

Scholarly Editions and Scholarly Translations Webinar
National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C.
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0:04

Hello, I'm Jason Boffetti, senior program officer at the NEH and team leader for the scholarly editions and scholarly translations grant program. This webinar will provide an overview of the grant program and provide some additional information about the application instructions that are posted on the web. While it's not intended as a complete guide to writing an application for this program-- please read the guidelines and full--I hope you will find it helpful.

0:38

The Office of Research Programs supports the work of scholars working individually or in teams doing research for scholarly and general audiences. This particular grant program provides institutional grants for teams of scholars, or at least more than one scholar. What is the scholarly editions project? What kind of projects do we fund in this program? While the program is not intended to support every phase of the production of an addition, it does support most of the activities. For example, we don't fund marketing of an addition. We support come in a variety of types from print only to digital born to projects that has produced both print and digital products of varying degrees. We fund projects that make accessible or inadequate editions available.

1:33

to scholars and public audiences. We fund editions in foreign languages without translation. So you might find a text that's in Latin but not translated into English. Perhaps used by scholars who would want it in the original Latin. The content of the editions that would apply for this program need to be humanities-centered topics or subjects and for humanities audiences. This program is meant to support collaborative work. So more than one person working on a project. We do not fund individuals for support in this program. To do an sole-authored edition, one could apply for support in our fellowship program to do an edition or translation project. What is not a scholarly editions project? So the edition or translation must do more than merely provide a readable text.

2:34

Some attention must be paid to the scholarly usage of the text providing background information, variations in the text footnotes, various kinds of appendices, maybe even interpretive essays. So it must be more than a transcription. We also don't fund translation into languages other than English.

2:56

This program does not support translations, say, of one's own works into a foreign language. We generally support historical documents in literature, history, those kind of subjects. And it's not meant to support translation of contemporary books. It's important that these projects be collaborations between scholars and not simply a collaboration between, say, a scholar and some one only providing technical support. So it's meant to be kind of richly collaborative among scholarly peers.

3:33

For a list of some of the other ineligible types of projects please see for page 4 of the guidelines. I will be going over the parts of an application and going into some detail about those parts. So here's a general overview of the sections of this of this presentation.

4:02

You will find most of what I'll be doing is going through the application guidelines, as we call them, or the notice of funding opportunity. You'll find this document, a PDF document, at www.neh.org. I've noted on the page the landing page you go to, step one and scroll down.

4:30

You can download this one, this is the first one in the list of downloadable documents.

4:37

Just a few details to worth noting about the program dates. The application deadline of December 4th, 2019 is 11:59 p.m. So please get your applications in before midnight of that of that day. And it's important not to wait too long to submit to grants.gov. For example, it's better to submit a few days prior to that deadline. So you're not racing at the last minute and there tends to be a crush of applications at the last minute. So you don't want to have a delay in that process. So I recommend applying or uploading before the fourth. You see here that projects can start any time between October 1st 2020 up until September 1st 2021. So that's a larger time frame in which a project can start in that period, January, March, up until September 1st, 2021.

5:37

We'll note, too, that this is the first year in which where we have not accepted drafts. There's no draft review for this program this year.

5:48

Just a few details about award amounts. We fund up to \$300,000 for up to \$100,000 per year for projects for between one to three years in this program. For those projects that are responding to the "More Perfect Union" initiative, that is projects that, quoting from this initiative, "promote a deeper understanding of American history and culture and that advance civics education and knowledge of our core principles of government." Projects that fit into that can ask for up to \$525,000, not to exceed \$175,000 per year. Now if you have more questions about whether your project qualifies please give program staff here a call. Cost sharing and match is not required in this program and we do not ask reviewers to evaluate whether they do cost-sharing or match. It's not a criteria for this program.

6:46

And should not be made to help or hurt the application.

6:53

In terms of eligibility, the kinds of Institutions that may apply include nonprofits public, higher education, tribal governments. This year, individuals are not eligible to apply. Rather individuals need to make arrangements with an institution that is eligible and apply through them to make it an institutional grant. We ask that the project director be a lead scholar on the project and not an administrator. Sometimes institutions want an administrator to be in that role. We would like to be receiving reports and have correspondence really with the scholars who are making the edition, who are working on the project in a day-to-day capacity rather than an administrator who might be more an institutional representative.

7:54

We do want someone to be a leading scholar. We say someone who knows a lot about the subject material and are not relying on others on the staff to do that. We ask that there be a significant amount of time and sustained work on this project by the project director. It's worth noting in the application the kind of commitment of time in various places that can be noted and we look at that to determine whether the lead scholar is involved in a major way or if there are only slightly involved and I think it's important to make the case for significant, sustained work on the project by the project director.

8:40

We say that only one application should be offered by a project director to this program and collaborative research. The point being that the time commitment to this kind of projects should be such that it would be difficult to handle more than one project and we don't want to encourage a model where a project director oversees multiple projects at the same time in this program.

9:09

Then we also have something that we've recently adopted in the last couple years--the 50 percent rule where 50 percent of the funding and 50 percent of the participants need to be US

residents or citizens. We certainly want to have international collaboration. There's an opportunity to do that with these scholarly editions projects, but the idea is that we would like to have, you know, kind of fair representation of US dollars on these projects. I not have projects that might seem from the outside as projects that are really projects that are being funded for foreign institution or funding for foreign scholars with a not as much involvement by US colleges. We want this to be an opportunity for US dollars to be used to collaborate richly with those other countries, if that's the direction of project chooses to go.

10:01

Let me just go over some of the all five of the review criteria and I'll give a little bit of a gloss on how we might see them here the first being the significance. The intellectual significance, and this is the quote from the application guidelines, the intellectual difference of the proposed work including its value to humanity scholars.

10:26

general audiences or both. That it stimulate new research and its relation to larger themes or questions in the humanities and the significance of the material on which the project is based. So I think a couple things to note there. We want it to be a text for humanities scholars, many scholars, would use and that it has great intellectual significance and that it have the ability, if it would come out as an edition or translation, to encourage new research. It makes a case for new research that could be done from it that hasn't been done previously for lack of the existence of an edition for scholars. It can in fact be of value to general audiences not just humanities scholars and perhaps both. So it's something to maybe note in the application as you discuss the text. Is it in fact the kind of source that could be used by multiple audiences?

11:25

Second, the methods of execution in the applications, the clarity of expression and appropriateness of a selection criteria. This is really talking about the kind of policies and decisions that are made about what to include in the text.

11:43

If it's not the entire corpus but rather maybe a selection of materials, why those decisions were made and then a discussion of the research methods, the policies that will be used for that choice, what kind of scholarly apparatus to include and then of course, you'll be providing samples and so the quality of those and the content of those will be important to represent what the final product will look like as best you can in a shorter sample. And then since we do want some kind of annotation, an explanation of the clarity and relevance of those annotations for the text and then, specifically for translation, the accuracy and quality of the translation which will be somewhat represented in the sample and the soundness of the theory and methods of translation. So we understand that some things may be translated different ways, different choices made, different types of styles, or that need to be explained in the application. So that it's clear how decisions are going to be made about how to translate text whether to make it rigidly from the words as they are in their context, or perhaps to use a more contemporary reading of those of the texts.

13:03

Collaborators, the qualifications expertise levels of commitment. So I think it's important to show how various folks who were involved in the project are committed in terms of their time to the project and also their expertise. Demonstrate what everyone's role is and why they're there in that capacity, why they've been chosen for that role in work plan. You need to make a case both. That there's a reasonable plan that can be done in the time allotted and it's possible to complete that work.

13:39

That's there's not an unreasonable amount of work to be done in the time frame and then, for those projects that have come back to us for multiple versions of their project, that they've made a case and that they've done what's discussed the application. That their past productivity has

been successful in producing the goals as promised and, in cases where they haven't, the reasons why they haven't been accomplished during the period of performance for the last grant. Not all projects come back for multiple awards. But if they do, we want them to make it make clear to those who are reviewing the applications what their productivity has been like compared to their publication goals.

14:20

Here's where you will discuss both the audience for your publication in the proposal as well as the case for whether you're going to do print volumes or a digital format or combination of those two. And then what technology you're going to use to do it as well as plans to sustain the project whether it's a print edition or digital edition. We're seeing sustainability as a real issue for long-term storage. What are plans to make sure that it's available to scholars for some period of time into the future, both in terms of financial sustainability and also the software sustainability. Have you chosen a format that should last for a while and then will be able to be updated as needed to make the text available to future scholars? So here we see go over the various application components that are required. So we have some additional forms here that need to be filled out.

15:21

These need to be filled out completely and submitted to grants.gov who provide these to us after they've I've done their initial collection. These first three are fillable forms that you'll fill out offline and then upload them. Its important to note here that they end up becoming the fields that we use to create some of the materials for reviewers.

15:55

So if you make mistakes in your title and name, things like that, it tends to stand out as a glaring since they are used to create a the cover sheet for the application. So it's important that this document is be checked and rechecked before being submitted for accuracy because I've seen many applications that have come in that have been poorly filled out with embarrassing mistakes that reflects poorly on the project. The fourth thing here. The attachment form is a place where you add to the application your PDF file.

16:32

Files that really other majority of your application. So the fourth attachment form is a way that you'll upload to the site. So the components of the application like the narrative and the contents and appendices if you follow the directions as we'll get to later. The grant application package can be found when you go to our website. If you look at the same place as before, right below the guidelines.

17:02

. There's the grant application package which takes you to grants.gov and you'll find they're here, the four mandatory forms, the last being the attachment form You'll need to fill out and accurately and then upload them to grants.gov once they're done.

17:23

So again now we'll look at the attachment form that fourth one and the required parts of that listed here. We've also given you some sense of what roughly the page count would be for these parts. Some are exact obviously. It's like one page table of contents, one page statement of significance, one page list of participants, a 12-page narrative this year. We're asking it to be single spaced instead of double spaces, as we have in the past, part of that is just to save on paper. Some of it is simply to make it a little bit easier to read. I think people are moving toward single spacing. And then also notice attachment number seven is the longest potential attachment where you can have it up to 35 pages in your appendices also singles.

18:22

You'll notice at the bottom there that are two federally required, or can be required in some cases, attachments. You'll have to read those and decide whether they are required in your case for this program. I will say that you don't have to use all 12 pages of your narrative or all 35

pages of the appendix. It's not a requirement. I would say most projects do need those 12 pages or 35 pages for the appendices, but it's not a requirement and I've certainly seen projects that have been funded that haven't used every one of the 12 pages of the narrative. It's what it takes to get the job done.

19:09

Just moving on to the table of contents. It seems fairly straightforward. And of course part of this is we want to see all part of application listed and ideally we'd like to see the numbering for the application go right straight through the appendices. So it's easier to jump to the pages and the application from one until what 47, I guess if you've used all the pages. The statement of significance and impact this is not the same thing as the abstract that gets prepared for one of the forms. It really should be a longer overview of the project. . .

19:51

that makes a succinct case for significance basically arguing why should the NEH fund this, why should scholars want this text in an edited form. it really is meant to be a distillation of the project as a whole with a focus on how the project impacts its field research and how it will reach its proposed audiences. Some discussion of product can be in this, where you make clear how it's going to make an impact through print or digital outputs.

20:24

The audience for this statement is non-specialist, potentially general readers, who might be reviewing this from another humanities field. So you may not be writing for an expert in your topic and I think it's important to keep that in mind. It's also important to keep in mind who the audiences are for your project and make a case that the grant products you're providing are going to reach that audience and are appropriate.

20:56

The list of participants want this to be alphabetical order by last name.

21:02

You can include the institution that they're associated with after that name and quick title or role in the project and even academic field, especially where multiple fields are involved and this gives a quick gloss on who's involved in the project and how. The NEH staff actually uses this particularly to avoid inviting people to be reviewers who actually are going to be involved in a project so we can compile these lists and use them and to look up who's actually has a grant in, who is involved in a grant. We don't want to have folks reviewing applications who are also involved in a grant at the same time or even if it's their own grant because they would have to recuse and we try to minimize refusals and so that's partly how we use this. It's also helps us look at whether your satisfying the 50% rule of involvement and whether the participants in the project are appropriately inclusive of the different types of fields that should be represented at depending on the topic.

22:13

The fourth section is the narrative. This is really the heart of the application, 12 pages single-spaced and we provide you some suggested page counts. If you look at the guidelines to see roughly what numbers of pages you should use for each of the sections of other narrative. We do actually ask you to expand on the significance of the project and the contribution again. This might mean that you take something from that statement of significance and impact but it's not meant to be a simple repetition of that section. It's also in the application you're going to describe the history of the project how it came to be where it's going and levels of commitment of all the staff including folks who might not be funded through this particular grant, but who involved in all aspects of the project perhaps that are not funded directly by this grant.

23:07

It's an opportunity to describe the entire project as a whole and also discuss the decision to make it a print or digital project.

23:21

So bit about the sections of the narrative, the substance in context, which is about two pages. The simple question you'd answer is "why is this text significant, why should come out as an edition, and who's going to use it. Just because something hasn't been an edition before, or hasn't been translated before for scholarly use doesn't automatically mean it's got to be done. What is the case for significant, what's the case for scholarly use. While in some cases there might have been previous editions, why are those inadequate or incomplete? Just because something is a fifty-year-old translation or an edition doesn't necessarily mean that it should be translated again. Even though the scholarly standards have now changed, make a case for that. Explain why that is and then what fields of literature and what type of fields of study does this edition possibly reach?

24:19

So even if it's a project that's pretty clearly in history, they still could actually impact other fields than just history and make the broadest case you can for the kind of scholars or public audiences that might be interested in this edition. The narrative portion also has a section on "history and productivity" which is about two pages long. So for new projects describe how this project came to be. What was the initial insight or desire by the participants to create this project? What was the thinking behind the way that it's been created. Then for previous projects you'll want to talk about what the project has done taking it up to the current period right now. You know, how much of the project is done? how many volumes have been completed? That sort of thing, so that it's clear where the project is at, even compared as we say both the status....

25:19

where it is today and compared to what it was predicted to be. Not all projects are able to get things done exactly when they hope to, so make the argument for why you're where you're at and then we also ask long-term projects that will go on beyond the term of the particular grant, say something like the George Washington papers where there's a long time frame, to predict what year your predicts, the entire edition, will be completed, understanding of these are predictions can't always be absolutely guaranteed, but they need to be predicted. So all applications must include the products that have been produced to date if any, whether they're digital or print runs, and usage statistics.

26:10

Some kind of active URL for the project and most projects, even new projects, would have something to start with, some place where someone interested in the project would be able to go and find materials. The number of volumes, the number of completed volumes. And then again, as I said, the estimate for the entire project. All previously funded projects must substantially update and describe new activities. So just because there's been previous funding, the application still should be gone through and make it clear what new things have happened in the intervening few years including maybe the uses of the text by scholars to keep the application fresh and whether it meet or did not meet its goals. We ask for a table of some kind providing an accurate representation of what was stated in the last application. What was actually achieved in terms of it.

27:19

If it's goals in terms of either volume numbers, page counts, documents processed, those sorts of indices of completion. We ask applicants for previously funded projects to go back at least two awards to describe that activity. The collaborator section should discuss the qualifications and the responsibilities of each of the people who will be involved in the project including participants who might not be funded with this award. We do have cases where multiple institutions may be supporting a project and different individuals may be involved in different applications or funded through different institutions...

28:10

or different funders and still we would like to have a discussion of all of the people who are involved in the project will be doing. It's important here to have the time commitments and the

percentages of hours reflected accurately as well as in the budget section and have them be the same to make it clear what NEH funds are being asked to support in terms of time commitment including those who provide technical services and their activities and their goals.

28:46

The method of execution section. This is where you'll discuss the selection process of what documents what text are going to be translated or created in a new edition, what the larger corpus might. There might be cases where not everything is going to be provided in the edition that was in the original text, but it may explain some rationale for how that choice was made and then a discussion of how the transcription and the various verification stages of the addition project are going to be done.

29:16

By who and by what method, including how you'll deal with things like variance and what how you'll choose to annotate things, whether it's done in a more minimal fashion or larger fashion some discussion of how that decision has been made and what type of things will be annotated. And then lastly the choice of technology that will be used especially when it's technology for a digital edition. What we need to know is what software platforms both on the front and back end will be used to do the work and then make it available publicly. For translations projects, we would also expect to see some discussion of the selection of original sources. Obviously things older text especially can have many different editions either by the original author or by subsequent editors.

30:13

So what's going to be the basis of the translation, the original text to make the translation and the theory and method of the translation. And then any challenges that might be posed by the translation, including things like various versions of the text, what was edited and changed. How will those be dealt with in the final translation of this product?

30:49

If your using digital technology, they'll be a focus on your choice of digital. Why is it necessary? What value is added by making it digital versus print and how it's going to be done? As I said, what are the front and back-end platforms? Provide some discussion of the sustainability plan. How have you thought about how the data will be migrated as the software may perhaps need to be updated and parts of the edition itself. Can it continue to grow will over time and be edited and used over time. Has some thought been given to that? And how will it be sustained beyond the life of the original creation of the grant financially. Will there be a subscription? Will there be an institution committed to making it available for the long term.

31:43

Those are important questions that should be addressed. And then you will provide examples of these things in the appendix. The work plan. Again, we want this to be consistent with the other sections of the application where you discuss who's doing what, including collaborator's work, their budget, those sections should all have a consistent set of numbers for how people are involved. We ask that the work plan be put into six months intervals. So six months at a time of what's going to be done by who and then that would have to reflect course the tasks that will be done in those time frames and time commitments. And then lastly the final product. We ask for broad access. What does that mean for the project? Have you thought about ways that the project could be make accessible to larger audiences, even if it might be that the print edition is not going to be free obviously, but how are you going to make some of that material accessible public audiences particularly since...

32:51

we encourage free access to digital materials. It may be that a part of an edition might be made available online to public audiences where maybe the bulk, with scholarly apparatus, might be behind pay wall. But has there been efforts made to make these editions public in some way and then what kind of arrangements have been made with the publisher for permissions to make it

available and what kind of commitments from publishers have been made. Then lastly the mix of media and choice of media that has been made printed or digital.

33:32

The budget. Here we expect you to list all NEH supported expenses. So the project may be larger than what NEH can support with its \$300,000 over three years, but we want the budget and the NEH budget to say exactly what NEH is being asked to support. What part of the project?

Whose time commitments? I'll talk a little more about that later. This year we've also brought back the budget justification.

34:02

It's another document you can attach where you can explain the details of the budget if its not evident from the budget itself. Including the what, when, where, how, and why of the budget. Why certainly choices were made or on what basis and that's the way to sort of explain the budget in plain language if it's not clear enough from the budget itself. Including sub-awards and why those line items are there and on what basis that's being done. If you have more questions about budget, you'll want to talk to budget staff here at the NEH. Program staff-- people like me-- can give you a general idea, but we really do defer to our grants office to talk to you about the details of how to put together your budget.

35:07

The appendices. These are parts that are required for all projects. So we expect two page resumes for each of the individuals involved in the participants, from project directors down technical staff. We expect that the bibliography would include both the citations of existing editions or translations of the works that you're editing or translating as well as secondary source material that would be reflect both the larger literature that this edition fits into as well as the kind of material that you might be using in your annotations or in your own bibliography. In many cases, they'll be the need for some kind of permissions particularly if a work is still under copyright.

35:57

You need to provide some proof that you have the rights to make available an edition unless it's a public domain. And then lastly all projects need to include samples whether it's an edition or translation and needs to show representatively...

36:17

what kind of product were expecting to get to give us a sense of what you expect the final thing to look like both in terms of its text as well the annotations. It's important to note that we're asking you to provide a sample from the work for which funding is being requested. So it should not be, say, a letter that already appeared in a preexisting volume, but rather the work that's actually going to be done during that grant term. It should illustrate, it should be representative of the work that would be in the final version including things like footnotes that would give us a good sense of what kind of annotations will be provided and demonstrate your editorial policy in some way. Samples must include a photo copy of the original document so we can compare it to the final version.

37:34

You must provide a transcription of what you're doing for that particular text and then in a representation of the annotations. So we want to make clear, especially for translations, that you provide samples of both the original text and the translated text, one that does a good job of reflecting translation philosophy.

38:03

We would expect to see what the final version would read like. Then last it's important that these be error-free. There have been cases where we've seen panel reviewers actually call out mistakes in the translation and obviously that would reflect very poorly on a project and the likelihood of success if even in the sample, they are already mistakes. So really focus on that.

38:33

making those accurate. Then we ask for projects to provide us with a statement of past funding received. Here's a way of showing a long-term commitment of funders including the NEH to the project. It's also a way of reflecting the other parts of large project that may be funded by third parties in addition to NEH. And it provides a broader picture of your financial support both at this time and in the past.

39:06

A bit about budgets. Largely budgets in this program consists of salaries, which represents time and travel. Often times these budgets are a piece of a larger more expensive projects, although not always. Sometimes we can fund an entire project. But sometimes NEH has a particular role in part of the funding for a project or some of the staff. Make that clear what NEH's role is both in your narrative. . .

39:36

and the budget justification. If you're only asking us to support, say an associate or an assistant editor, make it clear that there's other folks who are involved but that state what NEH is being asked to do. Ultimately budgets are vetted by our office of grants management at NEH. In fact, they can and often are revised after funding if our office find either mistakes or things that we cannot fund.

40:06

Or if we fund it at a lower level, we will ask for a revised budget later.. .

40:14

which may, in fact, a condition of funding. There's a smaller role here to play in the expenses related to the project such as software licenses. We do allow for some of that in this program, but we say specifically that the purchase of laboratory and computer equipment is not allowed in this program. We want to support largely the work of the translating and the editing and limit to some degree . . .

40:44

the kind of related expenses here. Although we do, of course, support indirect costs--overhead as it's sometimes called--the important thing is to have your grants office select the right type of IDC. And for more information on that again, I would refer folks to our grants office to make sure you've selected the right rate, which is usually the "other sponsored" projects rate as opposed to the "research" rate, but it depends on the project. Before you submit an application it's worth having your grants administrator talk with our grants administrators to make sure they've chosen the right indirect cost rate.

41:34

As I said, more detailed budget questions need to be answered by our office of grants management. So I provided you with contact information for one of our grants officers here, Peter Scott, who deals with our scholarly editions grants. You can pretty much talk to anyone in the grant's office, but he would be a good place to start because he's been managing these grants for a number of years and he will be able to answer more specific budget questions than program staff like myself can answer. But if you do have questions about the programmatic side of things, here's my contact information for Jason Boffetti and my email and my phone number and then also my colleague who also oversees a lot of the details of this program and probably answers the majority of the questions that initially come in--Lydia Medici and her contact information is here by email or by phone. You can contact her.

42:32

So please do take advantage of staff and ask us questions before you submit. Do try to think of your questions before the last minute. Try to get most of these things answer in the next month or two before you submit it would be happy to talk with you more about your projects. If you're even asking general questions, like whether the project would be would be eligible. This is the best time to do that. And so I hope this has been helpful. I thank you for listening.

43:03

And we look forward to speaking with you at a later time. Thanks very much.