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# NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506



## The Endowment and the Bicentennial

From its creation in 1965, The Humanities Endowment has sought to deepen the nation's capacity for understanding its history and guiding principles, and to foster the use of that knowledge in strengthening the fabric of American society. That objective, set forth in the NEFAH Act and pursued under the guidance of the National Council on the Humanities, is reflected in all NEH programs, which have supported a broad spectrum of activities directed at illuminating the American past, its impact on the present course of the nation, and its relationship to other cultures and civilizations. Thus, a major part of the Endowment's work is, and will always be, closely related to what a serious observance of the Bicentennial should intend.

Going beyond the legislative mission of the Endowment, the Federal Government is inevitably concerned with the Bicentennial -- not as a promoter or supervisor, but as a participant. In that role its example and influence will importantly affect the over-all tone and quality of the nation's response to the occasion. If government support is directed into programs that involve the highest ideals of American life, then other public and private observances of the Bicentennial should be affected for the good.

By virtue of its characteristic programs and the standards of excellence which govern them, the Endowment has been charged by Congress and the Administration with a principal responsibility for assisting Bicentennial-related activities of serious purpose and lasting value. This has not required radically new departures in programming, but rather an expansion of support in established fields where the Bicentennial stimulus would naturally be felt in increased proposals. Accordingly, with the increased funding available during FY 1974-76 the Endowment has identified certain specifically Bicentennial priorities as extensions of normal NEH activities, conducted under standard operating procedures.

The requested FY 1976 appropriation provides for continued funding, as in FY 1974-75, through which the Endowment solicits proposals within the aforementioned priorities: in the public programs, to emphasize American themes in film, television, and community projects; in education, to help establish

American studies programs at all educational levels; in fellowships, to address historically important issues and their implications for the present and the future; in research grants, to support reference works and new editions dealing with American history and culture; and in planning and development, to encourage young people and other population elements in a deeper concern with the American experience.

A principal focus for many of these activities is the American Issues Forum (AIF), a national program developed under Endowment auspices and co-sponsored by the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration. The core of the Forum is a calendar of issues running from September 1975 to May 1976 and comprising

major issues which have continually affected American life from the beginning. The calendar was designed to provide a flexible programming framework enabling all American organizations, institutions and individuals to participate in a nation-wide dialogue about the nation's heritage and goals.

Public reaction to the AIF was immediately enthusiastic, and it has become the national framework for serious Bicentennial observance. A very large number of Americans are now and will be throughout 1976 engaged in AIF-related activities -- and most of these will be carried out without Federal support. Major television networks have scheduled programs to coordinate with the Forum's topics; national public radio is presenting a monthly series tied into the Forum; newspapers, magazines, and corporate publications will feature articles on Forum topics; national organizations (AFL-CIO, NAACP, National Grange, Foreign Policy Association, National Council on the Aging and others) are developing specialized materials for their members; educational institutions have adopted the Forum's calendar for classroom work and for outreach activities into their communities; and thousands of local civic, religious, and professional bodies will be conducting discussion programs on AIF issues. All these activities suggest that a "nation in dialogue with itself" -- the goal of the Endowment and others who helped develop the American Issues Forum -- has become a reality.

The Endowment is charged by the NFAH Act with helping Americans "to achieve a better understanding of the past, a better analysis of the present, and a better view of the future." It has accordingly welcomed the Bicentennial's potential for arousing citizen interest in the nation's well-being, not just among academic humanists but among members of all professions and the adult public generally. In the years beyond 1976, its task will be to consolidate and strengthen this awakened public interest.

The following pages briefly summarize NEH activities which have received funding during the FY 1974-76 period and which relate to the nation's observance of its two-hundredth anniversary. These include (a) a listing of those activities which have been recognized by the Domestic Council's cabinet-level Bicentennial Committee as special Federal projects for the Bicentennial period, (b) a listing of other activities supported by the Endowment which -- as they focus on the development of American civilization and the humanistic aspects of problems confronting the citizenry today -- may be of particular interest during this period, and (c) a section describing American Issues Forum activities of especial significance.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES  
Bicentennial-related Projects, FY 1974-76  
(Funding in thousands)

	<u>FY 1974</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 1975</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 1976</u> <u>Estimated</u> <sup>1/</sup>
<u>A. Projects Approved by Domestic Council Bicentennial Committee</u>			
1. <u>State-based Humanities Programs.</u> Operational programs, administered by State Committees on the Humanities, supporting in all 50 states local projects directly involving millions of citizens in discussions with humanists about important public policy issues of concern to their state.	\$ 7,569	\$ 13,690	\$ 15,600
2. <u>American Film Review.</u> Production of programs and series on the American heritage for television and radio including "The Adams Series" (a 13-hour program sequence covering 200 years of American history beginning with John Adams), biographical series on George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, and programs on selected aspects of American civilization.	3,540	2,985	2,000
3. <u>America's Authors on Films.</u> Dramatizations of great works of American literature -- short stories, plays, and writings by such writers as Mark Twain, Willa Cather, Ernest Hemmingway and Eugene O'Neill -- which illuminate the American character and experience.	265	1,738	500
4. <u>Perspectives on America.</u> Design and preparation of major interpretive museum exhibits, which will travel to various areas of the country, and community museum exhibits which illustrate the nation's origins, growth, and evolution.	1,217	1,880	1,500

	<u>FY 1974</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 1975</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 1976</u> <u>Estimated</u> <u>1/</u>
5. <u>Skills for the Bicentennial</u> . Training workshops for staffs of museums and historical societies relating to the design, presentation, and coordination of Bicentennial interpretive exhibits.	431	342	100
6. <u>National Humanities Series</u> . Humanities programs on Bicentennial themes developed by the NEH Program Development Centers involving live presentations and audience participation for the nation's smaller communities.	1,241	352	<u>2/</u>
7. <u>Great Issues in the American Experience</u> . Community discussion programs -- organized around great historical questions and issues in our past which have continuing relevance to contemporary America -- developed and conducted for broad-scale participation by citizens in major metropolitan areas.	330	841	1,500
8. <u>College Courses for the Bicentennial</u> . New humanities programs for colleges and universities examining the American Revolution, the subsequent development of the nation, and America's place in the world.	1,162	1,054	1,000
9. <u>History in the Schools</u> . Preparation of improved and up-to-date curriculum materials in American history and development of interdisciplinary American studies courses for the elementary and high school classroom.	989	452	500
10. <u>Scholarship for the Bicentennial</u> . Original research on the background and events of the Revolutionary period, the development of American institutions, history and culture of U.S. minorities and regional groups, and America's relations with other countries.	2,486	2,790	3,000

	<u>FY 1974</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 1975</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 1976</u> <u>Estimated</u> <sup>1/</sup>
11. <u>Letters and Papers of Great Americans.</u> Editing of the papers of American statesmen -- including George Washington, John Jay, Robert Morris, John Marshall, Daniel Webster, and Booker T. Washington -- and preparation of definitive and complete editions of the works of major nineteenth-century American writers such as Hawthorne, Thoreau, Melville, and Whitman.	1,776	924	750
12. <u>International Bicentennial Conferences.</u> Congresses and conferences of international scholarly organizations bringing the leading figures in the humanities from around the world to the United States in recognition of the Bicentennial.	362	879	100
13. <u>Bicentennial Histories for the States.</u> A series of guidebooks for each state, the District of Columbia and the territories, providing the general public with interpretive essays relating the history of each State to that of the nation.	291	1,538	300
14. <u>Bicentennial Course by Newspaper.</u> Development of a college-level course, using newspaper articles and aimed at the general public, examining American Issues Forum subjects.	85	748	<u>2/</u>
15. <u>Good Reading for the Bicentennial.</u> Preparation of annotated reading lists -- one series for adults, another for young persons -- of books and audio visual materials which can be used for individual study or group discussions concerning American Issues Forum topics.	--	220 <sup>2/</sup>	<u>2/</u>
16. <u>National Bicentennial Youth Debate.</u> Organization of a program involving thousands of high-school and college students in every state in research on American history and discussion of selected issues and value questions relating to the American Issues Forum.	159	1,240 <sup>2/</sup>	750
<b>Total - Domestic Council Approved Projects</b>	<u>22,003</u>	<u>31,673</u>	<u>27,600</u>

	<u>FY 1974</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 1975</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>FY 1976</u> <u>Estimated</u> <sup>1/</sup>
<b>B. <u>Other Bicentennial-related Activities</u></b>			
1. <u>Humanities Institutes</u> . Establishment of a three-year institute on "The Humanities and National Life" bringing senior and junior scholars from around the country together to undertake interdisciplinary research and curriculum development for college-level courses which can be used in undergraduate programs in American civilization.	\$ 2,759	<u>2/</u>	<u>2/</u>
2. <u>Faculty Fellowships and Seminars</u> . Aid for individual and group study projects by college teachers examining selected aspects of U.S. history and culture.	1,204	1,127	1,200
3. <u>Youthgrants</u> . Humanities projects designed and conducted by students and out-of-school youth on local, regional, and minority history.	154	110	150
4. <u>Special programs</u> . Planning and development of new programs relating to American themes and aimed at special populations.	<u>902</u>	<u>1,542</u> <sup>2/</sup>	<u>2,000</u> <sup>2/</sup>
Total-Other Activities	<u>5,019</u>	<u>2,779</u>	<u>3,350</u>
Grand Total	27,022	34,452	30,950

<sup>1/</sup> Based on FY 1976 appropriation request.

<sup>2/</sup> Funding in previous year sufficient to assure presentation/operation during Bicentennial period.