American University
Conference for High-Impact Research
15 May 2017

“Best Practices in Developing Successful Federal Grant Proposals”

Claudia Kinkela
Senior Program Officer, Division of Research Programs
National Endowment for the Humanities
ckinkela@neh.gov
202-606-8203
1. Prepare

- Think of this as a multi-year process
- Study the guidelines
- Look at samples
- Talk to program officers
- Set up Grants.gov
Funded Project Query Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant number</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project director</td>
<td>First name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key words</td>
<td>ANY of these words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field of project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Award date range</td>
<td>From</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sorting options, Products, coverage, prizes, white papers*

[securegrants.neh.gov](http://securegrants.neh.gov)
NEH GRANTS

Fellowships

Division of Research Programs
Receipt Deadline April 30, 2015 for Projects Beginning January 2016

Brief Summary
Fellowships support individuals pursuing advanced research that is of value to humanities scholars, general audiences, or both. Recipients usually produce articles, monographs, books, digital materials, archaeological site reports, translations, editions, or other scholarly resources in the humanities. Projects may be at any stage of development.

Program Statistics
In the last five competitions the Fellowships program received an average of 1,241 applications per year. The program made an average of 83 awards per year, for a funding ratio of 7 percent.

The number of applications to an NEH grant program can vary widely from year to year, so be sure to check the specific information about the year you are interested in.
Your foundation relations office can help.
2. Before you start writing

• Get familiar with the review process
• Who is the audience?
• What are the evaluation criteria?
Stages of Review

1. Peer Review Panel
2. NEH Staff
3. National Council
4. Chairman
Think About Your Audience

- For the application: Generalists and specialists
- Don’t make it hard on them—make clear what you’re doing, limit the jargon.
- Balance abstraction and precision
- Show them you know what you’re doing
- Anticipate and answer possible concerns
Address the Evaluation Criteria

1. The intellectual significance of the proposed project, including its value to humanities scholars, general audiences, or both.

2. The quality or promise of quality of the applicant's work as an interpreter of the humanities.

3. The quality of the conception, definition, organization, and description of the project and the applicant's clarity of expression.

4. The feasibility of the proposed plan of work, including, when appropriate, the soundness of the dissemination and access plans.

5. The likelihood that the applicant will complete the project.
Tips for Writing

• Explicitly address the evaluation criteria

Project → CV → Proposal → Work plan → Success
Rating Scale

- E  Excellent
- VG Very good
- G  Good
- SM Some merit
- NC Not competitive
3. Writing: Make your case

- Start with the criteria.
- Focus on significance.
- Put the project in a larger context.
- Intrigue the panelists. Remember their time constraints.
- Make it sounds interesting.
- Dissertations: What’s new?
- Make work plan explicit, and make clear it’s doable.
4. Before Submitting

- Draft early and get comments.
- Check your bibliography.
- Proofread!
- Discuss your application with your letter writers.
5. Post mortem - Learn from before

- Reapply and ask for comments.
- Become a reviewer.
Questions?