

University of Rhode Island

DigitalCommons@URI

Arts and Humanities: Senate Report (1976)

Education: National Endowment for the Arts
and Humanities, Subject Files II (1962-1996)

January 2017

Arts and Humanities: Senate Report (1976): Book Chapter 01

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_II_19

Recommended Citation

"Arts and Humanities: Senate Report (1976): Book Chapter 01" (2017). *Arts and Humanities: Senate Report (1976)*. Paper 67.

https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_II_19/67

This Book Chapter is brought to you by the University of Rhode Island. It has been accepted for inclusion in Arts and Humanities: Senate Report (1976) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons-group@uri.edu. For permission to reuse copyrighted content, contact the author directly.

state governors, and none of the existing state-based committees (who almost alone have working experience of this kind of public programming in the humanities) believe that the amendment would improve upon the current structure. In all that I have heard, no case has been made for replacement of the existing volunteer-committee system in conducting state humanities programs. Indeed, the overwhelming evidence is that the volunteer committees are politically non-partisan, fiscally responsible, a credit to the citizenry of their states, and a force for good in promoting the national commonweal.

THE IMPACT OF FEDERAL SUPPORT

I should like, here, to illustrate the cumulative impact Federal assistance can have in the humanities, based on actual grants.

The range of direct, immediate beneficiaries covers (for example) the junior college teacher who receives a summer stipend for individual study of American Indian culture; the several scholars who are preparing an historical atlas of the United States; a group of college faculty who are integrating ethical studies into their engineering and pre-med curricula; a team of scholars and editors designing "Courses By Newspaper" on critical public issues; and a museum exhibition or a television film program.

In all these cases, however, the immediate grantees have received NEH funds because their work will serve ultimately hundreds, even millions, of Americans; the junior college teacher's knowledge of American Indian culture will benefit hundreds of students during his or her teaching career; the historical atlas will be used by hundreds of other scholars and in thousands of classrooms and libraries, enriching education and the future acquisition of knowledge; the revised college curriculum will be emulated by other institutions and help train thousands of young people for professional work of broad effect among the general population; Courses By Newspaper will appear in hundreds of city newspapers and be read by millions; and the museum and television projects will be viewed by other millions in small towns as well as major urban areas.

In addition, the effects of one small grant can be spread out over different time periods and felt by ever larger numbers of people at each stage. Thus, for example, a Youthgrant of \$2,910 to an 18-year-old youth in Southern Nevada helped her organize a local history project which directly involved 35 4-H club members, resulting in four television presentations and an historical exhibit, at the Nevada State Fair, which helped thousands of people gain a greater understanding of the development of their state.

Given this mix of program purposes and immediate and long-term audiences, it is not possible to quantify for any year what a particular budget authority level produces in "number of individuals served." But facts and conservative estimates yield this picture of the reach of NEH programs in the present fiscal year. They will support the work of 180 individual humanist scholars, for research, fellowships, and youth-grants. They will fund educational development in 200 schools, colleges, and universities. They will assist 250 research collections, museums, libraries and other humanities-related institutions. They will support 2,250 projects developed in all 50 states through re-grants of the state-based programs, involving 12,400 humanists and reaching an adult audience of 21 million. And they will reach 23 million people through national and regional television and radio programs; 18 million through Courses By Newspaper; and a further multi-million audience—surely the largest audience ever engaged in a nation-wide program—through the American Issues Forum and Bicentennial Youth Debate.

These are not just statistics. Some are grant recipients pushing back the frontiers of scholarship, learning to become better teachers, or organizing and presenting humanistic knowledge for academic or general use. Many are active participants in community discourse addressed to life's difficult decisions; many more are seeking out those few hours or pages in which the media have begun to explore the ideas and works of history's great minds.

Another measure of the Endowment's stimulus is in gifts received from the private sector in support of grant activities. Last year such donations totalled nearly \$6 million. Since NEH began, over \$26 million in private gifts has been received—releasing an equal amount in Federal matching funds—in aid of humanities programs. (This is apart from the \$30 million in non-Federal funds generated by State-based projects, and from private contributions made directly to NEH grantee organizations.)