NEH Grant Writing Workshop

Marquette University
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Stefanie Walker
Senior Program Officer, Division of Research
National Endowment for the Humanities
NEH 101

• NEH is funded by you
• is run by people like you
• makes awards in all areas of the humanities
• 7 divisions and offices offer grants
• all grant information is at neh.gov
• all applications are peer reviewed
The term ‘humanities’ includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; [and] those aspects of social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods . . . .”

National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965
Office of Challenge Grants

Institution-building grants to improve humanities programs and carry out long-term plans for strengthening basic resources and enhancing financial stability.
Division of Public Programs

Grants for the presentation of humanities topics to large and diverse public audiences. Grants typically support radio and television documentaries, exhibitions and interpretation of historic sites, reading and discussion series, lectures, and symposia.
Division of Education

Grants strengthen teaching and learning through new or revised curricula and materials, collaborative study, seminars, and institutes.
Division of Preservation and Access

Grants to preserve archival holdings (including digitization); enhance access to materials; train preservationists; and produce reference works for scholarly research, education, and public programming.
Encourages innovations in the digital humanities through research that brings new approaches or documents best practices; creation of digital tools for preserving, analyzing, and making accessible digital resources; and examination of the philosophical implications and impact of emerging technologies.
Division of Research

Makes grants to support individuals and teams of scholars pursuing advanced research in the humanities that will contribute to scholarly knowledge or to the general public's understanding of the humanities.
Application information

Grants database
Selected Individual Grants & Deadlines

- Awards for Faculty 4/16/13
- Fellowships 5/1/13
- Summer Stipends 9/26/13 (nomination usually required)
- Lib. of Congress/Kluge Fellowships 7/15/13

http://www.loc.gov/loc/kluge/fellowships/kluge.html
Selected Institutional Grants & Deadlines

• Collaborative Research 12/5/13
• Scholarly Editions & Translations 12/5/13
• Enduring Questions 9/12/13
• Bridging Cultures through Film 6/12/13
• Preservation Assistance Grants 5/1/13
• Challenge Grants 5/1/13
Applying to NEH and Peer Review
Grant Opportunities, Application Guidelines, and Resources for Managing Your Grant

SEARCH FOR A GRANT

Match your project to a grant program
Not sure where to start? Use this list as a springboard for finding a grant program that might fit your project.

Filter by Division/Office

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>DEADLINE</th>
<th>DIVISION/OFFICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>America's Historical and Cultural Organizations: Planning Grants</td>
<td>January 11, 2012</td>
<td>Division of Public Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America's Historical and Cultural Organizations: Implementation Grants</td>
<td>January 11, 2012</td>
<td>Division of Public Programs</td>
</tr>
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of reference by logging in to the secure area of NEH’s website. Enter your NEH tracking number (or application number) and your Grants.gov tracking number. You will be able to see the names and e-mail addresses of your letter writers and whether your letters of reference have arrived. (You will also be sent e-mail notification when each letter arrives.) If necessary, you may also send reminders to your letter writers from this site.

V. Application Review

Evaluators are asked to apply the following five criteria when judging the quality of applications.

1. The intellectual significance of the proposed project, including its value to humanities scholars, general audiences, or both.

2. The quality or promise of quality of the applicant’s work as an interpreter of the humanities.

3. The quality of the conception, definition, organization, and description of the project and the applicant’s clarity of expression.

4. The feasibility of the proposed plan of work, including, when appropriate, the soundness of the dissemination and access plans.

5. The likelihood that the applicant will complete the project.

Fellowships support projects at any stage of development.

Review and selection process

Knowledgeable persons outside NEH will read each application and advise the agency about its merits. NEH staff comments on matters of fact or on significant issues that otherwise would be missing from these reviews, then makes recommendations to the National Council on the Humanities. The National Council meets at various times during the year to advise the NEH chairman on grants. The chairman takes into account the advice provided by the review process and, by law, makes all funding decisions.
Grants.gov

Register

Your grants office can help.
Applications for individual grants

Schedule: Annual grant cycle (Awards for Faculty in mid-April, Fellowships in early May, Summer Stipends in October) for the following academic year. Results announced eight months later

Requirements: 3 page single-spaced narrative; 1 page bibliography; 2 page c.v.; 2 letters of recommendation

Fundable: Research, writing, scholarly monographs, synthetic works, translation, preparation of research tools (e.g., editions, databases), archaeological work

Not fundable: Projects that seek to promote a particular political, philosophical, religious, or ideological point of view, or a particular program of social action; pedagogical tools (e.g., textbooks); creative or performing arts; doctoral dissertations or theses.
Stages of Review

Peer Review Panel

→

NEH staff

→

National Council

→

Chairman

http://www.neh.gov/grants/application-process
Fellowships Panels

- Staff groups applications by field
- Each set is assigned to a 4- or 5- member panel
- Panelists are recruited for regional, institutional, career diversity
- Panelists are experts and generalists
- Panelists rate 30-40 applications
Rating Scale

- E  Excellent
- VG Very good
- G  Good
- SM Some merit
- NC Not competitive
Evaluation Criteria

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3. The quality of the conception, definition, organization, and description of the project and the applicant’s clarity of expression.

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Think about your readers

- For the application: Generalists and specialists, especially on the Council
- For the final product: How is it significant for them?
- Don’t make it hard on them—make clear what you’re doing, avoid jargon, define field-specific concepts and terms
- Explicitly address the criteria
The application

• Intrigue the panelists
• Balance abstraction and precision
• Engage with current scholarship on your topic
• Dissertations: What’s new?
• Make work plan explicit, and make clear it’s doable
• Have an up-to-date bibliography
• Don’t discuss need
• Don’t discuss previous applications
Further tips

• Take advantage of sample applications on the website
• Draft early and get comments
• Proofread!
• Discuss your application with your letter writers
A multi-year process

• Sign up to serve as a panelist
• Talk to program officers
• Remember the intensity of the competition
• Re-apply
• Ask for your comments
Questions?

Contact:
Stefanie Walker
NEH Division of Research
1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Room 318
Washington, DC 20506
swalker@neh.gov
202-606-8478

Also: research@neh.gov / 202-606-8200