Frequently Asked Questions

"What are the humanities?" When Congress established the National Endowment for the Humanities, and subsequently the LEH, it defined the humanities to include the following disciplines:

- History
- Philosophy
- Literature
- Foreign languages (classical and modern)
- Linguistics
- Comparative religion
- Ethics
- Archaeology
- Jurisprudence
- Art history
- Theory and criticism
- Philosophical and historical approaches to social sciences

These fields are differentiated from the quantitative social sciences and the arts (visual, performing or creative). However, the social sciences and the arts can interface with the humanities in terms of method or content. For example, political theory and cultural anthropology and geography are considered humanities disciplines. So are folklore and certain interdisciplinary fields such as American, ethnic and women's studies.

What role does a humanities scholar play? Given the central role played by humanities disciplines in all LEH projects, humanities scholars should figure prominently in any LEH-funded project–as project planners, speakers, panelists, resource persons, and evaluators. If a grant applicant is not trained in, or professionally involved with the humanities, the first step for developing a program should be to engage an appropriate scholar as project advisor. If prospective applicants need assistance in locating humanities scholars, there are at least two avenues open. They can (1) discuss their needs with an appropriate dean or humanities department head at a nearby college or university, or (2) contact the staff of the LEH directly.

What types of audiences should LEH-funded projects reach? Programs must be designed to address the out-of-school public rather than exclusively the scholarly community. We encourage the participation of the general public. Programs may also target specific audiences, such as families, professional groups, ethnic and/or minority groups, or women's groups. Representatives of the community must be involved in all phases of a project to complement the presence of the humanities scholars. The LEH encourages advance planning with community groups and consultation with LEH staff on outreach strategies.

To avoid advocacy and bias, programs sponsored by the LEH must provide for a balance of viewpoints, especially those projects dealing with controversial contemporary issues. For example, a project addressing the First Amendment's relation to religion in public schools should provide subject matter for both sides of the issue.

Is nonprofit status a condition of funding? Humanities-based organizations operating within the 64 parishes of Louisiana are eligible to apply. Organizations must be nonprofits with 501(c)(3) status; public-facing organizations operating within accredited institutions of higher learning; state or local government agencies; or state or federally recognized Native American tribal governments in Louisiana.

What is cost share? Cost share is the amount of funding provided by non-LEH sources. This support may be either in actual cash or in the form of in-kind contributions including volunteer time, contributed equipment and supplies, contributed facilities, and indirect costs.

What costs are not eligible for LEH grant funds? Within the actual budget, LEH grant funds, as a rule, cannot be used for the following purposes:

- Food, entertainment or liquor costs
- Expenses incurred prior to the grant award date
- Equipment purchases
- Publicity not specific to the grant-funded program

How are grant applications evaluated? LEH Staff reviews all grant applications submitted through the LEH online application portal. The online application closes at 11:59 p.m. on the day of the specified deadline. No exceptions are made. The LEH Grants Review Committee reviews proposals. The committee approves or rejects applications based on the project's humanities content, the development and dissemination of new scholarship about Louisiana, the involvement of humanities scholars, audience and outreach, geographical diversity, community involvement and partnerships, synergies with other LEH programs, and applicant's track record for completion of prior projects. See guidelines for specific grant opportunities for additional requirements.

What final reports and evaluation are required for funded projects? All grants require a Project Director's Final Report and Final Budget/confirmation of expenditures. Sponsoring organizations are obliged to provide an objective assessment of whether program activities fulfill or do not fulfill the original intent of the project as articulated in the grant proposal. As applicable, evaluation narratives may be required to supplement quantitative data gathered from the audience. See guidelines for specific grant tracks for additional requirements.

What role does LEH staff play? The LEH staff is available to review preliminary proposals, suggest humanities scholars and outreach strategies, review preliminary budgets, advise on LEH guidelines.