

## RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

The NEH Challenge Grants Program helps academic institutions and cultural organizations to secure **long-term support** for, and improvements in, their programs, activities, and resources in the humanities. While challenge grants can be used in a variety of ways, the most common and most strongly preferred is the augmentation or establishment of **endowment** funds. Other uses are also possible where the need is compelling and clearly related to improvements in the humanities. Often combined with endowment funds, direct expenditures can include, for example, acquisitions, technological enhancement, construction and renovation, and even debt retirement. Because the purpose of a challenge grant is to strengthen the humanities over the long run, awards are made in light of a careful institutional rationale for the challenge grant and of the institutional humanities goals that the grant would support.

These grants involve more than one kind of "challenge." Applicants are challenged to engage in serious long-term planning for their organization's humanities programs and resources. The ability to attain or sustain high quality in the institution's humanities work with the aid of the proposed challenge grant must be demonstrated in the application. In addition, the matching requirement challenges institutions to raise non-federal funds to match the federal award. Institutions are challenged to increase their sources of support and, in turn, potential donors are challenged to recognize and support humanities institutions in the educational or cultural life of their community.

In the case of a first challenge grant, three non-federal dollars must be raised for each federal dollar awarded, and for subsequent awards, four non-federal dollars are required to match each dollar of the federal award. In recent years the federal portions of challenge grants have ranged from \$25,000 to \$1,000,000.

The Challenge Grants Program is administered through the NEH Office of Challenge Grants. The information that follows suggests possible benefits of challenge grant support.

National Endowment for the Humanities  
Washington, D.C. 20506

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BULK RATE  
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NATIONAL ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE HUMANITIES  
PERMIT NO. G-43

## EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Challenge grants to EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS support the efforts of humanities teachers and of educational institutions at all levels in engaging students in sustained, thoughtful study of human history, language, and culture. While elementary and secondary schools are not eligible to apply for challenge grants, the office welcomes applications to improve humanities education in these institutions.

◆ **UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING:** Funds are often used by educational institutions to create endowments for professorial chairs in the humanities; for humanities course development; for humanities classrooms, including multimedia and computer classrooms for humanities teaching; and to purchase and endow the maintenance of computing and media equipment for humanities courses.

◆ **CAMPUS LIBRARIES:** Funds may be used to build endowments for library acquisitions, to fulfill immediate library acquisition needs, to endow positions for campus librarians and staff, to develop or expand on-line cataloguing systems, and, in cases of compelling need, to renovate or construct library humanities facilities.

◆ **FACULTY DEVELOPMENT:** Challenge grants may be used to support faculty research by establishing endowments for research, travel, and curriculum development awards. Endowments may support annual faculty development seminars. Funds may also be used to purchase materials and equipment that will enhance humanities course development and research.

◆ **RELATED CAMPUS-BASED HUMANITIES ACTIVITIES:** Annual humanities symposia or recurring special events programs may be endowed by challenge grants. Funds may be used to install and endow humanities computing facilities. Challenge grants may also support undergraduate academic programs that are linked to campus museums.

## RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

Challenge grants to RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS support production and dissemination of significant scholarly humanities work. Applications are accepted from **universities, scholarly presses, centers for advanced study, research libraries and archives, and other organizations** whose missions advance humanities research and scholarship.

◆ **RESEARCH:** Funds may establish or augment endowed chairs and faculty research funds; fellowships, of various durations, for research at the dissertation or post-doctoral level in the humanities; and travel to archives and special collections to conduct research. Endowments may be created to maintain major data or text bases for scholarly research.

◆ **PROGRAMS:** Endowment income may provide continuing support for collaboration and exchange within graduate programs and at centers for advanced study including seminars, conferences, workshops, lecture series, and visiting scholars. Presses might establish endowments to strengthen humanities publishing programs, including translation costs or positions for acquisitions editors.

◆ **COLLECTIONS:** Positions for staff involved in the care and use of humanities research collections may be supported by income from an endowment established through a challenge grant. Funds may also be used to acquire materials to fill gaps in collections, or, through endowment income focused on particular subjects or material, to maintain and strengthen important research collections. Endowments may be established to support preservation activities.

◆ **FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT:** The costs of major equipment, such as computer technology used by scholars for advanced research, are allowable, and scholarly presses are encouraged to consider new technology for improved dissemination of scholarship. In special circumstances, renovation and construction to improve storage and care of research collections, conservation laboratories, and other facilities may also be allowable.

## CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Challenge grants to CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS support programming that explores the humanities for general audiences. Applications are accepted from **museums, historical organizations, public libraries, media stations, and other non-profit institutions** whose missions advance public understanding and appreciation of the humanities. Institutions must demonstrate an active collaboration among experts in the humanities and professionals with knowledge of humanities programming.

◆ **PROGRAMS:** Income from an endowment may support humanities consultants and/or standing advisory boards for planning and participation in humanities exhibitions, lectures, seminars, and media productions as well as to advise on collections development. Endowments may also provide permanent support for research and development of humanities public programs and related educational materials; salaries for public programming coordinators and curators of education; and curatorial positions for senior humanities scholars.

◆ **COLLECTIONS:** Positions for conservators, archivists, curators, and educators involved in the care and use of humanities collections may be created and made secure by establishing an endowment for salaries. Funds may be used to acquire significant collections or endow acquisitions. Renovations and equipment for improved storage and climate control may also be considered under special circumstances. Public libraries are recognized as an important humanities resource and are encouraged to apply for grants to increase access to and use of humanities collections, as well as to endow humanities programming.

◆ **RESEARCH:** An endowment may be created to support long term relationships with humanities scholars in a research or advisory capacity. Such residencies may last for several months or several years.

◆ **FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT:** Improvement and enhancement of space for exhibitions, classrooms, auditoriums, media productions, and conservation laboratories as well as purchases of equipment--especially new computer technology for enhanced public understanding of the humanities--also are allowable if they clearly serve humanities activities.

◆ **FINANCIAL STABILITY:** Endowment income may ensure a permanent base for general operating expenses.

## HUMANITIES DEFINED

The act that established the National Endowment for the Humanities says "The term 'humanities' includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism, and theory of the arts; those aspects of social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life.

## DEADLINES

The **annual application deadline** for Challenge Grants is **May 1**. Applicants are encouraged to submit draft applications by March 1 to the Office of Challenge Grants. For further information, and to request the application forms and guidelines for the Challenge Grants Program, write, call, or e-mail:

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