"The best approach appears to be collaborative works. Publishers seem to be able to overcome their misgivings about feminist scholarship when we back each other up in our writing."

GRANTS
1. What granting agencies have funded your research on women?
   Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, N.J. and Arthur M. Cole Grant-in-Aid--Economic History--Dowry in Mediterranean City States
   Newberry Library in Chicago, The Monticello College Foundation Fellowship (6 mo.): Women in twelfth-century France (Specifically for a woman early in her career, preferably doing women's studies research. The Newberry has other fellowships as well and is an excellent place for humanists to apply for funding).
   Money for Women: Dictionary of Continental Women Writers. (One time grant of $750).
   NEH: Joan of Arc: Heretic, Mystic, Shaman Berkshire Conference and Bunting Institute: With Tears and Petitions: The Power and Influence of Medieval Pious Wives (summer)
   NEH Fellowship: Medieval Nuns (applied as unemployed and unaffiliated scholar)
   NEH: Feminist Critique of Courtly Romance
   NEH: Chaucer and Medieval Romance
   NEH: The Community of Women "Alle Pertiche" of Pavia, Italy
   NEH and National Gallery of Art: Christine de Pisan's Epistre Othea
   Fullbright Commission: The Convent and the Community in Late Medieval England
   Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada: Pastoral Care and the Changing Status of Women in the Middle Ages (3 yrs plus 2 yrs renewal possible)
   NEH: Women in Frankish Society
   NEH, Ford Foundation: Female Sanctity and "Deviancy"
   ACLS: The Language of Echo: Textuality and Feminity in Late Medieval Allegory and the Canterbury Tales

2. Did you consciously "slant" your proposal to make it more acceptable to the granting institution (i.e. using the term "gender studies" instead of "feminist studies")?
   Eleven responded "no", 4 "not really," and only one "yes", although most projects did invoke "gender studies" or "women's studies" rather than "feminist studies". Sample comments included:
   "No. And my only advice (if I have any of use) is not to attempt to write what any agency or audience might want to see, but what one truly feels willing and competent to write. I believe our best and most serious work is more likely to be meaningful than some distortion of it." (Recipient of an NEH)
   "No. I wrote an avowedly feminist proposal, but grounded in very specific texts and problems. I tried to justify the feminist methodology without being too polemical" (Recipient of an NEH)
   "None of this really applies to me since I got a state grant for my doctoral thesis before I got "into" feminism! But now that my thesis (which I am writing up) has become openly feminist my
supervisor (Univ. of London) is unhappy and worried how it will
be received!"
"No. I was frank and straightforward about what I wanted to
do."

3. What advice would you give future grant writers concerning:

a) areas of study likely to be funded-

NEH Summer Seminars for college teachers would be
interested in a seminar on women’s studies in any field. You must
be senior and at a research university to offer one.

Fulbright Commission is interested in proposals on
women’s history

- Historical studies of women, esp. women in monasticism
- Gender studies in all periods of history, women in the
  public realm, women in education, women and the church
- Make it appear as non-feminist as you can, as having
great interest to women and men

b) areas of study unlikely to be funded

In addition to many "I wish I knew"’s we received the
following:

- One respondent reported failure to receive funding
  from any source on European witchcraft
  persecutions
- Studies focusing specifically on anti-feminism
- Feminist studies (this reported from Germany)
- Topics too new to you, projects not well thought
  out
- NEH is in an anti-women’s studies phase (our poll
  seems to prove just the opposite!)

c) methodologies to propose

- Interdisciplinary approaches remain popular
- Combination of historical and gender analysis
- Use of quantitative analysis seems to be highly
  regarded. An interdisciplinary approach strengthens a proposal.
  Study of women’s institutions compared to those of men

d) methodologies to avoid

- Merely cliometric proposals are no longer likely to be
  funded
  - Psycho-history
  - Strictly feminist

e) other tips on writing proposals on women

I deliberately drew parallels to current issues of
concern and showed the relationship between the historical
problem I am investigating and current areas of interest

- Be quite detailed. Do not take the view that they will
  not be interested because it is on women.
- Do not be afraid to use feminist terminology if it is
  appropriate to the project

Write clearly, have a strong enough vita to ensure
serious consideration, be original

Keep trying
Don't give up. Keep applying even though you are rejected several times.

Make it sound like the most fascinating thing on earth. Get as many scholars in the field as possible to read the proposal. Retry with small changes the next year. There is a rhythm of abundance and dearth in many granting agencies. Get feedback from grantors.

Write granting institution and ask to see copies of the evaluators' remarks on your proposal. Then revise and resubmit until they give you the grant.

Write in the present tense, telling what this project "does" not what it "will do."

Don't be afraid to toot your own horn. The granting agency wants to know why this project deserves funding over others. What makes it significant and worthy of support?

4. Who were your recommenders?

Two respondents reported using only established male professors in the field. Two used only female scholars and known feminists. But most people used a combination of established, largely male professors and one or at the most two females, usually only one of those an avowed feminist. Some typical combinations were "two established male professors in related fields, one woman/feminist scholar who publishes on women’s history," "female scholars who had published on women’s issues and male professors in the field," and one interesting variation: "two established jesuits and one female feminist scholar."

5. Did you do anything else to strengthen your application?

Deliberately sought recommendations from established males but also from an "established" woman whose publications were discussed in the proposal as helping to provide context and define the questions. As a Canadian applying to a Canadian agency, I also chose two U.S. referees to give international "stature" to the proposal.

I talked to people at NEH about proposals, saw samples, saw comments on earlier, un-funded attempts, added bibliography tied to recently-published work.

I knew what I wanted to accomplish and could promise a finished project. Premature grants are hard to fund.

Had it read by several friends and colleagues including one non-academic as a control on clarity and style.

Had other people read it and make suggestions.

6. Have you served on the review board of a granting institution? If so, what advice would you give applicants preparing proposals on women?

When appropriate, put work on women into a broader context so panelists understand its significance.

Proposals on women are generally given favored status on the review boards I’ve served on. SUBMIT MORE PROPOSALS!

Proposal should reflect some expertise and previous work in the field proposed. It also helps if a project illuminates a particular aspect of a given society in terms of that society as a whole (NEH reviewer).
I believe that feminist work is not at a disadvantage for funding. As for all proposals, clarity and accessibility will help reviewers to judge favorably.

Show the need for the project as clearly as possible

I felt the review panels were fully receptive to work on women. I see no need to disguise feminist work in any way (served on NEH and Newberry Library panels)

Be up on recent feminist work and theory otherwise people like me will not take your proposal seriously. It is hard for me to see how research on women can be anything but feminist (AAUW reviewer)

No. But I would be happy to share my funded proposal to someone interested in applying to NEH for history (Constance Berman, History, Georgetown U.)

Be proud that you are working on women

Spend a lot of time thinking, then writing, re-writing and checking the proposal. Select a topic that is narrow enough or of manageable proportions so that the result will be a solid, in-depth study. Proposals should be realistic as far as how much work one can do in a given amount of time. Attach a substantial bibliography including the most recent publications. Be familiar with the latest research.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Many people expressed an interest in updated bibliography. We will have a bibliography section in every newsletter. So please SEND REFERENCES whenever you find something of interest.

Our apologies to Cheryl Tallan who submitted the bibliography on Medieval Jewish Women that we printed in MFN #4. We neglected to mention her name at that time, and wish to thank her now for making such a generous contribution to the newsletter. She has asked that we print the following additions to her list:


Describes both marriage arrangements and the high status of women due to large dowries and their activity in business.


A detailed discussion of the problem of a ransomed or apostate women returning to her husband.

Many thanks to the following authors who submitted bibliography for their recent works: