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ABSTRACT

Designed to provide an overview of programs offered by state humanities councils, this publication is divided into seven sections. An introduction defines the humanities and outlines the Division of State Programs within the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). A section entitled "The State Humanities Councils" presents the history, purpose, funding, and council members' responsibilities in the state councils. In the next two sections, the services provided by the Division of State Programs of NEH and the rationale, criteria, and process of review of state programs by NEH are discussed. A section entitled "Special Awards and Opportunities" describes merit awards, council-conducted projects, exemplary projects in the humanities, and the National Federation of State Humanities Councils. Concluding sections list the staff of the NEH Division of State Programs, give important dates in the Division of State Programs, provide a directory of state humanities councils, and list other NEH programs. (LP)

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INTRODUCTION

The National Endowment for the Humanities supports work in the humanities through programs administered by five divisions—Education Programs, Fellowships and Seminars, General Programs, Research Programs, and State Programs—and two offices—the Office of Challenge Grants and the Office of Preservation.

The purpose of this introductory brochure is to describe the work of the Division of State Programs and the state humanities councils.

The Humanities

Under the legislation establishing the National Endowment for the Humanities, the term *humanities* includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following disciplines:

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 the 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 the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life.

Of these fields, the disciplines of history, philosophy, literature, and languages are central, for learning in them is basic to the activity of other disciplines. But beyond certain areas of knowledge, the term *humanities* also involves processes such as careful reading and critical thinking, whereby these areas are analyzed, understood, and preserved.

[The humanities] are [society's] efforts to place itself in the sequence of history, to examine its ideas and ideals, to study its language and its forms of behavior, to come to a critical assessment of the myths, symbols, stories, rules by which it gives shape and direction to its life.

Charles Frankel

The state programs were established on the assumption that the study of the humanities contributes to the ability to make reasoned decisions and that there are benefits to individuals, to scholarship, and to society when citizens who are beyond the years of their formal schooling and scholars with knowledge and training in the humanities join together in serious study and interpretation of the acts, works, and artifacts of human culture.

THE STATE HUMANITIES COUNCILS

History

In 1965 Congress enacted the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, establishing the National Endowment for the Humanities as an independent grant-making agency of the federal government to support scholarship, education, and public programs in the humanities. The Endowment established the first six state humanities councils in 1971. The central purpose of state councils, like that of the Endowment, is to support the humanities. State humanities councils now operate in each of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Grants from the Endowment are made to the state humanities council, which then regrants the funds for projects in the humanities to organizations and groups through a competitive review process.

From the beginning, the state councils have relied on American volunteerism. By engaging citizens who are united through a common sense of purpose and interest in the humanities to serve on state humanities councils, the Endowment believes that the program can be an effective means of providing significant humanities programs for a general audience.

Purpose

Since 1976, state humanities councils have been authorized to support any type of project that is eligible for support from the Endowment, including educational and research projects and conferences. The special emphasis in state programs, however, is to make focused and coherent humanities education possible in places and by methods that are appropriate to adults. Within broad guidelines established by statute, each council develops its own guidelines, determines the emphasis of its own program, and selects its own members.

State council projects focus on a wide variety of topics, themes, and disciplines. These projects typically have the following elements in common:

The content of the project is centered in one or more of the humanities disciplines cited in the Endowment's authorizing legislation.

Each project is focused on a topic, idea, or text, which is analyzed and discussed using the methodology of the humanities.

The methods of the humanities—critical thinking and interpretation—are evident throughout the program. Scholars are actively involved in the project, drawing upon their analytical, interpretative, and pedagogical skills.

Scholars and the general public are involved in disciplined dialogue of benefit to both.

State councils have supported humanities projects in a wide variety of settings: museums, libraries, and college campuses; city parks and community centers; Indian reservations; traveling Chautauqua-style tents; and church and grange halls. The projects frequently involve bringing together institutions in the state that have never joined forces before in cooperative programming efforts. As state councils by law may support no more than half the cost of projects, every federal dollar provided by state councils is matched by local contributions of cash, goods, and services. Each year more than 1,100 private citizens volunteer as members of state humanities councils. The councils support more than 4,000 humanities projects annually, reaching some 2 million citizens.

Funding for State Humanities Councils

The Compliance Plan

To be eligible for funding, each council annually submits, for approval by the NEH chairman, a plan that indicates compliance with the terms of the enabling legislation. Although only one council may be supported by the NEH in any state, the opportunity to constitute a state council and to petition the Endowment for recognition through filing a compliance plan is a right available to any group of citizens in any state. State governments have the option of matching a portion of the federal funds and designating the existing council as a state agency or appointing up to four members to the existing council.

To be eligible to submit an application for federal funds, each council must first submit to the Endowment for approval thirty days before the start of the fiscal year a plan showing that the council has taken certain measures to ensure its accountability to the citizens of the state. This requirement, instituted by Congress in 1976 and amended in 1980, deals with such matters as the composition and rotation of council membership and officers and the provision of information to the public, state government officials, and the Endowment. The Endowment is responsible for interpreting this legislation and developing the specific means for compliance. The compliance plan requires councils to assure broad public representation in the membership of the council, provide for a rotation of members and officers on the council, prepare an annual report by the council to the governor, outline a public information plan, and provide for the appointment of four council members by the governor.

The Biennial Proposal

Every other year, each state council submits a proposal to the Endowment in which it assesses its work during the past two years and sets forth its plan for the upcoming two-year period. Through this proposal, the council applies for federal funds. The proposal is also a major planning and management tool for a state council because its preparation provides an opportunity for the council to assess its entire program and prepare a blueprint for the upcoming period.

In its application, the state council also analyzes the role of the humanities council within the state, assesses its work during the previous two years, and describes its goals for the next two-year period. Programs that are judged in the peer review process to be of unusually high quality are eligible for additional funds, based on merit.

Through the biennial proposal, the council also presents an analysis of the state in terms of the role of the council, an assessment of funded projects and the overall operation of the council within the state in the past two years, a description of what it expects to achieve during the ensuing two years (including how these plans fit into its long-range goals), and a budget for the coming period. The council may also propose to use a portion of its regrant funds to conduct a project of its own design; this council-conducted project is also described and justified in the proposal.

Roughly half of the state councils submit full proposals each year. In the year in which the council does not prepare a proposal, it submits an interim progress report in which it demonstrates the extent to which the program is being conducted according to plans set forth the previous year.

Since 1983, state councils have been able to use a small portion of their funds to conduct projects of their own design, provided that the projects are presented in the council's funding proposal or interim report and approved in the review process.

Councils are also eligible to compete for an award for Exemplary Projects in the Humanities, a program initiated in 1982. Both these opportunities make it possible for councils to take a more active role in the intellectual life of their states and to produce humanities projects that may serve as models for others.

Funding Formula

The legislation authorizing the Endowment indicates that not less than 20 percent of the appropriation of program funds for any fiscal year shall be for the state councils and establishes a formula for the allocation of the funds:

- Each eligible state council is first allocated \$200,000 of the amount appropriated for state programs (if sufficient funds are available; otherwise, funds are equally divided among all states).
- Of the funds remaining after these allotments have been made, 44 percent is divided equally among the states; 22 percent is awarded on the basis of state population; and the remaining 34 percent of the excess is awarded at the discretion of the chairman of the Endowment. A portion of the funds is used to provide services for the program nationwide as well as for Exemplary Projects in the Humanities and for special commendation awards in the states.

Cost Sharing

Each state council is required to share the costs of its Endowment grant—both program and administrative funds. This kind of matching is called cost sharing (not to be confused with Treasury matching funds, described on page 8.)

Cost sharing may not include funds from either of the Endowments. It may include not only cash but also services and materials supplied by regrantees and other supporters of the council. In order to meet the cost-sharing requirement, the state council usually provides only one half of the cost of projects supported by regrants; the other half is typically provided by the organization receiving the regrant.

Cost sharing may take many forms in addition to cash, from poster board given by a local store to the time a scholar spends preparing a presentation. In all cases, however, these in-kind donations must be documented by the grantees. It is a statutory requirement that for every dollar in outright funds provided (that is, those not contingent upon the grantee's raising third-party gifts to be matched with Endowment funds) by the Endowment, an equal amount of cash or in-kind cost-sharing contributions must be used to support budgeted project activities during the grant period. The council may exercise its discretion in waiving or lowering cost share for some grantees as long as total cost-sharing requirements for the council's grant from the Endowment are met.

The cost-sharing provision ensures that local support, in a tangible form, undergirds state council-funded projects. In this way, the state programs encourage diversified funding for activities in the humanities nationwide.

Treasury Matching Funds

In addition to outright funds, a council may request in its biennial proposal support from the Endowment in the form of Treasury matching funds. These are funds that are released to a council when it raises gifts in support of its general operating expenses or in aid of specific projects. Only gifts of money, including the net proceeds from the sale of noncash gifts, that are donated by non-federal third parties are eligible to release Treasury matching funds. In submitting a request for Treasury funds, a council must

describe in the proposal its fund-raising plan as well as its projected use of the funds.

Treasury matching funds are designed to stimulate increased private funding for the humanities. The gifts-and-matching provision has encouraged active and imaginative fund-raising efforts by many councils.

Council Members' Responsibilities

The Endowment grant is made to the members of the state humanities council, who are charged with the responsibility for bringing high quality humanities programs to the citizens of their state. To accomplish this purpose, the full council establishes the program policies. It sets program goals and objectives and, along with the council staff, develops plans to reach them. The council members are responsible for preparing the biennial proposal describing the program policies and objectives and for seeing that the program is carried out in accordance with that proposal.

One of the most important functions of the council is to judge proposals from organizations within the state, evaluate the humanities content and the quality of those proposals, and award grants. It must also establish the council budget, decide whether and how to seek outside contributions, and determine the council's approach to program evaluation. Most councils have set up committees to deal with these matters and make recommendations to the full council, which then directs the staff to carry out its decisions.

Unlike some boards, the state humanities council is not an advisory body. The council is a decision-making body, responsible for the overall stewardship of the program. Council members must attend meetings of the full council and meetings of any committees on which they serve. They must read grant proposals thoroughly and thoughtfully and participate in discussions of these proposals,

being sure that funding decisions further the goals of the council and meet its application guidelines. A full understanding of the work of the council requires attending council-funded grant projects when possible in order to see the results of policies and guidelines that the council has adopted and to get a sense of what constitutes a sound and successful humanities project.

Council members should be intimately involved in all aspects of a state humanities program, including assessing the council's review procedures to be sure that they are consistent and fair, overseeing the preparation of the proposal and the interim progress report to the Endowment in alternate years, setting up networks with other intellectual and cultural institutions in the state, carrying on outreach and public relations activities, making sure that the intended audience for programs is varied, reviewing personnel policies and hiring and directing staff, recruiting and orienting new council members, and evaluating the overall program. Council members must also be informed of the council's governing structures and bylaws and must ensure that the bylaws continue to contain adequate guiding principles for the governance of the council.

Responsibilities of the Council Chairperson

The primary duties of this office include presiding at meetings of the full council and usually the executive committee, working closely with the staff and the council in formulating long-range goals and preparing the proposal to NEH, and maintaining contact with the staff of the council and with the staff of the Division of State Programs in order to assist the council in reaching the goals set forth in its proposal. The chairperson also frequently represents the council at regional and national meetings. The chairperson is elected to a one- or two-year term.

Staff Responsibilities

Each council is assisted by a small staff that works closely with the members and that is responsible for implementing policy and developing recommendations to the council for future policy changes. The staff is headed by an executive director, whose duties usually include managing the council's day-to-day activities; conducting conferences and workshops; handling correspondence; assisting organizations wishing to submit proposals; overseeing regrants made by the council; coordinating the writing of biennial proposals and interim progress reports; planning council meetings; assisting in orienting new council members to the goals and principles guiding the council's work; directing fund-raising activities; maintaining contact with the Division of State Programs at NEH; and providing leadership in developing special programs, projects, and evaluation plans. Additional staff members may be involved in any of the above activities or may have such specific duties as conducting workshops or developing evaluation strategies. It is the responsibility of the staff to keep the council informed of the progress of the council's work and to represent the council to the general public and academic community.

Procedures Manual

Each council staff and chair has a copy of the Division of State Programs' *Procedures Manual*, which is periodically updated to include information and sample documents about the council's legal, financial, technical, and programmatic responsibilities. The manual includes, for example, the authorizing legislation, the NEH compliance plan requirements, copies of the NEH-paid liability insurance policies for state council members, and grant regulations from the Office of Management and Budget.

THE DIVISION OF STATE PROGRAMS

The Division of State Programs oversees the work of state councils. This responsibility is carried out primarily through three activities: (1) the biennial review of proposals from state councils for funding by the Endowment and the review of interim progress reports in alternate years, (2) the annual review of compliance plans from each state, and (3) visits by program officers to the states.

NEH Program Officer Responsibilities

Within the Division of State Programs, each state is assigned to a program officer for a fixed period of time. The primary responsibilities of program officers with respect to the states assigned to them are to oversee the work of the councils according to the mandate from Congress, to assist the councils in reaching the goals outlined in their biennial proposals, and to keep the councils informed of programmatic and procedural activities at the national level. In order to fulfill those responsibilities, the program officer attends major state council meetings or regrant projects; reviews draft proposals to NEH; prepares post-review letters for the councils; reviews and comments on each council's guidelines, application forms, and compliance plans; organizes orientation meetings at NEH for new executive directors; and recruits reviewers and panelists to evaluate applications from the state councils. Program officers also contribute to such activities as the orientation conferences for new council members and the meeting of council chairpersons, and they represent the work of the state programs and the Endowment to general audiences.

Services Provided by the Division of State Programs

Regional Orientation Conferences

Conducted each year by the Endowment in several locations

around the country, regional orientation conferences help new state council members understand the work of the state councils and NEH and orient them to their responsibilities as council members.

Ad Hoc Meetings

During the year, the division convenes at least one meeting of all state council chairpersons. In addition, small groups of state council members and staff may meet to address matters of common concern as they arise.

Special Publications

The division prepares publications from time to time on specific areas of the work of state councils.

Orientation of New Executive Directors and Chairs

Visits to Washington, D.C., early in their tenure allow executive directors and, whenever possible, chairs to meet with Endowment staff in all divisions of the agency and to receive orientation to their duties and responsibilities.

Computerized Information Assistance

The Endowment's computer system contains information on state council regrant applications and awards. A program has been developed to supply the councils with their annual catalogue of projects and statistical profile for each state, as well as other reports dealing with state council activities.

THE REVIEW PROCESS

A state council's proposal is subject to the same rigorous review as that given applications to all other Endowment programs. As with other programs, the chairman of the Endowment is charged by law with the responsibility for all final funding decisions. However, the chairman receives advice from many sources—reviewers and panelists outside the Endowment, Endowment staff, and the National Council on the Humanities.

The review process for state programs has three purposes: (1) to determine whether each state program conducts a satisfactory program in the humanities (as required by statute), (2) to provide the council with an assessment of its program as described in the proposal and to provide advice about possible areas of improvement, and (3) to make judgments about the level of funding and about whether conditions should be attached to the grant.

The proposal is analyzed by three to four *outside reviewers* selected by the staff of the Division of State Programs. Reviewers, including scholars and nonscholars, may have had direct experience in state programs as either past council members or project directors although they are never assigned proposals from states where they currently reside or from councils with which they have had close contact.

Each proposal is also evaluated by a *peer review panel* of six to eight people who meet at the Endowment offices in Washington, D.C. Panelists are selected on the basis of several factors, including their knowledge of the humanities and their familiarity with humanities programming for public audiences. Each panel is chaired by the director of the Division of State Programs with all division staff in attendance. The file of a council's previous proposal is available for the panel's consideration. (Interim progress reports are not submitted to panels; however, they are assessed by Endowment staff, by the National Council on the Humanities, and occasionally by outside reviewers.)

Criteria for Review

Reviewers and panelists are asked to evaluate the two integral and complementary aspects of the council's work: (1) the council-funded projects and programs and (2) the overall operation of the council within the state. In order to assess the quality and effectiveness of the overall work of the state council, the Endowment asks the reviewers and panelists to consider the intellectual quality of the program; the centrality of the humanities in individual regrants and council-initiated projects; the involvement of scholars in the humanities in all aspects of the council's program; the use of a range of disciplines and formats appropriate for the topics and the audiences; the effort to reach all geographic areas of the state through its programming; and the extent to which the council's program is appropriate to the state's needs, interests, and resources. They are asked also to judge the projects and programs funded by a state council in light of the qualities appropriate for humanities programs described on page 4 of this booklet. Reviewers and panelists also consider the size, population, resources, and general nature of a state in determining the progress the council is making toward intellectual leadership in the humanities within the state.

At least three division *staff* members read each proposal, including the state's program officer and the division director. Staff assessment is arrived at collectively and is based not only on the proposal but also on information gathered from correspondence, printed materials, and meetings with the state council.

The National Council on the Humanities, twenty-six citizens appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate, advises the chairman of the Endowment on grant-making and on policy. The members meet four times a year to make funding recommendations. Summaries of reviewers' and panelists' comments and a separate staff assessment are presented to the National Council's Committee on State Programs. After discussion, the committee

makes funding recommendations to the full council, which in turn makes recommendations to the chairman.

Reviewers and panelists are always asked to offer suggestions about ways in which a state council's program might be improved, even for those councils that received strong overall support in the review process. These suggestions are passed on to the council in the post-review letter from the program officer. A serious weakness in a council's program may be addressed by placing conditions on the grant aimed at improving particular aspects of the program. If this should occur, division staff will work closely with the council and its staff in fulfilling these conditions.

SPECIAL AWARDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Merit Awards

In order to reward exceptionally meritorious work by individual state councils, the Endowment awards some discretionary funds as supplements to the regular grants of councils whose biennial proposals are judged to be worthy of special commendation in the review.

Council-Conducted Projects

In previous years, all program funds awarded to the state councils had to be spent making grants. Since 1983, a council in its regular proposal to the Endowment can request that a portion of these funds be used to conduct a project of its own design. (A council does not receive additional funds to conduct these projects.) Through this change in policy, the Endowment hopes to encourage the development of projects that will be models for other groups in the states.

If a council wishes to conduct its own projects, it must present the project in the regular funding application. Should the project not be approved, funds allocated for it in the council's budget will be available for making grants.

Exemplary Projects in the Humanities

As of 1982, the Endowment uses a portion of the discretionary funds to encourage state councils to assume an even more active and visible role in their states. Now called Exemplary Projects in the Humanities, these special awards enable state councils to undertake worthy projects, which they might otherwise be unable to fund, and recognize projects of an imaginative and exemplary nature that could serve as models to other state councils. Awards are made on the basis of the merit of the particular project submitted, and several councils may apply jointly for a collaborative project. Proposals are assessed by a panel, outside reviewers, Endowment staff,

and the National Council. This competition has supported many outstanding projects, some of which are being replicated in other states.

National Federation of State Humanities Councils

In 1978 several state humanities councils formed what is now called the National Federation of State Humanities Councils. The federation's board of directors includes five public and five academic members of state councils, three executive directors, and the federation president, who is also a state council member. The organization, whose operating budget comes from dues paid by member councils and grants and contracts from the Endowment and other sources, has a small staff that handles its day-to-day operations from its headquarters in Minneapolis. Federation activities fall into three categories, each supervised by a standing committee of its board of directors: (1) Government and Public Affairs; (2) Research and Publications, including research reports and two bimonthly publications—*Federation Reports*, funded through a contract with NEH, which contains articles on public programming in the humanities, and *Federation Updates*, which carries legislative and organization news; and (3) National Humanities Resources and Conferences, including the annual meeting of the state humanities councils.

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All division staff can be reached by telephone at 202/786-0254. The mailing address is 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Room 411, Washington, D.C. 20506.

Important Dates in the Division of State Programs

February 15	Proposals for exemplary awards due at the Endowment
May 1	Biennial proposals due
June 15	Interim progress reports due
July 1	Exemplary award projects begin (final reports due 90 days after the end of the 18-month grant period)
August 31	Compliance plans due
September 15, 1985, - August 31 thereafter	Gifts to be matched must be certified and received at NEH

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Institute, West Virginia 25112
304/768-8869

Wisconsin Humanities Committee
716 Langdon Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53706
608/262-0706

Wyoming Council for the
Humanities
Box 3972—University Station
Laramie, Wyoming 82071-3972
307/766-6496

Other Endowment Programs

Division of Education Programs

The Division of Education Programs supports efforts in elementary and secondary schools as well as in institutions of higher education to improve instruction in humanities disciplines. Projects undertaken with NEH funds concentrate on the content and methods of these disciplines to give them a central place in school and college curricula. The Endowment also supports dissemination of the results of exemplary programs.

Division of Fellowships and Seminars

Programs in the Division of Fellowships and Seminars afford individual scholars, teachers, and other interpreters of the humanities opportunities to undertake full-time study or research for periods ranging from several weeks to one year. Support is available for independent work and for seminars on significant topics in the humanities.

Division of General Programs

The Division of General Programs is charged with bringing to the public a wide range of scholarly, research, and educational activities through projects designed to enrich the cultural and intellectual life of all Americans. In addition to programs in media, the division supports educational community programs in the humanities, interpretative exhibitions by museums and historical associations, and a variety of special projects that give public access to the best in scholarly and cultural life. Through this division, the Endowment has also initiated a number of new grant categories to promote the study and public appreciation of the history and principles of the U.S. Constitution.

Division of Research Programs

Through the programs of this division, the Endowment strengthens the intellectual foundation of the humanities by supporting interpretative research in all fields of the humanities, the preparation of reference works that add to the store of scholarly knowledge, and the organization of the essential resources for scholarship. Endowment research grants aid long-range projects that frequently involve a great diversity of scholarly activities, typically collaborative or coordinated efforts resulting in publications that advance knowledge in the humanities.

Office of Challenge Grants

Through the Office of Challenge Grants, the Endowment supports cultural institutions and organizations in order to increase their financial stability and to preserve or improve the quality of humanities programs. Institutions must raise at least three dollars in new or increased donations from nonfederal sources to receive each federal dollar.

Office of Preservation

This office has been created to address the problem of the physical deterioration of humanities resources by focusing current efforts and stimulating new efforts to undertake significant preservation activities. Through the U.S. Newspapers Project, grants are made to support projects for the bibliographic control and preservation of U.S. newspapers. Preservation grants support projects that address national preservation needs of research documentation in the humanities.

Equal Employment 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 of the 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.

National Endowment for the Humanities
Division of State Programs
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