NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

OFFICE OF **DIGITAL HUMANITIES**

DIGITAL HUMANITIES ADVANCEMENT GRANTS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Digital Humanities Advancement Grants program?

In 2016 NEH combined the former Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants and Digital Humanities Implementation Grants programs into the Digital Humanities Advancement Grants program. The program supports digital projects throughout their lifecycles, from early start-up phases through implementation and long-term sustainability. Experimentation, reuse, and extensibility are hallmarks of this grant category, leading to innovative work that can scale to enhance research, teaching, and public programming in the humanities.

What do you mean by experimentation or innovation?

An experimental project creates something new, offering an interesting new approach to tackling a problem. Experimentation can take many forms. Some projects are examples of technical innovation, such as the creation of a new piece of software to address a need in the humanities. In other cases, the experimentation does not consist of creating new technology; instead the project makes use of an existing technology in a new way. For example, an applicant might take existing software used for some other purpose and demonstrate how it could be effectively used for humanities research. In still other cases, the experimentation does not pertain to the technology per se; instead it is the project collaboration that is experimental, as with projects that bring together creative individuals from both technical and nontechnical fields to address a longstanding humanities issue in a new way.

Do Digital Humanities Advancement Grants support projects that study digital culture, in addition to projects that use digital techniques to study traditional humanities materials?

Yes.

What constitutes "revitalizing and/or recovering existing digital projects"?

Digital Humanities Advancement Grants support both completely new projects and projects that are not completely new. The program can support the expansion of existing projects in innovative or experimental ways, and the restarting of projects that are valuable but have

languished (and thus need substantive changes in their design, technical architecture, and dissemination and preservation strategies). Digital Humanities Advancement Grants do not, however, support regular, ongoing maintenance of existing projects. Activities that can be supported include

- the testing and evaluation of an established project with target audiences to determine needs and priorities;

- the redesign of a project's interface to align with current web design standards, including those that address accessibility for audiences with disabilities;

- the integration of widely used digital tools (for example, tools used for annotation or visualization) into an established project;

- the redevelopment of underlying technologies or standards to prepare project data for incorporation into a federated or discipline-specific platform such as the Digital Public Library of America, Open Context, etc.; and

- the creation or revision of a plan to manage an established project's data—including digitized images, scholarly essays, annotations, social media, etc.—in the long term. The plan should include a strategy for archiving and sharing data, even if the project is no longer being updated regularly.

My organization is interested in applying for Level III funding for a project involving a museum or a library, but I see that the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is partnering with NEH to support only Level I or Level II applications to the DHAG program. Can I still apply for a Level III grant?

Yes. Although IMLS is currently joining with NEH to support only smaller (Level I and II) grants, NEH has a long history of support for projects involving museums and libraries; it welcomes applications for such projects for all levels of funding. You may also wish to consider other IMLS opportunities, such as National Leadership Grants for Museums and National Leadership Grants for Libraries.

The project that I have in mind seems compatible with the guidelines for another NEH grant program, but it also seems to fit as a Digital Humanities Advancement Grant. To which program should I apply?

Generally, projects that can be supported through other NEH grant programs and that seek to achieve the goals of the other grant programs should be addressed to those programs. However, no rules prevent an applicant from submitting an application to more than one NEH grant program, so long as the application is appropriately modified to fit the guidelines of the different programs. If you are not certain to which grant program you should apply, contact NEH program staff for guidance.

ELIGIBILITY

I am an independent scholar. Am I eligible to apply for a Digital Humanities Advancement Grant as an individual?

Individual applicants are not eligible to apply for Digital Humanities Advancement Grants. Only eligible institutions may submit applications.

May a non-U.S. institution or organization apply for a grant?

NEH does not provide support to foreign institutions or organizations. However, American institutions may apply for cooperative projects involving U.S. and foreign individuals or organizations. Such collaborators may be included in the project budget. If you are interested in submitting an application for a project involving international collaborators, please consult beforehand with the staff of the Office of Digital Humanities.

May my institution apply for more than one Digital Humanities Advancement Grant at a time?

Yes. Institutions may apply for and hold more than one of these grants, but project directors may submit only one application to this program per deadline.

I received funds for the start-up phase of my project from a source other than the NEH. Am I still eligible to apply for a Level III Digital Humanities Advancement Grant?

Yes. You are welcome to apply to the program whether or not you previously received a Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant (SUG) or other NEH award. However, you must be able to demonstrate that you and your collaborators have completed the start-up phase and are prepared to move on to implementation.

I currently have another NEH grant. I would like to apply for a Level III Digital Humanities Advancement Grant as a follow-up to my current grant. However, at the time of the DHAG deadline, my other grant won't yet be fully completed. May I still apply?

We actively encourage NEH project directors to apply for a DHAG, even if the project director's other NEH grant is not fully completed when he or she applies to DHAG. Nevertheless, evidence of the success of a project's start-up phase is an important consideration when Level III DHAG proposals are reviewed. You should demonstrate that you have made enough progress in the start-up phase of your project to be ready to apply for a DHAG.

BUDGET

May the project budget include funds to support activities described in the data management and sustainability plans?

Yes. The budget may include funds for staff and other costs related to preserving, disseminating, and sustaining the digital materials created during the grant period.

Those applying for a Level III grant may request up to an additional $50,000 in NEH matching funds, which must be matched one-to-one by nonfederal gift funds raised from eligible third parties. These contributions, as well as the NEH match, must be directed specifically toward data management and sustainability activities (as described in the instructions for the data management plan and sustainability plan components of the application). This additional $50,000 is in addition to the $325,000 allowed in outright funds.

Sustainability plans are required of all Level III applications. The additional matching funds would support sustainability activities that are especially creative or robust.

Does NEH limit the amount of indirect costs that can be included as part of an institutional application for a Digital Humanities Advancement Grant?

No. An institution may include indirect costs up to the appropriate negotiated rate in the application budget. Note, though, that the indirect costs are included in the amount awarded for the grant; they are not added to the grant amount. (For example, if an applicant requests $325,000, this means that NEH would support no more than $325,000 of a project's costs, including the indirect as well as the direct project costs.) An institution that forgoes all or part of the indirect costs to which it is entitled may include the forgone portion as cost sharing.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Should the project participants and our institution include letters of commitment as part of our application or should they be sent separately?

Letters of commitment should be included with the application.

Whom should I ask to provide letters of support?

Letters of support should come from persons who can objectively assess the importance of the project to the humanities. These persons should comment on the importance of the project's subject area, the proposed methodologies, the technical plan, or the potential audience for the project. They should not be project participants. Also, the letters should be sent to the project director (not separately to NEH) and submitted with the application.

I would like to include a works cited page or bibliography in my application. Where should I insert this?

Please include this component in the appendices section of the application.

On the Supplementary Cover Sheet for NEH Grant Programs, question number 1 asks for the project director's major field of study. Our project director's field of study is not, however, listed in the drop-down menu. What should we choose?

If none of the listed fields seems to fit your project director's major field of study, please choose "Interdisciplinary."

REVIEW PROCESS

Who will read my grant application?

A variety of individuals will read your application, including peer reviewers, NEH staff, and members of the NEH National Council on the Humanities.

We therefore strongly emphasize that you should write your application so that readers without technical knowledge can understand it. We realize that your project may be technical in nature and that part of the application may have to address complex technological issues. But particularly in your abstract and the first portion of your narrative, you should write for a general audience that is familiar with the humanities but may have no specific knowledge of technology or of your project's relation to the humanities. In these sections of the application you should make a "big picture" case for your project's contribution to the humanities.

Your proposal must explain the significance of your project to the humanities, in terms that will be comprehensible to readers without technical knowledge. Your application will be read by many individuals with different backgrounds, from different disciplines, with varying degrees of familiarity with the methodologies used in digital scholarship. You must therefore make a case to this broad audience. Consider, for example, how you might make a case for your project if you were describing it to your provost, dean, or college president. Alternatively, consider how you might briefly describe the project to a new acquaintance outside your field. Your abstract and the first portion of your narrative should be crafted to appeal to individuals like these.

I would like to send a draft proposal for NEH staff comment. How do I do that?

While submitting a draft is not mandatory, applicants are encouraged to do so. In order to guarantee NEH review of the draft, it should reach NEH six weeks before the deadline. Draft proposals should be submitted via e-mail to odh@neh.gov.

ACCESSIBILITY

Where can I find resources with additional information about developing accessibility plans for my project?

The following resources may be useful in developing plans to ensure that grant products are accessible to a broad audience, including individuals with disabilities:

"Considering the User Perspective: A Summary of Design Issues," WebAIM
http://webaim.org/articles/userperspective/

"Design For Accessibility: A Cultural Administrator's Handbook" (PDF)
https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/Design-for-Accessibility.pdf

"How People with Disabilities Use the Web," Web Accessibility Initiative
http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/people-use-web/

United States Access Board
https://www.access-board.gov/

W3C Accessibility Standards
http://www.w3.org/standards/webdesign/accessibility