



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

DIVISION OF PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated February 29, 2024

1. Our project idea is not represented in one of the areas of special interest identified in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Does this mean that our project is not eligible?

No. The list is not exhaustive or comprehensive. We welcome well-constructed projects across a variety of disciplines that advance the preservation of and/or access to cultural heritage collections.

2. Is successful completion of a Tier I project a prerequisite for requesting a Tier II award?

No. You do not have to progress from a Tier I grant to a Tier II award, but Tier II projects should demonstrate sound planning and preliminary research. Support for planning and preliminary research may come from NEH, other federal or foundation awards, or your institution's own funds.

3. May we apply for a Tier I project that will not scale to a larger implementation project?

Yes. Tier I projects may be stand-alone studies or experiments and do not have to involve planning or preliminary research for a larger project. NEH welcomes discrete projects to conduct a case study or survey; to adapt recently updated standards, methodologies, tools, and equipment, or workflows for targeted institution types and audiences; or to develop a tool or undertake basic research. A proposal must demonstrate how the project advances knowledge in cultural heritage preservation and access.

4. The NOFO refers to “interdisciplinary teams.” What do you mean by this, and what constitutes the right kinds of disciplines?

Many project teams will include members from humanities disciplines and from other fields such as preservation, information and computer science, and natural science. The exact mix of specialists will depend on the specific nature of the project. NEH encourages projects that bring together participants from various backgrounds and expects applicants to explain how their project results will be broadly significant. In addition, you must articulate the direct benefits that your project will have for humanities work, including research, educational programming, or public programming. In short, your project team should embody a well-defined humanities perspective that can frame your objectives and guide the project to successful completion. Such a perspective may be provided by members of an advisory committee, consultant(s), a project co-director, or another participant.

5. Are we required to include a sustainability plan? If so, how do we craft one?

Your application does not have to include a separate sustainability plan. However, all applicants must address the sustainability of their project – which includes ensuring long-term access to project data and outcomes – in their narrative. Sustainability may be defined in many ways (to incorporate, for example, financial, technical, and institutional sustainability), depending on the nature of the project. You may find it helpful to formulate your discussion of sustainability as a data management plan. You must include critical information regarding sustainability in the narrative; you may also include a data management plan as an appendix in Attachment 9: Additional supporting documentation. Regardless of the nature of your project, NEH recommends coordinating with a preservation specialist, such as your institutional librarian, archivist, or an outside consultant.

6. What constitutes a good project title?

Your title should be brief (not exceeding 125 characters, including spaces and punctuation) and descriptive of the project. It should also be free of specialized language that the general public might not understand.

Avoid using a main title that requires clarification by the subtitle. For example, “A History of Counterfeiting in the U.S., 1776-1900” is clearer than “Fakes and Fakers: A History of Counterfeiting in the U.S., 1776-1990.”

Use words and phrases that are informative and specific rather than puzzling or intriguing. For example, “A Cultural History of the Telephone and Telecommunications in America, 1950-2015” is clearer than “Ten Digits and a Party Line: A Study of a Number and a Nation.”

NEH reserves the right to re-title funded projects that do not follow agency guidelines. Award recipients, however, are permitted to use their preferred title for any award products.

7. May the project director also serve as the institutional grant administrator?

No. The project director may not serve as the institutional grant administrator. The institutional grant administrator functions as the representative of the recipient organization with authority to act on the organization’s behalf in matters related to the administration of the award. All financial reports and prior approval requests such as budget revisions, extensions of the period of performance, and changes in key personnel must be signed or countersigned by the institutional grant administrator. Similarly, official correspondence from NEH to a recipient (for

example, an offer letter, the award document, an extension, a supplement or amendment) is addressed to the institutional grant administrator and copied to the project director.

The project director is the person directly in charge of the conduct of the funded project. Because the project director's involvement in the project is critical to its success, the replacement of the project director or the co-director or a substantial reduction in the level of their effort (for example, an unanticipated absence for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in the time devoted to the project) requires prior written approval from NEH. See D2 in the NOFO.

8. Will NEH accept late applications?

No. To be considered, an application must be received by Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the published deadline, except for the limited reasons covered by NEH's [late submission policy](#). See Section D4. Submission Dates and Times in the NOFO.

9. How will our application be reviewed?

Specialists and non-specialists will evaluate your application. Your narrative should therefore explain the project's significance and provide an overview of its methodology in terms that will be understandable to scholars outside your particular field of expertise. The narrative should also demonstrate a command of the literature relevant to the project and provide detailed information about the procedures to be used to accomplish the project's goals. You can learn more about the NEH review process in Section E2. in the NOFO.

10. If we receive an NEH award, may we also accept funding from other sources?

Yes. Applicants are encouraged to seek other financial support. We do ask that you tell us about proposals to other funding sources under item 4 of the Supplementary Cover Sheet for NEH Grant Programs and a history of support as Attachment 6 (see Section D2. in the NOFO), so that we can better understand the project's financial picture. Overlapping project costs between two or more applications for federal funding and/or approved federal award budgets are not permitted.

11. If we are requesting additional NEH funding to continue our project, should we describe the project anew or will evaluators have access to the earlier grant proposal?

NEH treats all applications as new. Reviewers will not have access to the previous application; therefore, proposals for renewed funding must discuss the project anew. Be sure to describe the work accomplished with previous NEH funding and be clear about the specific activities and products of the new grant.

12. Our application for a Research and Development grant was unsuccessful. Is there anything we may do to increase our chances for success next time?

You may request copies of the comments by reviewers. A revised application should take into consideration the issues that they raised. However, a resubmitted application will be reviewed by persons who will not have knowledge of or access to the previous application. In addition, program officers can review your draft application if submitted by the date specified in Section D4. of the NOFO. If you choose to submit a draft proposal, send it as an attachment to preservation@neh.gov.

13. We have a research project with a digital component. Is Research and Development the most suitable program for our project?

NEH offers several grant opportunities that support digital projects. Research and Development supports new or ongoing investigations in a broadly defined area related to the preservation of – or access to – humanities content, whether in analog or digital format. These projects typically address a problem and propose a solution with far-reaching applications in one or more humanities disciplines or for the cultural heritage community. If your digital project is not centered on preservation or access, or if you have a more narrowly defined interpretive or analytical research agenda, you should consider [Collaborative Research Grants](#), [Digital Humanities Advancement Grants](#), and [Digital Projects for the Public](#). If you are uncertain as to which program is most appropriate for your project, please contact a Preservation and Access program officer (preservation@neh.gov, or 202-606-8570) in advance of submission. See [Match Your Project to a Grant Program](#).