

# **ADE Federal Policy Committee Report**

**November 2007**

**Introduction:** This report looks back on another busy year for the Federal Policy Committee, but much of the subject matter will sound familiar. Funding for both the grants program and staffing for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) was again zeroed out by the Administration, and the fight to convince the Congress to restore the funding again consumed the time, talent and energy of many ADE members. The change in party control in Congress and the accompanying reorganization of the committee structure meant that we needed to educate a new group of committee chairs, members and staffers in both houses. But, we found that the new Congress was more receptive to our issues than the previous one. Nevertheless, as this report is written, we are still awaiting a resolution of the issue of FY2008 funding for both the NHPRC and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

Before reviewing the year's advocacy activities, we'll provide some information about the ADE's relationship to our two major advocacy coalitions.

## **NCH and NHA:**

Again this year, the work of both the National Coalition for History (NCH) and the National Humanities Alliance (NHA) has been vitally important. Our working relationship with the directors (Lee White and Jessica Jones) of these two organizations is strong, and they are very good about making sure that we are kept up to date on our issues and alerted to any crisis, breaking news, etc. They have both demonstrated themselves to be persistent, smart and politically savvy leaders in the battles to save the NHPRC and to increase the funding for both

the NHPRC and the NEH. Our ADE investment in these advocacy groups continues to yield big dividends.

**NCH:** The ADE is a member of the NCH Policy Board. Bickford represented the ADE at the NCH Board meeting in Atlanta in January and on a conference call Policy Board meeting in conjunction with the OAH meeting. If Bickford is unable to represent the ADE at NCH Policy Board meetings, she recruits another Federal Policy Committee member or ADE member to represent us.

At the time of last year's report, the NCH was involved in a leadership change after the announced resignation of Bruce Craig. Craig gave us ample notice of his intention to move to Canada and a smooth transition, with over a month of overlap, occurred as Craig was leaving and Lee White began work. Bickford was a member of the seven person search committee that chose White as Craig's replacement. White has already improved the NCH website and advanced the ability of the NCH to let its members know what is going on and what actions to take by making more use of CAPWIZ, an electronic advocacy tool. Anyone can now go from the NCH's updates and alerts to CAPWIZ and use it to send electronic messages to his/her Representative and Senators. And expanding the network of advocates is much easier with this tool as well. Bickford and Allida Black have met with White on several occasions to provide him with the perspective of documentary editors on various issues. White has quickly become a strong advocate for the NHPRC and NEH and understands our issues. Though White receives some administrative staff support from the American Historical Association, the NCH remains essentially a one person operation.

**NHA:** Jessica Jones has been and continues to be a tremendous ally. She has made the NHPRC a regular priority of the NHA and alerts Bickford and White to any issues that she sees

or hears about that relate to documentary editing on the NEH front. Erin Smith of the NHA staff is in charge of Humanities Advocacy day and is also a big help to us. In turn we supply Jessica and Erin with information and all the support that we can give them. Bickford is currently serving on the steering committee for the NHA's Annual Meeting and the 2008 HAD.

**ADE support for NHA and NCH:** The directors of these two organizations both spend a substantial amount of their time and resources on our issues. Perhaps more than any other organization, our members and editing projects benefit from their work. The ADE's substantial increase in our contributions to these two organizations its 2007 budget was money well spent and we thank the Council and membership for supporting these increases..

**Humanities Advocacy Day (HAD):**

As has been the case since the inception of this advocacy day exclusively for the humanities spearheaded by the NHA, the ADE was a financial sponsor of the 2007 HAD and Charlene Bickford served on the HAD Steering Committee. Again this year, ADE members participated at a higher level (9 of 109 participants) than virtually any other organization. HAD participants were provided with both a briefing and fact sheets on the NHPRC that Bickford and White put together. The fact that the NHPRC was again zeroed out in the Administration's budget made the issue urgent and participants were told that they should make sure that the NHPRC was covered in all of their meetings. ADE members Charlene Bickford, Allida Black, Phil Chase, Lynda Crist, Charles Cullen, Ted Crackel, Susan Englander, Penny Kaiserlian, and Martha King took part in several of the state delegations advocating for both the NEH and the NHPRC and/or the "national" NHPRC led by Bickford and Lee White. They were aided by leaders of other organizations who also advocated NHPRC funding on their visits (Lee Formwalt of the OAH, Arnita Jones and Barbara Weinstein of the AHA, and Peter Givler of the AAUP.

The national team visited staff of the NHPRC's appropriations subcommittees and the offices of some members of the subcommittees. This team was supplemented with other ADE members as they were available. Some members of the national team also joined state groups that had meetings set up with NHPRC app. subcommittee members. In those meetings both the NHPRC and the NEH were dealt with. The participation of ADE's NHPRC representative, Charles Cullen, was very helpful on the national team's visits.

**NEH:**

**Appropriation:** For the third year in a row the Administration requested level funding for the NEH. NHA decided to work for a \$36 million increase (from \$141 million to \$177 million) to be allocated across the NEH's programs. The requested increase would have restored NEH funding to its FY1994 actual funding level—not adjusted for inflation! The Federal Policy Committee regularly distributed NHA updates through sedit-l and in some cases contacted certain key ADE members to be in touch with their Representatives or Senators. The House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee chose to recommend an increase of \$18.645 million for FY'2008 and the full Appropriations Committee that the House of Representatives ratified this recommendation—a impressive victory for supporters of the NEH. The Senate subcommittee and full committee have approved a smaller increase of \$5 million, but the full Senate has not acted upon the bill as of this writing.

Nearly the entire federal government is currently operating on a continuing resolution which expires at the end of November. The President has threatened to veto nearly every appropriations bill, which has stalled the entire process.

**Issues Related to the Scholarly Editions Program:** Last year's Federal Policy Committee Report reviewed the situation relating to the NEH's funding for editions and the

potential impact of the Digital Humanities Initiative on ongoing projects and discussed the ADE's approach to the Chairman of the NEH on these issues, including the concern that elimination of outside review of proposals could have a negative impact. There has been no change in the status of these issues since our last report. In the Spring 2007 grant cycle, the total amount granted for editions was \$551,869 less than in FY2006 (see attached chart). There were several ongoing editions that were not funded and, as was true in the previous cycle, the impact was particularly hard on the projects documenting the lives of women. Since no list of applicants is available, our evidence relating to rejected projects is strictly anecdotal, depending upon which project directors reported to us that they applied for, but did not receive, a grant. There does not seem to be any evidence that projects were rejected because of the fact that they lacked a digital component, but it is possible that the NEH simply postponed the application of the digital requirement that was announced in the late summer of 2006, to the next grant cycle because of the reaction to its announcement so close to the application deadline.

#### **NHPRC:**

**FY2007 Appropriation:** The struggle to restore funding for the NHPRC's grants program after the Administration zeroed it out in its FY2006 proposed budget ended with an appropriation of \$5.5 million and funding to continue the NHPRC staffing. Given the circumstances, this was about the best possible result we could have hoped for, but another year of level funding meant another lean year for editorial projects, which saw their funding cut slightly or held level. This continued gradual erosion in funding, plus cuts in or no funding at all from the NEH, is doing serious damage to historical editions and putting the immediate future of some of the smaller projects at risk..

The battle over the FY2008 budget began when it was learned that the Administration had zeroed out the NHPRC (grants and staff) again. This year the archival community changed its strategy and joined the effort to fund the NHPRC's grants program at the \$10 million level with no reference to the Partnership for the American Historical Record (PAHR). At the same time they continued to work on developing an advocacy strategy to authorize and fund PAHR. The change in party control and leadership in both the House and the Senate also brought about a change in the jurisdictions of the Appropriations Committee's subcommittees in both houses. Thus NARA and the NHPRC are now under the jurisdiction of the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee. The chairs of the financial services subcommittees in both houses are from states that have benefited greatly from NHPRC grants, and there were more ADE members in their district or state who could try to influence them as well. Thus ADE members and others worked diligently to educate them and the new subcommittee members and staffers about the NHPRC's plight. The two chairs, Rep. Jose Serrano of New York City (the Bronx) and Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois, have been very receptive to our pleas for the restoration of funding at the full authorized level for the grants program and funding for the staff. Thus, the House subcommittee recommended \$8 million for grants and \$2 million for staff, which was included in the House bill, and the Senate subcommittee recommended \$10 million in funding without allocating it between grants and staff. The Senate subcommittee's recommendation has been approved by the full Appropriations Committee but there has been no floor action on the bill.

Despite this excellent result from our efforts, this appropriations bill is still held up in the face off between Congress and the President and the NHPRC is operating on a continuing resolution at the FY2007 funding level of \$5.5 million.

Charlene Bickford for the Federal Policy Committee

Charlene Bickford, Chair

Phil Chase

Theresa Collins

Linda Crocker Simmons

Barbara Oberg

Ann D. Gordon

Richard Leffler

Leslie Rowland

Charles T. Cullen, ex officio (ADE NHPRC Rep.)

Stanley N. Katz, ex officio (AHA NHPRC Rep.)

October 3, 2006

## NEH Editions Funding

FY2001—FY2006

Year	applicants	# funded	Outright	Matching	Total
2001 (last year in Collaborative)		20	\$2,282,818	\$1,318,500	\$3,601,318
2002 (first year of new editions program)	48	27	\$2,036,000	\$1,920,000	\$3,956,000
2003 (first year of WTP funds used for editions; those funds included)	47	16	\$1,715,000	\$1,470,000	\$3,185,000
2004 (\$12 million increase for WTP, funds used for editions included)	59	20	\$2,200,000	\$1,040,000	\$3,240,000
2005 (\$5 million increase for WTP, WTP funds used for editions included)	71	21	\$1,985,792	\$1,445,000	\$3,430,792*
2006 (WTP funds used for editions included)		21	\$2,570,000	\$1,666,869	\$4,236,869**
2007 (WTP funds used for editions included)		20			\$3,685,000

\*includes an almost \$300,000 grant for an electronic conversion grant (new initiative within editions program); therefore the grants for actually creating editions declined again.

\*\*Though this figure is substantially larger than the previous year's ongoing historical editions did not fare well in the process.



## **ADE Letter to NEH Chairman Bruce Cole**

September 1, 2006

Chairman Bruce Cole  
The National Endowment for the Humanities  
1100 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20506

Dear Chairman Cole:

I write on behalf of the Council and members of the Association for Documentary Editing, in which most of the significant documentary editing projects in this country are represented. The ADE's members appreciate your strong support for documentary editions as part of the basic foundation of the NEH's mission and the "We the People" initiative. Nevertheless, we wish to voice concerns over certain issues that have arisen.

### **1. Digital Humanities Initiative**

The first area involves the ways in which the NEH's Digital Humanities Initiative relates to scholarly editions. As you know, on August 20 new guidelines for the Scholarly Editions Program were posted on the NEH Website. With only ten weeks remaining until the November 1 deadline, project directors and their host institutions are suddenly faced with a guideline on digital publication that has troubled the scholarly editing community. The statement in the introduction to the guideline requires that:

Applicants employ digital technology in the preparation, management, and online publication of all critical and documentary editions. Projects that include TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) conformant transcription and offer free online access are encouraged and will be given preference.

Editors in the ADE fully understand the need to present authentic documentary resources on the Internet and have long pressed for increased federal attention to and funding for making their editions more widely accessible through electronic publication. They have also pioneered ways to transform textual scholarship into flexible and reliable digital formats. Nonetheless, this eleventh-hour imposition seems to require that on-going scholarly editions present plans for digital publication if they seek funding from the NEH. The agency's objective is admirable. Its execution seems unrealistic and potentially endangers the future of the ongoing book editions.

No electronic publication of any value and guaranteed permanence can be designed with two months lead-time. Moreover, most editors already in the midst of ongoing book editions are not in a position to determine whether or not their work will appear in electronic form. Few, if any, project directors or host institutions control the rights to these editions. Electronic publication of their work requires both negotiations with their publishers and willingness on the publishers' part to permit competitive publications and/or venture into electronic publishing themselves. Typically, publishers have made substantial financial investments in these editions with little or no profit to show for it. Asking them to produce free online resources is unrealistic. There is a very strong archival argument to be made for the presses as the best candidates to create electronic resources that will be maintained for future generations, particularly if there is a revenue stream to support this maintenance. If the

editions are not put online by publishers, who will guarantee long-term access and pay the costs of maintaining digital editions?

Even if viable plans for electronic publication are already in place for certain editions and publishers are ready and able to cooperate, those ongoing projects can only execute the work of preparing those new electronic publications by diverting staff time and talent away from their current objectives. But they have been told that meeting production goals is key to any renewal of NEH support. Either the requirement must be accompanied by significant increases in funding that will permit hiring staff dedicated to the electronic projects, or the requirement will impose the self-contradictory need to cut production on the current work dramatically in order to fund it at all.

The ADE reiterates its admiration for the objective pursued by the NEH. We are enthusiastic about digital humanities scholarship, but think it is a complicated and quickly evolving field in which editors, publishers, funding agencies and others should work in concert. Editors are unanimous that their work should be much more widely available than it is, and indisputably, the Internet offers the widest distribution now imaginable. A major initiative backed by serious funding is long overdue. But simply imposing a requirement at the last minute, without addressing how this direction will affect the scholarship already underway with support from the NEH and without money to make it happen, puts at jeopardy the publications that the NEH has long nurtured, promoted, and funded.

## 2. Declining Resources

Closely related to the first issue is a most difficult and pressing one: the declining resources available for the work of producing scholarly editions. We know that you are acutely aware that, despite the much needed and appreciated infusion of “We the People” funds, the NEH’s grant resources committed to scholarly editions are wholly inadequate to fund the projects that are highly rated in the competitive review process. And, far fewer projects are supported through the NEH today than in the past.

Just a few statistics illustrate that point. In FY1982 the NEH made 61 grants for editions totaling \$3,396,185 (\$2,157,974 outright, \$1,238,211 matching). In 2006, nearly a quarter century later, the NEH made only 22 grants for editions totaling \$4,236,869 (outright, \$2,570,000 outright, \$1,666,869). Despite the addition of WTP funds, the 2006 total for grants is slightly less than 25% higher than the 1982 figure in real terms.

And 2006 was the best year in recent history for grants to scholarly editions; in 2003 and 2004 the grants totaled less than they did in 1982! Thus, each year, projects that have been funded by the NEH in the past are not funded at all, have their grants cut from the previous grant level, or are level funded. In real dollars, projects are receiving less money and are required to raise more private funds.

This trend is worsened by the funding difficulties of the NHPRC. Ongoing historical editions have experienced a damaging decline in their funding from the NHPRC in the last few years. In FY2003 the NHPRC gave out over \$3.2 million in grants to editions; this year it granted \$2.25 million.

While the mission of editing projects has been increased to add websites, electronic publication, educational tools, and the work related to obtaining and reporting on grants has increased dramatically, the available funding has declined. This Catch-22 situation cannot continue much longer.

### 3. Review Process for Documentary Editions

Another related area of concern is the review process. ADE members have become aware that one element of that process—reviews from outside specialists familiar with the projects and their subject matter—has been eliminated in recent grant making cycles. While we applaud the hard work and dedication of the NEH staff and while we understand that seeking outside reviewers and sending out individual proposals consumed staff time and resources, we believe that these expert reviews provide valuable information and opinions that assist the panelists and staff in their evaluations.

Each year panels consist of different persons, and thus lack familiarity with projects already underway and with previous panels' decisions about those projects and reasoning behind them. Often, panels have only one member generally familiar with editorial practices, challenges, and accomplishments. One year a panel may consider a certain project's sample annotation excessive; the next year, a new panel might consider the annotation too lean.

Thus, it is not surprising when projects that have been almost continuously funded by the NEH have their funding interrupted for a year, and then restored, or when projects customarily denied funding by the NEH suddenly receive a grant, and then have subsequent applications rejected. In other words, a project's fate rests with the panelists—its fortunes may rise when it has a forceful proponent, or fall when it faces a vociferous critic.

We understand the difficulty of locating hundreds of outside reviewers. But 60 proposals from scholarly editing projects is not an overwhelming number, especially if instead of requiring seven outside reviewers for each grant proposal, staff could seek out three. This would reduce staff time, but would retain the valuable input of outside scholars.

For the sake of all those involved in the process, it is desirable that the NEH funding decisions be based on specific policies, on accurate information, and on sound interpretations. Further, the agency should be able to tell rejected applicants explicitly why they were not funded, and subsequent NEH panels should know what adjustments applicants have made in response to criticisms from previous NEH panels.

Especially at this time, when the Endowment has instituted a new digital policy, what confidence can editors have in the review process as it relates to established, ongoing editorial projects? In considering these projects, how will the panels interpret the word "preference" in regard to TEI as it relates to these particular projects?

There is a great need to complete the ongoing editions and digitize them for future generations. The NEH, which has invested so much in the production of the hundreds of volumes of scholarly editions now available or in progress and in digital editions, has a major stake in the accomplishment of this goal. Additional resources are absolutely essential if this goal is to be accomplished. The ADE stands ready to assist you in seeking to stop the erosion of federal resources available for meeting this goal and attaining funding that truly addresses the challenges of providing authentic and durable digital documentary resources.

We thank you in advance for your attention to the concerns of our membership. It is our hope that you could find time in your busy schedule to meet with me and a few of my colleagues from the ADE's leadership. We will contact your office about setting up such a meeting.

Sincerely,

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Council of the Association for Documentary Editing

Ronald Bosco, ADE President-Elect, Emerson Family Papers, University at Albany,  
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Christine Patrick, ADE Secretary, Papers of George Washington, University of  
Virginia  
John Lupton, Treasurer, Papers of Abraham Lincoln, Illinois Historic Preservation  
Agency  
Richard Leffler, Director of Publications, Ratification of the Constitution Project,  
University of Wisconsin  
Mary Gallagher, The Papers of Robert Morris, Brooklyn, New York  
Dennis Conrad, Past President, Naval Historical Center  
Kenneth Price, Walt Whitman Archive, University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Michael Stevens, Wisconsin Historical Society

Federal Policy Committee

Charlene Bickford, First Federal Congress Project, The George Washington University  
Ann Gordon, Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, Rutgers  
University  
Philander Chase, Papers of George Washington, University of Virginia  
Charles T. Cullen, ex officio, President, The Newberry Library, Emeritis  
Larry Hickman, The Center for Dewey Studies  
Stanley N. Katz, ex officio, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International  
Affairs, Princeton University  
Barbara Oberg, Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Princeton University  
Leslie Rowland, Freedmen and Southern Society

# **A Joint Statement on 2007 Funding Levels for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission**

**Council of State Archivists, National Association of Government Archives and  
Records Administrators, and Society of American Archivists  
3 March 2006**

**We support enhancement of NHPRC's programs in Fiscal Year 2007 to include formula grants to states through the Partnership for the American Historical Record (PAHR).**

- For many years NHPRC has successfully funded documentary editions and administered a competitive grants program to fund projects of national importance. The time has come for NHPRC to expand its scope to embrace documentary issues at every level (local, state, and national) and in every type of archival repository (public, private, university, etc.).
- State and local record keepers create records that are tied to federal rights and interests, such as citizenship, identity, and elections. PAHR is essential to bridging the critical gaps among local, state, and federal records to ensure citizens' rights and privileges.

**We support funding of NHPRC at the fully authorized level, but we believe that the current authorization is insufficient to address the profound issues that archival repositories face. Therefore, the archives community will advocate for a funding level of \$20 million.**

- We believe that the current authorization cap of \$10 million is a significant—but not insurmountable—issue. Members of archival organizations will work to secure an agreement with Authorization Committee members not to object to an appropriation that exceeds the authorization level, and we will work toward raising the authorization level.

**We believe that NHPRC's Fiscal Year 2007 appropriation, at whatever level, should be shared between "traditional" programs (documentary editions and nationwide grants) and PAHR.**

- The division of NHPRC's appropriation should be an every-dollar split rather than a sequenced split.
- We believe that the exact distribution of funds should be negotiated, but we envision that an amount greater than 50% would be designated for "traditional" NHPRC programs.
- We understand that, should the appropriation be very modest, such a division could threaten NHPRC's viability. We are committed to the survival of NHPRC's traditional programs. In the event of a very modest appropriation, we will work toward the goal of both preserving traditional NHPRC programs and establishing PAHR at some level.

