



**NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES**

Division of Preservation and Access
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Division of Preservation and Access Grant Programs Overview

The Division of Preservation and Access provides leadership and support in the national effort to preserve and create access to cultural heritage resources that constitute the foundation for research, education, and public programming in the humanities. Preservation and Access grants help the Endowment achieve one of its major strategic goals: to advance knowledge and understanding of the humanities in the United States.

A substantial portion of the nation's cultural heritage and intellectual legacy is held in libraries, archives, and museums. These repositories have the responsibility of preserving and making available collections of books, serials, manuscripts, sound recordings, still and moving images, works of art, objects of material culture, and rapidly expanding digital collections. The challenge is great: to preserve diverse formats of materials that are threatened by factors inherent to their physical structures or by the environments in which they are housed, and to create a level of intellectual control sufficient to enable users to find and use the materials relevant to them. Increasingly, these humanities collections are being used to create the kind of Web-based resources we support, such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, descriptive catalogs, and digital archives. Both the creators and users of these resources also need our support to develop digital tools to enhance access and promote integration of these materials.

The division's grant programs recognize that good stewardship of cultural resources requires equal attention to preservation and access. All of the division's programs focus on ensuring the long-term and wide availability of primary resources in the humanities. In this sense, research, education, and appreciation of the humanities depend on the foundational work of the Division of Preservation and Access in preserving cultural heritage materials and making them available to scholars, teachers, and the general public.

At present, the division administers grants in the following categories:

Humanities Collections and Reference Resources (HCRR)

Through HCRR, the division funds projects that preserve and create intellectual access to collections of books, journals, newspapers, manuscript and archival materials, maps, still and moving images, sound recordings, art, objects of material culture, and digital objects. It also provides strong support for the creation of dictionaries, encyclopedias, catalogs, and other reference works and research tools of major importance to the humanities. Because it is now possible to allow digital access, through a single entry point, to humanities materials housed in many different repositories and to use these materials in new ways, the HCRR program encourages projects that unite, integrate, or aggregate digital collections and resources.

Research and Development

Through its Research and Development grants, the division supports projects that advance the nation's capacity to preserve and provide access to humanities resources. These projects cover an array of activities, including devising more effective physical methods of preserving humanities collections;

developing new procedures to create reference works; and establishing standards or best practices for the use of digital technology.

Preservation and Access Education and Training

The Endowment considers support for education and training to be an essential component of its national preservation effort. Grants are made for regional preservation field services to help ensure that smaller cultural institutions across the country receive the kind of advice and knowledge they require to preserve their collections, as well as for graduate education in conservation for library and museum professionals and for the training of mid-career professionals in collections care and conservation. Grants are also made for projects that focus on the skills and knowledge required to provide or enhance intellectual access to humanities collections.

Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions

Small and mid-size cultural repositories constitute the large majority of collecting institutions in the United States. These organizations often lack the resources to address the preservation needs of their collections. Preservation Assistance Grants can improve an institution's capacity to preserve its holdings and use its collections more effectively for work in the humanities. This grant program provides small and mid-sized libraries, archives, museums, and historical organizations with grants of up to \$6,000 to support on-site consultation by a preservation professional, enable staff to attend preservation training workshops and other educational events, or help purchase preservation supplies and equipment.

The National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP)

As part of the Endowment's *We the People* program, NDNP represents a major effort to digitize millions of microfilmed pages of historically significant newspapers. Begun in 2005, the initiative will ultimately lead to the creation of a national digital resource of historically significant newspapers from all the states and U.S. territories published between 1836 and 1922. This searchable database will be permanently maintained at the Library of Congress (LC) and is freely accessible via the Internet. LC will also digitize and contribute to the NDNP database a significant number of newspaper pages drawn from its own collections. The Web resource, "Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers" (www.loc.gov/chroniclingamerica) is available to all. The text of the newspapers in "Chronicling America" is fully searchable, and search terms can be limited to a particular state, a specific newspaper, and by year or even month of publication.

Documenting Endangered Languages (DEL)

This on-going funding partnership between the National Science Foundation and the Endowment supports projects to gather and organize knowledge about endangered human languages. Made urgent by the imminent death of an estimated half of the 6,000-7,000 currently spoken languages, this effort exploits advances in information technology to achieve its goals. DEL grants support fieldwork and other activities relevant to recording, documenting, and archiving endangered languages, including the preparation of lexicons, grammars, text samples, and databases.

Save America's Treasures

These grants support the preservation of nationally significant cultural heritage collections housed in libraries, archives, or museums. Administered by the National Park Service, this program is a partnership between the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. The Division of Preservation and Access assists the Park Service with the peer review of applications and grant management of awards for the care of humanities collections.

JISC/NEH Transatlantic Digitization Collaboration

In partnership with the Higher Education Funding Council for England of the United Kingdom acting through the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) in the United Kingdom, the Endowment supports digital projects in the humanities that involve collaboration between institutions in both countries. These grants support new digitization projects and pilot projects, the addition of important materials to existing digitization projects, and the development of infrastructure to support American/British digitization work.

NEH Emergency Grants for Disaster Response

Natural disasters present a serious threat to repositories of humanities materials, and at present four out of five cultural repositories in the United States lack disaster or emergency plans and the trained staff to carry them out. In response to the 2008 flooding in the Midwest and the 2005 hurricanes in the Gulf coast states, the NEH Chairman announced that the Endowment would offer Emergency Grants for salvage and recovery efforts on the part of cultural institutions in the disaster areas. The Division of Preservation and Access serves as the principal point of contact for museums, libraries, archives, and other organizations seeking emergency assistance and administers any emergency grants approved by the Chairman.