

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

GENERAL CLEARANCE AUTHORITY TO DEVELOP EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS FOR THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

A. Justification

1) The NEH is seeking a general clearance authority to develop evaluation instruments for grant programs. 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 4,800 applications and makes approximately 700 awards per year. The NEH funding divisions to develop and use this evaluation instrument in the next few years will be Preservation and Access, Public Programs, and the Federal/State Partnership.

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. These evaluations will also support the agency's efforts to implement the Program Assessment Rating Tool.

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 evaluate some of its largest and most important grant programs: Preservation Assistance Grants (Preservation and Access); Media Programs (formerly known as America's Media Makers—Public Programs); Museums, Libraries, and Cultural Organizations (formerly known as America's Historical and Cultural Organizations—Public Programs). In addition, the Federal/State Partnership plans to ask the staff and board members of state and territorial humanities councils to assess NEH's review of their activities. A draft evaluation survey for Museums, Libraries, and Cultural Organizations is attached. We may carry out additional program evaluations as well over the next several years, but the programs and the timing of their evaluation have not yet been determined. Future surveys will closely follow the format of the attached draft and contain similar questions, varying only to accommodate the differences in purpose of the particular grant program being surveyed.

2) The 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 all 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 12, 2014, 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 NEH's funding be cut by 50 percent.
- 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 600 hours. We have based this figure on an estimated 600 responses over the three-year period. We anticipate that an individual will require 60 minutes on average to complete the questionnaire.
- 13) The annualized cost to respondents is estimated at \$37,800 based on 600 reporting hours. The average wage of respondents is estimated at \$63.00.
- 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 \$37,800. NEH staff will spend approximately one hour reviewing and processing each response at an average hourly wage of \$63.00 (600 responses x 1 hour x \$63.00).
- 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 600 grantees. These include 200 recipients of grants in the Division of Preservation and Access; 350 recipients of grants that were active in FY 2012 in the Division of Public Programs; and 50 representatives of state and territorial humanities councils. (Note that these councils are not, strictly speaking, grantees; instead, as the name Federal/State Partnership suggests, they are NEH's partners in creating humanities programming.) 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) We anticipate that the response rate to these questionnaires will be high. NEH staff will follow up with e-mail communications or letters to non-respondents.

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;
Karen Mittelman (Public Programs), Phone: 202-606-8269; and
Edythe Manza (Federal/State Partnership), Phone: 202-606-8257.