

Schmidt Sciences

2026 Humanities and Artificial Intelligence Virtual Institute (HAVI) RFP

Request for Proposals:

Humanities & Artificial Intelligence Virtual Institute (HAVI)

Overview

Schmidt Sciences is requesting proposals to the Humanities and AI Virtual Institute (HAVI), aimed at fostering research in the digital humanities with a particular focus on artificial intelligence. Ideal projects will have co-PIs with expertises from both the humanities and AI and will address research questions from both domains. This request is open to universities and non-profits globally.

Proposal Due Date	March 13, 2026, 11:59PM EDT
Notification of Decision	Summer 2026
Funding Levels	Level I: \$100,000 - \$299,999 Level II: \$300,000 - \$800,000
Estimated Number of Awards	15 - 25
List of previous awards under this program	Previous Awardees
Period of Performance	Level I: 1 - 2 years Level II: 1 - 3 years
Informational Webinars	January 20, 2026, 1PM EST. Register here . February 24, 2026, 1PM EST. Register here .
Contact email	havi@schmidtsciences.org
Link to FAQ	FAQ

What is HAVI?

Schmidt Sciences' [Humanities and Artificial Intelligence Virtual Institute](#) (HAVI) is a philanthropic initiative which intends to spur innovative, domain-specific research outcomes from humanities scholars through the integral application of AI-inspired tools and techniques as well as produce insights from the humanities that will advance the development of AI.

Current AI models struggle with multilingual contexts, multimodal datasets, and the nuances of historical and cultural diversity, hindering their application in humanities disciplines. HAVI aims to address these limitations by fostering interdisciplinary collaborations between AI and humanities researchers, focused on developing and applying new AI techniques to answer complex and compelling humanities research questions.

Our approach expects humanities scholars to play integral roles in AI development, while AI researchers gain deeper understanding of data, models, and problem spaces from humanistic perspectives. This collaborative framework aims to produce breakthrough results that advance both AI capabilities and humanities scholarship.

Funding Levels

Applicants can apply for one of two funding levels:

Level I: \$100,000 - \$299,999

This level is aimed at new research projects without an established record of past success. It could be newly established collaborations or established teams, but the research is in an early stage.

Activities at this Level I stage might include things like piloting new methods or developing prototypes. A successfully completed Level I project could be a candidate for future Level II funding.

Level II: \$300,000 - \$800,000

This level is aimed at scaling up and expanding mature projects. Applicants should be prepared to discuss the results of a previous planning or prototyping stage and how further funding will enable their project to reach its intended goals. (Note that Level II applicants do not have to have previous Level I funding from HAVI; but they should be able to demonstrate results from earlier stages of their research.)

What is a Humanities Research Question? Traditional Research vs. Tools/Methods/Infrastructure Research

Many humanities grant programs do not allow for research that focuses largely on developing new tools, methods, instruments, or infrastructure. HAVI, however, welcomes such projects.

When describing your humanities research questions, you may focus on “traditional” humanities questions (e.g. “how did food shortages during the U.S. Civil War influence the food culture for people in the South?”) or on “methodological” ones (e.g. “can we develop a new kind of sensor that uses AI that will help archaeologists determine where to dig?”) Many projects will pose both kinds of questions.

Projects whose primary research question is about developing tools or methods should make a strong case for why this tool is needed and how it will benefit the humanities and enable scholars to address more traditional research questions. The team should be well-suited to take on the proposed research, possessing the relevant domain and technical expertise in both the humanities and computer science fields. Applicants are encouraged to include clear test cases for any tools/methods they are developing.

Out-of-Scope Topics

Although the topics below are important and may be the focus of future HAVI grantmaking efforts, they are out-of-scope for this request for proposals:

- The creation of AI-aided artistic works.
- Policy, policy-adjacent and advocacy projects.
- Projects focused primarily on the history and/or critique of AI.
- Projects focused primarily on pedagogy and curriculum development.
- Development of AI methods without a humanities focus; humanities-based projects that do not propose the use of AI.
- Pure digitization projects.
- Non-technical aspects of AI, including ethics, policy, and governance research.

Access to Computing Resources

Schmidt Sciences has an allocation of computing hours and data storage resources set aside for HAVI-funded researchers. In your budget, you may request access to these resources. (See Question 8 under “How to Apply” below for details.)

Selection Criteria

Applications will be reviewed by Schmidt Sciences staff and by outside reviewers for eligibility and quality using the criteria below.

1. Clarity and Feasibility of Execution Plan
 - Does the proposed work present a feasible and technically sound approach to accomplish the project objectives within the time frame?
 - Is the project well-scoped for the chosen funding level?
2. Suitability of Team
 - Is the team well-suited to take on the proposed research?
 - Does the team include high quality representation and leadership from both humanities and computer science?
3. Potential Impact on the Humanities Field

- Does this project have the potential to catalyze groundbreaking, domain-specific research outcomes from humanities scholars through the integral application of AI-inspired tools and techniques? This can be illustrated by:
 - Innovative approaches that open up entirely new pathways of inquiry
 - Progress towards overcoming an existing bottleneck in academic scholarship
4. Potential Impact on the Development of Artificial Intelligence
- Does this project have the potential to produce insights and techniques from the humanities that will advance the development of AI generally? This can be illustrated by:
 - Construction of datasets (or new methods of data acquisition and/or construction) with properties that reduce or eliminate current problems in AI
 - Addresses a deficit area in AI that could benefit from humanistic data, theory and/or knowledge, such as multimodal understanding
 - Produce innovative model architectures driven by humanities research use case, such as joint embedding or new unsupervised models

How to Apply

Documents should be submitted through the SurveyMonkey Apply portal. Below is a list of the items you will need to submit:

1. Project Information

Name, Email, & Title of person submitting the proposal

Institution/Recipient of Funds (Please ensure this reflects the exact legal name of the organization. This should be the [fiscal sponsor](#) if there is one).

Total Project Budget (USD)

Project Start Date (MM/YY)

Project End Date (MM/YY)

Level I projects should not exceed 2 years. Level II projects should not exceed 3 years.

2. Project Level

Are you applying for Level I or Level II award?

3. Keywords

Please provide five keywords, comma-separated, that describe your project.

4. Disciplines

Please provide a list, comma-separated, of the key academic disciplines for this project (e.g. French literature, French history, computer science, East Asian studies, computational linguistics, etc).

5. Project Abstract

Please provide a short abstract of your project written for a non-specialist audience. (maximum of 1000 characters, including spaces).

6. Humanities Research Question

Please provide a short, high-level description of your humanities research question(s). The aim is to help a non-specialist reader understand how your project will advance the humanities. (maximum of 1000 characters, including spaces).

7. AI Research Question

Please provide a short, high-level description of your AI research question(s). The aim is to help a non-specialist reader understand how your project will advance AI. (maximum of 1000 characters, including spaces).

8. Compute Needs

Please answer the questions about any compute hours your project requires (e.g. considering a typical H100 GPU with 80GB of VRAM). You may request compute hours directly from Schmidt Sciences at no charge. Requests to Schmidt Sciences for compute hours are not assured and will be allocated, if at all, in Schmidt Sciences' sole discretion, and subject to such terms and conditions as Schmidt Sciences shares from time to time, including terms and conditions that may be required by third-party compute resource providers.

9. Project Narrative (up to 8 pages)

Please describe your proposed project, and address the questions listed below (please create a section within your document for each of the questions). Proposals must not exceed 8 pages, including figures but excluding citations. Budgets will be submitted separately. References should be listed in a reference list at the end of the document. (The narrative document must be uploaded as a PDF.)

- **Problem:** What is the challenge/problem being addressed by this proposal? How does the challenge and the proposed work specifically connect with the priorities of the HAVI program? What is the specific humanities research question you seek to answer, and why is AI the correct tool to address the stated humanities research question? What is the specific AI research question you seek to answer, and how will the humanities help you address that question?
- **Approach and Methods:** What is the approach this project will take, and why will the approach lead to progress toward the challenge/problem? Discuss why your project is appropriate for the budget level (Level I vs Level II) that you requested. Are there any risks associated with this approach, and how will you address this? What steps will you take to ensure ethical practice in the collection, analysis and use of data?
- **Environmental Scan:** How does your project fit in with the existing work in this field? What are the new and distinguishing features of this approach?
- **Impact:** If this project were successful, what would be different? Describe the intended impact with as much clarity and specificity as possible. Please illustrate how your project will further progress in both the humanities field as well as inform or improve the development of artificial intelligence.
- **Team:** Describe your project team and why they are the best people to lead this effort. Please highlight your team's expertise in both the humanities and AI. Please describe any planned approaches for fostering inclusive and collaborative research environments across diverse cultural or institutional contexts (e.g. describe how you will mentor students on the team). How will each team member lead and/or engage with the proposed work? Please provide details regarding the specific roles the members of the team will play in the plan for proposed activities.
- **Outreach and Dissemination:** Detail expected final products and their alignment with project goals. Outline dissemination plans to reach intended audiences, ensuring tools and results extend beyond the applicant institution.

10. Project Timeline and Implementation Template

Please use [this template](#) to provide details about the timeline (up to 3 years) for the proposed project. We are interested in understanding the primary anticipated activities and intended outputs for each year, as well as aspirational outcomes for the midpoint and end-point of the project. (Must be uploaded as a PDF.)

11. Team Template

Please use [this template](#) to describe the committed members of your project team, including name, email, professional title, institution, country, and a description of their role. Please explicitly designate your lead PI and co-PIs. (Must be uploaded as a PDF.)

12. Team CVs

Please upload the CVs of your PIs and co-PIs only through the form in Survey Monkey Apply. Each CV should not exceed two pages. (Must be uploaded as a PDF.)

13. Budget and Justification Template

Please use [this template](#) for your budget. (Must be uploaded as an Excel document.) At this stage, we seek a budget containing a list of total expenses organized by category, and broken down by each year of the project period. Please include a brief description for why each budget line item is needed in order for the team to reach their project goals.

Indirect costs (IC): Indirect costs must not exceed 10% for the entire project. For example, the indirect costs for an award totaling USD \$100,000 should not exceed USD \$10,000.

- The total IC for the entire project must be no more than 10% of the budget. This means that individual institutions within the proposing team may have more than 10% IC, as long as the total IC cap is respected for the overall budget across all institutions within the proposing team.
- Some costs often considered to be indirect by applying institutions can be considered as direct costs by Schmidt Sciences, provided they are directly related to the project and are individually itemized in the budget – for example, salaries, fringe benefits such as healthcare and retirement, laboratory usage charges, internet or data storage and use charges, or other computational charges could all be considered direct costs, if reasonable and allocable to the project or the project team.

Travel to PI Meeting: In your budget, please include a line item for the cost of travel for two members of your team to attend a HAVI PI meeting to be held on the east coast of the US (airfare/train/car only; SSci will cover hotel nights separately).

14. Awardee Information Sheet

Please submit the [Awardee Information Sheet](#) (must be uploaded as PDF). If the recipient of funds is located outside the United States or its territories, please also submit the [Non-US Grantee Information form](#) (can be signed with digital signature & uploaded as PDF or printed, signed with pen, scanned, and uploaded as PDF).

Opens

Dec 3 2025 12:00 AM (EST)

Deadline

Mar 13 2026 11:59 PM (EDT)

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