



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
Humanities

OFFICE OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES

**INSTITUTES FOR
ADVANCED TOPICS IN THE
DIGITAL HUMANITIES**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Eligibility

May a non-U.S. institution or organization apply for an Institutes for Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities (IATDH) award?

No, foreign entities are not eligible to apply.

NEH does not provide financial assistance to foreign institutions or organizations. Nevertheless, otherwise eligible American institutions may apply for collaborative projects involving U.S. and foreign organizations provided they do not use NEH funds for the purpose of issuing subawards to any foreign organization. This limitation does not preclude American institutions from obtaining the services of a foreign individuals and consultants to carry out various programmatic activities on a fee for service basis; it also does not preclude vendor contracts such as in-country transportation services. If you are interested in submitting an application for a project involving international collaboration, please consult beforehand with the staff of the division.

May an IATDH take place at an institution outside of the United States?

No, an IATDH must be held at a location in the United States.

May an IATDH grant support a program that provides opportunities for participants in just one state or at just one institution?

No. Projects must be regional (multistate) or national in scope.

Application Preparation

What constitutes a good title for my project?

Your title should be brief (not exceeding 125 characters, including spaces and punctuation) and descriptive of the project. It should also be free of specialized language that might not be understood by the general public.

Avoid using a main title that requires clarification by the subtitle. For example, “A History of Counterfeiting in the U.S., 1776-1900” is clearer than “Fakes and Fakers: A History of Counterfeiting in the U.S., 1776-1990.”

Use words and phrases that are informative and specific rather than puzzling or intriguing. For example, “A Cultural History of the Telephone and Telecommunications in America, 1950-2015” is clearer than “Ten Digits and a Party Line: A Study of a Number and a Nation.”

NEH reserves the right to re-title funded projects that do not follow agency guidelines. Award recipients, however, are permitted to use their preferred title for any award products.

What should I consider in discussing my project’s significance?

Do not assume that the project’s significance will be evident to readers; be explicit about its importance. Give examples of the ways in which the proposed educational program would provide opportunities to use or examine the uses of digital technology to advance humanities scholarship.

The application narrative should indicate that you are aware of other similar educational opportunities that currently are available regionally and nationally or that have been offered in the past. Consult the collection of online [white papers written by directors of past NEH-funded institutes](#). You should explain how your project builds on past work, complements existing opportunities, or breaks new ground.

What kind of detail should be included in the work plan?

Depending on the project, the work plan could be organized by type of activity or by period of time (for example, three-month periods). It should be presented in enough detail to demonstrate that you have thoroughly considered each step necessary to host a successful institute, such as participant recruitment, application review, curriculum development, preparation of institute materials, program evaluation, and post-institute activities. If you describe in detail the responsibilities of the project’s personnel, evaluators will understand the corresponding commitments of time that are shown in the project’s budget and the qualifications and experiences that are described in the “Staff, faculty, and consultants” section of the narrative.

May I submit a draft of my application?

Yes. We ask for draft submissions at least six weeks prior to the deadline—in other words, drafts should be submitted on or before February 26, 2019.

May the project director also serve as the institutional grant administrator?

No. The project director may not serve as the institutional grant administrator. The role of the project director must be distinguished from that of the institutional grant administrator, who functions as the representative of the recipient organization with authority to act on the organization's behalf in matters related to the administration of the award. All financial reports and prior approval requests such as budget revisions, extensions of the period of performance, and changes in key personnel must be signed or countersigned by the institutional grant administrator. Similarly, official correspondence from NEH to a recipient (for example, an offer letter, the award document, an extension, a supplement or amendment) is addressed to the institutional grant administrator and copied to the project director. The project director is the person directly in charge of the conduct of the funded project. Because the project director's involvement in the project is normally critical to its success, the replacement of the project director or the co-director or a substantial reduction in the level of their effort (for example, an unanticipated absence for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in the time devoted to the project) requires prior written approval from NEH.

Budget

Is it permissible to provide stipends to participants to help defray the costs of attendance at an Institute for Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities?

Yes. In the NEH budget form, you may include participants' stipends under item 7, Other Costs. If the stipend does not cover travel, lodging, and per diem, account for those costs under Travel. In the budget narrative, explain your rationale for covering participants' costs related to the institute. For travel and per diem estimates, refer to the policies of the applicant institution.

Is there a standard amount for participant stipends?

No. Stipends should be commensurate with the time commitment expected of the participants, as well as related travel, lodging, and per diem costs, if applicable.

Is there a standard amount to compensate project directors, faculty, or consultants for their work on the project?

No. Compensation costs charged to the award should be consistent with 2 CFR §§200.430, 431, and 459.

I'd like to hold a welcoming reception for the participants in my institute. May I pay for this out of grant funds?

No. Sometimes a project director's department or the dean's office will donate funds for such events, but NEH funds may not be used for social or entertainment activities.

On the other hand, catering costs for institute participants are allowable for working breakfasts and lunches. Note, though, that if the institute provides meals for participants, the per diem offered to participants should be reduced accordingly.

May I apply for a grant to pay for my tuition and living expenses while I pursue my graduate degree?

No. Institutes for Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities grants are made to institutions and organizations that offer regional and national educational programs. Individuals are not eligible to apply for these grants.

What are indirect costs and what rate is appropriate for an IATDH?

Indirect costs (also known as “facilities and administrative” or F & A costs) are those costs that are not readily identified with a specific project or organizational activity. “Facilities” is defined as depreciation on buildings, equipment and capital improvement, interest on debt associated with certain buildings, equipment and capital improvements, and operations and maintenance expenses. “Administration” is defined as general administration and general expenses such as the director’s office, accounting, personnel and all other types of expenditures not listed specifically under one of the subcategories of “Facilities” (including cross allocations from other pools, where applicable).

An indirect-cost rate is simply a device for determining the proportion of general (indirect) expenses that each federally funded project may include as part of its overall budget request. Indirect costs are computed by applying a negotiated indirect-cost rate to a distribution base. For administrative convenience, applicant organizations negotiate rates with a single federal agency (referred to as the “cognizant agency”), and then the organization can use that negotiated rate in any of their federal applications.

Governmental departments or agency units receiving more than \$35M in federal funds from all sources during a given fiscal year must have a federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement. Any other applicant organization that has never had a negotiated indirect-cost rate may use the de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC). If chosen, this method must be used consistently for all federal awards until the organization chooses to negotiate a rate. This can be done at any time. See 2 CFR §200.414 for additional information.

For applicants seeking reimbursement for indirect costs: Please review carefully your institution’s negotiated indirect-cost rate(s) to make sure you are using the most appropriate rate in your application budget. Many institutions negotiate multiple rates—for example, “Research,” “Instruction,” and “Other Sponsored Activities.” With rare exceptions, your institution’s “Research” rate will not be the appropriate rate for inclusion in your NEH project budget, as the use of this rate is reserved for projects involving scientific research, not scholarly inquiry of the type most often supported by NEH.

Application Review

I just found out that my institution is planning on submitting two applications to the Institutes for Advanced Topics in the Digital Humanities program this year. Will only one be funded?

Not necessarily. It is possible that both—or only one, or none—would be funded.

Who will read my grant application?

A variety of individuals will read your application, including peer reviewers, NEH staff, and members of the NEH National Council on the Humanities.

We therefore strongly emphasize that you should write your application so that readers without technical knowledge can understand it. We realize that your project may be technical in nature and that part of the application may have to address complex technological issues. But particularly in your one-paragraph description of the project on the SF-424 Short Organizational form and the first portion of your narrative, you should write for a general audience that is familiar with the humanities but may have no specific knowledge of technology or of your project's relation to the humanities. In these sections of the application you should make a "big picture" case for your project's contribution to the humanities.

Your proposal must explain the significance of your project to the humanities, in terms that will be comprehensible to readers without technical knowledge. Your application will be read by many individuals with different backgrounds, from different disciplines, with varying degrees of familiarity with the methodologies used in digital scholarship. You must therefore make a case to this broad audience. Consider, for example, how you might make a case for your project if you were describing it to your provost, dean, or college president.

If I intend to apply for another NEH grant for a second round of funding, do I have to describe the project anew or will reviewers have access to the earlier grant proposal?

NEH treats all applications as new applications. Reviewers will not have access to the previous application; therefore, proposals for renewed funding must discuss the project anew. Be sure to describe the work accomplished with previous NEH funding and be clear about the specific activities to be supported by the new grant. Explain in particular how your experience as a director has shaped the current proposal. You must also include in an appendix all of the participant evaluations from the most recently offered project.