

Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants

OFFICE OF CHALLENGE PROGRAMS

MARCH 19, 2021

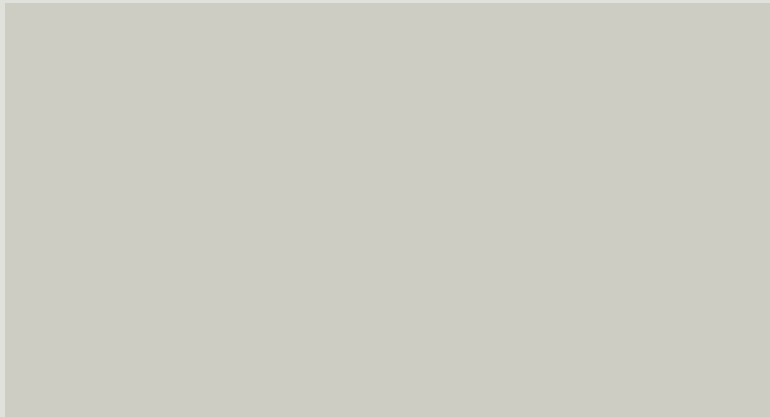
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Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants

Program Overview: Capital Projects and Digital Infrastructure

Developing an Application

Important Considerations

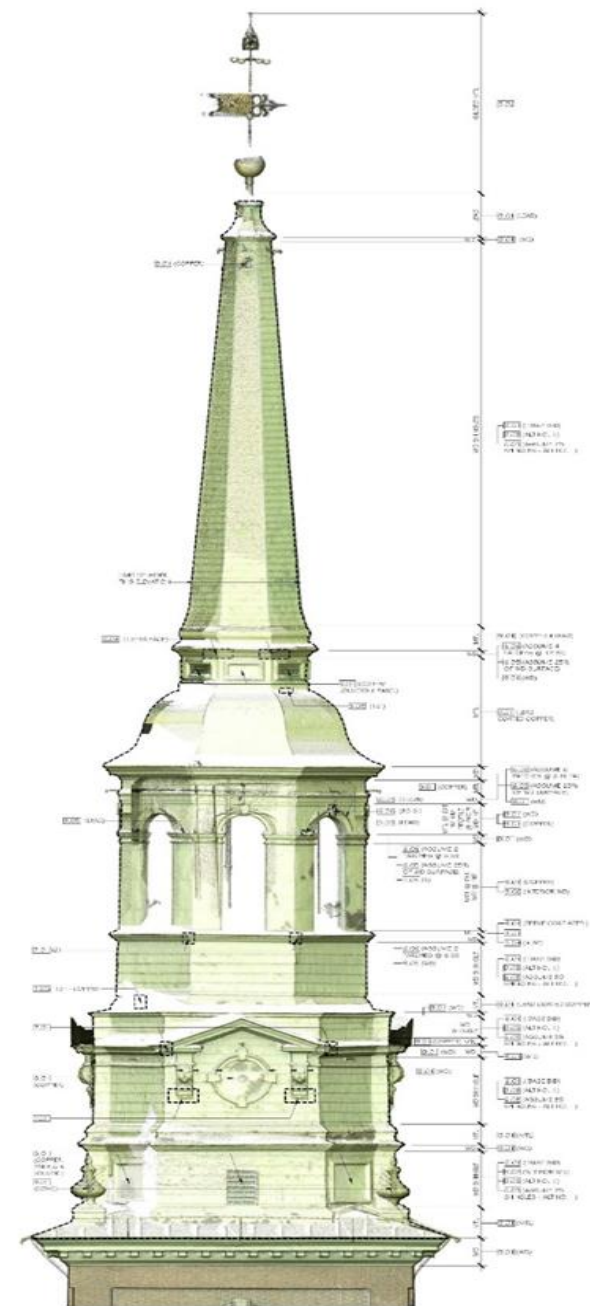
Applying for a Challenge Grant

Review Criteria

Application Tips and Resources

Review Process

Q&A



Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants

[Office of Challenge Programs](#)

The purpose of the Challenge Grants program is to strengthen the institutional base of the humanities by enabling infrastructure development and capacity building. Awards aim to help institutions secure long-term support for their core activities and expand efforts to preserve and create access to outstanding humanities materials. The program funds two distinct types of projects, each with its own Notice of Funding Opportunity:

- **Capital Projects** supports the design, purchase, construction, restoration, or renovation of facilities for humanities activities. This includes the purchase and installation of related moveable and permanently affixed equipment for exhibiting, maintaining, monitoring, and protecting collections (whether on exhibit or in storage), and for critical building systems, such as electrical, heating ventilation and air conditioning, security, life safety, lighting, utilities, telecommunications, and energy management.
- **Digital Infrastructure** supports the maintenance, modernization, and sustainability of existing digital scholarly projects and platforms.

Fundraising is a critical part of NEH Challenge grant awards: up to 10 percent of total funds (Challenge matching funds plus certified gifts) may be used for fundraising costs during the period of performance.

Grant Snapshot

Maximum award amount: \$750,000
Open to: Organizations
Expected output: Buildings; Equipment; Digital Infrastructure
Period of performance: Up to five years.

Application available: March 4, 2021

Optional Draft due: April 6, 2021

Application due: May 18, 2021

Expected notification date: December 31, 2021

Project start date: March 1, 2022 – June 1, 2022

Contact the Office of Challenge Programs Team
(202) 606-8309
challenge@neh.gov

Applicants who
Federal Relay (

What's new in 2021

- Two deadlines per year: May 18, 2021 and September 28, 2021
- 5-year maximum period of performance
- Narrative reorganized and extended
- Work plan requires parallel fundraising and project activities timelines
- Three years of financial statements are not required at the time of application but need to be provided by approved applicants before receiving an award offer from NEH.

Disclaimer: This is not a complete list of all changes to the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Infrastructure and Capacity Building: Supported Activities

Capital projects- supports the design, purchase, construction, restoration, or renovation of buildings or sites of historical, architectural, or cultural significance and facilities that house humanities collections or are used for humanities activities

Digital Infrastructure- supports the strengthening of mature digital projects that have been developed and in use for several years

Grant can also support up to 10% of fundraising costs



Matching Requirements

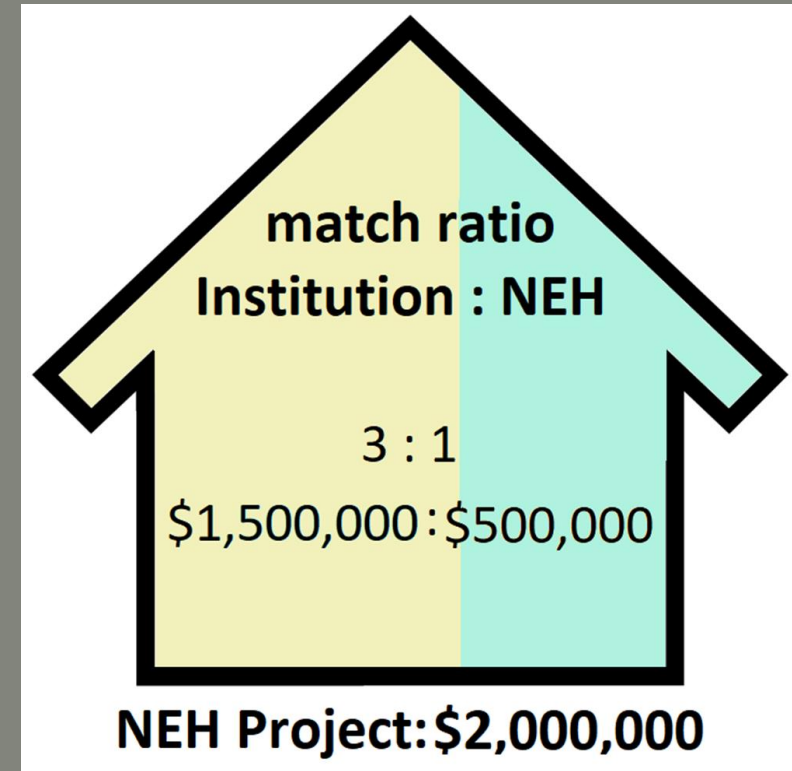
In order to receive Federal matching funds, recipients must raise and certify funding from non-federal third-party sources.

3:1 match ratio for grant requests of \$500,000 or less

4:1 match ratio for grant requests between \$500,000 and \$750,000

1:1 match ratio for HBCUs, TCUs, HSIs, and two-year community college applicants

Recipients can begin fundraising matching funds no more than five months before the application deadline





Developing your Application

Involve the whole team in the planning and grant writing process.

Include detailed information about long-term strategic planning, fundraising efforts, previous large-scale digital or capital projects, and how the outcomes and deliverables will benefit your institution, humanities research, and/or the public.

If it is a part of a larger project, think about which part might be the most appropriate for NEH support.



Important Considerations: Humanities Significance

How will your project promote or advance the humanities?

Who is your audience, and how will they benefit from the outcomes of the project over the long-term?

If your organization has a range of functions (an arts center or theatre, for example) what specific *humanities* activities will be supported through your proposed project?

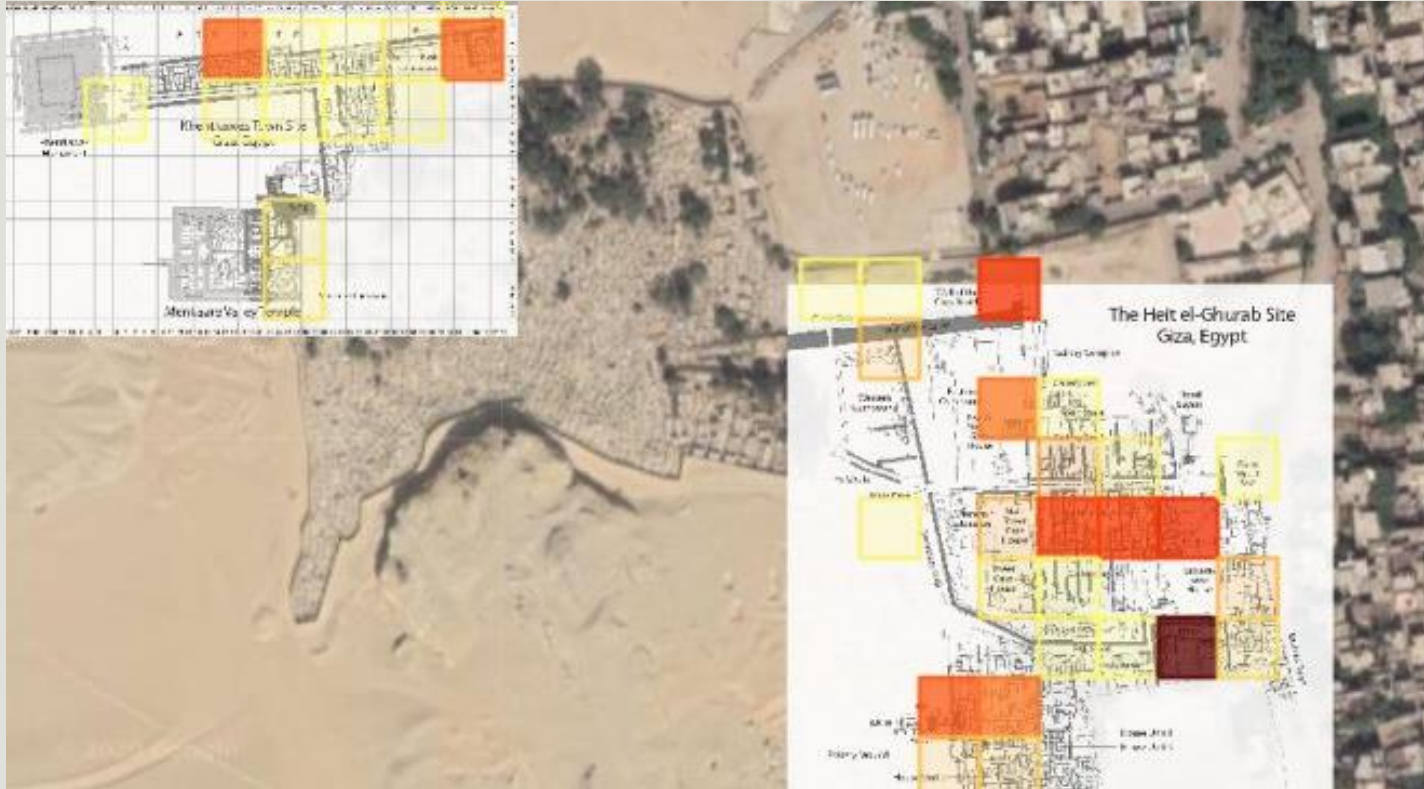


Important Considerations: Project Scope

Is your project part of a larger initiative? If so, which *specific* activities will be supported through this grant and matching funds?

How does your proposed project align with institutional strategic plans and long-term goals?

What are the deliverables and/or outcomes of the project?

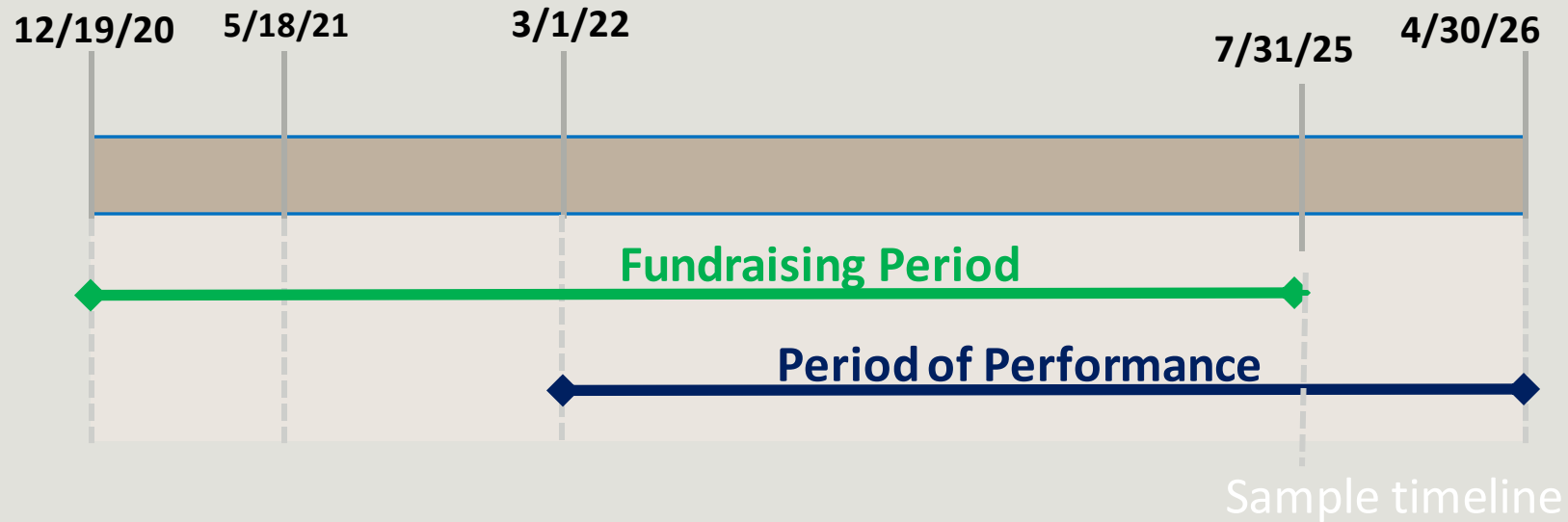


Important Considerations: Project Timeline

Do the dates on your workplan, budget, and period of performance align?

Have you allowed sufficient time for fundraising, project planning, and compliance with any applicable federal, state, or local regulations?

Project Timelines



Fundraising Period: The period five months prior to the application deadline (December 19, 2020) through the final certification deadline within the period of performance, in which recipients may raise and certify funds in order to receive NEH matching funds.

Period of Performance: The period in which the project work is being performed and allowable costs may be incurred and charged to the award.

The workplan included with your application should reflect plans for both fundraising and project activities



Important Considerations: Fundraising Capacity

Does your application include a detailed plan for raising the required match?

Who will be responsible for fundraising?

Refer to NEH Administration of Challenge Grants guidance at:
<https://www.neh.gov/grants/manage/administration-neh-challenge-grants>

Eligible Applicants

U.S. nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status

Accredited public and 501(c)(3) higher education institutions

State and local governmental agencies

Federally recognized Native American tribal governments

Must work wholly or in part in the humanities





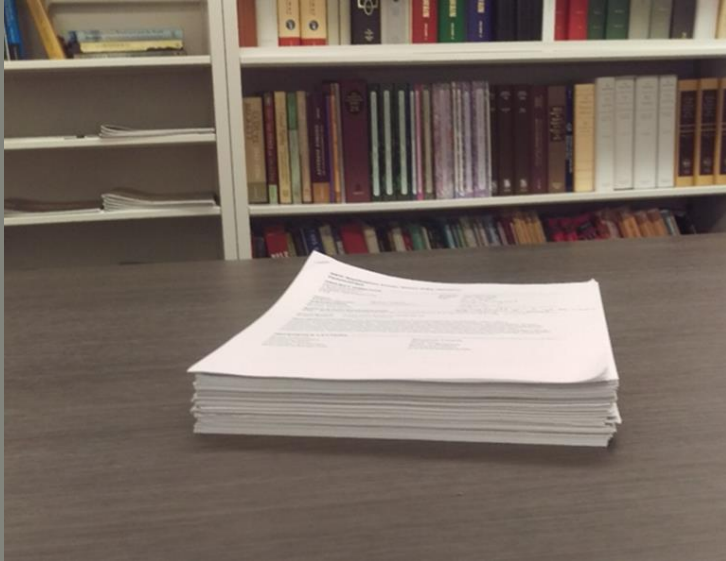
Other Eligibility Information

Can only apply for one Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grant deadline per year.

Previous recipients of Challenge Grants may reapply for a subsequent Challenge Grant three years after the submission of their final financial report for their most recent Challenge Grant. (This applies to Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants (CHA), Challenge Grants (CH), Cooperative Agreements and Special Projects (ZZ), and Special Initiatives (CZ) recipients).

All application materials must be completed and received by the deadline. If multiple applications are received for the same project, only the most recent submission will be reviewed.

Preparing Your Application



All applications must include:

Project narrative (8 pages)

Budget

Budget justification

Workplan

Institutional profile

Resumes for project participants

Letters of commitment or support

Capital Projects must also include:

Planning and design documents *and* site description (SF 429A)

Digital Projects must also include:

Data management plan *and* sustainability plan

Please see the Notice of Funding Opportunity for a complete list of required, conditionally required, and optional application elements

Application Content: Historic Preservation Review

NEH is required by federal law to review grant/cooperative agreement applications involving work involving construction, renovation, repair, rehabilitation, or ground or visual disturbance under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The SF-429a collects specific information about the real property and project needed for the historic preservation and environmental reviews.

NEH application specific instructions identify which questions require response and the level of detail needed in the responses.

Additional guidance on Section 106 and NEPA is available on NEH's website:
<https://www.neh.gov/grants/manage/section-106-the-national-historic-preservation-act>

EX-107 (Rev. 11/97)

ATTACHMENT A (General Reporting) SP-623-A

Federal Grant or Other Identifying Number Assigned [redacted]
by Federal Agency (HSR Act section 2406)

Complete the applicable blocks below for each parcel of real property being reported (duplicate this page to provide information for each
parcel of real property being reported under the Federal financial assistance award identified in section 2).

5. Period and type of Federal interest (AND/OR Y/N): From [] To []
☐ Acquisition ☐ Reacquisition ☐ Construction ☐ Government Purchased Property

6. Description of Real Property:
[redacted]

6b. Address of Real Property (legal description and complete address including zoning information)
Street: [redacted] County: [redacted] Precinct: [redacted]
Avenue: [redacted] ZIP + Postal Code: [redacted]
City: [redacted]
State: [redacted]
Country: [redacted] GPS Location Latitude: [redacted]
Zoning Information: [redacted] IAT: Green and Usable Square Footage Meters (m²) of Building, Access, etc.: [redacted]
GPS Location Longitude: [redacted] Enter Acres: [redacted] Usable [redacted]
Enter Acreage for Square Units: [redacted] Enter: [redacted] Select units: ☐ Square Feet ☐ Square Meters

6c. Local Acreage for Square Units:
Enter Acres: [redacted] ☐ Acres ☐ Square Feet ☐ Square Meters
Select units: ☐ Square Meters ☐ Square Feet ☐ Square Meters

6d. Ownership Type(s):
☐ A. Owned ☐ B. Co-Owned ☐ C. Fee Simple ☐ D. Corporate
☐ E. Joint Tenancy ☐ F. Partnership ☐ G. Limited Liability Partnership ☐ H. Co-Ownership
☐ I. Government/Purchased Property ☐ J. Other (Describe): [redacted]

6e. Risk Property Cost:
Federal Share: \$ [redacted] Share Percentage %: [redacted]
Non-Federal Share: \$ [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]
Total (Sum of Federal and Non-Federal Share): \$ [redacted]

6f. How is Real, Net, completed, or other related documentation been recorded to establish Federal interest in this real property?
Federal Share: [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]
Non-Federal Share: [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]
If yes (unless previously reported), describe the instrument used and enter the date and jurisdiction in which it was recorded:
Date: [redacted] Jurisdiction: [redacted]
[redacted] [redacted] [redacted]

6g. Has Federally required insurance coverage been received for this real property? ☐ Yes ☐ No
See instructions for more details.

6h. Are there any Uniform Relocation Act (URA) requirements applicable to this real property? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Application Submission: Resources

The Infrastructure and Capacity Building site contains links to the following resources:

- The Notice of Funding Opportunities (Capital Projects and Digital Infrastructure)
- FAQs
- Sample Narratives
- Policy guidance and instructions
- Instructions for registering with Grants.gov

Program Resources

[Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants Frequently Asked Questions, 2021](#)

[SF-429-A Real Property Status Report \(PDF\)](#)

[SF-429-A Instructions \(PDF\)](#)

[Certification of Matching Gifts for NEH Challenge Grants Form \(PDF\)](#)

[Administration of NEH Challenge Infrastructure and Capacity Building Grants](#)

[2021 New Recipient Webinar](#)

[2021 New Recipient Webinar transcription](#)

** This document may not open in your web browser. If this is the case, right click on the link to save the PDF to your desktop.*

Sample Application Narratives

[Alexandria Archive Institute, Data Literacy and Community Building in Digital Heritage \(PDF\)](#)

[Cabell County Public Library, Construction of a New Branch Library \(PDF\)](#)

[Dubuque County Historical Society, Preservation and Restoration through Campus Improvements \(PDF\)](#)

[Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Multidisciplinary Display of Permanent Collection Artwork \(PDF\)](#)

[Reynolda House Roof Renovation \(PDF\)](#)

[University of California, San Diego, Construction of the Institute of Arts and Humanities \(PDF\)](#)

Application Submission: Grants.gov

Ensure your SAM.gov and Grants.gov registrations and passwords are current. NEH will not grant deadline extensions for lack of registration. Registration in all systems, including SAM.gov and Grants.gov, may take up to 1 month to complete.

Submit your application as early as possible and confirm submission on Grants.gov. NEH cannot accept late applications or add materials after the deadline.

The screenshot shows the Grants.gov website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like HOME, LEARN GRANTS, SEARCH GRANTS, APPLICANTS, GRANTORS, SYSTEM-TO-SYSTEM, FORMS, CONNECT, and SUPPORT. A search bar is also present. The main content area is titled 'VIEW GRANT OPPORTUNITY' and displays details for the grant opportunity 20200515-CHA, 'Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants' by the National Endowment for the Humanities. It includes buttons for 'Apply' and 'Subscribe'. Below this, there are tabs for SYNOPSIS, VERSION HISTORY, RELATED DOCUMENTS, and PACKAGE. The 'General Information' section provides a detailed overview of the grant, including its type, funding number, title, category, and various dates. The 'Eligibility' section lists the types of organizations that can apply for this grant.

General Information	
Document Type:	Grants Notice
Funding Opportunity Number:	20200515-CHA
Funding Opportunity Title:	Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants
Opportunity Category:	Discretionary
Opportunity Category Explanation:	
Funding Instrument Type:	Grant
Category of Funding Activity:	Humanities (see "Cultural Affairs" in CFDA)
Category Explanation:	
Expected Number of Awards:	30
CFDA Number(s):	45.130 -- Promotion of the Humanities Challenge Grants
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement:	Yes
Version:	Synopsis 1
Posted Date:	Mar 10, 2020
Last Updated Date:	Mar 10, 2020
Original Closing Date for Applications:	May 15, 2020
Current Closing Date for Applications:	May 15, 2020
Archive Date:	
Estimated Total Program Funding:	\$12,500,000
Award Ceiling:	\$750,000
Award Floor:	\$1

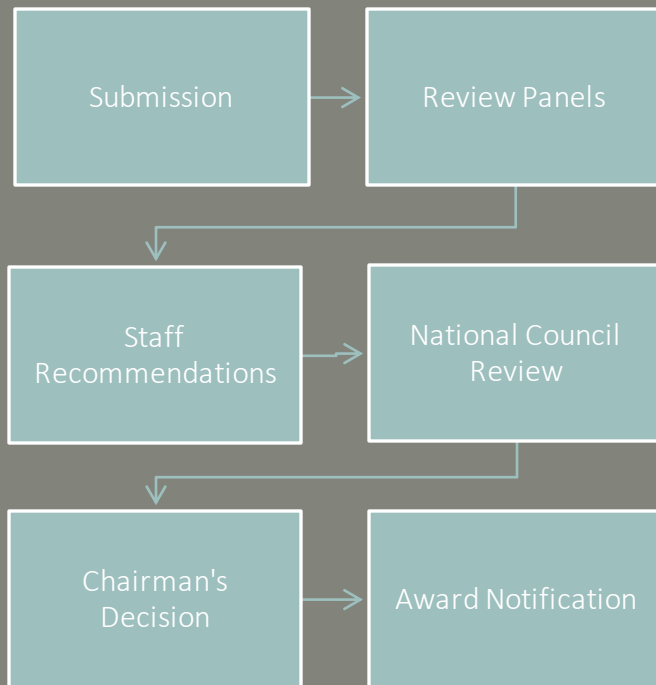
Eligibility

Eligible Applicants:

- Special district governments
- Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Public and State controlled institutions of higher education
- City or township governments
- County governments
- State governments
- Private institutions of higher education
- Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)

Additional Information on Eligibility:

NEH Review Process



1. NEH Staff review applications for eligibility and completeness
2. NEH uses peer review process to evaluate all eligible and complete applications
3. Peer reviewers evaluate applications according to review criteria
4. NEH staff make recommendations to the National Council on the Humanities
5. The National Council meets, then the Chairman considers advice made by the review process and makes funding decisions



Review Criteria

- Humanities significance and audience
- Long term impact and institutional commitment
- Project plans
- Fundraising plans
- Project and fundraising teams
- Project outcomes and their sustainability

Application Tips



Reach out to a Program Officer with a short description of your project in the early stages of development



Carefully read the Notice of Funding Opportunity, FAQs, Sample Narratives, and Policy Guidance



Involve stakeholders (fundraising staff, administration, outside consultants) in the planning and grant writing process



Reach out to other institutions that have received Challenge grants



Send a draft for comments by April 6



Request feedback from your Program Officer after awards are announced

QUESTIONS?

NEH staff are available by phone or email to answer questions and provide technical assistance!

Staff will offer feedback on draft proposals submitted to challenge@neh.gov by April 6, 2021.

challenge@neh.gov

202-606-8309

