



# NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

DIVISION OF **PRESERVATION AND ACCESS**

## **PRESERVATION ASSISTANCE GRANTS**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Published October 3, 2022

---

This FAQ supplements the information provided in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. If you do not see the answer to your question here, consult the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

For additional questions, please contact [preservation@neh.gov](mailto:preservation@neh.gov).

**1. Is an institution required to contribute funds from its own budget to a Preservation Assistance Grant project?**

No. NEH does not require cost sharing in the Preservation Assistance Grants program.

**2. Is staff time an eligible expense?**

Yes. Staff time funded by the award must be spent on eligible project activities, such as rehousing collections, taking part in the assessment process, or installing storage furniture.

**3. How do we find the appropriate consultant and other preservation resources online?**

You will find information regarding selecting a consultant along with links to other preservation resources in the Notice of Funding Opportunity in section H. Other Information, Applicant Resources.

**4. Which attachments should we provide if we want to purchase storage furniture and preservation supplies?**

If you have had an assessment, you should attach the portion of the assessment report recommending the supplies. If you have not yet had a preservation assessment recommending the storage furniture or preservation supplies, you must include a letter of commitment from your project consultant or a letter of support from a preservation professional who is familiar with your collections. This letter should provide a justification for the purchase.

**5. Can an internal staff member perform an assessment for our organization?**

Yes, if this internal staff member has the needed expertise. This assessment should still result in a formal report.

**6. We received funding elsewhere for a preservation assessment. On the basis of that assessment, we want to apply for a Preservation Assistance Grant to purchase storage furniture. Is this permissible?**

Yes. As with all requests for supplies, attach the portion of the assessment report recommending the supplies or a letter of support from the consultant justifying the purchase.

**7. What information should the consultant provide for inclusion in the application?**

A consultant should provide a two-page résumé and a letter of commitment. The letter of commitment should describe the proposed activity or activities and include a detailed plan of work, a budget, and a preliminary list of supplies that the consultant recommends for purchase (if applicable). The letter also should indicate what the consultant would provide to the applicant, such as an assessment or planning report. If the consultant is working with an advanced student or recent graduate, the letter should also identify the academic program from which the student or graduate would be selected and discuss the practical experience that the student or graduate would gain from the project.

**8. What is the difference between the Preservation Assistance Grants (PAG) program and the Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections (SCHC) program?**

Both programs support preventive conservation, but they differ significantly in scope. PAG is directed at small and mid-sized libraries, museums, and other cultural heritage institutions that seek to build their capacity to preserve and care for their humanities collections at a foundational level. Awards are capped at \$10,000 and in a typical project a single consultant offers basic advice on caring for humanities collections. The PAG program also supports the purchase of preservation supplies and staff training.

Small and mid-sized institutions might apply to the SCHC program to plan or implement larger, more complex projects focused on sustainable conservation strategies that pragmatically balance effectiveness, cost, and environmental impact. SCHC projects take a higher level of preparation than PAG awards. Organizations applying for Implementation, SCHC Level I (up to \$100,000) projects must have undertaken a general preservation assessment or other targeted collections assessment, identified preservation challenges and priorities, and be ready to implement small-scale improvements to environmental conditions and other sustainable conservation measures. This preparation might have been supported by a PAG award.

Implementation, Level II SCHC projects (up to \$350,000), often involve interdisciplinary teams that might include architects, building engineers, conservation scientists, conservators, curators, archivists, and facilities managers, among others. Planning for such complex projects may have been supported by a SCHC planning grant that allow up to \$50,000 for interdisciplinary planning.

You can learn more about the SCHC program [here](#). If you still have questions about which program is best for you, please contact us at [preservation@neh.gov](mailto:preservation@neh.gov).

**9. Is the purchase of equipment to control the environment of a storage area an eligible expense?**

Yes, you can apply to purchase environmental monitoring equipment and discrete units and supplies to control the environment, such as window air-conditioning units, portable dehumidifiers, window blinds, and door draft stoppers if recommended through a preservation

assessment. You cannot apply to purchase environmental control equipment that is part of a building's HVAC system, such as an air handling unit.

For capital campaigns intended to update building climate control systems, consider the [SCHC program](#).

**10. What assistance is offered for digital collections?**

You may apply for digital preservation assessments or the development of detailed plans for the preservation of your digital collections. Through the education and training component of Preservation Assistance Grants you may request support for training that focuses on both preservation and access issues for digital collections. For example, an institution could apply for support to attend workshops on such topics as standards and best practices for the preservation of digital collections, or the care and handling of collections during digitization. Applicants who have received a digital preservation assessment and/or worked with a consultant to develop a digital preservation plan may also request funding for digital storage media, such as external hard drives, RAID, NAS, and LTO systems.

**11. Is reformatting of collections an eligible activity?**

Reformatting of collections is only eligible if your collection has been impacted by a natural disaster in a federally declared disaster area.

The Humanities Collections and Reference Resources (HCRR) program funds reformatting projects. Learn more about the [HCRR program](#).

**12. What sorts of applicants can apply for funding for disaster relief activities?**

All eligible applicants that are in a federally declared disaster area may apply for activities such as disaster recovery, conservation treatment of damaged collections, temporary storage and relocation, and the reformatting of impacted collections as a preservation methodology, among others.

**13. Does the PAG program support repair or renovation of buildings or other structures damaged by disasters?**

No, but the PAG program can support the care and treatment of damaged *collections*. Eligible activities include disaster planning and mitigation, conservation treatment, the temporary relocation and storage of collections, the purchase of emergency supplies and equipment, education and training for disaster planning and response, and the reformatting of collections.