

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

GENERAL CLEARANCE AUTHORITY TO DEVELOP GRANTEE SURVEY INSTRUMENTS FOR THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

A. Justification

1) The NEH is seeking a general clearance authority to develop survey instruments for its grant programs to collect additional post-award information that will provide NEH with useful program progress information that is currently not being collected. The NEH is organized into seven main program areas: Education Programs, Preservation and Access, Public Programs, Research Programs, Digital Humanities, Challenge Grants, and the Federal/State Partnership; and one special initiative, Bridging Cultures. The NEH receives about 5,300 applications and makes approximately 1200 awards per year. The first NEH funding divisions to develop and use this clearance will be Preservation and Access, Public Programs, and Research Programs.

The NEH regularly monitors its grants, relying primarily on data obtained in performance reports. These data do not, however, provide as full an assessment of program outcomes as required by the Government Performance and Results Act. In many instances, outcomes are not readily observable during the one- to three-year grant period. It often takes longer, for example, before museums, libraries, and historical societies can implement plans for preserving their collections, for the impact of a documentary film to become apparent, or for scholars to publish the results of their research. Accordingly, the clearance to collect data from grantees and project participants after the close of the formal reporting period is essential to the NEH's ability to assess its programs systematically and to measure progress in achieving the goals articulated in the agency's strategic plan.

As a first step, the NEH is currently planning to survey three of its largest and most important grant programs: Humanities Collections and Reference Resources (Preservation and Access), America's Media Makers (Public Programs), and Fellowships (Research Programs). The draft surveys for these grant programs are attached. We intend to carry out additional surveys as well over the next several years, but the programs and the timing of these surveys has not yet been determined. Future surveys will closely follow the format of the attached drafts and contain many similar questions, varying only to accommodate the differences in purpose of the particular grant program being surveyed; hence the reason NEH is seeking a Generic Clearance for these survey instruments.

2) The three divisions indicated above will carry out these evaluations. When collected and analyzed, the data will inform NEH's continuing efforts to improve the quality of its programs, and hence will be of particular value to agency administrators and program managers. The information will be integrated into the annual agency performance reports to OMB and to Congress.

3) NEH has the capacity to carry out surveys of grantees electronically. We anticipate that most of the surveys developed as part of this evaluation strategy will be conducted electronically.

- 4) At present, grantees do not routinely provide information on the long-term impact of NEH-funded projects, so there is no risk of duplication.
- 5) Every effort will be made to simplify the data collection process. The agency's internal clearance process ensures that no undue burden is placed on any grantee.
- 6) As stated above, the survey of long-term outcomes is a vital component of gauging the effectiveness of NEH programs.
- 7) None of the listed conditions apply. Completion of these surveys will be purely voluntary, and no grantee will be surveyed, in any case, more than once a year.
- 8) On February 4, 2011, NEH published a notice in the *Federal Register* requesting comments on this proposed collection of information. Only one comment from a member of the public was received, however it did not comment on the proposed information collection, asking instead that the NEH's funding be cut.
- 9) No payment or gifts will be provided to respondents.
- 10) All NEH surveys will contain a notice furnished in compliance with the Privacy Act.
- 11) The surveys will not solicit information on sexual behavior, religious beliefs, or other personal matters.
- 12) The total estimate of the hour burden for the collections of information included in the NEH's general clearance authority is 500 hours. We have based this figure on an estimated 1,000 responses over the three-year period. This figure represents the *maximum* number of responses, since it assumes that every grantee in the designated programs will be surveyed. We anticipate that an individual will require 30 minutes on average to complete the questionnaire.
- 13) The annualized cost to respondents is estimated at \$27,000 based on 500 reporting hours. The average wage of respondents is estimated at \$54.00.
- 14) See response to 12 above. The cost estimate is based solely on the cost of the respondent's time to complete the information collection. The two cost components, total capital/start-up and operation/maintenance/purchase of services are not applicable. The annualized cost to the Endowment is estimated at \$54,000. NEH staff will spend approximately one hour reviewing and processing each response at an average hourly wage of \$54.00 (1,000 responses x 1 hour x \$54.00). Once again, this figure is based on the *maximum* number of solicited responses.
- 15) Not applicable. No program changes or adjustments were reported.
- 16) Not applicable. There are no plans to publish the results of the collection of information.

17) Not applicable. We intend to display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection.

18) Not applicable. There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods. Information will be collected mainly through a series of on-line questionnaires administered to entire populations of grantees in the designated programs. For purposes of illustration, the data collection methods to be used with the programs to be evaluated are described in detail below.

1) The potential respondent universe consists of an anticipated 1,000 grantees. These include 350 recipients of grants made during fiscal years 2000-2009 in the Division of Preservation and Access; 170 recipients of grants made during fiscal years 2006 - 2010 in the Division of Public Programs; and 480 recipients of grants made during fiscal years 2002-2004 in the Division of Research Programs. Depending on the program, grantees will be surveyed one to ten years after the completion of grant activities. Electronic questionnaires will be developed for each particular grant category. Grantees will be asked to assess the long-term impact of the grants. The questionnaires will consist of a mixture of open-ended and close-ended questions.

2) We envision conducting a complete census of project directors.

3) Our anticipated response rate is estimated based upon the results of the survey the Division of Preservation and Access conducted in 2005 (under OMB clearance 3136-0138) of the first five years of the Preservation Assistance Grants program. This response rate was 50-60%, however this was with repeated follow-up efforts. NEH staff will follow up with e-mail communications to non-respondents. Please see the attached sample of the planned follow-up communication.

4) Before they are administered, questionnaires will be pilot tested among a group of fewer than ten grantees.

5) The following will oversee the collection and analysis of information:

Nadina Gardner (Preservation and Access), Phone: 202-606-8442;

Thomas Phelps (Public Programs), Phone: 202-606-8269; and

Russell Wyland (Research Programs), Phone: 202-606-8391.

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP LETTER



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
HUMANITIES

DIVISION OF PRESERVATION AND ACCESS
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Dear Former NEH Project Director:

In (month/year), we wrote asking for your assessment of the NEH Preservation Assistance Grant you directed in 20___. If you have already completed the survey, please disregard this letter. We are very grateful for your kind assistance. If, on the other hand, you have not yet returned the completed questionnaire, please read on. We would genuinely appreciate hearing from you.

This survey is being conducted because your input can help NEH strengthen the programs it offers to collecting institutions. Because you directed a Preservation Assistance Grant in 20___, we turn to you for help in gaining data crucial to the NEH in determining changes or enhancements for this program. I ask that you take the time to complete the enclosed survey form. Your participation is vital as we consider ways to improve programming for smaller cultural institutions. Your responses to these questions will be kept strictly confidential.

Please complete the questionnaire by and return it to us in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. If you have any questions regarding the questionnaire, please contact me at (202) 606-8350 or (by e-mail) at rcanevali@neh.gov.

Thank you very much for your participation in our program, and for your help with this evaluation.

Sincerely,

Ralph C. Canevali
Deputy Director

