

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
February 5-6, 2024
Virtual/Chicago, IL**

**National Historical and Publications Records
Commission (NHPRC) December 2023**

(Prepared by Commissioner Tanya Zanish-Belcher, SAA Representative)

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), a statutory body affiliated with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), supports a wide range of activities to preserve, publish, and encourage the use of documentary sources, created in every medium ranging from quill pen to computer, relating to the history of the United States. I represented SAA at the most recent NHPRC meeting (November 16-17, 2023), both as a Commission member and as an appointed member of the Executive Committee. I was also recently appointed Chair of the Executive Committee, with a term of 2023-2025. Archivist of the United States (AOTUS), Dr. Colleen Shogun, chaired her first Commission meeting.

As a member of the newly established Oversight subcommittee, we held several meetings this fall.

The subcommittee includes the following members: Glen Asner (Office of the Secretary of Defense), Christine Lamberson (History Office/Federal Judicial Center), Janice Ruth (Library of Congress), Kathleen Williams (National Gallery of Art), myself (SAA), and NHPRC staff members Darrell Meadows, Keith Donohue, and Nancy Melley. We reported on the following items to the Commission:

- **Staffing and New Hires**
Dr. Julie Fisher was appointed as director for NHPRC's Publishing Programs
Dr. Anastacia Scott was appointed as director for NHPRC's Access Programs
Jeff de la Concepcion has been promoted to Grants Management Specialist
This fiscal year, NHPRC is in the process of advertising for an additional program officer for the State Boards and will be filling several additional positions over winter and spring, an additional financial management position, and two additional program officers to assist with the Access programs and Congressional mandates.
- **Archives Leadership Institute**
The Subcommittee agreed to review curricula plans from the University of Virginia for the next iteration of the Archives Leadership Institute, as well as related

promotional announcements. Ms. The Subcommittee will continue to assist in the development of recruiting.

- **What We Fund / Do Not Fund – Proposed Revisions**
The Subcommittee expanded wording and language for some of the categories. Oral histories as a component of a broader project (providing added context) are now included as options for funding (in addition to Native American projects). The Commission considered this as especially important for community history projects.
- **Update on new panel review process**
The Commission established a revised peer panel review system for applications, which now includes a live virtual panel discussion and the payment of honoraria to all panelists.

Additional Updates from the November Commission Meeting

Grant Review Update

At its semiannual meeting in November the Commission reviewed the following:

35 Applications (Total)		\$2,818,277
Publishing Historical Records in Collaborative Digital Editions	7 grants	\$738,835
State Board Programming Grants	17 grants	\$795,632
Archives Collaborative	2 grants	\$125,000
Major Collaborative Archival Initiatives	1 grant	\$350,000
NHPRC-Mellon Planning Grants for Collaborative Digital Editions	11 grants	\$1,273,022

Budget (from NHPRC Executive Director Christopher Eck’s Report)

Discrepancies in our FY23 Congressional Appropriations language (PL 117-328, 136 STAT 4690, Sec. 530) will shape our FY24 funding scenario. First, as reported at the May meeting, NHPRC was appropriated an additional \$22.573 million for a specific list of Congressionally

Directed, or earmarked, projects. In the process of completing those obligations, NARA Budget and Finance discovered a discrepancy between the total amount provided in the appropriations language (\$22.573 million) and the supplemental list of projects (\$23.772 million). In mid-September, General Counsel at Treasury and OMB determined that the total amount appropriated (\$22.573 million) in the language of the bill was the actual amount to be used. As a result—in conversation with the Chief Financial Officer, Office of General Counsel, Congressional Affairs, as well as Congressional staff—we offered to use unappropriated no-year funds to make up the unappropriated shortfall, to obligate the Congressionally-Directed project funds by September 30.

Actual obligations amounted to \$23,769,385, whereby Commission funds covered a deficiency of \$1,196,385. Based on conversations with Congressional Affairs, we are hopeful that Congress will make the Commission whole in the FY24 appropriation for this use of its funds for the shortage in our FY24 appropriation, but that remains uncertain. Additionally, the NHPRC’s final FY23 appropriations language indicated an increase to \$10 million for competitive grants but omitted specific language to indicate that this amount included \$3 million that the agency wished to see directed to the development and implementation of a specific grant program for HBCUs. As a result, staff recommendations for the FY23 grant cycles (November 2022 and May 2023) were premised on the full \$10 Executive Director’s Report - November 2023 3 million available, rather than \$7 million. The result was that the total of FY23 awarded funds inadvertently exhausted nearly all of the \$3 million. Once our FY24 appropriation is finalized, we will be working closely with NARA Budget and Finance on plans for restoring the HBCU funds. Budget Appropriations for FY24

As of November 1, 2023, Congress has not completed its work on full-year appropriations for the NHPRC. The appropriated funds available for competitive grants under the current Continuing Resolution, which ends on November 17, is a prorated amount of \$1,311,000, based on our FY23 funding levels. This allotment is supplemented by the Commission’s no year, unobligated carryover grant funds of approximately \$745 thousand (see the Financial Summary). Total available grant funds for the November meeting are \$2,056,000.

Impact of Congressionally Directed Spending Projects Managing the Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS, or “earmark”) awards over the past two years has placed additional strain on our small staff. Unlike our regular grants, these projects do not come in through the regular Grants.gov application process. Some organizations have little or no experience in the Federal grant requirements, and, in most instances, staff must put in extraordinary time with the awardees to prepare project proposals that fall within our statutory authority and regulations. At this time, we are unclear as to whether we may receive more of these Congressionally directed grants in the FY24 appropriations. Fortunately, as we have processed nearly \$30M in earmarks over the past two fiscal years after a 20-year hiatus, the staff has developed a process for managing these awards that is based on the way in which the competitive grant program functions.

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for May 2024.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions, zanisht@wfu.edu