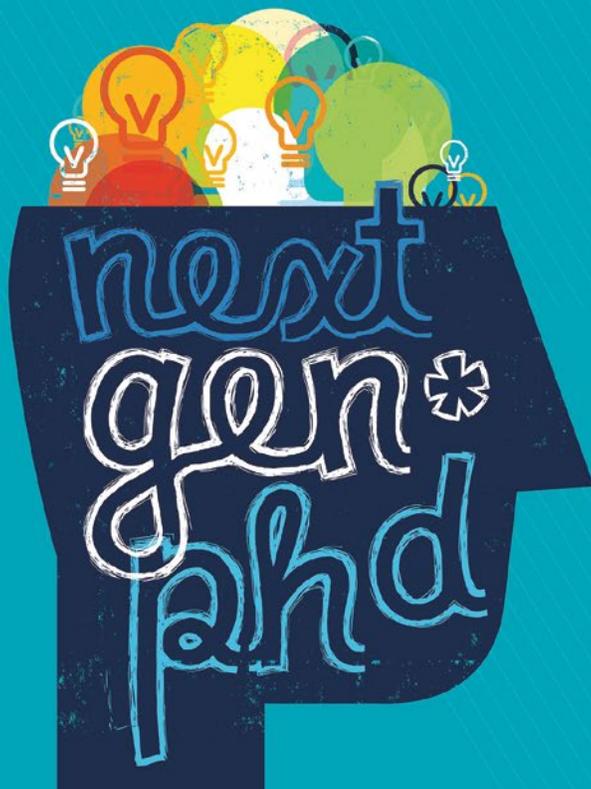


Third-Party Match Guidance

A Guide for NEH Next Generation
Humanities PhD Applicants

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Introduction

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Next Generation Humanities PhD grant program was designed to provide funds to universities “to plan and implement changes to graduate education that will broaden the career preparation of a PhD student beyond a career in the academy” (NEH, 2016). The Next Gen program addresses the need for a robust network of public humanities organizations and activities in the United States.

[Application guidelines](#) for NEH Next Generation Humanities PhD Planning grants are available at neh.gov.

One of the conditions the Next Gen grants is a one-to-one match of awarded funds. For planning grants, the maximum grant amount is \$25,000, requiring a \$25,000 match, for a total of \$50,000 over twelve months. Matching funds consist solely of cash gifts donated by nonfederal third parties to a

project. This represents a shift in how these NEH grants are administered. In the program’s previous competition, institutional cost sharing was allowed to substitute for third-party matches.

This document was written to help guide applicants to NEH Next Gen grants, as well as any campus team interested in pursuing the goals of the Next Gen program, in pursuing third-party matching (or external funding) options.

Third-Party Matching

The NEH defines “third party” as an individual or an organization that is not a part of the applicant institution. This section describes categories of entities that might be candidates for securing matching funds for Next Gen projects, along with some potential benefits and drawbacks of pursuing each.

Alumni and other private donors

When approaching the question of where to obtain a third-party match (or sustaining funds in general) for Next Gen work, begin close to home. Boasting existing ties to the institution, alumni and current donors to your institution or unit may be worth your first look. Request meetings with your institution’s advancement, development, and/or alumni relations team(s) to understand

their work, their strategy, and how they usually engage with PhD alumni. Explain to them your goals. Share not only your financial needs, but your vision for what the money could achieve. Take pains to understand the landscape at your institution and, as a general rule, do not ask anyone for a donation until you have discussed the matter thoroughly with the appropriate professional staff at your institution.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

What relationships with alumni or other private donors currently exist? Would a campaign to raise funds among many PhD alumni be possible or feasible, or are there a few potential or active donors who might be willing to give for this purpose?

PROS: Opportunity to steward existing alumni/donor relationships and build new ones

CONS: Unpredictable and lengthy timeline; May require existing infrastructure (e.g., to develop materials to reach out to graduate alumni with a coordinated campaign); May require sensitivity to existing relationships

Employers

The category of employers includes for- and non-profit organizations where humanities PhD students may both contribute important skills and perspective and gain valuable experience. Employers may be eager to connect with both a pool of highly-skilled workers or—depending on the organization—of future customers. Developing relationships with employers carries many of the same cautions as with alumni, e.g., there may be existing institutional connections that you will want to understand

before reaching out on your own. An additional consideration is the cultural differences that exist between the business world and academia. Different language, timelines, and priorities may need to be navigated.

Employers may be a particularly promising category of potential third-party matchers because of their potential to offer internships or other work opportunities for students. One possibility for structuring these relationships: instead of paying a student directly, the company could donate an amount equivalent to the student's stipend to the program, which could administer the funds to the student. (Such donated funds could be applied toward matching requirements.)

PROS: Opportunity to provide needed professional development for students while also securing financial goals of the program; Opportunity to steward existing alumni/donor relationships and build new ones

CONS: Employer interests may conflict with goals or values of the program; May require sensitivity to existing relationships

Local Funders

Many funders in the humanities and higher education spaces have geographical funding priorities. Research the private foundations in your region, state, and city. Also consider state agencies and corporate foundations. Each funding entity will require a unique approach, but it will be important to maintain focus on the ways the Next Gen work on your campus promise to affect the broader community. As always, professional advancement, development, or grants office staff may be your best resources when deciding which organizations to approach, but online resources can help identify funders. For example, the [Grantsmanship Center](#) offers lists of the top funders by state.

PROS: Opportunity to work with an organization with strong local ties; may be less competitive than other grant options

CONS: Small organizations may have corresponding grantmaking budgets

National Funders

Select national foundations have funding priorities that align with the goals and methods of the Next Gen program. Grant applications to these organizations are highly competitive and often dependent upon working closely with a program officer. Also consider national foundations that target urban or rural initiatives, depending on your situation.

PROS: Highly prestigious; Can design program to align exactly with Next Gen

CONS: Intense competition may equate to a low likelihood of success

EXAMPLES: The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Whiting Foundation, the Henry Luce Foundation

FAQ

What constitutes a third-party match?

Matching funds consist solely of cash gifts donated by nonfederal third parties to a project. This match cannot come from within your institution; i.e., cost sharing does not qualify.

Can we use an active existing external grant to cover our third-party match, or must the match come from "new" funds?

If the existing grant's goals clearly and significantly overlap with the Next Gen program, it may be possible to apply some of the funds as a third-party match. Please contact program staff at nextgen@neh.gov to ask about your specific circumstance.

Why does the NEH require this match?

Matching grants enable NEH to provide support to a greater number of projects and stimulate private support for projects in the humanities.



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