



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES  
DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

# HUMANITIES INITIATIVES

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

---

**My organization is eligible to apply for both the Humanities Initiatives at Colleges and Universities and the Humanities Initiatives at Community College programs. Which Humanities Initiatives program is right for our institution?**

There are five separate Humanities Initiatives programs.

Any U.S. accredited public or 501(c)(3) private institution of higher education can apply to Humanities Initiatives at Colleges and Universities. The other four programs are limited to certain eligible institutions: Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Community Colleges.

Institutions may be eligible for more than one Humanities Initiatives program, but cannot submit the same proposal to more than one of the five HI programs. Applicant institutions that are eligible to submit a proposal to Humanities Initiatives at Hispanic-Serving Institutions; Humanities Initiatives at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Humanities Initiatives at Tribal Colleges and Universities, or Humanities Initiatives at Community Colleges are encouraged to do so. Each of the five programs will be reviewed by a separate peer review panel. While a community college may choose to apply to the Humanities Initiative at College and Universities program, they will then compete against other colleges and universities. If the community college applies to Humanities Initiatives at Community College program, they will compete against other community colleges. Top rated applications from each of the five panels will go forward for review and recommendation by the Council and for final funding decisions by the NEH Chairman.

See Section C of the notice of funding opportunity for detailed information on eligibility.

**What first steps should we take in developing an NEH Humanities Initiatives grant proposal?**

First, read the notice of funding opportunity carefully, including the eligibility requirements in Section C. Be sure to read the review criteria by which your application will be judged in Section E. You may wish to discuss your proposal with colleagues or consult with a grants officer at your institution, if one is available. After this preparation, contact an NEH program officer for answers to questions, advice on the proposal, and review of draft proposals. The submission of

a draft is optional; if you wish to submit a draft, consult Section D in the notice of funding opportunity for the deadline. Call 202-606-2324 or email [hi@neh.gov](mailto:hi@neh.gov) to reach NEH staff. Email [hi@neh.gov](mailto:hi@neh.gov) to submit a draft proposal.

**Are sample narratives available?**

Yes. The sample proposals are available on the program resource pages for the five Humanities Initiatives programs: [Humanities Initiatives at Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#), [Humanities Initiatives at Colleges](#), [Humanities Initiatives at Hispanic-Serving Institutions](#), [Humanities Initiatives at Tribal Colleges and Universities](#), [Humanities Initiatives at Community Colleges](#), and [Humanities Initiatives at Colleges and Universities](#).

**Does our institution need a grant writer to prepare an application?**

No. NEH staff members are available to answer your questions and assist you as you prepare your proposal. Contact us at [hi@neh.gov](mailto:hi@neh.gov).

**May we apply for more than one NEH award at the same time?**

Yes, however, project directors may not simultaneously hold a full-time NEH individual award. Applicants interested in applying for more than one award should consult with a program officer.

**Our institution plans to submit multiple Humanities Initiatives proposals. Will NEH fund only one?**

Each application is evaluated on its own merits. NEH might fund both applications, one, or neither. As a reminder, overlapping project costs between two or more applications for federal funding and/or approved federal award budgets are not permitted.

**Our institution applied for an award last year and was unsuccessful. Will this be held against us if we apply again this year? Is there anything we can do to increase our chances for success this time?**

No. NEH evaluates all applications as new applications. If you are revising a previous submission, you may find it helpful to request the reviewers' comments on that application and to consult with an NEH program officer. To request the reviewers' comments or to get in touch with an NEH program officer, send an email message to [hi@neh.gov](mailto:hi@neh.gov).

**May we continue the work of a currently funded project with a subsequent NEH Humanities Initiatives award?**

An institution whose project has received NEH support may apply for a new or subsequent stage of that project. These proposals receive no special consideration and will be judged by the same criteria as others in the current competition. In addition, these proposals must be substantially updated and must include a description of the new activities and a justification of the new budget.

## **What constitutes a good title for our project?**

Your title should be brief (not exceeding 125 characters, including spaces and punctuation), descriptive of the project, and free of specialized language that might not be understood by the general public.

Avoid using a main title that requires clarification by the subtitle. For example, “Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales” is clearer than “Following the Pilgrims: Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales.”

Do not use the name of your institution or the name of the grant program to which you are applying in your title. For example, “Developing an Interdisciplinary Environmental Humanities Minor” is clearer than “George Washington University Humanities Initiatives Project.”

Use words and phrases that are informative and specific rather than puzzling or intriguing. For example, “The Civil Rights Movement in the United States, 1954-1968” is clearer than “Foot Soldiers for Liberation: The American Freedom Struggle.”

Omit technical terms, jargon, and unfamiliar words. For example, “Health and Disease in the Middle Ages” is clearer than “Paleopathology and Textual Analysis: Interrogating Medieval Epidemics.”

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.

## **May an NEH Humanities Initiatives award be used for the pursuit of independent research?**

No. NEH does, however, support independent research in the humanities through its [Public Scholar](#), [NEH-Mellon Fellowships for Digital Publication](#), [Fellowships](#), [Fellowships for Advanced Social Science Research on Japan](#), and [Summer Stipends](#) programs, as well as the Awards for Faculty [at Hispanic-Serving Institutions](#), [at Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#), and [at Tribal Colleges and Universities](#).

## **May the project director also serve as the institutional grant administrator?**

No. The project director may not serve as the institutional grant administrator. The role of the project director must be distinguished from that of the institutional grant administrator, who functions as the representative of the recipient organization with authority to act on the organization’s behalf in matters related to the administration of the award. All financial reports and prior approval requests such as budget revisions, extensions of the period of performance, and changes in key personnel must be signed or countersigned by the institutional grant administrator. Similarly, official correspondence from NEH to a recipient (for example, an offer letter, the award document, an extension, a supplement or amendment) is addressed to the institutional grant administrator and copied to the project director. The project director is the person directly in charge of the conduct of the funded project. Because the project director’s involvement in the project is normally critical to its success, the replacement of the project director or the co-director or a substantial reduction in the level of their effort (for example, an

unanticipated absence for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in the time devoted to the project) requires prior written approval from NEH.

**How will we know if we have submitted our application successfully?**

**[Confirm that you successfully submitted your application](#)**. It is your responsibility as an applicant to confirm that Grants.gov and subsequently NEH have received your application.

**When will we be notified of the outcome of our application?**

Applicants will be notified of the decision by email in December 2020. See section E4 and F1 of the notice of funding opportunity for additional information.