



## **ORGANIZATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT FOR STATE AND JURISDICTIONAL HUMANITIES COUNCILS: THE 2007-2011 REVIEW CYCLE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The National Endowment for the Humanities self-assessment reporting process for state and jurisdictional humanities councils is designed as a forward-looking, strategic effort to provide councils formal opportunity to analyze their present work and to lay out their plans for the future. In addition to fulfilling the legislative requirement that councils have a plan of work approved by NEH, the purpose of the self-assessment is to appraise and anticipate a council's role in its state or jurisdiction, its audiences, the ways it develops and achieves its mission to promote and support the humanities, and the means by which it organizes its resources. The Self-Assessment Report is most useful to a council when it is written analytically and succinctly with candor and forthrightness. A spirit of transparency and accountability should guide the creation of the Report.

Councils will find it efficient to couple self-assessment with regularly scheduled strategic planning. The Self-Assessment Report, however, is a discrete, though complementary, document to a strategic plan. A Council is encouraged to attach its current strategic plan to the Self-Assessment Report.

The Self-Assessment Report consists of three elements: (A) a snapshot of the Council, (B) an analysis of how the Council works and how it plans for the future, and (C) supplemental materials. Section B is the narrative heart of the Self-Assessment Report. This section addresses the overall context in which the Council works, the humanities benefits and services it provides, and its management and organizational effectiveness. The document that follows provides guidance for developing the Self-Assessment Report and includes templates of charts that may be used to lay out objectives for the future, analyze programs, and present budgets. The Self-Assessment Report, along with the site visitors' report, will serve as the basis upon which the Interim Report will be written at the mid-point between five-year site visits.

The Self-Assessment Report is prepared and written by a council's board and staff for its own benefit. There are, however, external audiences for the Report: the staff of Federal/State Partnership, a council's site visitors, the NEH Chairman and staff, and the National Council on the Humanities. Federal/State Partnership strongly recommends that a council share its Self-Assessment Report with all those invited to participate in its site visit. Councils will want to know that part of this Report may be subject to the federal Freedom of Information Act.

Four printed copies and one electronic copy (do not send the starred [\*] items electronically) of the Self-Assessment Report are due in the Federal/State Partnership office six weeks before the site visit. Present the material in the order suggested. Bear in mind that the site visitors and NEH staff will carry the Self-Assessment Report with them when they travel to the site visit and will appreciate a Report that is not unnecessarily large and unwieldy.

## ORGANIZATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT: CONTENTS OF PACKET

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Major Objectives Template	attached
Major Objectives (example)	attached
Program Template	attached
Budget Template	attached

The Office of Management and Budget requires federal agencies to supply information on the time needed to complete forms and also to invite comments on the paperwork burden. NEH estimates the average time to complete this Self-Assessment Report is forty hours per response. This estimate includes time for reviewing instructions, researching, gathering, and maintaining the information needed, and completing and reviewing the Report.

Please send any comments regarding the estimated completion time or any other aspect of this Self-Assessment Report, including suggestions for reducing the completion time, to the Office of Publications, National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C. 20506; and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (3136-0134), Washington, D.C. 20503. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number.

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

present materials in the order listed below

### A. COUNCIL SNAPSHOT

(two pages maximum)

#### 1. Council organizational information

- name
- founding date
- number of executives in its history
- mailing address, phone number/s, fax number/s, website
- fiscal year beginning and ending dates
- amount of the current fiscal year's budget, and total expenditures for each of the two previous fiscal years
- the percentage of the NEH general operating support grant in the Council's current budget, and in the budgets of the two previous fiscal years
- amount in the Council's reserve fund
- mission statement
- vision statement

#### 2. Council staff and board information

- executive's name, title, contact information, and number of years as executive; if the contact information is otherwise the same as above, add in only the executive's email address
- board chair's name, contact information (should not be the same as the council's contact information), and dates of tenure and board membership
- number of full time staff, number of part time staff
- full time equivalents and/or number of interns, contractors, consultants, volunteers with length of tenure with the Council
- current number of board members; potential number of board members
- current number of gubernatorial appointees; potential number of gubernatorial appointees
- Does the council carry directors and officers insurance?

#### 3. Name and title of the person primarily responsible for preparing the Self-Assessment Report

### B. ANALYSIS OF THE COUNCIL

(fifteen pages maximum for the narrative; the list of major objectives, the program analyses, and the staff and board biographies are *not* included in the total page count of this section. The "Useful Terms" on page 7 may be helpful with this section of the Report.)

#### 1. The Context in which the Council Works

- interpret the state's/jurisdiction's current and projected population demographics, including age, education, and median income; geography; economy; politics; educational infrastructure; cultural and humanities infrastructure; and other issues and elements as they affect the work of the Council

- **address and interpret the Council's position** in relation to the institutional/organizational hierarchy of the state/jurisdiction; its relations with the state's/jurisdiction's cultural institutions and organizations; its relationships and involvements with college and universities, and with academic and professional humanists; its relationships with elected officials; its partnerships and collaborations, memberships (in state/jurisdiction, regional, national associations and organizations); revenue sources; and what the Council is best known for and how this is determined
- **interpret the Council's history of strategic planning and analyze its plans for the future.** Lay out the major objectives for the next three to five years: for each, include details about the financial and personnel resources required to achieve it, the target audience/s, the short-term benchmark/s, the long-term benchmark/s, the anticipated outcome/s, and challenges or roadblocks to success. You may use the template provided. If you use another format, be sure to include all the information about each objective requested on the template and listed above. In addition, the discussion should address whatever roadblocks the Council may have encountered in the past that hindered the full achievement of its objectives and how its current strategic planning is taking potential roadblocks and risks into consideration.

## 2. The Humanities Benefits and Services Provided

- **programs:** use one page per program (*not* included in the total page count of this section), indicating at the top of the page the name of the program and the total cost to deliver the program (including staff expenses and indirect costs). In addition, provide the following information for each program: the core humanities content it provides, the target audience/s, the secondary audiences, the goals for the program, short-term benchmarks, program marketing and publicity, long-term benchmarks, strengths, weaknesses, plans for the future of the program, the value and priority of the program within the Council's overall work, the revenue sources and amounts that support the program, and the staff involved in its delivery. You may use the template provided. If you use another format, be sure to include all the information about each program requested on the template and listed above. The program analyses should be presented in the order in which the programs appear in the budget (see below, Required Supplemental Materials).
- **audiences:** analyze the primary and secondary audiences the Council serves. Note those that are specifically targeted as well as those, such as funders, that play key roles in the way the Council does its work. Consider as well the Council's potential audiences and the reasons they are not yet being served.
- **communication:** assess the effectiveness of the Council's communication about its work, including its website and electronic communications, publications, media exposure, and development and fundraising.
- **humanities achievements and plans for the future:** analyze such overarching areas of council activity as civic engagement; public policy;

humanities lifelong learning; humanities organizational capacity building; intertwining the humanities with daily and public life in the state/jurisdiction; outreach to youth, families, immigrant populations, underserved audiences; collaborations and partnerships with non-traditional audiences; enhanced stature as a major influence in the state/jurisdiction

### 3. The Council's Management and Organizational Effectiveness

- **staff and board:** provide a one-paragraph biography (*not* included in the total page count of this section) of
  - each staff member, that includes what that person brings to the Council and length of service to the Council
  - each current intern, contractor, consultant, laying out the area of work in which that person has responsibility and the length of time that person has worked with the Council
  - each board member, that includes that person's professional affiliation, what she or he brings to the Council, and his or her length of board service; indicate whether that person is a gubernatorial appointee
- **management:** provide analyses of
  - how the board makes decisions about executive compensation and evaluation, and how these decisions are made in the context of the state and region in which the Council operates
  - how staff evaluations are carried out; including discussion of expectations for staff performance, opportunities for staff communication, teamwork, creativity, and initiative
  - staff benefits
  - financial management
  - the working relationship between staff and board; including discussion of board/staff communication and transparency of activity
  - the Council's relationships with nonprofit and business consultants, associations, and its other means of identifying and utilizing the most promising practices in nonprofit management
- **organizational effectiveness:** provide analyses of
  - the role of the mission statement in shaping the Council
  - leadership development and transition planning for the executive, all staff members, and board members; including the opportunities for staff and board professional development
  - board recruitment and development, including how board members are actually nominated and elected
  - resource development and fundraising
  - planning for and managing risks and liabilities
  - anticipated changes in organizational structure, acquisitions, practices; if no changes are anticipated, explain.

## C. 1. REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

- **finances**
  - actual expenditures for the past two fiscal years (budget template provided): present the budget in the order requested. The template is in a format Federal/State Partnership finds most helpful.
  - budget for the current fiscal year (budget template provided): present the budget in the order requested. The template is in a format Federal/State Partnership finds most helpful.
  - latest audited financial statement\*
- **organization**
  - by-laws
  - organizational chart
  - conflict of interest statement/s for staff and board
  - table of contents of the board member handbook
  - personnel manual
  - statement of organizational compliance with nondiscrimination laws and regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- **grants**
  - grant guidelines\* (if the grant guidelines are available electronically, please include them in the electronic copy of the self-assessment report)
  - list of grants made in the last two fiscal years
- **other**
  - map of the state/jurisdiction\*

## C. 2. OTHER SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS\*

*Four sets of selected additional items (such as brochures, newsletters, media coverage, annual reports) that reflect the Council's best work may be submitted at the Council's discretion. The Council is encouraged to attach its current strategic plan to the Self-Assessment Report.*

## **USEFUL TERMS**

In preparing the Self-Assessment Report, the following terms may be useful in assuring that there is clear communication between those preparing the Report and those reading it. These terms and concepts are broadly accepted in the world of nonprofit management and organizational development.

**Values:** the principles governing how an organization operates

**Vision:** the expression of what an organization wants to be

**Mission:** the organization's reason for existence and its priorities for action

**Goal:** an accomplishment toward which an organization's work and actions move

**Objective:** a discrete, necessary, and measurable action taken to achieve a goal

**Benchmark:** any objective identified during the planning of a project or activity that is essential to the success of the project. The accomplishment of a benchmark is a good indicator that the project or activity is on time and on track and is proving to be successful. A short term benchmark is an accomplishment scheduled for achievement within the first year of the project and a long term benchmark is one that is scheduled for achievement beyond the current project year but prior to the conclusion of the project or activity.

**Strategy:** the plan of concrete action that an organization develops, in the context of the environment in which it works, to meet its goals and fulfill its vision and mission

**Evidence:** quantifiable indication that change has resulted from the implementation of one or more objectives

**Outcome:** quantifiable direct result of the implementation of a project

**Impact:** indirect or long-term result of the implementation of a project

**Primary audiences:** those groups of people who are directly targeted by programs or services; such as, its participants.

**Secondary audiences:** those groups of people who are indirectly targeted or engaged through a particular program or service; such as, a funding agency, the host organization, the scholars involved in the production and delivery of a program

## SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT CHECKLIST AND ORDER OF CONTENTS

(send four printed copies and one electronic copy of the Self-Assessment Report; items marked with an asterisk [\*] need *not* be sent electronically)

- Council Snapshot** (*absolutely* no more than two pages)
- Analysis of the Council**
  - The Context in which the Council Works
    - the state/jurisdiction
    - the Council's position
    - Council's history of strategic planning and its plans for the future
      - major objectives next three to five years (may use template provided)
  - The Humanities Benefits and Services
    - programs
      - analysis of each program: one page per program (may use template provided)
    - audiences
    - communication
    - humanities achievements and plans for the future
- The Council's Management and Organizational Effectiveness
  - staff and board
    - one-paragraph bio for each person
  - management
  - organizational effectiveness
- Supplemental Materials**
  - required
    - actual expenditures for the past two fiscal years
    - budget for the current fiscal year
    - latest audited financial statement\*
    - by-laws
    - organizational chart
    - conflict of interest statement/s (staff and board)
    - table of contents of the board member handbook
    - personnel manual
    - statement of organizational compliance with nondiscrimination laws and regulations
    - grant guidelines\*
    - list of grants made in the last two fiscal years
    - map of the state/jurisdiction\*
  - other materials (four sets)\*
- Checklist:** include completed checklist