



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
Humanities

DIVISION OF **PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

AMERICA'S HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS: PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Humanities content and advisers

What are the humanities?

According to the 1965 National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act, “The term ‘humanities’ includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life.”

How do I know whether my project is more appropriate for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) or the National Endowment for the Humanities?

If your project involves the creation of musical compositions, dance, painting, poetry, short stories, novels, or projects that focus on arts performance or training, you should apply to NEA. NEH supports projects that provide an analytical, reflective, or historical perspective on the arts.

What are “humanities themes”?

A theme is a brief interpretive assertion about a topic that shows the educational direction that a project will take. More than a topic, a theme considers the relevant humanities scholarship and offers a broad conceptual framework for understanding material. For example, “Women in the

Civil War” is a topic. It describes a subject but does not reveal what the interpretive approach to it would be. On the other hand, “Women played important economic roles during the Civil War” is a theme. It identifies a topic and also suggests what audiences might learn about it.

What is a humanities scholar?

Someone who has an advanced degree in a discipline of the humanities is generally considered a scholar. Scholars can provide context for a project and identify relevant humanities themes and ideas.

When should I start consulting with scholars about a project?

The earlier scholars are involved in a project, the better. A project is more likely to be recommended for funding if scholars have had a central role in helping shape the project's conceptual framework.

Is it okay to rely on a single scholar for a project?

Projects that depend on input from a single scholar are not competitive. Working with a number of scholars allows projects to explore a diverse range of interpretive possibilities.

How do I find the right scholarly advisers for a project?

There are many ways to find scholars for your project. Check with your local college or university to see if any faculty members have relevant expertise or could suggest the names of other scholars. You can also peruse bookstores (either real or on-line), libraries, and Web resources to see who has published on topics related to your project. [State humanities councils](#) often maintain lists of scholars who have participated in public programs. You can also contact professional associations or consult published directories of scholars. Finally, ask for samples of funded projects to see what kinds of scholars have participated in other projects.

How much should I pay scholarly advisers?

There is no set fee for scholars and other professionals working on your project. Some projects pay scholars a flat honorarium, others pay a daily rate. Discuss your project with the scholars, including the work that you expect from them, and negotiate a fair rate.

2. Public program grants

What types of projects are typically supported with these grants?

The program supports museum exhibitions, interpretations of historic sites, library programs, public discussion programs, interpretive websites, and mobile media tours. A list of recent awards made by America's Historical and Cultural Organizations: Planning Grants can be found [here](#). A list of recent awards made by America's Historical and Cultural Organizations: Implementation Grants can be found [here](#). These lists can give you an idea of the types of projects that are eligible for NEH support.

If I am implementing a museum exhibition that will be accompanied by a website and a short film based on the exhibition, should I apply only to AHCO or should I submit multiple applications to different NEH grant programs?

Many AHCO projects have multiple formats. Applicants must determine the primary format for which they are requesting support and apply to the grant program most appropriate for that format. Applicants may want to consider how they will use grant funds and staff resources in determining the primary format.

In this case, the exhibition is the primary grant product. The other components enhance and broaden the exhibition content. You should probably apply to AHCO and follow these guidelines for describing the exhibition and related components. NEH will NOT accept multiple applications for the same project at the same deadline: for example, one application to AHCO for a museum exhibition and a separate application to America's Media Makers to support production of a film.

What if I want funding only for a single format, such as a museum exhibition?

Projects with a single format are still welcome and will be judged on their own merits.

Where should I apply if I want to produce a media project?

If you are planning to produce a radio program, film, television series, or podcast for broad regional or national distribution over broadcast media or the Internet, the most appropriate program is America's Media Makers. (The program's development guidelines can be found [here](#), and its production guidelines can be found [here](#).)

Will AHCO fund resources for students and teachers?

Projects should be geared mainly for public audiences, and the project budget and activities should reflect this focus on producing programs for general public audiences. However, an AHCO project can include resources that help students and teachers explore the humanities content and themes central to the project. Such resources might include brief audio or video clips, hands-on activities, lesson plans, interactive games, scholarly essays, maps, and/or timelines.

Are Interpreting America's Historic Places (IAHP) grants still offered?

No, the IAHP grants are now included within the AHCO grant category. While a separate IAHP grant competition no longer exists, we still encourage applicants to explore the significance of a specific place to explain American history to the public.

What happened to Family and Youth Programs?

Although Family and Youth Programs are no longer specifically discussed in the guidelines, applicants can still seek funding for AHCO grants that focus on a narrower audience of children and families.

3. Submitting an application

Do I need to apply for a planning grant before I apply for an implementation grant?

No. Organizations may apply for any type of grant that is appropriate for the developmental stage of their project. Although many applicants find it beneficial to obtain planning funds before applying for implementation, it is not required.

May I apply for more than one NEH grant for my project?

Applicants may apply to NEH for support for different phases and activities of their projects. For example, an institution may apply to the Division of Preservation and Access for a preservation grant to stabilize its collections, the Office of Challenge Grants for a challenge grant to support a capital improvement program, and to the Division of Public Programs for a grant to support interpretive public programs.

Applicants may apply for planning or implementation grants, either singly or in sequence, but they may not submit a second proposal for a project if the outcome of the prior application is still pending. For example, if an applicant institution has a planning grant application pending, it may not apply for an implementation grant for the same project until it has heard the outcome of the application for a planning grant.

How long a grant period should I request?

The grant period for planning grants is normally about twelve months. Implementation projects normally run from eighteen to thirty-six months, although this varies, depending on the project. Grantees are encouraged not to rush through the planning phases of a project. Instead, they should allow time for the ideas generated during the planning phase to coalesce in ways that will move the project forward.

How long do I have to wait to hear the outcome of the application review?

The waiting time for planning and implementation applications is normally seven to eight months.

Are program officers available through phone or e-mail to answer questions?

Yes. Applicants are encouraged to contact us to discuss applications prior to their submission. We are also happy to look at drafts of proposals and to share samples of previously funded projects. The staff can be reached at 202-606-8269 or publicpgms@neh.gov. NEH recommends that drafts be submitted at least six weeks before the deadline, to ensure sufficient time to respond. Responses cannot be guaranteed if drafts arrive late.

4. Budget and grant funds

What are the differences between outright funds and matching funds? What is cost sharing?

Outright funds are awarded without being contingent on additional fund-raising.

Matching funds require a grantee to obtain nonfederal gift funds from third parties before federal funds are awarded.

Learn more about [different types of grant funding](#).

Cost sharing consists of the cash contributions made to a project by the applicant and third parties as well as third-party in-kind contributions, such as donated goods and services. Cost sharing also includes nonfederal gift money that will be raised to release federal matching funds.

If I receive NEH funding, may I also accept funding from other sources?

Yes. Applicants are encouraged to seek funding from diverse sources. Submitting proposals to other funders has no bearing on how NEH reviews proposals. We do ask that you tell us about those applications, so that we can better understand the project's funding situation.