



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE  
**Humanities**

OFFICE OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES

**DIGITAL HUMANITIES  
IMPLEMENTATION  
GRANTS**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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**What do you mean by innovation?**

An innovative project creates something new, offering an interesting new approach to tackling a problem. Innovation can take many forms. Some projects are examples of technical innovation, such as the creation of a new piece of software to address a need in the humanities. In other cases, the innovation does not consist of creating new technology; instead the project makes use of an existing technology in a new way. For example, an applicant might take existing software used for some other purpose and demonstrate how it could be effectively used for humanities research. In still other cases, the innovation does not pertain to the technology per se; instead it is the project collaboration that is innovative, as with projects that bring together creative individuals from both technical and nontechnical fields to address a longstanding humanities issue in a new way. True innovation is rare, and reasonable people can disagree as to what constitutes innovation. The applicant therefore needs to make a strong case for the innovative character of the proposed project.

**Who will read my grant application?**

A variety of individuals will read your application, including peer reviewers, NEH staff, and members of the NEH National Council on the Humanities.

We therefore strongly emphasize that you should write your application so that readers without technical knowledge can understand it. We realize that your project may be technical in nature and that part of the application may have to address complex technological issues. But particularly in your abstract and the first portion of your narrative, you should write for a general audience that is familiar with the humanities, but may have no specific knowledge of technology or of your project's relation to the humanities. In these sections of the application you should make a "big picture" case for your project's contribution to the humanities.

Your proposal must explain the significance of your project to the humanities, in terms that will be comprehensible to readers without technical knowledge. Your application will be read by many individuals with different backgrounds, from different disciplines, with varying degrees of

familiarity with the methodologies used in digital scholarship. You must therefore make a case to this broad audience. Consider, for example, how you might make a case for your project if you were describing it to your provost, dean, or college president. Alternatively, consider how you might briefly describe the project to a new acquaintance outside your field. You should craft your abstract and narrative to appeal to individuals like these.

### **What constitutes “the revitalization and/or recovery of existing digital projects”?**

Implementation Grants are not just for completely new projects. They can also support the expansion of existing projects in innovative or experimental ways, and the restarting of projects that are valuable but have languished (and thus need substantive changes in their design, technical architecture, and dissemination and preservation strategies). Implementation Grants do not, however, support regular, ongoing maintenance of existing projects. Activities that can be supported include

- the testing and evaluation of an established project with target audiences to determine needs and priorities;
- the redesign of the project’s interface to align with current web design standards, including those that address accessibility for audiences with disabilities;
- the integration of widely used digital tools (for example, tools used for annotation or visualization) into an established project;
- the redevelopment of underlying technologies or standards to prepare project data for incorporation into a federated or discipline-specific platform such as the Digital Public Library of America, Open Context, etc.; and
- the creation or revision of a plan to manage an established project’s data—including digitized images, scholarly essays, annotations, social media, etc.—in the long term. The plan should include a strategy for archiving and sharing data, even if the project is no longer being updated regularly.

### **My project includes collaborators from another country. May I include them in the project budget?**

Yes. Collaborators may be from other countries, and such collaborators may be included in the project budget. If you are interested in submitting an application for a project involving international collaborators, please consult beforehand with the staff of the Office of Digital Humanities.

### **May the project budget include funds to support activities described in the data management plan?**

Yes. The budget may include funds for staff and other costs related to preserving and disseminating the digital materials created during the grant period.

**May my institution apply for more than one Digital Humanities Implementation Grant at a time?**

Yes. Institutions may apply for and hold more than one of these grants, but project directors may submit only one application to this program at a time.

**I received funds for the start-up phase of my project from a source other than the NEH. Am I still eligible to apply for a Digital Humanities Implementation Grant (DHIG)?**

Yes. You are welcome to apply to the program whether or not you previously received a Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant (SUG) or other NEH award. However, you must be able to demonstrate that you and your collaborators have completed the start-up phase and are prepared to move on to implementation.

**I already have an NEH Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant (SUG). I would like to apply for a Digital Humanities Implementation Grant (DHIG) as a follow-up to my current grant. However, at the time of the DHIG deadline, my SUG won't yet be fully completed. May I still apply?**

NEH is actively encouraging SUG project directors to subsequently apply for a DHIG, even if the SUG is not fully completed when the project director applies to DHIG. Nevertheless, evidence of the success of a project's start-up phase is an important consideration when DHIG proposals are reviewed. Thus one of the review criteria is "whether the project would be ready to be implemented by the close of the [DHIG] grant period." Hence you should demonstrate that you have made enough progress in the start-up phase of your project to be ready to apply for a DHIG.

**The project that I have in mind seems compatible with the guidelines for another NEH grant program, but it also seems to fit as a Digital Humanities Implementation Grant. To which program should I apply?**

Generally, projects that can be supported through other NEH grant programs and that seek to achieve the goals of the other grant programs should be addressed to those programs. However, no rules prevent an applicant from submitting an application to more than one NEH grant program, so long as the application is appropriately modified to fit the guidelines of the different programs. If you are not certain to which grant program you should apply, contact NEH program staff for guidance. The staff for Digital Humanities Implementation Grants can be reached at [odh@neh.gov](mailto:odh@neh.gov).

**Does NEH limit the amount of indirect costs that can be included as part of an institutional application for a Digital Humanities Implementation Grant?**

No. An institution may charge its negotiated rate in the application budget. Note, though, that the indirect costs are included in the amount awarded for the grant; they are not added to the grant amount. (For example, the maximum award in this program is \$325,000. This means that NEH would support no more than \$325,000 of a project's costs, including the indirect as well as the direct project costs.)

**I would like to send a draft proposal for NEH staff comment. How do I do that?**

While submitting a draft is not mandatory, applicants are encouraged to do so. In order to guarantee NEH review of the draft, it should reach NEH at least six weeks before the deadline. Draft proposals should be submitted via e-mail to [odh@neh.gov](mailto:odh@neh.gov).

**Should the project participants and our institution include letters of commitment as part of our application or should they be sent separately?**

You should include the letters of commitment with the application.

**Whom should I ask to provide letters of support?**

Letters of support should come from persons who can objectively assess the importance of the project to the humanities. These persons should comment on the importance of the project's subject area, the proposed methodology, the technical plan, or the potential audience for the project. They should not be project participants. Also, the letters should be sent to the project director (not separately to NEH) and submitted with the application.

**I would like to include a works cited page or bibliography in my application. Where should I insert this?**

Please include this component in the appendices section of the application.

**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 seems to fit your project director's major field of study, please choose "Interdisciplinary."