

Documentary Film & Radio Grants

Any project producing film, television programming, or radio broadcast is eligible for a Documentary Grant. For funding consideration, documentary projects either must apply the humanities—interpretation and analysis—to the history/culture of Louisiana, or subjects and/or issues impacting life in Louisiana. Out-of-state applicants are encouraged to secure in-state sponsors and are required to obtain letters of interest from Louisiana television or radio stations. There is only one annual deadline—**April 25**.

All Documentary Film and Radio Grant applications follow a standard application and review process. Applicants are encouraged to submit a Preliminary Application to the appropriate member of the LEH grants staff at least 4-6 weeks prior to the appropriate grant deadline. Preliminary applications should be developed using the Preliminary Application Worksheet found on the Web page of the appropriate grant type, and should be submitted to the appropriate LEH staff member via email. Staff will provide a written critique of your application so that you may revise it before the deadline. Often, projects are rejected or receive reduced funding because of preventable errors or guideline violations. See Preliminary Applications Policy for more information. **Documentary Film and Radio Grant applicants who submit preliminary applications at least 4 weeks before the deadline are eligible for \$10,001 or more in funding; applicants who do not submit a preliminary proposal are limited to a maximum request of \$10,000 in funds.**

The project narrative, itemized budget and budget narrative must divide project activities into three phases:

1. **Pre-Production** - includes research, writing, scripting, identifying resources (both material and human), and any other activities necessary to prepare a media project for production.
2. **Production** - includes the actual filming or taping of footage
3. **Post Production and Distribution** – includes the final editing of the material and articulates the mechanism by which the film, radio program, etc. will be presented to the public. This might include a public premiere; local, statewide or national broadcast on PBS; and, the marketing of the production through distribution firms. Preference is given to plans that include public television or radio distribution.

The form of the **Project Narrative** should address the following items:

1. Brief history of the sponsoring organization;
2. Outlined scenario or script treatment (including a justification for the selected medium);
3. Discussion of the humanities content, including what and how humanities disciplines will be utilized during the project activities;
4. Identification of the participating scholars, their qualifications and how their expertise will be brought to bear on the project (i.e. consultant, on-air interview, script editor, etc.);
5. Outline of project's activities, including a timetable with tentative dates for all three phases;
6. Identification of supplementary materials to be created to complement the production (i.e. Web sites, bibliographies, study guides, posters);
7. Short and long term effects of the project;

8. Description of the targeted audience (if specific age, ethnic and/or socio-economic group is sought; justify the reasons for targeting such);
9. Description of distribution plans, including live programs to be held in conjunction with production, the form exchange of ideas will take (some provision for such should be a part of the project), broadcast and cablecast arrangements (include station names and times where possible), the inclusion of plans for dissemination to other organizations and individuals (i.e. parish libraries, school districts, etc.). Preference is given to plans that include public television or radio distribution.
10. Outline of the evaluation apparatus to be employed for the project, including the type of information sought, who will gather this information and the evaluation methods employed (i.e. audience evaluations, scholarly evaluations, outside evaluator, etc.).

The **Itemized Budget and Budget Narrative** must provide as detailed a breakdown of expenses for all three phases as possible, including narrative explanations and justifications for expensive items. This additional information is necessary due to the accelerated costs usually associated with media production. There is no established funding ceiling for documentary projects. The average is \$25,000. However, due to the high costs of documentary production, the LEH recommends that extremely expensive projects augment their request for outright LEH support by soliciting gifts from third-party donors.

As with all LEH grants, the **Support Materials** must include resumes for the project director and staff, participating scholars and professional consultants. This section also needs to contain additional documentation of community and institutional support for the project, such as letters of interest or commitment from co-sponsors, impacted institutions and groups, letters of commitment from participating scholars, and letters of financial commitment. Applicants must provide a first-generation DVD or CD sample with the application. This sample should reflect the work of the production team, *identifying specifically* who performed what function in the sample. The sample should be cued to a 5-10 minute segment.

Final Proposal Submission: No proposal should exceed 30 pages in length (excluding support materials, 15 pages if double-sided). **Applications must be submitted online by 11:59 p.m. on April 25.** If April 25 falls on a weekend, the deadline will be extended to 11:59 p.m. on the following business day.

Review Process: Due to the particular nature of documentary requests, they undergo a different review process. Like other applications, documentary proposals are evaluated by the staff, according to the following criteria:

- Omitted materials;
- Program guideline violations;
- Applicant's history with the LEH (including scholars, sponsors and project directors); and
- LEH priorities (including region of the state, special audiences and responses to RFPs).

Also, prior to review by the Grant Review Committee, these proposals are evaluated by a special Media Review Panel composed of professionals in various media fields (film scholars, film directors, television and radio producers and directors, and media specialists from other funding agencies). This panel makes recommendations regarding the:

- Expertise of technical personnel,
- Adequacy of both equipment and costs,
- Quality of the submitted sample,
- Feasibility of the submitted script treatment or scenario, and
- Achievability of the project's proposed timetable for implementation.

Approximately two weeks following the grant deadline, and after the meeting of the Media Review Panel, proposals are reviewed by the Grant Review Committee.

The LEH Board's Grant Review Committee (GRC) screens Public Humanities Grant (defined as projects requesting more than \$2,500) applications and provides recommendations to the Full Board. The GRC itself is composed of members of the Executive Committee, three rotating Board members and four guest scholars. This procedure was established to focus discussion during the Board meetings and allow time for considering policy issues. After two to three weeks for individual review, GRC members submit numerical ratings which are then averaged. Then the Committee convenes to consider and discuss proposals, and to prepare a list of recommendations. These recommendations include decision rationales for the Full Board meeting two to three weeks later. At the full Board meeting, the recommendations of the GRC are presented as a motion. The full Board then considers substitutions, additions, deletions, and other changes to the proposals recommended for funding, keeping in mind the individual merits of each application, as well as its role in the LEH program. The LEH Board may make one of five funding decisions:

1. Fund in full as proposed;
2. Fund with conditions;
3. Revise and resubmit;
4. Reject/resubmit; or
5. Reject.

All applications not approved for funding may be resubmitted at future deadlines. The Revise/Resubmit decision is a conditional award, which obligates the funding subject to the review and approval of the LEH. The revised proposal is submitted within 45 days to a panel consisting of the LEH Chair and two other members of the GRC and requires a two-thirds vote. All funding decisions are made by a simple majority vote of the present and voting LEH Board members; **the staff does not vote on proposals**. Decisions to accept or reject proposals are contingent upon the number and quality of proposals received, and the availability of grant funds.

Award decisions are announced **July 1. Documentary Film and Radio Grant awards are made as a final payment reimbursement only.** At the end of the grant term, always June 30 of the following year, a completed film or radio program must be submitted with all final report materials as outlined in the Grant Agreement by June 30; otherwise, funds will be forfeited.