



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
Humanities

DIVISION OF PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

SUSTAINING CULTURAL HERITAGE COLLECTIONS

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Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 45.149

Funding Opportunity Number: 20190131-PF

If after reading this document you have questions about this grant program, contact the staff of NEH's Division of Preservation and Access at preservation@neh.gov and 202-606-8570. Applicants who are deaf or hard of hearing can contact NEH via Federal Relay (TTY users) at 800-877-8399.

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I. Program Description

The Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections (SCHC) program helps cultural institutions meet the complex challenge of preserving large and diverse holdings of humanities materials for future generations by supporting sustainable conservation measures that mitigate deterioration, prolong the useful life of collections, and support institutional resilience: the ability to anticipate and respond to disasters resulting from natural or human activity. (To learn more about sustainability and institutional resilience, see the Frequently Asked Questions. A link to this document is available on the [program resource page](#).)

Cultural institutions, including libraries, archives, museums, and historical organizations, face an enormous challenge: to preserve humanities collections that facilitate research, strengthen teaching, and provide opportunities for life-long learning. To ensure the preservation of books and manuscripts, photographs, sound recordings and moving images, archaeological and ethnographic artifacts, art, and historical objects, cultural institutions must implement measures that slow deterioration and prevent catastrophic loss from emergencies resulting from natural or human activity. They can accomplish this work most effectively through preventive conservation. Preventive conservation encompasses managing relative humidity, temperature, light, and pollutants in collection spaces; providing protective storage enclosures and systems for collections; and safeguarding collections from theft, fire, floods, and other disasters.

As museums, libraries, archives, and other collecting institutions strive to be effective stewards of humanities collections, they must find ways to implement preventive conservation measures that are sustainable. This program therefore helps cultural repositories plan and implement preservation strategies that pragmatically balance effectiveness, cost, and environmental impact. Sustainable approaches to preservation can contribute to an institution's financial health, reduce its use of fossil fuels, and benefit its green initiatives, while ensuring that collections are well cared for and available for use in humanities programming, education, and research. Sustainable preventive conservation measures may also aim to prepare and plan for, absorb, respond to, recover from, and more successfully protect collections in the event of emergencies resulting from natural or human activity.

Effective and sustainable preservation strategies must be informed by the nature of an institution and its collections. Applicants should have completed the process of basic preservation planning and environmental monitoring, which might include a general preservation plan, collection inventory, emergency plan, and/or basic assessments of building and storage environments. Using priorities established through this basic planning process, applicants to SCHC should consider how to address long-term collection care needs. Sustainable preservation strategies can take many forms, depending on collection materials, the building envelope, and the local climate. However, interdisciplinary collaboration during planning and implementation of these strategies is essential. In SCHC projects, such teams typically consist of consultants and members of the institution's staff and can include architects, building engineers, conservation scientists, conservators, curators, archivists, and facilities managers, among others.

The SCHC program is authorized by 20 USC §956 *et seq.* Awards are subject to [2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#).

To identify and achieve sustainable preservation strategies, it is important to

- define preservation requirements based on an understanding of your collections, their conditions, **and the particular risks that they face**, rather than relying on prescriptive targets;
- understand the characteristics and performance of the building in which your collections are housed, its envelope and its systems, and their role in moderating interior environmental conditions;
- consider the impact of the local climate on establishing relative humidity and temperature setpoints and managing interior environmental conditions;
- consider the potential effects of changes in average weather conditions, natural disasters, and/or emergencies resulting from human activity on cultural property;
- weigh initial and ongoing energy use, costs, and environmental impacts of potential preservation strategies;
- look first for passive (that is, nonmechanical) ways to improve and manage collection environments and risks;
- design mechanical systems, whenever possible, only after investigating and implementing passive approaches for achieving and managing desired conditions;
- develop solutions tailored to the capabilities of the organization and its staff; and
- evaluate and measure the effectiveness of a project's results through the collection of data on conditions, energy use, and costs.

Types of awards

Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections offers two kinds of awards: planning and implementation.

Planning grants

To help an institution develop and assess sustainable preventive conservation strategies, grants of up to \$50,000 will be available for a two-year period of performance to support planning projects, which may encompass such activities as on-site consultation, risk assessments, planning sessions, ongoing environmental monitoring programs, testing, modeling, project-specific research, and preliminary designs for implementation projects. Planning grants must be informed by an existing preservation or collection management plan and must focus on exploring sustainable preventive conservation or resiliency strategies. They also must involve an interdisciplinary team appropriate to the goals of the project. The team may consist of

consultants and members of the institution's staff and might include architects, building engineers, conservation scientists, conservators, curators, and facilities managers, among others. A preservation/conservation professional who works with collections must be included on the planning team. All members of the team must be identified in the application, and they should all work collaboratively throughout the planning process.

Planning grants might be used to

- reevaluate environmental parameters for collections and establish realistic and achievable targets;
- study the performance characteristics of buildings and building envelopes to understand how they might be used to moderate collection environments;
- examine passive (nonmechanical) and low-energy alternatives to conventional energy sources and energy-intensive mechanized systems for managing environmental conditions;
- analyze and optimize existing climate control systems to enable improved operation, effectiveness, and energy efficiency;
- explore the potential of actively managed mechanical systems to achieve desired conditions along with energy and cost savings;
- conduct a risk assessment to improve institutional resilience in the face of disasters resulting from natural or human activity;
- examine options and develop strategies for lighting collection spaces in ways that protect collections while achieving improved energy efficiency;
- evaluate the effectiveness of preventive conservation strategies previously implemented, including energy-efficient upgrades to existing systems and performance upgrades to buildings and building envelopes; or
- perform a building reserve study or reinvestment plan for infrastructure and systems associated with collection storage and display.

Planning grants may also be used to perform various kinds of testing, modeling, or project-specific research to help applicants better understand conditions and formulate sustainable preservation strategies. Testing, modeling, or project-specific research might include

- measuring energy consumption;
- thermal imaging of buildings;
- testing building performance during extended power outages or other emergency situations;

- using blower door tests to identify air leaks in buildings;
- creating mock-ups of lighting options;
- testing natural ventilation methods;
- testing the effect of buffered storage enclosures on moderating fluctuating environmental conditions;
- recommissioning or tuning small-scale climate control systems; or
- adjusting the operating protocols for climate control systems.

Please note: SCHC planning grants are intended to address complex preservation challenges, which only an interdisciplinary team can solve. Therefore, an applicant for a planning grant must have completed its basic preservation planning and identified its preservation challenges and priorities. Such basic activities as completing general preservation/conservation assessments and establishing environmental monitoring programs are not eligible for support through SCHC. For support of general assessments and initial environmental monitoring programs, see NEH's [Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions](#).

Projects that seek to serve the field by advancing best practices and standards for preserving and enhancing access to humanities collections are eligible for support through NEH's [Research and Development](#) grants.

Implementation grants

To help an institution implement a preventive conservation project, grants of up to \$350,000 for a five-year period of performance are available. Implementation projects must focus on sustainable or resilient preservation strategies. Projects should be based on planning that has been specific to the needs of the institution and its collections within the context of its local environment. It is not necessary to receive an NEH planning grant to be eligible for an implementation grant. Planning for sustainable preservation strategies could be supported by NEH, other federal agencies, private foundations, or an institution's internal funds.

Implementation grants to preserve humanities collections might be used to

- manage interior relative humidity and temperature by passive methods (such as creating buffered spaces and housing, controlling moisture at its sources, or improving the thermal and moisture performance of a building envelope);
- upgrade a building automation system to enable more active management of a heating, ventilating, and air conditioning system;
- recommission or install heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems;
- reorganize collections by material type, locating more vulnerable collections in spaces that are more naturally stable;

- install storage systems and rehouse collections to reduce risk;
- improve security and the protection of collections from fire, floods, and other disasters;
or
- upgrade lighting systems and controls, to achieve energy efficiency and levels suitable for collections.

Implementation grants may cover costs associated with minor building alterations and renovation required to implement sustainable preventive conservation measures. Because SCHC grants may **not** fund new construction, the costs of installing climate control, security, storage equipment, and fire protection systems in a building under construction are not eligible. However, grants may support the rehousing and movement of collections into a new building, *if* the primary purpose of the move advances institutional sustainability and/or resilience.

Applicants wishing to carry out construction and/or major alteration and renovation projects should seek support through [Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants](#).

The Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections program does not support activities such as cataloging, documenting, and digitizing collections. Applicants wishing to catalog, document, or digitize humanities collections should seek support through [Humanities Collections and Reference Resources](#).

Lessons learned

All grantees will be expected to create a white paper documenting lessons learned, so that others can learn more about sustainable preventive conservation strategies. White papers will be posted on the NEH website. Applicants should be prepared to report data in their white papers that enable comparison of conditions, energy use, and costs before and after the implementation of preventive conservation measures.

Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections grants may not be used for

- general conservation/ preservation assessments, establishing initial environmental monitoring programs, and other basic preservation projects that could be supported through [Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions](#);
- the preservation of materials that are the responsibility of an agency of the federal government, are privately held, or are not generally accessible for research;
- the installation of climate control, security, lighting, storage equipment, and fire protection systems as a component of a project to construct a new building;
- the preservation of the built or natural environment;

- the renovation or restoration of historic structures, except insofar as that activity is needed to preserve humanities collections that such structures house;
- the stabilization of archaeological sites;
- asbestos abatement;
- new construction and major renovation resulting in an expanded building footprint or addition of floors/stories;
- alterations and repairs that are considered routine operations and maintenance expenses;
- the purchase of buildings or land;
- promotion of a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view;
- advocacy for a particular program of social or political action;
- support of specific public policies or legislation;
- lobbying; or
- projects that fall outside of the humanities; the creation or performance of art; creative writing, memoirs, and creative nonfiction; and empirically based social science research or policy studies.

Previously funded projects

An institution whose project has received NEH support may apply for a grant for a new or subsequent stage of that project. These proposals receive no special consideration and will be judged by the same criteria as others in the grant competition. In addition, these proposals must be substantially updated and must include a description of the new activities and a justification of the new budget. The applicant must also describe how the previously funded project met its goals.

Award information

The maximum award for planning grants is \$50,000, for a period of performance of up to two years.

Applicants may request a period of performance of up to five years for implementation projects, with a maximum award of \$350,000.

Successful applicants will be awarded a grant in outright funds, federal matching funds, or a combination of the two, depending on the applicant's preference and the availability of NEH funds.

Overlapping project costs between two or more applications for federal funding and/or approved federal award budgets is not permitted.

(Learn more about different [types of grant funding](#).)

Cost sharing

Cost sharing consists of gift money raised from nonfederal third parties to release federal matching funds. Voluntary cost sharing includes cash contributions to a project by the applicant and nonfederal third parties, in-kind contributions (such as donated goods and services), and unrecovered indirect costs. Although voluntary cost sharing is not required, this program is rarely able to support the full costs of projects approved for funding.

As a matter of programmatic policy, SCHC grants generally cover no more than 80 percent of total project costs (direct and indirect) for planning projects and 50 percent of total project costs (direct and indirect) for implementation projects. Applicants should demonstrate that at least 20 percent of the total project costs for planning grants and 50 percent for implementation projects will be met with cost sharing.

Eligibility

Any U.S. nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) status is eligible, as are state and local governmental agencies and federally recognized Indian tribal governments. Individuals are not eligible to apply. Eligible organizations include institutions of higher education.

Individuals and foreign and for-profit entities are not eligible to apply.

Applications must be complete, must observe the specified page limits, and must be received and validated by Grants.gov under the correct funding opportunity number to be considered under this notice.

NEH generally does not make awards to other federal entities or to applicants whose projects are so closely intertwined with a federal entity that the project takes on characteristics of the federal entity's own authorized activities. This does not preclude applicants from using funds from, or sites and materials controlled by, other federal entities in their projects.

NEH will not review late, incomplete, or ineligible applications.

II. Preparing and Organizing your Application

Resources for preparing a strong application

To prepare a strong application, applicants are encouraged to take the following steps:

- read these **guidelines** carefully, noting what information needs to be provided in the application;
- review the **sample narratives**, which are available on the [program resource page](#);
- consult the program's **review criteria**, which are listed immediately below;
- read the **Frequently Asked Questions**, which are available on the [program resource page](#);
- contact the **program staff** (at 202-606-8570 or preservation@neh.gov) to discuss your project and raise any questions you may have about the application; and
- submit an optional **draft proposal**, to which program staff will respond with suggestions and advice.

Review criteria

Applicants should read the program's review criteria and ensure that their applications respond to them.

Evaluators are asked to apply the following criteria in assessing applications:

- the significance of the collections for the humanities and the potential impact of the project on the humanities;
- the attention to exploring and implementing sustainable preservation strategies;
- the attention to identifying risks to collections (for example, fire, flooding, theft, or temperature fluctuations) and implementing effective preventive conservation measures;
- the project's methodological soundness;
- the likely viability, efficiency, and productivity of the project, as demonstrated by the work plan;
- for implementation projects, the thoroughness of the planning that has informed the project;
- the experience and appropriateness of the project's interdisciplinary team in relation to the activities for which support is requested; and
- the reasonableness of the proposed budget in relation to anticipated results.

Applicants are encouraged to contact NEH program officers, who can offer advice about preparing the proposal and review preliminary proposal drafts if they are submitted at least six weeks before the deadline. Time constraints may prevent staff from reviewing draft proposals submitted after that date. Draft proposals are optional; if you choose to submit one, send it as an e-mail attachment to preservation@neh.gov.

Staff comments on draft proposals are not part of the formal review process and have no bearing on the final outcome of the proposal, but previous applicants have found them helpful in strengthening their applications. Once NEH has received a formal application, the staff will not comment on its status except with respect to questions of completeness or eligibility.

Application elements

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). 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 abstract (up to one thousand characters, including spaces) written for a nonspecialist audience, clearly explaining the project's principal activities and its expected results. You should place the paragraph in the Project Information field in the SF-424 Application for Federal Domestic Assistance - Short Organizational form. (The [program resource page](#) provides a link to the instructions for submitting your application to Grants.gov, which contain information about this form.) Do not attach the abstract to the Attachments Form, a form that is also explained in the instructions for submitting your application to Grants.gov.

Application

The application consists of the following parts.

- 1. Description of the project and its significance**

Provide a one-page abstract written for a nonspecialist audience, clearly explaining the project's importance to the humanities, its principal activities, and its expected results.

- 2. Table of contents**

List all parts of the application and, beginning with the narrative, number all pages consecutively.

3. Narrative

For planning grants, limit the narrative to *twelve* single-spaced pages; for implementation grants, limit the narrative to *fifteen* single-spaced pages. All pages should have one-inch margins and the font size should be no smaller than eleven point.

Use appendices to provide material that supplements the narrative. As relevant, include (for example) sample materials (such as photographs) that illustrate the collections' current conditions and the experience of the project staff in doing comparable work.

Keep the application review criteria (listed above) in mind when writing the narrative, which consists of the following sections.

- **Introduction**

Provide an overview of your project and request to NEH, and explain how they fit into the institution's strategic plan and preservation priorities. Include a brief statement explaining how your project addresses sustainable preventive conservation strategies.

Provide a brief profile of your organization, including its collections, institutional history and mission, physical facilities (specify whether the facilities are owned or leased), number of staff, operating budget, and number of users or visitors annually. Discuss the collections' relevance to the institution's mission. Identify plans or policies that guide the collections' development.

- **Significance of collections**

Describe in detail the nature, size, and intellectual content of the collections that are the focus of the project. Discuss the collections' current, past, or potential use in support of the humanities, and describe the various audiences that your institution serves. Include examples of specific exhibitions, educational programs, research projects, and publications to illustrate the ways in which the collections have been used to examine humanistic themes and ideas. In addition, discuss the relation of the collections to similar holdings in other repositories.

- **Current conditions and preservation challenges**

Describe the present condition of the collections and define the preservation challenges that the project would address.

In addition, provide a brief overview of preventive conservation practices and policies at your institution. For example, identify policies, practices, and systems that are in place to manage environmental conditions, provide appropriate storage, and protect collections from fire, theft, pests, and disasters. Consider including visual documentation in appendices to illustrate the preservation problems described in the proposal.

Describe the current level of administrative and intellectual control of the collections. If the project involves the movement or relocation of collections, explain how the current levels of control prepare for successful implementation of the project.

- **History of the project**

Discuss previous preservation actions and the findings of research or studies (such as general preservation or conservation assessments, risk assessments, environmental monitoring, and specialized consultations) that lay a foundation for the proposed project. Explain how the proposed project relates to any sustainability initiatives at your institution and to your strategic plan or other long-range planning efforts. This section of the narrative should provide the rationale for undertaking the proposed planning or implementation activities, along with the expected outcomes.

- **Methods and standards**

For both planning and implementation projects, explain and justify the proposed methods and procedures. Discuss how your project explores or employs sustainable preservation strategies and how research, standards, and practices provide a basis for the project. Include in your project the collection of data on conditions, energy use, and costs that would make it possible to evaluate the effectiveness of sustainable preservation strategies.

For planning projects, discuss the kinds of knowledge and skills that the planning team needs, and explain how the team has been assembled. Show how the project's framework and methods are related to the expected outcomes. Describe the nature of any testing, modeling, or project-specific research that is planned, and explain how such activities could help you identify sustainable preservation strategies.

Implementation projects must be at a stage of schematic design when the application is submitted. If you are not following or are modifying the recommendations of assessors and specialists, explain why. Discuss any measures that will be taken to ensure that the collections are professionally maintained and protected during the project.

For implementation projects to rehouse and improve storage of collections: Describe the methods and materials used to rehouse the collections and discuss the development of the storage plan. In the appendices include floor plans of the existing and proposed storage areas that indicate square footage and the layout of cabinets and shelving. Explain how the proposed work plan will support long-term institutional resilience in the face of natural emergencies and emergencies resulting from human activity. As applicable, refer to institutional, regional, and/or national disaster plans and/or networks.

For implementation projects to improve and manage environmental conditions: Provide a detailed description of steps that will be taken to improve conditions for humanities collections and define expected conditions. As relevant, describe the primary design features of passive measures, mechanized systems, and equipment proposed for managing or controlling conditions. Discuss your institution's capacity, including policies, procedures, and staffing, for operating and maintaining systems that manage environmental conditions. Discuss plans for ongoing monitoring of conditions, energy consumption, and system performance. (The purchase of environmental monitoring equipment may be

included in the project's budget.) Address the potential impact that the proposed environmental improvements would have on the structure or building envelope, particularly if the building is a historic structure. As relevant, also explain how the project would be guided by the Secretary of the Interior's [Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties](#).

NEH funds must be used only for activities and equipment required to provide appropriate environmental conditions for humanities collections. In multi-use facilities, costs for conditioning noncollection spaces should be excluded from the project's budget.

For implementation projects to install or improve security, fire protection, or lighting: Describe the primary design features and explain how the proposed equipment would work in conjunction with institutional policies, procedures, and staffing to protect collections. Explain how the proposed work plan will support long-term institutional resilience in the face of emergencies resulting from natural or human activity.

Applications to preserve Native American collections should discuss the institution's compliance with the [Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act](#) and other relevant national and local statutes and regulations.

- **Work plan**

Present the steps of the planning or implementation project and discuss how each will be carried out. Indicate who is responsible for each activity. Include a schedule indicating what will be accomplished during each stage of the project.

- **Project team**

Provide the names, qualifications, and expected contributions to the project of each member of the project team, including consultants as well as staff members.

Include in the appendices résumés (of two pages or less) for each member of the project team, job descriptions for any new staff whom the institution would hire for the project, and letters of commitment from consultants.

- **Project results and dissemination**

Summarize the project's expected outcomes. For planning projects, describe expected "next steps." For implementation projects, explain how the preservation improvements could strengthen your institution's work in the humanities.

All grantees should collect and report data on conditions, energy use, and costs, which can help inform the cultural heritage community about the effectiveness of sustainable preservation strategies. NEH will require a white paper on lessons learned, which will be posted on the NEH website. NEH also encourages additional dissemination of information about projects through such activities as blogs, conference presentations, or publications.

4. **History of awards**

If the project has received previous support from any federal or nonfederal sources, including NEH, list on one page the sources, dates, and amounts of these funds. If the project has a long history of support, the sources and contributions may be grouped and summarized.

5. **List of participants**

On a separate page, list in alphabetical order, surnames first, all project participants and collaborators and their institutional affiliations. When relevant, this list should include advisory board members, consultants, and authors of letters of commitment and letters of support. Because these individuals may not participate in the review process, this list is used to ensure that prospective evaluators have no conflict of interest with the projects that they will assess.

6. **Budget**

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, budget form, and sample budget on the [program resource page](#). Budgets should be completed in compliance with [2 CFR 200 Subpart E – Cost Principles](#).

Indirect costs are not allowed for the construction, restoration, or renovation of facilities and historical landscapes.

For applicants seeking reimbursement for indirect costs for non-construction, non-restoration, or non-renovation projects: 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.

If the applicant institution is claiming indirect costs and has a current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement, submit a copy of this agreement. Do not attach the agreement to your budget form. Instead you must submit it on the Attachments Form as Attachment 8.

While all items should be justified by the narrative, you may include further explanation in brief budget notes. For any outsourced work, third-party subaward and contractor costs should be included in the budget category "Subawards." Attach a complete itemization of these costs to the budget form. If there is more than one subrecipient or contractor, each one must be listed on the budget form and the costs itemized separately.

Permanent equipment may be purchased for a project if an analysis demonstrates that purchasing is more economical and practical than leasing. Permanent equipment is defined as nonexpendable personal property costing \$5,000 or more and having a useful life of more than one year. (Also see [2 CFR §§200.313 Equipment](#) and [439 Equipment and other capital expenditures](#).)

Consistent with Executive Order 13788 (“Buy American and Hire American”), grantees and subrecipients who purchase equipment and products with grant funds should purchase only American-made equipment and products.

7. Appendices

Use appendices to provide the following items:

- **assessments and specialized studies**
Include assessments or specialized studies that are directly relevant to the project (for example, a study of current environmental conditions, a preliminary design report that provides a description of the systems to be installed to protect the collections, or an analysis of storage conditions and requirements). For more general studies, we suggest that you submit summaries rather than full reports. You may also include in the narrative hyperlinks to online versions of such studies.
- **institutional plans and policies**
Include only plans that directly support your project; when possible, present only summaries or excerpts, so as to avoid submitting lengthy attachments.
- **floor plans**
Any projects involving the renovation or repurposing of existing space must include floor plans of the area in which work will occur.
- **technical specifications for building envelope improvements, equipment, or systems**
Attach product data and specifications for proposed materials, equipment, and systems.
- **brief résumés** (no longer than two pages) for staff with major responsibilities for the project’s implementation and for consultants to the project.
- **job descriptions** for any additional staff who will be hired specifically to work on the project.
- **letters of commitment** from key participants or partners, both within and outside the applicant institution.
- **letters of support** (preferably no more than three) from experts in the project’s subject area, the proposed methodology, or the technical plan.
- a copy of the **request submitted or to be submitted to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and/or Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) for a written determination on the project’s impact, together with all supporting materials** (see below), for applicants for projects involving alterations, renovation, repair, rehabilitation, or ground or visual disturbances.

Special requirements for projects involving alteration, renovation, repair, rehabilitation, or ground or visual disturbances

All NEH-funded projects involving alteration, renovation, repair, rehabilitation, or ground or visual disturbances must submit (in the appendices) the following additional information (described more fully in the [General Terms and Conditions for Awards to Organizations](#)) to comply with the Davis-Bacon Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). 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 facilities.

Here is additional information about the Davis-Bacon, the ADA, the NEPA, and the NHPA.

I. Davis-Bacon requirements

Recipients and subrecipients using NEH funds for projects involving alteration, renovation, repair, rehabilitation, or ground or visual disturbances with contracts in excess of \$2,000 must comply with the [Davis-Bacon Act](#). Applicants must therefore take into account the effect of the Davis-Bacon Act on costs. Additional information is available [here](#). Applicants for such projects should affirm in the proposal that they will meet the requirements of the Davis-Bacon Act.

II. Americans with Disabilities Act

Article 26 (e) of NEH’s General Terms and Conditions for Awards requires grant recipients and subrecipients to adhere to the [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#) (ADA). Title III of the ADA covers places of public accommodation (such as museums, libraries, and educational institutions) and includes a specific section regarding new construction and alterations in public accommodations. The website www.ada.gov provides comprehensive information that grantees can consult concerning compliance with the ADA, including the text of the legislation, the revised regulations implementing Title II and Title III of the ADA, and the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

III. National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act

All NEH-funded projects involving alteration, renovation, repair, rehabilitation, or ground or visual disturbances must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the [National Historic Preservation Act](#) (NHPA, PDF). Applicants should familiarize themselves with Section 106 of the NHPA and its implementing regulations.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, at 42 U.S.C. 4321, *et seq.*), successful applicants engaging in alterations and renovations must identify the impact the

project may have on the quality of the human environment and assist the NEH to comply with NEPA and to prepare Environmental Impact Statements or other required environmental documentation. In such cases, the recipient agrees to take no action that will have an adverse environmental impact (for example, physical disturbance of a site such as breaking of ground) until the agency provides written notification of compliance with the environmental impact analysis process.

Applicants should familiarize themselves with Section 106 of the NHPA and its [implementing regulations](#) (PDF).

Section 106 of the NHPA: Prior to the expenditure of any federal funds, Section 106 requires NEH to review the effects of projects offered NEH funding on historic properties that are listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

When applicable, NEH must also provide the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) an opportunity to comment on such projects **prior to the expenditure of any federal funds**.

To understand and navigate the Section 106 review process, applicants should familiarize themselves with the Section 106 materials available [here](#). There is no formula for how long a given Section 106 review may take, so applicants should build sufficient time into their project plans to allow for a potentially lengthy review. NEH does not formally initiate a Section 106 review until it offers support for a project. However, applicants should know that **a recipient of an SCHC grant cannot begin any work involving alteration, renovation, repair, rehabilitation, or ground or visual disturbances—and that NEH cannot release any federal funds—until NEH concludes its Section 106 and NEPA reviews.**

Applications for projects involving the alteration, renovation, or restoration of facilities must demonstrate readiness to move forward with the Section 106 and NEPA review. NOTE: NEH will initiate the process after the grant offer is made. Please provide the following materials as part of element 7 of the application.

- **A written** description of **the project**, including the proposed use(s) for the property and the scope of the proposed alteration, renovation, repair, rehabilitation, ground (square footage), or visual disturbance. Include as well the age of the building;
- A map, photograph, or drawing clearly demarcating the project's Area of Potential Effects (APE). The APE is the geographic area(s) within which a project may directly or indirectly affect historic properties. To determine the APE, applicants should consider all locations where the project may result in ground, visible, or audible disturbances, or changes in public access, traffic patterns, or land use;
- Descriptions of all known properties in the APE that are listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register, and descriptions and evaluations of all other properties in the APE (regardless of age) to determine their eligibility for the National Register when the National Register criteria are taken into account.

8. 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.

9. Certification regarding lobbying (only for applicants for implementation projects)

Applicants for implementation projects must complete and submit the Certification Regarding Lobbying. If nonfederal funds have been or will be used for lobbying, also complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities. (These forms are available on the [program resource page](#).) Submit the signed and completed document(s) as a PDF. (See [2 CFR §200.450 Lobbying](#) for additional information.)

III. Submitting your Application

All organizations must submit their applications for NEH funding via [Grants.gov Workspace](#). Before using Grants.gov for the first time, each organization must have an Employer Identification Number (EIN) and register with Grants.gov.

The Grants.gov registration process requires completing information in three separate systems:

1. Dun and Bradstreet (<https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>)
2. System for Award Management (SAM) (<https://www.sam.gov>)
3. Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov/>)

In order to apply through Grants.gov, the applicant organization must first have or obtain a valid Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, and register (or have an active registration) in the System for Award Management (SAM). Note: If you are registering in SAM.gov for the first time, you must provide an original, signed [notarized letter](#) stating that you are the authorized Entity Administrator for the entity associated with the DUNS number. Read the [SAM update and FAQs](#) to learn more about this process change. **The initial SAM registration can take up to six weeks.**

Organizations must maintain active SAM registration with current information at all times during which they have an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal agency. You must therefore review and update your information at least annually after the initial registration, and more frequently if required by changes in information. Effective June 29, 2018, when you go to SAM.gov and log in, you will be asked to create a Login.gov user account. Your current SAM.gov username and password will **no longer work**. Applicants renewing or updating their registrations are strongly advised to know the e-mail address associated with their current SAM.gov user account. Using the same e-mail address allows SAM.gov to automatically migrate your roles. If a different e-mail address is provided, your roles will need to be reassigned. This could cause delays in renewing or updating your SAM.gov registration. You can review your organization's SAM registration [here](#). **We strongly recommend that you verify the status of your SAM registration at least two weeks before the application deadline.**

Applicant organizations with a valid DUNS number and an active SAM registration must then register with Grants.gov. Visit Grants.gov at <https://grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html> for complete registration information. **The initial Grants.gov registration process can take up to two weeks.**

If your organization has already registered with Grants.gov, you must verify that your registration is still active and that your Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) is current and has been approved. **We strongly recommend that you do this at least two weeks before the application deadline.** Note: Grants.gov passwords expire every 60 days. Accounts that have been inactive for one year or more result in removal of all account roles.

If you have problems registering or verifying your registration with Grants.gov, call the Grants.gov help desk at 1-800-518-4726 or email support@grants.gov.

You can find links to the Grants.gov application package and instructions for preparing and submitting the package on the [program resource page](#).

Be sure to read the [document](#) (PDF) that explains how to confirm that you successfully submitted your application. It is your responsibility as an applicant to confirm that Grants.gov and subsequently NEH have accepted your application.

Deadlines for submitting optional draft proposals and applications

Draft Proposals (optional): Program staff recommends that draft proposals be submitted at least six weeks before the deadline. Time constraints may prevent staff from reviewing draft proposals submitted after that date.

Applications must be received and validated by Grants.gov by **11:59 p.m. (Eastern Time), Thursday, January 31, 2019**. Grants.gov will date- and time-stamp your application after it is fully uploaded. Applications submitted after that date will not be accepted.

IV. What Happens After the Submission of an Application

Review and selection process

Knowledgeable persons outside NEH will read each application and advise the agency about its merits. NEH staff comments on matters of fact or on significant issues that otherwise would be missing from these reviews, 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](#).

Prior to making an award, NEH will conduct a risk assessment of successful applicants, consistent with Administrative Requirements set forth in 2 CFR [§200.205](#). (See below the next

heading for more information about the Office of Management and Budget's Administrative Requirements, which NEH has implemented.) This assessment guards against the risk that federal financial assistance might be wasted, used fraudulently, or abused. Based on its risk assessment, NEH will include in the award documents specific conditions designed to mitigate the effects of the risk.

Information for all applicants and for successful applicants

Applicants will be notified of the decision by e-mail in August 2019. Institutional grants administrators and project directors of successful applications will receive award documents from the NEH Office of Grant Management by e-mail in September 2019. Award documents will identify the relevant terms, conditions, and administrative requirements that pertain to successful applications. The [Grant Management](#) section of the NEH website outlines all the responsibilities of award recipients, including anti-lobbying restrictions, in great detail. Applicants may obtain the evaluations of their applications by sending an e-mail message to preservation@neh.gov.

In December 2014 NEH adopted 2 CFR Part 200: [Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#). 2 CFR 200 applies to all NEH awards to organizations and is aimed at reducing the administrative burden on award recipients and improving accountability of federal financial assistance for tax payers. NEH will identify in each award document the relevant programmatic terms, conditions, and reporting requirements with which the recipient must comply.

Help NEH eliminate fraud and improve management by providing information about allegations or suspicions of waste, fraud, abuse, mismanagement, research misconduct (fabrication, falsification, plagiarism), or unnecessary government expenditures, during the period of award performance, to the NEH Office of the Inspector General. You can find details on how to report such allegations and suspicions [here](#).

V. Additional Information

Contact information for the program and Grants.gov

Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections
Division of Preservation and Access
National Endowment for the Humanities
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20506
202-606-8570 or preservation@neh.gov

If you have questions about registering or renewing your registration with SAM.gov, contact the Federal Service Desk Monday – Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern Time at:

The Federal Service Desk: [FSD.gov](https://www.fsd.gov)
U.S. calls: 866-606-8220
International calls: +1 334-206-7828

If you need technical assistance in submitting your application to Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov 24 hours a day, seven days a week (excluding federal holidays).

Grants.gov: <https://www.grants.gov/>
Grants.gov help desk: support@grants.gov
Grants.gov customer support tutorials and manuals:
<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html>
Grants.gov support line: 1-800-518-GRANTS (4726)

Privacy policy

Information in these guidelines is solicited under the authority of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 956. The principal purpose for which the information will be used is to process the application. The information may also be used for statistical research, analysis of trends, and Congressional oversight. Failure to provide the information may result in the delay or rejection of the application.

Application completion time

The Office of Management and Budget requires federal agencies to supply information on the time needed to complete forms and also to invite comments on the paperwork burden. NEH estimates that on average it takes fifteen hours to complete this application. This estimate includes time for reviewing instructions, researching, gathering, and maintaining the information needed, and completing and reviewing the application.

Please send any comments regarding the estimated completion time or any other aspect of this application, including suggestions for reducing the completion time, to the Chief Guidelines Officer, at guidelines@neh.gov; the Office of Publications, National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, DC 20506; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (3136-0134), Washington, DC 20503. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- **Register your institution or verify its registration with the System for Award Management (SAM).** Begin a new registration at least six weeks before the deadline. Read the [SAM update and FAQs](#) to learn more about this process.

- **Register your institution or verify its registration with Grants.gov.** Begin a new registration at least two weeks before the deadline.
- **Access the application package through Grants.gov Workspace.** The [program resource page](#) on NEH’s website has a direct link to the package. You can also search Grants.gov for this program. The program resource page has a direct link to the NEH instructions for completing the package.
- **Complete the following forms contained in the Grants.gov application package.**
 1. Application for Federal Domestic Assistance - Short Organizational
 2. Supplementary Cover Sheet for NEH Grant Programs
 3. Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form
 4. Attachments Form—Using this form, attach the parts of your application as described in the guidelines:
 - ATTACHMENT 1: Description of the project and its significance (name the file “projectdescription.pdf”)
 - ATTACHMENT 2: Table of contents (name the file “contents.pdf”)
 - ATTACHMENT 3: Narrative (name the file “narrative.pdf”)
 - ATTACHMENT 4: History of awards (name the file “awardhistory.pdf”)
 - ATTACHMENT 5: List of project participants, consultants, and advisers (name the file “participantslist.pdf”)
 - ATTACHMENT 6: Budget (name the file “budget.pdf”)
 - ATTACHMENT 7: Appendices (name the file “appendices.pdf”)
 - ATTACHMENT 8: Federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement, if applicable (name the file “agreement.pdf”)
 - ATTACHMENT 9: Certification Regarding Lobbying, for implementation applicants only (name the file “lobbyingcertification.pdf”)

Your attachments must be in Portable Document Format (.pdf). 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.

Visit Grants.gov's Adobe Software Compatibility page to verify the compatibility of your current software or to download the appropriate version at <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>. Even if you choose to complete the online webforms in Workspace, you will need to convert the files that you will attach (to the Attachments Form and the Budget Narrative Attachment Form) into PDFs. If you have a problem installing Adobe Reader, it may be because you do not have permission to install a new program on your computer. Many organizations have rules about installing new programs. If you encounter a problem, contact your system administrator.

Upload your application to Grants.gov. 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.

Be sure to read the [document](#) (PDF) that explains how to confirm that you successfully submitted your application. It is your responsibility as an applicant to confirm that Grants.gov and subsequently NEH have accepted your application.

TIMELINE

Until January 31, 2019: Contact Division of Preservation and Access program officers (at 202-606-8570 or preservation@neh.gov) with questions and for advice (optional)

December 20, 2018: Submit draft application (optional) by this date

December 20, 2018: Applicants that have not registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) and Grants.gov should begin the process by this date

January 17, 2019: Applicants that have registered in SAM and Grants.gov should verify their registrations by this date

January 31, 2019: Applications must be submitted through and validated by Grants.gov by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on this date

March-April 2019: Peer review panels take place

July 2019: Meeting of the National Council on the Humanities, followed by funding decisions

August 2019: Applicants are notified of the funding decisions

September 2019: Institutional grants administrators and project directors of successful applications receive award documents by e-mail from the NEH Office of Grant Management

October 2019: Successful applicants may begin work on their projects