

Public Humanities Projects Grants: Instructions for Preparing an Exhibitions Planning or Implementation Application

Grants in this category support permanent exhibitions that will be on view for at least three years, or travelling exhibitions that will be available to audiences in at least two venues in the United States. Consider the following examples:

- An art museum collaborates with a national cultural organization to bring Korean art works to four venues in major metropolitan areas in the U.S. The exhibition features high-quality works of art, placed in the context of Korea's history and culture over several centuries. A dedicated website expands on the exhibition themes by offering rich interactive content and educational materials.
- A public library and city museum develop a project to explore the history of their region as expressed through literature and historical artifacts. In addition to a traveling exhibition, the partners launch a related reading and discussion program series that includes a call-in radio show, inviting rural listeners to discuss short works of fiction with literature scholars and historians.

Expected Outcome:

Planning: Exhibition designs and a draft script that illustrates the main humanities ideas and the ways in which they will be conveyed to audiences, as well as plans for outreach, marketing, and evaluation of the final exhibition.

Implementation: A completed, installed long-term or touring exhibition with fully realized programming, vigorous marketing and outreach activities, and active evaluation of the project's impact.

Verify your institution's registration or register your institution with Grants.gov. Complete at least two weeks before the deadline.

Download the application package from Grants.gov. The [program resource page](#) on NEH's website has a direct link to the package. You can also search Grants.gov for this program.

Complete the application using the following instructions. The narrative should not assume specialized knowledge, and it should be free of jargon. It should clearly define technical terms so that they are comprehensible to a nonspecialist audience. NB: For an implementation application, a separate Walkthrough (Attachment #3) is required.

Please include the following application components:

1) **Table of Contents**

List all parts of the application in order with corresponding page numbers.

□2) Application Narrative

Up to **twenty** single-spaced pages for **planning** proposals.

Up to **fifteen** single-spaced pages for **implementation** proposals, or **twenty** single-spaced pages for proposals requesting a **Chairman's Special Award**.

Use one-inch margins and at least 11-point type.

A) *Abstract*

Briefly describe the major elements and significance of the project. Also enter your response as your "Project Description" for question 6 part b of the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance (part of the Grants.gov application package). Note that Grants.gov will accept **no more than 1,000 characters in this field**.

B) *Nature of the request*

In a page or less, provide an overview of the project and its interpretive goals.

- State that you are applying for a grant to support an exhibition project; identify the funding level (planning or implementation) and amount that you are requesting; if you are applying for a Chairman's Special Award or a Position in Public Humanities, indicate that.
- Describe the formats, the subject, and the main themes.
- If your project responds to one of the NEH areas of interest described in section I of the guidelines, explain how it does so.

C) *Humanities content*

- Describe the significance of the subject and its relevance to the public. Discuss the intellectual content of the project, identifying the major humanities ideas, themes, and questions to be addressed.
- Explain how humanities scholarship will inform the project.

D) *Project formats*

- Briefly describe all the formats and techniques that you will use to engage general public audiences.
- Discuss how the chosen format(s) will enhance public understanding of the humanities content.

E) *Project resources*

- Describe the resources available at your institution or elsewhere that will support your project. (Examples of resources include archives, special libraries, collections of art or artifacts, images, documents, film, audio, or digital materials.)
- If applicable, explain how you will secure permissions or rights for key materials.

F) *Project history*

- Give a brief history of the project to date. Describe the relationship of the project to others on the topic and explain what its particular contribution would be.

G) Chairman's Special Award

- If the application requests implementation funding at the **Chairman's Special Award** level, explain why the institutional collaborations, number of program formats, and broad reach to audiences make the project a good candidate for that funding level.
- Explain why the project will be unusually significant and appealing, and why it will have exceptionally broad reach nationally.

H) Audience, marketing, and promotion

- Describe the expected audience and present a plan for reaching this audience. If applicable, discuss partnerships that would help promote the project.
- If you are proposing special outreach to underserved or at-risk communities, describe your outreach plan and explain how you will engage new audiences in thinking about and discussing humanities ideas.

I) Evaluation of the project's impact

- Describe the process used and the results of any evaluation already conducted.
- Explain how you will test the efficacy of planned project elements or the success of implemented projects in conveying humanities content; describe how the evaluation results might inform the project moving forward.

J) Organizational profile

Provide a short profile of your organization and other major partner organizations (not to exceed one page for your organization and a half page for each collaborating organization). These descriptions should include the institutional mission, origin, and size; annual operating budget; annual number of visitors (for museums and historic sites); and special characteristics and current activities. Explain the responsibilities of collaborating organizations.

K) Project team

Identify the key staff members who will be involved in the project. Briefly describe each person's qualifications and expected contribution to the project.

L) Humanities scholars, consultants, and collaborating institutions

Identify the consultants (including humanities scholars) who will be involved in the project. Briefly describe the qualifications and expected contribution to the project of each consultant. Depending on the needs of the project, consultants may include education and public program specialists, historic site or cultural tourism experts, writers, media producers, or digital designers.

M) Work plan

- Provide a detailed month-by-month schedule of the major work to be done during the grant period, the amount of time it will take, and the specific people involved.
- State clearly when the meetings with scholars and other consultants will occur, and how the meetings will advance the project.
- Include activities related to planned project evaluation and indicate who will be responsible for each activity.

N) Project funding

Describe how project costs in excess of the NEH grant would be met.

□3. Project Walkthrough***For implementation applications only***

Up to **fifteen** single-spaced pages (**twenty** single-spaced pages for applicants for a Chairman's Special Award)

Use one-inch margins and at least 11-point type.

- Provide a detailed tour of your project, from the perspective of the visitor, section by section.
- Explain how the project's central ideas will be conveyed in each section, through objects, environments, and/or text.
- Explain the project's interpretive strategies and design philosophy.
- You may incorporate thumbnail images of objects or key places into the text, if they help clarify the description.
- If the project includes secondary formats (such as a website or discussion programs), briefly describe them.
- Please attach the following items, which don't count toward the page limit:
 - renderings of the floor plans and sections,
 - elevations of at least two sections; and
 - four to six examples of interpretive text to be used in the project. (As appropriate, include different levels of text, ranging from introductory panels to object labels.)

□4. Résumés and letters of commitment

- List on one page the project team, humanities scholars, and consultants, using the following format: Joan Smith (American studies, University of Maryland), or John Smith (designer, ABC Designs).
- Include résumés (of two pages or less) for each key member of the project team.
- For each humanities scholar and consultant provide a two-page résumé and a letter of commitment stating his or her intention to work on the project and his or her contribution. Letters from paid consultants should include estimated fees and deliverables.

□5. Budget

Using the instructions and the sample budget, complete the budget form (MS Excel format) or a format of your own that includes all the required information. (You can find links to the budget instructions, sample budget, and budget form on the [program resource page](#).) Submit your budget in a font of at least eleven points.

If you wish, you may attach separate pages with notes to explain any of the budget items in more detail.

Identify all key project personnel by name on the budget form, and note the number of days that each of them will contribute to the project or the percent of their time to be devoted to the project. Indicate in the budget if any of these individuals will perform different and separately budgeted functions.

- Be sure that the budget reflects the involvement of all consultants and humanities advisers.
- If fees will be used to defray costs of the project, include the anticipated amount of revenue under “Project Income” in Section 11.b. of the budget (Cost Sharing).
- If you are requesting funding for a Position in Public Humanities, include in the budget line items for the new hire’s salary and fringe benefits for two years of the grant. Up to \$30,000 in salary may be charged to NEH for each of the two years. Applicants that wish to increase the salary above \$30,000 must use their own funds to do so. Applicants must also use their own funds to pay for the employee’s benefits. Note that institutions would be required to pay benefits to the person hired equal to the benefits of a typical employee.
- If the applicant institution has a federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement and is claiming indirect costs, submit a copy of its agreement. Do not attach the agreement to your budget form. Instead you must attach it to the Budget Narrative Attachment Form (also known as the Budget Narrative File). (See the instructions for this form in the Application Checklist near the end of the main guidelines document.) Alternatively, you must attach a statement to the form, explaining a) that the applicant institution is not claiming indirect costs; b) that the applicant institution does not currently have a federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement; c) that the applicant institution is a sponsorship (umbrella) organization, which will charge an administrative fee of 5 percent of the total direct costs; or d) that the applicant institution is using the government-wide rate of up to 10 percent of the total direct costs, less distorting items (including but not limited to capital expenditures, participant stipends, fellowships, and the portion of each subgrant or subcontract in excess of \$25,000).
- Indirect costs are computed by applying a negotiated indirect-cost rate to a distribution base (typically a portion of the direct costs of the project). If the applicant institution is claiming indirect costs and has a current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement, include on the budget form the following information: a) the indirect-cost rate; b) the federal agency with which the agreement was negotiated; and c) the date of the agreement.
- Organizations that wish to include overhead charges in the budget but do not have a current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate or have not submitted a

pending indirect-cost proposal to a federal agency may choose one of the following options:

1. NEH will not require the formal negotiation of an indirect-cost rate, provided that the charge for indirect costs does not exceed the government-wide rate of up to 10 percent of direct costs, less distorting items (including, but not limited to, capital expenditures, participant stipends, fellowships, and the portion of each individual subgrant or subcontract in excess of \$25,000). This option is not available to a sponsorship or umbrella organization—that is, an organization that applies for a grant on behalf of an organization that may not be eligible to apply directly to NEH for a grant. Applicants choosing this option should understand that they must maintain documentation to support overhead charges claimed as part of project costs.
2. If your organization wishes to use a rate higher than 10 percent, provide on the budget form an estimate of the indirect-cost rate and the charges. If the application is approved for funding, the award document will provide instructions on how to negotiate an indirect-cost rate with NEH.

□6. Bibliography

Include a short bibliography (not to exceed three pages) of the most significant humanities scholarship that informs the project.

□7. Additional information (if applicable)

If applicable to your project, you must submit the following additional information in a single attachment:

o **Traveling exhibitions**

Describe the traveling version of the exhibition. If it will differ substantially in size, content, artifacts, or experience from the original exhibition, please describe the anticipated changes.

For planning applications: please provide the preliminary travel itinerary, if one exists.

For implementation applications: please provide the travel itinerary, as well as a letter of commitment from the first travel venue beyond the originating institution (and preferably also letters of commitment or expressions of serious interest from subsequent travel venues).

o **Conservation treatment**

If the project includes funding requested for conservation treatment, and the treatment exceeds 15 percent of the total amount requested from NEH, include a discussion of the rationale for conserving the objects being used. Provide a list of individual objects, sample condition reports, a timetable for the treatment of

objects, a description of the conservation methods, and the qualifications of the conservator.

o **User-generated content**

If the project includes user-generated content (UGC), describe how it will add to the humanities content and explain the criteria and process to be used for selecting and monitoring the content that will ultimately be made available to the public. Describe the policies and process to be used to prevent the dissemination of obscene, libelous, indecent, or defamatory content (including hate speech, personal attacks, or material constituting harassment).

Applicants requesting implementation grants must also provide the following additional information, if applicable:

o **Work samples for secondary digital media components**

If your project includes secondary digital media components, provide an example of previously completed work from the principal members of the digital team. We would prefer to have this work available through a URL included in the application but would also accept a DVD, if this is the most appropriate format. (When you include a URL, be sure to test it in both PC and MAC environments from the final PDF version of the document that you will submit.) Clearly indicate that this URL is your digital work sample. Identify the project personnel who worked on this sample and, if relevant, include additional information on the audience or distribution of the work sample. If you are submitting a DVD, please see the instructions beneath the “Submitting digital samples and/or supplementary material” heading in section III of the guidelines.

o **Information on public accessibility and admission**

As a taxpayer-funded federal agency, NEH endeavors to make the products of its grants available to the broadest possible audience. Discuss how you plan to provide at least twenty hours of free admission each month to NEH-supported exhibitions.

o **Publications**

Describe the content (including brief abstracts of essays), author(s), format, estimated print run, distribution plans, and sale price of any publications for which funding is requested. Explain how these publications will complement the project’s other formats.

Proceeds from the sale of any publications will be subject to the NEH policy on program income, which is outlined [here](#).

□8. Supplementary material

Applicants may choose to submit no more than **one** supplementary item, such as a collection of digital images of art works, photographs, or artifacts, or an exhibition catalog. Provide a brief description of the supplementary item. When possible, provide a URL for the supplementary item or submit it as a PDF via Grants.gov. Remember to test URLs in both PC and MAC environments from the final PDF version of the document that you will submit. If you are submitting a supplementary item that is not available as a URL and cannot be scanned and submitted to Grants.gov as a PDF, follow the instructions beneath the “Submitting digital samples and/or supplementary material” heading in section IV of the guidelines.

□9. Object list and illustrations (only for implementation proposals)

Include a complete list of objects and five to ten object illustrations.

□10. Information about a requested Position in Public Humanities (if applicable)

Applicants seeking support to create a Position in Public Humanities should justify the request in this section of the application. You can find detailed instructions about the information to provide [here](#) (PDF).