

National Endowment for the Arts

Notice of Funding Opportunity: FY27 Research Labs

Program Guidelines

Table of Contents

Click a heading below to jump directly to that section

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Research Labs | 3 |
| Basic Information | 3 |
| Executive Summary..... | 3 |
| Research Labs Program Description | 5 |
| Projects, Research Methods, Data Sources, and Analysis | 5 |
| We Do Not Fund..... | 6 |
| Required Partnership with an Arts Organization or Working Artist(s)..... | 7 |
| NEA Research Lab Project Activities | 7 |
| Period of Performance..... | 8 |
| Subsequent Awards | 8 |
| Authorizing Statute | 8 |
| Eligibility | 9 |
| Additional Eligibility Requirements for Previous Research Labs Recipients | 10 |
| Tribes and Tribal Communities | 10 |
| Fiscal Sponsorship..... | 10 |
| Application Limits..... | 10 |
| Award Amounts & Cost Sharing | 11 |
| Award Amounts | 11 |
| Cost Share Funds..... | 11 |
| Application Contents & Format | 12 |
| Application Instructions & Process | 12 |
| Application updates after submission | 12 |
| Applications Recommended for Funding | 12 |
| Submission Requirements & Deadlines | 14 |
| Pre-Application Required Registrations..... | 14 |
| Submission Methods..... | 14 |
| Contact Information..... | 14 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Application Submission Dates and Times | 14 |
| Extensions to the Submission Deadlines | 15 |
| Incomplete Applications | 15 |
| Intergovernmental Review | 15 |
| Application Review | 16 |
| Review Criteria | 16 |
| Review & Selection Process | 17 |
| Application Status Updates..... | 17 |
| Other Requirements | 18 |
| Responsible Conduct of Research..... | 18 |
| Data Management and Sharing | 19 |
| Award Notices | 20 |
| Post-Award Requirements & Administration..... | 21 |
| General Terms & Conditions..... | 21 |
| Changes in Projects..... | 22 |
| Project Reporting and Evaluation | 22 |
| Ownership and Use of Materials | 24 |
| Legal Requirements and Assurance of Compliance..... | 24 |
| Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Rehabilitation Act Section 504 | 24 |
| Civil Rights..... | 25 |
| Laws Relating to Lobbying (31 U.S.C. 1352)..... | 26 |
| Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Notice | 26 |
| Paperwork Reduction Act Statement | 26 |
| Frequently Asked Questions | 27 |

Access for individuals with disabilities:

Contact accessibility@arts.gov to request an accommodation or an alternate format of the guidelines at least 2 weeks prior to the application deadline.

Research Labs

Basic Information

| Category | Information |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Federal Agency Name | National Endowment for the Arts |
| Funding Opportunity Title | Research Labs |
| Announcement Type | Modification of previous announcement |
| Funding Opportunity Number(s) | 2026NEA01RESEARCHLABS |
| Assistance Listing Number(s) | No. 45.024 |
| Agency Contact Information | NEAResearchGrants@arts.gov |

| Funding Details | Estimated Amount <i>(Contingent upon availability of funds)</i> |
|---|--|
| Total amount of funding expected to award | \$1,200,000 |
| Anticipated number of applications | 20 |
| Anticipated number of awards | 4 awards |
| Expected dollar value of awards (range) | \$100,000-\$300,000 |

Executive Summary

The NEA Research Labs program funds long-term research agendas that include multiple empirical studies and the dissemination of various products or services for promoting public knowledge about the arts and their contributions to American life. Each Lab must include an interdisciplinary team of researchers. These awards require a 1:1 cost share.

Eligible applicants include: U.S. Institutions of higher education or nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3), U.S. organizations with a five-year history of operations that includes commissioning and conducting research in the behavioral or social sciences. Funding in this category is *not available* for individuals, fiscally sponsored projects, commercial/for-profit enterprises, State Arts Agencies (SAA), or Regional Arts Organizations (RAO), among others. See [Eligibility](#) for full eligibility requirements.

Applications are evaluated based on the published Review Criteria.

COMPONENTS OF THIS NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY (NOFO):

- **RESEARCH LABS PROGRAM GUIDELINES (this document):** Information including a program description, eligibility, review criteria, award amount and cost sharing, and post-award requirements and administration.
- **APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:** Navigate to the “Application Instructions” section on the [Research Awards webpage](#) for complete information on application requirements and how to apply.

KEY DATES:

We estimate that after completing the required registrations, which can take several weeks to finalize, the process to draft and submit an application will take approximately 35 hours.

| STAGE | DATE |
|---|---|
| Part 1: Application Package Available on Grants.gov | February 2026 |
| Part 1: Grants.gov Submission Deadline | March 23, 2026 11:59 pm Eastern Time |
| Part 2: NEA Applicant Portal Opens to Applicants | March 26, 2026 9:00 am Eastern Time |
| Part 2: NEA Applicant Portal Submission Deadline | April 2, 2026 11:59 pm Eastern Time |
| Notification of recommended funding or rejection | November 2026 |
| Earliest project start date | January 1, 2027 |

Research Labs Program Description

The NEA Research Labs program is a funding opportunity under the NEA’s Research Awards initiative. The program funds long-term research agendas (referred to herein as NEA Research Labs, or Labs) that include multiple empirical studies and the dissemination of various products or services for promoting public knowledge about the arts and their contributions to American life. Each Lab must include an interdisciplinary team of researchers. Products or services developed under the award are expected to be of value to arts researchers, arts practitioners, and professionals in sectors such as healthcare, education, and business or management. Funded projects should have national, regional, or field-wide significance.

Projects supported through this program include:

1. **Arts and Health.** Includes studies that will test or characterize the benefits of the arts or arts and health activities—including creative arts therapies—in terms of health and well-being for people or communities. The NEA has a special interest in supporting such projects in the following contexts:
 - Military personnel, veterans, and their families
 - Pediatric cancer care and other childhood diseases
 - Opioid use prevention, treatment, and recovery
 - Disaster relief and emergency response and preparedness
 - Care of older adults experiencing cognitive or neurodegenerative declines
2. **Arts and the Economy.** Includes studies that will test or characterize the benefits of the arts or arts activities in terms of economic or workforce development.
 - The NEA has a special interest in supporting such projects involving the arts in Artificial Intelligence (AI) competency training, in career development for people with disabilities, and/or in preparation for high-paying skilled trade jobs of the future.
3. **Arts and Education.** Includes studies that will test or characterize the benefits of the arts or arts activities in terms of school readiness, school engagement, or academic achievement among children from preschool through high school.
 - The NEA has a special interest in supporting such projects for learners with autism spectrum disorder or intellectual disabilities.

Applicants seeking funding solely for discrete research studies and the promotion of their results should instead apply to the Research Grants in the Arts program.

Projects, Research Methods, Data Sources, and Analysis

We welcome applications from a wide range of research fields (e.g., economics; psychology; education; medicine, health, and therapy; business administration; urban and regional planning). We expect the funded projects will be varied in terms of geographical distribution,

the artistic and research fields or disciplines involved, and the research topics proposed. We anticipate that funded projects will reflect an array of study designs.

In recent years, the NEA has supported studies that hypothesize a cause-effect relationship between the arts and key outcomes of interest (e.g., in health, education, or the economy). For research studies or program evaluations seeking to explore causal claims about the arts, experimental approaches are generally preferred. In some cases, different study designs will be preferable. These designs may include, but are not limited to meta-analyses, quasi-experimental studies, complex surveys, case studies, replication studies, and studies using mixed methods. Where appropriate, community-based participatory research approaches may be used.

Eligible projects also may include translational research that moves scientific evidence toward the development, testing, and standardization of new arts-related programs, practices, models, or tools that can be used easily by other practitioners and researchers.

[Visit the NEA website](#) for a list of publicly available datasets that include arts-related variables. Some of these datasets are also available through the NEA's public data repository: the [National Archive of Data on Arts & Culture](#) (NADAC).

See [Responsible Conduct of Research](#) for requirements related to primary data collected from human subjects.

We Do Not Fund

- Projects that do not include a focus on one of the topics listed above.
- Projects that focus exclusively on data acquisition.
- Projects that do not include data analysis conducted during the period of performance.
- Projects that focus exclusively on conducting a literature review.
- Projects involving the study of arts programs, conditions, or characteristics outside the United States.
- Projects that include the creation and/or installation of public art as part of the proposed project activities and budget. *Public art* refers to the commissioning and installation of artwork that is temporarily or permanently installed in public spaces, such as outdoor furnishings (e.g., benches or market structures), or other artwork such as a sculpture or mural. These types of projects are funded through [Grants for Arts Projects](#).
- Seasonal or general operating support.
- Costs of physical construction or renovation, or the purchase costs of facilities or land.

See the [General Terms & Conditions](#) for more information on unallowable costs and activities.

Required Partnership with an Arts Organization or Working Artist(s)

The NEA Research Labs program requires a **confirmed** partnership at the time of application between the lead applicant organization and at least one “arts partner” external to the applicant organization, defined as either (a) an arts organization *or* (b) working artist(s). The arts partner is expected to contribute substantially to the NEA Research Lab.

In addition to the required arts partner, applicants are also strongly encouraged to partner with other organizations with expertise in the proposed research topic area.

NEA Research Lab Project Activities

NEA Research Labs recipients will be required to complete several project activities as outlined below. Each Lab will design and execute the following:

Research Lab Agenda, Keystone Study, and Related Activities

- **Choose one of the following research focus areas (as described on pg. 5):**
 - Arts and Health
 - Arts and the Economy
 - Arts and Education
- **Choose a team representing at least two research disciplines and whose members will be highly collaborative.** We encourage teams that include personnel at various stages in their careers. Training and mentorships may be offered as part of the Lab’s activities.
- **Conduct at least one keystone study** during the initial award’s period of performance. Additional studies may be proposed as part of the initial award’s period of performance or as part of the multi-year Research Lab agenda.
- Propose a **plan for sustaining the multi-year Research Lab agenda** beyond the initial award’s period of performance. This may include plans to continue the Lab’s proposed activities and/or new activities in an identical or similar research topic area.

Required Products and Services

- **Create and maintain a public website about the Lab.** The website should include, at a minimum, a description of the project and activities, information about key personnel and technical working group members (see Administration section below) and about Lab products, events, and resources. Additional content will be based on a proposed dissemination plan.
- **[Produce at least one research report](#)** for each award period of performance that documents the methods and findings of each research study.
- **Prepare and deliver at least two presentations per year**, one to a community of researchers and the other to a community of arts practitioners.

- **Applicants are encouraged to generate research products** (e.g., datasets, questionnaires, web apps or other technologies) that can be accessed by practitioners or researchers who might be interested in developing a program, model, or tool similar to the one used by the Lab.

Administration

- **Establish and support a technical working group (TWG)**, that includes representatives from partners, and/or experts in distinct fields of practice or research that are needed to inform the work of the Lab. TWG members will offer feedback to the Lab on key project activities and deliverables.
- **Participate in interdisciplinary NEA Research Labs meetings** approximately every six months that include other NEA Research Lab award recipients. These meetings are expected to be virtual conferences.

Period of Performance

NEA support of a project may start on or after January 1, 2027. Each award generally may have a period of performance of up to three years. Award recipients will be required to submit quarterly progress reports to the NEA throughout the life of the award.

Projects that extend beyond one year will be required to submit an additional annual progress report, and must include updates on responsible conduct of research requirements, as necessary.

A recipient may not receive more than one NEA award for the same activities during the same period of performance.

Subsequent Awards

The NEA may enter into one subsequent renewal award with the recipient of an NEA Research Labs award for a project consistent with the intent of these guidelines. Any such future award, however, would be subject to agency priorities, the availability of funds, recipient performance, and the agency's regular review process.

The exact level of the NEA award amount for the renewals will be determined by the NEA in consultation with the selected recipient at a later stage; however, it is anticipated that renewal award amounts will be approximately \$100,000-\$150,000, with a required 1:1 cost share.

Authorizing Statute

The NEA offers this funding opportunity under the authority of 20 U.S.C. § 954.

Eligibility

One organization that meets the eligibility requirements below must act as the lead applicant, submit the application, and assume full responsibility for the award. Partnering organizations and/or partnering individuals are not required to meet the eligibility requirements below. **We will not transfer the award to another organization.**

The lead applicant must be an organization with research and policy as a principal focus for its core components, either as the primary work or as part of an interdisciplinary mission.

| ELIGIBLE |
|--|
| <p>The lead applicant organization must be a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. institution of higher education, or • Nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3), U.S. organization <p>To be eligible as the lead applicant, the organization must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the NEA’s Legal Requirements, including nonprofit, tax-exempt status at the time of application. • Have completed a five-year history of operations prior to the application deadline that includes commissioning and conducting research in the behavioral or social sciences, as well as communicating research findings and policy implications through reports and/or convenings. • Have an active registration with the System for Award Management (SAM), and have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), at the time of application. Applicants must maintain an active SAM registration until the application process is complete and throughout the life of an award. |
| NOT ELIGIBLE |
| <p>The following are not eligible to apply as the lead applicant organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals. • Commercial and for-profit enterprises. • Applications through a fiscal sponsor/agent. All organizations must apply directly on their own behalf; • An organization whose primary purpose is to channel resources (financial, human, or other) to an affiliated organization may not apply if the affiliated organization also submits its own application. This prohibition applies even if each organization has its own 501(c)(3) status. For example, the "Friends of ABC Museum" may not apply if ABC Museum applies. • The designated 50 state and six jurisdictional arts agencies (SAAs) and their regional arts organizations (RAOs). SAAs and RAOs may serve as partners in projects. However, they may not receive NEA funds through this grant program or contribute sub-awarded federal funds to the cost share. • Applications that do not demonstrate the minimum required cost share. |

Additional Eligibility Requirements for Previous Research Labs Recipients

Organizations who previously received an NEA Research Lab award are eligible to apply to the FY27 Research Labs funding opportunity. However, new applications from previous Research Labs recipient organizations:

- Must propose a period of performance start date *after* the period of performance end dates for all of their open/active Research Lab awards.
- Must propose a project that aligns with the FY27 funding opportunity guidelines.
- Forfeit the possibility of a renewal under a previous Lab award by submitting an application for the FY27 opportunity.

NOTE: Applicants can check their organization’s Research Labs award history on the [NEA Research Labs webpage](#).

Tribes and Tribal Communities

Federally recognized tribes and tribal communities that meet the eligibility requirements may apply. In keeping with federal policies of [Tribal Self Governance](#) and [Self-Determination](#), we may provide support for a project with a primary audience restricted to enrolled members of a federally recognized tribe. **Native Hawaiian and non-federally recognized tribes may apply** if the applicant is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3), U.S. organization. Projects for Native Hawaiians and non-federally recognized tribes and indigenous groups may be supported, but project participation cannot be restricted to only Native Hawaiians and/or tribal members.

Fiscal Sponsorship

Fiscally sponsored organizations and projects are not eligible for NEA funding. An organization or individual **may not** use a fiscal sponsor/agent for the purpose of applying. Unincorporated or for-profit entities or individuals may not use eligible organizations to apply for grants on their behalf. If your organization does not have its own non-profit status, you may still participate in a project submitted by another eligible organization.

Application Limits

Organizations can submit up to one application to the FY27 Research Labs funding opportunity.

- Applicants to the FY27 Research Labs funding opportunity may apply to other FY27 NEA funding opportunities (applications submitted in CY2026), including Research Grants in the Arts. Each proposal must be for **a distinctly different project**.
- An organization may receive up to one FY27 award in either the Research Labs program or the Research Grants in the Arts program.

Applications will not be transferred between different NEA funding opportunities. Applications to Research Labs will not be transferred to Research Grants in the Arts or another NEA funding opportunity, or vice versa.

Award Amounts & Cost Sharing

All applications submitted and grants made in response to these guidelines are subject to the NEA's [General Terms & Conditions](#).

Award Amounts

We anticipate awarding four (4) grants, based on the availability of funding.

Awards will range from \$100,000 to \$300,000. Priority will be given to applications that present theory-driven research agenda, questions, and methodologies that investigate the value and/or impact of the arts in American life.

We reserve the right to limit our support of a project to a particular phase(s) or cost(s).

Cost Share Funds

Awards cannot exceed 50% of the total project costs. All awards require a nonfederal cost share of at least 1 to 1. These cost share funds may be all cash or a combination of cash and in-kind contributions, and can include federally-negotiated indirect costs. Cost share funds do not need to be committed at the time of application.

Applicants whose projects are recommended for less than the requested funding amount will have the opportunity to revise the project based on the recommended funding amount.

All costs included in your Project Budget must be incurred during your period of performance. **Costs incurred before the earliest project start date of January 1, 2027 cannot be included in your budget or cost share.**

Federal funds may not be used as cost share. "Federal funds" may include funding from other federal agencies, or an entity that receives federal appropriations. Additionally, cost share funds cannot include subgranted federal funds through Regional Arts Organizations (RAO), State Arts Agencies (SAA), or Local Arts Agencies (LAA). Applicants may use funds from RAOs, SAAs, or LAAs *only if those funds did not originate at the federal level*. Applicants may contact their RAO, SAA, or LAA to ascertain the source of funding.

Application Contents & Format

Application Instructions & Process

A detailed instructions document outlining how to complete and submit the application, including all application questions, can be found on the [Research Awards](#) page, under the *Application Instructions and Questions* section.

REGISTRATION: Before applying, applicants must finalize [required registrations](#).

Application Part 1, Grants.gov

All applicants must submit the *Application for Federal Domestic Assistance/Short Organization Form* through Grants.gov. This brief form collects basic information about your organization and project. You must successfully submit Part 1 to move on to Part 2.

Application Part 2, NEA Applicant Portal

Part 2 of the application is submitted via the NEA's [Applicant Portal](#), a separate website from Grants.gov. Applicants must complete the *Grant Application Form (GAF)*, which collects information about your organization's history and budget, project details including a project description, timeline, and budget information, and special attachments.

Application updates after submission

Send new information that significantly affects your application (such as changes in project personnel or IRB status) as soon as possible to NEA Research Awards staff. You must include your organization's name and NEA application number with any updates.

If you have questions about your application, contact the NEA Research Awards staff at NEAResearchGrants@arts.gov.

Applications Recommended for Funding

Funding recommendations are tentative, and not the official award Notice of Action, which is contingent upon final NEA review. If your project is recommended for funding, you must submit additional information to the NEA for approval before the award can be finalized.

Additional information may include:

- A revised project budget
- A project update, including:
 - If relevant, a list of participating artists and works of art. You may be required to provide bios and/or work samples for updated participants. Any changes to artists, works of art, or activities from the original application must be approved by the NEA. If substitutions do not align with the original proposal, we reserve the right to withdraw

the funding offer. Depending on the proposed changes, awards may be delayed or the offer withdrawn.

- Updates on human ethics training certificates and Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviews.
- [ADA and Section 504 Compliance information](#). See [Post-Award Requirements and Administration](#) for more information.

Submission Requirements & Deadlines

Pre-Application Required Registrations

Before applying, all applicants must register with Login.gov, the System for Award Management (SAM) at SAM.gov, and Grants.gov. All three required registrations must be active to submit Part 1 of the application through Grants.gov. Returning applicants must renew or verify that their registrations are up to date prior to the application deadline. Applicants must provide a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) in their application; and continue to maintain an active registration in SAM.gov with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal agency.

A **Registration Guidance document** is available on the [Research Awards](#) page, which provides detailed information about the registration process, including links to each registration site and support resources. **Registering and maintaining accounts with Login.gov, SAM, and Grants.gov is FREE.**

Submission Methods

Application materials must be submitted electronically; refer to the Application Instructions found on the [Research Awards](#) page.

Contact Information

The [Contacts](#) page has information for reaching NEA staff, Login.gov, SAM, and Grants.gov.

Application Submission Dates and Times

The NEA suggests setting an internal application deadline for your organization that is at minimum 24-48 hours before the actual application deadline. Do not wait until the day of the deadline to submit. **Late, ineligible, and incomplete applications will not be reviewed.**

| STAGE | DATE |
|---|---|
| Part 1: Application Package Available on Grants.gov | February 2026 |
| Part 1: Grants.gov Submission Deadline | March 23, 2026 11:59 pm Eastern Time |
| Part 2: NEA Applicant Portal Opens to Applicants | March 26, 2026 9:00 am Eastern Time |
| Part 2: NEA Applicant Portal Submission Deadline | April 2, 2026 11:59 pm Eastern Time |
| Notification of recommended funding* or rejection | November 2026 |
| Earliest project start date | January 1, 2027 |

*If your project is recommended for funding, you must submit [additional information](#) to the NEA for approval before an award can be finalized. Specific due dates will be included in the tentative funding recommendation notice.

Extensions to the Submission Deadlines

Extensions to the submission deadlines will be considered **only** for registration or renewal issues, or technical malfunctions resulting from government technological systems failures (Login.gov, SAM.gov, Grants.gov, or NEA systems), as determined by the NEA. To be considered for an extension, you must provide documentation of a government technological systems failure that prevented your submission by the deadline.

In the event of a major emergency (e.g., a hurricane or government technological systems failure), the NEA Chair may adjust application deadlines for affected applicants. If a deadline is extended, an announcement will be posted on our website.

Extensions to the deadlines **will not** be considered for reasons such as:

- User error, including but not limited to, failing to register or apply on time, or failure to verify that your application was successfully submitted to Grants.gov and/or the Applicant Portal.
- Problems with the applicant's computer systems or Internet access.

Please note:

- Permission for a late Part 1 application submission cannot be granted in advance. If you feel you have a case for an extension, contact staff within one week **after** the Part 1 submission deadline with documentation of the issues you encountered.
- Applications submitted late or outside the Grants.gov system (e.g., an emailed SF-424) will not be processed, reviewed, or considered for funding.

Incomplete Applications

NEA staff will not contact applicants to request missing material. For your application to be considered complete, every required item **MUST** be included in your application, and submitted on time. An organization cannot add missing items and resubmit the application after the application deadline.

Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is not subject to Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs Executive Order 12372.

Application Review

Priority will be given to applications that present theory-driven research agenda, questions, and methodologies that investigate the value and/or impact of the arts in American life.

Review Criteria

Applications will be reviewed based on the criteria below, with equal weight assigned to artistic excellence and artistic merit.

Artistic Excellence

- **Clarity of the research agenda and project activities**, including commitment to both short- and long-term project objectives. This includes the appropriateness of the project for this funding opportunity, the coherence of the proposed project activities and their correspondence to the Lab's research agenda, and evidence that the research agenda is informed by extant literature, as appropriate. This also includes plans for sustaining the research agenda beyond the initial award's period of performance.
- **Clarity of the proposed keystone research study**, including the conceptual framework, research design, and analytical methods to be used, and the relationship of these elements to the proposed research questions. This includes, if relevant, the keystone study's Institutional Review Board plans and/or status.
- **Research qualifications of the key project personnel and organizations involved**, including the proposed technical working group. This includes the degree to which the mission and/or experience of the Lab team and the nature of the interdisciplinary collaboration advance the goals of the NEA Research Labs program and the proposed research agenda. As appropriate, this includes discussion of planned or actual ethics training on human subjects research protections for relevant personnel, as well as planned training or mentorship activities for early-career personnel. This also includes the appropriateness of the artistic and/or research disciplines represented on the project team.
- **Ability to carry out the project on time and within budget**, including the reasonableness of the budget.

Artistic Merit

- **Plan to develop a website and products and/or services that will engage the scientific and artistic communities and the greater public** with the Lab's work throughout the period of performance. This includes plans to produce and release reports, articles, tools, programs or services and/or to host convenings. This also includes creative communication and distribution strategies to make the research findings and products data accessible to the public and to other researchers and practitioners. Finally, this element includes, where applicable, the potential for raw- and/or meta-data to be shared with other researchers and the public, including through such platforms as open-access journals and public data repositories.

- **High potential of the project activities to benefit the public in one or more of the following ways:**
 - Likely to yield results that are generalizable, even for discrete populations or practitioner groups.
 - Likely to spur innovation in arts-related research, policy, or practice—e.g., through the development, testing, and standardization of models, tools, or evidence-based guides.
 - Likely to extend access to the arts and their benefits to a larger proportion of the U.S. population, including those for whom there are limited opportunities.
- **Potential for the Lab’s research agenda to continue meaningfully** after the conclusion of NEA-supported activities.

Review & Selection Process

Applications are checked for completeness and eligibility by NEA staff. Eligible applications are reviewed, according to the review criteria above, in closed session by interdisciplinary research and evaluation advisory panelists. Each panel includes at least one knowledgeable layperson. Panels are convened remotely, and membership changes regularly. The panel recommends the projects to be supported, and the staff reconciles panel recommendations with the funds that are available. These recommendations are forwarded to the National Council on the Arts, where they are voted on in an open, public session.

The National Council on the Arts makes recommendations to the NEA Chair.

The NEA Chair reviews the recommendations and makes the final decision on all awards.

Application Status Updates

Applicants will receive a tentative funding offer or a notice of rejection via email. Refer to the [Application Calendar](#) for expected notification dates. Do not request the status of your application before the listed notification date. Applicants tentatively recommended for funding will receive a preliminary congratulatory message, with a request for required [project and budget updates](#).

Other Requirements

Responsible Conduct of Research

The NEA requires applicants under this program to comply with all applicable laws and regulations governing the conduct of research in the United States. We require award recipients to obtain permissions (including but not limited to the acquisition of existing data) from all appropriate entities or individuals (including but not limited to minors or other sensitive populations) for conducting the proposed project. These may include, but are not limited to, approval from Institutional Review Boards (IRBs), and/or data licensing for the acquisition of existing data, as may be required.

Data collection activities conducted under an award are the sole responsibility of the recipient organization, and the NEA's support of the project does not constitute approval of those data collection procedures. Therefore, data collected from respondents/participants will be conducted by the recipient or at the recipient's direction. Any researchers collecting data for a project supported with NEA funds—or by the cost share funds for the project—**may not represent to those subjects that such data are being collected on the NEA's behalf**. Recipients may, however, use the NEA logo to aid in data collection if data collection is included in the project budget. In such cases, use of the logo must include the award number, and the recipient should not state or imply that such data are being collected at the direction of or on behalf of the NEA.

Applicants who propose *primary data collection* as part of their projects are required to describe plans and/or status of ethics training on human subjects research protections, including such aspects as working with minors and other sensitive populations, as well as the role of IRBs. Evidence of such plans and/or status can take the form of an active, unexpired certificate of completion of a training module. The NEA does not specify or endorse any specific educational programs. Certificates of completion of the training are not required at the time of application. If you are recommended for an award, you will be expected to submit active, unexpired certificates of completion of a training module for each key personnel involved with primary data collection or analysis of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) from human subjects. **The NEA will not reimburse costs for ethics training under this program.** Award recipients are required to submit updated ethics training documentation as relevant.

In addition, applicants who include *primary data collection* as a proposed project activity are required to provide an explanation for whether IRB approval is needed to execute the project. If IRB approval is required, then applicants also must indicate the measures they have taken or plan on taking to gain IRB approval. If multiple organizations are directly involved in human subjects research for a proposed project, then the applicant must provide documentation from each of those organizations as well. Recipients are required to submit IRB approval documentation to the NEA prior to engaging in any activity determined to require IRB approval, as well as submit updated IRB documentation as relevant.

IMPORTANT: For this program, the NEA may withhold award funds until IRB approval and ethics training certificates are submitted to the NEA.

Costs of submitting research proposals to IRBs are allowable only if this activity takes place during the award period of performance; however, the application proposal must include evidence that the applicant has consulted with their preferred IRB or IRBs.

The [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) provides additional guidance and resources for learning about the responsible conduct of research, including [decision charts for assessing whether a project needs an IRB/research ethics review](#), a set of [free training modules](#), and a [database of registered IRBs](#) that applicants could consult with; the [National Science Foundation](#) also has resources related to IRB and human subjects research protections.

Data Management and Sharing

We intend for the Research Labs program to generate new findings that will inform the public—including researchers and/or practitioners in the arts or other domains—about the value and/or impact of the arts in American life. For more detail on what is required, see the Data Access and Management Plan section of the Application Instructions.

Costs of storing and/or sharing data are only allowable if these data management activities take place during the period of performance.

Award Notices

The official award notification (i.e., a notice of action authorized by the NEA Office of Grants Management) is the only legal and valid confirmation of award. Receipt of your official award notification can take several months depending on factors such as reviewing changes to the project budget, the number of awards to be processed, NEA Congressional appropriations level, etc.

All NEA awards are contingent on active SAM registration and compliance with 2 CFR 200, NEA's legislation 20 U.S.C. § 954 and 955, along with other federal statutes, regulations, and executive orders that apply to federal financial assistance awards and established NEA policies. The NEA will not be able to issue an award if you have an expired SAM.gov registration on September 1 of the fiscal year listed on this funding opportunity or if the project is not compliant with applicable statutes and regulations.

Risk Review

All recommended applications undergo a review to evaluate risk posed by the applicant organization prior to making a federal award. The review may include past performance on federal awards, meeting reporting deadlines, compliance with terms and conditions, audit findings, etc.

Final Reporting on Previous Awards

Before the NEA issues any award, organizations must have submitted acceptable Final Report packages by the due date(s) for all previous NEA award(s).

Post-Award Requirements & Administration

General Terms & Conditions

Federal government-wide and agency-specific requirements that relate to NEA awards are highlighted in our [General Terms & Conditions](#) (GTCs). The GTCs incorporate the adoption of 2 CFR Part 200 by reference. The document also explicitly identifies where the NEA has selected options offered in the regulation, such as budget waivers and requirements for use of program income. It also includes requirements for cost share funds, reporting requirements, amendment processes, and termination actions. **Recipients must review, understand, and comply with these requirements.** Failure to comply with the GTCs for an award may result in termination of an award, and/or returning funds to the NEA, among other consequences.

Implementation of Title 2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards

The guidance under 2 CFR Part 200 from the federal government's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) establishes clarity and consistency for pre- and post-award requirements applicable to federal award recipients. The NEA has adopted the OMB Guidance in [2 CFR part 200 under §3255.1 Adoption of 2 CFR Part 200](#). The NEA's adoption of 2 CFR Part 200 gives regulatory effect to the OMB guidance, including any updates to it.

Crediting Requirement

Recipients must clearly acknowledge NEA support of the awarded project in their programs and related promotional material, including publications and websites. Additional acknowledgment requirements or guidance may be provided later (e.g., provision of America250-specific NEA logos). The NEA does not fund general operating support, so you must ensure that the NEA is only credited supporting the specific project and not your entire organization or its operations.

In *publications and presentations* of the data and the findings, acknowledgment of the NEA must be prominently displayed, including the NEA award number; appropriate disclaimers are also required, depending on the nature of the product. Additional NEA Research Labs program requirement: to the extent possible, include the NEA Research Labs visual identifier in all materials.

- *Sample crediting language:* This project was supported in part or in whole by an award from the NEA Research Labs program at the National Endowment for the Arts: Award# xxxxxxx-38-xx.
- *Sample disclaimer language:* The opinions expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not represent the views of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The NEA does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of the information included in this material and is not responsible for any consequence of its use.

In all other places (including but not limited to presentations concerning the project and material created for social media), the recipient must clearly acknowledge support from the NEA, regardless of the medium of the material, except as noted in [Responsible Conduct of Research](#).

Additional information on crediting can be found in the NEA Research Labs Media Toolkit in the [How to Manage Your Award Handbook](#).

Changes in Projects

Pre-Award: Applicants must notify the NEA of any significant changes in their project that occur after applying. If the project, the applicant's eligibility, or the organization's capacity to carry out the project changes significantly before an award is made, the NEA may revise or withdraw the funding recommendation.

Post-Award: Recipients are expected to carry out a project consistent with the proposal that was approved for funding by the NEA. If changes to the project are required, the recipient must request approval from the Office of Grants Management, which is **the only office authorized to amend or change an NEA award. Written and/or verbal approval of proposed project changes from any other NEA office does not constitute an approved change to an award.** Detailed information is included in the [General Terms & Conditions](#).

Project Reporting and Evaluation

Before applying, review the reporting requirements for the NEA's [Final Reports](#). If you have any questions about the agency's objectives or the required final reports, contact NEA staff.

NEA Research Labs recipients will be required to submit quarterly progress reports to the NEA throughout the life of the award. Projects that extend beyond one year will be required to submit an additional annual progress report, and must include proof of updated ethics training on human subjects research protections and Institutional Review Board (IRB) materials as necessary. **Failure to submit progress reports will delay the release of award funds.**

All recipients are required at a minimum to submit a Final Descriptive Report (FDR), a Federal Financial Report (FFR), a Geographic Location of Project Activity Report (GEO), and two (2) Research Products within 120 days of the end of their period of performance.

Recipients must maintain project documentation, including financial records, for three (3) years following submission of final reports.

Product Requirement for Research Labs

Within 120 days of the end of the period of performance, recipients are required to submit, at a minimum, two Research Products for each award:

- 1) A **link to a NEA Research Lab website**, and
- 2) One **15-30-page research report** that is of publishable quality and, at a minimum, includes two separate components: an **abstract/summary** and a **full research paper**.
 - **Abstract/Summary:** an abstract/summary of no more than one page in length describing the study's research goals, methods, findings, conclusions, and implications for research, policy, and/or practice. This should be written for **both non-technical**

and technical audiences.

- **Full Research Paper:** Full research papers (excluding the abstract and executive summary) typically are comprehensive accounts of the project. These include, but are not limited to, academic research articles; white/grey papers; and books or book chapters. Full research papers may vary in format and organization, and typically contain some or all of the following components:
 - An explanation of research question(s) and why they are important.
 - A literature review of previous work on the topic, and conceptual frameworks or theories guiding the research, as appropriate.
 - A description of the research methods (e.g., sample characteristics and/or data source characteristics, procedures, measures and assessments, and the data analysis plan).
 - A summary of the results/findings of the analysis, including positive, negative, and null findings, as relevant. This should include quantitative measures of uncertainty (e.g., confidence intervals, error margins, or sensitivity analyses) if those measures were used.
 - Interpretations of the results/findings; strengths and limitations of the research; future directions; and research and/or policy recommendations based on the findings.
 - A list of works cited or references.
 - Tables and figures, as appropriate.
 - Any appendices or supplementary material.
 - Contact information of the corresponding author (name and email at a minimum) and websites that have more information about the project, such as additional papers, products, and data (including raw and/or meta-data).

For translational research projects, recipients are encouraged to also submit a research product that can be used easily by practitioners or researchers who might be interested in developing a similar program, model, or tool.

Final research papers from grantees may be posted to the NEA website as “working papers” unless they already have been published in another outlet—in which case, they will be replaced with the published versions. However, grantees may request an embargo of up to one year from their period of performance end date, so that the papers are not posted to the NEA website within this period. Even if the NEA agrees to offer an embargo period to the grantee, the agency still may opt to put the grantee’s abstract/summary online. Following the end of the embargo period, the NEA may post the grantee’s final paper to the agency’s website, with any additional changes requested by the grantee.

Please contact the NEA if you are contacted by the press or if you proactively engage the press about your awarded research through outlets such as news media, radio, and TV; and more informal outlets such as newsletters, listservs, blogs, and social media. You may notify us of your media engagement and publications at NEAResearchGrants@arts.gov.

Ownership and Use of Materials

Any materials (the “Material”) produced under an NEA Research award, including but not limited to academic research articles, white/grey papers, books/ book chapters, training materials, research, and data, are deemed to be owned by the recipient. The recipient must use the Material in a manner consistent with the award terms and conditions including but not limited to crediting requirements. The NEA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive and irrevocable right to obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the Material for Federal purposes, and to authorize others to do so (2 CFR 200.315).

Legal Requirements and Assurance of Compliance

The [Legal Requirements](#) section on our website provides information about key legal requirements that may apply to an applicant or recipient. It is not an exhaustive list; more details may be found in Appendix A of the [General Terms & Conditions](#).

By signing and submitting the application form on Grants.gov, the Applicant certifies that it is in compliance with the statutes outlined in the [Assurance of Compliance](#) and all related National Endowment for the Arts regulations as well as all applicable executive orders, and that it will maintain records and submit the reports that are necessary to determine its compliance. For more information, review the [Assurance of Compliance FAQ](#).

It is ultimately your responsibility to ensure that you are compliant with all legal, regulatory, and policy requirements applicable to your award.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Rehabilitation Act Section 504

As outlined in the [Assurance of Compliance](#) all NEA-funded projects must be accessible to people with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities may include artists, performers, audiences, visitors, teaching artists, students, staff, and volunteers, among others. Funded activities must be held in a physically-accessible venue. Program access and effective communication must also be provided for participants and audience members with disabilities. For technical assistance on how to make your project accessible, contact accessibility@arts.gov or see [Accessibility Resources](#).

In accordance with the [General Terms & Conditions](#), your organization must have a Section 504 self-evaluation on file and a designated 504/accessibility coordinator on staff.

If your project is recommended for funding, you will be asked to provide detailed information describing how the project will be physically and programmatically accessible to people with disabilities:

- Buildings and facilities (including projects held in historic facilities) must be physically accessible. The following are some examples, though this is not an exhaustive list:

- Ground-level/no-step entry, ramped access, and/or elevators to project facilities and outdoor spaces, including paths of travel;
- Wheelchair-accessible box office, stage/backstage, restrooms, water fountains, meeting and dressing rooms;
- Directional signage for accessible entrances, restrooms, and other facilities; and
- Accessible workspaces for employees.
- Programmatic activities must be accessible either as part of the funded activity or upon request. The following are some examples, but your examples should be relevant to your proposed activities:
 - Accommodations for performances, tours, virtually streamed events, conferences, and lectures, such as sign language interpretation, real-time captioning, and audio description;
 - Print materials in alternative formats, such as large-print brochures/labels/programs, braille, and electronic/digital formats;
 - Accessible and screen reader-compatible electronic materials, documents, websites, and virtual platforms, and alternative text for images;
 - Closed/open captioning and audio/visual description for video, film, television broadcasts, and virtual events;
 - Auxiliary aids and devices, such as assistive listening devices.

Costs associated with project-related programmatic accommodations, such as those listed above, may be included in an NEA award budget. Physical construction or renovation expenses may not be included in the award budget.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR RESEARCH AWARD PRODUCTS

Ensure that your products are developed in a format readable by screen reading software. Provide a text equivalent for every non-text element, such as tables, charts, and photos by tagging them with alternate text descriptions (alt text) and captions. Do not use color-coding as the only method of conveying information.

Civil Rights

Projects may reach a particular group or demographic (such as sex, disability, economic status, race, color or national origin); however, projects may not be exclusionary under Federal civil rights laws and policies prohibiting discrimination. This extends to hiring practices, artist selection processes, and audience engagement. The NEA recognizes that selection criteria in research projects that focus on specific populations are warranted where nondiscriminatory justifications establish that such criteria are appropriate for the scientific study design and/or the purpose of the research. Therefore, federal funding for research projects with a focus on a particular group or demographic may be permissible. Review the [Assurance of Compliance](#) which outlines relevant federal statutes, NEA regulations, and executive orders. For additional guidance regarding how this applies to the NEA Research Awards program, contact [NEA Staff](#).

The Office of Civil Rights investigates complaints about compliance with accessibility standards

as well as other federal civil rights statutes. For further information and copies of the nondiscrimination regulations, contact civilrights@arts.gov or 202-682-5454.

Laws Relating to Lobbying (31 U.S.C. 1352)

For organizations applying for more than \$100,000 (31 U.S.C. 1352). The applicant certifies that:

- a) It has not and will not use federal appropriated funds or cost share funds to pay any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a member of a National Endowment for the Arts advisory panel or the National Council on the Arts, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of or modification to any federal grant or contract.
- b) If it has used or will use any funds other than federal appropriated funds to pay any person for influencing or attempting to influence any of the individuals specified above, the applicant:
 - i) Is not required to disclose that activity if that person is regularly employed by the applicant. (Regularly employed means working for at least 130 days within the year immediately preceding the submission of this application.)
 - ii) Will complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," if that person is not regularly employed by the applicant.
 - iii) Will require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards of more than \$100,000 and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Notice

Disclosure Notice: Where required or permitted by law, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) may share with the public or other third parties a copy of applicants' awarded applications and/or related materials submitted to the NEA.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated at an average of 35 hours per response. This includes the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. We welcome any suggestions that you might have on improving the guidelines and making them as easy to use as possible. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: webmgr@arts.gov, attention: Reporting Burden. Note: Applicants are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it displays a currently valid U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number.

ALN No. 45.024

OMB No. 3135-0112 Expires 11/30/2026

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I find out when new guidelines are released?

Guidelines for Research Labs are typically posted in January of each year, with an application deadline in late March. Please monitor our website for updates. You may also email NEAResearchGrants@arts.gov to sign up for our distribution list to receive updates. You can also sign up via Grants.gov.

What is the difference between the Research Grants in the Arts program and the NEA Research Labs program?

Research Grants in the Arts funds discrete research studies that investigate the value and/or impact of the arts in American life. See [examples of previous Research Grants in the Arts projects](#). *NEA Research Labs* funds long-term research agendas that include multiple empirical studies and the dissemination of various products or services for promoting public knowledge about the arts and their contributions to American life. Each Lab must include an interdisciplinary team of researchers. NEA Research Labs are eligible for up to one subsequent renewal award for a project consistent with the intent of the program.

Do I need to include citation references in my proposal, and if so, where do I put them?

Yes. References should be included in the Project Narrative section of the Grant Application Form. Do not include them as a special attachment; the files will be removed.

What method of citation is preferred?

We do not currently have any requirements regarding the style of citation. Common citation formats include but are not limited to APA, AMA, Chicago, and MLA. Do not use footnoting in the text fields of the Grant Application Form, although this is acceptable for any PDF attachments.

Can I get a sample application?

Examples under the Research Labs program are not available at this time.

What is the Earliest and Latest Start Date for my deadline?

You may request a start date as early as January 1, 2027 and as late as December 1, 2027.

How long can my project last? May I apply for another project during this period?

NEA Research Lab awards generally allow a period of performance of up to three years, with the possibility of one subsequent renewal award, subject to agency priorities, the availability of funds, recipient performance, and the agency's regular review process. An eligible organization may apply for funding for another project (with totally different project costs) in a subsequent year(s) in other NEA grant opportunities, even if a NEA-supported project is still underway. Note that if you do receive an extension on an existing award, it may affect your new proposed project. All requests for changes and extensions to awards must be submitted through a proper REACH account.

My organization received an NEA Research Labs award last year (or in prior years); are we eligible to apply under the NEA Research Labs program?

It depends. As an official applicant, you may be eligible to apply for this round depending on the existing Lab's period of performances for their awards. If all previous Lab awards will be closed out by the "Earliest Start Date" for your new application, you are eligible to apply. However, submitting a new application will forfeit the possibility of a subsequent renewal award under the existing Lab award.

Separately, you can serve as a partner on another application from an eligible applicant organization—partnering organizations and/or partnering individuals are not required to meet the official applicant eligibility requirements.

Will it be possible to make project changes if needed later in the process?

Please try to complete information within the application to the best of your knowledge. If you are recommended for an award, you will have an opportunity to request changes (e.g., a time extension, a modification to project activities) as outlined in the [How to Manage Your Award Handbook](#).

We will work with you to try to accommodate changes to your project, but approval is not guaranteed. If you need to request a change, please contact the NEA at both grants@arts.gov and NEAResearchGrants@arts.gov to discuss what is possible. Only the NEA Office of Grants Management is authorized to amend or change an NEA award. Written and/or verbal approval of proposed project changes from any other NEA office does not constitute an approved change to an award.