

Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants

OFFICE OF CHALLENGE PROGRAMS

AUGUST 10, 2021

challenge@neh.gov
202-606-8309

Tatiana Ausema
Senior Program Officer



Stefanie Walker
Director of the Office of
Challenge Programs



Tatiana Ausema
Senior Program Officer



Program Overview

Capital Projects and Digital Infrastructure

Developing an Application

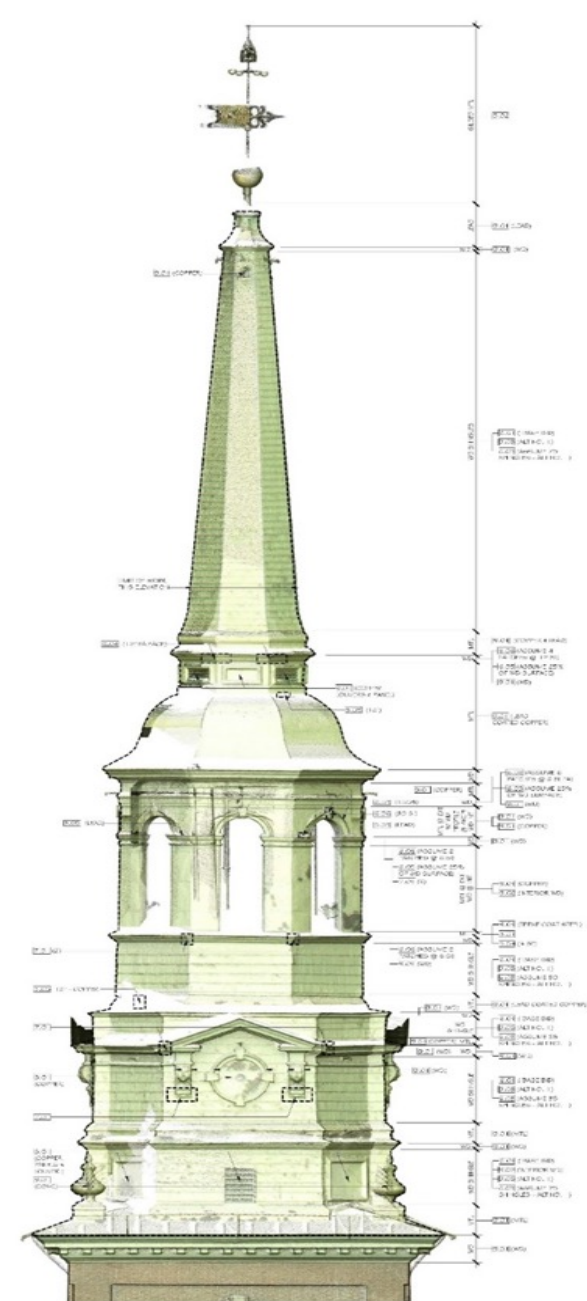
Important Considerations

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 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.

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) 606-8309

challenge@neh.gov

Applicants who are deaf or hard of hearing can contact NEH via
Federal Relay (TTY users) at 800-877-8399

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



CHA-261891-19: Burke Museum Association, Fabrication and Installation of Exhibition Infrastructure in the New Burke Museum



CHA-261947-19: WGBH Digital Infrastructure Project

Matching Requirements

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

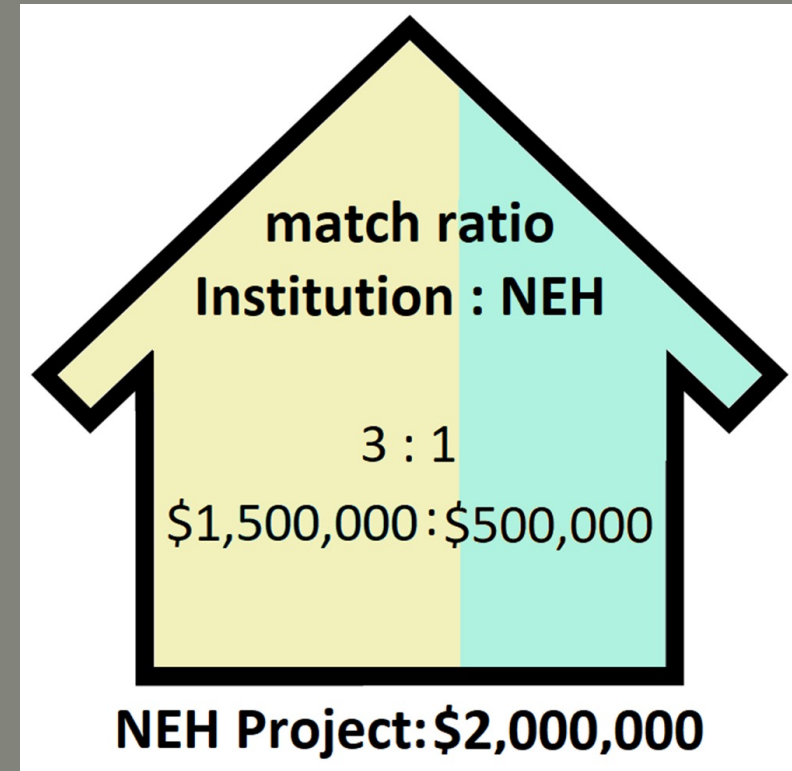
3:1 match ratio for grant requests of \$500,000 or less

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?

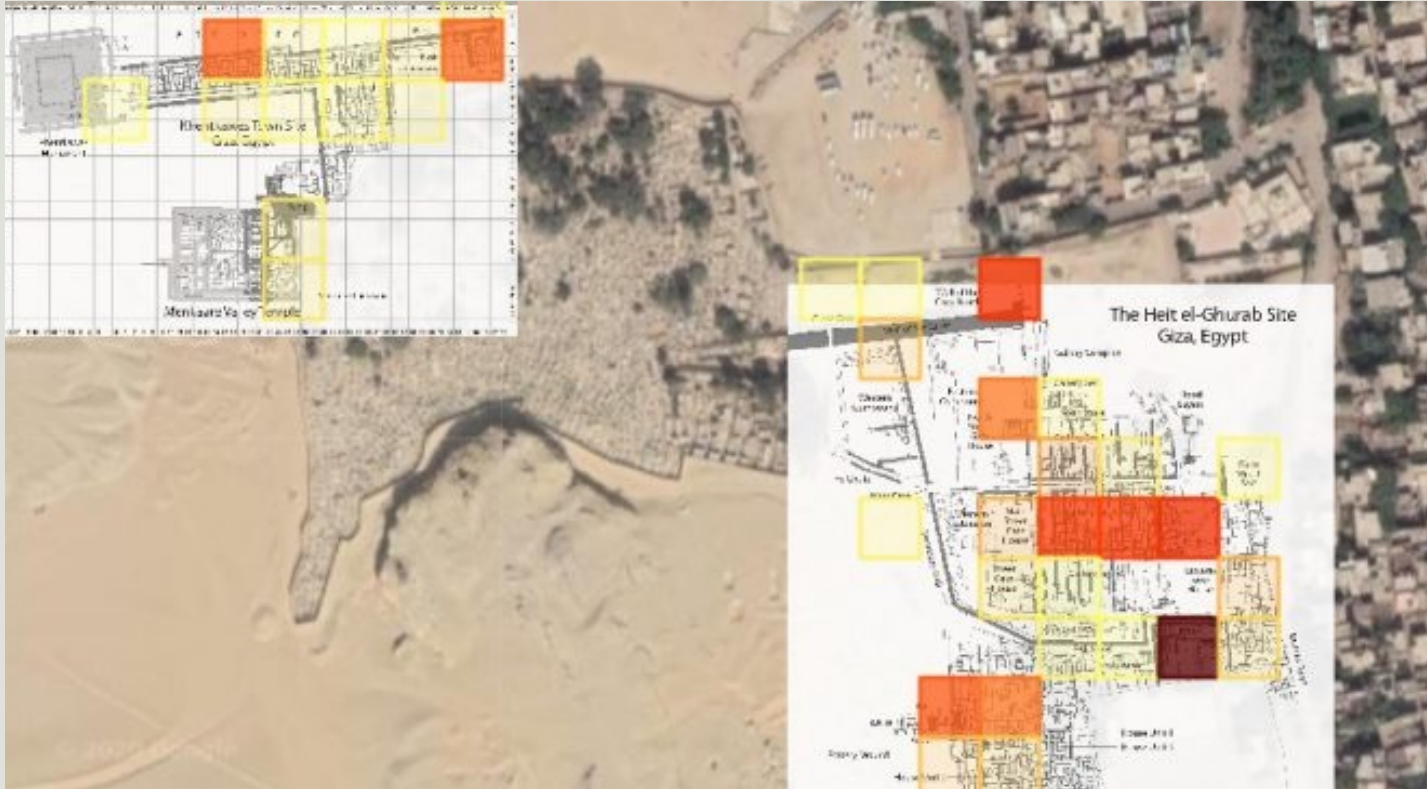


Important Considerations: Project Scope

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?

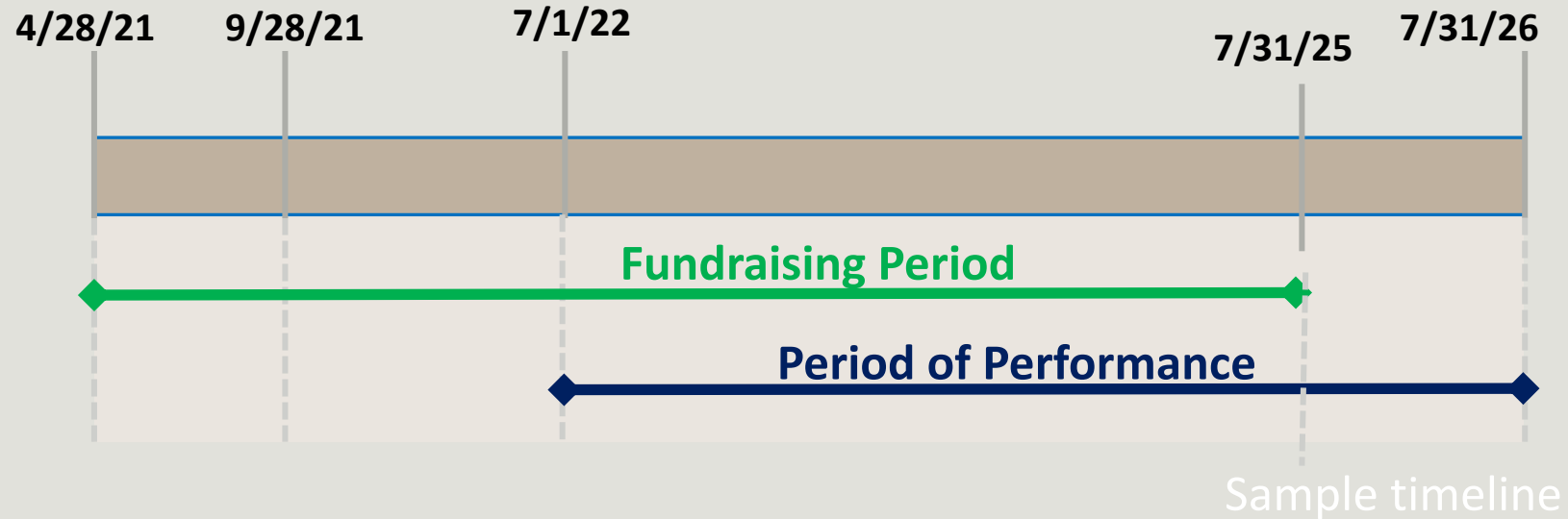


Important Considerations: Project Timeline

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 (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

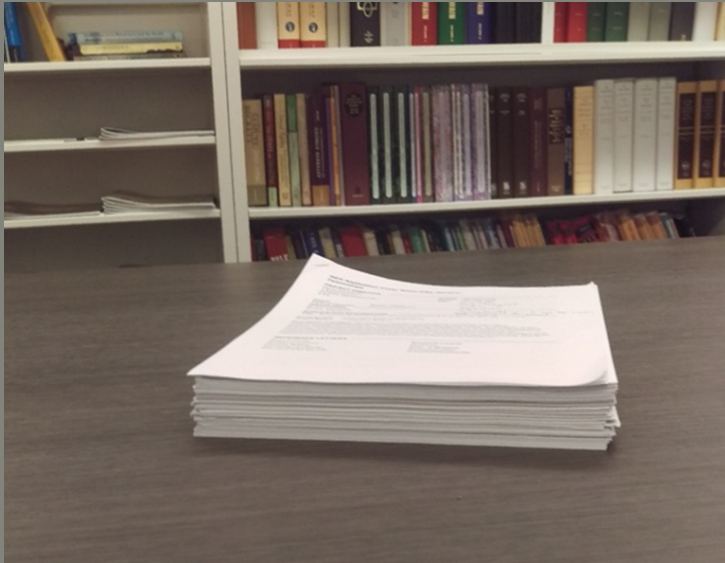
Can only apply for one Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grant deadline per year.

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>

The form is titled "ATTACHMENT A (General Reporting) SF-429-A". It is a detailed reporting form for real property. The form includes sections for: 1. Federal Grant or Other Reporting Number Assigned; 2. Period and Type of Federal Interest; 3. Description of Real Property; 4. Address of Real Property; 5. Zoning Information; 6. Real Property Ownership Type; 7. Real Property Cost; 8. Real Property Insurance; 9. Real Property Tax; 10. Real Property Use; 11. Real Property Status; 12. Real Property Location; 13. Real Property Description; 14. Real Property History; 15. Real Property Future; 16. Real Property Other.

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 C.F.R. 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 Piesen, 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

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

[Instructions for the Supplementary Cover Sheet for NEH Grant Programs](#)

[Sample Work Plan](#)

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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 \(PDF\)](#)

[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 is a navigation bar with links for HOME, LEARN GRANTS, SEARCH GRANTS, APPLICANTS, GRANTORS, SYSTEM-TO-SYSTEM, FORMS, CONNECT, and SUPPORT. A search bar is located on the right with the text 'SEARCH: Grant Opportunities' and a 'GO' button. Below the navigation bar, the page title is 'VIEW GRANT OPPORTUNITY' for the grant number '20200515-CHA', titled 'Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants' from the 'National Endowment for the Humanities'. There are 'Apply' and 'Subscribe' buttons on the right. The main content area is divided into tabs: SYNOPSIS, VERSION HISTORY, RELATED DOCUMENTS, and PACKAGE. The 'SYNOPSIS' tab is active, showing 'General Information' and 'Eligibility' sections. The 'General Information' section includes details such as 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), 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), and Award Floor (\$1). The 'Eligibility' section lists 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, and Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized). There is also a link for 'Additional information on Eligibility'.

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SEARCH: Grant Opportunities ▾ Enter Keyword... GO

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VIEW GRANT OPPORTUNITY

20200515-CHA
Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants
National Endowment for the Humanities

Back | Link

Apply Subscribe

SYNOPSIS | VERSION HISTORY | RELATED DOCUMENTS | PACKAGE

Print Synopsis Details ?

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:

How to Complete the Supplementary Cover Sheet

3. Project Funding

What to include:

Outright Funds	<input type="text"/>	Enter \$0. Challenge Grants do not include outright funds.
Federal Match	<input type="text"/>	Enter the total amount of Challenge funds requested from NEH.
Total from NEH	<input type="text"/>	Enter the same as the total amount of Challenge funds requested from NEH
Cost Sharing	<input type="text"/>	Enter the total matching funds to be raised according to the 1:1, 3:1, or 4:1 ratio
Total Project Costs	<input type="text"/>	Enter the total from NEH + Cost Sharing

How to Complete the Supplementary Cover Sheet

3. Project Funding

Example:

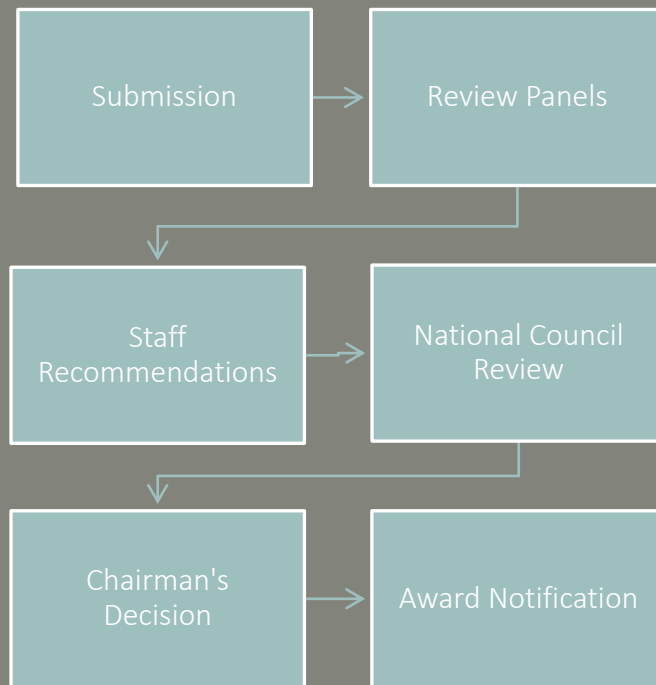
Outright Funds	<input type="text" value="\$0"/>
Federal Match	<input type="text" value="\$500,000"/>
Total from NEH	<input type="text" value="\$500,000"/>
Cost Sharing	<input type="text" value="\$1,500,000"/>
Total Project Costs	<input type="text" value="\$2,000,000"/>



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

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

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

202-606-8309

