



Request for Proposals (RFP):
What Does it Mean to be a New Mexican?

A relatively recent addition to the United States of America, the State of New Mexico has its own unique history, religions, philosophies, ideologies and sense of itself as it relates to the nation as a whole. Before becoming a state in 1912, New Mexico had a longstanding history and identity that has changed over time in response to peoples of different languages, ethnicities, and religions who have lived and traveled here. If the landscape gave birth to an American identity, the West reaffirmed that existence.

The Board of Directors of the New Mexico Humanities Council (NMHC) has approved a new initiative for the grant program entitled, "What Does it Mean to be a New Mexican?", a special call for public programs to enhance the teaching and understanding of New Mexico history. This project arises from and is inspired by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) "We the People" initiative which examines the concepts of freedom and democracy. The NEH has provided public programming funds to explore, compare and contrast, and discuss concepts relating to the development and meaning of the New Mexican identity over time to understand who we are today.

A wide range of public programming formats is encouraged for applicants applying for funding under this initiative. These may include exhibitions, speaker presentations, and reading and film discussions. Participants will be asked to discuss who New Mexico's heroes and heroines are and what roles they have played in the state's development. Other considerations that may be addressed are: 1) what are some of the significant events, values and themes in our state's history? 2) what are the significant documents that define New Mexico? 3) How are New Mexico and the United States similar and different in terms of our founding documents like the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and civil rights legislation? 4) How are the U.S. and pre-statehood New Mexico the same and different in terms of conflicts and wars, economies, and ownership of land? 5) How does the core of U.S. democracy (individual freedoms, equality, economic opportunity, civic engagement, and justice) compare to the development of democracy in New Mexico? What role does cultural pluralism and diversity play in New Mexico's identity and are they similar or different in the formation of other state identities? Is New Mexico currently more or less advanced than other states in terms of cultural pluralism?

These and other questions are posed for participating organizations and communities to use as a comparative model to examine how we are the same and how we are different in terms of the native and immigrant experience, constitutional checks and balances in government, a shifting U.S. border, the importance of "place" in New Mexican identity, the formation of the state in terms of the influence of community and ethnic groups on local, regional, and national identity. Applicants might elect also to compare these themes to our neighboring states to assist them in determining just how New Mexico is distinct and unique while acknowledging what we share with one another.