

The National Endowment for the Humanities

2003

In order “to promote progress and scholarship in the humanities and the arts in the United States,” Congress enacted the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965. This act established the National Endowment for the Humanities as an independent grant-making agency of the federal government to support research, education, and public programs in the humanities. In fiscal year 2003, grants were made through Federal/State Partnership, four divisions (Education Programs, Preservation and Access, Public Programs, and Research Programs), and the Office of Challenge Grants.

The act that established the National Endowment for the Humanities says, “The term ‘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; 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.”

The National Endowment for the Humanities supports exemplary work to advance and disseminate knowledge in all the disciplines of the humanities. Endowment support is intended to complement and assist private and local efforts and to serve as a catalyst to increase nonfederal support for projects of high quality. To date, NEH matching grants have helped generate almost \$1.67 billion in gift funds. Each application to the Endowment is assessed by knowledgeable persons outside the agency who are asked for their judgments about the quality and significance of the proposed project. Seven hundred and sixty scholars, professionals in the humanities, and other experts served on 168 panels throughout the year.