TRANSCRIPT

NEH Webinar on Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants, March 19, 2021

Tatiana Ausema 00:04

So, welcome everyone to the Office of Challenge Programs pre-application webinar. We'll get started in a minute or two. I just want to give everyone a chance to get into the room so just hang tight and we'll get started in just a minute.

Alright, I am going to turn it over to the director of Challenge Program Stefanie Walker to say hello and welcome everyone.

Stefanie Walker 00:56

Yes, hello. I am Stefanie Walker, Director of the Office of Challenge Programs. I welcome you to this pre-application webinar for Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants. Even though NEH has been operating on a 100 percent telework status for a full year now, we have continued to run our programs and made significant awards supporting all areas of the humanities. We hope today to give you helpful information about the revised guidelines for the Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants and we all look forward to hearing about your creative projects. Remember that you're welcome to contact the Challenge Office at any time with questions and with this brief hello I'll turn it over to Tatiana to lead you into the details. Thank you bye-bye.

Tatiana Ausema 02:07

Great, thanks so much Stefanie and welcome again! I am Tatiana Ausema. I'm a senior program officer in the Office of Challenge Programs and I'm so glad that all of you were able to join today's webinar and learn a little bit more about this program, ask some questions. So a few housekeeping notes before we get started: As you probably figured out, the Teams live platform doesn't allow participants to be on camera or on a microphone so if you have questions, please enter them into the question box. We have a few of our NEH staff, Stefanie and some of the other program officers and some representatives from Grants Management, that are behind the scenes and they may be able to answer some questions as they come in. And then if there's time at the end, I will also—I can answer some questions as well. So, if you need closed captioning, there's a button on the Teams interface to turn on captions. If you have trouble finding it or need assistance, you can ask a question in the chat box about that. In addition, a recording and transcript of the webinar will be available on the program page for Challenge Programs within a few days if you need to re-watch or share information with colleagues. Finally, also please make a note of our email address challenge@neh.gov here. You can send any additional questions to the Challenge box and we'll respond to you or can set up a time for a phone call. And finally before I launch in, I want to thank one of our interns, Sydney. You're going to be hearing my voice a lot, but we had an intern that put together a large portion of this PowerPoint so I want to make sure that she gets credit up front for her hard work putting this together to assist us. So thank you so much Sydney.

04:21

So, before we get started, for the next 40 minutes or so—I'm going to aim to keep it 40-45 minutes—I'll be discussing both the Capital Projects and the Digital Infrastructure Notice of Funding Opportunity or NOFO. While these are two distinct opportunities, they have many similarities and most of the application requirements are going to be the same. And then I will begin with an overview of the program, some considerations that you may want to think about as you start developing your project, the process of applying for a challenge grant. We'll talk a little bit about the review process and review criteria, and then end with some tips and resources.

05:09

All of the information that I'm going to be discussing today can be found on the program information page on NEH's website and this is a screenshot from that. So, to find this page go to the NEH website, www.neh.gov, click on "Grants" and then you can find the Office of Challenge Programs and you'll be able to find all of the information that I'm talking about. It has the dates for the application, resources, and then it also highlights what's new in this year and this year we've had a couple changes to the program, if you've applied before. Instead of one deadline a year we've moved to two deadlines and we hope that this will help you decide when to apply in a way that matches your fundraising schedule and your project goals and project plans. You can only apply to a single deadline per year so choose wisely, but we can also help talk with you about which deadline and which program might be most appropriate for your project. The other changes that we've made to the program this year are fairly minor. We have a five-year maximum period of performance. There were certain circumstances where six years were allowable before. We're asking for a little bit more information in the narrative than we have in the past but are also allowing a little bit more space for that narrative and we're looking for a slightly more detailed project timeline as part of the work plan.

06:52

So, the purpose of the Challenge Grants program is to strengthen the institutional base of the humanities by enabling infrastructure, development, and capacity building. The awards aim to help institutions secure long-term support for core activities and expand efforts to preserve and create access to outstanding humanities materials. Capital projects—you'll see that there's two different Notice of Funding Opportunities. Capital Projects is the "bricks and mortar" part of Challenge and it will support the design, purchase, construction, restoration, and renovation of facilities for humanities activities. This includes the purchase and installation of movable and permanent equipment for exhibits; maintaining, monitoring, and protecting collections whether they're on exhibit or in storage; building systems such as electrical, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, security, life safety, all of those bricks and mortar activities that you might need for your institution. Digital Infrastructure is going to support the maintenance, modernization, and sustainability of existing digital scholarly projects and platforms. Eligible activities might look like modernization of digital architecture, so perhaps developers to rewrite software data management such as changing records from MARC to other formats; upgrading software and hardware systems; purchasing new servers, licenses; improving user existing content; making the interface easier to navigate; and a whole range of associated activities. You can also include associated personnel costs for both of these projects. For the Digital Infrastructure program, keep in mind that these must be existing digital scholarly projects and platforms. This is not the program to come to for preliminary digitization projects. They're going to be modernization of existing platforms but NEH has a number of other programs for digitization and other digital

projects so if you need to be directed to one of those, reach out to us and we'll get you in touch with our colleagues in other divisions.

09:15

Fundraising is what sets Challenge Programs apart from most of the other programs at National Endowment for the Humanities and it puts the "challenge" in the Challenge Grants. Having funds to match is a great motivator for potential donors, for board members, and it can help expand your base of support within the community and nationally. Up to 10 percent of the project funds can be used to offset the cost of fundraising. Successful applicants must raise third-party, non-federal funds in order to receive funds from NEH. There's a number of different matching ratios depending on your institution type. Challenge projects have a upper limit of $750,0000 from NEH and the matching ratio required to release funds is going to depend on the institution type and the amount requested. So, for HBCUs, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and two-year community college applicants, they're eligible for a one-to-one match regardless of the amount requested from NEH. So, in this scenario, successful applicants must raise one dollar in gifts for every one dollar they're requesting from NEH. All other applicants must raise three dollars for every one dollar that they request, up to $500,000 and four dollars for every one dollar in requests from $500,000 to $750,000. And so, we have this this helpful graphic on the side showing what the total project cost would be. So, if you request $500,000 from NEH, you would be responsible for raising $1.5 million for a total project cost of $2 million. In your application, you'll propose a fundraising schedule which is also known as a match and release schedule as part of the application. And we would encourage, if your organization has a development office, we would recommend that you meet with them early to discuss your plans and how you might right embark on a fundraising plan.

11:36

The development of an application in challenge projects is complex. If you're attending today's webinar there's a good chance you already have a project in mind. Perhaps you've talked about it with your board of trustees, other staff members, maybe the general public, maybe you've already started your fundraising campaign. Successful applications usually involve input from a whole project team and this likely includes administration, boards, facilities staff. If you're doing a digital project, you'll need to have expertise in that area, and we would encourage you to involve every member of your team in the planning and grant-writing process. Just like a successful team is going to include a wide range of voices, a successful application is also going to bring together the threads of fundraising, long-term strategic planning, project management, and sustainability into a coherent and compelling and concise narrative. A strong application will clearly lay out both the project activities and the fundraising and align them with past planning and future goals. A detailed explanation of review criteria is found in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, but we will talk a little bit more about that before the end of the webinar. I am going to pull out a couple key things that our reviewers do look for in Challenge applications and that we would like you to consider as you're planning your project.

13:13

The first thing that we want to make sure that that you're considering as you develop your project is the humanities significance of your project, right? We are the National Endowment for the Humanities and so the humanities focus of your organization and focus of your project

should be front and center in your application. The Challenge applications ask for a lot of technical information about building and plans, digital infrastructure, but don't forget to tell the story of your organization and the story of what you're trying to do. Perhaps it's your collections, your programs. Why are they important? Who's using them? For collections or organizations that are outside of the bounds of what one might typically consider a humanities organization, talk specifically about how your proposed project is going to serve humanities programs, collections, individuals and how it will advance your long-term goals.

14:20

The second important consideration as you're planning your project is the scope of the project. So, for some projects, the NEH funding plus your match is going to cover the entire cost of your project, right? So that the slide with the house where it's $500,000 from NEH, you're raising $1.5 million, $2 million dollars may cover the entire project. For many projects, it might be much larger. You may have a $70- or $80 million-dollar building project. As you're thinking about applying to NEH, think about what specific activities are going to be supported through this grant and the matching funds. In the $2 million example, what bit of your larger project is that $2 million going to cover and how are you going to present that as part of your larger project in the application? Tell us how you determined that this was the right time to do this project. How does it align with long-term strategic plans and goals? And then what specifically is going to happen at the end of the NEH portion of the project? Are you going to be able to start programming right away or do you still have more construction? This year, we've added an attachment where we ask you to give us specific deliverables and outcomes that will be funded through the NEH portion of your project.

15:49

The third important consideration is the timeline. We ask for a work plan as part of your project application package and we will look to see if the dates on the work plan, your budget, and the period of performance—which I'll explain in a minute—do they all align? Are you fundraising at the right time in order to be able to start your project when you say? Have you allowed for sufficient time for fundraising, for planning, and particularly compliance with any applicable federal, state, and local regulations?

16:30

So, in this attachment with the work plan, we're going to ask you to weave all of these threads together. So, tell us when you start fundraising. The period of performance will begin no earlier than March 1st of 2022 for this May deadline and then it will extend no longer than five years beyond that period. And we ask you to tell us how long you're going to need for your project, but please make sure that throughout your narrative, throughout your work plan, and all of your attachments that all of your dates align.

17:09

The final important consideration that you need to make sure you have in your application is to tell us about your fundraising capacity. As I mentioned before, some of you may have a development office that has been doing this for a long time. Is this a priority for your development office? How are they going to support this particular project with a number of other institutional goals going on? Some of you may not have a development office. You may be relying on your board of trustees or your staff to be doing the fundraising, so who is going to be

ultimately responsible for the fundraising? What type of fundraising has your organization done in the past? How does this fit in with existing donors? Will it expand your base of new donors? Think about what types of gifts you may be getting. The gifts, in order to be allowable, must be third-party contributions and we have an entire "administration of challenge grants" guidance that's available on our website to help you determine what gifts may or may not be eligible. And we're happy to have conversations with you about that, both before but especially if you have a successful application, we'll talk about what types of gifts are allowable.

18:32

Challenge Programs—we have a number of eligible applicants. So, in order to apply, you must either be a U.S.-based non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. The 501(c)(3) is required. Higher education institutions, state and local governments, federally recognized Native American tribal governments. And your organization must have a humanities—either entirely or in part in the humanities, your project must be humanities based, and you need to explain in the application how your organization involves the humanities.

19:22

You can only apply for one Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge grant deadline per year and that applies to both the digital projects as well as the capital projects so as you're thinking about your application, you'll need to decide, first, if you're going to apply for capital or digital, and then, second, which deadline you're going to apply to so you can only apply to one per calendar year. Eligible applicants also may not have received a challenge grant in the past or—they're not allowed to have completed a challenge grant within three years after the end of an existing challenge grant. So, if your organization had a challenge grant that was ending this year, there's a three-year waiting period before you can reapply or before you can come back for another one. And it doesn't apply to some of the smaller grants that that we had offered in 2015 through 2017—oh dear let's fix thar, there we go—but it does apply to existing challenge grants, cooperative agreements, and special projects. And we're unable to accept any late materials, so if you have someone who's writing a letter of recommendation and they say that they aren't going to be able to get it in in time, we can't add it to the application after the deadline. So please do apply, get your application package in on time, complete, and check to make sure everything is in the appropriate format.

21:19

So,all of the applications are going to have a number of different components. The project narrative is going to be probably where you spend the most time. That's where you're going to lay out exactly what you're going to do. You're going to tell us about your humanities significance. You're going to tell us about your project. You're going to tell us about your fundraising and you're going to do it all within eight pages, so you have to think very clearly and concisely as you lay out all of this information. The Notice of Funding Opportunity contains a full listing of the materials that you'll need to submit. Some of them are standard forms, but for many of them you'll prepare a document and ultimately save it as a .pdf for uploading into eGMS [...] and naming conventions that are in the Notice of Funding Opportunities. As I mentioned, the narrative is going to provide the comprehensive framework and the description of all of the aspects of the project and it needs to be self-explanatory, well-organized, and written for a relatively general audience. The budget will be submitted using a standard form 424c and then we also ask you to submit a budget justification that will include your match and release

schedule as well as a breakdown of cost items. So, in that standard form you may include construction costs, you may include materials. Please in your budget justification, explain why those things are necessary as part of your project and how you came up with those numbers. Your proposed budget should only include the funds that you're requesting from NEH and your required match so for larger projects please designate which part that NEH will be supporting, if possible. So, as I'd said before, if you are requesting $500,000 from NEH, you have a $1.5 million match, we would like to see a budget for $2 million, even if your project is above and beyond that amount. So, decide which portion of your larger project, if possible, what NEH will be supporting and we're happy to have conversations about that. Your work plan, which is a separate attachment, will need to align with your narrative and budget and timeline. It's going to need to include a schedule with the anticipated start and finish dates; critical milestones including fundraising, planning, and construction activities; and please build in time to account for the environmental and historic preservation review, which I'll talk about in a moment. Capital projects are going to also include some additional attachments, planning and design documents as well as a site description, which I'll talk about. Digital projects are going to require a data management plan and a sustainability plan. Consult the Notice of Funding Opportunity for how to create that data management and sustainability plan. The data management plan is going to vary significantly depending on what type of digital project you're doing and that's okay; we know that. Your sustainability plan is to demonstrate institutional commitment. Where is your project going to be in 10 or 20 years and what is your institution's commitment to it as a legacy, both in terms of staffing and funding, beyond the end of the challenge grant?

25:10

For your construction projects, we ask for a form called the SF-429a and there's guidance on our website for this. Our environmental and historic preservation officer, Ann Piesen, who is, I think, answering questions as I talk is the person who is responsible for this aspect of challenge grants and she's put together a really, really helpful webinar that explains the historic and environmental requirements for capital projects. But in short, NEH is required by law to review the impact of federal funds on historic resources, and in order for us to begin that process, we ask you to fill out the SF-429a as part of your application and it will collect specific information about your property, the project site, that will then help us—if it's a successful application—help you through that process so please do look at the instructions for this if you're doing any type of construction, even if you don't think your property is historic or will have an impact on historic resources. Please, if it's a capital project, include this SF-429a and there's instructions on the website how to fill it out and we're always again happy to answer questions.

26:41

So, I've mentioned a few different resources that we have on the website and I wanted to include some screen shots here. So, on our program resources page, you'll find the Notice of Funding Opportunity for both Capital Projects and Digital Infrastructure. You'll find a Frequently Asked Questions document that will perhaps answer some of the questions you might have about submission and some of the details. You'll find instructions for that SF-429a form. You'll find a link to Ann Piesen's webinar as well where she can talk you through some of the questions that you may have about that. You'll also find the "administration of challenge grants" document that can give you information about fundraising and eligible gifts. And perhaps most importantly, you'll find sample application narratives on this and these sample application narratives can be really helpful to see what successful applicants have done and how they've constructed their

project. Keep in mind that we have changed the format of the narrative in this past year. We don't have any narratives yet that use the new format, but I think these are still really helpful for thinking about how you may propose your project and communicate it to NEH and our reviewers.

On our website, you'll also find instructions for registering for grants.gov. If your organization is not currently registered on grants.gov, do this first. You need to register for SAM.gov and Grants.gov. It can take up to a month to complete and there's a number of different steps in the process and we are not able to take late applications if there are problems with your registration generally with SAM and Grants.gov so get that updated. Make sure you know who has the passwords for your organization and that's where you will submit your application. Submit your application as early as possible and confirm that submission. You'll get an email when it's confirmed. Check your file formats and make sure that if a file needs to be in .pdf form that it's in .pdf form, properly named. You can resubmit your application package up until the deadline, but no materials can be added after the deadline, including letters of recommendation or parts of the package that are formatted incorrectly.

So, once you submit your application, that's just the beginning of the process. So, you've assembled it, you've submitted it, what happens next? So, all applications for NEH go through a lengthy review process which has several stages. The first step is going to be that NEH staff will review for eligibility and completeness. We'll make sure that all of the required forms are there and that you're an eligible organization. The next step—and it's probably, it's central to the work that we do at NEH—is the peer review panel. And during this peer review process, evaluators read the applications, write comments, and post a rating. They'll then meet to discuss the applications, probably virtually in in this world we're in now, and then will provide feedback and comments to NEH staff. NEH staff review those comments and make our own recommendations. Those recommendations are considered by the National Council on the Humanities which includes 26 people that are scholars in the humanities, nominated by the president, and approved by the Senate. The Council then makes recommendations to the endowment's chairman who takes all of this into consideration and then makes the decision on which to fund. It's a long process but it allows for rich review. But it may help explain why it takes about a year between when your application is going to be submitted to when you're going to hear the results of the competition. After grants are announced, you can request comments from your evaluators and if the proposal is not funded, the reviewers comments can help you think about how to revise your proposal for next time.

So, before wrapping up—I'm getting to the end of this—I want to touch on the review criteria that our peer reviewers will be looking at to evaluate your application. This review criteria is included in the Notice of Funding Opportunity with a crosswalk to match each review criteria with a specific part of the application package and do take a look at that. To the best of your ability, be sure to clearly include each one of these elements in the application and you can use the criteria as subject headings in your narrative for clarity. The reviewers will be generalists, sometimes former project directors or project participants or individuals from a similar institution type to your own, but they may not have experience with your particular institution,

your particular project type so be sure to write for a knowledgeable but very generalized audience. Try to avoid gaps or asking reviewers to make assumptions about your project, expertise, or staffing. I often will say to applicants that you don't want to confuse the reviewers because they're always going to assume the worst so be very clear and don't assume that reviewers are going to know your staff or your institution. If possible, ask a colleague to review your application with these review criteria in mind and ask for feedback on how well your proposal responds to each of these areas.

33:17

So, I'm going to wrap up with just a few application tips and then we can get to the questions. I see there's a whole range of questions going on the side over here. So, the first application tip I would say is reach out to a program officer with a short description of your project early in the stages of development; challenge@neh.gov is our division email address. That will be forwarded to one of the program officers or program analysts will respond to you, just to have a sense of what you're interested in proposing and we can potentially have a conversation to help with that important scoping piece of your project. Read the Notice of Funding Opportunity, FAQs, narrative and policy guidance early and often. Dig into the website; there's lots of really good information there. It can be very confusing and overwhelming. We're happy to help provide clarity, but all of that information is very important and particularly those with file names, budget conventions, and other details. I started off by mentioning, you know, involve your stakeholders, get your fundraising staff, administration, consultants, board in on the planning and grant-writing process because they're all going to be key to the success of a project if it's funded. You can reach out to other institutions that have received challenge grants or done similar construction projects. This can be helpful for budgeting. It can be helpful for understanding local review processes and making sure that you're including enough time in your project. We read drafts in this program and for this first deadline, April 6th is the deadline for the drafts. You can submit that to challenge@neh.gov and we'll read over your project. The draft is not required. It doesn't give you a leg up or down in the review process, but applicants have found it to be very helpful in hearing what reviewers often may comment on and in putting together an application. So please take advantage of the draft review opportunity if you think you'll be able to have it done by April 6th. We're not able to accept drafts after that time in order to give our staff, as well as you, enough time to incorporate any comments into your final application package. And then regardless of whether you're successful or not, please get feedback from your program officer once awards are announced. I mentioned that your reviewers will provide written comments that can be forwarded to you upon request and this is helpful whether your project is funded or not because these reviewers often have really interesting and helpful insights into the various projects.

36:20

So, I'm just going to wrap up here with reiterating that we're here for questions. This is a complicated grant program. There's lots of pieces. We try to provide as much guidance on our website as possible, but please don't hesitate to reach out to us either by phone or email. You'll see the challenge@neh.gov email on here as well as our phone number. We're all, as Stefanie mentioned at the beginning, we're all full-time remote but the phone number gets forwarded to us so we're all available from our various corners to assist you as you prepare your projects. And with that, thank you all for joining us and I'm going look at my other screen here and see if

there's any questions that haven't been answered that I can help answer for anyone. And Stefanie or any of the other staff, if there's any in particular that I should answer, let me know.

Stefanie Walker 37:37

Yeah Tatiana, thank you that's great. John and Anne and I have been busy answering quite a few questions. We've tried to—if I understand the system correctly, when we publish the questions they should be visible to all and I think those are all answered, but maybe you want to comment on some of them? There are also some that we haven't gotten to yet in the new questions. I think there are a couple that ask about if the project is larger than the grant or the question of, can the grants support part of a larger project or what—maybe a few remarks about what people should keep it in mind about that?

Tatiana Ausema 38:35

Absolutely, I'm going to see if I can switch over so that I can see everything here. No, maybe not. That's fine. So, for a larger project it—ideally your application would focus on a specific part of that project. So for example, if it's a renovation of a building and it's going to be a $8 million project you may submit a proposal that focuses just on a roof replacement or an HVAC replacement or both, but that you would be able to identify some specific parts of that larger project that could be funded from the NEH challenge grant. Does that answer—oh there we go there's the Q & A.

Stefanie Walker 39:43

Yeah there's also a question about any advice on the kinds of support letters one might submit.

Tatiana Ausema 39:55

That's a great question that I didn't touch on. So, letters of support can—there could be a range of letters of support. Ideally, we'd like to see some letters from users for either the general public or institutions that you're working with, you know, who's your constituents, you know. So, if it's a university, from university faculty and staff that may be using the space or partnerships. So, that would be one type of letter of support. It's also helpful to have institutional commitments. So, if you're a smaller organization within a larger institution, knowing that organizational leadership supports your project and to have letters from either the president, board of trustees, fundraising that will show support for your project is also really helpful. And letters of support are different than what might be considered a letter of commitment or an estimate from any of your contractors or consultants. Those would be submitted separately as part of the budget justification so they wouldn't be a letter of support.

41:36

Let's see so there's a question about—it looks like Stefanie answered—about a non-humanities organization that has a humanities component. So, for a non-humanities organization that's doing humanities work, it would be eligible but as Stefanie mentioned it definitely needs to it tell us about how the humanities is woven into your institutional mission and this particular project.

42:30

And then there's two questions about a larger project that would be a new building, to apply to construct an archive storage and reading room and if the matching grants need to be restricted

to the reading storage room only or can they be pledged to the broader development. The answer is it depends and the answer to a lot of matching and fundraising questions is going to be "it depends" because every organization is very different in terms of how they do fundraising and how they interact with donors and the documentation, but I would say ideally you would have letters and commitments from donors that are specifically donating for the reading storage room. And we can, you know, have further conversations but in the best of all possible worlds they would be specific donations for that. It makes things cleaner, but it may not be a requirement depending on how your fundraising is structured.

43:47

Oh there's another question along those lines about can you raise money for an overall project and consider that matching and the short answer is sometimes. You know, ideally as this is part of where scoping comes in as you're thinking about what you're going to come to NEH for and what you can fundraise for. Ideally, you'd be fundraising for a specific part, but we know that that's not always how it works.

44:35

Let's see, so the next question is, would a building that houses the performing arts gallery space and storage of art qualify for a capital grant? It potentially could, again, depending on if there's a humanities component to your mission and how that space would be used and that would be a conversation that we would want to have in advance of an application.

45:14

So, the next question is about, what extent should the narrative focus on how grant will build capacity for existing projects versus demonstrating potential growth for new projects given the new capacity the grant monies will allow? I would turn that back to you in the application and you know what fits with your long-term institutional goals and how have you planned for this project and is new projects and new grow growth part of your institutional mission or do you need to sustain existing projects? And both are appropriate depending on what your institution strategic planning process has in it.

46:14

So, there's a couple questions about the fundraising period and it looks like one of my colleagues just answered it but the fundraising period of five months prior to the application deadline is a firm deadline. The goal of challenge projects is to spur new fundraising, new donors looking forward. So, donations that are received prior to five months before the application deadline which would be December 18th of 2020 this year, are not eligible to be certified as matches.

47:17

There's a question, if a single large donation can satisfy the match requirement. Absolutely, it's less paperwork for everyone so if you have a $1.5 million gift or you have a potential $1.5 million dollar gift and you're requesting $500,000 from NEH, you could certify that as a single large donation.

47:52

It looked like there were two questions about in-kind donations as part of a matching question, whether they can be certified as a match. In-kind donations are sometimes eligible. In-kind or unrestricted gifts may be eligible up to the amount of the federal portion. So in this example that I keep coming back to of a $500,000 from NEH and a $1.5 million match, you would potentially be able to use up to $500,000 of unrestricted funds or in-kind donations but there's a number of restrictions on that and it's all detailed in the "administration of challenge grants" information that's on our website.

48:56

Oh and I apologize that I had 10 pages listed. It is eight pages this year for the narrative and not 10 because it's single spaced. So, I apologize for that and thank you to whatever eagle eye in the audience caught that. Let's see, Stefanie, am I missing any?

Stefanie Walker 49:32

No, one that is not answered yet and I had hoped that maybe Ann Piesen would know the answer to is, can state historic tax credits be used as matching funds or is that another "it depends" question?

Ann Piesen 49:57

Can you hear me?

Stefanie Walker 49:59

Yes.

Ann Piesen 50:01

Hi sorry, this is Ann Piesen and yeah actually we would need more information about the project itself and the context for the historic tax credits. So, I would encourage them to directly contact the office of challenge programs.

Stefanie Walker 50:20

I'll type that in as the answer.

Ann Piesen 50:22

Okay.

Tatiana Ausema 50:28

Thank you, Ann. Oh and there's a question about the timeline six months to award notice or 12 months? Each deadline for this—so there's two deadlines on the current Notice of Funding Opportunities. The timeline is slightly different for each one, so refer to the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the award announcement dates and what that timeline looks like. Not sure if I can pull it up.

51:15

Oh there's a question about raising the match. You do not have to raise any of your funds prior to the application deadline if that doesn't work with your project or your timeline. You're not required to start fundraising before the application deadline but as a number of people have

indicated, some of these projects are long-term projects with long-term fundraising so you may start fundraising and include gifts that have been offered up to five months before the application deadline, but you're not required to.

52:16

Let's see, and it looks like there's a question, is there a scope of a project that you would consider too small for this program? I think the short answer is no. You know, looking at institutional capability and what's appropriate for your organization, I wouldn't—there's no lower limit on what you can apply for. That said, particularly for construction projects the time and the process of going through the historic preservation review sometimes can make a smaller project just take longer, but fundamentally there's no bottom limit for what you could apply for in this program.

Stefanie Walker 53:36

I think we're doing pretty well, Tatiana.

Tatiana Ausema 53:40

Yeah and we're bumping up against the hour-long period here and I don't want to keep anyone any longer than necessary on a Friday afternoon. Are there any final questions that we haven't been able to respond to? Oh, and the question about—there's been a couple questions about the PowerPoint and the recording. They will be on the program resource page. I need to fix the information about the narrative length, and we'll do that and get that up on the web page in the next week or so. And there'll also be a transcript and it looks like there's one final question about, would a building system like HVAC or lighting require historic review? As with so many things, the answer is it depends. It depends on the nature of your building, what type of HVAC, you may already have in place, if any, what type of impact the lighting would have on the building envelope. So, it depends, and that's why we ask you to fill out that 424c as part of the application process so that Ann and program staff can all look at it and get additional information from you as necessary.

Stefanie Walker 55:22

Well thank you very much, Tatiana, first of all but also the sort of quiet behind the scenes helpers, John Cox and Ann Piesen. And I hope this webinar has been useful for you. Remember the contact information is still up on the screen; challenge@neh.gov is probably the best way to reach us as we are working remotely but you can also leave a message at 202-606-8309 and thank you very much for attending. We always learn from your questions too and we look forward to hearing from you and seeing your applications. Thank you, bye-bye!

Tatiana Ausema 56:27

Thanks everyone for coming.