



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES
DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

SUMMER SEMINARS AND INSTITUTES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION FACULTY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the most important element of an application to direct an NEH Summer Seminar or Institute?

The most important element is the specific humanities content of the project. The application should address the significance of the subject; the topics, questions, and readings that form the core of the intellectual conversation; and the qualifications of the humanities faculty who lead the project.

Whom should I consult with about my proposal?

NEH program officers can offer advice on a full range of issues, such as content, scheduling, and logistics. We strongly encourage you to contact a program officer and to follow up with a draft proposal (submitted as an attachment to an e-mail message to sem-inst@neh.gov, by the date specified in section D4. "Submission dates and times" of the notice of funding opportunity. Call 202-606-2324 or send an e-mail message to sem-inst@neh.gov before you submit a draft proposal.

Are there projects or activities that NEH does not support?

Yes. Please review the section D6. "Funding restrictions" of the notice of funding opportunity.

We were unsuccessful with our last application. Is there anything we can do to increase our chances for success next time?

Yes. You are encouraged to revise your proposal in light of the reviewers' comments. To request these comments, send an e-mail message to sem-inst@neh.gov. After you read the comments, you may follow up with a phone call with a program officer. You may also submit a draft of your new proposal by the date specified in section D4. "Submission dates and times" of the notice of funding opportunity.

I have led a previous NEH summer program. Am I eligible to apply at the February 2020 deadline for the same project?

As a matter of programmatic policy, NEH will not make awards in the Summer Seminars and Institutes or Landmarks of American History and Culture Workshops programs for the same project (that, is a project with essentially the same topic and faculty team) in consecutive years. For example, if a recipient was funded in 2019 (for a summer 2020 offering), they are not eligible to apply for the same project in 2020 (for a summer 2021 offering). Project directors who are unsure about the applicability of this rule should consult with program staff.

How should I title my proposal? Does NEH change project titles?

Your title should be descriptive of the project, substantive, and free of specialized language. It should be easily understood by the general public. The title should not exceed 125 characters (including spaces and punctuation). 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.

Avoid using a main title that requires clarification by the subtitle. 1) “Economies and Cultures of the Blue Ridge Mountains from 1650-1950,” is clearer than “Working the Woods: Economies and Cultures of the Blue Ridge Mountains: 1650-1950.” 2) When possible, include a person or place and dates to indicate a project’s scope. For example, “The Artistic and Cultural Legacy of Black Mountain College, 1933-1950,” is clearer than, “Black Mountain College: An Artistic and Educational Legacy.” 3) Use words and phrases that are informative and specific rather than puzzling or intriguing. For example, “Cleveland as a Case Study of American Immigration and Migration from the Nineteenth through the Twentieth Centuries,” is clearer than “Community Memory and Landmarks of Migration.”

You should provide the project title in section 6.a. of the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance – Individual Form. This form is part of the Grants.gov application package.

I just found out that someone else at my institution is planning to apply to direct an NEH Summer Seminar or Institute. Will only one be funded?

Each application is evaluated on its own merits. NEH might fund both applications, one, or neither.

My institution would not be an appropriate site for a Seminar but the college across town would be. Would I be permitted to hold my Seminar there, and if so, how would that work administratively?

Yes, you may hold your Seminar at a different institution. You may apply through your home institution and subcontract with the other institution. Alternatively, you could have the other institution serve as the applicant. Contact a program officer for further details.

Would it be permissible to co-direct an Institute with a colleague who is not on the faculty of my university, which will serve as the host institution?

Yes. In this situation, both you and the co-director would share the directorial responsibilities for the full period of the project. Your compensation would be entered under budget item 1. “Salaries and Wages,” and your co-director’s would be entered under budget item 3 “Consultant Fees” or included in a subaward to the partnering institution.

May a non-U.S. citizen serve as a project director or a visiting lecturer in an NEH Summer Seminar or Institute?

Yes. Such individuals may be included on the staff of a seminar or institute if they bring unique and important expertise to the endeavor. Unless they are employed by the applicant institution such individuals should be entered under budget item 3.

We are proposing co-directors to lead the project. Must we identify a replacement director?

If co-directors plan to equally share intellectual and administrative leadership of the project, and each is prepared to assume full leadership of the project should the other become unable to fulfill his/her role, then a replacement director need not be named. The proposal should clearly state that this is your plan. If co-directors plan to divide intellectual and administrative responsibility (and possess expertise suited to each role), then a replacement director who is qualified and prepared to assume each specific intellectual and/or administrative role must be identified.

May non-U.S. citizens participate as Summer Scholars in a Seminar or Institute?

Foreign nationals who have been living in the United States or its jurisdictions for at least the three years prior to the application deadline and are currently teaching are eligible to participate as Summer Scholars. Foreign nationals teaching abroad are not eligible to participate as Summer Scholars.

May we use NEH funds to host a welcoming reception for the participants in my NEH Seminar?

No. NEH grant funds may not be used to support social events, entertainment, or the purchase of alcoholic beverages. You may seek funding for a welcoming reception from other sources. Please note: if incidental food items and/or meals are provided at no charge during such welcoming receptions, the per diem charged to the award must be reduced accordingly.

If our organization proposes an institute away from our primary location, may we include and lodging expenses for the project director(s) in the budget?

Yes.

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.