# Navigating the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)
# Proposal Submission Process

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# NEH Proposals….

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# NEH Proposal Submission....

- Part 1: Background Information
  - NEH Website
  - Creation/Mission
  - Organization
  - Communications

# NEH Proposals….

- NEH Website Home (neh.gov) (https://www.neh.gov)
  - Opening page
    - Announcements
    - Funding Opportunities link
    - Mission statement
    - Upcoming Grant Deadlines
    - Explore Our Work
    - Tabs for Grants, News, Our Work, About, Search

# NEH Proposals....

# NEH Proposals....

## NEH Creation

- In 1963 the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), the Council of Graduate Schools in America and the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa establishing a National Commission on the Humanities; the Commission released a report in April 1964 that recommended establishment by the President and Congress of a National Humanities Foundation to address an imbalance of science related studies vs arts and humanities.

- Sept 29, 1965 President Lyndon Johnson signed the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act into law; this created the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts as separate independent federal agencies.

# NEH Proposals....

## NEH Mission

- The National Endowment for the Humanities supports research, education, preservation, and public programs in the humanities

- Is one of the largest funders of humanities programs in the United States.

- The law identified the need for a national cultural agency to preserve America's history and cultural heritage and encourage and support scholarship and innovation in history, archeology, philosophy, literature, and other humanities disciplines.

'Because democracy demands wisdom, NEH serves and strengthens our republic by promoting excellence in the humanities and conveying the lessons of history to all Americans. The Endowment accomplishes this mission by awarding grants for top-rated proposals examined by panels of independent, external reviewers.'

# NEH Proposals….

**What are the humanities?**

"The term 'humanities' includes, but is not limited to, the study and interpretation of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of the social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life."

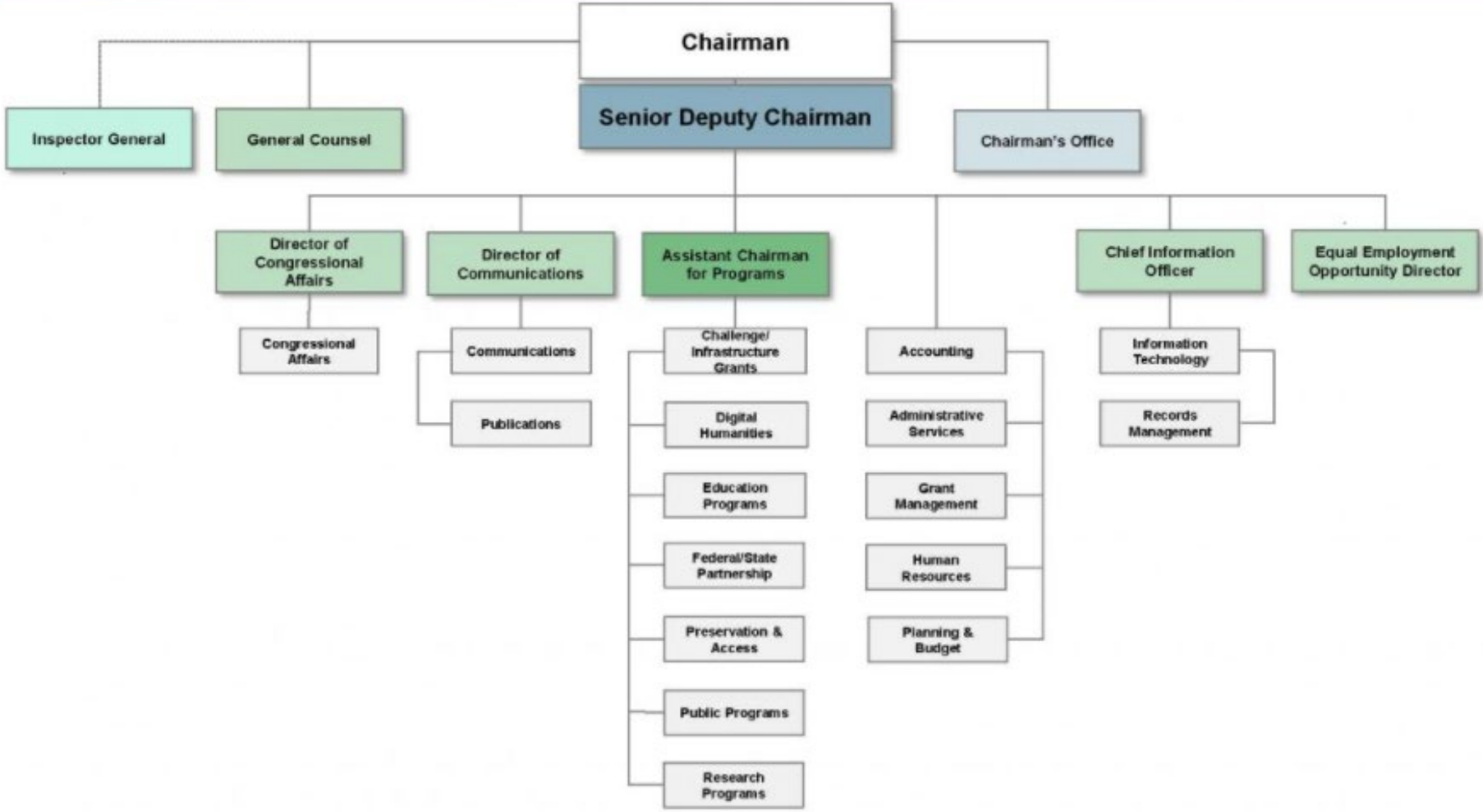--National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, 1965, as amended

# NEH Proposals….

- **Organization**
  - Office of Chairman
    - Appointed by President for 4-year term with advice and consent of Senate
    - Advised by National Council on the Humanities which is a board of 26 private citizens appointed by President, confirmed by Senate. Appointment is 6 years (staggered rotation)
  - Office of Inspector General
  - 7 program divisions and offices and several administrative offices such as Human Resources.
  - NEH also supports and works closely with the humanities councils in each state and territory.

# NEH Proposals....



National Endowment for the Humanities

Updated 11/18

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# NEH Proposals….

- Grants are primarily managed through Divisions and Offices of NEH under the Assistant Chairman for Programs

  - Challenge Programs

  - Digital Humanities

  - Education

  - Federal/State Partnership

  - Preservation & Access

  - Public Programs
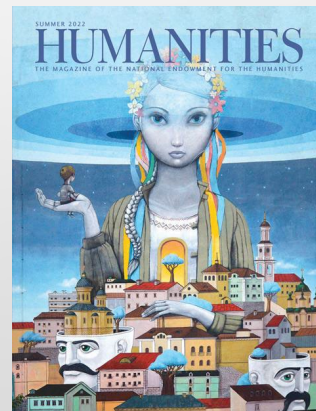
  - Research



Georgia O'Keeffe Paints Hawaii

More info in Part 2 of the presentation

# NEH Proposals….

- Communication is under the Director of Communications; has two main offices Communications and Publications

- NEH is very serious about their dedication to dispersing information and making it available to the public and other researchers. They are also usually very open and helpful to helping PI/researchers as much as they can. They even have Professional Development offerings.

- Contact to NEH is available on their website through questions@neh.gov; the mailing address, phone number and contact with program officers (under 'About' tab).

- Information from NEH is available in several spots on their website and through Twitter, Facebook, You-Tube, newsletters, blogs etc.

# NEH Proposals....

- NEH website tabs related to communication (beyond 'About' tab contacts)
    - Our Work (awards & honors, events, Humanities Magazine, NEH blog)
    - News from our work (press releases)
    - Projects (ongoing and past supported projects)
    - Under Grants = Grantee Communications Toolkit (connecting to NEH, info on doing press releases, using NEH logo, how to create various social media accounts/posts to support dissemination)
    - NEH's Humanities Magazine

# NEH Proposals….

- Guidelines for Ensuring and Maximizing the Quality, Objectivity, Utility, and Integrity of Information Disseminated by the National Endowment for the Humanities

- These Guidelines for Ensuring and Maximizing the Quality, Objectivity, Utility, and Integrity of Information Disseminated by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) are prepared under the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2001, Section 515(b), and are designed to ensure and maximize the quality, objectivity, utility and integrity of information disseminated by NEH.

(Under the 'About' tab)

# NEH Proposals....

- Part 2: Proposal Contents
    - Sources and Announcements
    - Indirect Costs for NEH proposals
    - Common Proposal Requirements and Comments
    - Submission Portals

Mexie – Art Museum

# NEH Proposals....

## Sources and Announcements for Funding

- Grants.gov

- NEH Website (search, blogs, newsletters)

- NEH Division & Office (website, blogs, etc.)


- Normally funding announcements/solicitations are called Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) or Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA).

# NEH Proposals….

- NEH grants typically go to cultural institutions, such as museums, archives, libraries, colleges, universities, public television, and radio stations, and to individual scholars. The grants:

  - strengthen teaching and learning in schools and colleges

  - facilitate research and original scholarship

  - provide opportunities for lifelong learning

  - preserve and provide access to cultural and educational resources

  - strengthen the institutional base of the humanities

# NEH Proposals....

- Grants are primarily managed through Divisions and Offices of NEH under the Assistant Chairman for Programs (38 funding programs fall under the areas below)
  - Challenge Programs
  - Digital Humanities
  - Education
  - Federal/State Partnership
  - Preservation & Access
  - Public Programs
  - Research

# NEH Proposals….

- ==Challenge Grants== programs strengthen institutional and organizational capacity for work in the humanities. Institutions and organizations in the United States support the humanities by preserving and providing access to collections, conducting scholarship and research, and developing educational programs for various audiences. Challenge Grants projects may involve building and renovating structures such as museums and libraries, and updating the infrastructure that undergirds humanities work in its many forms.

# NEH Proposals….

- The Office of Digital Humanities (ODH) offers grant programs that fund project teams experimenting with digital technologies to develop new methodologies for humanities research, teaching and learning, public engagement, and scholarly communications. ODH funds those studying digital culture from a humanistic perspective and humanists seeking to create digital publications. Another major goal of ODH is to increase capacity of the humanities in applying digital methods.

# NEH Proposals....

- ==The Division of Education Programs== supports humanities education through programs aimed primarily at program and curriculum development and through professional development opportunities for K-12 and higher education faculty. Intensive reading and discussion programs featuring recognized scholars bring together small communities of teachers at both the higher education and K-12 levels to investigate new themes and innovative approaches to humanities subjects. Largely residential and held during the summer, these programs encourage the study of common texts and other resources, include visits to collections in libraries and museums, and help faculty integrate what has been learned back into their classrooms. The division has several grant programs to support broad institutional endeavors. Community colleges, Historically Black colleges and universities, tribal colleges and universities, and Hispanic-serving institutions receive grants to enhance the humanities content of existing programs, develop new programs, or lay the foundation for more extensive endeavors. The division also supports creative, integrative, collaborative curricular projects at two- and four-year post-secondary institutions between the humanities, and STEM, pre-professional, and professional programs in law, the health sciences, etc. Finally, the division's veterans-centered program supports institutions interested in designing and implementing discussions programs that explore the experiences of war and military service through the examination of humanities texts and other resources.

# NEH Proposals....

- **The <mark>Office of Federal/State Partnership</mark> is the liaison between the National Endowment for the Humanities and the nonprofit network of state and jurisdictional humanities councils.**

  Fed/State provides general operating support awards to the states and jurisdictions in order to bring humanities education, lifelong learning, and public humanities programming to communities across the country. Fed/State collaborates with designated state and jurisdictional humanities councils to advance public understanding of the humanities, while enhancing public awareness of, access to, and support for the humanities on a local, grassroots level.

  The council community helps the National Endowment for the Humanities realize its two primary strategic goals of advancing knowledge and understanding of the humanities and increasing public awareness of, access to, and support for the humanities throughout the United States.

# NEH Proposals....



The humanities councils support local humanities programs and events. The councils are funded in part by the federal government through [NEH's Office of Federal/State Partnership](#) (Fed/State). They also receive funding from private donations, foundations, corporations, and, in some cases, state government.

Stories about the work of state and jurisdictional humanities council are on the [Fed/State page](#). Articles about the public humanities programming by state and jurisdictional humanities councils appear in most issues of *[Humanities](#)*, as do articles about council executives. To find out more about the humanities councils near you, browse the alphabetical listing by state and jurisdiction, below.

A printable version of the contact information for the state and jurisdictional humanities councils can be found here ([PDF](#)).

# NEH Proposals….

- <mark>Division of Preservation and Access</mark>

- A substantial portion of the nation's cultural heritage and intellectual legacy is held in libraries, archives, and museums. These repositories are responsible for preserving and making available collections of books, serials, manuscripts, sound recordings, still and moving images, works of art, objects of material culture, and rapidly expanding digital collections. The challenge is great: to preserve diverse formats of materials that are threatened by factors inherent in their physical structures or by the environments in which they are housed, and to create a level of intellectual control sufficient to enable users to find and use the materials relevant to them. Increasingly, these humanities collections are being used to create the kind of Web-based resources that NEH supports, such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, descriptive catalogs, and digital archives. Both the creators and users of these resources also need our support to develop digital tools to enhance access to and promote integration of these materials.

# NEH Proposals….

- Division of Public Programs

- Public humanities projects enable millions of Americans to explore significant humanities works, ideas, and events. They offer new insights into familiar subjects and invite reflection upon important questions about human life. The division supports a wide range of public humanities programming that reaches large and diverse public audiences and make use of a variety of formats—interpretation at historic sites, television and radio productions, museum exhibitions, podcasts, short videos, digital games, websites, mobile apps, and other digital media. Examples of funded projects include Ken Burns's Civil War documentary, which increased public understanding of a pivotal point in American history; the Walters Art Museum exhibition The Book of Kings: Art, War, and the Morgan Library's Medieval Picture Bible, which gave visitors insights into the role of religion in the Middle Ages; and the reinterpretation of Historic Hudson Valley's Phillipsburg Manor, an eighteenth-century New York mill site, through which visitors learn about the contributions of enslaved African Americans in the North, and Walden, a game, a free-to-educators digital game that allows players to spend a year at Walden Pond as Henry David Thoreau.

# NEH Proposals....

- The Division of Research supports scholarly research that advances knowledge and understanding of the humanities. Through twelve annual funding opportunities, awards are made to scholars—individuals, collaborative teams, or institutions—working on research projects of significance to specific humanities fields and to the humanities as a whole. The projects that the division supports are as diverse as America itself. Examples: editions of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the history of "The Star Spangled Banner," and the autobiography of Mark Twain.

# NEH Proposals....

- NEH's **Fellowships** program was established over 50 years ago and was the first award offered by the Endowment. Since then, approximately seven thousand books have been written by NEH fellows. In the academic world, "getting an NEH" is a shorthand for receiving an NEH Fellowship, which indicates the award's widely respected reputation and prestige. Recognizing the specific needs of certain scholars, **Awards for Faculty** offer more flexible fellowships to those employed at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges and Universities. **Summer Stipends** (limited submission) offer two-month awards to allow scholars to take a shorter break to pursue focused research. **Public Scholar** awards encourage writing books for a wide readership. Placing NEH at the forefront of innovative methods in the humanities, **NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication** support projects that require digital expression and digital publication. Books resulting from all of these grants regularly earn awards and recognition. NEH-funded work has been honored with Pulitzer Prizes, Bancroft Prizes, as well as awards from academic associations across the country and accolades from reviewers in major newspapers and literature journals.

- While Research Programs is the only NEH division to make awards to individuals, institutional grants are also available. **Collaborative Research** supports projects by teams of scholars. **Scholarly Editions and Scholarly Translations** provides funding for time-intensive editing projects such as the Papers of George Washington, and **Fellowship Programs at Independent Research Institutions** provides American scholars access to unique collections at American centers for humanities research around the world.

# NEH Proposals….

Format Guidance

- NEH ==does not have general guidelines== so you must read the Funding Opportunity Announcement for particular formatting information (if given)

- In general

  - PDFs are preferred; with no security enhancements (password protection, encryption, digital signature)

  - File names 50 characters or less

  - Watch for file naming instructions

  - Watch page limits (and page additions at conversion)

  - See if single or double lines are mentioned

  - If no information is given, ask Program Office; if no guidance we recommend 1 inch margin; 11 point font, Ariel/Times New Roman.

# NEH Proposals….

## Indirect Cost Rates (IDC) for NEH Proposals

- The default IDC at the University of Oklahoma per our federally negotiated agreement, is for activity code Research at 55%. However, our Other Sponsored Activities (OSA) activity code at 36.3% is often appropriate for NEH types of proposals.

- If a high majority of the work is not done at the OU-Norman Campus (or using OU assets) then the off-campus rate of 26% may be approved for use.

- Sometimes sponsor guidelines can specify an idc rate, which is usually accepted by OU.

- There is a form PI's can use to request idc of less than the full rate. Talk to your Proposal Development Specialist (PDS) so the correct rate can be established. Do not assume just because it is NEH that it is 36.3% or that prior submissions/approvals can be used for current submissions.

# NEH Proposals….

## Common Proposal Requirements and Comments

Note you must read the solicitation for your proposal as contents vary between solicitations and sometimes by years – use most current version.

- SF 424 –Cover page form (ORS does if OU submitting)

- Supplementary Cover sheet for NEH Grant Programs (ORS)

- Project Performance Site(s) Location Form (ORS)

- Research Related Budget form and Budget Justification (ORS based on routing)

- Narrative file (PI, contents vary widely)

# NEH Proposals….

Common Proposal Requirements and Comments (cont.)

- Work plan (PI)

- Resumes of Key Personnel (PI, usually 2 pages)

- Letters (PI, may be Reference, Commitment, etc. or not allowed)

- Bibliography (PI)

- Federally Negotiated IDC agreement (ORS)

# NEH Proposals….

Common Proposal Requirements and Comments (cont.)

- Many of the NEH solicitations include
    - links to samples/examples
    - Advertisement of a webinar (later available on You Tube
- Program Officers are normally very responsive to answer questions
- Program Officers will review submissions and provide advice
    - Must be complete proposal
    - Must be received by PO 6 weeks prior to submission date
- Most important criteria is Significance (determine your audience and emphasize what is unique about your proposal and how it will meet the need or change/impact your audience)
- Pay close attention to review criteria and make sure you address them
- NEH posts information on awards, their budget, gives heads up on Program pages on expected solicitation announcements; prior You Tube webinars are available.

# NEH Proposals….

Fellowship Proposals

- NEH does fellowship proposals to individuals and to/through organizations
- Some fellowship proposals let you pick if it goes through organization
- Common parts of fellowship proposal
  - SF 424 Individual Form
  - NEH Supplemental Information Form
  - SF 424 Performance Site Form
  - Attachment Form
    - Narrative
    - Bibliography
    - Resume(s)
  - Specific solicitation items
- Provost policy on fellowships (whether going through ORS or not)

# NEH Proposals….

## Submission Portals

- Grants.gov is the primary submission portal for NEH proposals

    - Unless the PI is submitting an individual proposal (one where funds will come to them and not through the University) the submission will go in under the University account. You do not need a Grants.gov registration to do a submission that will flow through the University.

- Very rarely you may be asked to provide a submission to an email address.

- Note registration 'needs' may be given in funding announcements for such things as System for Award Management (SAM); do not obtain any registrations for your NEH submissions without checking with ORS.

# NEH Proposals....

- Part 3: After Submission
  - Other Actions
  - Review
  - Award
  - Special Notes
  - Take-a-Way



Saying Hello in Navajo

# NEH Proposals….

- Other Actions
  - Resubmissions after the deadline are normally not allowed.
  - Update or Revision types of actions are normally done via email with the PO; however, there have been a few times we've seen grants.gov used.
  - PO have worked with PI on slight corrections at PI request.
  - PO can ask for additional or replacement information after submission, prior to review, and during review.

# NEH Proposals….

- Review
  - There are 4 steps in the review process
    - Level 1 -- Panel Review
      - 3-6 people who review 15-40 applications
      - Evaluators read, comment, and assign initial rating (based on published review criteria and program guidelines)
      - They may or may not meet to discuss and do final comments and rating; Evaluators are not expected to reach a consensus or rank as a panel.
    - Level 2 -- NEH Staff Review – PO gathers all the comments and ratings; compiles information and ratings; sends highest ranked proposals to Level 3.
    - Level 3 – National Council on the Humanities – reviews all the funding recommendations and votes on the Staff recommendations. Meets March, July, and November.
    - Level 4 –NEH Chair Decisions –Funding recommendations from the National Council on the Humanities are sent to the NEH Chair to make the final funding decisions.

# NEH Proposals….

- Review
  - NEH has no standing review panels; all are assembled anew; no back-to-back reviewer allowed on same program.
  - They are always looking for panel members (good way to meet program officers and see the process).
  - NEH is very competitive; normally only 8-20% get funded (varies by program).  Second time submissions have better success.
  - Reviewer comments are provided upon request; PO recommend requesting whether you are funded or not for possible future use.  If you have questions or don't understand comments, the PO will meet with you to go over them.

# NEH Proposals….

- Award

  - PO may request revisions as part of award process

  - PI may receive notification (or heads-up) first, let ORS know

  - On website, under 'Grants' is a tab 'Manage Your Award' with many forms and report tips

  - Be aware of reporting requirements and timing.  File reports using eGMS system

# NEH Proposals….

Special Notes – NIH says Common Errors

- Ignoring the guidelines

- Not making the case for significance

- An incomplete work plan

- Using jargon

- Not planning ahead



First Americans Museum - Oklahoma

# NEH Proposals….

## Organizational/Internal Considerations

- Proposal process begins with submission of information sheet; just answer the questions the best you can – we can update as needed.

- We will work with you to develop the budget; talk to your PDS about Indirect Costs.

- At OU, completion of the routing is what gives the PI and ORS the permission to submit any proposal.

- Be cognizant of submitting accurate subcontract and consultant information – is what you are submitting officially approved?

# NEH Proposal Submissions….

# **Take-a-Way**

- If you are a PI, decide your Division(s)/Programs of interest.

- When Director changes some programs will change but not as disruptive as some agencies.

- Sign up for NEH newsletter
  https://tinyurl.com/subscribeNEH

- Get to know your Program Officer.

- Become a review panel member.

- Look at the NEH website; it contains a lot of information.  Visit their Virtual Grants Webpage under "Grants"

- See 'NEH Virtual Grants Workshops' on Grants tab

# Contacts for Help

- [RIS@ou.edu](mailto:RIS@ou.edu) will answer questions or put you in contact with who can answer your questions for anything pre-award/Office of Research Services (ORS) related.

- Submit an info sheet [Office of Research Services - Proposal Information Sheet|| The University of Oklahoma (ou.edu)](#) and someone from ORS will contact you.

- Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE) provides proposal assistance to include SciENcv training [cfe@ou.edu](mailto:cfe@ou.edu) .

- If your question is related to post award, then contact Research Financial Services (ReFS) [refsinfo@ou.edu](mailto:refsinfo@ou.edu) .

# QUESTIONS?