OFFICE OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES
DIGITAL HUMANITIES ADVANCEMENT GRANTS
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Updated: September 7, 2021

## 1. How do I submit a draft for review?

To submit a draft, please send a narrative, preliminary work plan, and/or preliminary budget as a single attachment (one file) to odh@neh.gov. In the body of the email, indicate the proposed funding level, lead project director, institution name, and preliminary title for the project. Drafts must not be submitted via Grants.gov.

This optional preliminary review is not part of the formal review process and has no bearing on the final outcome of the proposal, however, previous applicants have found it helpful in strengthening their applications.

For current draft deadlines, see D4. Submission Dates and Times in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

## 2. What do you mean by experimentation or innovation?

An experimental project creates something new, offering an interesting new approach to tackling a problem. Applicants should conduct a thorough environmental scan as this is helpful in convincing reviewers that the project is experimental or innovative.

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.

## 3. What constitutes "planning for the revitalization and/or recovery of existing digital projects"?

Only Level I Digital Humanities Advancement Grants, can be used to support planning for the restarting of projects that are valuable but have languished (and thus need substantive changes in their design, technical architecture, and/or dissemination and preservation strategies).

Digital Humanities Advancement Grants cannot, 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 planning for a redesign of a project's interface to align with current web design standards, including those that address accessibility for audiences with disabilities;
- the testing of widely-used digital tools (for example, tools used for annotation or visualization) to see if they can be successfully integrated into an established project;
- the consideration of how the project data can be incorporated 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.—for the long term.

**4. Our project seems compatible with the goals and activities of another NEH program, but it also could fit as a Digital Humanities Advancement Grant. To which program should I apply?**

NEH funds digital humanities projects across many programs. We encourage applicants to apply to the program that best fits with their project's goals, audiences, and outcomes and have put together resources to help applicants select the most appropriate program: Navigating DH at the NEH (PDF) and Match Your Project with an NEH Grant Program.

Applicants may submit proposals to more than one NEH program for complimentary (that is, separate and distinct) components of a larger project, so long as the applications addresses the requirements for each program. Note that overlapping project costs and activities between two or more applications for federal funding and/or approved federal award budgets are not permitted. If you are uncertain to which program you should apply, we strongly encourage you to contact ODH program staff at odh@neh.gov for guidance.

**ELIGIBILITY**

**5. May a non-U.S. institution or organization apply for an NEH award?**
NEH does not provide financial assistance to foreign institutions or organizations, so foreign entities are not eligible to apply or receive a subaward from any NEH program. See C3. Other Eligibility Information in the NOFO.

**6. Can my project include collaborators based outside of the U.S.?**
Yes. American institutions can obtain the services of foreign individuals as consultants to carry out various programmatic activities on a fee-for-service basis paid directly to the individual. See C3. Other Eligibility Information in the NOFO.

**7. If I work at an eligible institution and I am not an American citizen, may I serve as a project director?**
Yes. Project directors need not be U.S. citizens or U.S. residents, so long as the applicant institution is eligible.

**8. May our 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 awards simultaneously.

However, individuals may serve as project directors or co-directors for only one application to this program per deadline.

**9. Our organization currently has a DHAG award. We would like to apply for a Level II or III DHAG award to continue progressing on the project. However, at the time of the DHAG deadline, our current award will still be active. May we still apply?**

Current DHAG recipients may apply for another DHAG, even if the earlier award is not fully completed when they apply for the subsequent award. Nevertheless, evidence of the success of a project's earlier phase is an important consideration when Level II or 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 an additional DHAG.

**10. Our organization received funding for the start-up phase of our project from a source other than the NEH. Are we 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 an NEH award. However, you must demonstrate that you and your collaborators have completed the start-up phase and are prepared to move on to implementation.

**11. May the project director also serve as the institutional grants administrator?**
No. The project director may not serve as the institutional grants administrator. The role of the project director must be distinguished from that of the institutional grants administrator, who functions as the representative of the recipient organization with authority to act on the organization's behalf in matters related to the administration of the award. All financial reports and prior approval requests such as budget revisions, extensions of the period of performance, and changes in key personnel must be signed or countersigned by the institutional grants administrator. Similarly, official correspondence from NEH to a recipient (for example, an offer letter, the award document, an extension, a supplement or amendment) is addressed to the institutional grants administrator and copied to the project director. The project director is the person directly in charge of the conduct of the funded project. Because the project director's involvement in the project is normally critical to its success, the replacement of the project director or the co-director or a substantial reduction in the level of their effort (for example, an unanticipated absence for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in the time devoted to the project) requires prior written approval from NEH.

**12. How many co-project directors are projects allowed to have?**
There are no restrictions on the number of co-project directors a project can have. Be aware that serving as a project director comes with specific institutional obligations, that are not present in other titles, like research lead. Applicants are encouraged to use the title of co-project director judiciously.

**ACTIVITIES and BUDGET**

**13. Can our project include students?**
Undergraduate and graduate students may be included a project's activities and paid with grant funds. While degree candidates may not be project directors or co-directors, they may serve in other project roles. Use the Activities and Project Team section of the Narrative to describe how your project will support and benefit all project staff, including students, through project-based learning, mentoring, immersion in the activities of the institution, or other professional

development opportunities. See sections C3 and D2 in the NOFO.

**14. May we include funds to support activities described in the data management and sustainability plans in our project budget?**
Yes. The budget may include funds for staff and other costs incurred within the period of performance related to preserving, disseminating, and sustaining the digital materials created under the award.

To see how previously-funded projects proposed to implement data management strategies, seethe sample applications available on the program resource page. Note that sustainability plans are only required of Level III applications.

**15. Is it possible to describe institutional salary requirements in the budget?**
Yes. Use the budget justification (attached to the Research and Related Budget form) to contextualize institutional practices in salaries or benefits, such as standard rates for undergraduate or graduate student wages, honoraria, or base salaries for post-doctoral research associates.

**16. My institution has several indirect cost rates. What rate is most appropriate to use for a Digital Humanities Advancement Grant?**
An institution may include indirect costs up to the appropriate negotiated rate in the application budget. With rare exceptions, your institution's "Research" rate will not be the appropriate rate for inclusion in your DHAG project budget, as the use of this rate is reserved for projects involving scientific research, not scholarly inquiry of the type most often supported by NEH. Note that the indirect costs are included in the amount awarded; 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 costs.)

**17. Is it possible for my institution to use an indirect cost rate that is lower than its negotiated rate or to waive indirect costs altogether?**
Yes, your institution may include indirect costs up to the appropriate negotiated rates (see question above) and may elect to request a lower rate. Your institution may also waive the indirect costs.

**18. Who should be named as a key person on the Research and Related Budget form?**
Only key project personnel **employed by the applicant institution** should be included in sections A and B of the Research and Related Budget form. Project team members who are playing a leadership role should be included in A. Key Persons while additional project team members should be included in B. Other Personnel. Depending on their role on the project, costs for other project team members who are not employed by the applicant institution may be included on the budget under F3. Consultant Services or F5. Subawards/Consortium/ Contractual Costs. It is important to understand that not everyone included in Attachment 1: List of Personnel will be included as a Key Person on the budget, and the status an individual is granted for the purposes of the budget will have no impact on their role in the project and its implementation.

**19. Are Automatic Data Processing (ADP) and Computer Service costs the same as equipment?**
No. The ADP/Computer Services section in the Research and Related Budget form refers to paid services at the applicant's institution for activities such as high-performance computing, use of

GIS licenses, or lab space to complete your project. If you are contracting with a third party to provide any of these services, or plan to rent computer equipment, include them in line F5 Subawards/Consortium/Contractual Costs. If you plan to purchase laptops, these are generally considered "supplies or materials" and belong in line F1.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### 20. May we include letters of support with our application?
No. Letters of support are no longer accepted as part of DHAG applications.

### 21. What is required in a letter of commitment?
Letters of commitment are suggested for project participants outside of the host institution, such as advisory board members, consultants, contractors, and workshop facilitators. Letters of commitment may be brief and should demonstrate that the participant is aware they have been included in the grant proposal and understands the level of commitment that the project will require of them. Letters of commitment are not intended to supplement the narrative by further describing the value or potential impact of your project.

### 22. 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, choose "Interdisciplinary."

## ACCESSIBILITY

### 23. Where can we find resources with additional information about developing projects that are accessible for users of all abilities?

Section H of the NOFO includes a list of resources which may be useful in developing plans to ensure that grant products are accessible to a broad audience, including individuals with disabilities.