STATE AND REGIONAL EXEMPLARY AWARDS
DIVISION OF STATE PROGRAMS

I. Introduction

The Division of State Programs conducts an annual competition for state and regional exemplary awards. All state humanities councils are eligible to compete for these awards, which do not normally exceed $75,000. In addition to proposals from individual states, joint applications will be accepted from two or more councils that want to undertake a regional project. Funding for regional projects can be up to $170,000, depending upon the complexity of the project and the number of states involved. The purpose of this program is twofold: to enable councils to undertake worthy projects that they might otherwise be unable to fund, and to recognize projects of an outstanding and imaginative nature that are appropriate for the state and that further the goals of the state council. It is hoped that these projects may serve as models to other state councils, but it is recognized that the significance of the project for the particular state is of primary importance. The emphasis in this competition is on high-quality humanities projects rather than on administrative or program development activities. Councils may also apply for small planning grants in order to undertake the research and planning necessary for a major statewide or regional project. Planning grants can also be made for administrative efficiencies or for projects that study the possibilities of shared resources. Normally, planning grants should not exceed $15,000 for statewide projects or $25,000 for regional projects. The award of a planning grant does not necessarily indicate that a subsequent exemplary award application will be funded. An individual council may apply for a planning grant, a grant for a full-scale project, or as part of a regional program. Councils considering the submission of more than one proposal in a given year should discuss the applications with division staff in advance, and no council should plan to submit more than two applications a year. On occasion, a council may be offered a planning grant on the basis of the evaluators' view that a promising project needs further development before being considered for an exemplary award.

In the act that established the National Endowment for the Humanities, the term humanities includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following disciplines: history; philosophy; languages; linguistics; literature; archaeology; jurisprudence; the history, theory, and criticism of the arts; ethics; comparative religion; and those aspects of the social sciences that employ historical or philosophical approaches.

The following list gives examples of the types of projects that have been supported in this program:

-- an interpretive exhibition, a series of lectures, a reading and discussion series, and a conference on the concept of heroism in Western and non-Western cultures;
two traveling photographic exhibitions, one on the U.S. Constitution, and one on the exploration of the American West;

a series of twelve lecture, reading, and discussion programs that used landmark Supreme Court cases as the basis for public discussion;

an award made jointly to five councils that allowed them to plan and design cooperative regional programs for distribution by their resource centers;

a statewide series of seminars offered to teachers during the school year that examine significant texts in the humanities; and

a series of planning meetings held in order to develop a statewide program that will explore the question of how we know what we know about the past.

Applications are due at the Endowment on Friday of the first full week of October and will be presented to the National Council on the Humanities for consideration in February. State councils wanting to apply in this competition are invited to confer with division staff well in advance of the October deadline. The applications are reviewed by a panel representing both the general public and the scholarly community. Panelist evaluations will be based on the document submitted, not on the regular biennial proposal, interim progress report, or other documents that provide an assessment of the council's overall program. Outside specialized reviews may occasionally be sought to supplement panel assessments. A summary of the panel discussion and recommendations as well as a staff assessment will be presented to the National Council committee responsible for the review of state programs. The recommendation of that committee will be presented to the full Council for review and to the Chairman who, by law, makes the final funding decision. Awards will be made by April 1, and most project activities will be completed within two years. Each state council that receives an award will be required to submit a final narrative report on the accomplishments of the project. The report is due at the Endowment no later than ninety days after the termination of the project.

The Endowment is currently encouraging proposals for projects concerning the following topics:

**Foundations of American Society**

Within its existing programs, the Endowment continues to encourage study, research, and discussion about the history, culture, and principles of the American founding, an emphasis that began with the NEH initiative on the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution. Proposals may deal directly with the events and achievements of the founding, including the ratification of the new Constitution, the establishment of the federal government, and the works of philosophy, politics, literature, and art that were produced during this founding period. They may also treat later events, achievements, and works that have resulted or developed from the founding or that reflect or respond to its concerns and principles.
The Columbian Quincentenary

As part of the international observance of the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's voyage of discovery to the New World, NEH invites proposals for original scholarship on related topics and for the dissemination of both new and existing scholarship. Topics may include the expansion of European civilization through the efforts of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns and the establishment of new societies and new forms of cultural expression through encounters among native American, European, and African peoples. Proposals may also focus on the ideas—political, religious, philosophical, scientific, technological, and aesthetic—that shaped the processes of exploration, settlement, and cultural conflict and transformation set into motion by Columbus's momentous voyage.

II. Proposal Format

A. Abstract

Provide an abstract of no more than 150 words that describes the proposed project's activities. Please type the abstract in Section 9 on the NEH Application Cover Sheet (Description of Project).

B. Narrative

Applicants should refer to the criteria for review on page 6 in writing the narrative section of the proposal; panelists will be asked to consider these criteria in assessing the application.

I. Full-Scale Projects

1. Origin and Intellectual Need: Clearly describe the origin of the project idea, how the humanities are central to the project, and why this project has been identified as belonging to a promising program area, appropriate for the state or states involved. Disciplines of the humanities that are central to the project should be made explicit. Explain how the project relates to the overall program goals of the state council. Include an assessment of previous efforts and accomplishments in this area. If the proposal has developed out of another project, provide an assessment of the earlier project, including information about the humanities disciplines central to the project, the number and type of participants, the involvement of scholars in the project, what was learned from the past effort, and why the project is worthy of being proposed for an exemplary award.

2. Purpose and Audience: Explain what the project will accomplish and how it will advance understanding of the humanities for the participants as well as for other citizens of the state. It is expected that the project will have long-term effects and will be continued after exemplary award funding has ceased; please describe the mechanisms
envisioned for providing ongoing support. Identify the potential audience(s) for the project and provide a publicity plan for reaching that audience.

3. Activities, Work Plan, and Format: Describe the kinds of activities that will be central to the project and how they will be implemented. Include a timetable for project activities. If the project is one that covers more than one state, describe how it will be administered and how responsibilities will be allocated among the participating states. If the project includes regranting funds, outline the funding guidelines and the proposed regrant review process. Describe how the criteria that will be used for awarding regrants were developed, including any past council experience that helped to establish the criteria. If the council plans to issue a request for proposals, indicate how many and what types of proposals are expected to be received. If the project involves a conference, outline the qualifications of scholars and speakers; commitments from principal speakers should also be obtained. If the project involves an interpretive exhibition, the overarching themes should be explicated and details provided on how the materials to be used will be selected, displayed, and interpreted. Sample texts and information on the proposed exhibition design should also be included.

4. Project Personnel and Resources: Outline the key personnel involved, including humanities scholars and other resource personnel. Explain how their experience qualifies them for the project. Describe the material and human resources that qualify the council to undertake the project. If a council decides to submit more than one proposal, it must demonstrate that it has the available resources, in terms of personnel and supporting institutions, to make two projects feasible.

5. Evaluation: A plan for measuring the outcome of the project is required. Indicate both the mechanism and criteria by which the project will be evaluated. If an outside evaluator is to be hired, provide a description of the qualifications needed for the task and of exactly what that person will be required to do. Give an explicit outline of the questions to be asked and how they will be answered.

II. Planning Grants

1. Intellectual Substance and Origin of the Idea: As for full-scale projects, the central humanities themes and ideas must be clearly defined. The project to be planned should be related to the council's overall program.
2. Personnel: The application should be clear about who will be involved in planning the project and their qualifications. Commitments from humanities scholars and other resource persons who will serve on advisory committees or in such capacities as lecturers or exhibit designers should be included in the application. If firm commitments have not yet been obtained, the application should describe the qualifications and background individuals must have in order to be included in the planning project.

3. Work Plan: The activities of the planning phase should be described in detail, including, for example, preliminary agendas for planning meetings, contacts to be made with collaborating institutions, and how resources at collaborating institutions would be useful for the project. Applicants should describe the work that has taken place prior to the planning phase in order to establish the direction of the project. The intended results or accomplishments of the project's planning phase should also be clear.

C. Budget

Provide a detailed budget and narrative explaining the project costs. Be sure that costs for the project are justified in terms of the project's goals and activities. Because all NEH funds to state humanities councils must be matched with cost-sharing contributions, the council should indicate how this requirement will be met on these awards. Accounting records of expenditures on this project must be maintained for auditing purposes for at least three years.

II. General Facts about Preparing the Proposal

A. The Office of Management and Budget requires federal agencies to supply information on the time needed to complete forms and also invites comments on the paperwork burden. NEH estimates the average time to complete this application is 120 hours per response. This estimate includes the time for reviewing instructions; researching, gathering, and maintaining the information needed; and completing and reviewing the application. Please send any comments regarding the estimated completion time or any other aspect of this application, including suggestions for reducing the time to complete, to the Office of the Assistant Chairman for Administration, National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C. 20506; and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (3136-0114), Washington, D.C. 20503.

B. The proposal narrative must be limited to no more than twenty pages, although appropriate attachments may be submitted.
C. Fifteen copies of the application should be submitted to the Division of State Programs no later than Friday of the first full week of October.

IV. Criteria for Review

1. The project should be consistent with the established goals for the state council(s). It should have long-term benefits for the overall program of the council(s).

2. The project should be firmly rooted in one or more of the humanities disciplines. It should advance understanding of the humanities for the proposed audience. The humanities scholars, other resource persons, and intended audience should be clearly identified.

3. The proposal should include an adequate description of the duties and qualifications of key personnel who will be involved. Letters of commitment should be included.

4. If the project represents a new program area for the council, it should be clear that the resources and expertise necessary for its success are available to the council. If it is an outgrowth of something the council has tried before, an examination of the previous record should indicate future success. If the applicant proposes a planning grant, it should be evident that enough preliminary work has been done to indicate clearly the directions and goals of the project.

5. The project plan should be realistic and practicable. The application should provide a clear description of how the project will be implemented.

6. It should be clear that the overall cost is reasonable in relation to the project goals and the scope of activities.

7. The project should be exemplary, that is, outstanding, worthy of imitation or adaptation, and entirely appropriate for the state(s) involved.

Equal Opportunity

The Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 1110, implements provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and, along with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, provides that the National Endowment for the Humanities is responsible for ensuring compliance with and enforcement of public laws prohibiting discrimination because of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, and age in programs and activities receiving federal assistance from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility
receiving federal assistance from the Endowment should write immediately to the director, Office of Equal Opportunity, National Endowment for the Humanities, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506.

Note: If a proposed project relates to American Indians, Aleuts, Eskimos, or native Hawaiian people and artifacts, an applicant should obtain from the Endowment a copy of its Code of Ethics concerning native Americans. The code establishes certain standards of conduct in research, publication, and public programs involving native American peoples.

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