



NEH 101: Opportunities and Resources

University at Buffalo
24 February 2017

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National Endowment for the Humanities

Thanks for the invitation to be with you all here today. We do most of our work via email and online applications, so it is good to see real people on a real campus. It's particularly a pleasure to be here at UB—my brother and sister in law are both alumni. Many thanks to Libby Otto, Maki Tanigaki, and their colleagues here at the University of Arkansas for making this happen.

This workshop is designed to introduce you to the National Endowment for the Humanities, and grant opportunities available to you. In the first session I'll talk about the endowment, grant programs, and how to apply. In the second session we'll talk about how applications are reviewed and hints for writing a successful application. There will be plenty of time for questions.

All you really need to know

- NEH programs are competitive, but you won't get a grant if you won't apply
- Read the application guidelines
- Talk to NEH program officers



But here's my key message, boiled down: 1) NEH programs are competitive, but you won't get a grant if you won't apply. 2) Read the application guidelines—that will help you write a better application. 3) Talk to NEH program officers—that's why we're there. Write us or call us--we will reply and we will help.

NEH 101

- NEH is funded by you



Now to the less condensed version. The first thing to know is that the NEH is a federal agency, supported by taxpayers.

NEH 101

“The practice of art and the study of the humanities require constant dedication and devotion. While no government can call a great artist or scholar into existence, it is necessary and appropriate for the Federal Government to help create and sustain not only a climate encouraging freedom of thought, imagination, and inquiry but also the material conditions facilitating the release of this creative talent.”

National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965



The NEH and the NEA were created by Congress in 1965—which means we just marked our 50th anniversary. Here’s language from our founding legislation, describing how the Endowments serve the public good. We support work that engages scholars and the general public in humanistic inquiry, believing that understanding our world today requires understanding history, literature, philosophy and the rest. Our motto: Exploring the human endeavor.

NEH 101

- NEH is funded by you
- **NEH is run by people like you**



Since the Endowment is a federal agency, you may assume that the staff are all federal bureaucrats. Well, we are, but Endowment staff are scholars, many with faculty experience and research records. We see our job as supporting public and scholarly engagement with the humanities, and we do it because we believe in the humanities and in scholarship. If you take away nothing else today, know that, unlike some foundations, NEH staff are happy to talk to you by phone or email. We want to be your allies.

A word or two about myself. A historian of American religion, with a degree in religious studies. Variety of teaching and administration before coming to the NEH almost seven years ago.

NEH 101

- NEH is funded by you
- NEH is run by people like you
- **NEH makes awards in all areas of the humanities**



Third, and this may seem fairly obvious, the Endowment's work focuses on the humanities. We don't support the creative arts—that's the NEA. We don't support humanitarian work.

What are the Humanities?



 NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
Humanities

We work with a capacious definition of the humanities. There is some room here, for instance, for the social sciences as long as they are pursuing humanistic work through humanistic methods. Sometimes our evaluators do find themselves wrestling with whether a particular project really is in the humanities.

NEH 101

- NEH is funded by you
- NEH is run by people like you
- NEH makes awards in all areas of the humanities
- **Grant programs offered by 7 divisions**



The NEH does its grant work through seven divisions, each focused on a different kind of work or audience. Since we have people here today with a variety of interests and goals, I thought it might be good to describe what our various programs do. Illustrated with recent grants to local institutions. Do it fairly quickly. There are more details on the handouts, which describe the programs and deadlines for each division.

Division of Research



Grants 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.



We'll start with the Division of Research Programs, because it may be of most interest to you all. The division supports the work of scholars, working individually or in teams, doing research for scholarly and general audiences. This is my division, so I know these programs the best.

Fellowships/Awards for Faculty Summer Stipends

For individual scholars that support research and creation of:

- Articles
- Books
- Digital materials
- Archaeological site reports
- Translations
- Editions
- Other scholarly resources in the humanities



Fellowships (6-12 months) -
April 12, 2017
Summer Stipends (8 weeks) -
September 27, 2017

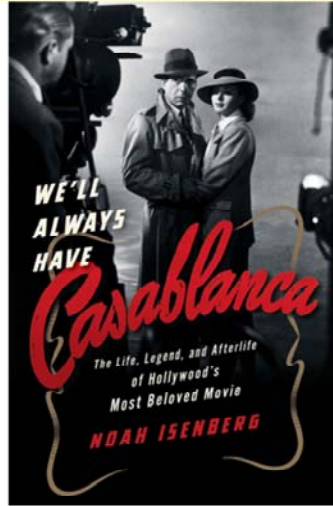


The division's programs include the Fellowship, probably the best-known of the Endowment's grant programs—this is what people are talking about when they say “Oh, that person got an NEH!” This supports the work that most scholars do—research to produce books or other materials that will have an impact on the scholarship in their field. The fellowship is available for 6-12 months. The Awards for Faculty program is similar, but focused on faculty at HBCUs, HSIs, and TCUs. Our summer stipend program provides two month of support for the same kind of work. Projects may be at any stage of development. These are both annual programs. The Fellowships deadline this year is April 12. The Stipends deadline is late September.

Public Scholar

The Public Scholar program supports well-researched books in the humanities intended to reach a broad readership.

Deadline: February 7, 2018

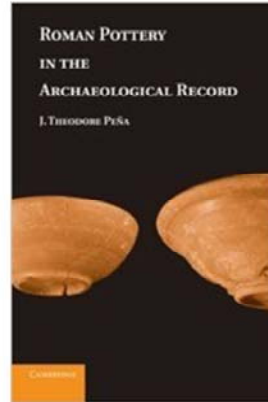


Our newest program, Public Scholar, starting its third year, supports books on humanities themes targeted at a general readership. Applicants must have a track record of writing for a broad audience and be prepared to engage a variety of publics with their work. Like the fellowship, this program is good for six to twelve months.

Collaborative Research Scholarly Editions and Translations



Deadline: December 6, 2017



The Collaborative Research Program is for teams of scholars working on a larger, longer-term enterprise, like a multi-author book, a conference or an archeological dig. Scholarly Editions and Translations is for a team collaborating on creating a critical edition of materials not available otherwise to scholars. Grants for these projects can be up to three years and can be renewed. They need to involve at least two scholars. Another annual program, with the deadline this year on December 6

For Individual Scholars

NEH Fellowships (6-12 months) - April 12
Awards for Faculty at HBCUs, HSIs, TCUs - April 12
Summer Stipends (8 weeks) - September 27
Public Scholar (6-12 months) - February 7

For Teams of Scholars

Collaborative Research - December 6
Scholarly Editions & Translations - December 6

- Victoria Wolcott (University at Buffalo), The Utopian Strain in the Long Civil Rights Movement (Fellowship)
- Camilo Daniel Trumper (University at Buffalo), The Politics of Public Space and Public Art in Santiago, Chile (Summer Stipend)
- Theodore Pena (University at Buffalo), Supplying the Eternal City: The Study and Publication of Five Centuries of Pottery from Ancient Rome (Collaborative Research)



Here are the deadlines for this year, and a list of grants to local scholars.

Fellowship Programs at Independent Research Institutions



While we're talking about research, you should also know about the fellowships that we sponsor at **independent research institutions**. These are places like the Newberry Library in Chicago or the American Antiquarian Society, or the American Academy in Rome or American Institute of Indian Studies in New Delhi. These institutions invite scholars to come use their research resources and participate in their scholarly life. The NEH provides funds to support fellowships for those researchers. People apply directly to the institutions, and they make their own choices. The funding rate varies widely from place to place, some are more competitive than others.

Division of Education



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



The education division has programs that support teaching, for both college and pre-college classrooms.

Summer Seminars, Institutes, and Landmarks



The most important program here are the summer seminars and institutes and Landmarks of American History. They are available for both K-12 teachers and college and university teachers. These are great career development opportunities, especially for early-career faculty. People regularly tell us how these programs have changed their careers and their teaching. The programs run one to four weeks, at sites all over the country. Institutes are for larger groups of faculty, meeting for reading and discussion with experts centered on a topic, designed to enrich classroom teaching. Seminars are smaller groups, still focused on a topic, but with more space for independent work. Landmarks uses particular places to teach. I have brought cards listing the programs for this coming summer—the application deadline is March 1, so you should think about this soon, and let your

colleagues know about them. People apply directly to the programs, which also reserve slots for contingent faculty. If you have particular expertise that you think other teachers would find useful, you might think about directing a seminar or institute yourself.

Humanities Connections



Here's another program for teachers, a new grant program—Humanities Connections. The program seeks to expand the role of the humanities in the undergraduate curriculum at two- and four-year institutions. Grants support the development and implementation of an integrated set of courses and student engagement activities focusing on significant humanities content. A common topic, theme, or compelling issue or question must link the courses and activities. Those classes can include collaboration with colleagues in the natural and social sciences or professional programs. The student engagement activities could include individual or collaborative undergraduate research projects; opportunities for civic engagement; or a structured experience with community-based, project-based, or site-based learning. The next deadline is October 5, 2017 for

projects beginning May 2018.

Seminars, Institutes and Landmarks - March 1

Humanities Initiatives at HBCUs, IHHEs, and TCUs - June 22

Humanities Initiatives at Community Colleges - January 16, 2018

Humanities Connections - October 5

- Richard Cohen (University at Buffalo), Emmanuel Levinas on Morality, Justice, and the Political (Seminar)
- Kristin Stapleton (University at Buffalo), China and India: Comparisons and Connections (Institute)
- Jill Gradwell (Buffalo State), Buffalo's Pan-American Exposition and Ideas of Progress (Landmarks)



Also worth noting is a special initiative for minority serving institutions, and another for community colleges. Here is a list of recent grants to nearby institutions.



I also want to highlight here the Education Division's EDSITEment program. It contains teaching resources and lesson plans for the humanities for a variety of classes. Arts, language, history, social studies, literature. Single-class sessions or multiple classes. Many are focused on K-12 teaching. I've heard education professors say that it is a great resource for their student teachers. Some college teachers also use the lesson plans, especially for introductory classes. It's an amazing collection of stuff.

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.



Preservation and Access, as the name suggests, supports work that makes preserves documents and objects and makes them available for scholars and the general public. Many of these grants go to libraries, museums, and historic sites.

Common Heritage



One other new grant program your institutions might want to know about—Common Heritage. The program supports both the digitization of cultural heritage materials and the organization of public programming at community events that explore these materials as a window on a community's history and culture. Think of it as Antiques Roadshow--your college or the local historical society hosts a day when local community members bring in historical artifacts. The hosts digitize them and add them to a publicly accessible collection. The day also features sessions on local history and historic preservation. Think about what a great opportunity this would be for your students and faculty. The next deadline will be June 1.

Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections – December 5
Preservation Assistance Grants – May 2
Education and Training Grants – May 2
Common Heritage – June 1
Research and Development Project Grants – June 8
Humanities Collections and Reference Resources – July 20
Documenting Endangered Languages (with NSF) – September 15

- Patrick Ravines (Buffalo State), Graduate Conservation Education and Training Fellowships (Education and Training)
- Environmental Monitoring at the Buffalo Museum of Science (Preservation Assistance)
- Reformatting and Cataloging Poetry Tapes (University at Buffalo) (HCRR)



A rich variety of programs, with lots of deadlines. Note the diversity of grantees and the different kinds of programs supported.

Chronicling America

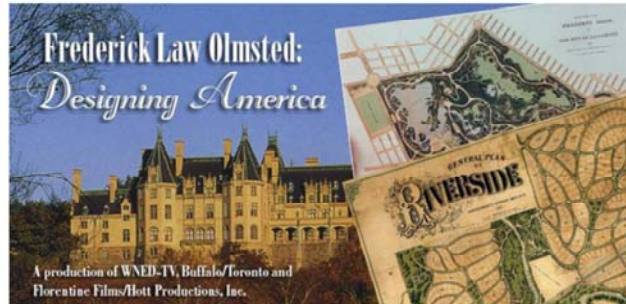


chroniclingamerica.loc.gov



A great resource for teachers from this division is Chronicling America, which hosts digitized newspapers from all over the country. It currently contains over 11 million pages, from 1836 to 1922, often featuring small-town papers and some foreign-language immigrant papers. It is all searchable with metadata. The papers are chosen by state-level groups and the finished materials are hosted by the Library of Congress. Again, a great resource for student researchers.

Division of Public Programs



Public humanities programs reach large and diverse audiences through a variety of formats—interpretation at historic sites, television and radio productions, museum exhibitions, Web sites and other digital media.



The Division of Public programs supports projects that engage the broad American public with the humanities. This includes documentaries, museum exhibits, and digital outreach projects.

Digital Projects for the Public – June 7

Media Projects – August 9

Public Humanities Projects – August 9

- Music Unwound (Buffalo Philharmonic)
- Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing America (Western New York Public Broadcasting)
- Alexander Hamilton: The Man Who Made Modern America (Buffalo and Erie County Public Library)



These grants tend to go media producers and to museums that create or host exhibits. Digital Projects for the Public supports efforts that use digital means to reach broad audiences.

Created Equal



Here's another resource for teachers, supported by the Public Programs division: Created Equal, a collection of five NEH-supported PBS documentaries on the history of the long civil rights movement—The Abolitionists, Slavery By Another Name, Freedom Riders, the Loving Story, and Freedom Summer. On the NEH web site you will find lesson plans, discussion questions, and primary sources. There are also resources for community groups.

Office of Digital Humanities



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.



Our Office of Digital Humanities is supporting a lot of cutting-edge work in incorporating technology into research and public engagement in the humanities. This includes creating new tools and collaborating on new research methods. Other projects look at the history and implications of digital culture. There is digital work in the other divisions, too.

Digital Humanities Advancement Grants – June 6

Institutes for Advanced Topics in the Digital
Humanities—March 14

Humanities Open Book Program - September 13

Neil Coffee (University at Buffalo), *Tesserae: A Search
Engine for Allusion*

Anne Conable (Buffalo and Erie County Library), *Re-
Collecting the Depression and New Deal as a Civic
Resource in Hard Times*



Their programs projects include Digital Humanities Advancement Grants which support creative new work in the digital humanities. They also sponsor Institutes for Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities, which are training opportunities for faculty in digital methods and topics. The Open Book program supports the digitization of important but out of print books in the humanities to make them freely available to all audiences.

Office of Challenge Grants



Matching grants to support major institutional goals.

- Next Generation Humanities Ph.D.
- Humanities Access Grants
- Creating Humanities Communities



The Office of Challenge Grants supports major institutional endeavors. It is developing some new programs aimed at addressing important issues in the humanities. Next Generation Humanities Ph.D., encourages universities to broaden graduate training to reflect the range of career options that humanities Ph.D. students pursue. Humanities Access grants support capacity building for humanities programs for under-resources communities. Creating Humanities Communities help stimulate and proliferate meaningful humanities activities in states and U.S. territories underserved by NEH's grantmaking divisions and offices.

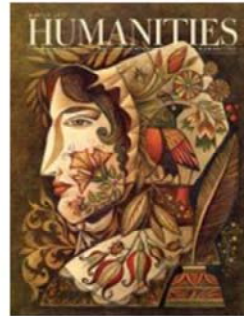
Office of Federal/State Partnership



As you may know, each state and territory has a council on the humanities. These groups do programming as well as make grants for institutions and individuals in their state. Some of their financial support comes through the National Endowment's office of federal/state partnership. Humanities New York is a terrific partner. I hope you find a way to connect with these valuable local assets—they always welcome partnerships with scholars in their work.

Humanities magazine

- News from the Endowment
- Interesting scholarship
- The latest deadlines



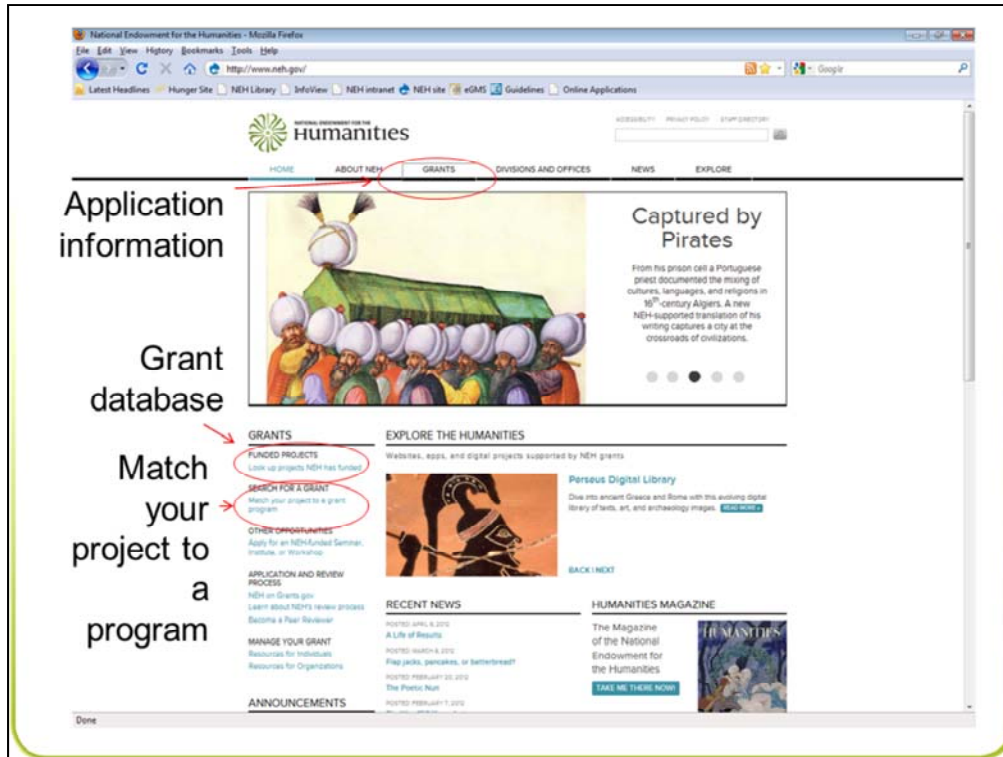
Before I wrap up this section, I wanted to draw your attention to Humanities magazine, which comes out four times a year. It features articles about scholarship supported by the NEH, news about NEH programs, and a list of upcoming grant deadlines. I brought a pile along. There is a subscription card inside.

NEH 101

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- NEH makes awards in all areas of the humanities
- 7 divisions make awards
- **All grant information is at neh.gov**



The other good source for information about the Endowment's work is our web site. It has all of our grant programs, all of our deadlines, and a wealth of other information, at neh.gov



On our site you will find information about how to apply for a grant. You can see the link there at the top of the page. I'll come back to that in a moment. You can also search our online database for previous grants. A tool helps you match your project to a particular grant program.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Funded Projects Query Form

Grant number

Project director First name Last name

Key words
 ANY of these words ALL of these words This phrase Whole words only

Organization name

State

Field of project


Grant program

Division

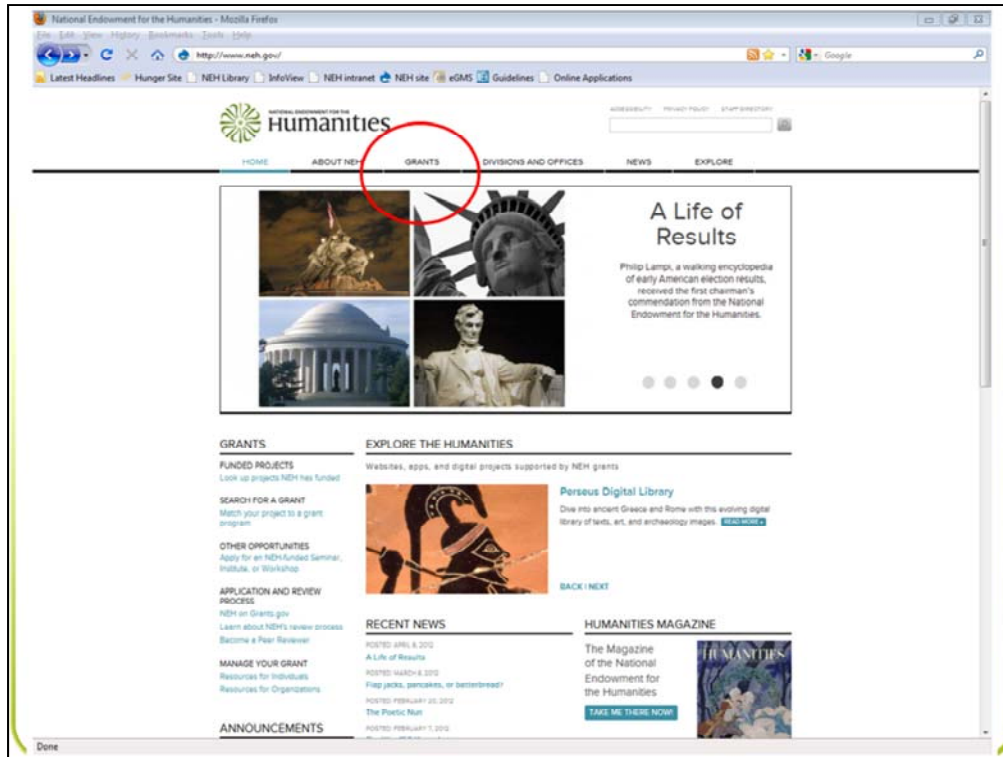
Award date range From To

Sorting options Products, coverage, prizes

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) [Query Form](#) [NEH Website](#) Grant data as of 4/9/2012



Here's that search form. You can look for grants in particular states, or focusing on particular topics. So if you wanted to find out what grants have gone to people at your institution, or on topics related to work that you're doing, it's a very useful resource.



The first step in applying for a grant is going to the NEH web site, www.neh.gov, where you will find has all our application guidelines. Up at the top you'll find a link, simply labeled grants.

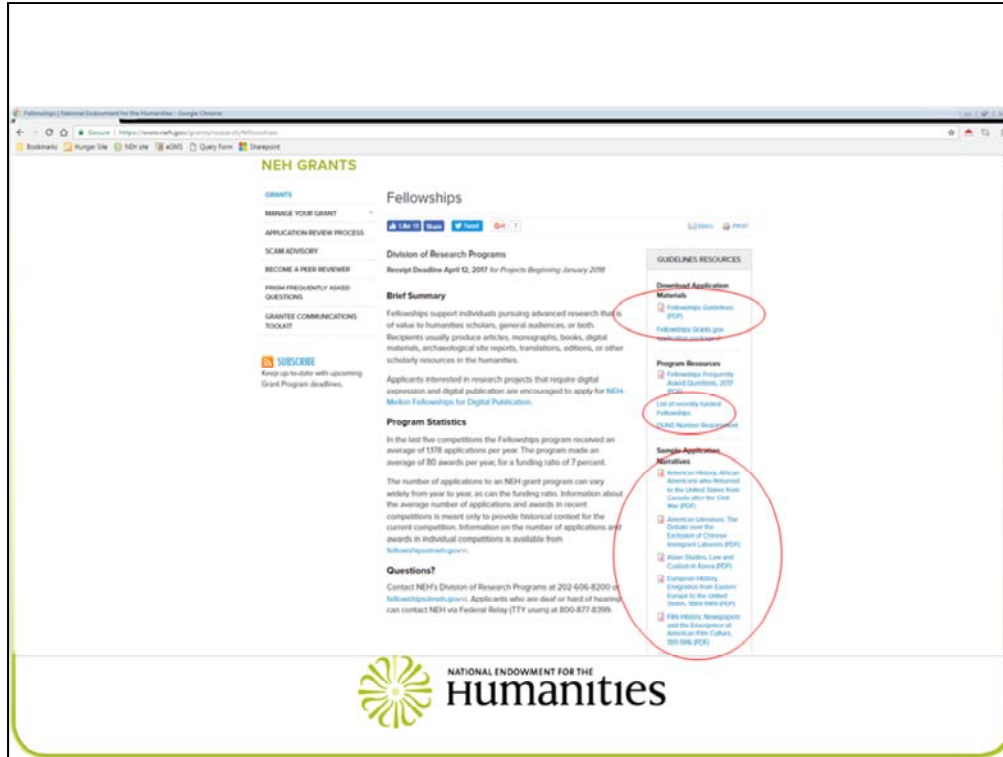
The screenshot shows the NEH Grants website interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for HOME, ABOUT NEH, GRANTS, DIVISIONS AND OFFICES, NEWS, and EXPLORE. Below the navigation, the main content area is titled "NEH GRANTS". On the left side, there are several utility links: "MANAGE YOUR GRANT", "NEH ON GRANTS.GOV", "APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS", "BECOME A PEER REVIEWER", "SUBSCRIBE", and "CONTACT NEH". The "CONTACT NEH" section provides the address: NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES, 1500 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20506, and contact information including phone numbers (1-800-NEH-7121, 202-606-8400) and an email address (neh@neh.gov).

The main content area features a "Manage Your Grant Now" section with a "FILE REPORTS USING eGMS" button and "RESOURCES FOR" links for "REVIEWSALS" and "ORGANIZATIONS". Below this is a "SEARCH FOR A GRANT" section with the heading "Match your project to a grant program" and a sub-heading "Not sure where to start? Use this list as a springboard for finding a grant program that might fit your project." The search filters include "Filter by Division/Office", "Applicant Type", and "Keywords". There are "RESET" and "SEARCH" buttons.

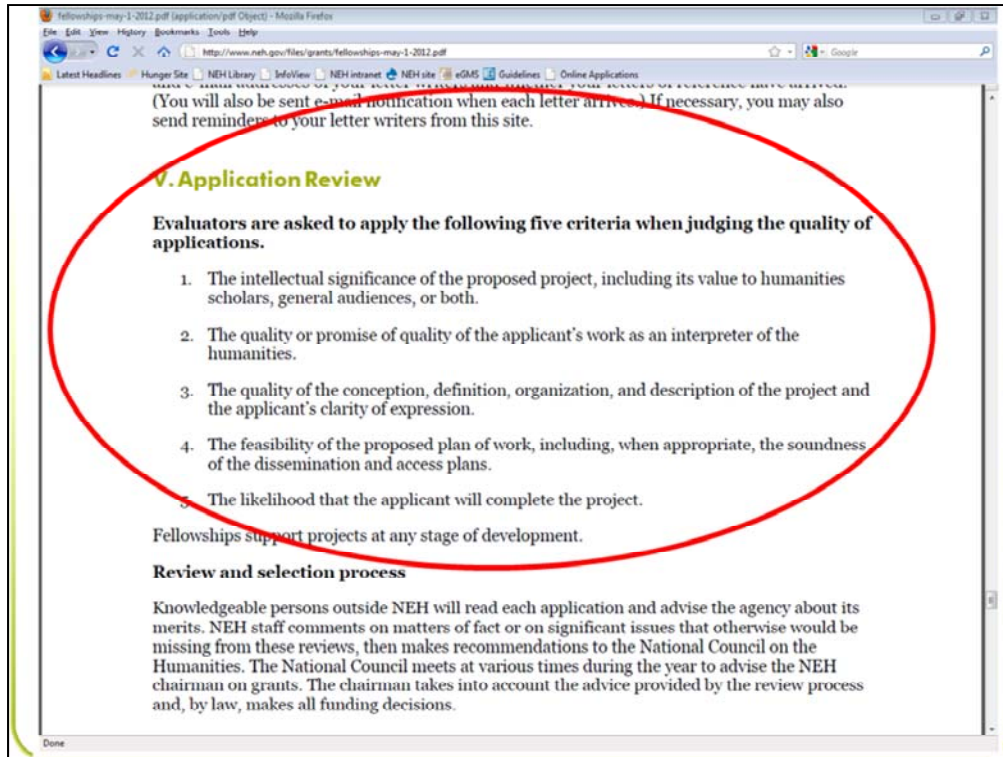
The search results are displayed in a table with the following columns: TITLE, DEADLINE, and DIVISION/OFFICE. The results list three grant programs, all with a deadline of April 15, 2014, and managed by the Division of Research Programs:

TITLE	DEADLINE	DIVISION/OFFICE
Awards for Faculty at Hispanic-Serving Institutions	April 15, 2014	Division of Research Programs
Awards for Faculty at Historically Black Colleges and Universities	April 15, 2014	Division of Research Programs
Awards for Faculty at Tribal Colleges and Universities	April 15, 2014	Division of Research Programs

You will get a list of our grant programs, with links to the guidelines for each of those programs. You can filter the list by NEH division. Today we'll use the example of the Fellowships program, which many of you may be particularly interested in, but the basic process is the same for most grant programs at the Endowment.



Each program page include the same kind of information, although the actual information varies from program to program. The most important are the guidelines These guidelines are long and a bit bureaucratic, but grant applicants should spend some time reading them. They'll tell you who can and who cannot apply for a grant, what grants can and cannot support, what an application should include, and how applications will be evaluated. Also on this page is a link to recently funded applications, to get a sense of the kinds of things that a program can support, and a link to sample applications—previously successful applications (names removed) that you can use as inspiration and suggestion—though not necessarily as a model—for your application.



Each set of guidelines tells applicants how their applications will be reviewed. We give our evaluators a focused set of criteria, and ask them to consider nothing else when reading applications. A smart applicant keeps these criteria in mind when writing an application. I'll repeat that: A smart applicant keeps these criteria in mind when writing an application. Different programs have different criteria—these are the fellowships criteria. Make sure that you are looking at the right criteria when you are working on an application. I will talk more about the criteria in the second part of the workshop.

Applications For Individual Grants

Application schedule:

- Annual grant cycle (Fellowships in early May, Summer Stipends in late September) for the following academic year.
- Results announced eight months later (i.e. if you want funding sometime in the next 1-2 years, you should start thinking about it now).

Requirements:

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



These individual grants have annual cycles, with deadlines at about the same time every year. The evaluation process is long—about eight months. People who apply for fellowships in May, for instance, will find out in December. They can start using them in January. That long time frame means that you should plan ahead—if you want funding in the next few years, start thinking about it now.

The applications for individual grants are fairly simple—a three page narrative, one page bibliography, 2 page CV, and 2 letters. Other applications, like collaborative research, are a lot bigger.

Applications For Individual Grants

Fundable:

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

Not fundable:

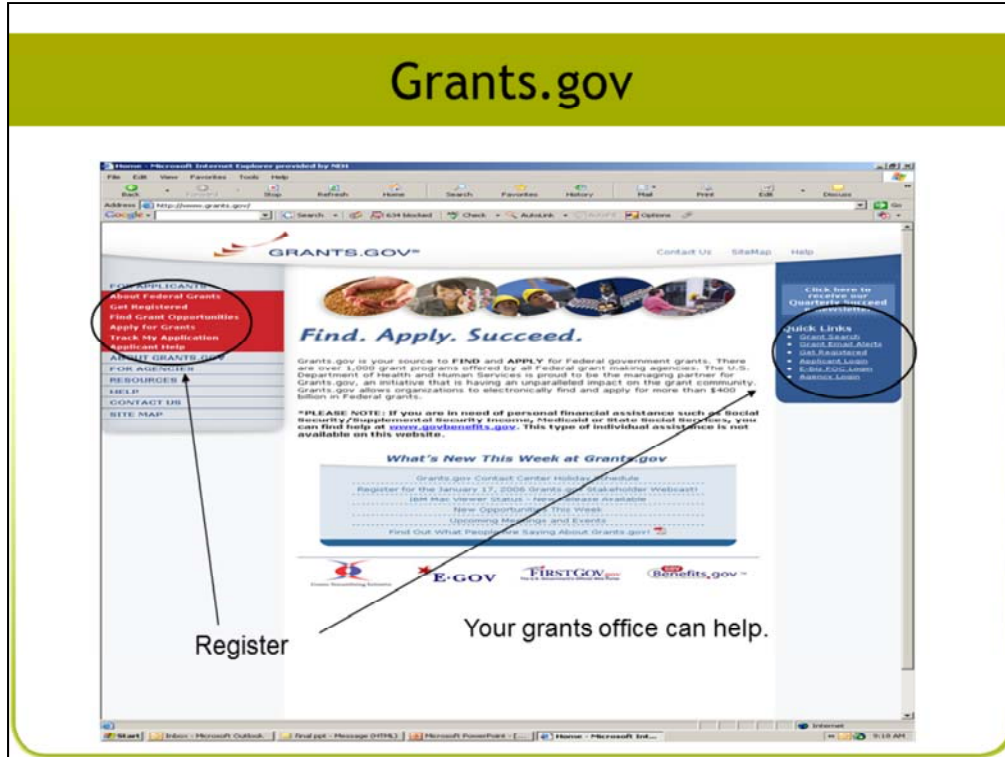
- Projects that seek to promote a particular political, philosophical, religious, or ideological point of view, or a particular program of social action;
- pedagogical tools (e.g., textbooks);
- creative or performing arts;
- doctoral dissertations or theses.

*Rarely support revisions for readers' reports.



The guidelines also specify what we do and do not fund. Much of what we fund is the usual work of scholars—research and writing books and articles, translations, and creating research tools. It's a pretty broad umbrella. Note what we don't fund—work that promotes a particular ideology or program of action, text books, creative works, or dissertations. We rarely support revisions for readers' reports.

Grants.gov



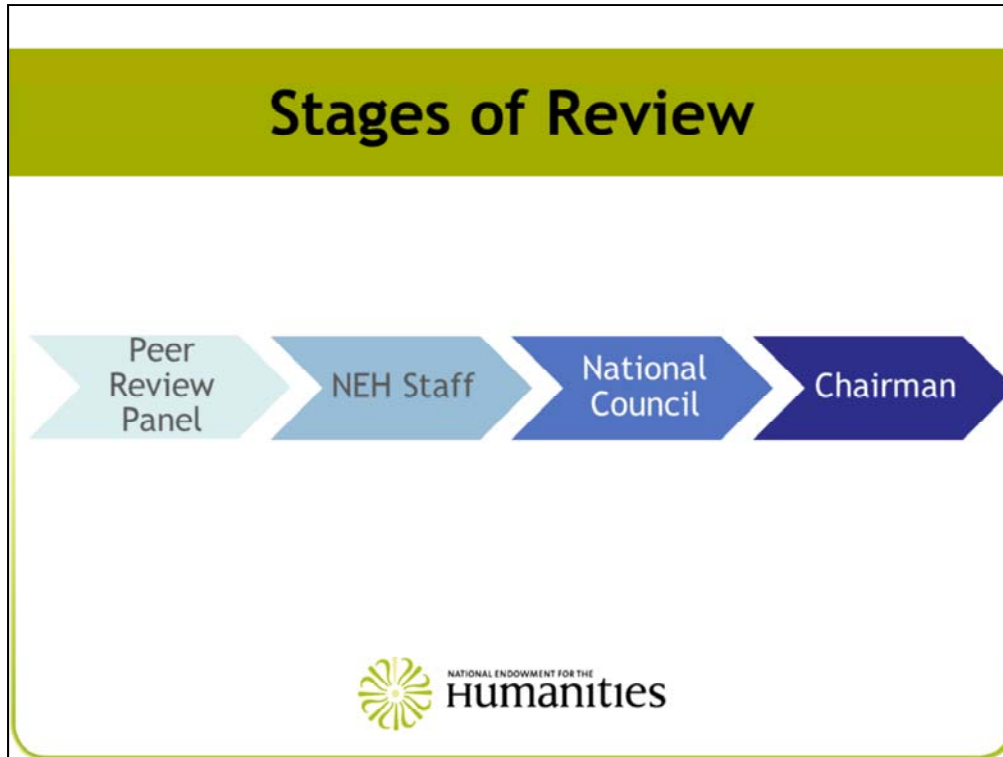
NEH grants, like many federal grants, are submitted through a web portal called grants.gov. It is a fairly smooth system, but it would be good for you to spend some time getting familiar with it before you submit your application. You need to register a week or so before applying. We strongly urge that you apply early, as it gets pretty overwhelmed in the five minutes before the midnight deadline. In this process it would be good to work with your grants office—they do this a lot.

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- 7 divisions make awards
- All grant information is at neh.gov
- **All applications are peer reviewed**



The final thing to do know at this point about the NEH is that all of our grant applications are peer reviewed. Decisions are not made by a bunch of bureaucrats sitting somewhere. They are informed by the comments and recommendations made by committees of scholars and other humanities practitioners. That peer review process is a crucial part of what we do—and understanding it can help you write a better grant application.



There are multiple stages to the peer review process at the NEH. The first and most important are the peer review panels—most often scholars with some background in the general field. Some panels meet in person, some are virtual. The NEH staff reviews all the comments from panelists and recommends which applications should be supported. Those recommendations are considered by the National Council on the Humanities, 26 people (scholars and others) nominated by the president and approved by the Senate. The Council makes recommendations to the Endowment’s chairman, who takes all this into consideration and makes the decision on which to fund. It’s a long process, but it allows for rich review. Throughout, the peer review panel’s comments are taken very seriously. After grants are announced, applicants can request the comments from their evaluators. Not every funder does that, but we see it as a service to our applicants, to get the feedback on their application from five smart people. Our panelists are incredibly generous with their comments.

Peer Review Panels

- We group 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
- Recruit panelists most likely to give an application a sympathetic read
- Panelists rate 30-40 applications, and generally discuss the top-rated 15 or 20



How do these panels come to be? This will help you think about the audience for your application. When applications come in, we group them by discipline—generally based on how the applicant defines her or himself. Broad categories—multiple American history panels, for instance, but we don't have enough for a women's studies panel. Generally we make piles of 30-40 applications, and then go looking for panelists. We want people who can be experts but can also evaluate carefully applications that they do not have expertise for. We want a diversity of panelists, including experience with the NEH. Most importantly, we want people who can give applications a sympathetic read. People cannot serve on panels in successive years, so it is always a new panel. Panelists read up to 40 applications, but they may only have time to discuss the top-ranked 15 or 20.

NEH Funding Rates

Fellowships (FY 2017):

Received 1176 applications, funded 78 (7%)

Awards for Faculty (FY 2017):

Received 138 applications, funded 12 (9%)

Summer Stipends (FY 2016):

Received 808 applications, funded 83 (10%)



It's not only a long process, but also a competitive one. Last year, for these individual competitions, we received a lot of applications and were able to fund only a small number. Don't let this keep you from applying, but just be aware of the competition. In the second part of today's session we'll talk about the application process and give you some hints on how to improve your application and better your odds.

Questions?

Daniel Sack

Division of Research Programs

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202-606-8200



Before we wrap up this section, let me repeat something I said at the beginning. NEH program officers are fellow scholars, and they want to help support your work. That's why we do what we do. Please contact us with questions. If we don't know the answer, we'll find someone who does.