national writing project

Request for Proposals

Building a More Perfect Union:
Pandemic Recovery Grants for Humanities Organizations

American Rescue Plan: Humanities Grantmaking for Organizations

As part of the American Rescue Plan: Humanities Grantmaking for Organizations, *Building a More Perfect Union: Pandemic Recovery Grants for Humanities Organizations* invites grant applications from eligible organizations that have been adversely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. These grants are intended to assist organizations in recovering from interruptions to their operations due to the coronavirus pandemic and to develop programming in anticipation of the upcoming 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

Building a More Perfect Union recognizes the unique role that local, regional, and cross-regional humanities organizations play in understanding and making visible fuller stories of our national experience. *Building a More Perfect Union* will award up to 50 grants to local, regional, or cross-regional organizations such as nonprofits, museums, libraries and archives, state parks and historic sites, and public-facing humanities centers at colleges and universities. These grants will assist entities in restoring programming, post-pandemic, and to engage or deepen collaborations with stakeholders and communities to expand their reach. Successful applicants will create open-access, adaptable resources and program models with the potential to enrich public understanding of our diverse yet intersecting civic life. These one-year grants will provide $50,000 and access to an online community of practice.

Application Overview

Local, regional, and cross-regional humanities organizations that have been adversely affected by the coronavirus pandemic are encouraged to apply for $50,000 to support pandemic recovery efforts and to provide programming that expands or engages diverse or underserved audiences in public humanities programming in anticipation of the 250th anniversary of our nation's founding. Applicants will be required to describe the adverse impacts of the coronavirus pandemic and associated restrictions on their organization, detail plans that allow them to address those impacts, and propose programming that allows them to reengage or expand their public missions in anticipation of the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding. Applicants are encouraged to work directly with stakeholders and community partners, such as educators, in developing their plans.

Applicants should propose a 12-month plan that includes recovery and reopening, planning activities, and public programming that engages stakeholders and community members to access and/or contribute to the material, scholarly, and intellectual resources of the organization. Programming can take the form of newly curated exhibits, public forums, online learning programs, curriculum for school-

age youth, or similar activities. Allowable recovery costs include necessary costs of reopening such as improving physical sites, maintaining staff, rebuilding volunteer pools, and costs associated with planning and relaunching public programming. In addition, applicants should identify and collaborate with stakeholders and community partners who can assist the organization in engaging more diverse audiences and expanding the reach and impact of their mission. Allowable costs associated with such collaborations might include stipends, transportation, and other costs necessary to allow underserved or low-income community members to access the organization or for exhibits and programs to be prepared for use in the community.

Successful applications will be led by eligible humanities organizations and can benefit from partnering with community members such as educators or community representatives to plan to re-engage the organization with the community and expand the diversity of its audience. Small and medium-sized organizations and organizations concerned with communities or areas of interest that help provide a fuller understanding of the stories of our national experience in anticipation of the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding are especially encouraged to apply. Funding will be awarded from the National Writing Project through a subaward grant agreement to the applicant organization (see **Application Details and Eligibility Requirements** section below).

Important Dates
- Applications due: December 21, 2021 11:59 p.m. PT
- Awards announced: March 31, 2022
- Period of performance: April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023
- Final data and narrative reports due: April 30, 2023
- Final financial reports due: June 30, 2023

Application Details and Eligibility Requirements
In order to be eligible to apply for this funding, organizations must be a U.S. nonprofit organization with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, an accredited public or 501(c)(3) institution of higher education, a state or local governmental agency, or a federally recognized Native American tribal government. Foreign and for-profit entities and individuals are not eligible under this grant competition.

Applicant organizations should have a record of activity in the humanities. Organizations and institutions proposing to engage in activities outside the humanities (e.g., the creation or performance of art), are not eligible under this grant competition. Organizations that received American Rescue Plan funds directly from NEH are not eligible under this grant competition. To see if your organization received such a grant, consult this list: American Rescue Plan: Humanities Organizations program. In addition, the 56 state and jurisdictional humanities councils and interim partners are not eligible.

In addition to the specific eligibility criteria listed above, grant recipients must not be debarred or suspended by any federal department or agency. The OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) contained in 2 CFR Parts 180 and 3369 apply to awards made under this competition.

Submission Overview

In preparing to submit an application, we recommend that you take time early on to familiarize yourself with the online submission process and the criteria for selection. Proposals will be reviewed with reference to the criteria by an independent committee of humanities experts with experience in public humanities programming and representing a wide range of regions, specialities, and demographic backgrounds.

In the online Application Form, you will be asked to:

1. Provide key information, such as a proposal title, abstract, information and documentation about your organization, and information about key team members. (Download the **Application Form Template** to review all of the required questions and to prepare your responses and documentation in advance of your online submission. Follow the file naming convention below for the document uploads.)
2. Upload a completed **narrative proposal** as a PDF file (following the file naming convention below) that responds to the prompts in the **Constructing a Narrative** section below. Use the provided **Narrative Template**.
3. Upload a completed **requested budget** as an Excel file (following the file naming convention below). Use the provided **Budget Template**.
4. Upload a completed and signed **signature page** as a PDF file (following the file naming convention below). Use the provided **Signature Page Template**. *This must include the signature of the Program Lead and the Applicant Organization's Contracting Officer (someone authorized by the organization to sign off on grant proposals on behalf of the organization, usually a Grants or Finance Officer, or Executive Director)*. See file naming convention below.

FILE NAMING CONVENTION: For all file uploads, please use the following naming convention: State Postal Abbreviation_Organization Name_Document. The document names are as follows: Audit, Indirect, W9, Narrative, Budget, Signature. (e.g., CA_National Writing Project_Narrative)

NOTE: Be sure to develop your proposal early enough to leave time to route your application for approval through your organization's internal grants management process in order to be able to submit your full application by the **Tuesday, December 21, 2021 11:59 p.m. Pacific** submission deadline.

Constructing a Project Narrative

Prepare responses to the following questions using the Narrative Template. Your narrative should be no more than 8 pages and use a 12 point font. Upload your completed Narrative as a PDF document into the Application Form. Proposals will be evaluated by a panel of humanities experts using both the Narrative and information entered in the online forms. Their review will be based on the **Criteria for Selection** described below.

In your project narrative, respond to the following questions:

Project Overview
Share with us a summary of the project you are proposing.

- Briefly introduce your organization and its humanities-focused work.
- Summarize your project proposal.
- Describe impacts of coronavirus and associated pandemic restrictions on your organization and explain how your proposed project will enable recovery.
- Explain how the proposed project will engage the resources and assets of the organization to respond to the needs of diverse or underserved audiences and stakeholders.

Community Contributions
Share with us your thoughts on the contributions your proposed project will make to your community and beyond.

- Explain how your proposed humanities-oriented project will contribute to the themes associated with *Building a More Perfect Union* in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding. (See NEH and the Semiquincentennial)
- Discuss the potential of your project to expand and/or enhance access to engagement in public humanities consistent with goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Describe the resources and program models that will be created through your proposed project and how you will share them. If applicable, discuss how your resources and program models might be adapted by other organizations interested in public-facing humanities work.

Project Details
Expand on the details of your proposed project, including:

- Describe the local or regional settings where your work will occur and any connections with community or stakeholder groups. If applicable, describe how your project engages stakeholder groups or organizations to promote sustained community engagement.
- Include a timeline of the major activities and milestones for your proposed project over the 12-month period of performance beginning April 1, 2022 and ending March 31, 2023.
- List the team who will be involved in the proposed project. Explain how the members of this team will contribute to developing programming that can broaden and engage communities in humanities work in anticipation of the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding.

Budget Narrative
Describe in one paragraph how the grant funds requested in the budget contribute to the goals of recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and the development of programming that engages audiences and contributes to the themes of the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding.

Note: The Explanation column in the budget must describe how costs have been calculated, including an explanation of the indirect cost rate used and any exclusions applied to your indirect costs base calculation (see **Funding Restrictions** and **Indirect Costs** sections below).

Criteria for Selection

Selection will be based on the goals of *Building a More Perfect Union*, combining investments in speedy recovery from the impact of the pandemic with attention to relaunching and expanding humanities-oriented programming to support visibility and better understanding of a fuller range of stories of the American experience. The selection committee will look for proposals that:
- enable reopening and support humanities-oriented recovery from the impacts of the pandemic.
- demonstrate understanding of and responsiveness to local settings and stakeholders' needs and interests, especially in relation to underserved populations.
- expand and/or enhance access to humanities engagement consistent with goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- describe a program or product that supports public engagement with the themes of the nation's commemoration of the 250th anniversary of its founding. (See NEH and the Semiquincentennial); and
- include a commitment to open sharing of resources and models and a plan to create them.

Creating a Budget

Overview
Building a More Perfect Union: Pandemic Recovery Grants for Humanities Organizations will award grants of $50,000. Use the provided Budget Template to prepare your requested budget. Upload your completed budget as an Excel file as part of your online application. Successful budgets will show how grant funds will be used strategically to support your proposed project. Budgets must total exactly $50,000. Access to the online community of practice will be provided as part of the technical assistance program for no cost to your organization.

Funding Source
Building a More Perfect Union: Pandemic Recovery Grants for Humanities Organizations is funded by a federal grant awarded to the NWP by the National Endowment for the Humanities, under a program authorized by 20 U.S.C. §956, *et seq*, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Public Law No: 117-2), and the CARES Act (Public Law 116-136).

Funding Restrictions
Awards are subject to 2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, and the General Terms and Conditions for Awards to Organizations (for grants and cooperative agreements issued December 26, 2014 or later).

All costs must be reasonable, necessary to accomplish project objectives, allowable in terms of [2 CFR 200 Subpart E - Cost Principles](), auditable, and incurred during the period of performance. All costs are subject to audit, record retention, and other requirements set forth in [2 CFR 200 Subpart F]().

Additionally, awards made under this grant program may **not** be used for the following purposes:
- overlapping project costs with any other pending or approved application(s) for federal funding and/or approved federal awards ([2 CFR 200.403(f)]())
- competitive regranting
- cancellation costs
- pre-award costs incurred more than 90 days before the subrecipient's period of performance
- equipment costs in excess of 20% of total project costs
- travel (both foreign and domestic)
- construction, purchase of real property, major alteration and renovation
- collections acquisition
- the preservation, organization, or description of materials that are not regularly accessible for research, education, or public programming
- promotion of a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view
- advocacy of a particular program of social or political action
- support of specific public policies or legislation
- lobbying
- projects that fall outside of the humanities and the humanistic social sciences (including the creation or performance of art; creative writing, autobiographies, memoirs, and creative nonfiction; and quantitative social science research or policy studies)
- social and entertainment costs or alcoholic beverages
- for any eligible American organization located overseas, support of non-U.S. citizens

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be readily identified with a specific project or activity of an organization. Indirect costs include such expenses as the depreciation on buildings, equipment, and capital improvement; operations and maintenance expenses; accounting and legal services; and salaries of executive officers.

Indirect costs are computed by applying a federally negotiated indirect cost rate to a distribution base, usually the project's modified total direct costs (MTDC).

Carefully review your institution's negotiated indirect cost rate(s) to make sure you are using the most appropriate rate for your project. Many institutions of higher education 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 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.

Except as provided in paragraph (c)(1) of 2 CFR §200.414, federal agencies must use the negotiated rate(s) in effect at the time of the initial award throughout the life of the federal award. Award levels will not be adjusted in future years as a result of changes in negotiated rates. Except as provided in 2 CFR §200.414, when an educational institution does not have a negotiated rate with the federal government at the time of an award (because the educational institution is a new recipient or the parties cannot reach agreement on a rate), the provisional rate used at the time of the award must be adjusted once a rate is negotiated and approved by the cognizant agency for indirect costs. If the recipient fails to negotiate an indirect cost rate applicable to the period of performance within the period of performance, indirect costs may be disallowed. NWP will restrict payment of indirect costs until a fixed, final, or predetermined indirect cost rate agreement is provided by the recipient.

An organization that wishes to include indirect costs in its budget but does not have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate may choose one of the following options:

1. direct cost all expenses;
2. charge a de minimis rate of 10% of MTDC (see 2 CFR §200.414(f)); or
3. charge an indirect cost rate recently negotiated between a different pass-through entity and your organization, consistent with 2 CFR §200.332.

Per 2 CFR §200.1, MTDC are all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, and up to the first $25,000 of each anticipated subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subaward). MTDC exclude equipment, capital expenditures, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs, and the portion of each subaward in excess of $25,000.

If you are using a federally negotiated indirect cost rate or a rate previously negotiated between your organization and a different pass-through entity, you will be required to upload a copy of your rate agreement into the Application Form.

Direct Administrative Costs

In addition, no more than 10% of the grant can be allocated to direct administrative costs. These expenses are for activities directly related to the administration of your award, and must be based on actual expenses. These costs may include expenses such as an allocable portion of a person's salary for preparing and submitting required programmatic and financial reports, managing the budget for the award, or processing payments under this award. Requests that are a simple percentage of the award, without any justification, will not be allowed.

In most cases, the salaries of administrative, secretarial, or clerical staff are included as part of indirect costs. Per 2 CFR §200.413(c), direct charging of salaries for administrative or clerical staff may be appropriate only if all of the following conditions are met:

1. Administrative or clerical services are integral to a project or activity.
2. Individuals involved can be specifically identified with the project or activity.

3. Such costs are explicitly included in the budget or have prior written approval of the federal awarding agency.
4. The costs are not also recovered as indirect costs.

In your budget's explanation column, document how direct charging for secretarial/clerical personnel (i.e., administrative and clerical staff) meets all four conditions.

If you charge indirect costs to the project, ensure that expenses included in your organization's indirect cost pool are not charged to the project as direct costs. Administrative costs must not be charged twice as both direct and indirect costs.

Program Income Policy

All program income generated as a result of awarded funds must be used for approved project-related activities. The program income alternative applied to awards under this program is "addition." Post-award requirements for program income can be found at 2 CFR §200.307.

Additional NEH Pass-Through Requirements

Providing Access to NEH-funded Products

As a taxpayer-supported federal agency, NEH endeavors to make the products of its awards available to the broadest possible audience. Our goal is for scholars, educators, students, and the American public to have ready and easy access to the wide range of NEH award products. All other considerations being equal, NEH gives preference to those that provide free access to the public.

Recipients must follow the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which is designed to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. Consult Design for Accessibility: A Cultural Administrator's Handbook.

Copyright Information

Subrecipients may copyright any work that is subject to copyright and was developed, or for which ownership was acquired, under an award. In accordance with 2 CFR §200.315(b), NEH reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work for federal purposes, and to authorize others to do so. NEH has typically exercised this right in consultation with recipients to publish an excerpt from resulting grant product(s) in Humanities magazine or on the NEH website.

Acknowledging NEH Support

All materials publicizing or products resulting from NEH-funded activities must contain an acknowledgment of NEH and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Consult Acknowledgment and Publicity Requirements for NEH Awards and Publicizing Your Project for guidance.

Public Audiences

NEH-funded projects reach broad public audiences. Projects that receive NEH funds cannot include material that is obscene, libelous, offensive, or defamatory (including hate speech, personal attacks, or material constituting harassment). Recipients are responsible for monitoring all project content, including user-generated content, comments, blog posts, links and other social media.

Have Questions?

Building a More Perfect Union: Pandemic Recovery Grants for Humanities Organization is hosted by the National Writing Project with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Only applications submitted through the National Writing Project's online Application Form will be accepted for review. If you have questions after reviewing the RFP and all supporting documentation, you may email us at grantapps@nwp.org.