



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Frequently Asked Questions: Fellowships Open Book Program

Office of Digital Humanities
Published: December 22, 2023

For authors

1. I wrote a book based on NEH-funded research that may be eligible for an FOBP award. What should I do?

First, confirm that the award you received was funded by a program included in FOBP. To be eligible for an FOBP award, your book must be based on research supported by one or more eligible programs, listed below.

Next, talk to your editor! University and non-profit presses, rather than authors, apply for FOBP awards, but publishers often don't know which authors have received eligible NEH awards. You can help make them aware that your book may be eligible.

Many presses have already received an FOBP award for one of their books and may be familiar with the process. Look for your press in our [list of funded projects](#).

Programs for individuals:

- [Awards for Faculty at Hispanic-Serving Institutions](#)
- [Awards for Faculty at Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#)
- [Awards for Faculty at Tribal Colleges and Universities](#)
- [Fellowships](#)
- [Fellowships for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan](#)
- Fellowships for College Teachers
- Fellowships for University Teachers
- [NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication](#)
- [Public Scholars](#)
- [Summer Stipends](#)

Programs for institutions:

- [Dangers and Opportunities of Technology](#)
- [Digital Humanities Advancement Grants](#)
- Digital Humanities Implementation Grants
- Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants
- [Humanities Initiatives at Colleges and Universities](#)

- [Humanities Initiatives at Community Colleges](#)
- [Humanities Initiatives at Hispanic-Serving Institutions](#)
- [Humanities Initiatives at Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#)
- [Humanities Initiatives at Tribal Colleges and Universities](#)
- [Humanities Connections](#)
- [Dialogues on the Experience of War](#)
- Seminars for Higher Education Faculty
- Seminars for K-12 Educators
- [Institutes for Higher Education Faculty](#)
- [Institutes for K-12 Educators](#)
- [Landmarks of American History and Culture](#)

2. I had an NEH fellowship at an independent research institution, like a library, archive, or Overseas Research Center. Is my book eligible?

If your fellowship was provided through an independent research institution, and not directly provided by the NEH, unfortunately your book is not eligible for this program.

3. My book draws on research that I did with an NEH award, but I didn't specifically propose to write a book in my original project. Is it eligible?

Books may be eligible for this program if:

- They explicitly draw on ideas or methods proposed in the NEH award application, and
- They reference research conducted during the award's period of performance.

4. My book draws on research that was funded by an eligible institutional NEH award, but I wasn't the project director. Is it still eligible?

Books written by any member of the project team may be eligible for FOBP if they are based on research supported by an eligible NEH award. In your letter of commitment, concisely explain the role that you played in the funded project.

5. My book was/will be published by a press based outside the United States. Is it eligible?

In most cases, no. Only presses that meet NEH's eligibility criteria can apply for this program. As described in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, "Publishers must be U.S. nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, or accredited public or 501(c)(3) institutions of higher education." See C1. Eligibility Information in the NOFO.

6. I published a book in a language other than English. Is it eligible?

There are no language-specific eligibility requirements for the FOBP. However, if your book was published in more than one language, be aware that you can still only apply for one FOBP award.

7. I published my research in a volume of collected essays. Is it eligible?

Edited collections are not eligible for an FOBP award. They fall under the category of "restricted activities," along with several other types of books such as memoirs and textbooks. See D6. Funding Restrictions in the NOFO.

For publishers

8. My press publishes many books. How do we know if we have any that are eligible for FOBP?

NEH does not maintain a comprehensive list of books that are eligible for FOBP. However, there are several ways to identify eligible books.

To be eligible for an FOBP award, a book must have been written with NEH support and must acknowledge that support. If you have a monograph that acknowledges NEH, it may have received funding through one of our eligible programs for individuals.

NEH [maintains a database](#) of all individuals and organizations that have received NEH awards. You can search by first and last name to determine whether an author received an NEH award and if that award is eligible for FOBP.

Finally, if you have questions about the eligibility of a specific book, you can contact odh@neh.gov.

9. What information should be in the author letter?

FOBP applications must include a letter of commitment from each author. See D2. Form and Content of Application Submission for a complete description of the letter of commitment requirements, which vary depending on if the book's underlying research was funded by an NEH program for individuals or institutions. In the letter, authors should:

- Indicate that they concur with the applicant's plan to release a free-to-download digital edition of their book governed by a Creative Commons license.
- Provide the original Federal Award Identification Number. To look up an award number, consult [NEH's online query form](#).

Letters written by NEH individual award recipients should also:

- state whether the book differs from the book proposed and reviewed in the NEH fellowship application
- provide a description of any changes in argument, content, or structure, and their impact on the final manuscript

Letters written by institutional award recipients should also:

- describe the author's role in the NEH-funded project (e.g., project director, research assistant)
- describe how the book builds on the project proposed and reviewed in the original NEH award application
- describe any differences in argument, content, or structure from the original project

We encourage authors not to include extraneous details in their letters of commitment. Sample letters are on the [FOBP program resource page](#).

10. Who should serve as the project director and institutional grants administrator for my project?

NEH requires all applicants in this program to name two separate representatives: a project director (PD) and institutional grants administrator (IGA). You can find a detailed description of these roles in D2. Content and Form of Submission in the NOFO.

Briefly, the PD oversees the programmatic aspects of the award. They are responsible for ensuring that the open access e-book is published on time and according to the protocols described in the NOFO, and for completing the [performance report](#).

The IGA is responsible for managing the financial and administrative requirements of the award and completing the [financial report](#). The IGA is also responsible for requesting changes to the award.

You should select staff for these roles who are likely to remain in their positions for the duration of the period of performance. NEH does not consider PD and IGA biographies or credentials as part of the review process for this program.

Fixed Award Amounts

11. The Fellowship Open Book Program (FOBP) award is a fixed amount award. What are fixed amount awards?

Fixed amount awards provide a specific amount of funding without regard to actual costs incurred by the recipient. Accountability is based on recipient performance and results, not expenditures, thereby reducing the administrative burden. Budgets should be based on a realistic estimate of allowable, reasonable, and allocable costs but the cost principles (2 CFR 200, Subpart E) do not apply. Fixed amount awards eliminate the need for proposed budgets, reviews of accounting and reporting systems, and incurred cost audits.

This type of award is suitable for the Fellowship Open Book Program as the work and costs to digitize and release e-books is predictable and consistent. The FOBP program uses this fixed award type because, unlike a typical grant, the project outcome is not only easily measurable, but identical for every project: a single e-book with a Creative Commons license and costs associated with author royalties, distribution fees, open access fees, securing rights, and promoting open access editions. Once the recipient accomplishes this outcome and final reports are submitted, the recipient has successfully met the requirements of the grant.

12. My sponsored research office is asking if NEH requires us to track actual costs for an FOBP award like we do for our other NEH awards?

No. The FOBP award is different from other NEH programs. FOBP is a fixed amount award. The award funds are payment for your effort to produce the e-book.

Accountability is based on the meeting the required deliverables (a single e-book and the author payment). Payment is provided either as a cash advance or reimbursement and NEH does not require you to track or provide an explanation of the expenditures incurred by your organization. However, if your institution has financial monitoring requirements for fixed amount awards that exceed NEH's, you will need to adhere to them.

For additional information see [2 CFR §§ 200.1](#), [200.101\(b\)\(2\)](#), [200.102\(c\)](#), and [200.201\(b\)](#).

13. Can I request a cash advance as the method of payment?

No. Fixed amount awards are based on performance and results. Recipients must verify the release of the e-book addition before NEH will release payment. Once NEH verifies the outcome of this award is complete, payment may be requested as a reimbursement.