

Washington Insider

President Obama's Proposed FY '13 Budget Request to Congress

On February 13, 2012, President Obama sent a proposed fiscal year (FY) 2013 budget request to Congress. In general, programs affecting historians, archivists and other National Coalition for History (NCH) stakeholders would receive funding levels comparable to those they received in the FY '12 budget.

Major exceptions are the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). President Obama has requested FY 2013 funding of \$154.2 million for the NEH, an \$8.2 million increase from the FY '12 level of \$146 million. The NHPRC would see its budget cut by \$2 million from the FY '12 level of \$5 million to \$3 million in the President's proposal.

Below is a summary of the President's proposed FY '13 budget for key federal agencies and programs. The FY '12 budget numbers are provided for comparison.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION (NARA)

The President's FY '13 appropriations budget request includes \$386.8 million for the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The agency's request is a reduction of \$4.7 million from the \$391.5 million amount Congress provided for the current fiscal year. NARA has requested \$371.7 million for its operating expenses. This includes funding for rent, energy, security, and staff costs at NARA's 44 facilities nationwide as well as operational costs of the Electronic Records Archives program. NARA's request also includes \$4.1 million for the Office of Inspector General and \$8 million for repairs and restorations to NARA-owned buildings, a 12% reduction from FY '12 funding level of \$9.1 million.

NATIONAL HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS & RECORDS COMMISSION

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission grants program would see its funding slashed by \$2 million from the current \$5 million to \$3 million, a 40% reduction.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES (NEH)

President Obama has requested FY 2013 funding of \$154.2 million for the NEH. This represents an \$8.2 million (or 5.6%) increase over the final FY 2012 appropriation of \$146 million. This includes an additional \$5 million in program funds and a special administrative supplement of \$3 million for relocation expenses. If one subtracts that amount, the actual funding available for programs, salaries and expenses is \$151.2 million, or a 3.6% increase over the current year's figure.

In early February 2012, the US General Services Administration (GSA) announced that the Trump Organization would acquire and redevelop the Old Post Office on Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC, as a luxury hotel. The historic building currently houses the NEH, the National Endowment for the Arts, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. It has not been determined

when the move will take place, construction will begin, or where the NEH and the other agencies will be relocated.

TITLE VI-FULBRIGHT HAYS PROGRAMS

The US Department of Education's International Education and Foreign Language Studies (IEFLS) programs, including HEA-Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs, form the vital infrastructure of the federal government's investment in the international service pipeline.

The Fulbright-Hays programs are of particular importance to historians and political scientists because of the resources they provide for research and education relating to foreign languages and cultures.

Under the President's proposed budget, the Fulbright-Hays program would be level funded while the Title VI Domestic Programs would see a small increase of \$1.7 million.

Fulbright-Hays:

President's FY '13 Budget Request: \$7.4 million

FY '12: \$7.4 million

Higher Education Act, Title VI-A&B (Domestic Programs):

President's FY '13 Budget Request: \$68.2 million

FY '12: \$66.5 million

IEFLS Total:

President's FY '13 Request: \$75.6 million

FY '12: \$74 million

Digging into Data Challenge Winners Announced

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and seven global partners announced the 2011 Digging into Data Challenge winners. Approximately \$4.8 million was awarded to international research teams investigating how computational techniques may be applied to "big data"—the massive multi-source datasets made possible by modern technology. According to an NEH press release, the competition promotes innovative humanities and social science research using large-scale data analysis. Fourteen teams representing Canada, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States were winners. Each team represents collaborations among scholars, scientists, and librarians from leading universities worldwide.

Arising out of the question "what would you do with a million books?" the Digging into Data Challenge grant competition was created in 2009 by NEH and three other international research agencies. This year, an expanded group of funders will support 14 projects that apply "cyberscholarship" to a variety of topics, such as tracking the spread and severity of the flu pandemic of 1918 as reported in the newspapers of the day; using medical imaging scanning on mummies to see if ancient Egyptians died of hardening of the arteries; and mining 19th and 20th century census data to determine how migration affected individuals' economic opportunity and social mobility in Europe and North America.

Detailed descriptions of the fourteen winning projects can be found on the NEH website. Additional information about the competition can be found at www.diggingintodata.org. ■