



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE  
**Humanities**

DIVISION OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS

**COLLABORATIVE  
RESEARCH GRANTS**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

---

## Program Description

### 1. What kinds of projects are supported in this program?

Collaborative Research supports three types of projects: **Convening Grants** for conferences and working groups, **Publication Grants**, and **Archaeology Grants**. All three grant categories are for projects that result in publications, whether in print or online.

### 2. We were awarded a Convening Grant. Can we apply for any other Collaborative Research grant after that?

Yes, you may apply for a Publication Grant.

### 3. We want to apply for a Publication Grant. Do we have to receive a Convening Grant award first?

No, if you have already done preliminary planning, a prior Convening Grant is not necessary to apply for a Publications Grant.

### 4. How many participants must a project have to qualify for a Collaborative Research grant?

Collaborative Research projects must have at least two participants, each of whom must be a scholar.

### 5. I am working on a research project, but I am the only participant. May I apply to the Collaborative Research program?

No. Collaborative Research grants support original research undertaken by a team of two or more participants; at least two project participants must be scholars. If you are the only participant, you should apply to the [Fellowships](#) program.

**6. May a Collaborative Research grant be used for an interdisciplinary project?**

Yes. The program seeks to encourage projects in a single field of study, as well as interdisciplinary work, both within the humanities and beyond. Projects that include partnerships with researchers from the natural and social sciences are encouraged, but they must remain firmly rooted in the humanities and must employ humanistic methods. Résumés of the participants should demonstrate pertinent expertise.

**7. Our archaeology project doesn't focus on digging and laboratory analysis. Instead we want to produce a monograph and create a website about our findings. Are we eligible to apply?**

Yes. The Collaborative Research program supports archaeology projects that focus on data reuse and the publication of findings. Excavation is not required.

**8. Must all Collaborative Research projects have project websites? Must they disseminate their results electronically?**

No. Although NEH encourages its grantees to have an online presence, projects without their own websites are eligible. Projects intending to disseminate their results only in print volumes are also eligible. For further guidance applicants should consult the guidelines (specifically, the instructions for the narrative under the “Final product and dissemination” heading.)

**Award Information**

**9. What is the length of the period of performance for a Convening Grant? What is the size of the award?**

Convening grants are for one year. The maximum award is \$50,000.

**10. What are the lengths of the periods of performance for Publication Grants and Archaeology Grants? What is the size of the awards?**

The period of performance for Publication Grants and Archaeology Grants ranges from one to three years, with a maximum total award of \$100,000 for a one-year project or \$250,000 for a three-year project.

**11. Must indirect costs be paid for out of the funds awarded by NEH, or does NEH defray indirect costs through a separate award?**

NEH makes only one award, which includes all project costs—both indirect and direct.

**12. Why is cost sharing important?**

Cost sharing can be vital to the successful completion of a project, since the Collaborative Research program is often unable to support the full costs of projects approved for funding.

## Eligibility

### **13. I am a U.S. citizen teaching at a foreign university. Am I eligible to apply for a Collaborative Research grant?**

Yes. You may apply through an eligible sponsoring U.S. institution, or you may apply (if you are not affiliated with an eligible institution) as an unaffiliated project director.

### **14. I am a U.S. citizen collaborating with someone from another country. May I include payments to this person in the project budget?**

Yes. Collaborators may be from other countries, and payments to such collaborators may be included in the project budget. At least 50 percent of the budget must, however, support U.S. institutions and U.S. citizens or residents.

### **15. I am a graduate student completing my Ph.D. May I apply as a project director, co-director, or the only collaborator for a Collaborative Research grant?**

Persons enrolled in academic degree programs are not eligible to apply as project directors or co-directors for Collaborative Research grants, or to serve as the project's only collaborator. If you have passed your dissertation defense but have not yet received the degree, you are eligible to apply as a project director, co-director, or as the only collaborator through an eligible sponsoring U.S. institution. (Only U.S. citizens are eligible to apply as unaffiliated project directors.) To demonstrate that you have completed the requirements for the Ph.D., you must include as an appendix to the application a letter from your dean or department chair, stating that you have successfully completed all requirements for the Ph.D. as of the application deadline.

### **16. Do I need to have an advanced degree such as a Ph.D. to apply as a project director for a Collaborative Research grant?**

No. However, your résumé should include publications, presentations, and other related experience that demonstrate your ability to carry out the project that you are proposing.

### **17. May I apply as an unaffiliated project director for a Collaborative Research grant, or must I apply through my institution?**

Only U.S. citizens who are adjunct faculty, teaching at foreign universities, or without institutional affiliation may apply as unaffiliated project directors. Such individuals are, however, strongly encouraged to seek a sponsoring institution. Project directors affiliated with an eligible institution must apply through that institution. If the project can be better hosted by a different U.S. institution, they may apply through that institution.

**18. May an institution submit more than one application to the Collaborative Research and Scholarly Editions and Translations programs?**

Yes, an institution may submit multiple applications for distinctly different projects. However, any one project director or co-director may direct only one application to either the Collaborative Research program or the Scholarly Editions and Translations program, but not both. Overlapping project costs between two or more applications for federal funding and/or approved federal award budgets is not permitted.

**19. May a project director or co-director submit more than one application to the Collaborative Research and Scholarly Editions and Translations programs?**

No. Project directors or co-directors may submit only one application to either the Collaborative Research program or the Scholarly Editions and Translations program, but not both; they may, however, apply for other NEH awards, including Fellowships and Summer Stipends.

**20. May a project director or co-director hold more than one award from the NEH Division of Research Programs at a time?**

No. Collaborative Research project directors or co-directors may not hold concurrent full-time awards from the Division of Research Programs.

## **Application Preparation and Submission Information**

**21. 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.”

When possible, include places and dates indicating a project’s scope. For example, “Faith and Belief among New York City Catholics, 1945-1970” is clearer than “Faith and Belief in the Catholic Community.”

If a person is mentioned in your title, include dates and description. For example, “A Biography of German Philosopher Klaus von Guberstopper (1834-1910)” is clearer than “A Biography of Klaus von Guberstopper.”

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.”

Omit technical terms, jargon, and unfamiliar words. For example, “Time, Space, and Clocks in the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century British Novel” is clearer than “Chronotopes and Horologies in the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century British Novel.”

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.

**22. Must we apply through Grants.gov?**

Yes. All applications to this program, both from institutions and from unaffiliated project directors, must be submitted via Grants.gov. You can find a link to the instructions on the [program resource page](#).

**23. Until what time can we apply on the day of the deadline?**

You may apply until 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time, on the day of the deadline. However, NEH **strongly** suggests that you submit your application no later than noon Eastern Time, on the day of the deadline. Doing so will leave you time to contact the Grants.gov help desk for support, should you encounter a technical problem of some kind. The Grants.gov help desk is now available seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day (except on [federal holidays](#)), at 1-800-518-4726. You can also send an e-mail message to [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). For purposes of verification, keep a record of any communication with Grants.gov, including a case number if it is assigned.

**24. I am a leading scholar on a project, but my institution wants to designate an administrator to serve as the project director. Is that allowed?**

No. The project director must be a leading scholar participating in the project, not an administrator or press representative.

**25. Neither I nor my collaborators are able to work on our project during the academic year. Can we work on our project only during the summers?**

No. The Collaborative Research program supports sustained, full-time or part-time activities over the course of one to three years. If you are unable to devote sustained effort to your project during the course of the year, you should consider applying instead to the [Summer Stipends](#) program.

**26. Our project is a conference, and we plan to apply for a Convening Grant. Do we need commitments to participate from all invited conference participants before applying?**

No. However, it is preferable to have commitments from as many participants as possible.

**27. We plan to hold several meetings to explore our chosen topic. Can we apply for the entire series in one Convening Grant application?**

Yes. All of the meetings must, however, relate to the same project and publication plan and must occur during the one-year period of performance.

**28. What type of dissemination is expected in the Collaborative Research program?**

All three types of Collaborative Research grants must result in some form of publication. Examples of acceptable dissemination include monographs, multi-authored volumes, edited volumes, themed journal issues, or digital publications.

**29. May a Collaborative Research project create a tool (for example, a digital tool, database, visualization or map)?**

Yes, but this cannot be the only outcome of the project. The project must also publish substantive interpretive scholarship, addressing one or more significant humanities research questions.

**30. Must we have a contract with a publisher before applying?**

No. Although having a contract may be helpful, proposals lacking a contract often are successful, so long as there is an appropriate and feasible plan for publication.

**31. We have some supporting materials that are not in electronic format. How can we submit them?**

You must convert them into one or more PDF files. All materials must be submitted electronically (as PDF files) through Grants.gov. Make sure that all files in formats other than PDF (images, Word or Excel files, etc.) have been properly saved as PDF files. Do not simply rename your non-PDF files with PDF extensions. If an attachment contains multiple PDFs, you must merge those documents into a single PDF. Do not attach a zip file containing multiple PDFs.

**32. We expect to receive some supporting materials after the deadline. Can they be added to our application?**

No. New materials may not be added to an application after the deadline.

**33. For institutional applicants only: 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.

## Budgets

### **34. Some of the items on our budget form can't be explained in the space available. Can we submit an additional written explanation for these items?**

You may add rows to the NEH budget form as needed. Enter any explanation directly on the form. The primary budget form should, however, include only costs that NEH is asked to support. Prospective applicants are urged to consult with program staff or the NEH Office of Grant Management to avoid requesting budget items that NEH cannot support.

### **35. How do we explain our cost-sharing arrangements and third-party contributions?**

Itemize these amounts on a separate, secondary spreadsheet to make clear what parts of the project will be supported by non-NEH sources. You may also provide this information in a narrative. All sources from which you are requesting or receiving support must also be listed in the **Statement of funding received and requested**. Include in this statement funds that you anticipate receiving, as well as other funds that you are requesting from another funder.

### **36. Does the Collaborative Research program support the payment of open access fees?**

Yes. You may ask for such support if you know the exact amount of the fees and submit supporting documentation.

### **37. Can we put a subvention and payments to a publisher in our budget?**

No. The Collaborative Research program does not support subventions or payments to publishers.

### **38. We will be serving food at our meeting(s). Where do we list this expense?**

The cost of food should be listed under "Other Costs." As a reminder and per [2 CFR §200.432](#): Allowable conference costs paid by a sponsor or host of the conference may include rental of facilities, speakers' fees, costs of meals and refreshments, local transportation, and other items incidental to such conferences. Conference hosts/sponsors must exercise discretion and judgment in ensuring that conference costs are appropriate, necessary and managed in a manner that minimizes costs to the award. Please note: if incidental food items and/or meals are provided at no charge during meetings, conferences, training, or other events attended while on NEH-supported travel, the per diem charged to the award must be reduced accordingly. Alcoholic beverages are unallowable and may not be included in your budget.

### **39. Members of our project team travel regularly to the national conference for our discipline. May we charge these costs to the project budget?**

No. The program does not provide funding for this purpose.

**40. Our project needs scientific and technical services from outside sources, and several project team members and consultants are not in the humanities. Are the costs for these services and salaries for these project participants allowable?**

Yes, but total NEH funding for all technical and scientific collaborators and experts, technical and scientific services, equipment, supplies, labor, and materials is capped at \$30,000 (excluding indirect costs).

## Application Review

**41. Our application for a Collaborative Research grant was unsuccessful. Is there anything I can do to increase my chances for success next time?**

In addition to examining sample proposals and submitting a draft proposal for comment, as described below (see question 44), you may also ask for copies of the (unattributed) reviewers' comments about your proposal. For reasons of confidentiality, requests must be filed by e-mail ([collaborative@neh.gov](mailto:collaborative@neh.gov)) by either the project director or the institutional grants administrator.

**42. We applied for a grant last year and were unsuccessful. Will this be held against us if we apply again this year?**

No. NEH regards all applications as new applications.

**43. What help is available for all applicants?**

The staff of the Collaborative Research program will answer questions and review drafts of proposals submitted up to October 15. A response cannot be guaranteed if the draft arrives later. In addition, applicants may examine the narrative sections of sample funded proposals; samples are available on the [program resource page](#). Applicants may contact staff by telephone (202-606-8200) or e-mail ([collaborative@neh.gov](mailto:collaborative@neh.gov)). Draft proposals must be submitted by e-mail.

**44. What should we include in our draft proposal?**

A draft application should include, at a minimum, a statement of significance and impact, a narrative, and a budget. In addition, previously unsuccessful applicants must explain how the draft proposal addresses recommendations made by the previous set of reviewers.