



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE  
**Humanities**

DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

**SUMMER SEMINARS AND  
INSTITUTES FOR HIGHER  
EDUCATION FACULTY**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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**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. Thus 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](mailto:sem-inst@neh.gov), by January 24, 2019). Call 202-606-2324 or send an e-mail message to [sem-inst@neh.gov](mailto:sem-inst@neh.gov) before you submit a draft proposal.

**Are there projects or activities that NEH does not support?**

Yes. Please review the bulleted list of examples found in Section I of the program guidelines.

**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 on your previous application. To request these comments, send an e-mail message to [sem-inst@neh.gov](mailto:sem-inst@neh.gov). After you read the comments, you may follow up with a phone call to a program officer. You may also submit a draft of your new proposal by January 24, 2019, to receive additional feedback.

**I have led a previous NEH summer program. Am I eligible to apply at the February 21, 2019 deadline?**

You may not offer the same project (that is, a project with essentially the same substantive content) two years in a row. You may apply in 2019 (to direct a 2020 project) if you offered the project in 2018. But if you will be offering a project in the summer of 2019, you may not apply in 2019 to direct the same project in 2020. You may, however, apply in 2019 to direct an entirely different project.

If you are unsure of the applicability of this rule to your particular case, consult with program staff.

**I have directed an NEH summer program several times and am planning to reapply to direct it again. I plan to make substantial revisions based on participant evaluations. Must I also make other changes?**

An application for a previously offered project is expected to propose appropriate revisions, as you intend to do. But such revisions are not sufficient by themselves. The application must also include a well-defined plan to disseminate the project to an audience beyond the group of NEH Summer Scholars. (In the main guidelines document, see the discussion of “Project outreach” in the instructions for the narrative.)

**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 1a, and your co-director's would be entered under budget item 3 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.

**May a non-U.S. citizen participate as an NEH Summer Scholar in a Seminar or Institute?**

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

**I'd like to include a welcoming reception for the participants in my NEH Seminar. May I pay for this out of award funds?**

No. You may include in the project budget water or light refreshments for site visits and other project-related activities, but NEH grants funds may not be used to support social events, entertainment, or the purchase of alcoholic beverages. Lunch expenses are allowable only when vendors are inaccessible during the scheduled program, such as during a field trip at a remote location. 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 meetings, conferences, training, or other events attended while on travel, the per diem charged to the award must be reduced accordingly.

**If I hold an Institute away from where I live, may I include in the project budget my travel expenses to and from the Institute site and my living expenses at the site?**

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.