Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants

OFFICE OF CHALLENGE PROGRAMS
AUGUST 10, 2021

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Program Overview

Capital Projects and Digital Infrastructure

Developing an Application

Important Considerations

Applying for a Challenge Grant

Review Criteria & Review Process

Application Tips and Resources

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 movable 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.

**Grant Snapshot**

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

**Application available:** May 20, 2021
- **Optional Draft due:** August 17, 2021
- **Application due:** September 28, 2021
- **Expected notification date:** April 30, 2022
- **Project start date:** July 1, 2022 – October 1, 2022

Contact the Office of Challenge Programs Team:
(202) 606-8339
challenge@neh.gov

Applicants who are deaf or hard of hearing can contact NC/PCR at 800.877-8319 Federal Relay (TTY users) at 800.877-8319

**What’s new in 2021**

- If you applied to the May 18, 2021 deadline and your proposal was rejected for issues of eligibility, completeness, or responsiveness, you may apply for the September 28, 2021 deadline.

- **Two deadlines per year:** May 18, 2021 and September 28, 2021

- **5-year maximum period of performance**

*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.
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

Grant can also support up to 10% of fundraising costs
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?

CHA-268738: Buffalo Bill Memorial Association, Collection Environment and Security Upgrades
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?
Fundraising Period: The period five months prior to the application deadline (April 28, 2021) 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

Pay close attention to page limits, formatting, and required attachments. Applications that do not meet the stated guidelines may be declared ineligible.

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.

A PDF titled "SF-429a Instructions" provides an overview for how to complete this form.

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
Application Submission: Environmental and Historic Preservation Review

Program Resources
- Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants Frequently Asked Questions, 2021
- Instructions for the Supplementary Cover Sheet for NEH Grant Programs
- Sample Work Plan
- SF-429-A Real Property Status Report (PDF)
- SF-429-A Instructions (PDF)
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
- Frequently Asked Questions about the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- 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

FAQs about Section 106:
- NEH Overview of Section 106 of the "National Historic Preservation Act and the National Environmental Policy Act"
- Notice of Delegation of Authority
- Federal Historic Preservation Laws
- 36 CFR Part 800
- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- List of State Historic Preservation Officers
- List of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers
- National Register of Historic Places
- National Register Database
- National Historic Landmarks
- The Secretary of Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties
- Professional Qualifications Standards

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the National Environmental Policy Act

Ann Piesse, MCP
Federal Preservation and Environmental Officer
National Endowment for the Humanities
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 and workplans
- Policy guidance and instructions
- Instructions for registering with Grants.gov

**Program Resources**

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**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)
- Reynolds House Roof Renovation (PDF)
- University of California, San Diego, Construction of the Institute of Arts and Humanities (PDF)
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.
### How to Complete the Supplementary Cover Sheet

#### 3. Project Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What to include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outright Funds</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter $0. Challenge Grants do not include outright funds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal Match</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter the total amount of Challenge funds requested from NEH.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total from NEH</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter the same as the total amount of Challenge funds requested from NEH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost Sharing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter the total matching funds to be raised according to the 1:1, 3:1, or 4:1 ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Project Costs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enter the total from NEH + Cost Sharing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Project Funding</th>
<th>Example:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outright Funds</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Match</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total from NEH</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost Sharing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Project Costs</td>
<td>$2,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
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
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, Sample Workplans, 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 August 17
- 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 August 17, 2021.

challenge@neh.gov

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