NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

DIVISION OF **PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

AMERICA'S MEDIA MAKERS: DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION GRANTS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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1. Humanities content and advisers

What are the humanities?

According to the 1965 National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, "The term 'humanities' includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life."

What are "humanities themes"?

A theme is a brief interpretive assertion about a topic that shows the educational direction that a project will take. More than a topic, a theme considers the relevant humanities scholarship and offers a broad conceptual framework for understanding material. For example, "Women in the Civil War" is a topic. It describes a subject but does not reveal what the interpretive approach to it would be. One the other hand, "Women played important economic roles during the Civil War" is a theme. It identifies a topic and also suggests what audiences might learn about it.

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What is a humanities scholar?

Someone who has an advanced degree in a discipline of the humanities is generally considered a scholar. Scholars can provide context for a project and identify relevant humanities themes and ideas.

When should I start consulting with scholars about a project?

As a general rule, the earlier scholars are involved in a project, the better. Projects recommended for funding are usually ones in which scholars have helped shape the project's conceptual framework.

Is it okay to rely on a single scholar for a project?

Projects that depend on input from a single scholar are not competitive. Working with a number of scholars allows projects to explore a diverse range of interpretive possibilities.

How do I find the right scholarly advisers for a project?

There are many ways to find scholars for your project. Check with your local college or university to see if any faculty members have relevant expertise or could suggest the names of other scholars. You can also peruse bookstores (either real or online), libraries, and Web resources to see who has published on topics related to your project. State humanities councils often maintain lists of scholars who have participated in public programs. You can also contact professional associations or consult published directories of scholars. Finally, ask for samples of funded projects to see what kinds of scholars have participated in other projects.

How much should I pay scholarly advisers?

There is no set fee for scholars and other professionals working on your project. Some projects pay scholars a flat honorarium, others pay a daily rate. Discuss your project with the scholars, including the work that you expect from them, and negotiate a fair rate.

2. **General information on media grants**

What advice do you have for media producers in putting forth a strong application?

The project itself must fall within the fields of the humanities and accord with the purpose and goals of NEH. NEH does not give general support for media programs but seeks to fund those programs that will best bring the issues and approaches of the humanities, and humanities research, to broad public audiences.

It is helpful to review samples of successful applications. These samples will give you models that can help you compose your application. Sample narratives from successful applications are available on the program resource pages of the Development Grants and Production Grants programs. You can request additional samples by sending an e-mail message to publicpgms@neh.gov.

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A list of recent awards made by America's Media Makers: Development Grants can be found here. A list of recent awards made by America's Media Makers: Production Grants can be found here. These lists can give you an idea of the types of projects that are eligible for NEH support.

What is the most common mistake applicants make?

Applicants, especially first-time applicants, often fail to provide as much information as evaluators expect. Applicants must discuss the project in considerable detail, articulating clearly their concept for the project and the humanities issues that the project reflects, even when the proposal is for a development grant. Media producers should have done considerable research on the subject and consulted with scholars about their ideas; they should also explain the scholars' contributions in the proposal.

What advice do you give media producers who have less experience but have worthy humanities projects?

Less experienced applicants frequently find it advantageous to form a partnership with a more seasoned media team.

If I am an individual producer unaffiliated with a nonprofit organization, may I still receive an America's Media Makers grant?

No. America's Media Makers grants are awarded only to U.S. nonprofit, IRS tax-exempt organizations, state and local governmental agencies, and federally recognized Indian tribal governments. But many cultural organizations, media arts centers, public radio stations, public television stations, and universities serve as sponsors of the projects of independent producers and may be willing to sponsor your project. Independent producers who wish to apply for NEH funding must have obtained sponsorship by an eligible organization before submitting an application. Please contact a program officer for a list of recent grantees, which includes examples of nonprofit organizations that were awarded grants. For further information on the specific responsibilities of sponsorship organizations, please see Requirements for Grant Recipients that Serve as Sponsors of Projects.

What distinguishes a production grant application from a development grant application?

More research should have been completed for a production grant application, and the project should be described in greater detail in the application. These applications should convey a solid command of the relevant humanities scholarship, the program's narrative elements, and the visual approach. All production proposals require a detailed program description for a radio project, a script for a television project, or a design document and prototype for a digital media project. Development applications do not need to be worked out to the same extent; nevertheless, they need to describe the intellectual themes, storyline, and audio or visual approach in enough detail so that the evaluators can see the merits of the project.

Will this grant fund resources for students and teachers?

Projects should be geared mainly for public audiences, and the project budget and activities should reflect this focus on producing programs for general public audiences. However, a

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project can include resources that help students and teachers explore the humanities content and themes central to the project. Such resources might include brief audio or video clips, hands-on activities, lesson plans, interactive games, scholarly essays, maps, and/or timelines.

3. Submitting an application

Must I submit my application through Grants.gov?

Yes.

May the same project director or producer submit an application for two different projects at the same time?

Yes. In each application clearly explain how you would allocate your time if you were awarded more than one grant.

May the same project director apply for funds two years in a row?

Yes. Applicants may even revise and resubmit a proposal that was not recommended for funding. All applicants may request the evaluators' assessments of their proposal. This information is useful as you continue working on the project and decide whether to resubmit.

When I apply through Grants.gov, how should I submit my sample and (if necessary) prototype?

Please refer to the instructions in the guidelines under "How to Submit Samples" (or, if you are applying for a Production grant, "How to Submit Samples and Prototypes") in Section IV, "Application and Submission Information."

How do the application deadlines work? Are they receipt or postmark?

All deadlines are receipt deadlines. ALL supporting materials must arrive at NEH or be entered into Grants.gov by these dates.

4. Budget and grant funds

If I receive NEH funding, may I also accept funding from other sources?

Yes. We encourage applicants to approach a range of funders, as it is unlikely that NEH can support the full costs of a single program or series of programs.

Do I need to have already raised money from other sources in order to be competitive for an NEH grant?

No. But NEH policy requires that commitments for full funding for the project from all sources must be in place prior to the start of production and the release of grant funds.

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5. Distribution

What expectations does NEH have for the distribution of a project?

NEH-funded projects should be offered for broad distribution to the widest possible audience. Although NEH does not require applicants to have a commitment for distribution when they apply, a letter of interest from a broadcaster or other distribution partner may enhance an application. Furthermore, as a taxpayer-supported federal agency, NEH endeavors to make the products of its awards available to the broadest possible audience. Our goal is for scholars, educators, students, and the American public to have ready and easy access to the wide range of NEH award products. All other considerations being equal, NEH gives preference to those projects that provide free access to the public.