



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
Humanities

DIVISION OF **PRESERVATION AND ACCESS**

**PRESERVATION AND
ACCESS EDUCATION AND
TRAINING**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the humanities?

According to the 1965 National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, “The term ‘humanities’ includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of the social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life.”

May a non-U.S. institution or organization apply for a grant?

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 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 division staff.

May an education and training grant support educational opportunities in historic preservation?

No. Education and training projects must focus on humanities collections and not on buildings, sites, or the natural environment.

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

No. Grants for education and training are not awarded to individuals. Education and training grants are made to institutions and organizations that offer educational programs. Tuition remission is an unallowable cost.

Who will read my grant application?

Outside evaluators usually include preservation professionals, museum curators, librarians, archivists, administrators of cultural organizations, and scholars who use the kinds of collections that are the focus of your education and training project. NEH staff also comments on matters of fact or on significant issues that otherwise would be missing from the reviews of outside evaluators and then makes recommendations to the National Council on the Humanities. The National Council meets at various times during the year to advise the NEH chairman. The chairman takes into account the advice provided by the review process and, by law, makes all funding decisions. More details about NEH's review process are available [here](#).

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. You should explicitly state the ways in which your project would address statewide, regional, or national needs in the field. Provide examples of the ways in which the proposed activities to train or educate practitioners would contribute to the preservation of or improved intellectual access to humanities collections.

The application narrative should indicate that you are aware of other similar educational opportunities that currently are available or that have been offered in the past. 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?

Explain who will do what and when. 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 of the project and that you are ready to begin. 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.

If I intend to apply for another NEH grant to continue my project, must I describe the project anew or will evaluators have access to the earlier grant proposal?

NEH treats all applications as new applications. Evaluators will not have access to the previous application; therefore, proposals for renewed funding must discuss the project anew. Preservation and access needs in the field, whether defined at the state, regional, or national level, are constantly evolving. Your application should propose an activity or set of activities that addresses those self-identified needs, as opposed to requesting ongoing general program or institutional support. Be sure to describe the work accomplished with previous NEH funding and be clear about the specific activities and products of the new grant.

I would like to conduct a new training program. Do I need to develop a brand-new curriculum, or may I adapt my program using a widely accepted model?

The pedagogical method that you select should take into consideration widely accepted standards and practices in the field, as well as the particular circumstances of your project. Curricular innovation is welcome, particularly in cases where an area of practice is new or pedagogical methods lack broad consensus. It is not, however, required in this program. We encourage project submissions that are at all stages of development, including projects that may require support for curriculum development or projects expanding the reach of a recognized program.

My project would reach practitioners from institutions residing in my state. Must I describe the project's national impact?

The educational infrastructure for preservation and access is strengthened when services, networks, and programs reach practitioners at various geographic levels. Your discussion of project impact may address state, regional, or national impact, depending on the project scope. For instance, a statewide project might target participants according to a unique combination of environmental and institutional factors. Regardless of the scope, you should describe the broad national significance of the humanities collections that would be directly affected by your project.

If I receive NEH funding, may I also accept money from other sources?

Yes. Applicants are encouraged to seek additional financial support. We do ask that you tell us about proposals to other funding sources, so that we can better understand the project's financial plan. As a reminder, overlapping project costs between two or more applications for federal funding and/or approved federal award budgets is not permitted.

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.

What are indirect costs?

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. Included are costs that are frequently referred to as overhead expenses (for example, rent and utilities) and general and administrative expenses (for example, officers' salaries, accounting department costs, and personnel department costs).

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 grant applications.

With the exception of major nonprofit entities and governmental departments or units that receive more than \$35 million in direct federal funding during their fiscal year, any 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.

Do unrecovered indirect costs count as gifts for federal matching funds?

No. Indirect costs, in whole or in part, that are not charged to the NEH award do not count as gifts that may be used to release NEH matching funds. Only cash contributions or pledges for cash from nonfederal third parties can be matched by NEH.

My education and training project will generate some income through registration fees. How do I show project income in the budget?

The line for project income is in Section 11 of the NEH budget form under Cost Sharing. In your narrative, or in brief budget notes, you should explain how you have calculated the expected

income (for example, 100 participants paying a \$75 registration fee would generate \$7,500 in project income). Please note that only those registration fees that would be collected during the project period should be included in the application budget. Registration fees may be calculated separately from requested NEH funding as supplemental income that further advances your project objectives.

My NEH application for a grant was unsuccessful. Is there anything I may do to increase my chances for success next time?

As is explained in the guidelines, you may request copies of the evaluators' comments. A revised application should take into consideration the issues that they raised. However, a resubmitted application will be reviewed by persons who will not have knowledge of or access to the previous application file. We strongly recommend submitting a revised draft proposal at least six weeks prior to the deadline. Send the draft to preservation@neh.gov.