

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Fiscal Year 2009 Appropriation Request

SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

The Administration and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) request an appropriation totaling \$144.355 million for the agency for fiscal year 2009:

- \$20.000 million to support the agency's *We the People* program on American history and culture, including the new Picturing America initiative;
- \$2.000 million for the Endowment's Digital Humanities efforts;
- \$84.242 million for NEH's grant programs in support of high quality education, research, preservation and access, and public programming in the humanities; and the projects and programs of the 56 state humanities councils;
- \$7.082 million for the NEH Challenge Grants program to stimulate and match private, nonfederal donations in support of humanities institutions and organizations;
- \$5.031 million to stimulate and match nonfederal contributions to humanities projects supported by the Endowment; and
- \$26.000 million for administrative expenses necessary to operate the agency efficiently and effectively.

Since 1965, the National Endowment for the Humanities has worked to fulfill its mandate to preserve, promote, and disseminate the best of the humanities in America. NEH was founded in the belief that cultivating the best scholarship, education, and public programming in the humanities has real, tangible benefits for all Americans. Identifying excellence in the humanities enables and furthers the study and understanding of human history and culture, thereby enriching the lives of all Americans and better equipping them to participate fully as citizens in our democracy.

We the People

Funds requested for FY 2009 would support an expansion of NEH's path-breaking *We the People* program, including support for our new special initiative, Picturing America, which will bring images of iconic pieces of American art into the nation's classrooms and libraries to help teach American history.

We the People is a comprehensive strategy that is designed to encourage and enhance the teaching, study, and understanding of American history and culture. The

program consists of special activities NEH sponsors directly, as well as support for research, education, preservation and access, and public audience projects through the Endowment's grant-making programs.

A sampling of the impressive record of accomplishments of *We the People* over its first five years includes:

- More than 1,380 grants have been awarded through NEH's grant programs. From museum exhibitions to Emmy-award winning television programs to summertime workshops for teachers, these grants are helping to improve Americans' knowledge and understanding of their nation's history and culture.
- Nearly 8,000 K-12 teachers and community college faculty have attended NEH-sponsored Landmarks of American History and Culture workshops at historical sites across the nation. We estimate that these teachers have shared their new knowledge with nearly one million students.
- NEH's National Digital Newspaper Program has begun transferring historically important United States newspapers onto a fully searchable database available on the Internet. Developed in partnership with the Library of Congress, this project ultimately will make millions of pages of newspapers accessible online to students, teachers, parents, scholars, and historians. A prototype of the first 250,000 pages is now available on the Library of Congress's "Chronicling America" website. Hundreds of thousands of additional pages will be added in the coming year.
- In partnership with the American Library Association, the Endowment annually has provided sets of classic works of history and literature to thousands of public and school libraries as part of the *We the People Bookshelf* program. These books convey important themes from American history and culture to an audience of young readers. Since the program began in 2004, more than 6,000 sets of books have been distributed to libraries in every state of the nation.
- Through the NEH Federal/State Partnership, all 56 state humanities councils have conducted major *We the People* programs, reaching millions of citizens from the Manhattan to the Northern Marianas Islands.

Since the Endowment launched this innovative program more than five years ago, it has received broad support from teachers, humanities scholars, civic leaders, and the American people. We are especially proud that President Bush has publicly endorsed *We the People* and has requested substantial funding from Congress each year.

We are pleased that Congress also has enthusiastically endorsed and provided critical support for *We the People*. In FY 2004, the Endowment was appropriated new

funds of \$9.876 million to begin the program. In recognition of *We the People's* initial accomplishments, funding was increased to \$11.217 million for FY 2005 and \$15.239 million for FY 2006 and FY 2007. Congress continued this budget level for FY 2008 (which was subsequently reduced by an across-the-board rescission of 1.56 percent under P.L. 110-161). These funds have helped NEH put many new programs and grant opportunities in place and to support significant projects in American history and culture for the American people.

The agency's budget request for FY 2009 continues the Endowment's strong commitment to *We the People*. The request would support full implementation of the new Picturing America special initiative, as well as fund Landmarks of American History and Culture workshops for teachers, the digitization of hundred of thousands of pages of U.S. newspapers, *We the People* activities of the state humanities councils, and hundreds of other projects supported through the agency's grant programs. In FY 2009, *We the People* also will encourage and support projects relating to the 2009 bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth and the upcoming sesquicentennial of the American Civil War.

Additional Budget Highlights

NEH also requests funding for FY 2009 that would enable the agency's other national programs to continue supporting high quality projects across all fields and disciplines of the humanities. These time-tested and cost-effective programs advance scholarship, education, preservation and access, and public understanding in the humanities throughout the United States. A brief overview of the Endowment's strategic objectives and plans for FY 2009 follows. These objectives and plans are discussed in more detail in the individual division and program sections of this budget submission.

- Digital Humanities: In 2006, the Endowment launched a major effort to encourage and support projects that utilize or study the impact of digital technology on research, education, preservation and access, and public programming in the humanities. Through our new Digital Humanities grants, NEH is fostering the growth of a wide variety of digital humanities projects including, for example, those that deploy technologies and methods to enhance our understanding of a topic or issue in the humanities; those that study the impact of digital technology on the humanities—exploring the ways technology changes how we read, write, think, and learn; and those that digitize important materials, thereby increasing the public's ability to search and access humanities information.

Our request for FY 2009 will enable the Endowment to build on Digital Humanities' impressive accomplishments in its first year. In FY 2007, for example, NEH made 33 awards for projects that are now exploring innovative approaches to studying and disseminating the humanities. More than half of these grantees had never received NEH grants, which suggests that the agency has tapped an important unmet need in the humanities. We also established several new grant categories that are now encouraging scholars, teachers, and

other humanities practitioners to develop digital projects. In 2007, we also sponsored two conferences that brought together experts to discuss new approaches to and key issues in digital humanities.

- Maintain and strengthen the programs and activities of the state humanities councils: NEH's work in FY 2009 will be complemented and extended by the local programming of the 56 state humanities councils. The councils also are essential partners in the agency's *We the People* program. With their strong networks of cultural and educational institutions, these organizations are well positioned to ensure that the program reaches every state and territory. Since *We the People* received its first appropriation in FY 2004, the Endowment has annually provided the state humanities councils with major funding to support projects and activities related to American history and culture. Significant funding for these projects will again be provided at the Endowment's FY 2009 request level. In FY 2009, the state councils can be expected to play a critical role in expanding the reach of the agency's Picturing America initiative.
- Strengthen humanities teaching and learning in the nation's schools and colleges: The FY 2009 request will enable NEH to continue to be a critical resource for projects to improve the quality of humanities instruction at all levels of the nation's educational system. Projects support teacher and faculty development and curricular resources that are based on rigorous humanities scholarship. The ultimate beneficiaries of these projects are the hundreds of thousands of American students who annually are taught by teachers who have attended NEH-sponsored enrichment programs.

Support for projects for humanities teachers will continue to be a critical feature of the agency's *We the People* efforts, especially those that relate to the Picturing America special initiative. Funding would also be provided to maintain the Endowment's acclaimed programs of Summer Seminars and Institutes for school, college, and university teachers, as well the outreach program of Humanities Initiatives for Faculty at Historically Black, Hispanic Serving, and Tribal Colleges and Universities. In FY 2009, as part of the new Digital Humanities effort, the Endowment will support digital workshops for the nation's elementary and secondary school teachers.

- Facilitate basic research and original scholarship in the humanities: The FY 2009 budget request will allow NEH to continue its role as the nation's largest single source of support for advanced research and scholarship in the humanities. The Endowment annually makes hundreds of awards to individual scholars, as well as to teams of scholars engaged in collaborative projects, to explore subjects that enrich our knowledge of the people, ideas, and events that make up the record of civilization. By supporting humanities research and scholarship, the Endowment also contributes to faculty enrichment, improved teaching, and quality public programming throughout the nation.

In FY 2009, the Endowment will continue to be a major funder of comprehensive, annotated editions of the papers and writings of important historical and cultural figures and texts that document critical events in history. Many of these projects present the most important political, philosophical, and literary ideas and works in the American intellectual tradition, as well as important documentary materials bearing on the American experience. As part of our collaboration with the National Science Foundation on the Documenting Endangered Languages initiative, the Endowment also will continue to support fellowships and collaborative research projects that seek to document languages that are in danger of perishing.

In FY 2009, NEH will introduce a new program of NEH Fellowships at Digital Humanities Centers, which will provide residencies for scholars at centers that specialize in the use of technology to advance humanistic understanding.

- Preserve and increase access to cultural and intellectual resources essential for the American people: In FY 2009, the agency's programs in this area will continue to focus on preserving and reformatting the intellectual content of historically significant books and periodicals; preserving and providing access to important archival materials and library special collections; creating humanities research tools and reference works such as dictionaries, bibliographies, and encyclopedias; offering preservation education and training opportunities; and providing grants to smaller institutions to support their special preservation and training needs. Funds also would be available to support a fourth round of grants in the National Digital Newspaper Program, a *We the People* program that is converting microfilmed U.S. newspapers into digital files and mounting them on a national, web-accessible database.

Support also will be provided in FY 2009 for humanities projects awarded under NEH's partnership with the National Science Foundation on Documenting Endangered Languages. This effort provides funds for projects that are recording, documenting, and archiving information relating to the estimated 3,000 current spoken languages that are on the verge of extinction.

With the advent in recent years of digital technology and the Internet as tools for preserving and accessing important humanities resources, grant applications for projects to microfilm brittle books, newspapers, and other humanities materials have declined steadily, and the Endowment has reduced its support for such projects. In addition, one of NEH's long-standing preservation microfilming programs—the United States Newspaper Program (USNP)—came to a successful conclusion in 2007. Begun in 1982, this program awarded grants to organizations and institutions in all 50 states, the

Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia to locate and catalog more than 140,000 unique newspaper titles published in America since 1690 and to microfilm more than 70 million pages that otherwise would have been lost to future generations. The decline in microfilming applications and the completion of the USNP program have afforded the Endowment an opportunity to reassess its preservation and access grant categories. The FY 2009 budget for NEH's Division of Preservation and Access has been adjusted accordingly.

- Provide opportunities for Americans to engage in lifelong learning in the humanities: In FY 2009, the Endowment will provide support for projects—such as television and radio documentaries, museum exhibitions, and reading and discussion programs in libraries—that help the nation's citizens engage in a lifetime of learning in the humanities. NEH's public programs support activities that help millions of Americans learn more about important works, ideas, and events. These programs contribute to the agency's broad strategic goals of advancing knowledge and understanding of the humanities in the U.S. and increasing public awareness of, access to, and support for the humanities.

The Endowment recently established a new program of special grants for major traveling exhibitions for museums that will reach large numbers of Americans with high quality humanities programming. Such projects also will be widely accessible through companion websites or other creative digital components.

In FY 2009, the Endowment's programs for general audiences also will continue to play important roles as part of the *We the People* program. In particular, projects keyed to Picturing America themes will be encouraged and supported. The Endowment also will support projects related to the 2009 bicentennial of the birth of Abraham Lincoln. In addition, the agency will encourage planning projects for public audiences in anticipation of the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, which will be observed between 2011 and 2015.

- Strengthen the institutional base of the humanities: The NEH Challenge Grants program in FY 2009 will continue to assist nonprofit institutions in developing new sources of long-term support for their humanities programs. Challenge grants, which require \$3 or \$4 in gifts for every NEH dollar awarded to a humanities institution, are recognized for their success in encouraging private giving to the humanities.

In FY 2009, the Endowment will be placing a lower priority on endowment-building Challenge Grants. Such projects tend to consume a significant amount of federal resources in their first few years while returning only modest benefits as the endowment accumulates earnings. We also will make a

special effort to encourage applicants to seek support for projects related to current NEH priorities, such as *We the People*, Picturing America, and the Digital Humanities. As we expect the refocused program to make fewer and smaller awards, the FY 2009 budget for Challenge Grants has been reduced accordingly.

- Leverage third-party contributions to humanities projects: For FY 2009, NEH requests funding for its Treasury funds account to match nonfederal contributions to individual projects in the humanities. Encouraging private-sector support for cultural activities is an important goal of the agency. NEH Treasury matching grants, which match nonfederal donations on a one-to-one basis, have proven to be an effective mechanism for leveraging the contributions of businesses, foundations, and individuals on behalf of the humanities. At the FY 2009 request level, Treasury funds totaling \$5.031 million would leverage an equal amount in nonfederal contributions to humanities projects.
- Fostering international programs and activities in the humanities: The National Endowment for the Humanities has always promoted the study of other cultures and will continue to do so in FY 2009. NEH projects on the history and culture of other countries have resulted in scholarly works and reference materials on a vast array of topics, contributed to the preparation of teachers at all levels, and brought the world to America's communities through museums, media, and other public programs. Such projects typically receive about \$2 of funding for every \$3 NEH spends on projects devoted to the study of American history and culture. The Endowment is currently exploring other avenues for enhancing its support for projects that will help Americans develop a broader understanding of other cultures.

NEH is also an active participant in the State Department's *Global Cultural Initiative*, a major public-private initiative launched in 2006 to coordinate, enhance, and expand America's cultural diplomacy efforts worldwide. As part of *We the People*, for example, the Endowment will continue to work with the State Department to bring foreign teachers and administrators to the U.S. to participate in selected NEH-supported Landmarks of American History and Culture workshops. This new partnership will further promote understanding of the United States and its democratic principles.

The Chairman of NEH is an active member of the U.S. National Commission on UNESCO and, at the request of the State Department, has been a member of the U.S. delegation to UNESCO meetings and Organization of American States cultural ministerial meetings. Important international issues related to the humanities are discussed at UNESCO and OAS meetings.

The Endowment recently has embarked on a number of other international collaborations to encourage global engagement in the humanities. This

activity is in keeping with the statutory charge in our enabling legislation to “foster international programs and exchanges.” In October 2007, for example, NEH and the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (National Research Council, or “CNR”) of Italy signed a memorandum of understanding that aims to encourage scholarly collaboration in the humanities. NEH and CNR began their collaboration by jointly sponsoring a conference, “Using New Technologies to Explore Cultural Heritage,” hosted at NEH headquarters. The conference brought together American and Italian scholars and technology experts to discuss the use of digital tools to preserve and study cultural heritage.

NEH also has forged a cooperative program with the United Kingdom’s Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) to support joint digitization projects in the humanities. Grants under this unique partnership will be awarded in FY 2008. Discussions are underway with representatives of the governments of China, Germany, Japan, and Mexico about other collaborative efforts.

NEH Chairman Bruce Cole, together with senior leaders of other federal cultural agencies, traveled to the People’s Republic of China—at the host country’s invitation—as part of the first such U.S. cultural delegation. NEH also recently participated in three bi-national meetings intended to strengthen cultural exchange with Mexico. The meetings have resulted in collaborative program efforts between state humanities councils on each side of the U.S.-Mexico border.

- Provide administrative funds to operate the agency effectively and efficiently: The NEH budget request includes funds needed to support the cost of operating the agency at the FY 2009 request level while maintaining a high level of customer service. Funds requested would support personnel compensation and benefits; building rent and security; the agency's grant application review system; and NEH’s participation in the government-wide Grants.gov program and other E-Gov initiatives.

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Summary of FY 2009 Budget Request
(in thousands of dollars)

| <u>Division/Program</u> | <u>Request</u> |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| We the People | 20,000 |
| Digital Humanities Initiative | 2,000 |
| Federal/State Partnership | 31,712 |
| Education Programs | 12,601 |
| Preservation and Access | 13,861 |
| Public Programs | 12,709 |
| Research Programs | 13,003 |
| <u>Program Development</u> | <u>356</u> |
| Subtotal | 106,242 |
| Challenge Grants | 7,082 |
| <u>Treasury Funds</u> | <u>5,031</u> |
| Subtotal | 12,113 |
| <u>Administration</u> | <u>26,000</u> |
| TOTAL | \$144,355 |