

## **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: Challenge Grants, Digital Humanities, Education Programs, the Federal/State Partnership, Preservation and Access, Public Programs, and Research Programs; and one special initiative, The Common Good: The Humanities in the Public Square. The NEH receives more than 5,000 applications and makes more than 800 awards per year. The NEH funding divisions to develop and use this evaluation instrument in the next few years will be 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 two of its grant programs: Humanities in the Public Square (Public Programs) and Public Humanities Projects (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. No draft evaluation survey for any of these programs is yet available. Instead I attach a draft evaluation survey for Museums, Libraries, and Cultural Organizations. (Note that the former Museums, Libraries, and Cultural Organizations program has been folded into what is now the Public Humanities Projects program.) 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 March 8, 2017, 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; it did not, however, comment on the proposed information collection, asking instead that NEH's funding be eliminated.
- 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 580 hours. We have based this figure on an estimated 1160 responses over the three-year period. We anticipate that an individual will require 30 minutes on average to complete the questionnaire.
- 13) The annualized cost to respondents is estimated at \$40,020 based on 580 reporting hours. The average wage of respondents is estimated at \$69.00.
- 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 \$40,020. NEH staff will spend approximately half an hour reviewing and processing each response at an average hourly wage of \$69.00 (1160 responses x .5 hour x \$69.00).
- 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.