

Disclaimer: The following slides were used to supplement a public oral presentation for potential NEH applicants. They are not intended to provide complete information about the NEH's programs and they do not constitute an official statement of NEH policy. For current information about NEH programs, including eligibility requirements and the dates of deadlines, please consult the guidelines posted on the NEH website at neh.gov.



Summer Stipends

Program Introduction Webinar
May 20, 2020

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National Endowment for the Humanities

Closed captioning is available

Thank you for joining us for this webinar about the NEH Summer Stipend program. We are here to tell you more about the program, and to ask questions. The guidelines have just been posted and applications can now be submitted. This webinar is designed to walk you through some of the highlights of the program and application process.

A quick introduction. I am Dan Sack, a program officer in the Division of Research Programs and lead for the Summer Stipends program. I have been at the NEH since 2010. My background is in religious studies and worked at Hope College and the University of Chicago before coming to the NEH. I am joined here today by Gwen Yates, program analyst for the Summer Stipend program. She will be helping me collect and answer questions for this session.

I have about 30 minutes of remarks and then we'll have plenty of time for questions. In the upper right hand corner of your screen you'll see a place to open the Q&A window. I will answer as many as I can in the time we have.

This webinar is being recorded. We will post a link to the recording on the program page on the NEH's website in a couple of days.

Also note that closed captioning is available. Click the captioning box on the lower right hand corner of your screen.

Overview

- Program goals
- Program details
- Eligibility
- Nomination process
- Review criteria
- Required application materials
- Application submission
- Your questions

(Feel free to submit questions at any time during the presentation)

This is our agenda for the afternoon. I'll give an overview of the Summer Stipends program and provide key program details, discuss eligibility criteria and the nomination process, describe our review criteria, and the contents of an application, and where to find more information. As I talk, feel free to type in questions.

NEH staff



—NEH



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES

Before all that, a quick note: Since the Endowment is a federal agency, you may assume that the staff are all federal bureaucrats. Well, we are, but Endowment staff are scholars, many with faculty experience and research records. We see our job as supporting public and scholarly engagement with the humanities, and we do it because we believe in the humanities and in scholarship. If you take away nothing else today, know that, unlike some foundations, NEH staff are happy to talk to you by phone or email. We want to be your allies.

■ What is New in 2020

- **The guidelines are now **Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)****
- **Slight revision to evaluation criteria**
- **Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form**
- **“A More Perfect Union”: Special Initiative Advancing Civic Education and Celebrating the Nation’s 250th Anniversary.**

Summer Stipends is one of the oldest programs at the NEH. It hasn't changed much in recent years, but here are a few shifts you might want to know about.

- (1) In past years the document was governed by something we called the guidelines. They are now called the Notice of Funding Opportunity (or NOFO for short). They contain the same basic information, arranged a little differently.
- (2) We have revised the evaluation criteria a bit. I'll discuss that a bit later in today's presentation. The content is the same, but they're in slightly different order. Applicants should pay close attention to the evaluation criteria.
- (3) The application packet now requires the Project/Performance Site Location(s) Form. It's really simple—just tell us where you're going to be doing your research during the grant period.
- (4) We have a cross-agency initiative called “A More Perfect Union.” As our nation approaches its 250th anniversary in 2026, NEH encourages projects that promote a deeper understanding of American history and culture and that advance civic education and knowledge of our core

principles of government. The agency-wide “A More Perfect Union” initiative will help Americans better understand the world’s oldest constitutional democracy and how our founding ideals are met in a modern, pluralistic society. Projects do not need to respond to this initiative. Reviewers will not give you a boost if you do, and will not give you demerits if you don’t. All applications will be evaluated on the usual criteria.

Goals of the Program

To support individual scholars pursuing projects that embody exceptional research, rigorous analysis, and clear writing.

To support projects that are of value to humanities scholars, general audiences, or both.

Projects may be at any stage of development, but Stipends are often most helpful for early-stage research and late-stage writing.



The main goal of the Summer Stipends program is to support outstanding and advanced humanities research (in all disciplines and fields). These projects can be valuable to scholars, general readers, or both. The program supports project at any stage of development (early, middle, late), although these small grants are often most useful at the early research stage or at the end of the writing process.

■ Key Program Details

- **Duration: 2 months - Award must be held full-time and continuously.**
- **Stipend: \$6000**

- **Application deadline: September 23, 2020**
- **Notification of decision: Late March, 2021**
- **Earliest possible start date: May 1, 2021**
- **Latest possible start date: September 1, 2022**

- **The Summer Stipends program makes an average of 81 awards per year.**
- **Funding ratio: 10%**
- **40% of recent awardees were first-time applicants**

Here are the most important details. Summer Stipends grants are for two months—usually though not necessarily during the summer. The grant period must be full-time and continuous.

The application deadline is September 23, with notifications sent in late March 2021. You can start as late as May 1, 2021, and as late as September 1, 2022.

Over the last five years the Summer Stipends program received an average of 827 applications and made an average of 81 awards per year, for an average funding rate of 10%. Do not let these numbers discourage you. It is a competitive program, but you can't get a grant unless you apply. If you do not get an award the first time around, we encourage you to reapply, and then reapply. I'll also note that 40% of the awardees in the last five years were first time applicants to the NEH.

■ Typical Activities and Products

TYPICAL ACTIVITIES

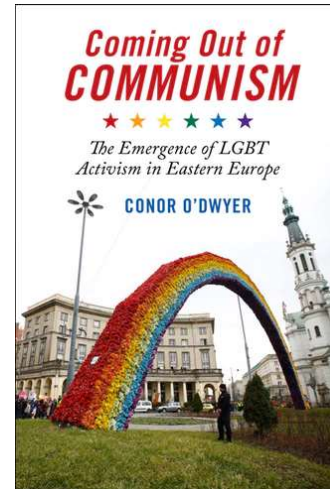
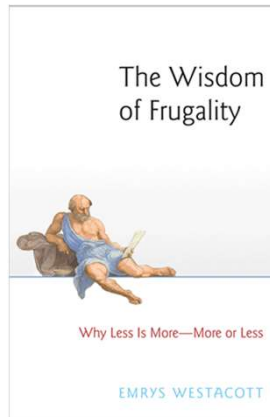
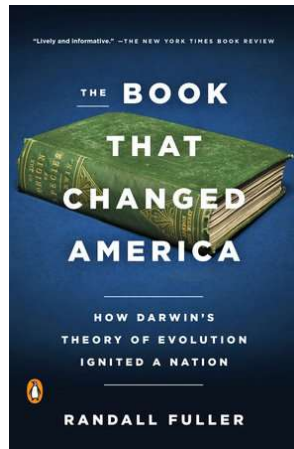
humanities research
travel to archives
scholarly editing
writing and revision

PRINT AND DIGITAL PRODUCTS

monographs, books/e-books
peer-reviewed articles
translations (with critical apparatus)
editions (with critical apparatus)
other interpretive tools

What do people do and produce? People do what most scholars do—research and write. The most common outcome of a Summer Stipend is a book or monograph, but we are seeing other types of products as well, including e-books and digital materials, peer-reviewed articles. Translations and editions with critical apparatus are fully eligible in this program.

■ Sample Projects and Products



Here are a few recent books supported by Summer Stipends grants. They are meant to show the variety of projects that receive grants. We welcome projects on all topics in the humanities.

■ Who Should Apply?

The NEH Summer Stipends program invites research applications from scholars in *all* disciplines that employ humanistic research methods.

The program encourages submissions from independent scholars, junior scholars, and faculty at historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and community colleges.

The Summer Stipends program is open to all disciplines *in* the humanities.

We invite all disciplines, individuals from all institutions, and especially welcome independent scholars and junior scholars, as well as **faculty at historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and community colleges.**

What are the **Humanities**?

- History
 - Literature and language
 - History and theory of the arts and performing arts
 - Philosophy and ethics
 - Religious studies, theology
 - Political theory
 - Jurisprudence
 - Cultural anthropology, archaeology
- The program also supports projects in the social sciences and sciences that employ humanistic research methods

Here is how we define the humanities, as laid out in our founding legislation. The Summer Stipends program is open to all disciplines *in* the humanities, but also to projects from the social sciences and sciences that apply humanities methods.

■ Who Is Eligible?

Open to U.S. citizens, and to foreign nationals who have been living in the U.S. for the three years preceding the September 23, 2020 application deadline.

No advanced degree is required.

No institutional affiliation is required.

You may not be currently enrolled in a degree program.

***For currently enrolled students:* If you have satisfied all the requirements for a degree and are awaiting its conferral, you are eligible, but you must include a letter from the dean of the conferring school or your department chair attesting to your status as of the application deadline (September 23, 2020).**

All U.S. citizens, and foreign nationals who have been living in the U.S. for the three years preceding the September 23, 2020 application deadline.


No advanced degree is required.

No institutional affiliation is required.

You do not have to have an advanced degree to apply, but you cannot be enrolled in a degree program.

For currently enrolled students: If you have satisfied all the requirements for a degree and are awaiting its conferral, you are eligible, but you must include a letter from the dean of the conferring school or your department chair attesting to your status as of the application deadline (September 23, 2020).

Nomination process

- **Tenured and tenure-track faculty must be nominated by their institution**
 - **All institutions can nominate up to two people per year**
 - **Institutions run their own nomination process**
 - **Applications must include name of nominating official**
- 

The Summer Stipends program is unique at the NEH in requiring that all tenured and tenure-track faculty need to be nominated by their institution. Each institution can nominate up to two people per year. We do this to encourage applications from a broad range of institutions, and to encourage faculty to discuss their research with each other.

Institutions run their own nomination process and identify one person as their nominating official. Applicants include that person's name in their applications, so we can contact them to confirm the nomination.

Exempt from nomination

- **Non-tenure-track faculty (including adjuncts)**
- **Staff**
- **Community college faculty**
- **Emeritus faculty**
- **Independent scholars**



Note that a big group of people are exempt from nomination: non-tenure-track faculty (including adjuncts), non-faculty staff, community college faculty, emeritus faculty, and independent scholars.

■ Projects Not Supported (NOFO p. 14)

Some highlights, see the funding notice for a complete list of prohibitions

- **the creation or performance of art; creative writing, autobiographies, memoirs, and creative nonfiction**
- **promotion of a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view**
- **advocacy of a particular program of social or political action**
- **the development of teaching methods or theories**
- **empirical social science research, unless part of a larger humanities project**
- **the preparation or revision of textbooks, curriculum development**
- **research for doctoral dissertations or theses**

It's also important to note the kinds of things that our program does not support. You can find a full list on page 14 of the NOFO, but note that the list includes artistic projects, advocacy and policy work, teaching materials, empirical social science projects without humanities content, and dissertations.

■ Application Materials (NOFO pp. 5-13)

- **3-page narrative (single-spaced)**
- **1-page bibliography**
- **2-page resume or CV**
- **Appendices (only if required) (for editions/translations, database project, visual materials)**
- **Documentation of degree conferrals or explanation of federal debt**

- **1000-character summary of your proposal**
- **Two letters of reference (due by October 16, 2020)**
- **Note: no budget is required**

Applicants submit their own applications (even if they are nominated by their institutions). They submit the application package through a portal called grants.gov. I'll tell you more about that process in a few minutes. Here's what the application packet includes. You can find this information in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, pages 5-13.

(1) Most important is a 3-page narrative. I'll say more about this piece in a moment

(2) The 1-page bibliography should demonstrate your knowledge of the field. Evaluators will know that the bibliography is not comprehensive.

(3) The same goes for the 2-page resume. In the CV you should focus on the items that are most relevant to your current project and best demonstrate your competencies for that work. Always add your language skills.

(4) For certain types of projects you will need a 1-page appendix. This includes editions, translations, database projects, and visual materials. Other projects should not include an appendix.

(5) Doctoral students who are waiting for conferral of their degree, are eligible if they can provide a letter from the dean or department chair confirming this status before the submission date, September 23.

(6) If you are delinquent on some form of federal debt, you will need to document your repayment status.

The application forms also ask for a few more things:

(1) A brief summary of your project (less than 1000 characters)—it will be the first thing evaluators see and will help us determine who should evaluate your application.

(2) The names and email addresses of two people who will write recommendation letters for your application. Ideally, they should come from two different institutions (other than your own), and from people who know your project well. Missing letters do not make your project ineligible, but it is more helpful to have them. Letters are due October 16. Recommenders will be getting a prompt from us ca. 10 days after the deadline, and will then have two weeks to send the letters in.

Note that the Summer Stipend award is a fixed amount of money, so no budget is required.

■ The narrative should include (NOFO, p.10)

Research significance and contribution

Organization, concepts, and method

Work plan


Competencies, skills, and access

Final product and dissemination

➤ **In three pages! Look at the review criteria and samples**

On p. 10 of the guidelines, you will find an explanation of the parts that should be in your narrative: (1) The significance and contribution of your research—why is the project important? (2) The organization and methods of your project—how will you do it? (3) A work plan—what will you do during the grant period, and how does it fit into the larger arc of your project? (4) Your competencies, skills, and access for the project—why are you the right person to do this work? (5) Final product and dissemination. How will your work reach its audience? All of this in three pages! Applications that exceed page limits will be rejected from further consideration. It is possible—our web site includes samples of successful applications—you can take a look to see how someone else made a case for their project.

Review Criteria (NOFO p. 15)

- 1. The intellectual significance of the proposed project, including its value to humanities scholars, general audiences, or both.**
- 2. The quality of the conception, definition, organization, and description of the project and the applicant's clarity of expression.**
- 3. The feasibility and appropriateness of the proposed plan of work.**
- 4. The quality or promise of quality of the applicant's work as an interpreter of the humanities.**
- 5. The likelihood that the applicant will complete the project (not necessarily during the period of performance), including, when relevant, the soundness of the dissemination and access plans.** 

As you work on your narrative keep in mind the criteria the evaluators will use when reading your application. Your goal is to make a case for your project based on these criteria. You should use them to structure your narrative. You should think strategically. You will find the 5 review criteria under E. 1., or page 15 of the funding notice. I'll now unpack these criteria.

■ Review Criteria

1. The intellectual significance of the proposed project, including its value to humanities scholars, general audiences, or both.

The first criterion is the most important. Briefly, why? Tell your reader what your project is about and why it is important. You should explain what it will contribute to your specific field in a way that a generalist can understand. You should also situate your project in the broader context of humanities research and knowledge.

How will my project change the scholarship? Who needs to read your book and why? How will your work change how they understand the topic? Does your work tell us anything larger?

■ Review Criteria

2. The quality of the conception, definition, organization, and description of the project and the applicant's clarity of expression.

The second criterion is about what? What will you do during the grant period. It needs to explain to general readers what you will do and convince them that the work will answer your research questions. It needs to be clear and organized. A well-written, clear application is a predictor of the quality of the planned publication, so a clear narrative is important.

Review Criteria

3. The feasibility and appropriateness of the proposed plan of work.



The third criterion is about how? How will your project work? You should provide a detailed work plan, describing what you will do each month. Be realistic about how much work you can get done during the grant period. Be specific: I am going to work on chapter 5. I will go to a specific archive. Think about where you will be in the project when the award period starts, even though that will be 9 or more months from your application date.

Review Criteria


4. The quality, or promise of quality, of the applicant's work as an interpreter of the humanities.



The fourth criterion is about who? Why are you the perfect person to do this project? Emphasize your strengths: exceptional language abilities that the project requires, or research skills that make the project work. Evaluators will also look at your CV to see your research and publication experience. They will understand that people at different career stages will have different levels of experience.

Review Criteria

5. The likelihood that the applicant will complete the project (not necessarily during the period of performance), including, when relevant, the soundness of the dissemination and access plans.



The final criterion is about the likelihood of success. You need to convince your readers that you will be able to finish the project (not necessarily during the grant period) and that it will reach the audiences you have identified. Evaluators will look at your publication record and referee letters to decide whether they have confidence in your ability to produce.

■ Application Materials (NOFO pp. 6-8)

Grants.gov Forms:

- **Application for Federal Assistance SF 424 – Individual**
- **NEH Supplemental Information for Individuals**
- **Project/Performance Site Location Form**
- **Attachments (your narrative, bibliography, CV, appendices)**

As I mentioned, you will submit your application through a portal called grants.gov. In addition to the narrative, it will ask you to fill out a few other forms. This is all described on pages 6-8 in the NOFO.

(1) SF424: has the applicant information, name, phone number, email address (important!!) and mailing address. Congressional district. **Project information:** Project title—if you receive an award this will be available to the public, so please make it something the general public will understand. **Project description (1000 characters). Start and ending dates of your project.** Electronic signature.

(2) NEH Supplemental Information Form: It will ask you a few other important things.

Field of Project (3 fields); Project Director field of study. We use this information to help us choose what evaluators should review your application.

Status: sr/jr. We define jr. scholars as those who are 7 years or fewer beyond their terminal degree.

Reference letters names, email addresses, and affiliations. **Important: please enter only ONE email address.**

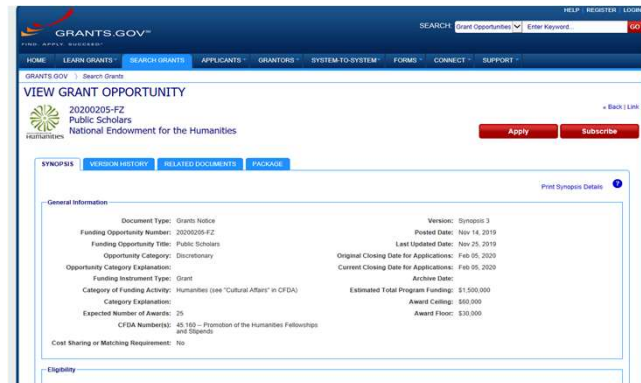
Nominating official: If you are tenured or tenure-track, please give us the name and email address of the person on your campus who can confirm that you are nominated for this program. We will write them in October for that confirmation.

(3) Project / Performance Site Location Form: This is a new form, very simple. Please enter the location or locations where the project activity takes place during the award period.

(4) The Attachments form is where you add your narrative, bibliography, CV, and any appendices.

Submitting Your Application

1. Register now with Grants.gov.
2. You must create an “individual applicant profile” in your account.
3. Submit several days early to allow time for technical problems.
4. Use the Grants.gov 24/7 helpline: 1-800-518-4726



As mentioned, you will submit your own application through grants.gov. Your institution cannot submit it, even if you are nominated. You will need to register.

- (1) All federal applications have to go through Grants.gov. Since you are applying as an individual, make sure that your account has an individual applicant profile. Otherwise you can't apply.
- (2) Over 50% of our applications are submitted the last day, and sometimes the system crashes. I recommend you submit at least a week before the deadline to avoid any technical problems. If you realize you made a mistake somewhere and want to resubmit your application *before* the application due date, we will use your *last* validated online submission.
- (3) If you do have technical problems, please call the grants.gov helpline. They are actually helpful. You find the number here and also in our guidelines.

■ Resources for Applicants

Information on the NEH website at:

<https://www.neh.gov/grants/research/summer-stipends>

- **Notice of Funding Opportunity (contains instructions for applying)**
- **Sample application narratives**
- **List of recently funded projects**

Advice from NEH staff stipends@neh.gov


Application-writing tips webinar—posted September 1

I've given you a lot of information here—I am sorry if it is overwhelming. But all is not lost—there are lots of resources for you as you work on your application. On our website you will find the NOFO document, which includes detailed instructions for how to apply. You'll also find there some sample application narratives—successful applications, examples of how someone else made a case for their project. You'll also find a list of recently funded projects, which shows the breadth of the kinds of things the program can fund.

Also, remember that you can contact us. Your best bet is to drop us a line at stipends@neh.gov. You will hear back from one of us as soon as possible.

Finally, we'll post another webinar on September 1, with suggestions on writing a Stipends application.

FAQs

- **Are dissertation revisions eligible?**
 - **Can I apply with a collaborative project?**
 - **Can I apply to other NEH grant programs concurrently?**
 - **Does my university or college submit the application for me?**
 - **Other questions? Please enter in the Q&A box**
- 

We are almost ready to take your questions. Go to the top right hand corner of your screen and find the link for the Q&A box. Type in your question and we'll answer as many as we can. While you think about those, here are a few frequently asked questions and answers:

- (1) Are dissertation revisions eligible? Yes! But projects based on dissertations need to demonstrate how their projects moves beyond the original dissertation.
- (2) Can you apply for a collaborative project? Yes, kind of. The Summer Stipends program is designed for individual applicants. If you are working on a collaborative project, each collaborator must submit an individual application. An award may not be divided among multiple collaborators. Peer reviewers will be asked to evaluate each application on its own merits. Each application should clearly explain how the work will be divided and the extent to which each collaborator's contribution depends on that of the other(s). Applicants who are seeking funding only for themselves but who are working as part of a collaborative team are also eligible. Collaborating scholars affiliated with or sponsored by an

eligible institution may wish to apply to the Collaborative Research program.

- (3) Can you apply concurrently to other NEH programs? Yes, you can apply to most other NEH grant programs concurrently, including the Public Scholars program and the Fellowships program, but you can only hold one grants in a given federal fiscal year. That means that if you apply for a Fellowship and then for a Summer Stipend and receive the Fellowship, we will withdraw the Stipend application.
- (4) Who submits the application? You. All notifications will go to the email provided in the application.



Questions?

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