Reauthorization: State Grant Formula (1990): Correspondence 02

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August 13, 1990

To: Chairs and Executive Directors
   State Humanities Councils

From: Marjorie A. Berlincourt, Director
      Division of State Programs

Subjects: 1. Changes in Reporting Requirements Effective 1991  
          2. Supplements to FY 1990 Grants  
          3. New Directions in the State and Regional Exemplary Award Program

I am very pleased to inform you that, at the quarterly meeting of the National Council on the Humanities August 9-10, 1990, the staff of the Division of State Programs presented three major items of business that were strongly supported by the Chairman of NEH: 1. changes in reporting requirements effective in 1991; 2. supplements to the councils' FY1990 grants; and 3. new directions for the State and Regional Exemplary Award program. All were approved unanimously by the National Council.

Based on observations of the division staff and on information gathered over the past two years in both structured meetings and on numerous informal conversations with you, we are able to modify some requirements. The changes in reporting requirements recognize and further encourage the advances made to date by the councils in institutional development and long-term programmatic planning. With confidence in the institutional stability of the state humanities councils, NEH will institute streamlined reporting requirements that combine accountability for federal funds with maximum programmatic flexibility for the councils. The Chairman's Planning Awards of $10,000 will enable each council to establish programmatic and funding priorities in preparation for planning and requesting funding for the longer term.

** Reporting Requirements **

- Beginning with the April 1991 deadline, state councils may apply for a three-year program and report annually with program progress reports and financial reports.

- The state program staff is developing guidelines that will enable councils to reduce narrative reporting by 50 per cent. The new guidelines will govern either a biennial or a triennial proposal.
The form and substance of the budget section of all future proposals will allow for maximum state council flexibility: line item restrictions will be removed; and projections for the expense of operating the entire council program may be submitted.

In FY 1991 a telecommunication system will be tested. Bringing on line a few council offices at a time, the NEH Office of Automated Processing will coordinate with the staff at the state offices to enable them to achieve compatibility with the NEH system. Catalogues of Projects will be the first category of information transmitted electronically.

Supplements

With regard to FY 1990 funding, the unobligated balance of the FY90 Chairman's National Fund will be distributed to the councils to use either for matching or for grantmaking on the basis of a formula reflective of the Congressional funding formula for the councils. That is, two-thirds of the funds will be distributed equally to each council and one third will be distributed on the basis of population.

New Directions for State and Regional Exemplary Awards

The Exemplary Award program will now be open to proposals for multi-year programs in addition to one-time projects. This enlargement will provide councils with the opportunity to undertake projects of a larger scale and to sustain important efforts over the longer term.

You will shortly receive an amendment to your FY90 grant from the NEH Grants Office that will provide official notification of the Chairman's Planning Award of $10,000 and the supplement to your FY90 unrestricted funds to be used for matching or for regrants.

On the attached sheet you will see the amount of the supplement for your council that includes both the Chairman's Planning Award of $10,000 plus the one-time supplement for matching or for regrants.

In order to be able to send you the information as speedily as possible, it was not feasible to send a personal letter to each of you. In the weeks ahead, division staff will provide additional guidance on the changes in reporting requirements. In the meantime, we look forward to talking to you about these changes and to responding to any questions you may have. Please do not hesitate to telephone your program officer at (202) 786-0254.

Attachment