

NEW MEXICO HUMANITIES COUNCIL
BOARD MEMBER HANDBOOK

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NEW MEXICO HUMANITIES COUNCIL

Mission Statement

Throughout the State of New Mexico, the New Mexico Humanities Council supports and conducts innovative and imaginative programs that lead to a greater understanding of, and to motivating interest in, the richness of the human experience and heritage. In both residents and visitors, the New Mexico Humanities Council seeks to inspire an appreciation for the rich diversity of land, people, and ideas, providing the foundation on which to build a better understanding of who we are, were, and hope to be.

Encourages and Supports the Humanities in New Mexico

...direct connection to the communities it serves...



We seek out and fund quality humanities programs for presentation to public audiences throughout the state. Through our grants program, we support worthy projects and organizations which deal with topics ranging from local history and culture to international affairs. These programs enrich the cultural lives of the state's citizens.

Our Speakers Bureau, National History Day and Grant Programs, as well as other national programming initiatives, bring the humanities to communities throughout the state.

The New Mexico Humanities Council website lists events including upcoming Speakers Bureau programs, other NMHC-sponsored initiatives, and gatherings, performances, workshops, and celebrations by NMHC grantees. In supporting these programs, NMHC strives to enhance both the cultural and civic life of New Mexico citizens.

Bringing the humanities to the public enriches the cultural life of the state's citizens who contribute to the consideration of public and social issues and policy. New Mexico has diverse cultures that influence our contemporary lives. The mission and goals of NMHC reflect its history, its current relationship with its principal funder, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and sustained commitments by its Board of Directors.

Funding

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), an independent grant-making agency of the United States government, is dedicated to supporting research, education, preservation and public programs in the humanities and is our principal funding source. Other sources of income are from grants from the State of New Mexico, grants from other sources, income and royalties from NMHC programs, corporate and private gifts, interest from the investment of non-Federal funds, and sustained commitments by its Board of Directors and staff.

Corporate Status

NMHC is a private, non-profit corporation that falls under section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code. As a private non-profit corporation, NMHC is neither a Federal nor state agency nor a local branch or office of NEH.

Humanities Disciplines

The act establishing the NEH in 1965 states, "Humanities includes, but is not limited to, the study 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 social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods
- 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."

Educational Programs in Communities Statewide

NMHC programs are free or nearly free and open to the public. Over 3,000 Speakers Bureau programs have been presented in the past 10 years. Each year over 500,000 individuals in nearly every New Mexico county, city, and many villages, enjoy NMHC-sponsored programs.

Fosters Economic Development

Over 20 million visits are made annually to New Mexico's cultural resources, accounting for 2 percent of the \$5.5 billion tourism industry. Arts and Culture industries account for one out of eighteen jobs (5.5%) and Arts and Culture Industries and Tourism account for one out of ten jobs (9.8%). NMHC strives to foster this economic development by supporting, through our grants program, compelling and thought-provoking humanities-related projects in museums, libraries, historical and cultural sites in over 50 New Mexico communities each year.

Multiplies Investment in the Humanities

NMHC program support is matched by local communities at a rate of 1 to 1. An average of \$700,000 a year in matching contributions is made by private, foundation and institutional support.

Supports Public Education

Over the last 10 years, NMHC has annually sponsored over 250 public education programs statewide, including a two-week residential institute for teachers of New Mexico's history.

Connects the Traditions of the Past with the Issues of Today

NMHC documents and preserves New Mexico's rich traditions and cultural heritage, presenting educational and entertaining programs statewide.

Promotes and Fosters Civic Participation and Responsibility

NMHC is involved in a variety of activities which enhance the public's understanding of and engagement in civic life. NMHC sponsors major programs on the foundations of democracy (the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and Religious Freedom) as well as public forums on issues such as land use practices, the homeless, the incarcerated, science and society, immigration, the role of government, and the importance of community. NMHC funds help support local communities, rural and urban, as they explore their history and culture, their past and their future.

Current Programs

- Grants
Communities and organizations throughout the state apply to NMHC for funds to carry out specific humanities-based programs. The program is competitive and is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Applicants must demonstrate that their proposed program is rich in humanities content and appropriate for public audiences. NMHC also requires grantees to use humanities scholars or community experts in their planning to ensure that humanities themes and approaches are well integrated into grant-funded programs.

- National History Day (NHD)

A project-oriented history competition for middle and high school students who compete first regionally, then statewide, and then nationally. Categories can be entered individually or as a group to include essays, documentaries, performances, websites, documentaries and exhibitions. The program directly serves some of the state’s most underserved communities; the majority of NHD-participating students are from some of the most poverty-stricken counties in the state, all of which exceed the national poverty rate of 14%. All of these counties have median household incomes under the national average (\$57,617) and six are under the state average (\$46,844.) NHD in New Mexico provides wrap-around services for participating schools through stipends to underwrite costs for transportation to and from contests and for student project materials, travel for judges, teacher development opportunities, student awards, coordinator travel, and classroom coaching.
- Speakers Bureau

The Speakers Bureau is “known state-wide for innovative and engaging public programs that advance understanding and appreciation of the State and our people.” The Speakers Bureau includes Chautauqua and lecture programs held in every corner of the state. These programs can be booked by any nonprofit group, including schools. This project is partially funded by the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs. Seventy-eight scholars and cultural experts offer 138 programs that inform and delight audiences through lectures, living history (Chautauqua) performances, storytelling, and folk music “informances.” Speakers address history, art and literary criticism, environmental issues, archaeology, comparative religion, and the diverse traditions and cultures that make up New Mexico.
- Digital Humanities

This Initiative is poised to grow exponentially with the help of a pending grant from the Bureau of Land Management to develop an online resource for New Mexico archaeology. The primary deliverable from the project, paired with NMHC’s existing online Atlas of Historical New Mexico Maps, would be an adaptive website (for mobile and desktop) that can support features to present deep, broad, and granular interpretive and educational information on New Mexico archaeological sites, engaging visitors on topics of ancient cultures and places of New Mexico, contemporary archaeological ethics, and developments in the field. NMHC would also collaborate with partners to conduct outreach activities to engage students, professionals, and enthusiasts--particularly in tribal communities--with both heritage and online resources. A digital humanities podcast is also in development.
- Journalism, Democracy and the Informed Citizen

NMHC received a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for this initiative in partnership with the Pulitzer Prizes. The Council conducted a film and panelist discussion series, sponsored photo exhibitions and discussions featuring the work of journalist Ernie Pyle, photojournalists Rick Kozak and Don Bartletti and AP photo editor Hal Buell.

Past Programs

- Summer Institute for Teachers of New Mexico History
This was a course for K-12 teachers to renew, inspire, and bring the latest historical curricula and interpretations into the classroom. This project was funded by the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs.
- Museum on Main Street (MoMs)
MoMs brings together the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Services (SITES), the Federation of State Humanities Councils, individual state humanities councils, and small rural museums in a collaborative effort to serve rural audiences. The partnership, established in 1991, was formed as a creative response to the challenges faced by rural museums to enhance their own cultural legacies. The NMHC has supported five MoMs traveling exhibitions in 30 communities.

NMHC HISTORY

...bringing individual experience into the community



Two cowboys in New Mexico circa 1945.
Photo courtesy of the Museum of New Mexico.

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) was established by the U.S. Congress in 1965. In 1970, Congress authorized the National Endowment for the Humanities to establish state-based humanities programs through NEH's Division of State Programs. This legislation mandated these state programs to conduct humanities programs only on issues of social and public policy. Reauthorization of the NEH in 1975 allowed state programs to fund any program eligible for funding by NEH. Thus, in addition to programs for the general public, state programs were able to fund research activities, publication, preservation of documents, and curriculum development. As a matter of local policy, NMHC's Board of Directors decided to retain its commitment to bringing the humanities to the general public. This commitment has been periodically reaffirmed

by the board and the NMHC today remains committed to this aspect of its original mission.

Because NEH remains NMHC's principal source of funds, NMHC must comply with a variety of requirements as a condition of this funding. These requirements are reflected in its mission and goals -- both as originally stated and as subsequently modified and reaffirmed. NMHC began with and retains a commitment to support humanities programs which, so far as is possible, are accessible to citizens throughout the state.

In a typical year, NMHC will support over 500 public programs serving about 50 different communities throughout the state. Communities served range from villages such as San Jon, Mosquero, and Glenwood to the state's population centers - Albuquerque, Clovis, Farmington, Las Cruces, Roswell, and Santa Fe. In support of this effort to provide equal access throughout the state, NMHC actively reaches out to communities throughout the state. Board and staff members hold public meetings and conduct grant-writing workshops in such communities as Shakespeare, Raton, Shiprock and Jal.

The New Mexico Humanities Council traces its roots to the summer of 1972. Six New Mexicans -- Dr. Frank Angel, Dr. Thomas Gale, Mr. Gordon Greaves, Dr. Ferrel Heady, Dr. Frank Ikle, and Mr. Arturo Ortega -- were invited to Washington, D.C. by the National Endowment for the Humanities. They were briefed on NEH's newly created Division of State Programs. Following this trip, the New Mexico Endowment for the Humanities was established. Dr. Dudley Wynn was appointed its first Executive Director, and Dr. Thomas Gale elected its first Chair.

From August 1972 through February 1973, the council began with a planning grant from NEH. This resulted in an application for operating funds which was submitted to NEH's Division of State Programs in February 1973. Full operations began in July of 1973 with a \$175,000 grant.

When the reauthorization of NEH in 1975 lifted some of the restrictions on state program, NMHC reassessed its programming goal and priorities. While broadening its purview from issues of social concern and public policy to humanities programs generally, it maintained its commitment to serve the public (i.e., out-of-school adults).

In 1986 the Board of Directors of the New Mexico Endowment for the Humanities changed the organization's name to the New Mexico Humanities Council. In 1988 the NMHC Resource Center was created and annually supports over 250 programs a year today. NMHC conducted its first annual New Mexico History Teachers Institute in 1995, and in 1997 the Council served as the sole sponsor for the National History Day competition for New Mexico students in grades 6-12. NMHC began funding Resource Center programs for school children in 1997 and the "pubic audience" definition was changed to include mixed and intergenerational audiences in 1998. The Resource Center's name was changed to the Chautauqua Program in 2006 and is currently known as the Speakers Bureau.

Responding to the extreme budget cuts in 1996, NEH reorganized and consolidated some of its divisions to include the renaming and reorganization of the Division of State Programs to the Federal/State Partnership. The Federal/State Partnership fosters public understanding of the humanities throughout the nation through state humanities councils in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and Guam.

The NMHC Board of Directors responded to the threat of the elimination of federal funds and the uncertainty of receiving continued state funding by creating the NMHC Endowment Fund in 2001. The Board established a minimum goal of \$250,000 before earned income can be distributed to NMHC programs.

NMHC celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2002 and its 40th anniversary in 2013.

GOVERNANCE

The governing body of NMHC is its volunteer Board of Directors, including board members appointed by the governor and elected by the board. The board sets policy, determines NMHC's goals and objectives both operational and programmatic, evaluates funding applications, and hires the executive director. Each board member serves a three-year, renewable term. To ensure continuity, terms are staggered so a portion of its members are replaced each year.

Under the supervision of the executive director, the NMHC staff assists with the implementation of the plans and policies determined by the board.

Responsibilities

- The board should give priority to developing and maintaining high standards of intellectual excellence in its programs.
- Board members should review and approve grant awards of NEH grant funds sought by applicants seeking to sponsor public humanities programs.
- The board should establish the general policies that govern the operations of the organization and the development of a long-range plan for the organization. A Strategic Plan that looks at least three years into the future will guide the work of the NMHC. Board members should participate in an annual review of the current Mission Statement and Strategic Plan and monitor the organization's progress in relationship to the plan.
- Board members should attend meetings regularly. The NMHC board meets three times a year, in November, March, and July. These meetings are scheduled for 1-1/2 days and are extremely important to the work of the organization. Board members should contribute financially, approve grant awards and serve on committees as appointed, attend NMHC-funded programs, contribute to program development, review and approve NMHC policy and procedures, approve NMHC proposals to the NEH and other sources, and review the status of the NMHC Endowment Fund at the annual meeting.
- The board provides management oversight and accountability and lends credibility to NMHC through the contributions and accomplishments of its members to the humanities in New Mexico. In addition to the Executive Committee, which consists of the officers and committee chairs, the NMHC Board has working committees: Grants, Development, Nomination, Finance, Audit and Programs. Board members should participate fully in the work of the committee to which they are assigned.

- Board members should participate in recruitment and orientation of new board members on a broad statewide basis, taking into account the current strategic needs of the organization in terms of skills and expertise, as well as ensuring geographic, gender, and ethnic equality.
- The board should continuously search and implement new means of increasing public understanding and use of the humanities.
- The board should help root NMHC's programs more firmly in the state by seeking additional sources of funding locally and by making its program efforts known to its political representatives. The board may seek the advice and participation of community leaders with appropriate expertise and experience in the interest of promoting awareness of NMHC's activities and enhancing the resources of NMHC. The board is responsible for all tangible assets and liabilities of the organization and accepts full responsibility for the finances of the organization, including monitoring the annual operating budget, reviewing the projected budget, selecting auditors and investment managers, managing endowments, and raising funds from public and private sources.
- The board should identify and secure financial resources to advance the work of the organization, and this is one of the most important aspects of the work of the NMHC Board. Examples of this work include: Making contacts on behalf of NMHC; raising awareness of NMHC activities; assisting in the acquisition of funds to support the organization as appropriate; participating in revenue-producing events; assisting in the identification of potential donors, both governmental and private; joining the executive director or other appropriate persons on calls to corporate or legislative leaders; and making an annual personal contribution to the organization.
- The board should evaluate itself and the Executive Director annually to assure a high level of performance at both the board and staff level. In the event of the resignation of the executive director, the board should initiate a search and select a new leader for the organization

Composition

The composition of the board is determined in part by Federal legislation. These requirements have been interpreted by NEH as follows:

- The board should consist of about equal numbers of academic and public members.
- The board should consist of about equal numbers of females and males.
- The racial/ethnic composition of the board should reflect that of the state.
- The hometowns of board members should reflect the distribution of the state's population.
- Academic members should represent a variety of humanities disciplines.
- Public members should represent a variety of constituencies.
- Public members should represent a variety of vocations, skills, and talents.

NMHC Board of Directors Code of Conduct

The Board of Directors of the New Mexico Humanities Council (council) has adopted this Code of Conduct to:

- set forth certain of the values to which it will adhere in the governance of the council,
- promote honest and ethical conduct by directors by establishing standards to which they should conform, and
- provide guidance to directors in carrying out their duties to the council.

No code or policy can anticipate every situation that may arise. Accordingly, this code is intended to serve as a source of guiding principles for directors. Directors are encouraged to bring questions about particular circumstances that may implicate one or more of the provisions of this code to the attention of the chair of the audit committee, who may provide guidance on the provision in question.

This code applies to all NMHC Board members. All Board members shall adhere to the requirements set forth below in carrying out their duties to the council.

Standard of Conduct

In discharging his or her duty to direct the management of the business and affairs of the council, a director shall at all times act in a manner he or she believes in good faith to be in the best interests of the council, and exercise the care an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would exercise under similar circumstances. The Board of directors represents the interests of council funding providers by overseeing management performance on their behalf. The Board of directors' responsibilities in performing this oversight function include a *duty of care* and a *duty of loyalty*.

A director's *duty of care* refers to the responsibility to exercise appropriate diligence in overseeing the management of the council, making decisions and taking other actions. In meeting the *duty of care*, directors are expected to:

- Attend and participate personally in Board and committee meetings.
- Remain properly informed about the council's business and affairs. Directors will devote appropriate time to reviewing periodic updates provided by council management and staff, as well as studying board materials prior to each meeting.
- Rely on others. Absent knowledge that makes reliance unwarranted, directors may rely on board committees, council management and staff, and professional advisors.
- Make inquiries. Directors will make inquiries about potential problems that come to their attention and follow up until they are reasonably satisfied that management is addressing them appropriately.
- A director's *duty of loyalty* refers to the responsibility to act in good faith and in the council's best interests, not the interests of the director, a family member or an organization with which the director is affiliated. Directors shall not use their positions for personal gain. The *duty of loyalty* may be relevant in cases of conflict of interest.

Conflicts of Interest

Directors have a duty to be free from the influence of any conflicting interest when they participate in council board or committee deliberations or voting, and for complying with the NMHC Board of Directors Conflict of Interest Policy.

Confidentiality

Directors will maintain the confidentiality of all proprietary and sensitive or valuable information of the council entrusted to them, except when disclosure is authorized or legally mandated.

Fair Dealing

In carrying out their responsibilities to the council (including establishing the council's policies and practices), Directors shall seek to deal fairly with the council's funding providers, customers, service providers, suppliers, competitors, partners, and employees, and shall avoid taking unfair advantage of anyone through manipulation, concealment, abuse of privileged information, misrepresentation of material facts, or any other unfair dealing practice. Directors will refrain from any statement, promotion, or advertisement that is deceptive or fraudulent, and from the use of implication or half-truths that could falsely represent a product or service.

Protection and Proper Use of Council Assets

In carrying out their responsibilities to the council (including establishing the council's policies and practices), Directors will protect the council's assets, ensure their efficient use and ensure they are used for legitimate business purposes. Directors will not use the name and good reputation of the council to advance a personal cause unless authorized by the Board of Directors.

Compliance With Laws and Regulations

In carrying out their responsibilities to the council, directors will adhere, and cause the council to adhere, to all applicable international, federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Encouraging the Reporting of Possible Illegal or Unethical Behavior

Directors will take steps to ensure that the council (a) promotes ethical behavior; (b) encourages employees to talk to their management and other appropriate personnel when in doubt about the best course of action in a particular situation; (c) encourages employees to report violations of laws, regulations or the council's Employee Code of Conduct to appropriate personnel; and (d) informs employees that the council will not allow retaliation for reports made in good faith.

Compliance Procedures

Any waiver of any provision of this code may only be made by the Board of Directors after due deliberation and a determination by the board that appropriate controls to protect the council are in place. Directors will communicate any suspected violations of this code promptly to the chair of the audit committee. Violations will be investigated by the audit committee or by a person or persons designated by the board, and appropriate action will be taken in the event of any violations of the code.

NMHC GRANT PROCESS

...thought, learning and experience must be shared...

The New Mexico Humanities Council accepts applications for funding to conduct high quality humanities programs for public audiences throughout the state. They are intended primarily for adults who are not full-time students and for families. These programs are widely-advertised and held at times and in locations accessible to the general public. The programs vary as widely as New Mexico's communities and audiences. These programs bring humanities scholars and the public together to create dialogue that enhances the civic and cultural life of the citizens of New Mexico.

How We Decide

Decisions to fund grant applications are made by the NMHC Board of Directors through the grants committee. The funding process is a competitive one with more proposals than NMHC can support. Only the written application is reviewed so the submitted materials must clearly and effectively state the applicant's case.

In making funding decisions, proposals are evaluated against the following NMHC guidelines:

- Humanities Content -- Does the proposed project have substantial humanities content which is central to the activities for which NMHC funding is requested?
- Humanities Scholars -- Will professional humanities scholars be principal participants in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project? Is each scholar's specific role clearly explained? Do the proposed scholars have appropriate expertise?
- Project Substance -- Has a brief, clear statement of the proposed project's activities been presented? Is it clear who will do what, when, where, and why?
- Balance -- Does the proposed program aim at a balanced presentation and broad public understanding? Does it avoid advocacy, bias, and calls for direct action?
- Community Interest -- Do the program's schedule, format, participants, and plans for publicity demonstrate the capacity to gain the interest and participation of an adult out-of-school or family audience?

- Budget -- Is the proposed budget adequate to support the project's activities without being wasteful? Does promised cost share at least equal the amount requested from NMHC? Does the budget clearly explain proposed expenditures and the sources of funds?
- Project Income -- If the program expects to generate income, is it used to defer the project's costs? Is this use clearly explained in the budget?