NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE Humanities

DIVISION OF **PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

HUMANITIES IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE

Deadline: June 24, 2015 (for projects beginning January 2016)

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 45.164

Items referred to in this document needed to complete your application:

☐ Budget instructions
☐ Budget form
☐ Grants.gov application package and instructions

Also see the **application checklist** at the end of this document.

Questions?

Contact the staff of NEH's Division of Public Programs at 202-606-8269 or publicpgms@neh.gov. Hearing-impaired applicants can contact NEH via TDD at 1-866-372-2930.

Submission via Grants.gov

All applications to this program must be submitted via Grants.gov. NEH strongly recommends that you complete or verify your Grants.gov registration at least two weeks before the application deadline, as it takes time for your registration to be processed.

System for Award Management Entity records

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) requires federal agencies to make information about the expenditure of tax funds available to the public. To facilitate this, the applicant organization must maintain current information in its Entity record in the System for Award

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Management (SAM). You must therefore review and update the information in your Entity record at least annually after the initial registration, and more frequently if required by changes in your information or another award term. In order for you to apply for an award via Grants.gov, receive an award, or receive payment on an award, the information in your Entity record must be current. You can update your organization's Entity record here. You may need a new SAM User Account to register or update your Entity record. NEH strongly recommends that applicants update (or, if necessary, create) their SAM Entity record at least four weeks before the application deadline.

I. Program Description

The Humanities in the Public Square program supports scholarly forums, public discussions, and educational resources related to the themes of a new NEH initiative, The Common Good: The Humanities in the Public Square.

Designed to demonstrate the vital role that humanities ideas can play in our civic life, the Humanities in the Public Square program invites projects that draw on humanities scholarship to engage the public in understanding some of today's most challenging issues and pressing concerns. As NEH launches a year-long celebration of its fiftieth anniversary in September 2015, the Common Good initiative seeks to demonstrate the vital role that the humanities can play in our public life. NEH's enabling legislation speaks eloquently of the need to attend to "the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life." Today, as our country grapples with both remarkable opportunities and extraordinary challenges, the "conditions of our national life" suggest that this need is greater than ever.

The Common Good initiative envisions humanities scholars and organizations turning their attention and expertise to topics that have widespread resonance with the American people and that lend themselves to humanistic methods and concerns. Organizations are encouraged to think creatively about what discussion topics would be meaningful to their community. A list of questions that exemplify promising subjects might include the following:

- How can the humanities illuminate both the positive and worrisome ways in which the remarkable advances in information technology are affecting individuals and communities in contemporary American life?
- How can the humanities enrich the debate over the appropriate balance of security and privacy that technological advances have placed before us?
- How can the humanities deepen public understanding of the meaning of democratic citizenship in the twenty-first century in relationship to our founding principles and values, our political history, and our current circumstances?
- How can the humanities contribute to the understanding of the relationships between humans and the natural world?
- How can the humanities illuminate the legacies of recent wars and conflicts and contribute to the achievement of a deeper and broader public understanding of the experience and lessons of war? (For more details, see NEH's Standing Together initiative.)

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- How can the humanities contribute to the full incorporation of veterans into civilian life and help all of us appreciate their unique perspectives? (For more details see NEH's Standing Together initiative.)
- How can the humanities assist the country in addressing the challenges and opportunities created by the changing demographics in many American communities?
- How can the humanities illuminate the enormous promise of new biomedical technologies and procedures and deepen our understanding of the complex ethical and personal questions they raise?
- How can the humanities address the various forms of cultural and political polarization that have become so prevalent in contemporary American life and thereby contribute to the building of new forms of community and understanding?

The Humanities in the Public Square program, a key part of the Common Good initiative, welcomes projects addressing a significant humanities theme that is important to a particular community, region, or state. The theme may be based on one of the questions above or it may address another significant public issue that is informed by the humanities in ways that will appeal to public audiences and concerns.

The project should consist of

1. a public forum that engages scholars and humanities practitioners in discussion with a public audience about a theme;
2. subsequent public programs that would use creative formats to engage audiences in reflection on and discussion of a humanities theme for an extended period of time; and
3. educational resources that disseminate materials for ongoing use by teachers, students, and/or lifelong learners.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to forge partnerships with other institutions as appropriate (especially state humanities councils), to ensure that the scholarly, public programming, and educational elements are all well conceived and realized. More information on state humanities councils is available here.

Public forum

The public forum should bring to bear the diverse intellectual perspectives of the humanities on the project topic. The public forum should be held by May 2016. Projects should be designed to foster collaboration between humanities scholars from a variety of disciplines and community participants. While presentations should be informed by humanities scholarship and methods, the forum should also seek to present scholarship in language conducive to productive public discussion. Host institutions are also encouraged to think creatively about how to use digital tools to expand the audience for the forum. The content and public feedback from the public forum will lay the intellectual foundation for the public programs to follow.

Public programs

The project's public programs can take many forms—book or film discussion programs, scholarly talks, local history projects, courses for lifelong learners, or other face-to-face

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programming. These programs should begin in the spring of 2016, closely following the public forum. The programming should engage the public and/or specific audiences in sustained conversations. In the public programs the humanities' diverse intellectual perspectives should be brought to bear on the chosen theme in ways that encourage public participation and dialogue.

To expand the audience for the public programs, institutions are encouraged to explore digital platforms to boost virtual participation or further audience interaction. These resources might include, for example, recommended readings, podcasts, essays, discussion questions, conversation toolkits, primary sources, or videos.

Educational resources

Projects should be designed to include educational components that will extend the reach of the content developed for the public forum and public programs. Technology can be a tool for distributing materials and content to students, teachers, stakeholders, lifelong learners, and the general public. Institutions are encouraged to develop digital resources, such as curricular materials for high school and college/university classrooms, to engage and deepen engagement with the program's subject.

If the educational resources are primarily designed for classroom use, applicants should develop a clear plan for disseminating materials to teachers and students, so that they will be used effectively in the classroom to enhance existing coursework and relevant curricula.

NEH's [EDSITEment website](#) is a respected source of educational materials for the classroom. NEH encourages applicants to create resources accompanying their projects that would be appropriate for publishing on EDSITEment or promotion through EDSITEment.

All projects should

- deepen public understanding of significant humanities questions;

- appeal to general audiences, high school through adult;

- build on sound humanities scholarship;

- involve a team of humanities scholars in all phases of development and implementation;

- approach a subject analytically and interpretively through a variety of perspectives;

- produce digital resources; and

- encourage sustained dialogue and discussion.

Grants may not be used for

- projects that seek to promote a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view;

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- projects that advocate a particular program of social action;

- empirical social scientific research or specific policy studies;

- educational or technological impact assessments;

- projects that focus on pedagogical theory, research on educational methods, testing, or measurements; or

- expenses for program venues in foreign countries.

Providing access to grant products and programs

As a taxpayer-supported federal agency, NEH endeavors to make the products of its awards available to the broadest possible audience. Our goal is for scholars, educators, students, and the American public to have ready and easy access to the wide range of NEH award products.

II. Award Information

Awards can be up to $300,000. The requested amount should reflect the project's complexity, number of venues, estimated number of participants, and partnerships. The grant period may last as long as twelve months. It must begin in January 2016.

Applications requesting $150,000 or more should aim to implement ambitious projects with a broad geographic reach and the potential to engage large audiences through extensive collaboration or a large number of venues. NEH strongly encourages smaller projects focused on local communities and smaller audiences.

Successful applicants will be awarded a grant in outright funds, federal matching funds, or a combination of the two, depending on the applicant's preference and the availability of NEH funds.

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

Cost sharing

No cost sharing is required. NEH is, however, rarely able to support the full costs of projects approved for funding. If eligible expenses exceed the amount requested from NEH, an applicant may cover the difference and show this as cost sharing in the project's budget.

III. Eligibility

Any U.S. nonprofit organization with IRS tax-exempt status is eligible, as are state and local governmental agencies and federally recognized Indian tribal governments. Eligible institutions include but are not limited to public, school, academic, and research libraries; museums; disciplinary and professional associations; cultural institutions; state humanities councils; and institutions of higher learning. Individuals are not eligible to apply.

NEH generally does not award grants to other federal entities or to applicants whose projects are so closely intertwined with a federal entity that the project takes on characteristics of the

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federal entity's own authorized activities. This does not preclude applicants from using grant funds from, or sites and materials controlled by, other federal entities in their projects.

Late, incomplete, or ineligible applications will not be reviewed.

IV. Application and Submission Information

Application advice

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact program officers, who can answer questions about the application and review process. Questions should be directed to the staff of NEH's Division of Public Programs at 202-606-8269 or publicpgms@neh.gov.

NEH staff members do not read and comment on draft proposals in the Humanities in the Public Square program.

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION

The following required elements must be submitted through Grants.gov.

1. **Table of contents**
   List all parts of the application.

2. **Narrative**
   Your narrative should not exceed fifteen single-spaced pages with one-inch margins. The narrative should not assume any specialized knowledge on the part of its readers, and it should be free of jargon. You should use at least eleven-point type.

   The narrative should contain the following, in this order:

   o **The nature of the request**

      In a paragraph, provide an overview of the project and its goals. Describe the subject and the chosen formats. Include the amount of money that you are requesting from NEH and the total project budget.

   o **Humanities content**

      Provide a clear description of the project's intellectual focus and its relevance to the Common Good initiative. Identify the humanities ideas, themes, and questions that the project will address. Also describe how various humanities disciplines will illuminate the topic. Explain how this project will use the humanities to engage a contemporary issue in fresh ways and why the issue that you have chosen is particularly meaningful to your community.

      If appropriate, describe the relationship of the project to others on the topic and explain what its unique contribution would be.

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- o **Digital media components**

  If your project includes significant digital media components, provide an example of previously completed work from the principal members of the digital team. The program would prefer to have this work available through a URL included in the application. Alternatively, you can send the work as a supplementary item (see below for the instructions for sending a supplementary item).

- o **Public forum**

  Provide a draft agenda for the public forum, identifying the subject matter and speakers for the event. (Speakers should be identified in the application as potential, invited, or confirmed.) Explain how the subject and themes will be engaging for the full range of participants. Discuss how you expect the program to contribute to public understanding of the subject that will be addressed.

  Use short paragraphs to describe the qualifications and contributions of each speaker on the agenda. Indicate how the speakers' expertise is suited to the project.

- o **Public programs**

  Describe the types of public programs that will be offered. Explain how the subject and themes will be engaging for the full range of participants. Discuss how you expect these programs to contribute to heightening your community's understanding of this project's theme.

  Describe all the formats that you will use to engage audiences and enhance public understanding of your topic and the humanities. Provide a draft agenda for the public programs, identifying the subject matter; titles of books, films, or other resources to be used in the programs; questions that would be explored; speakers; and a description of how the sessions would be organized (that is, their duration, format, etc.).

  If you have not yet identified venues for public programs, describe the criteria that you will use to select them. If applicable, describe training workshops and other activities to prepare discussion facilitators, scholars, and other project staff.

- o **Educational resources**

  Describe the project's educational goals and intended audience for ongoing learning about the project's topic. If applicable, provide details about how the project is particularly relevant to teachers and students. If applicable, identify the intended grade levels of the students to whom the resources are addressed, and discuss the partnerships that you will form and the plans that you will make to reach teachers. When appropriate, describe how the resources would help teachers meet applicable learning standards, and what support would be provided (for example, teacher training workshops or webinars) to ensure that they would be used effectively in the classroom.

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- o **Audience, marketing, and promotion**

   Describe the targeted audience and present a plan for engaging this audience. If applicable, discuss partnerships, media plans, and engagement tools that would help publicize the project. Applicants with plans to reach new, underserved, or at-risk audiences are encouraged to describe such plans in their proposals. If the project will create digital components, describe strategies for reaching the online participants on particular platforms.

- o **Program evaluation**

   Describe the project's anticipated reach, impact, and the criteria by which it will be measured. Include a specific evaluation plan for both the public forum and public programs that is appropriate for the project's scope, formats, and objectives. The evaluation plan should include, but need not be limited to, audience surveys and/or digital analytics.

   For the educational resources, describe how the evaluation will be tailored to teachers and students.

   Describe the qualifications of the evaluators. Include in the appendices brief résumés (two pages) from and a letter of commitment for each evaluator.

- o **Organizational profile**

   Describe why your institution is well suited to this project. Demonstrate that you have the institutional capacity for the project. Limit this description to a paragraph for your organization and a paragraph for each partner institution. Explain the responsibilities of collaborating organizations.

- o **Project personnel**

   Provide a brief overview of the project's team, including staff members, scholars, educators, and other program experts. If applicable, list additional scholars and discussion leaders who would conduct local programs and are not part of the core project staff listed elsewhere in the application.

3. **Résumés and letters of commitment**

   List on one page the project team and humanities advisors, using the following format: Joan Smith (American Studies, University of Texas), or John Smith (designer, ABC Designs). Include résumés (of two pages or less) for and letters of commitment from the key persons on the project team and all consultants (including humanities scholars and evaluators).

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4. **Work plan**

   Provide a month-by-month schedule of the specific tasks and the individuals responsible for them. It is often helpful to present this section in a grid format. Clearly indicate when the team will meet and explain the expected results of each meeting.

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. You should retain a copy of your budget form.

   All project directors will attend a planning meeting at the NEH offices in Washington, D.C. Directors should budget accordingly for a one-day meeting in the first months of the requested grant period.

   Budget narrative (optional)

   If needed, include a brief narrative supplement to the budget, explaining projected expenses, fundraising (if applicable), or other items in the project's budget. If your organization intends to share some of the costs, explain how your share will be met and outline the fundraising plan. Note that NEH is rarely able to support the full cost of projects approved for funding.

   If the applicant institution is claiming indirect costs, submit a copy of its current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement. Do not attach the agreement to your budget form. Instead you must attach it to Form 5, the Budget Narrative Attachment Form. (See the instructions for Form 5 in the Application Checklist at the end of this document.) Alternatively, you must attach a statement to Form 5, 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; or c) 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).

6. **Appendices (optional)**

   Include any additional information about the project that would be helpful for reviewers: public program agendas, educational resources created for previous projects, a bibliography, wireframes, screen shots, or other project schematics. Materials in this section may not exceed ten pages.

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HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

The application must be submitted to Grants.gov. Links to the Grants.gov application package and instructions for preparing and submitting the package can be found on the program resource page.

HOW TO SUBMIT A SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM

Applicants may choose to include **one** additional supplementary item (such as a publication or DVD from a scholarly or public program previously organized by the host institution; a CD with Web design, digital images of art works, photographs, or artifacts; or a monograph or catalogue by one of the project scholars that elucidates the program theme) for presentation to reviewers. If you are sending a supplementary item, please provide **six** copies of the item and list it in the application's table of contents. Each copy of the supplementary item must be labeled with the name of the project director, the name of the applicant institution, the title of the project, and the title of the supplementary item.

Send the item to

National Endowment for the Humanities
Attn: Humanities in the Public Square
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20506
202-606-8269

NEH continues to experience lengthy delays in the delivery of mail by the U.S. Postal Service, and in some cases materials are damaged by the irradiation process. We recommend that supplementary materials be sent by a commercial delivery service to ensure that they arrive intact by the receipt deadline.

Supplementary items will not be retained by NEH, and they will not be returned to applicants.

DEADLINES

Applications must be received by Grants.gov on or before June 24, 2015, for projects beginning in January 2016. Grants.gov will date- and time-stamp your application after it is fully uploaded. Applications submitted after June 24, 2015, will not be accepted. Supplementary items must also arrive at NEH on or before **June 24, 2015**, to be considered as part of the application.

V. Application Review

Evaluators are asked to apply the following criteria in assessing applications:

1. **Intellectual content and humanities significance**
   The project's fit with the Common Good initiative, and the likely contribution of the program to advancing the public humanities. The intellectual significance of the

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proposed project, including its value to humanities scholars and general audiences, as well as the quality of the humanities scholarship informing the project.

2. **Audience**
   The appeal of the subject to a general audience, the accessibility of the ideas, and the quality of the project's plan to reach audiences.

3. **Public forum**
   The quality and effectiveness of the proposed public forum; its potential to bring together diverse scholarly perspectives and to illuminate, through humanities scholarship, complex contemporary issues of pressing concern to American communities.

4. **Public programs**
   The appropriateness, quality, and creativity of the concept for organizing and presenting the material at the public programs. The likelihood that the programs will engage the public and will effectively convey the humanities content to the audience over a sustained period of time.

4. **Educational resources**
   The quality of materials to be provided to teachers, students, and lifelong learners. The appeal and appropriateness of the formats. The likelihood that the educational resources will extend the use of the project materials, including use by teachers or students in the classroom to further their understanding of the project's theme.

5. **Humanities team**
   The qualifications of the scholars and humanities practitioners, and their potential contributions to all phases of the project.

6. **Project team**
   The experience and demonstrated skills (administrative, technical or conceptual) of the team, the quality of the team's previous work, and the likelihood of timely and successful completion of the proposed project; evidence that institutional partners (if any) will collaborate effectively.

7. **Work plan**
   The likelihood that the applicant will achieve the project's goals in a timely and efficient manner.

8. **Budget**
   The appropriateness and reasonability of the project's costs.

Review and selection process

Knowledgeable persons outside NEH will read each application and advise the agency about its merits. NEH staff comments on matters of fact or on significant issues that otherwise would be missing from these reviews, then makes recommendations to the National Council on the Humanities. The National Council meets at various times during the year to advise the NEH chairman on grants. The chairman takes into account the advice provided by the review process

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and, by law, makes all funding decisions. More details about NEH's review process are available here.

VI. Award Administration Information

Applicants will be notified of the decision by e-mail in December 2015. Institutional grants administrators and project directors of successful applications will receive award documents by e-mail in January 2016. Award documents will identify the relevant terms, conditions, and administrative requirements that pertain to successful applications. The Grant Management section of the NEH website outlines all the responsibilities of award recipients, including anti-lobbying restrictions, in great detail. Applicants may obtain the evaluations of their proposals by sending a letter to NEH, Division of Public Programs, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20506, or an e-mail message to publicpgms@neh.gov.

VII. Points of Contact

If you have questions about the program, contact

Division of Public Programs
National Endowment for the Humanities
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20506
202-606-8269
publicpgms@neh.gov

If you need help using Grants.gov, refer to

Grants.gov: www.Grants.gov
Grants.gov help desk: support@grants.gov
Grants.gov customer support tutorials and manuals:
http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.html
Grants.gov support line: 1-800-518-GRANTS (4726)

VIII. Other Information

Privacy policy

Information in these guidelines is solicited under the authority of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 956. The principal purpose for which the information will be used is to process the grant application. The information may also be used for statistical research, analysis of trends, and Congressional oversight. Failure to provide the information may result in the delay or rejection of the application.

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Application completion time

The Office of Management and Budget requires federal agencies to supply information on the time needed to complete forms and also to invite comments on the paperwork burden. NEH estimates that the average time to complete this application is fifteen hours per response. This estimate includes time for reviewing instructions, researching, gathering, and maintaining the information needed, and completing and reviewing the application.

Please send any comments regarding the estimated completion time or any other aspect of this application, including suggestions for reducing the completion time, to the Chief Guidelines Officer, at guidelines@neh.gov; the Office of Publications, National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C. 20506; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (3136-0134), Washington, D.C. 20503. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

☐ **Verify and if necessary update your institution's Entity record, or create an Entity record for your institution, at the System for Award Management (SAM).** Complete at least four weeks before the deadline.

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

☐ **Download the application package from Grants.gov.** The program resource page on NEH's website has a direct link to the package. Alternatively, you can search Grants.gov for this program. (Note that Grants.gov tells you to download the "application instruction" as well as the "application package." The "application instruction" is this document, so there's no need to download it.) The program resource page also has a direct link to the instructions for completing the package.

☐ **Complete the following forms contained in the Grants.gov application package.**

1. Application for Federal Domestic Assistance - Short Organizational

2. Supplementary Cover Sheet for NEH Grant Programs

3. Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form

4. Attachments Form—Using this form, attach the parts of your application as described in the guidelines:

   ATTACHMENT 1: Table of contents (name the file "contents.pdf")

   ATTACHMENT 2: Narrative (name the file "narrative.pdf")

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ATTACHMENT 3: Résumés and letters of commitment (name the file "resumesandlettersofcommitment.pdf.")

ATTACHMENT 4: Work plan (name the file "workplan.pdf")

ATTACHMENT 5: Budget (name the file "budget.pdf")

ATTACHMENT 6: Appendices, if applicable (name the file "appendices.pdf")

5. Budget Narrative Attachment Form—Using this form, attach **only** a copy of your institution's current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement (or an explanation why you are not attaching such an agreement). (See the Grants.gov instructions for institutional applicants, which are available on the program resource page, for additional information.)

Your attachments must be in Portable Document Format (.pdf). We cannot accept attachments in their original word processing or spreadsheet formats. If you don't already have software to convert your files into PDFs, many low-cost and free software packages will do so. You can learn more about converting documents into PDFs here.

Upload your application to Grants.gov. NEH **strongly** suggests that you submit your application no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the day of the deadline. Doing so will leave you time to contact the Grants.gov help desk for support, should you encounter a technical problem of some kind. The Grants.gov help desk is now available seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day (except on federal holidays), at 1-800-518-4726. You can also send an e-mail message to support@grants.gov.