Summer Stipends: Application Strategies

Beauty Bragg, Program Office
Division of Research Programs
National Endowment for the Humanities

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Agenda

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

REVIEW PROCESS

REVIEW CRITERIA

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

TIPS

Program Overview

$6,000 for two months

• Providing small grants to individuals pursuing advanced research that is of value to humanities scholars, general audiences, or both.

• Supporting projects at any stage of development, but most especially early-stage research and late-stage writing in which small grants are most effective

• Encouraging applications from under-represented and under-served individuals and institutions (including independent scholars and faculty at Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and community colleges).

DEADLINE: September 22, 2021, for awards made March 2022

NUMBERS: Five-year average: Received 837 applications, made 83 awards, funding rate 10%

Steps of Application Review

Award notification

Chairman's decision

National Council review

Staff recommendations

Peer review panels

Sorting by NEH staff

Submission

Review Criteria

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

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

3. The feasibility and appropriateness of the proposed plan of work.

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

5. The likelihood that the applicant will complete the project (not necessarily during the period of performance), including, when relevant, the soundness of the dissemination and access plans.

The Application Requires:

- Three-page narrative
- One page bibliography
- Two-page C.V.
- Any necessary appendices
- Names/contact info for two references

The Narrative

- Research and contribution

- Methodology and work plan

- Competencies, skills, and access

- Final product and dissemination

In three pages! Look at the guidelines and samples

Prepare Early

- Find the right program
- Grants.gov
- Read the guidelines and samples
- Contact a program officer

Make Your Case

- Start with the review criteria
- Demonstrate your project's significance
- Provide context
- Make it sound interesting
- Dissertation: What's new?
- Develop a clear and realistic work plan

Remember Your Audience

- Write for specialists and generalists

- Avoid jargon

- Address the criteria

- Use concrete examples

- Give them confidence, show them you know what you're doing

- Anticipate and answer possible concerns

Pay Attention to Details

Draft early and solicit feedback

Check your bibliography

Include required supporting materials

Proofread!

Discuss your application with your letter writers.

Common Errors

- Ignoring the guidelines
- Not making the case for significance
- Focusing on gaps in the scholarship
- Fuzzy methodology
- An incomplete work plan
- Using jargon
- Not moving beyond the dissertation
- Unhelpful references
- Not planning ahead

If Your Application Is Not Funded

Request your reviewers' comments

Contact a program officer

Resubmit

Questions?

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