

Navigating the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Proposal Submission Process

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NEA Proposals....

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NEA Proposal Submission....

- Part 1: Background Information
 - NEA Website
 - Creation/Mission
 - Organization
 - Grants Overview



NEA Proposals....

- NEA Website [National Endowment for the Arts](https://www.arts.gov)
 - Opening page (as you scroll down)
 - What's Happening at the NEA
 - Featured news
 - Featured Stories
 - Link to Grants and Impact pages
 - Some Facts about NEA
 - [NEA-Quick-Facts-Infographic-6.1.2021.pdf \(arts.gov\)](#)

NEA Proposals....



[Grants](#)

[Initiatives](#)

[Stories](#)

[Impact](#)

[Honors](#)

[News](#)

[About](#)



2022 NEA Jazz Masters Stanley Clarke, Billy Hart, and Donald Harrison, Jr. playing Ellington's "Take the Coltrane" at the tribute

NEA Proposals....

- Menu on website
 - Grants – intro to what they fund, list of programs, award management, recent awards
 - Initiatives – showcases NEA work/programs involving other agencies/organizations related to public access to arts
 - Stories – communication of arts events, organizations, and artists through blogs, podcasts, videos, and magazines
 - Impact – access to art by various communities, value of the arts, funded activities
 - Honors – past winners of the Jazz Masters Fellowship, National Heritage Fellowship, and National Medal of Art
 - News – press releases, upcoming events, chair information
 - About – NEA establishment, Leadership & Staff, News, Publications, Upcoming Events, etc.
- Every page above has a link to sign up for newsletter and magazine

NEA Proposals....

NEA Creation

- In 1963 the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), the Council of Graduate Schools in America and the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa establishing a National Commission on the Arts and Humanities; the Commission released a report in April 1964 that recommended establishment by the President and Congress of a National Foundation for the Arts and Humanities to address an imbalance of science related studies vs arts and humanities.

NEA Proposals....

[Established by Congress in 1965](#), the National Endowment for the Arts is the independent federal agency whose funding and support gives Americans the opportunity to participate in the arts, exercise their imaginations, and develop their creative capacities. Through partnerships with state arts agencies, local leaders, other federal agencies, and the philanthropic sector, the Arts Endowment supports arts learning, affirms and celebrates America's rich and diverse cultural heritage, and extends its work to promote equal access to the arts in every community across America.

NEA Proposals....

- **Organization**

- NEA is governed by a chairman nominated by the President to a four-year term and subject to congressional confirmation. The NEA's advisory committee, the National Council on the Arts, advises the Chairman on policies and programs, as well as reviewing grant applications, fundraising guidelines, and leadership initiatives. This body consists of 18 individuals, appointed by the President with congressional approval, for their expertise and knowledge in the arts, in addition there are six ex-official members of Congress who serve in a non-voting capacity on 2-year appointments.

At least some of their meetings are publicly accessible/broadcast

I was not able to find an organizational chart on their website but note they do have their own Inspector General.

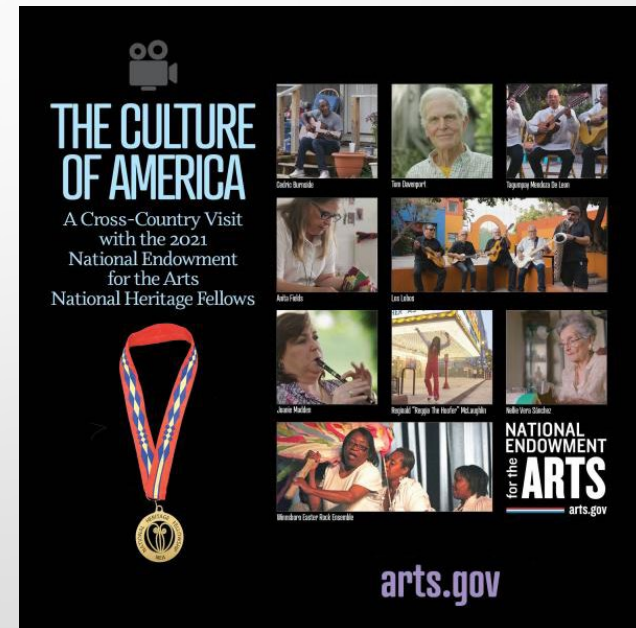
(Sources: Wikipedia and NEA website)

NEA Proposals....

- “The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is the only arts funder in the United States—public or private—that provides access to the arts in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. jurisdictions. Each year, we award thousands of grants to provide everyone in the United States with diverse opportunities for arts participation.
- We award cost/share matching grants to nonprofit organizations for a wide variety of arts projects, literature fellowships for published creative writers and translators, and partnership agreements with the 62 state/jurisdictional arts agencies and regional arts organizations.
- Through our programs, we encourage activities that rebuild the creative economy and educate the next generation; unite and heal the nation through the arts; and serve the nation’s arts field. We are committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, and fostering mutual respect for the diverse beliefs and values of all individuals and groups.”

NEA Proposals....

- Grants are broken into the following areas
 - American Rescue Plan Grants
 - Grants for Arts Projects
 - Challenge America
 - Our Town
 - Research Awards
 - Creative Writing
 - Translation Projects
 - Partnership Agreements



More info in Part 2 of the presentation

NEA Proposals....

- Part 2: Proposal Contents
 - Sources and Announcements
 - Indirect Costs for NEA proposals
 - Common Proposal Requirements and Comments
 - Submission Portals

NEA Proposals....

Sources and Announcements for Funding

- Grants.gov (key word National Endowment for Arts or sponsor search)
 - NEA recommends finding announcement you are interested in and signing up for notifications
- NEA Website (search, blogs, newsletters, under Initiatives, throughout website)
 - No grant specific search function

Normally funding announcements/solicitations are called Program Notices.

NEA Proposals....

- Grants for Organizations
 - Grants for Art Projects (two cycles; Feb and July)
 - Challenge America (April)
 - Our Town (August)
 - Research Awards (March)
 - America Rescue Plan (past, might see future based on COVID impacts/funding)
 - Partnership Agreements (State, Regional, National – limited opportunity for OU)
- Grants for Individuals
 - Creative Writing Fellowships (March; alternates between prose and poetry)
 - Translation Projects (Jan; can be prose, poetry, drama)
- Program Solicitations (special solicitations that normally change yearly)
 - National Endowment for the Arts Musical Theater Songwriting Challenge for High School Students (July 28, 2022)
 - Independent Film and Media Arts Field Building Initiative (Aug 9, 2022)

NEA Proposals....

- **Grants for Arts Projects** is our principal grants program for organizations based in the United States. Through project-based funding, the program supports public engagement with, and access to, various forms of art across the nation, the creation of art, learning in the arts at all stages of life, and the integration of the arts into the fabric of community life.
- Applicants may request cost share/matching grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000. Designated local arts agencies eligible to subgrant may request from \$10,000 to \$150,000 for subgranting programs in the Local Arts Agencies discipline. A minimum cost share/match equal to the grant amount is required.

NEA Proposals....

- **Challenge America** offers support primarily to small organizations for projects in all artistic disciplines that extend the reach of the arts to populations that are underserved. Challenge America features an abbreviated application, a robust structure of technical assistance, and grants for a set amount of \$10,000. Grants require a cost share/match of \$10,000 consisting of cash and/or in-kind contributions. Total project costs must be at least \$20,000 or greater.
- This category is an entry point for organizations seeking NEA funding. See [Applicant Eligibility](#) for more information.

NEA Proposals....

- **Our Town** is the NEA's creative placemaking grants program. Through project-based funding, the program supports activities that integrate arts, culture, and design into local efforts that strengthen communities. Our Town projects advance local economic, physical, or social outcomes in communities, ultimately laying the groundwork for systems change and centering equity. These projects require a partnership between a nonprofit organization and a local government entity, with one of the partners being a cultural organization. Grants range from \$25,000 to \$150,000, with a minimum cost share/match equal to the grant amount.

NEA Proposals....

Research Awards

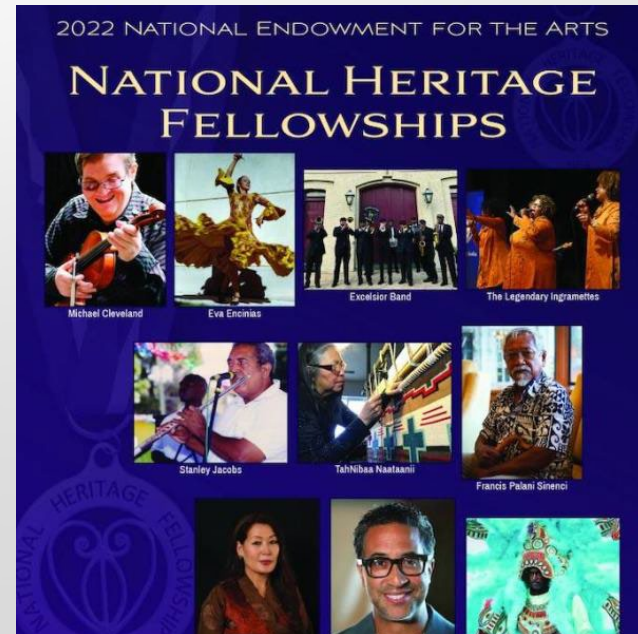
- The National Endowment for the Arts invites applicants to engage with the agency's five year agenda through two funding opportunities for research projects. The 2022 – 2026 agenda is posted here (but also look at info lower on the page) [RESEARCH AWARDS | National Endowment for the Arts](#):
- [Research Grants in the Arts](#) funds research studies that investigate the value and/or impact of the arts, either as individual components of the U.S. arts ecology or as they interact with each other and/or with other domains of American life. Matching/cost share grants of \$10,000 to \$100,000 will be awarded.
- [NEA Research Labs](#) funds transdisciplinary research teams grounded in the social and behavioral sciences, yielding empirical insights about the arts for the benefit of arts and non-arts sectors alike. Matching/cost share grants between \$100,000 and \$200,000 will be awarded.

NEA Proposals....

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN GRANTS

The Arts Endowment will competitively award Rescue Plan funds to eligible organizations nationwide. These funds are intended to help support jobs in the arts sector, keep the doors open to arts organizations nationwide, and assist the field in its response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

* Deadlines have passed.



NEA Proposals....

- The National Endowment for the Arts' State & Regional Partnership Agreement grants are awarded to the nation's 56 state and jurisdictional arts agencies (SAAs), and the six regional arts organizations (RAOs) whose members comprise SAAs. Partnership support is also available to the national service organization for the state arts agencies.

Partnership Agreement support enables these agencies and organizations to respond to needs identified through public planning undertaken with their constituents, partners, and stakeholders. This investment in locally-determined priorities extends federal reach and impact, translating national leadership into local benefit.

All SAAs, RAOs, and their national service organization must apply annually for this support. Approximately one third of all organizations submit a full application (“on-year”) while the remaining organizations (“off-year”) submit abbreviated applications.

NEA Proposals....

Grants for Individuals

CREATIVE WRITING FELLOWSHIPS

The National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellowships program offers \$25,000 grants in prose (fiction and creative nonfiction) and poetry to published creative writers that enable the recipients to set aside time for writing, research, travel, and general career advancement.

* Deadline: March 10, 2022.

TRANSLATION PROJECTS

Through fellowships to published translators, the National Endowment for the Arts supports projects for the translation of specific works of prose, poetry, or drama from other languages into English.

* Deadline: January 12, 2022

NEA Proposals....

Program Solicitation

Program Solicitation:
National Endowment for the
Arts Musical Theater
Songwriting Challenge for
High School Students

To select an organization (“Cooperator”) to coordinate and administer the 2023 Musical Theater Songwriting Challenge for High School Students in conjunction with the NEA.

* Proposal Receipt Deadline: July 28, 2022

Program Solicitation:
Independent Film and Media
Arts Field-Building Initiative

To select an organization (Cooperator) to administer the Independent Film and Media Arts Field-Building Initiative.

* Proposal Receipt Deadline: August 9, 2022

NEA Proposals....

Format Guidance

- NEA does not have general guidelines so you must read the Program Notice for particular formatting information (if given)
- In general
 - PDFs should have no security enhancements (password protection, encryption, digital signature)
 - File names 50 characters or less
 - Watch for file naming instructions
 - Watch page limits (and page additions at conversion)
 - See if single or double line spacing is mentioned
 - If no information is given, ask contact in Program Notice; if no info is provided we recommend 1 inch margin; 11 point font.

NEA Proposals....

Indirect Cost Rates (IDC) for NEA Proposals

- The default IDC at the University of Oklahoma per our federally negotiated agreement, is for activity code Research at 55%.
 - However, our Other Sponsored Activities (OSA) activity code at 36.3% is often appropriate for NEA types of proposals.
 - NEA guidance specifically states that the Research rate is appropriate for research awards.
- If a high majority of the work is not done at the OU-Norman Campus (or using OU assets) then the off-campus rate of 26% may be approved for use.
- Sometimes sponsor guidelines can specify an idc rate, which is usually accepted by OU.
- There is a form PI's can use to request idc of less than the full rate. Talk to your Proposal Development Specialist (PDS) so the correct rate can be established. Do not assume just because it is NEA that it is 36.3 percent or that prior submissions/approvals can be used for current submissions.

NEA Proposals....

Common Proposal Requirements and Comments

- You must read the solicitation for your proposal as contents vary between solicitations and sometimes by years – use most current version.
- Grants for Arts Projects have specific information/guidance that varies by the artistic discipline selected. If you have trouble or questions about the discipline (or a multi-discipline project) the website provides contact information to seek advice.

NEA typically uses a two step application process for the organizational proposals and a one step process for fellowship applications (discussed later)

Step 1 Grants.gov ‘short form’

Step 2 Grants Application Form (GAF) through their system (Applicant Portal)

NEA Proposals....



NEA Proposals....



Step 1

- 424 'Short Form'
 - This is a SF 424 form 'cover Page' it contains information such as the Project Director (PI), contact info, organizational info (if applicable), dates, title, etc. Plus a short project description (length can vary by instructions)
 - Some Program Notices may also ask for other attachments
- After the 'short form' is submitted
 - a Grants.gov tracking number is received (this becomes your user name)
 - Your NEA number is issued when Grants.gov transfers the application to NEA (the NEA tracking number becomes your password)
 - When the window opens in the Applicant Portal for the Grant Application Form an email is sent to the Project Director

NEA Proposals....

Step 2

- Email received that Applicant Portal window is open
- PI accesses the Applicant Portal and fill out the Grant Application Form
 - Normally this is information similar/same as what was requested on the 424 form but with addition of things like the budget, team member info, etc.
 - There are usually tabs or blocks of information to fill out
- Attachments
 - If the Program Notice requires attachments (which most are going to require at least one or two) then you load them based on the guidance given in the instructions.
 - This guidance can include specific file names or the inclusion of video and/or audio clips, pictures, etc.

NEA Proposals....

You will submit a substantial part of your application through the GAF in the Applicant Portal, including:

- Answers to narrative questions about your organization and project.
- Financial information about your organization and project.
- Bios of key individuals.
- Work samples and files.

The Applicant Portal platform has seven tabs, some of which have sub-tabs:

- Tab 1: View Application Data
- Tab 2: Organizational Information
- Tab 3: Project Details
- Tab 4: Project Budget
- Tab 5: Project Participants
- Tab 6: Programmatic Activities
- Tab 7: Items to Upload

NEA Proposals....

Tab 7: Items to Upload

There are two types of **required** items to upload:

- Statements of Support
- Work Samples

Preparation

You should prepare your items **well in advance of the deadline** and have them fully ready to upload once the applicant portal becomes available to you. Arrange the items in the following order when uploading to the Applicant Portal:

- Statements of Support
- Image Work Samples
- Audio Work Samples
- Video Work Samples
- Documents

NEA Proposals....

Common Proposal Requirements and Comments

- Budget Information
 - Mandatory cost share of minimum 1:1 on almost all
 - NEA form (ORS can provide some help but you may need to give us a copy of the form/guidance for your specific solicitation)
 - OU internal budget spreadsheet is still required
 - Read the whole budget section as there is normally a lot of information on what is expected, allowed, and not allowed
- While the Applicant Portal may not be available where you can see the Grant Application Form, the Program Notice and/or website info usually provides information on what is needed for the GAF so you can start gathering content

NEA Proposals....

Submission Portals – 2 required

- Grants.gov is the primary submission portal for NEA proposals
 - Unless the PI is submitting an individual proposal (one where funds will come to them and not through the University) the submission will go in under the University account. You do not need a Grants.gov registration to do a submission that will flow through the University.
- NEA Applicant Portal
 - Access is given after the Grants.gov Submission is done and may not be immediate
- Very rarely you may be asked to provide a submission to an email address.
- Note registration ‘needs’ may be given in funding announcements for such things as System for Award Management (SAM); do not obtain any registrations for your NEA submissions without checking with ORS.

NEA Proposals....

Fellowship proposals

- Two types – Creative Writing and Translation (into English)
- In Creative Writing alternating years of funding between prose and poetry
 - 2022 is Poetry
- Grants.gov is used
- The individual must create their own account
- A ‘workspace’ package must be opened for your application
- While they can be done online, it is recommended to download the application package/forms to your computer, complete it, and then upload it for submission.

NEA Proposals....

Fellowship proposals cont.

- Package usually consists of
 - 424 cover form
 - For Creative Writing - An Attachment Form with file uploads of Writing Sample and Publications
 - For Translation – An Attachment Form with file uploads for a variety of items such as resumes, excerpt to translate, permissions, etc.
 - I believe no budget is required; NEA determines how much is received up to \$25k (they provide phone contact info, I'd recommend calling)
- You must accept the award as an individual

NEA Proposals....

- Part 3: After Submission
 - Other Actions
 - Review
 - Award
 - Special Notes
 - Take-a-Way



NEA Proposals....

- Other Actions
 - Resubmissions after the deadline are normally not allowed. Usually, NEA is strict about deadlines.
 - Update or Revision types of actions are not normal but on occasion can be done but instructions are with coordination with the contact listed in the Program Notice.
 - PO have worked with PI on slight corrections at PI request.
 - PO can ask for additional or replacement information after submission, prior to review, and during review.

NEA Proposals....

- Review
 - Initial review after submission is by NEA staff looking for completeness and eligibility compliance; then they are assigned to a panel
 - There are 3 steps in the review process
 - Level 1 -- Panel Review
 - 3-6 people who review 15-40 applications
 - Evaluators read, comment, and assign initial rating (based on published review criteria and program guidelines)
 - They meet to discuss and do final comments and rating; Evaluators are not expected to reach a consensus or rank as a panel.
 - Level 2 -- NEA Staff gathers all the comments and ratings; compiles information and ratings; sends highest ranked proposals to National Council on the Arts. NAC reviews all the funding recommendations and votes on which applications to recommend for funding and non-funding.
 - Level 3 –NEA Chair Decisions –Funding recommendations from the National Council on the Arts are sent to the NEA Chair to make the final funding decisions.

NEA Proposals....

- Review
 - NEA has no standing review panels; all are assembled as needed
 - They are always looking for panel members (good way to meet program officers and see the process).
 - Reviewer comments are provided upon request for both funded and unfunded proposals that met a panel but there is a deadline normally 30 days after notification of decision made.

NEA Proposals....

- Award
 - PO may request revisions as part of award process
 - PI may receive notification (or heads-up) first, let ORS know
 - On website, under 'Grants' is a tab 'Manage Your Award' with many forms and report tips
 - Be aware of reporting requirements and timing. File reports using eGMS system

NEA Proposals....

- The NEA Grants Management is the only office to contact for official actions related to NEA Awards.
- Awards are managed based on their Terms and Conditions package, special instructions, and the NEA Award Handbook and eGMS REACH



NEA Proposals....

Organizational/Internal Considerations

- Proposal process begins with submission of information sheet; just answer the questions the best you can – we can update as needed.
- We will work with you to develop the budget; talk to your PDS about Indirect Costs.
- At OU, completion of the routing is what gives the PI and ORS the permission to submit any proposal.
- Be cognizant of submitting accurate subcontract and consultant information – is what you are submitting officially approved?
- Some NEA proposals are limited submissions and will require internal permission.
- Almost all NEA proposals require cost share which will require time to build the cost share package and possibly contribution by the VPRP which will take time to obtain.

NEA Proposal Submissions....

Take-a-Way

- If you are considering an Arts Project grant decide the most likely discipline(s) and research their solicitations.
- The information needed for a submission may take time to gather beyond what you normally need for a project description/narrative.
- When Director changes some programs will change but not as disruptive as some agencies.
- Sign up for NEA newsletter/magazine.
- Become a panel member.
- Look at the NEA website; it contains a lot of information. Visit their Virtual Grants Webpage under “Grants” national endowment for the arts.
- There is some You Tube content if you search ‘national endowment for the arts’ including a channel you can subscribe to.

Contacts for Help

- RIS@ou.edu will answer questions or put you in contact with who can answer your questions for anything pre-award/Office of Research Services (ORS) related.
- Submit an info sheet [Office of Research Services - Proposal Information Sheet|| The University of Oklahoma \(ou.edu\)](#) and someone from ORS will contact you
- Arts & Humanities Forum provides specific support related to Arts & Humanities [Arts & Humanities Forum \(ou.edu\)](#)
Email: humanities.forum@ou.edu
- Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE) provides proposal assistance to include SciENCv training cfe@ou.edu
- If your question is related to post award then contact Research Financial Services (ReFS) refsinfo@ou.edu



QUESTIONS?