NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Overview

I am the prospective project director of a Collaborative Research application and have looked at the Notice of Funding Opportunity but am overwhelmed by all the sections. Where should I start?

While you should read the Notice of Funding Opportunity in its entirety, the following points may help to get you started:

- Right from the beginning, partner with a research development specialist or grant administrator at your institution to work together on different parts of the application.
- Study **A 1. Purpose** in the Program Description section and decide which application category is the best match for your project. Compare your ideas with **D 6. Funding restrictions** to make sure you are not applying for activities or costs that are not allowed in this program. Consider the information about **Related funding opportunities (H. Other Information)** to decide whether parts of your project might find success in other NEH programs.
- Pay particular attention to **C 3. Other Eligibility Information** to help select your project team.
- Focus on the instructions in **D 2. i. Project Narrative** to craft a compelling presentation of your project's significance and content. While composing the application narrative, keep the list under **E 1. Review Criteria** close at hand to make sure your application responds to each of the evaluation criteria in the appropriate parts of the narrative.
- Assemble materials for **D 2. iv. Attachments** with care to make sure all the required components and information are included.
- If possible, submit an optional **draft** before or by the October 15 deadline (see **D 4. Submission Dates and Times**).
- Your institutional grant administrator, who is likely responsible for budgets, federal compliance, and proposal submission, will be looking more closely at the sections **D 2. ii. Research and Related Budget**, **D 2. iii Application Components**, **D 3.**

Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management, and **F. Federal Award Administration Information**.

A. Program Description

1. My collaborators and I are planning to work on a proposal that responds to NEH's "A More Perfect Union" special initiative. Does this help our chances of getting an award?

No. All projects, including those that respond to special initiatives and encouragements, are evaluated by the same review criteria found in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. After a project receives an NEH award it may be associated with one of the agency's initiatives.

2. Must all Collaborative Research projects have project websites? Must they disseminate their results electronically?

No. Although an increasing number of projects have an online presence, this is not a NEH requirement. Review, in particular, the guidance under the "Final product and dissemination" heading (see D 2. I Project Narrative).

B. Award Information

1. We plan to apply for a period of performance of 18 months under the Manuscript Preparation category. May we request $200,000 in funding?

No. Periods of performance that total less than full years will be prorated. For example, the maximum amount you may request for 18 months in the Manuscript Preparation category is $150,000 ($100,000 for the maximum of one year of funding plus $50,000 for half of the maximum of a second year of funding).

2. Our timeline and budget exceed the period and funding amounts for the category we wish to apply for. What happens if we ask for more?

Applications that exceed the ceiling amount or established period of performance will be considered nonresponsive and will not be reviewed under this announcement.

C. Eligibility

1. Does a scholar need to have an advanced degree such as a PhD to serve as a project director for a Collaborative Research grant?

No. Only a terminal degree is needed. However, the project director's résumé should include evidence (publications, presentations, and other related experience) that demonstrates their ability to carry out the project as proposed.

2. I am the sole U.S.-based researcher among an international group of collaborators. Can I be the project director of a Collaborative Research application and request funding to support my international colleagues' work?

Technically, yes, but keep in mind that the Notice of Funding Opportunity stresses the importance of an equitable balance of U.S. and non-U.S. project team members and the corresponding allocation of funds.

3. May our organization include a scholarly collaborator from another country in our project?

Yes, and for Planning International Collaboration applications they are required. For the other categories, international collaborators are permitted and can be compensated with NEH funds. consistent with the guidance provided in Section C3 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity regarding collaborative projects with foreign entities. Please remember that projects including international scholars must maintain an equitable balance in the allocation of NEH funds between U.S.-based scholars and international scholars.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. How important is the format of the application (including appendices)?

Applications must follow the format provided in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. Applications that violate the formatting instructions, including page limits, will not be reviewed.

2. What constitutes a good title for my project?

Your title should be descriptive of the project, substantive, and free of specialized language. It should be easily understood by the general public. Omit technical terms, jargon, and unfamiliar words. Avoid a title that requires clarification by a subtitle.

The title included on the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance - Short Organizational form may not exceed 125 characters (including spaces and punctuation). Please note that title text over the limit is automatically deleted during the submission process. Your NEH project title does not necessarily have to be the same as the title of your proposed book or project.

> For example, "A History of Counterfeiting in the U.S., 1776-1900" is clearer than "Fakes and Fakers: A History of Counterfeiting in the U.S."

> When possible, include places and dates indicating a project's scope. For example, "Faith and Belief among New York City Catholics, 1945-1970" is clearer than "Faith and Belief in the Catholic Community."

> If a person is mentioned in your title, include dates and description. For example, "A Biography of German Philosopher Klaus von Guberstopper (1834-1910)" is clearer than "A Biography of Klaus von Guberstopper."

> Omit technical terms, jargon, and unfamiliar words. For example, "Time, Space, and Clocks in the 19th-Century British Novel" is clearer than "Chronotopes and Horologics in the 19th-Century British Novel."

NEH reserves the right to re-title funded projects that do not follow agency guidelines. Award recipients, however, are permitted to use their preferred title for any award products.

3. Our project description runs over the 1,000 character and space limitation on the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance - Short Organizational. Is that acceptable?

No. Anything that is over the character and space limitations in both the project title and project description fields is automatically deleted during the application submission process at Grants.gov.

4. Neither I nor my collaborators are able to work on our project during the academic year. Can we work on our project only during the summers?

No. The Collaborative Research Program supports sustained, full-time, or part-time activities over the course of the entire period of performance. If you are unable to devote sustained effort to your project, you could consider applying to the Summer Stipends program.

5. Must we have a contract with a publisher before applying in the Manuscript Preparation funding category?

No. Although having a contract is helpful, proposals without it can be successful, so long as there is an appropriate and feasible plan leading towards manuscript submission.

6. We have some supporting materials that are not in electronic format. How can we submit them?

You must convert them into one or more PDF files. See the Attachments Form instructions in the Notice of Funding Opportunity for guidance on how to format your PDFs.

7. We expect to receive some supporting materials after the deadline. Can they be added to our application?

No. Additional materials may not be added to an application after the deadline.

8. We are a team of collaborators from several different disciplines. Should we pick "interdisciplinary" as the field for our project on the Supplementary Cover Sheet for NEH Grant Programs?

No. You should pick a primary and secondary discipline before you pick "interdisciplinary" as your tertiary, since "interdisciplinary" is not a well-defined academic field.

Budget Advice

1. My collaborators and I are having a difficult time understanding the budget instructions. Whom should we contact for assistance?

You should contact your institution's research development, sponsored research, or grant administration office, which will likely be familiar with federal budget requirements. If the staff there have questions about allowable costs or administrative requirements, they should contact NEH's Office of Grant Management at grantmanagement@neh.gov.

2. Some of the items on our budget form can't be explained in the space available. Where can we provide additional information for these items?

You must attach a Budget Justification to the Research and Related Budget form (Section L), which briefly describes the amounts requested from NEH for each line item of the budget and how each item will support the achievement of the proposed objectives. If the NEH application requests support for part of a larger project, describe the overall design of the whole project and clearly delineate the specific part intended for NEH funding in the "History of the project and its productivity" section of the narrative (D 2. i).

3. Who should be named as a key person in section A on the Research and Related Budget form?

Project team members employed by the applicant institution who are playing a leadership role on the project should be included in Section A (Key Persons) while additional project team members employed by the applicant institution should be included in Section B. Other Personnel. Depending on their role on the project, costs for other project team members who are not employed by the applicant institution may be recorded in Section F3. Consultant Services or F5. Subawards/Consortium/Contractual Costs. Project team members who are not U.S. citizens and are receiving compensation should be listed in Section F3. Consultant Services. It is important to understand that not everyone included in Attachment 1: Project Team will be included as a key person on the budget, and the status an individual is granted for the purposes of the budget will have no impact on their role in the project and its implementation.

4. May we choose to hold our meetings outside of the United States?

Yes, but there must be a project-related and justifiable reason for convening outside of the United States. Saving money on lodging is not a sufficient justification. Any foreign travel must be undertaken on U.S. flag carriers (coach or equivalent), wherever such service is available. Refer to Articles 9 ("Travel Costs") and 10 ("Foreign Travel") of the General Terms and Conditions for Awards to Organizations (for grants and cooperative agreements issued December 26, 2014 or later) for further details.

E. Application Review

1. What can we do to increase our chances for success?

You should familiarize yourselves with all the materials on the program resource page by examining sample proposals, reviewing the list of recent funded projects, and by carefully adhering to the instructions in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. Submitting a draft is strongly encouraged. If your application is unsuccessful, request the reviewers' comments about your proposal and incorporate their advice in a revised application. For reasons of confidentiality, requests must be made by e-mail to collaborative@neh.gov by either the project director or the institutional grant administrator. If you still have specific questions, you may contact the Collaborative Research program staff by email at collaborative@neh.gov.

2. We applied for a grant last year and were unsuccessful. Will this be held against us if we apply again this year?

No. NEH regards all applications as new applications. Previous unsuccessful applications are considered confidential and will not be disclosed to the reviewers, who will not be the same

reviewers who evaluated your previous application. You are encouraged, therefore, not to mention unsuccessful applications in your narrative.