



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Public Scholars Program Announcement Deadline: April 22, 2026

The Public Scholars program offers grants to individual authors for research, writing, travel, and other activities leading to the creation and publication of well-researched nonfiction books in the humanities written for the broad public.

The 2026 Awards for Faculty competition will accept only projects for research in American history and culture and Western civilization.

To apply, follow the instructions in the [Notice of Funding Opportunity for Awards to Individuals](#) (Individual Programs NOFO). This announcement includes additional guidance and requirements specific to the Public Scholars program. **You are responsible for reviewing and following all requirements in the NOFO and in these guidelines.** You must apply via Grants.gov.

Funding Opportunity Title	Public Scholars
Funding Opportunity Number	20260422-FZ
Federal Assistance Listing Number	45.160
Application Deadline	April 22, 2026, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time
Anticipated Award Announcement	January 2027
Anticipated FY 2027 Funding	Approximately \$900,000
Estimated Number and Type of Awards	Approximately 15 grants
Award Amounts	\$30,000 to \$60,000 (\$5,000 per month for full-time work; prorated for part-time)
Cost Sharing/Match Required	No
Period of Performance	The period of performance is 6-12 months. Projects must start between April 1, 2027, and September 1, 2028.
Eligible Applicants	U.S. citizens residing domestically or abroad and foreign nationals who have lived in the United States or its jurisdictions for at least the three years prior to the application deadline See eligibility information below and in the Notice of Funding Opportunity for additional requirements.

Program Resource Page	https://www.neh.gov/grants/research/public-scholar-program
Webinar	Pre-recorded webinar posted to resource page
Published	March 2, 2026
Updated (amended reference letter deadline)	April 1, 2026

Purpose

The Public Scholars program encourages non-academic writers to deepen their engagement with the humanities by strengthening the research underlying their books, and it encourages academic writers in the humanities to communicate the significance of their research to the broadest possible range of readers. NEH encourages submissions from independent scholars and junior scholars. Projects are eligible at any stage in their development.

The 2026 Public Scholars competition will accept only projects for research in American history and culture and Western civilization. Competitive applications must focus on topics in the history, culture, and government of the United States in any period from the Colonial Era to the present, or topics in Western civilization from antiquity to the present.

Review criteria

Peer reviewers will use the following criteria to review applications for this program:

1. The appeal and intellectual significance of the proposed book for general readers, and its potential for promoting a deeper understanding of American history and culture and Western civilization.
2. The applicant's record of research and experience in interpreting the humanities for general audiences.
3. The quality of the conception, definition, organization, and description of the project; and the breadth and depth of the humanities research underlying the project.
4. The quality of the writing sample and the applicant's clarity of expression.
5. The feasibility and appropriateness of the proposed plan of work, the soundness and probable reach of the dissemination plan, and the likelihood that the applicant will complete the project.

Funding restrictions specific to this program

See section A.2 in the [Individual Programs NOFO](#) for the full list of funding restrictions for awards to individuals.

You may not use awards made under this notice for the following purposes:

- projects that do not involve research in American history and culture or Western civilization
- fiction, including historical fiction and philosophical novels
- anthologies and edited collections of essays or primary source documents
- publications consisting primarily of transcribed interviews, oral histories, or responses to questionnaires
- translations and scholarly editions
- projects whose primary product will be a digital archive or database, or audiovisual materials
- projects devoted primarily to promoting or disseminating a completed book

- development of curricula or teaching methods and theories

Period of Performance

Public Scholars awards can be from 6 to 12 months. You may work on your project part-time or full-time, or combine periods of part-time and full-time work, but the period of performance must be continuous. If you propose a time period of less than the equivalent of six full-time months, NEH will reject your application. It may not exceed 12 months, even if it includes part-time work. You may request a period of performance start date between April 1, 2027, and September 1, 2028.

You must:

- work at least half-time on your project throughout your period of performance
- forego other major activities, including teaching, while holding a full-time award
- carry a reduced teaching load when working part time on your project, if you teach while holding an award

Eligibility

See sections C.1 and C.2 in the [Individual Programs NOFO](#) for full eligibility information, including resubmission, collaborative projects, and projects supported by previous NEH grants.

You may not accept or hold any other NEH individual award, including a Chairman's Award to Individuals, in the same federal fiscal year.

You must have written at least one nonfiction book published by a university or trade press and be credited as its sole author. You must list the relevant publication(s) on your résumé, providing a citation sufficient to identify the work(s). NEH will reject your proposal if you fail to do so.

You may not meet this requirement with a co-authored volume, an edited collection of essays or anthology, a scholarly edition, a translation, a dissertation, a book that has not been published by the application deadline, or a self-published book. (Self-published books include books published by a press that requires payment from the author to the press as a condition of publication.)

Application deadline

Applications must be submitted by April 22, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time.

Applications must be complete, follow length and formatting requirements, and be validated by Grants.gov under the correct funding opportunity prior to the deadline to be considered under this notice.

Application components

See the [Application Component Table](#) below to learn what a complete application entails, and the sections following it for information about the content of those components.

See the [Individual Programs NOFO](#) for instructions for the Grants.gov forms in your application package (SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance-Individual, NEH Supplemental Information for Individuals Form, Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form, Attachments form).

Your attachments must be PDFs and conform to the following formatting requirements:

- pages no larger than standard letter size (8 ½" x 11")
- margins of at least one inch on all sides
- single-spacing
- a readable font such as Arial, Georgia, Helvetica, or Times New Roman, no smaller than 11 points
- any standard citation style is acceptable; citations are included in page count

Application Component Table

Application Component	File Name	Designation	Page limits
Attachments			
1: Narrative	narrative.pdf	Required	3 (mandatory)
2: Work plan	workplan.pdf	Required	1 (mandatory)
3: Bibliography	bibliography.pdf	Required	1 (mandatory)
4: Résumé	resume.pdf	Required	2 (mandatory)
5: Writing sample	writingsample.pdf	Required	20 (mandatory)
6: Publisher's letter of interest or commitment	publisherletter.pdf	Optional	
7: Explanation of delinquent federal debt	delinquentdebt.pdf	Conditionally required	
Grants.gov forms			
SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance - Individual		Required	
NEH Supplemental Information for Individuals Form		Required	
Project/Performance Site(s) Location Form		Required	
Attachments Form		Required	

Attachment 1: Narrative (required)

Organize your narrative using the following headings. Each section aligns with one or more [review criteria](#) NEH will use to evaluate your proposal. Your narrative should be succinct, well organized, and free of technical terms and jargon so that peer reviewers can understand the proposed project. Per the [Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence for NEH Grant](#)

[Proposals](#), you must acknowledge (by use of footnotes or other marginal notations) when you have inserted AI-generated text into your proposal.

a. Significance and contribution (aligns primarily with [review criterion 1](#))

Describe the appeal and significance of the proposed project for general readers. Explain why your topic will be of interest to a general audience, and how it advances humanities knowledge. Summarize the project, explaining its scope and the basic ideas, problems, arguments, questions, texts, people, and/or events that it will explore. Discuss how it relates to previous work on the topic and how your work makes a new contribution.

b. Sources and organization (aligns primarily with [review criteria 1 and 3](#))

Discuss your sources and research materials. Explain how you will use appropriate primary and/or secondary sources, including such things as historical or contemporary documents or other writings, artifacts or objects, literary or artistic or cinematic or visual works, print or digital publications or other digital resources, interviews, observation (including participant observation), the administration of surveys or questionnaires, or other fieldwork. Explain how you will locate or select your sources and how they will support your treatment of the topic. Explain how you plan to organize your book. Provide a chapter outline, with brief explanations of each chapter's contents.

c. Competencies, skills, and access (aligns primarily with [review criteria 2 and 5](#))

Explain your competence in the area of your project and describe your experience in conveying scholarship to, or otherwise writing for, a broad audience. If the subject is new to you, explain your reasons for working in it and your qualifications to do so. Specify your level of competence in any language or skills needed for the study. If relevant, specify the arrangements for access to archives, collections, or institutions that contain the resources you need, or for interviews with relevant people. If you are proposing to work with a collaborator, indicate that person's competencies. If you are proposing a biography of a living person, discuss the degree of cooperation you have from that person and how this affects your project.

d. Final product and dissemination (aligns primarily with [review criteria 1 and 5](#))

The output of a Public Scholars award is a book for a general audience. Describe your final product(s) and the audience(s) you aim to reach. Discuss why your treatment is appropriate to the subject matter and audience. Indicate when you expect to submit the project for publication and when you expect the book to appear. If you have a publisher, describe your plans to disseminate and market the book, explaining how you will reach general readers. If you do not have a publisher, describe your plans to secure one. If you propose creating supplemental digital materials, discuss their technical specifications and explain how you will support and maintain them beyond the period of performance. Explain how you will handle the documentation of sources, and what form you expect the documentation to take. Briefly discuss how you will balance readability against the need for thoroughness and precision in your documentation of sources. If the project involves publishing materials that are under copyright, indicate your plans for securing the necessary permission.

Your narrative must not exceed **three pages**. Name the file narrative.pdf.

Attachment 2: Work plan (required)

Present a schedule for the period of performance (in increments of three months or fewer). This schedule can be in narrative form or by using a table. Indicate the current state of the project and identify what, if any, parts of the project you have already completed. Explain the tasks you

expect to accomplish during the period of performance. If you will not complete the project during the period of performance, state when you expect to complete it. You should not include a chapter outline. Chapter outlines and descriptions, if applicable, should be part of your narrative.

Your work plan should not depend heavily on factors beyond your control, such as the receipt of outside reviewers' reports from a publisher. If you plan to submit a manuscript for publication before the end of the period of performance, explain what additional work will be required and why it merits support.

Your timeline should include where you will work and, if you will be in more than one location, how long you will spend in each.

If you received NEH support for an earlier stage of the same project, indicate the program, what was accomplished during that award period and how the proposed work plan builds on your previous support.

If you and another researcher are seeking funds for the same project, identify them and state if they have received or submitted a proposal for NEH support. Clearly explain how the work will be divided and the extent to which each collaborator's contribution depends on that of the other.

Your work plan must not exceed **one page**. Name the file workplan.pdf.

Attachment 3: Bibliography (required)

Your bibliography should consist of primary and secondary sources that relate directly to the project. Include works that pertain to both the project's substance and its theoretical or methodological approaches to give a well-rounded representation of your project. Peer reviewers will use the bibliography to assess your knowledge of the subject area.

Your bibliography must not exceed **one page**. Any standard bibliographic format is acceptable. Items referenced in the narrative need not appear in the bibliography if the citation in the narrative enables readers to identify the work.

Name the file bibliography.pdf.

Attachment 4: Résumé (required)

Include a résumé with the following information:

- current and past positions
- education: list degrees, dates awarded, and titles of theses or dissertations
- awards and honors: include dates. If you have received prior support from NEH, indicate the dates of these awards and the products that resulted from them.
- publications: include full citations for publications and presentations
- other relevant professional activities and accomplishments
- level of competence in digital tools or methodologies, and if applicable, in any relevant foreign languages

Your résumé must not exceed **two pages**. Name the file resume.pdf.

Attachment 5: Writing sample (required)

You must submit a writing sample. NEH strongly recommends that you submit a draft chapter or partial chapter of the proposed book if possible. If a draft chapter is not available, a sample in the style of the proposed book is acceptable.

Your writing sample should demonstrate how the final product will read, and your ability to appeal to a general audience. If it is drawn from the proposed book, it should demonstrate how you will document your sources or contain a note explaining this.

Your writing sample must not exceed **20 PDF pages**.

You may submit the writing sample as typescript (i.e., as manuscript pages) or as a reproduction of previously published pages.

- If you submit your sample as typescript (i.e., as manuscript pages), you must use a font no smaller than standard 11-point. NEH recommends that you submit a double-spaced sample. Single-spaced samples containing more than the equivalent of 20 double-spaced pages may not receive full consideration from reviewers. You may include end notes or footnotes (either single-spaced or double-spaced), tables, visual material, captions, a bibliography, and/or an explanatory headnote, provided they are contained within the 20-page limit.
- If you submit a reproduction of previously published pages, you may include either one or two published pages on each page of the PDF. The sample may include end notes or footnotes, tables, visual material, captions, a bibliography, and/or an explanatory headnote. You may make abridgments to conform to the 20-page limit, and you may include a note explaining what has been omitted. The entire sample, including any such ancillary material, must be contained within the 20-page limit. NEH recommends that you limit your sample to approximately 7,000 words. Longer samples may not receive full consideration from reviewers.

If the sample consists of material that will appear in the proposed book, include a headnote explaining how the sample and the proposed book relate. For example, specify which chapter it is, whether it is a complete or partial chapter, or whether you will ultimately use parts of it in several different chapters. This explanation must be included within the 20-page limit.

If the sample has been previously published, indicate this and list the publication on your résumé.

The sample may not include a table of contents, outline, or abstract of the proposed book or portions of it (this information belongs in the narrative).

You must be the author of the sample. It must not be co-authored, unless you are proposing a co-authored book, in which case you may submit a sample co-authored with your proposed collaborator.

NEH recommends that you submit a single piece of writing as your sample, rather than multiple pieces.

Name the file writingsample.pdf.

Attachment 6: Publisher’s letter of interest or commitment (optional)

If you have already explored publication arrangements, you may submit a letter of interest or commitment from a publisher. The letter should be from an official representative of the publisher. Letters of commitment should indicate the physical format(s) planned for the book, dissemination plans, and print-run expectations.

If you submit a letter, it must be included together with your other materials. It may not be submitted separately or added to your application after the deadline.

Name the file publisherletter.pdf.

Attachment 7: Explanation of delinquent federal debt (conditionally required)

If you receive an offer of an award and are **delinquent** in the repayment of any federal debt, you will be asked to provide explanatory information including evidence that you have entered into a repayment agreement with the Internal Revenue Service, and that you are current on all payments due. Examples of relevant debt include **delinquent** student loans, taxes, child support payments, and payroll taxes for household or other employees. See [OMB Circular A-129](#). NEH encourages you to submit this information with your application, but you will be required to submit it if you receive an award.

Name the file delinquentdebt.pdf.

Letters of reference

To ensure full consideration, letters of reference must be submitted online no later than **June 4, 2026**. For additional information on letters of reference, see Section 4: Letters of Reference in the [Individual Programs NOFO](#).

Award announcements

Applicants will receive notification about their application in January 2027.

Federal award documents

If NEH selects your application for an award, the NEH Office of Grant Management will send your award documents through eGMS Reach starting in March 2027.

Agency contacts

If you have questions about the program, contact:

Division of Research
National Endowment for the Humanities
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20506
202-606-8200
publicscholar@neh.gov

If you have questions about administrative requirements or allowable costs, contact:

Office of Grant Management
National Endowment for the Humanities
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20506
202-606-8494
grantmanagement@neh.gov

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you can contact NEH using telecommunications relay at 7-1-1.