DIVISION OF **PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

Media Projects and Short Documentaries

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

General information on Media grants

What do Media grants support?

Media Projects grants support film, television, radio, and podcast projects for general audiences that encourage active engagement with humanities ideas through creative storytelling approaches. In addition to funding projects on American history and culture, NEH continues to encourage humanities media projects that examine international themes and subjects and spark Americans' engagement with the broader world by exploring countries and cultures outside of the United States.

What advice do you have for media producers in putting forth a strong application?

The project itself must fall within the fields of the humanities and accord with the purpose and goals of NEH. NEH does not give general support for media programs but seeks to fund those programs that will best bring the issues and approaches of the humanities, and humanities research, to broad public audiences.

Review samples of successful applications. These samples will give you models that can help you compose your application. Sample narratives from successful applications are available on the program resource pages of the Development Grants and Production Grants programs.

In judging your project's fit for the NEH, review the list of recent awards. Media Projects: Development Grants can be found here. A list of recent awards made by Media Projects: Production Grants can be found here. These lists can give you an idea of the types of projects that have attracted NEH support.

Once you have determined that your project is a good fit for the Media program, convince us that your project will develop into a great film or audio program. NEH wants to fund engaging, creative projects that many people will enjoy.

What are the most common mistakes that applicants make?

Applicants often fail to provide as much information as reviewers expect. Applicants must discuss the project in considerable detail, articulating clearly their concept for the project and

the humanities issues that the project reflects, even when the proposal is for a development grant. Media producers should have done considerable research on the subject and consulted with scholars about their ideas; they should also explain the scholars' contributions in the proposal. In addition, do not assume that evaluators will be aware of your previous work; instead, be sure to provide a full description of any previous experience that strengthens your current request for a grant.

What advice do you give media producers who have less experience but have worthy humanities projects?
Less experienced applicants frequently find it advantageous to form a partnership with a more seasoned media team.

If I am an individual producer unaffiliated with a nonprofit organization, may I submit a Media Projects application?
Media Projects grants are awarded only to U.S. nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations, institutions of higher education, state and local governmental agencies, and federally recognized Native American tribal governments. Individuals are not eligible to apply; however, cultural organizations, media arts centers, public radio stations, public television stations, and universities often partner with independent producers. The eligible organization (lead applicant) is responsible for submitting the application to NEH. The lead applicant must not function solely as a fiscal agent, but should make substantive contributions to the success of the project. If the application is funded, the lead applicant assumes all programmatic, financial, and legal responsibilities of the award. Please contact a program officer for a list of recent grant recipients . For further information, see 2 CFR §200.331 for recipient responsibilities for managing and monitoring subrecipients.

What distinguishes a production grant application from a development grant application?
NEH expects that applications will demonstrate that more research has been completed for a Production Grant application, and the project should be described in greater detail in the application. NEH requires a much shorter treatment in a Development Grant application (up to five pages) than in a production application (up to fifteen pages per hour of the proposed program).

Can a production grant script be shorter than fifteen pages per hour?
Yes. The length of a successful script varies, depending on the scope of the project and the writing style of the applicant. NEH has funded applications with shorter scripts. We rely on the script to provide a detailed description of what viewers will see when they watch the completed film. We understand that films evolve during the production process and the completed film may not be identical to the script submitted with the application.

Does this program fund resources for students and teachers?
Projects should be geared mainly for public audiences, and the project budget and activities should reflect this focus on producing programs for general public audiences. However, a Production project can include resources that help students and teachers explore the humanities content and themes central to the project. Such resources might include brief audio or video clips, hands-on activities, lesson plans, interactive games, scholarly essays, maps, and/or timelines.

My project is for a film that will be distributed only online. Do you support film, television, radio, and podcast projects that will be distributed only online?
Yes. Media Projects grants support film, television, radio, and podcast projects that will be distributed to the widest possible audience. If you are planning online-only distribution of a film or radio program, you will need to make the case that it will reach a broad audience.

However, if you seek support for a digital project (website, game, mobile app, or other digital product) that is not related to your film, television, or radio program, you should apply to the Digital Projects for the Public program.

Submitting an application
Must I submit my application through Grants.gov?
Yes, you must submit your application through Grants.gov Workspace. In order to do so, you must have completed information in three separate systems:

1. Dun and Bradstreet (https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform)
2. System for Award Management (SAM) (https://www.sam.gov/SAM/) Effective June 29, 2018, when you go to SAM.gov and log in, you will be asked to create a Login.gov user account
3. Grants.gov (https://www.grants.gov/)

You can find links to the Grants.gov application package and the NEH instructions for preparing and submitting the package on the program resource pages for Development Grants and Production Grants. The program resource pages also link to a PDF document that explains how to confirm that Grants.gov and subsequently NEH have accepted your application.

Applicants are responsible for confirming that their applications include all the required elements and that their applications have been accepted.

May the same project director or producer submit an application for two different projects at the same time?
Yes. In each application clearly explain how you would allocate your time if you were awarded more than one grant. Overlapping project costs between two or more applications for federal funding and/or approved federal award budgets is not permitted.

May the project director also serve as the institutional grant administrator?

No. The project director may not serve as the institutional grant administrator. The role of the project director must be distinguished from that of the institutional grant administrator, who functions as the representative of the recipient organization with authority to act on the organization's behalf in matters related to the administration of the award. All financial reports and prior approval requests such as budget revisions, extensions of the period of performance, and changes in key personnel must be signed or countersigned by the institutional grant administrator. Similarly, official correspondence from NEH to a recipient (for example, an offer letter, the award document, an extension, a supplement or amendment) is addressed to the institutional grant administrator and copied to the project director. The project director is the person directly in charge of the conduct of the funded project. Because the project director's involvement in the project is normally critical to its success, the replacement of the project director or the co-director or a substantial reduction in the level of their effort (for example, an unanticipated absence for more than three months, or a 25

percent reduction in the time devoted to the project) requires prior written approval from NEH.

May a non-U.S. institution or organization apply for an NEH award?
No, foreign entities are not eligible to apply. NEH does not provide financial assistance to foreign institutions or organizations. Nevertheless, otherwise eligible American institutions may apply for collaborative projects involving U.S. and foreign organizations provided they do not use NEH funds for the purpose of issuing subawards to any foreign organization. This limitation does not preclude American institutions from obtaining the services of foreign individuals and consultants to carry out various programmatic activities on a fee-for-service basis; it also does not preclude vendor contracts such as in-country transportation services. If you are interested in submitting an application for a project involving international collaboration, please consult beforehand with the division staff.

When I apply through Grants.gov, how should I submit my sample?
The Media Projects programs encourage applicants to submit samples by linking to a URL. You are responsible for ensuring that the link to the sample remains active and that the sample is accessible throughout the review period. The program also accepts DVDs. Please refer to the instructions in the guidelines under "Submitting Samples" in Section III, "Submitting your Application."

How do the application deadlines work for samples? Are they receipt or postmark?
All deadlines are receipt deadlines. ALL samples must either arrive at NEH or be entered into Grants.gov by the deadline. An online sample may not be revised after the deadline.

Funding and Distribution

If I receive NEH funding, may I also accept funding from other sources?
Yes. We encourage applicants to approach a range of funders, as it is unlikely that NEH can support the full costs of a single program or series of programs. Note that overlapping project costs between two or more federal award budgets is not permitted. In addition, other (non- NEH) federal funds may not be used to secure the release of federal matching funds.

Do I need to have already raised money from other sources in order to be competitive for an NEH award?
No. However, NEH programmatic policy requires that commitments for full funding for the project from all sources must be in place prior to the start of production and the release of funds for Media Projects: Production Grants and Short Documentaries.

What expectations does NEH have for the distribution of a project?
As a taxpayer-funded agency, NEH expects that funded projects will be offered for broad distribution to the widest possible audience. Although NEH does not require applicants to have a commitment for distribution when they apply, a letter of interest from a broadcaster or other distribution partner may enhance an application.

Our goal is for scholars, educators, students, and the American public to have ready and easy access to NEH award products. All other considerations being equal, NEH gives preference to those projects that provide free access to the public.

Humanities content and advisers

What are the humanities?

According to the 1965 National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, "The term 'humanities' includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following: 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 reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life."

What are "humanities themes"?

A theme is a brief interpretive assertion about a topic that shows the educational direction that a project will take. More than a topic, a theme incorporates the relevant humanities scholarship and offers a broad conceptual framework for understanding material. For example, "Women in the Civil War" is a topic. It describes a subject but does not reveal what the interpretive approach to it would be. One the other hand, "Women played important economic roles during the Civil War" is a theme. It identifies a topic and also suggests what audiences might learn about it.

How many humanities themes should I identify in my application?

A typical application will identify three or four themes, but the number of themes varies depending on the scope and complexity of the project. For example, a short documentary may be focused on a single theme. A long-form series of films or podcasts may address five or six themes. A long list of themes in an application does not necessarily increase your chances of funding and may hurt your application because it may be an indication that the project is not as focused as it could be. Identify and develop the most relevant theme(s).

What is a humanities scholar?

Someone who has an advanced degree in a discipline of the humanities is generally considered a scholar. Scholars can provide context for a project and identify relevant humanities themes and ideas.

May my advisory team include experts who do not have advanced degrees in the humanities?

Yes, as long as the team also includes humanities scholars.

When should I start consulting with scholars about a project?

The earlier scholars are involved in a project, the better. Projects recommended for funding are usually ones in which scholars have helped shape the project's conceptual framework.

Is it okay to rely on a single scholar for a project?

Projects that depend on input from a single scholar are not competitive. Working with a number of scholars enables the projects to explore a diverse range of scholarly perspectives on a subject.

How do I find the right scholarly advisers for a project?

There are many ways to find scholars for your project. Check with your local college or university to see if any faculty members have relevant expertise or could suggest the names of

other scholars. You can also search for scholarly books related to your project. State humanities councils often maintain lists of scholars who have participated in public programs. You can also contact professional associations or consult published directories of scholars. Finally, examine the samples of funded projects available on the program resource pages (for Development grants and Production grants) to see what kinds of scholars have participated in other projects.

How much should I pay scholarly advisers?
There is no set fee for advisers. Some projects pay advisers a flat honorarium, others pay a daily rate. Discuss your project with the scholars, including the work that you expect from them, and negotiate a fair rate. Also see 2 CFR §200.459 Professional service costs. When engaging faculty members employed by the recipient institution as scholarly advisers, please work with your institutional grant administrator to ensure compliance with 2 CFR §200.430.