

2016

## Reauthorization: Hearing and Reports (1990): Report 02

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## Use of NEH Chairman's Grant

Section 17 of the NFAH Act of 1965 as amended authorizes up to 10% of definite funds to be awarded by the Chairman without a recommendation from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Such grants can be made at a maximum of \$17,500 per grant and only pursuant to a delegation from the Council. Each grant must be reported to the Council for its review.

"The Arts and the Humanities Act of 1979", a draft bill to amend the basic Act, seeks to raise the limit from the \$17,500 established in 1973 to \$30,000, a more functional figure given the rate of inflation over the intervening years. As is evident from the listing of FY 79 Chairman's Grants, the \$17,500 figure is constantly approached, and with warrant, due to inflation. The increased maximum would permit response to requests that will be keeping pace with anticipated inflation over the five years covered by the legislation under consideration.

Requests are of three basic types:

- (1) requests on behalf of proposals that are not synchronized with deadlines due to factors beyond the applicant's control;
- (2) requests for assistance for credible ideas that do not comfortably fit guidelines, but should be encouraged;
- (3) requests to facilitate grants for credible application from underserved constituencies, while the reviewing process is monitored for possible remedy or amendment;
- (4) requests for grants that fall within established program areas and historically are expected by the Council to be awarded as Chairman's Grants.

Chairman's Grants, whether staff initiated or otherwise, are subjected to appropriate staff and/or outside review. Chairman's Grants likewise are only made in response to formal applications. While the law permits up to 10% of definite monies to be awarded through this mechanism, in FY'79 only 1.2% of authorized monies were so used. Such caution has been the consistent pattern since the 1973 legislation, an attitude unlikely to change since the authority to make those awards is delegated to the Chairman by the National Council on the Humanities.

*report - stress  
emergency basis  
only*