Request for Proposals
SSRC/NEH Sustaining Humanities Infrastructure Program (SHIP)

OVERVIEW

Date of RFP Posting: October 7, 2021
Deadline for submission of proposals: December 7, 2021
Expected Announcement of Awards: March 2022
For Projects Beginning: April 1, 2022

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a wide-ranging impact across the humanities sector, affecting staffing, programs, project infrastructure, and institutions that are essential to maintaining the advancement of the humanities in communities across the country. In recognition of the vibrant role humanities organizations play in our country, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 provides funding through the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to offer relief to humanities programs and institutions affected by the pandemic.

The Social Science Research Council, with the support of NEH, invites applications from colleges, universities, and nonprofit humanities research or educational organizations (with 501(c)(3) status) located in the United States to support staffing, programming, and operations in order to—in keeping with Congress's intention—restore, sustain, and recover from the coronavirus. Applicants should be prepared to discuss the essential role the humanities play in their organization, the impact the pandemic has had on their work, and the ways in which funding support would provide relief, sustain essential activities in response to the pandemic, or help their organization recover.

SSRC/NEH SHIP will award grants of up to $100,000 to humanities organizations seeking relief and planning for recovery in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, offering support to the full spectrum of humanities infrastructure—the people, projects, and resources—at the core of humanities scholarship and teaching. In recognition of the pandemic's disproportionate impact on underserved communities, SSRC strongly encourages projects and institutions that emphasize topics, themes, and approaches related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as applications from minority-serving institutions (MSIs). This can take the form of programming, teaching, or research focused on issues of inequality and the role the humanities can play in understanding and addressing large shifts in culture, society, and the nation. Applicants may also propose activities that help mitigate the financial and social impact that the pandemic is having on diverse and inclusive staffing, programming, sustaining crucial humanities resources, and building and/or retaining audiences.

Applicants may request no more than $100,000 in support for a performance period of no more than one year (12 months). Projects may begin as early as April 1, 2022, and must begin no later than June 1, 2022. Projects must conclude no later than May 31, 2023.

Applicants must address how they have been adversely impacted by the pandemic in their applications, consistent with the purposes of the American Rescue Plan. Possible areas of support include (but are not limited to):

- Support for staffing, including students or research assistants, at a humanities center or other humanities institution whose activities are under threat due to funding restrictions related to the pandemic
- Departmental, college, or university-level efforts to examine and produce concrete steps, including revised tenure and promotion guidelines and timelines, to address the disproportionate impact the pandemic has had on humanities scholars, particularly women, people of color, caregivers, and other vulnerable populations
- Funds to help sustain critical humanities projects that are used widely by researchers or teachers, particularly those that address inequality or reach underserved populations
- Strengthening college and university instruction by developing, refining, or preserving online or hybrid humanities curricula to build resilience in humanities education
- Providing essential services, programming, and support to sustain the next generation of humanities scholars (such as current humanities PhD students) in the wake of the pandemic, particularly through the lens of strengthening diversity, equity, and inclusion

Funding to rebuild live or virtual programming to regain or expand access to humanities content for public audiences
Applicants must address how they have been adversely impacted by the pandemic in their applications, consistent with the purposes of the American Rescue Plan. Possible areas of support include (but are not limited to):

ELIGIBILITY

SHIP supports humanities organizations seeking relief and planning for recovery in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, consistent with the purposes of the American Rescue Plan.

Eligible institutions include: accredited public and 501(c)(3) institutions of higher education and US nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. If an American organization located overseas receives an award, funding cannot be used to support non-US citizens. Foreign and for-profit entities are not eligible as subrecipients.

Organizations must have a record of achievement in the humanities and the proposed projects may not engage in activities outside the humanities (e.g., the creation or performance of art).

Grants are for a maximum of 12 months and are no more than $100,000.

Multiple proposals may be submitted from a single institution. However, if more than one proposal is submitted from an institution, the activities must be substantially different and the Principal Investigator and staffing must also be distinctive from any other submitted proposals.

Organizations that received American Rescue Plan funds directly from NEH (through the American Rescue Plan: Humanities Organizations program, which had a deadline on May 14, 2021) are not eligible to be subrecipients under this program. Organizations that received funding through the 2020 CARES Act are eligible to be subrecipients under this program. The 56 state and jurisdictional humanities councils and interim partners are not eligible subrecipients under this notice.

Priority is given to projects and institutions that emphasize topics, themes, and approaches related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as applications from minority-serving institutions (MSIs).

SUBMITTING YOUR PROPOSAL

To submit a proposal and view the required application form, please visit: http://apply.ssrc.org. You may begin a proposal and save your progress at any time until final submission.

The application is comprised of the following (all to be submitted online):

Completed application form: this form includes information about the institution, the participants, and short-answer questions about the project. For more details about the specifics of the application form, please see the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page.

Supporting documents: supporting documents include a project description, budget and budget narrative, brief CVs for key project participants, and a letter of institutional support. Details about the project description and budget are below. Additional information about the supporting documents can be found in the FAQ.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project description should be no more than 3-5 pages, single-spaced, with one-inch margins. Your project description should be as thorough as possible and written in clear prose free of jargon. It must not exceed five single-spaced pages and should include the following information:

- A description of your organization's primary goals in applying for the grant, including the background of your organization or program as it relates to the core goals of the SHIP funding opportunity.
- Relevance of the project to the vitality and flourishing of the humanities.
- Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on your operations and specific ways that a SHIP award would mitigate the impact and help your program recover from the pandemic.
- The SHIP opportunity prioritizes projects that emphasize diversity, equity, and inclusion or are submitted from MSIs. If that is the case for your proposed activity or institution please explicitly address this component in your project description.
- Number of staff (including faculty and/or students) engaged in the work of the program and the audience of the organization/program, as well as any plans to use the grant to expand the reach and audience of the established program within and/or outside the institution.
- A grant timeline and work plan.
- Expected outcomes and/or results.

Budget

All applicants must submit a budget and budget narrative that provides detailed justification for the amount requested, with particular focus on how this funding helps mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic, strengthens the humanities, and restores existing staff positions and/or creates new ones within the work of the humanities at their institution. Applicants may use their Federally negotiated overhead rate, if the organization does not have a negotiated overhead rate a de minimis 10% rate

A **budget narrative** should be appended to your budget and should detail how you arrived at all estimated and final figures in the budget. If you are requesting funds for salary support, provide information on how you calculated all figures.

Please review the FAQ for additional budget requirements and limits.

Letter of Institutional Support

This letter should be on institutional letter-head, signed by the appropriate university or institutional official—such as your university dean, provost or president, or the executive director or president of your nonprofit institution—and should confirm institutional support for your proposed activities.

Demographic Data

The SSRC collects self-reported demographic information on applicants, consistent with categories of the US census, and uses it to self-assess our outreach success. Within our review process, we also use these data to indicate the importance we place on an institutionally and demographically diverse cohort. The SSRC provides application statistics during the review and selection process so that reviewers are aware of institutional and individual demographic patterns that may help counteract possible bias.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

For this program, peer reviewers will evaluate applications based on the following criteria:

Intellectual merit: the intellectual significance of the proposed project, its relationship to advancing knowledge in the humanities, and, when relevant, the strength of its connection to the priority theme of diversity, equity, and inclusion

Alignment to Covid-19 response: the degree to which the proposed project, activities, and budget align to a response to pressures due to the coronavirus pandemic

Feasibility: the appropriateness of the proposed activities, methods, planned activities, and budget to accomplish the stated aims of the proposed project

Qualifications: the degree to which the participants have the expertise, skills, and knowledge to accomplish the stated aims of the proposed project

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please direct all inquiries related to the SSRC/NEH Sustaining Humanities Infrastructure Program (SHIP) to:
nehrescue@ssrc.org.

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