

NHPRC Funding Zeroed Out for FY 2008; Take Action Now to Save NHPRC!

Dear Colleague:

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) – the grant-making arm of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) – is targeted in the President's proposed FY 2008 budget for *zero* funding for grants and *zero* funding for staff to administer the agency and its programs. For FY 2008, our organizations and the National Coalition for History support **full funding for national grants at \$10 million plus \$2 million for staffing and administration.**

The newly created House and Senate Financial Services and General Government appropriations subcommittees have jurisdiction over the NARA appropriation, including NHPRC. These subcommittees currently are drafting appropriations bills for the programs under their jurisdiction. **This spring is a critical time to make your voice heard on this appropriation.**

ACTION NEEDED! If you support restored funding for the NHPRC grants program, please contact your Congressional representatives now, especially if they are members of the House and Senate subcommittees on Financial Services and General Government:

http://appropriations.house.gov/Subcommittees/sub_fsd.c.shtml

<http://appropriations.senate.gov/financialservices.cfm>

To contact your Members of Congress, go to the Humanities Advocacy Network at: http://www.humanitiesadvocacy.org/action_ctr.html. The website allows you to send a pre-written electronic letter or to edit the letter to include your own story and express your own views. You can also fax a letter to your Member of Congress or contact him/her through the U.S. Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121. To find your representative's website, go to <http://www.house.gov>; to find your senator's website, go to <http://www.senate.gov>. For suggestions on writing letters, including details about the impact that NHPRC grants have had in specific states, visit the SaveArchives wiki at <http://savearchives.pbwiki.com>.

FUNDING HISTORY: The NHPRC grants program is authorized at \$10 million through FY 2009. This small but effective program last received its fully authorized \$10 million in FY 2004. In FY 2007, Congress appropriated \$5.5 million for NHPRC grants and \$2 million for administrative costs, despite the Administration's continued efforts to eliminate the program. Unfortunately, cuts of this magnitude – and the uncertainty created by the annual threat of extinction – endanger the agency's programmatic integrity.

We believe that NHPRC needs at least \$10 million in FY 2008 if the agency is to meet its congressional mandate to provide leadership in preserving our nation's documentary heritage and to make that heritage accessible through publication. In addition, \$2 million is required to maintain the expert staffing to administer this program.

Loss of funding for NHPRC's grants projects will have a domino effect, causing funding from other sources to be withdrawn or reduced. NHPRC's grants are the linchpins for the funding structure of most projects; without them, the structure will collapse.

BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION: NHPRC, the grant-making affiliate of the National Archives and Records Administration, was created within the National Archives in 1934, given its own staff in 1951, authorized to make grants in 1964, and reorganized in 1975 as the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Its 15 members represent the three branches of the federal government and six professional associations of archivists, historians, documentary editors, and records officers.

During the past 40+ years, the Commission has awarded \$163 million to more than 4,200 state and local government archives, colleges and universities, and other institutions to preserve and provide access to important records that document American history. As characterized by former Archivist of the United States John Carlin, NHPRC is “history’s venture capitalist.” Through federal outright and matching grants, it successfully leverages private sector contributions to projects such as the publishing of papers associated with nationally significant individuals and institutions.

NHPRC currently is helping to fund dozens of papers projects, including those of founders Franklin, Jefferson, Washington, Adams, and Madison; projects documenting the ratification of the Constitution and the First Federal Congress; the correspondence between Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony; the Papers of Eleanor Roosevelt; the Frederick Douglass Papers; and the Papers of General George C. Marshall. It has funded hundreds of projects designed to preserve historical records of enduring value, as well as cooperative state, regional, and national projects that address common archival issues, such as the complex problem of preserving electronic historical records.

NHPRC works to accomplish its mandate by setting strategic priorities; using modest federal grants to stimulate state, local, institutional, and private contributions; and providing expert staff assistance to grantees to address these priorities. It is the only grant-making organization – public or private – whose mission is to provide national leadership in the effort to promote the preservation and accessibility of historical records and to publish the papers of significant figures and themes in American history.

If Congress allows the NHPRC to be zeroed out of the federal budget, this important program, which has played an essential federal leadership role and has an outstanding success record of using a small amount of federal funds to leverage other contributions, would come to an end. This would be devastating to such projects as development of new archival programs; promotion of the preservation and use of historical records; regional and national coordination in addressing major archival issues; editing and publication of the papers of nationally significant individuals and institutions; and a wide range of other activities relating to America’s documentary heritage.

For more information about the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, visit the agency’s website at: <http://www.archives.gov/nhprc/>

We hope that we can count on your help in our cooperative effort to ensure funding for NHPRC. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact any of us at the email addresses or phone numbers below.

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