NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Office of Data & Evaluation

State and Impact of the Humanities

Frequently Asked Questions

January 17, 2025

ELIGIBILITY

1. **May a non-U.S. institution or organization apply for an NEH award?**
   No. NEH does not provide financial assistance to foreign institutions. See Section C.1 for Eligibility Information in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

2. **Can our project include collaborators based outside of the U.S.?**
   Yes. Eligible U.S. institutions may obtain the services of foreign individuals as consultants to carry out various programmatic activities on a fee-for-service basis paid directly to the individual. See Section C.3 for Other Eligibility Information in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

3. **If I work at an eligible institution and I am not a U.S. citizen, may I serve as a project director?**
   Yes. Project directors need not be U.S. citizens or U.S. residents, so long as the applicant institution is eligible.

4. **May the project director also serve as the institutional grant administrator?**
   No. As a matter of NEH policy, the project director and institutional grant administrator must not be the same person. The project director is the person directly in charge of the conduct of the funded project. The institutional grant administrator must sign or countersign financial reports and prior approval requests (like budget revisions, extensions, and changes in key personnel).

5. **How many co-project directors may we include on our proposed project?**

There are no restrictions on the number of co-project directors you may include in your proposed project. However, you should keep in mind that serving as project director comes with specific obligations that are not present in other titles like research lead. NEH encourages you to use the title of co-project director judiciously.

ACTIVITIES AND BUDGET

6. **What do you mean when you say that "projects that exclusively rely on humanities approaches are unlikely to be competitive in this program"?**
While projects may incorporate humanistic research methods, they must also include a significant data component. Projects should not propose to conduct work within humanities fields, but rather about those fields. See Section H, Other Information: Related Funding Opportunities for more information about how NEH can support research on the humanities without a significant data component.

7. **What is a humanities expert and how should I indicate that our team includes one?**
All teams must include at least one person actively working in the humanities as a scholar or a practitioner. For the purposes of this program, the humanities are broadly defined as activities associated with the study and interpretation of human experience and the arts. Plan to share information about your humanities expert(s) and their experiences in Attachment 1: List of Personnel and Attachment 4: Biographies.

8. **My project has a data component but does not involve data scientists. Should I still apply?**
This program does not require that project teams include scientists, social scientists, or data scientists. Make sure that you provide evidence that your team has the technical competence required to carry out the proposed research in Attachment 4: Biographies.

9. **Should we have commitments from consultants and board members before we apply?**
While identifying outside consultants is not an application requirement, many projects benefit from early consultation with experts to plan and ensure budget accuracy. Board members that are named in the application should be committed to the project in advance.

10. **Can our project include students?**

You may include undergraduate and graduate students in your project's activities and compensate them with grant funds. While degree candidates may not be project directors or co-directors, they may serve in other project roles. Use the Activities section of Attachment 2: Narrative to describe how you will support all project staff, including students, through project-based learning, mentoring, immersion in the activities of the institution, or other professional development opportunities.

11. **What's the difference between the activities section of the narrative and the work plan?**
The activities section of Attachment 2: Narrative should provide a broad narrative overview of the work to be undertaken by the project team in order to achieve the project's goals and objectives. Attachment 3: Work Plan should complement the activities section by providing a granular description of specific and measurable project activities that includes a concrete timeline and specifies team responsibilities.

12. **How do I successfully incorporate my institution's IRB process into my work plan?**
Institutional Review Boards are convened by organizations such as universities to oversee research involving human subjects. If researchers on your project team are affiliated with institutions that have an IRB, your project may be subject to additional oversight. Ensure that you understand the institutional policies that govern your research and the timelines involved in receiving IRB approval. Include that information in Attachment 3: Work Plan, as necessary, to ensure your project won't be subject to foreseeable delays.

13. **May we include funds to support activities described in the data management and sustainability plans in our project budget?**
Yes. Your budget may include funds for staff and other costs you would incur during the period of performance related to preserving, disseminating, and sustaining the digital materials created under the award.

14. **May we describe institutional salary requirements in the budget justification?**
Yes. Use the budget justification to contextualize institutional practices in salaries or benefits, such as standard rates for undergraduate or graduate student wages, honoraria, or base salaries for post-doctoral research associates.

REVIEW

15. **Can NEH give me feedback about my application?**
Yes. Program staff will review one preliminary project summary per project submitted by February 14, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. ET, as listed in Section D.4, Submission Dates and Times, in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. Project summaries should comply with the provided template. Project summaries and any other general inquiries must be submitted to odeprograms@neh.gov.

16. **How will my application be assessed?**
Your application will be reviewed for completeness, eligibility, and responsiveness by NEH staff. If your application meets the eligibility criteria, responds to the program's purpose, and has all the required components, it will move on to the peer review process. During peer review, external evaluators (who are experts in their field with specialized knowledge relevant to the proposed activities) will review your application. NEH staff instruct peer reviewers to evaluate applications according to the review criteria listed in section E.1, Review Criteria, in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. Peer reviewers must comply with federal ethics rules governing conflicts of interest.

NEH program officers supplement the peer reviewers' comments to address matters of fact or significant points that the peer reviewers have overlooked. They then make funding recommendations to the National Council on the Humanities. The National Council meets three times a year to review applications and advise the NEH Chair. By law, the Chair has the sole authority to make final funding decisions. Learn more about NEH's review process.

17. **Can I see the comments from peer reviewers?**
Yes. After NEH's public announcement of funded projects, you may request copies of the peer reviewers' evaluations of your proposal by contacting odeprograms@neh.gov.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

18. **May we include letters of support with our application?**
No. NEH does not accept letters of support in the State and Impact of the Humanities program.

19. **What is required in a letter of commitment?**

NEH suggests that individuals outside the applicant institution submit letters of commitment, such as advisory board members, consultants, contractors, and workshop facilitators. Letters of commitment may be brief and should demonstrate that the individual is aware you have included them in the grant proposal and understand the level of commitment that the project will require of them. Letters of commitment should not supplement the narrative by further describing the value or potential impact of your project.

20. **On the Supplementary Cover Sheet for NEH Grant Programs, question number 1 asks for the project director's major field of study. Our project director's field of study is not, however, listed in the drop-down menu. What should we choose?**
If none of the listed fields seem to fit your project director's major field of study, choose "Interdisciplinary."