NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

DIVISION OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(Published on August 31, 2021)

Overview

I am the prospective project director of a Collaborative Research application and have looked at the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) but there is so much information. Where should I start?

From the beginning, partner with a research development specialist or grant administrator at your institution to work together on different parts of the application. Both parties should read the NOFO carefully, but the following points will help you get started:

- The project director should study **A1. Purpose** in the Program Description section and decide which project category is the best match for your project. Compare your ideas with **D6. Funding restrictions** to make sure you are not applying for unallowable activities or costs. Consider the information about **Related funding opportunities (H. Other Information)** to decide whether your project might find success in another NEH program.
- Pay particular attention to **C3. Other Eligibility Information** as you select your project team.
- Focus on the instructions in **D2.Content and Form of Application Submission** to craft a compelling presentation of your project's significance and content. While composing the application narrative, keep the list under **E1. 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 **D2. Content and Form of Application Submission** with care to make sure all the required components and information are included and that page limits and formatting criteria have been followed.
- If possible, submit an optional **draft** before or by the deadline stipulated in **D4. Submission Dates and Times**.
- The institutional grant administrator is responsible for budgets, federal compliance, and proposal submission and should look closely at sections **D2. Content and Form of Application Submission, especially the budget instructions**, D3. Unique

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

A. Program Description

1. My collaborators and I plan to work on a proposal that responds to NEH's "A More Perfect Union" special initiative. Will this improve our chances of receiving an award?

No. All projects, including those that respond to special initiatives and encouragements, are evaluated by the same review criteria found in the NOFO.

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 programmatic requirement. For more information, review the guidance under the "Final product and dissemination" heading (see **D2. Content and Form of Application Submission** in the NOFO).

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 request more?

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

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 NOFO 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. See section **C3. Other Eligibility Information** in the NOFO for more information regarding collaborative projects with foreign entities. Projects including international scholars must maintain an equitable balance in the allocation of NEH funds between U.S.-based and non-U.S.-based 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 NOFO. **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). 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, 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 NOFO 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.

9. We would like to maximize our chance of receiving an award, so we plan to submit a second application for the same project to another NEH program. Is that allowed?

Possibly. The two applications must be for distinct stages or components of the same overarching project and per 2 CFR §200.403(f) they cannot include overlapping costs. If you have concerns about your application's overlap, email collaborative@neh.gov.

Budget Advice

1. If we still have questions about allowable costs or administrative requirements, after we have read the NOFO and FAQ, whom should we contact?

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 (section L of the Research and Related Budget form) 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 (**D2. Content and Form of Application Submission**).

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 **A. Key Persons.** Additional project team members employed by the applicant institution should be included in **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 **F3**. **Consultant Services** or **F5. Subawards/Consortium/Contractual Costs**. Individuals affiliated with institutions outside the U.S. who are receiving compensation should be listed in **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?

Familiarize yourselves with all the materials on the program resource page (https://www.neh.gov/grants/research/collaborative-research-grants). There you will find sample proposals and a list of recently funded projects. You should also carefully adhere to the instructions in the NOFO. Submitting a draft is strongly encouraged. If your application is unsuccessful, request the reviewers' comments and incorporate their advice in a revised application. For reasons of confidentiality, requests for reviewers' comments must be made by email to collaborative@neh.gov by either the project director or the institutional grant administrator. If you still have specific questions, email the Collaborative Research program staff at collaborative@neh.gov.

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

No. NEH regards all applications as new. 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 not to mention unsuccessful applications in your narrative.