NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

DIVISION OF **EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

HUMANITIES CONNECTIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This document covers a variety of queries regarding the Humanities Connections grant program. Program staff members are available to answer further questions at 202-606-8337 or humanitiesconnections@neh.gov.

I. Eligibility and general information

What are the humanities?

According to the 1965 National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, "The term 'humanities' includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of the social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life."

May an institution submit multiple applications?

Yes, an institution may submit multiple applications for distinctly different projects, so long as the institution is prepared and committed to carrying them out, should more than one be funded. Overlapping project costs between two or more applications for federal funding and/or approved federal award budgets are not permitted. We strongly encourage you to discuss any plan for multiple submissions with a program officer.

May multiple institutions collaborate on an application?

Yes, although a single institution—which must be a U.S. two- or four-year public or private 501(c)(3) tax-exempt college or university—must serve as the applicant of record. Please note that letters or e-mails of commitment from each institution and organization involved in the project, including the applicant institution, must be submitted as a proposal attachment.

My project is related to the arts. How do I know whether my project is more appropriate for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) or the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)?

If your project is focused on the creation of musical compositions, dance, painting, poetry, short stories, novels, or arts performance or training, then NEA would be the more appropriate choice for your application. NEH supports projects that provide scholarly, analytical, or historical perspectives on the arts.

II. Project content and design

What first steps should I take in developing an NEH Humanities Connections proposal?

First, read the program guidelines carefully, including the eligibility requirements. Be sure to read the review criteria by which your application will be judged (in Section II of the guidelines). 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 the application guidelines for the deadline. Call 202-606-8337 or e-mail humanitiesconnections@neh.gov to reach NEH staff. E-mail humanitiesconnections@neh.gov to submit a draft proposal.

Several of my colleagues in other disciplines already offer courses on a theme we would like to develop in our application. I would propose to create a new course in my discipline on this theme. Is this a strong basis for a Humanities Connections grant project?

Not necessarily. Humanities Connections grants support collaboration between humanities and non-humanities faculty to devise a curriculum that integrates the subject matter, perspectives, and pedagogical approaches of two or more disciplines—which goes beyond individual development of separate single-discipline courses that share a theme. As stated in the guidelines (under Section I: Program Description), the program does not support the isolated addition or revision of a single course offering, or the simple pairing of complementary courses, whether in the same or in different departments or schools.

Are there examples of funded proposals from past NEH Humanities Connections competitions?

Yes: we recommend that you consult the sample proposals on the Humanities Connections program pages.

In addition, members of the NEH staff are available to discuss your ideas and read draft proposals. Please do not hesitate to contact us at humanitiesconnections@neh.gov or call 202-606-8337 to speak with a program officer.

What distinguishes an Implementation Grant from a Planning Grant?

Implementation grant proposals must show unambiguous evidence of preceding planning work and present a defined rationale with clear intellectual and logistical objectives that are supported by institutional commitment. These proposals must include a high level of detail in such areas as project structure and components; key topics and texts or other resources to be used in specific courses/components; and the roles and responsibilities of the individual members of the collaborative team.

For projects that have not yet advanced enough to be ready for implementation, a planning grant provides the opportunity to create a firm foundation for an implementation-ready program.

What constitutes a good title for my 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 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.

III. Budget

What types of costs may we include in our application budget?

Applicants may include funds for expenses including travel and honoraria for guest scholars and visiting consultants; books and other materials; modest purchases of computer equipment directly related to the project; staff salaries; logistical support; and renumeration for project participants, based on their involvement in and contributions to the project.

I see that we may not use NEH funds to support student or faculty travel abroad. May we use NEH funds to support student or faculty travel in the U.S.?

The purpose of the Humanities Connections program is to develop long-term structures rather than to fund one-off activities for a particular cohort. While NEH funds may be used to pilot experiential learning programs, which might involve modest travel costs in some cases, keep in mind that you must demonstrate how the experiential learning program will be sustained beyond the period of performance. A project devoting a large segment of the budget to NEH-funded student travel for a one-time experience is unlikely to make a convincing case in this regard.

I see that the sample budget includes institutional cost sharing. Is cost sharing required?

Cost sharing is not required. NEH will make awards of up to $35,000 in outright funds for Planning Grants and $100,000 in outright funds for Implementation Grants. If your total project costs exceed the maximum amount, please indicate the other source(s) for the funds. The funds from other sources would constitute voluntary cost sharing.

IV. Application assistance and review

What help is available for preparing the proposal?

You are encouraged to contact a program officer (at 202-606-8337 or humanitiesconnections@neh.gov) to discuss your project ideas, and to submit draft proposals no later than **August 19, 2019**. Time constraints may prevent staff from reviewing draft proposals submitted after this date.

Although staff comments and responses to draft proposals are not part of the formal review process and have no bearing on the final outcome of the proposal, previous applicants in other programs have found them helpful in strengthening their applications.

Does my 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. Please contact us at humanitiesconnections@neh.gov.

How will my application be reviewed?

All applications will receive peer review. Using the evaluation criteria listed in Section II of the application guidelines, teachers and scholars in the humanities will convene in panels to read and rate the applications. NEH staff will compile a slate of recommended applications based on the panelists' comments and ratings. The National Council on the Humanities will review the recommendations and provide additional insights. All advice—from the panelists, staff, and National Council—will be sent to the NEH Chairman. By law, only the Chairman is empowered to make an award. More details about NEH's review process are available here.

How long must I wait to learn the outcome of my application?

Applicants will be notified of the decision by e-mail in April 2020.

V. Submitting your application to Grants.gov

When is the deadline for submitting the application?

Applications for NEH Humanities Connections grants must be submitted through and validated by Grants.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on September 19, 2019. Grants.gov will date- and time-stamp your application after it is fully uploaded. Applications submitted after that date will not be accepted.

NEH suggests that you submit your application no later than noon (Eastern Time) on the day of the deadline. Doing so will leave you time to contact the Grants.gov help desk for support, should you encounter a technical problem of some kind. The Grants.gov help desk is available seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day (except on federal holidays), at 1-800-518-4726. You can also send an e-mail message to support@grants.gov.

How do I know if I have submitted my application successfully?

Grants.gov provides guidance on checking the status of your application.:
https://www.grants.gov/help/html/help/Applicants/CheckApplicationStatus/CheckApplicationStatus.htm