



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

OFFICE OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES DIGITAL HUMANITIES ADVANCEMENT GRANTS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS Updated: August 16, 2022

1. How do we submit a draft for review?

To submit a draft, 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. Do not submit your draft via Grants.gov.

This optional review is not part of the formal selection process and has no bearing on the final funding decision. However, previous applicants have found it useful to strengthen 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. You should conduct a thorough environmental scan to help convince reviewers that your project is experimental or innovative.

Experimentation can take many forms. Some projects demonstrate technical innovation, such as the creation of a new piece of software to address a need in the humanities. In other cases, the experimentation is not based in the creation of new technology; instead, the project makes use of an existing technology in a new way. For example, you might take existing software used for some other purpose and demonstrate how it could be effectively used for humanities research. In 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”?

The DHAG program can support activities such as:

- 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 or Open Context; 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.

Only Level I Digital Humanities Advancement Grants can 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.

If you seek long-term (five-year) support for revitalization and coverage of ongoing costs for existing digital scholarly infrastructure projects and programs, including the sustaining of scholarly projects and networks in digital form, you should consider the [Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants](#) offered by the Office of Challenge Programs.

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 we apply?

NEH funds digital humanities projects across many programs. We encourage you to use [Navigating DH at the NEH](#) (PDF) and [Match Your Project with an NEH Grant Program](#) to choose the program that best fits with your project's goals, audiences, and desired outcomes.

You may have questions about the difference between the DHAG and Dangers of Technology: Perspectives from the Humanities (DOT) programs. Consider the following when you are deciding which program is most appropriate for your project.

DHAG supports projects that respond to one or more of these programmatic priorities:

- research and refinement of innovative, experimental, or computationally challenging methods and techniques
- enhancement or design of digital infrastructure that contributes to and supports the humanities, such as open-source code, tools, or platforms
- evaluative studies that investigate the practices and the impact of digital scholarship on research, pedagogy, scholarly communication, and public engagement

The DOT program supports research that examines technology and its relationship to society through the lens of the humanities. Those technologies need not be digital.

DOT projects do not need to demonstrate innovation; do not need to enhance or contribute to digital infrastructure or platforms; and do not need to address practices or impacts of digital humanities scholarship.

You may submit proposals to more than one NEH program for complementary (that is, separate and distinct) components of a larger project, as long as the applications address the

requirements for each program. NEH does not permit overlapping project costs and activities between two or more applications for federal funding and/or approved federal award budgets. If you are uncertain which program you should apply to, we encourage you to contact ODH program staff at odh@neh.gov for guidance, and we can help you determine which program is a good fit for your project. [You may also find the resources on our website helpful.](#)

ELIGIBILITY

5. May a non-U.S. institution or organization apply for an NEH award?

No. NEH does not provide financial assistance to foreign institutions or organizations. See C. Eligibility Information in the NOFO.

6. Can our project include collaborators based outside of the U.S.?

Yes. Eligible U.S. institutions may 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 U.S. 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 the project. However, at the time of the deadline, our current award will still be active. May we still apply?

Yes. If you are a current DHAG recipient, you may apply for another award, even if you have not completed the first award. However, NEH will consider evidence of the success on your current award when reviewing your pending proposal. 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 may 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 grant administrator?

No. As a matter of NEH policy, the project director and primary contact/grant administrator must not be the same person. The grant administrator (also called the “institutional grant administrator”) functions as the representative of the recipient organization. This individual should have authority to act on the organization’s behalf in matters related to the administration of the award. The institutional grant administrator must sign or countersign financial reports and prior approval requests such as budget revisions, extensions to the period of performance,

and changes in key personnel. NEH will address official correspondence (for example, the offer letter or Notice of Action) to the institutional grant administrator and copy 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 may we include on our proposed project?

There are no restrictions on the number of co-project directors you may include in your proposed project. However, you should keep in mind that serving as a project director comes with specific obligations that are not present in other titles like research lead. NEH encourages you to use the title of co-project director judiciously.

ACTIVITIES and BUDGET

13. Can our project include students?

You may include undergraduate and graduate students in your project's activities and compensate them 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 you 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. Your budget may include funds for staff and other costs you would incur **during 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, see the sample applications available on the program resource page. Note that NEH only requires Level III applicants to include a sustainability plan.

15. May we describe institutional salary requirements in the budget justification?

Yes. Use the budget justification 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 its application budget. With rare exceptions, your institution's "Research" rate will **not** be the appropriate rate for inclusion in your DHAG project budget, since it is reserved for projects involving scientific research, not scholarly inquiry of the type most often supported by NEH. You should include indirect costs in your amount requested. NEH will not add them to your award if you are selected for funding. 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 apply a lower rate. Your institution may also waive the indirect costs.

18. Who should we name as a key person on the Research and Related Budget form?

You should only include key project personnel **employed by the applicant institution** in sections A and B of the Research and Related Budget form. Include team members who are playing a leadership role in A. Key Persons and additional project team members in B. Other Personnel. Depending on their role on the project, you may include costs for other project team members who are not employed by the applicant institution on the budget under F3. Consultant Services or F5. Subawards/Consortium/ Contractual Costs. It is important to understand that not everyone listed in Attachment 1: List of Personnel will be a Key Person on the budget. An individual's status on the budget has 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 your institution for activities such as high-performance computing, use of GIS licenses, or lab space to complete your project. If you plan to contract with a third party to provide such services, or plan to rent computer equipment, include these costs 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. NEH does not accept letters of support in the DHAG program.

21. What is required in a letter of commitment?

NEH suggests that individuals outside the applicant institution submit letters of commitment, such as advisory board members, consultants, contractors, and workshop facilitators. Letters of commitment may be brief and should demonstrate that the individual is aware you have included them in the grant proposal and understands the level of commitment that the project will require of them. Letters of commitment should not 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 that may be useful in developing plans to

ensure that grant products are accessible to a broad audience, including individuals with disabilities.