

# **INFORMATION FOR NEW YORK APPLICANTS TO THE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS AND RECORDS COMMISSION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) is a federal agency, chaired by the Archivist of the United States, that makes grants to state and local governments and to nonprofit institutions for the preservation and management of historical records. The NHPRC provides guidelines and application forms, establishes national funding priorities, and makes the final decisions on whether to fund each application. Its deadlines, guidelines, and priorities change from time to time, and potential applicants should request current NHPRC materials before preparing an application. This information is included in the Commission's publication *Program Guidelines: Applications and Grants*. The Commission's address is:

**National Historical Publications and Records Commission - NP  
National Archives Building, Room 607  
Washington, DC 20408  
202-501-5610**

NHPRC regulations require that each state appoint a State Historical Records Advisory Board and a State Historical Records Coordinator. The State Advisory Boards set statewide priorities, seek to provide leadership and coordination in addressing these priorities, and evaluate all records applications to NHPRC for projects that take place in the state. In New York, as in most states, the Governor has designated the State Archivist as State Historical Records Coordinator. The State Archives and Records Administration, State Education Department, serves as the Board's secretariat, coordinates grant review on behalf of the Board, and advises and assists potential applicants.

## **APPLICATION AND REVIEW PROCEDURES**

### **Copies of Application Form and NHPRC Guidelines**

Applicants should secure copies of current application guidelines directly from NHPRC. They are also available from the State Coordinator's office.

### **Informal Review of Applications Before Submission to NHPRC**

The Advisory Board recommends that applicants contact the State Coordinator or Deputy State Coordinator to discuss informal proposals or to seek comment on draft proposals before they are submitted to the NHPRC. The Board advises applicants to submit drafts of applications for projects that are complex, large-scale, or have broad implications for historical records

programs in New York. The informal review process permits the Coordinator or Deputy Coordinator to advise applicants on probable concerns of the Advisory Board and to suggest ways to strengthen applications. Draft applications must be submitted at least *two months* prior to the relevant NHPRC deadline in order to allow sufficient time for review. For more information, please contact Kathleen Roe at (518) 474-4372.

Applicants should contact the NHPRC to discuss its funding priorities, to request advice on the formulation of applications or to secure an informal review before submission.

### **Number of Copies Required for Submission**

The Commission requires submission of a signed original and two copies of formal applications and strongly urges applicants to send a total of 11 copies to expedite review. Five (5) copies should be sent to the Coordinator's office in Albany for distribution to the Advisory Board and other reviewers approved by the Board.

### **Application Deadlines**

Applications must be postmarked by the deadlines established by the Commission. The Advisory Board does not grant extensions of application deadlines established by NHPRC. The time permitted by NHPRC for review at the state level is extremely short.

### **The Advisory Board's Funding Priorities**

The Advisory Board will carefully consider all New York applications eligible under NHPRC guidelines and regulations. The Advisory Board places high priority on proposals submitted by historical records repositories and institutional archives. Proposals from State government may be submitted, but should include substantial cost-sharing from the State itself and should demonstrate that project activities will be continued or project recommendations implemented after the end of the grant project. Local governments interested in submitting proposals should first consider applying to the New York Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund. This fund supports projects for a variety of local government records management projects.

### **Strategic Priorities**

In reviewing applications, the Board places priority on projects that entirely or in part address its strategic priorities. The Board's funding priorities are based on its strategic plan, "Ensuring a Future for Our Past: A Strategy for New York." The priorities are:

- **Educating the Public:** Clear, compelling information on the importance of and uses for historical records is an essential foundation for a better understanding of the value of

historical records. The Advisory Board places priority on: projects that inform the public of the existence, uses, and long term values of historical records; projects that educate people to save today the materials that will be come tomorrow's historical records; and projects that promote the use of historical records at all levels of education.

- **Ensuring Comprehensive Documentation:** Despite the best efforts of historical records repositories, there are significant gaps and inadequacies in the documentation of the many people, places, groups, issues and events in New York's past. The Advisory Board places priority on: projects that ensure equitable documentation of the current and historical records of all communities; and projects that improve the extent and coverage of State and local government archival holdings.
- **Providing Broad Access:** The effort necessary to care for records is only worthwhile if records are actually used by a range of researchers. Broad access is essential to facilitating that use. The Advisory Board favors: projects to help ensure that all communities have equitable access to historical programs, resources and services; and projects that foster the widest possible use of New York's historical records.
- **Providing Professional Education and Development:** Because New York has more than 2,500 historical societies, libraries, archives, governments, museums and other organizations that house historical records, there is an expressed need for training, and for better physical storage for and preservation of records. The Advisory Board places priority on: projects that enhance knowledge and skill in the archival and historical record profession; and projects that improve the preservation of the historical records of New York.

### **General priorities:**

In general the Advisory Board favors applications to the NHPRC for historical records program projects that:

- Assist a historical records repository to better define its mission and collecting policy, to develop plans and priorities, and to evaluate and strengthen its operating procedures.
- Involve collaboration or cooperation regionally or statewide.
- Address the effective use of current and emerging technology.
- Focus on the inclusiveness and diversity in the documentary record.
- Initiate or substantially increase the commitment of the parent agency to an ongoing program for the administration of its own archival records or for the collections

acquired by its historical records program. The Board is particularly interested in projects where the applicant makes a clear commitment to continue to support the program after the NHPRC funding ends.

- Serve as "leverage" to seek out and secure private sector funding for a historical records program or programs.
- Follow national and state guidelines for professionally acceptable approaches.
- Actively recruit and employ adequately trained and experienced archivists or, where appropriate, other experts well versed in techniques and procedures suited to project activities.

### **Advisory Board-Initiated Projects**

The Board sometimes directly encourages or initiates applications in areas it has defined as high priority. For more information on Board-initiated projects, please contact State Coordinator V. Chapman-Smith or Deputy Coordinator Kathleen Roe.

### **Low priority projects:**

Because of the limited funding available and the need to address the priority areas identified above, the Advisory Board usually does not endorse projects that:

Involve detailed indexing or other detailed descriptions of records.

- Involve preparation of records for publication. (These projects should contact the NHPRC for information on its publications program.)

- Are essentially records management activities, unless an archival component is clearly present and fully integrated with the records management program.
- Involve records to which the applicant does not have clear legal title and ownership or cannot describe special arrangements that have been made to guarantee satisfactory continuing administration of the records.

## **Review of Applications**

As prescribed in NHPRC guidelines, the Advisory Board reviews all grant proposals formally submitted to the Commission. Additional New York reviewers, selected for their archival expertise and approved by the Board, may also review applications at the Coordinator's request. The Advisory Board and these additional reviewers take into account the Board's priorities, described below, in evaluating applications. The Coordinator prepares a summary of all of these reviews and sends the summary and copies of each of the reviews to NHPRC, as prescribed by their guidelines.

However, applicants should understand that the NHPRC itself, not the Advisory Board or Coordinator, makes the final decisions on all applications. The Commission has a long-range plan that defines national goals and objectives to be achieved, in part, through the funding of grant proposals. Applicants should carefully review these goals and objectives, described in NHPRC's *Program Guidelines* because they provide the best indications of the Commission's own funding priorities.

In deciding on certain types of applications, the NHPRC often solicits reviews by outside experts. This is especially the case for (A) applications requesting grant funds of \$75,000 or more; (B) applications for projects lasting two years or more, except State Historical Records Advisory Board travel grants; (C) applications for projects involving technological processes and issues (i.e., motion pictures, sound recordings, electronic records, and the use of innovative automated techniques); and (D) resubmission of applications that were rejected by the Commission in a previous funding cycle.

Copies of the State Coordinator's summary and all outside reviews are sent to each applicant with an invitation to respond to the Advisory Board's concerns as expressed in the Coordinator's summary, and to issues raised by outside reviewers. NHPRC staff may also send inquiry letters to applicants concerning: (A) apparent errors in proposed budgets; and (B) aspects of proposals that run counter to the Commission's written guidelines.

NHPRC staff prepares a formal summary of the reviews and makes a recommendation to the Commission on each funding request, and the Commission accepts these recommendations in most cases. While recommendations from the Advisory Board are taken into account, it is important to stress that it is the Commission which determines which projects receive support, the level of funding, and special conditions for the project.

## **Questions About the Commission's Review Process**

Any questions about the Commission's review process should be directed to NHPRC staff.

## **Other Funding Sources:**

### **Local Government Records**

The Advisory Board encourages local governments interested in archival activities to first apply to the New York Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund. This Fund supports projects for a variety of local government records management projects, including the identification, arrangement, and description of archival records and the initiation of archival programs. For information about this grants program, please contact:

*Training and Grants  
State Archives and Records Administration  
10A63 Cultural Education Center  
Albany, NY 12230  
Phone 518-474-4485*

In addition, the State Archives and Records Administration provides direct advice to local governments on the development of archival programs. This includes a range of workshops and publications focused specifically on local government archival issues and needs. For more information, please contact:

*Archival Advisory Services  
State Archives and Records Administration  
9B38 Cultural Education Center  
Albany, NY 12230  
Phone 518-474-4372*

### **Historical Records Beyond Government**

The Advisory Board urges historical records repositories and institutional archives that are considering applying to NHPRC to contact the Documentary Heritage Program (DHP) office at the State Archives and Records Administration before deciding whether to apply. The DHP provides grants to historical records repositories for projects to identify and make available historical records, and for other projects to strengthen the management of historical records. The DHP's priority is on projects that focus on underdocumented topics and groups in the Twentieth Century. The DHP office can advise potential applicants on whether their proposed projects would be eligible for DHP

funding. In some instances, the DHP office may be able to advise repositories on initiatives that might apply to the DHP for support of certain aspects of the work, and to the NHPRC for other aspects. For more information, please contact:

*Documentary Heritage Program  
State Archives and Records Administration  
9B38 Cultural Education Center  
Albany, NY 12230  
Phone 518-474-4372*

### **Preservation of Historical Records**

The Advisory Board does not give priority to projects that involve the conservation or preservation of historical records. Repositories interested in conservation and preservation work are advised to contact the New York State Division of Library Development's Conservation/Preservation Grants program. This program supports regional cooperative projects, general preservation surveys, projects to improve environmental controls, and preservation of newspapers. Projects may include planning and screening of materials, reformatting (including preservation microfilming), physical treatment, and bibliographic activities. For more information, please contact:

*Conservation/Preservation Program  
Division of Library Development  
New York State Library  
10C47 Cultural Education Center  
Albany, NY 12230  
Phone 518-474-6971*