

RELATING TO STATE ARTS COUNCILS NOT INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAM

The material explaining the State-Based Program which WBE sent to arts council directors, along with JB's appearance at the recent ACA meeting has done much to inform arts councils about our program. Our primary responsibility is to NEH and this program, and the matter of political relations with arts councils, both in timing and extent, must be given much lower priority to this primary responsibility.

The question of relating to state arts councils is at least threefold:

1. At what time should they be informed of the humanities program in their states?
 - (a) before committee is chosen;
 - (b) after committee has met with us in Washington but before a program design grant has been awarded;
 - (c) at the time a program design grant has been awarded;
 - (d) after a large program grant has been awarded;
 - (e) on demand.

Comment: While situations differ, it seems best to follow (c) above unless we or the state-based group has persuasive reasons for deferral. At this time the committee should have sufficient strength to withstand arts council pressure if it occurs.

Naturally, we will inform arts councils (e) when asked, but in specific terms only after the program design grant award.

2. Should we advise arts councils of NEH grants other than State-Based? (We have been asked by NEA state and community staff to think about this.)

Comment: In eight months, our PIO has issued eight national press releases and approximately fifty "grassroots" releases, all of which help to explain what we are and what we do. In addition, the PIO prepares a list of grants by state. DdC informs me that it is no strain to send all or any of these press releases to arts council directors. There has been a tendency to emphasize humanities in all the releases and I recommend that we send them to arts councils as a matter of course.

3. Should we involve arts councils chairmen or directors, whether or not they are State-Based grantees, in reviewing State-Based proposals, evaluations, etc?

Comment: There is no precedent for involving as advisors, panelists or evaluators persons basically disinterested in Endowment programs. By contrast it might be beneficial in terms of learning from the experience, communication among state groups, and increased involvement and commitment to the program, to involve State-Based grantees, arts councils or not.