

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

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

A. Justification

1) NEH is seeking a renewal of its general clearance authority to develop evaluation instruments for its grant programs. NEH is organized into seven main program areas: Challenge Grants, Digital Humanities, Education Programs, Federal/State Partnership, Preservation and Access, Public Programs, and Research Programs. NEH receives more than 5,000 applications and makes more than 800 awards per year.

NEH regularly monitors its recipients 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 recipients and project participants after the period performance is essential to NEH's ability to assess its programs systematically and to measure progress in achieving the goals articulated in the agency's strategic plan.

At this time, the schedule for such evaluations has not been determined, and as such, no draft surveys are currently available. While NEH had stated that it planned to conduct surveys of its Public Programs and Federal-State Partnership award recipients in its 2017 renewal of this clearance, neither of those evaluations occurred. The draft survey for the Museum, Libraries and Cultural Organizations program that was included with our 2017 renewal is included with this submission. NEH anticipates that future surveys will 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) Evaluation will be overseen by NEH's Director of Policy, Research, and Analysis (a new position to be filled) in collaboration with relevant divisions. 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 will collect information electronically and/or use online collaboration tools to reduce burden.

4) No similar data are gathered or maintained by the Agency or are available from other sources known to the Agency.

5) Small businesses or other small entities may be involved in these efforts but the Agency will minimize the burden on them of information collections approved under this clearance by sampling, asking for readily available information, and using short, easy-to-complete information collection instruments.

6) As stated above, the survey of long-term outcomes is a vital component of gauging the effectiveness of NEH programs. Without these types of feedback, NEH will not have timely information to adjust its services to meet customer needs.

7) None of the listed conditions apply. Completion of these surveys will be purely voluntary, and no recipient will be surveyed more than once a year.

8) On April 13, 2020, NEH published a 60-day notice in the *Federal Register* requesting comments on this proposed collection of information (85 FR 20531) 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. On July 1, NEH published a 30-day notice (85 FR 39591.)

9) The Agency will not provide payment or other forms of remuneration to respondents of its various forms of collecting feedback.

10) All NEH surveys will contain a notice furnished in compliance with the Privacy Act.

11) No questions will be asked that are of a personal or sensitive nature.

12) The total estimate of the hour burden for the collections of information included in the NEH's general clearance authority is 615 hours. We have based this figure on an estimated 1,230 responses over the three-year period. We anticipate that an individual will require 30 minutes on average to complete the questionnaire.

13) No costs are anticipated.

14) The anticipated cost to the Federal Government is approximately \$42,435. These costs are based on estimated staff time to create the individual surveys and to monitor and review the responses.

15) The only change reported in this revision request is an adjustment of the quantity of open NEH awards that may be surveyed.

16) Not applicable. There are no plans to publish the results of the collection of information. Findings will be used for general service improvement, but are not intended for publication or other public release. Although the Agency does not intend to publish its findings, the Agency may receive requests to release the information (e.g., congressional inquiry, Freedom of

Information Act requests). The Agency will disseminate the findings when appropriate, strictly following the Agency's "Guidelines for Ensuring the Quality of Information Disseminated to the Public.", and will include specific discussion of the limitation of the qualitative results discussed above.

17) We are requesting no exemption.

18) Not applicable. These activities comply with the requirements in 5 CFR 1320.9.