



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE
Humanities

DIVISION OF PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

SUSTAINING CULTURAL HERITAGE COLLECTIONS

Deadline: December 13, 2016 (for projects beginning October 2017)

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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.

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I. Program Description

Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections (SCHC) **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 natural and man-made disasters. (To learn more about institutional resilience, see the Frequently Asked Questions. A link to this document is available on the [program resource page](#).)

Libraries, archives, museums, and historical organizations across the country face an enormous challenge: **to preserve collections that facilitate research, strengthen teaching, and provide opportunities for life-long learning in the humanities**. Ensuring the preservation of books and manuscripts, photographs, sound recordings and moving images, archaeological and ethnographic artifacts, art, and historical objects requires institutions to implement measures that slow deterioration and prevent catastrophic loss from natural or man-made emergencies. This work is best accomplished through **preventive conservation**, which 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 natural or man-made disasters.

All applicants, whether applying for planning or implementation projects, must clearly address **sustainable preventive conservation strategies** in their application narratives. Sustainable preservation strategies can take many forms, depending on the nature of an institution and its collections, its building, 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.

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 ideal and 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 also the impact of the local climate on establishing relative humidity and temperature setpoints and managing interior environmental conditions;
- consider the potential effects of climate change 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;
- 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.

To learn more about sustainable preservation strategies, see the Frequently Asked Questions. (A link to this document is available on the [program resource page](#).)

Types of awards

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

Planning grants

To help an institution develop and assess sustainable preventive conservation strategies, grants of up to \$40,000 will support planning projects, which may encompass such activities as site visits, risk assessments, planning sessions, monitoring, testing, modeling, project-specific research, and preliminary designs for implementation projects. Planning grants must focus on exploring sustainable preventive conservation 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 natural and man-made disasters;
- examine options and develop strategies for lighting collection spaces in ways that protect collections while achieving improved energy efficiency; or
- evaluate the effectiveness of preventive conservation strategies previously implemented, including energy-efficient upgrades to existing systems and performance upgrades to buildings and building envelopes.

Planning projects can be designed to address a variety of preservation challenges. Various kinds of testing, modeling, or project-specific research may 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;
- thermal imaging of buildings;

- 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.

To enhance the outcomes of planning grants and to encourage incremental improvements in the care of collections, applicants may request an additional **\$10,000 to carry out one or more recommendations made by the interdisciplinary planning team during the course of the project.** Such work could help demonstrate the benefits of sustainable preservation strategies or lead to new information or changes in conditions that would influence “next steps.” Applicants should confer with their consultants before submitting an application to determine whether to request such funds to carry out recommendations of the planning team.

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 are available. Implementation projects must focus on sustainable 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;
- 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 renovation required to implement sustainable preventive conservation measures. Because SCHC grants may **not** fund new construction, the costs of installing climate control, security, and fire protection systems in a building under construction are not eligible. However, grants may support the purchase of storage furniture and the rehousing of collections that will be moved into a new building.

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

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 or preservation assessments** 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 freely accessible for research;
- the installation of climate control, security, lighting, 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; or
- **asbestos abatement**.

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 ordinarily \$40,000, for up to two years. Planning applications may, however, request up to an additional \$10,000 to carry out one or more recommendations made by the interdisciplinary planning team during the course of the project. For such applications, the maximum award is \$50,000. Grants can be made for 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.

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

Cost sharing

Cost sharing consists of the cash contributions made to a project by the applicant, third parties, and other federal agencies, as well as third party in-kind contributions, such as donated services and goods. Cost sharing also includes gift money raised to release federal matching funds.

Although cost sharing is not required, this program is rarely able to support the full costs of projects approved for funding. In most cases, SCHC grants cover no more than 80 percent of project costs for planning projects and 50 percent of project costs for implementation projects.

Eligibility

U.S. nonprofit organizations are eligible, as are state and local governmental agencies and federally recognized Indian tribal governments. Individuals are not eligible to apply.

NEH generally does not award grants 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 grant 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 the **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 **evaluation 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.

Evaluation criteria

Applicants should read the program's evaluation criteria (listed below) 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.

As noted earlier, before they submit a proposal applicants are encouraged to contact 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

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, 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.** If you are budgeting funds of up to \$10,000 to carry out one or more recommendations made by the interdisciplinary planning team during the course of the project, you need not provide a detailed account of the anticipated activities. However, by identifying your consultants and discussing the scope of your planning project with them as you prepare your application, you should be able to **suggest a range of possible activities.** As relevant, **explain how the interdisciplinary team will evaluate the results of these activities.**

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. Include in the appendices 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 and man-made emergencies.

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 natural and man-made emergencies.

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. For planning projects that include the additional funds (up to \$10,000) to implement recommendations of the planning team, indicate in the schedule when the planning team would determine how to use the funds and later evaluate how effectively they were used.

- **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 grants**

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](#).

If the applicant institution is claiming indirect costs and has a federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement, submit a copy of the agreement. Do not attach it to your budget form. Instead you must attach it to the Budget Narrative Attachment Form (also known as the Budget Narrative File). (See the instructions for this form in the Application Checklist near the end of this document.) Alternatively, you must attach a statement to the form, explaining a) that the applicant institution is not claiming indirect costs; b) that the applicant institution does not currently have a federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement; or c) that the applicant institution is using the government-wide rate of up to 10 percent of the total direct costs, less distorting items (including but not limited to capital expenditures, participant stipends, fellowships, and the portion of each subgrant or subcontract in excess of \$25,000).

Indirect costs are computed by applying a negotiated indirect-cost rate to a distribution base (typically a portion of the direct costs of the project). If the applicant institution is claiming indirect costs and has a current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement, include on the budget form the following information: a) the indirect-cost rate; b) the federal agency with which the agreement was negotiated; and c) the date of the agreement.

If the applicant institution does not have a current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate or has not submitted a pending indirect-cost proposal to a federal agency, you may choose one of the following options, if you wish to include overhead charges in the budget:

- NEH will not require the formal negotiation of an indirect-cost rate, provided that the charge for indirect costs does not exceed 10 percent of direct costs, less distorting items (including but not limited to capital expenditures, participant stipends, fellowships, and the portion of each individual subgrant or subcontract in excess of \$25,000). This option is not available to sponsorship (umbrella) organizations. If you

choose this option, you must maintain documentation to support overhead charges claimed as part of project costs.

- If the applicant organization wishes to use a rate higher than 10 percent, you must provide an estimate of the indirect-cost rate and the charges on the budget form. If the application is approved for funding, NEH will provide instructions in the award document on how to negotiate an indirect-cost rate with NEH.

If you choose one of these two options, please indicate on your budget form that you are doing so.

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

Planning grant applicants who are requesting up to \$10,000 to carry out one or more recommendations made by the interdisciplinary planning team during the course of the project must show this expense as “work recommended by the planning team” in the “Other Costs” section of the budget. Include an estimated breakdown that shows how the funds might be divided among supplies, equipment, and services.

To the maximum extent practical, all procurement contracts must be made through an open and free competition. They are to be awarded to the bidder or offeror whose bid or offer is most advantageous, considering price, quality, and other factors. Applicants must justify procurement contracts in excess of \$100,000 that are not awarded by competitive bids or offers.

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.

Consistent with the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 10a-c and Public Law 105-277), 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** (for implementation projects to rehouse and improve storage of collections).
- **technical specifications for building envelope improvements, equipment, or systems** Attach product data and specifications for proposed materials, equipment, and systems. Please consult program staff before submitting blueprints or other bulky specifications that cannot be submitted digitally via Grants.gov. (See the “Submitting supplementary materials” heading below.)
- **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.
- for applicants for projects involving construction, renovation, repair, rehabilitation, or ground or visual disturbances, a copy of the **request submitted to the State Historic Preservation Officer and/or Tribal Historical Preservation Officer for a written determination on the project’s impact, together with all supporting materials** (see below).

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

All NEH-funded projects involving construction, renovation, repair, rehabilitation, or ground or visual disturbances must comply with federal laws on wage rates, disability rights, and historic preservation. Such projects may therefore require extra documentation as well as an extra review before NEH can release any federal funds. Applicants should familiarize themselves with the requirements described below; NEH cannot release any grant funds until these federal requirements are met.

I. Davis-Bacon requirements

Institutions using NEH funds for projects involving construction, renovation, repair, rehabilitation, or ground or visual disturbances 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 Historic Preservation Act

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

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 **an applicant offered an SCHC grant cannot begin any work involving construction, renovation, repair, rehabilitation, or ground or visual disturbances—and that NEH cannot release any federal funds—until NEH concludes its Section 106 review**.

Additional information about Section 106 and its specific implications for SCHC applicants and awardees is available on the [program resource page](#).

III. Submitting your Application

To be able to submit an application, applicants must have registered with Grants.gov and must have an updated Entity record in the System for Award Management (SAM). More detailed information is immediately below.

All applications to this program must be submitted via Grants.gov. NEH strongly recommends that you complete or verify your registration at least two weeks before the application deadline, since it takes time to process your registration.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) requires federal agencies to make information about the expenditure of tax funds available to the public. To facilitate this, the applicant organization must maintain current information in its Entity record in the System for Award Management (SAM). You must therefore review and update the information in your organization's Entity record at least annually after the initial registration, and more frequently if required by changes in your organization's information or another award term. In order for your organization to apply for an award via Grants.gov, receive an award, or receive payment on an award, the information in its Entity record must be current. You can update your organization's Entity record [here](#). You may need a new SAM User Account to register or update your organization's Entity record. NEH strongly recommends that applicant organizations update (or, if necessary, create) their SAM Entity records at least four weeks before the application deadline.

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.

Submitting supplementary materials

If you are sending supplementary materials (those that cannot be scanned and converted to an electronic form and submitted via Grants.gov), please include a list of the supplementary materials in the application's table of contents, with an indication that the materials are being sent separately. The supplementary materials should be sent to the following address:

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

NEH continues to experience lengthy delays in the delivery of mail by the U.S. Postal Service, and in some cases materials are damaged by the irradiation process. We recommend that supplementary materials be sent by a commercial delivery service to ensure that they arrive intact by the receipt deadline.

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 by Grants.gov by **11:59 p.m. (Eastern Time), Tuesday, December 13, 2016**. Grants.gov will date- and time-stamp your application after it is fully uploaded. Applications submitted after that date will not be accepted. Supplementary materials must also arrive at NEH on or before December 13, 2016, to be considered as part of the application.

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 on grants. 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 Uniform Guidance [§200.205](#) (see the second paragraph below the next heading for more information about the Uniform Guidance provided by the Office of Management and Budget). 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 2017. Institutional grants administrators and project directors of successful applications will receive award documents by e-mail in September 2017. 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 a letter to NEH, Division of Preservation and Access, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20506, or an e-mail message to preservation@neh.gov.

In September 2015 NEH adopted without exception a new government-wide regulation for federal awards, referred to as the “Uniform Guidance.” The Uniform Guidance applies to all NEH awards and is aimed at reducing the administrative burden on award recipients and improving accountability of federal financial assistance for tax payers (See 2 C.F.R. Part 200: [*UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL AWARDS.*](#)) NEH will identify in each grantee’s award documents the relevant terms, conditions, and administrative requirements from the Uniform Guidance with which the grantee 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

Grants.gov: <http://www.grants.gov>
Grants.gov help desk: support@grants.gov
Grants.gov customer support tutorials and manuals:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.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 grant 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

- **Verify and if necessary update your institution’s Entity record, or create an Entity record for your institution, at the System for Award Management (SAM).** Complete at least four weeks before the deadline.
- **Verify your institution’s registration or register your institution with Grants.gov.** Complete at least two weeks before deadline.
- **Download the application package from Grants.gov.** The [program resource page](#) on NEH’s website has a direct link to the package. Alternatively, you can search Grants.gov for this program. (Note that Grants.gov tells you to download the “application instruction” as well as the “application package.” The “application instruction” is this document, so there’s no need to download it.) The program resource page also has a direct link to the 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 grants (name the file “granthistory.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”)

Your attachments must be in Portable Document Format (.pdf). We cannot accept attachments in their original word processing or spreadsheet formats. If you don't already have software to convert your files into PDFs, many low-cost and free software packages will do so. You can learn more about converting documents into PDFs [here](#).

5. Budget Narrative Attachment Form (also known as the Budget Narrative File)—Using this form, attach **only** a copy of your institution's current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement (or an explanation why you are not attaching such an agreement). (See the Grants.gov instructions for institutional applicants, which are available on the program resource page, for additional information.)

Upload your application to Grants.gov. NEH **strongly** suggests that you submit your application no later than 5:00 p.m. 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 December 13, 2016: Contact Division of Preservation and Access program officers (at 202-606-8570 or preservation@neh.gov) with questions and for advice (optional)

November 1, 2016: Submit draft application (optional) by this date

November 15, 2016: Create or verify your institution's Entity record at the System for Award Management by this date

November 29, 2016: Register your institution (or verify its registration) with Grants.gov by this date

December 13, 2016: Submit application through Grants.gov and (if appropriate) submit supplementary materials to NEH by this date

March-April 2017: peer review panels take place

July 2017: meeting of the National Council on the Humanities, followed by funding decisions

August 2017: applicants are notified of the funding decisions

September 2017: institutional grants administrators and project directors of successful applications receive award documents by e-mail

October 2017: successful applicants may begin work on their projects