

Public Humanities Projects Grants: Instructions for Preparing an Exhibitions Planning or Implementation Application

Grants in this category support permanent, travelling, and temporary exhibitions at the Planning and Implementation levels.

- **Permanent** exhibitions that will be on view for at least three years, or **travelling** exhibitions that will be available to audiences in at least two venues in the United States (including the organizing venue) are eligible for Planning grants of up to \$75,000. Implementation grants for these exhibitions may be for as much as \$400,000, or \$460,000 if requesting a Position in Public Humanities. Projects that would have an exceptionally large national audience may request a Chairman's Special Award for as much as \$1,000,000. Awards are made for a period of performance of twelve months for Planning grants and twelve to thirty-six months for Implementation grants.
- **Temporary single-site** exhibitions (on display for a minimum of two months) are eligible for Planning grants of up to \$40,000 or Implementation grants of up to \$100,000, or \$160,000 if requesting a Position in Public Humanities. Awards are made for a period of performance of twelve months for Planning grants and twelve to thirty-six months for Implementation grants.

Consider the following examples:

- An art museum collaborates with a national cultural organization to bring Korean art works to four venues in major metropolitan areas in the U.S. The exhibition features high-quality works of art, placed in the context of Korea's history and culture over several centuries. A dedicated website expands on the exhibition themes by offering rich interactive content and educational materials.
- A public library and city museum develop a project to explore the history of their region as expressed through literature and historical artifacts. In addition to a traveling exhibition, the partners launch a related reading and discussion program series that includes a call-in radio show, inviting rural listeners to discuss short works of fiction with literature scholars and historians.
- A regional history museum in the Midwest undertakes new collection research after discovering a hidden cache of paintings by local self-taught artists. The museum finds that the paintings and the stories of the artists convey important information about the region. The museum develops a one-year exhibition, inviting a contemporary local artist and area scholars to help shape new perspectives on the history of the land and people that the works bring to light. Oral histories, walking tours, discussion programs, and website resources enhance public understanding of this previously unknown collection.

Program Expectations:

Planning: Exhibition designs and a draft script that illustrates the main humanities ideas and the ways in which they will be conveyed to audiences, as well as plans for outreach, marketing, and evaluation of the final exhibition.

Implementation: A completed, installed permanent, travelling, or temporary exhibition with fully realized programming, vigorous marketing and outreach activities, and active evaluation of the project's impact.

Application Instructions

Please include the following application components:

SF-424 Application for Federal Domestic Assistance – Short Organizational

In Section 6.a of the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance – Short Organizational (part of the Grants.gov application package), include a project title not to exceed 125 characters (including spaces and punctuation). (Information about this form is available in the NEH Grants.gov Instructions for Applicant Organizations document. You can find a link to that document on the [program resource page](#), by clicking on the down arrow across from the words “Step 2.”)

Successful proposals will typically have titles that are descriptive of the project, substantive, and free of specialized language. Most importantly, your title should be easily understood by the general public. NEH reserves the right to retitle funded projects for clarity when announcing its funding decisions and in its own reports and communications, but recipients are permitted to use their preferred title for any award products.

Provide a one-paragraph description (up to one thousand characters, including spaces) written for a nonspecialist audience, clearly explaining the project's principal activities and its expected results. In the SF-424 form you should place the paragraph in Section 6.B, Project Description. Do not attach the description to the Attachments Form, a form that is also explained in the NEH Grants.gov Instructions for Applicant Organizations document.

Application

Your application should include the following parts.

Attachment 1) Table of Contents (name the file “contents.pdf”)

List all parts of the application in order with corresponding page numbers.

Attachment 2) Application Narrative (name the file “narrative.pdf”)

*Up to **twenty** single-spaced pages for **planning** proposals*

*Up to **fifteen** single-spaced pages for **implementation** proposals (or **twenty** single-spaced pages for proposals requesting a **Chairman's Special Award**)*

Use one-inch margins and at least 11-point type.

The narrative should not assume specialized knowledge, and it should be free of jargon. It should clearly define technical terms so that they are comprehensible to a nonspecialist audience.

A) Nature of the request

In a page or less, provide an overview of the project and its interpretive goals.

- State that your request is for an Exhibitions grant and indicate the type of exhibition for which you are applying (permanent, travelling, or temporary); identify the funding level (planning or implementation) and the amount that you are requesting; if you are applying for a Position in Public Humanities, indicate that.
- Identify the formats, the subject, and the main themes.
- If your project responds to one of the NEH areas of interest described in section I of the guidelines, indicate how it does so.

B) Humanities content

- Describe the significance of the subject and its relevance to the public. Discuss the intellectual content of the project, using theme statements to identify the major humanities ideas and questions to be addressed. Incorporate the humanities scholarship that supports the themes and provide examples of how the exhibition illustrates those themes.
- For reinterpretations or updates of existing exhibitions, describe the existing exhibition and then explain what new humanities ideas will be incorporated into the new exhibition.
- Demonstrate how humanities scholarship will inform the project.

C) Project formats

- Briefly describe the concept for organizing the exhibition and the techniques that the exhibition will employ to engage general public audiences.
- Provide short descriptions of all secondary formats and discuss how each will enhance public understanding of the humanities content.

D) Project resources

- Describe the resources available at your institution or elsewhere that will support your project. (Examples of resources include archives, special libraries, collections of art or artifacts, images, documents, film, audio, or digital materials.) Explain what you expect to find in the resources and the ways in which that material will contribute to the project.
- Discuss the significance and quality of the relevant artworks or objects.
- If applicable, explain how you will secure permissions or rights for key materials.

E) Project history

- Give a brief history of the project to date. Describe the relationship of the project to others on the topic and explain what its particular contribution would be.

F) Chairman's Special Award

- If the application requests implementation funding at the **Chairman's Special Award** level, explain why the institutional collaborations, number of program formats, and broad reach to audiences make the project a good candidate for that funding level.
- Explain why the project will be unusually significant and appealing, and why it will have exceptionally broad reach nationally.

G) Audience, marketing, and promotion

- Estimate the size of the expected audience and explain the basis for this number. If applicable, discuss partnerships that would help promote the project.
- Present a plan for reaching this audience. If applicable, discuss partnerships that would help promote the project.
- If you are targeting a specific audience or proposing special outreach to underserved or at-risk communities, outline the community need that the project addresses. Describe your outreach plan, including the history of relationships you have built with those audiences or communities. Outline the approaches to engagement that you have developed based on those relationships. Alternatively, describe your strategies for establishing productive connections in the community. Explain how you will engage new audiences in thinking about and discussing humanities ideas.

H) Evaluation of the project's impact

- Describe the process used and the results of any evaluation already conducted.
- Explain how you will test the efficacy of planned project elements or the success of implemented projects in conveying humanities content; describe how the evaluation results might inform the project moving forward.

I) Organizational profile

Provide a short profile of your organization and other major partner organizations (not to exceed one page for your organization and a half page for each collaborating organization). These descriptions should include the institutional mission, origin, and size; annual operating budget; annual number of visitors (for museums and historic sites); and special characteristics and current activities. Explain the responsibilities of collaborating organizations.

J) Project team

Identify the key individuals who will be involved in the project. Briefly describe each person's qualifications and expected contribution to the project.

K) Humanities scholars and consultants

Identify the consultants (including humanities scholars) who will be involved in the project. Briefly describe the qualifications and expected contribution to the project of each consultant. Depending on the needs of the project, consultants may include education and public program specialists, historic site or cultural tourism experts, writers, media producers, or digital designers.

L) Work plan

- Provide a detailed month-by-month schedule of the major work to be done during the period of performance, the amount of time it will take, and the

- specific people involved.
- State clearly when the meetings with scholars and other consultants will occur, and how the meetings will advance the project.
- Include activities related to planned project evaluation and indicate who will be responsible for each activity.

M) Project funding

- Specify the source and amount of all funds raised to date for all aspects of the project.
- Describe how project costs in excess of the NEH grant would be met. Include information about any previous NEH funding for the project, as well as support from other sources. If applicable, identify voluntary cost share, institutional resources, or other significant “in-kind” support; provide specific plans for raising funds from outside sources to cover the costs that will exceed NEH support.

Attachment 3 (only for implementation applications). Project Walkthrough (name the file “walkthrough.pdf”)

*Up to **fifteen** single-spaced pages (**twenty** single-spaced pages for applicants for a Chairman’s Special Award)*

Use one-inch margins and at least 11-point type.

- Provide a detailed tour of your project, from the perspective of the visitor, section by section, describing what they will see and do.
- Demonstrate how the project’s central ideas will be conveyed in each section, through objects, environments, interactives, and/or text.
- Explain the project’s interpretive strategies and design philosophy.
- You may incorporate thumbnail images of objects or key places into the text, if they help clarify the description.
- If the project includes secondary formats (such as a website or discussion programs), briefly describe them.
- Please attach the following items, which don’t count toward the page limit:
 - renderings of the floor plans and sections,
 - elevations of at least two sections, and
 - four to six examples of interpretive text to be used in the project. (As appropriate, include different levels of text, ranging from introductory panels to object labels.)

Attachment 3 (for planning applications) Attachment 4 (for implementation applications).
Résumés and letters of commitment (name the file “resumesandlettersofcommitment.pdf”)

- List on one page the project team, humanities scholars, and consultants, using the following format: Joan Smith (American studies, University of Maryland), or John Smith (designer, ABC Designs).
- Include résumés (of two pages or less) for each key member of the project team.
- For each humanities scholar and consultant provide a two-page résumé and a letter of commitment stating his or her intention to work on the project and his or her contribution. Letters from paid consultants other than scholars

should include estimated fees and deliverables.

Attachment 4 (for planning applications) Attachment 5 (for implementation applications).
Budget and budget notes (name the file “budget.pdf”)

Using the instructions and the sample budget, complete the budget form (MS Excel format) or a format of your own that includes all the required information. (You can find links to the budget instructions, sample budget, and budget form on the [program resource page](#).)

- Staff costs should include the position title, name (if possible), percent of full time equivalent or total number of hours charged to the project. Indicate in the budget if any individuals will perform multiple, separately budgeted functions.
- If you are requesting funding for a Position in Public Humanities, include in the budget line items for the new hire’s compensation for up to two years of the grant. (Up to \$30,000 may be charged to NEH for a project with a one-year period of performance. Up to \$60,000 may be charged to NEH for a project with a two- or three-year period of performance.) Applicants that wish to increase the compensation above \$30,000 per year must use their own funds to do so.
- If there will be travel for any project team members, the budget should name the travelers (if possible) or their positions; reflect the travel expenses (for example, airfare, lodging, parking, per diem, etc.) for each person and trip; briefly describe the purpose of the travel; and list the destinations.
- List equipment costs and provide a justification for the need to purchase the equipment to carry out the program’s goals. Consistent with Executive Order 13788 (“Buy American and Hire American”), grant recipients and subrecipients who purchase equipment and products with NEH funds should purchase only American-made equipment and products.
- 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.
- Applicants that have never had a negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement may use the government-wide de minimis rate of 10 percent of the total direct costs, less distorting items (including equipment, capital expenditures, rental costs, tuition remission, participant support costs, scholarships and fellowships, and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$25,000). See 2 CFR §200.414 (f) for additional information regarding the de minimis rate.
- If the applicant institution has a federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement and is claiming indirect costs, submit a copy of its agreement. Do not attach the agreement to your budget form. Instead you must attach it to the Attachment Form as Attachment 8 (for planning applications) or Attachment 11 (for implementation applications).

If you wish, you may attach separate pages with notes to explain any of the budget items in more detail.

Reminder: Overlapping project costs between two or more applications for

federal funding and/or approved federal award budgets is not permitted.

Attachment 5 (for planning applications) Attachment 6 (for implementation applications).
Bibliography (name the file “bibliography.pdf”)

Include a short bibliography (not to exceed three pages) of the most significant humanities scholarship that informs the project.

Attachment 6 (for planning applications) Attachment 7 (for implementation applications).
Additional information (if applicable) (name the file “additionalinformation.pdf”)

If applicable to your project, you must submit the following additional information in a single attachment:

o **For traveling exhibitions only**

Describe the traveling version of the exhibition. If it will differ substantially in size, content, artifacts, or experience from the original exhibition, please describe the anticipated changes.

For planning applications: please provide the preliminary travel itinerary, if one exists.

For implementation applications: please provide the travel itinerary, as well as a letter of commitment from the first travel venue beyond the originating institution (and preferably also letters of commitment or expressions of serious interest from subsequent travel venues).

o **Conservation treatment**

If the project includes funding requested for conservation treatment, and the treatment exceeds 15 percent of the total amount requested from NEH, include a discussion of the rationale for conserving the objects being used. Provide a list of individual objects, sample condition reports, a timetable for the treatment of objects, a description of the conservation methods, and the qualifications of the conservator.

o **Social media and audience-generated content**

If the project includes social media and/or audience-generated content, describe how it will add to the humanities content and explain the criteria and process to be used for selecting and monitoring the content that will ultimately be made available to the public. Describe the policies and process to be used to prevent the dissemination of obscene, libelous, indecent, or defamatory content (including hate speech, personal attacks, or material constituting harassment).

Applicants requesting implementation grants must also provide the following additional information, if applicable:

o **Work samples for secondary digital media components**

If your project includes secondary digital media components, provide an example (through a URL) of previously completed work from the principal members of the digital team. (Be sure to test the URL in both PC and MAC environments from the final PDF version of the document that you will submit.) Clearly indicate that this URL is your digital work sample. Identify the project personnel who worked on this sample and, if relevant, include additional information on the audience or distribution of the work sample.

o **Information on public accessibility and admission**

As a taxpayer-funded federal agency, NEH endeavors to make the products of its grants available to the broadest possible audience. Discuss how you plan to provide at least twenty hours of free admission each month to NEH-supported exhibitions.

o **Publications**

Describe the content (including brief abstracts of essays), author(s), format, estimated print run, distribution plans, and sale price of any publications for which funding is requested. Explain how these publications will complement the project's other formats.

Proceeds from the sale of any publications will be subject to the NEH policy on program income, which is outlined [here](#).

Attachment 7 (for planning applications) Attachment 8 (for implementation applications).
Supplementary material (name the file "supplementarymaterial.pdf")

Applicants may choose to submit no more than **one** supplementary item, such as a collection of digital images of art works, photographs, or artifacts, or an exhibition catalog. Provide a brief description of the supplementary item. Provide a URL for the supplementary item or submit it as a PDF via Grants.gov. Remember to test URLs in both PC and MAC environments from the final PDF version of the document that you will submit.

Attachment 8 (for planning applications). Federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement (if applicable)

If the applicant institution is claiming indirect costs and has a current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement, submit a copy of the agreement.

Attachment 9 (only for implementation applications). Object list and illustrations (name the file "objects.pdf")

Include a complete list of objects and five to ten object illustrations.

Attachment 10 (only for implementation applications). Information about a requested Position in Public Humanities, if applicable (name the file “publicpositions.pdf”)

Applicants seeking support to create a Position in Public Humanities should justify the request in this section of the application. You can find detailed instructions about the information to provide on the [program resource page](#).

Attachment 11 (for implementation applications). Federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement (if applicable)

If the applicant institution is claiming indirect costs and has a current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement, submit a copy of the agreement.