



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES  
DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

# HUMANITIES CONNECTIONS

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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This document covers a variety of queries regarding the Humanities Connections program. NEH staff are available to answer further questions at [hc@neh.gov](mailto:hc@neh.gov).

### Eligibility and General Information

**1. May an institution submit multiple applications to the Humanities Connections program?**

Yes, an institution may submit multiple applications. Each application must be for a separate and distinct project, with no overlapping project costs. (As stated in section C3 of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), “you must not include the same project costs in more than one application for federal funding and/or approved federal award budget.”) We strongly encourage you to discuss any plan for multiple submissions with NEH staff.

NEH will evaluate each application on its own merits. NEH might fund all applications from an institution, some, or none of them. Therefore, an applicant submitting multiple applications must be prepared and committed to carry them out, should more than one be funded.

**2. May an institution apply to the Humanities Connections program with the same project that was submitted for a pending NEH application (such as Humanities Initiatives), or for a related project that seeks to fund separate activities toward the same overall goals?**

Applicants may not include the same costs on more than one pending application budget for federal funding. For example, a project submitted and still pending for the Humanities Initiatives program could not be submitted to the Humanities Connections program at this deadline. Applicants may, however, seek funding from more than one NEH program for distinct projects that serve *complementary* aspects of the same overall goal and do not involve overlapping costs. We strongly encourage you to discuss any plan for multiple submissions with NEH staff.

**3. May multiple institutions collaborate on an application to Humanities Connections?**

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. If funded, the applicant entity becomes the recipient of record, and is legally, programmatically, and fiscally responsible for the award. Please note that you must include a letter of commitment from the applicant institution and are encouraged to include letters or emails of commitment from other institutions and organizations involved in the project, submitted as the relevant attachment.

If your project includes subawards, you must also provide a separate Research and Related Budget and budget justification for each subrecipient.

**4. Our project is related to the arts. How do we know whether it is more appropriate for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) or the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)?**

NEH supports projects that provide scholarly, analytical, or historical perspectives on the arts. NEH cannot fund projects that fall outside of the humanities, including the creation or performance of art; creative writing, autobiographies, memoirs, and creative nonfiction; policy studies; and social science research that does not address humanistic questions and/or utilize humanistic methods. If your project is focused on the creation of musical compositions, dance, painting, poetry, short stories, novels, or arts performance or training, then NEA might be the more appropriate choice for your application. If you are unsure whether your project is appropriate for NEH, we encourage you to contact NEH staff.

## **Project content and design**

**5. What first steps should we take in developing an NEH Humanities Connections proposal?**

First, read the NOFO carefully, including the eligibility requirements (section C) and the review criteria (section E1). 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 NEH staff for answers to questions, advice on the proposal, or to submit a draft proposal. The submission of a draft is optional, but previous applicants have found it helpful. Consult section D4 in the NOFO for more information and the deadline. Email [hc@neh.gov](mailto:hc@neh.gov) to reach NEH staff or to submit a draft proposal.

**6. Humanities Connections projects must include both humanities and non-humanities faculty. What are the humanities and who would count as non-humanities faculty?**

According to NEH's founding legislation, the humanities includes, but is not limited to, the study and interpretation of "language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts," as well as "aspects of the social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods." The term also includes "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." NEH would consider faculty whose training, teaching, and research is in those areas humanities faculty.

Non-humanities fields may include, but are not limited to, natural and physical sciences; health sciences; technology-driven fields, such as computer science; professional fields, including business, law, and engineering; and social sciences that take a professional or quantitative approach rather than a humanistic one. NEH would consider faculty whose training, teaching, and research is in those areas non-humanities faculty.

We recognize that colleges and universities may define the humanities in different ways and that schools and departments may employ both humanities and non-humanities faculty. Your application should clearly explain who is participating in the project, what their role would be, and whether they should be considered humanities faculty. Sometimes a department or school may be sufficient, but in other cases more information may be required. For example, a criminology department may employ a historian, who would fall into the humanities; a statistician and a law enforcement professional, who would not; and a sociologist, who may fall into either category. Your proposal should provide sufficient information for peer reviewers to determine whether the project encourages meaningful collaboration between humanities and non-humanities team members.

### **7. What distinguishes an Implementation proposal from a Planning proposal?**

Implementation 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, as well as by commitments from any partners or collaborators. 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 or components; anticipated interdisciplinary learning opportunities and their relationship to the proposed curricular structure; outreach strategies to attract students to the new educational opportunities; 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 but are beyond the rudimentary stage, the Planning level provides the opportunity to create a firm foundation for an implementation-ready program.

Consult the NOFO section on funding levels (under A1) for further details. If you are unsure whether to submit at the Implementation or Planning level, we encourage you to contact NEH staff.

### **8. I would like to create a new course in my humanities discipline, which would share a theme with existing courses in other disciplines (including non-humanities disciplines) at my institution. Would the development of this course be a strong basis for a Humanities Connections project?**

No, a single course that you develop on your own, even on a theme with relevance in other disciplines, would not suffice as the focus of a Humanities Connections project. As stated in the NOFO (under D6. Funding Restrictions), 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.

### **9. 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 resource page](#).

You may also find examples of previously funded projects by using the [NEH's Funded Projects Query Form](#).

In addition, NEH staff are available to discuss your ideas and read draft proposals (see D4 in the NOFO for draft submission deadlines). Do not hesitate to contact us at [hc@neh.gov](mailto:hc@neh.gov).

### **10. 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 Connections 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.

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

No. The project director may not serve as the institutional grant administrator. The institutional grant administrator 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 an 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 is critical to the project’s 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.

## **Budget**

### **12. 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 remuneration for project participants, based on their involvement in and contributions to the project. See D6. Funding Restrictions in the NOFO.

### **13. I see that we may not use NEH funds to support student or faculty travel abroad. May we use 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. A project devoting a large segment of the budget to travel for a one-time experience lacking long-term impact is unlikely to make a convincing case. However, you may use funds for project team members to visit other universities to evaluate their programs, or to bring to campus a relevant subject expert.

### **14. Is cost sharing required?**

Cost sharing is not required. NEH will make awards of up to \$50,000 in outright funds for Planning awards and \$150,000 in outright funds for Implementation awards. If your total project costs exceed the maximum amount, please indicate the other source(s) for the funds in the budget justification. The funds from other sources would constitute voluntary cost sharing. See C2. Cost Sharing in the NOFO.

## **Application assistance**

### **15. What help is available for preparing the proposal?**

We encourage you to email [hc@neh.gov](mailto:hc@neh.gov) to discuss your project ideas or submit draft proposals; consult section D4 in the NOFO for the draft deadline. NEH staff cannot review drafts submitted after this deadline. Drafts do not need to be fully developed program ideas or near complete applications to be submitted for review and feedback.

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

### **16. 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 [hc@neh.gov](mailto:hc@neh.gov).

## **Submitting your application via Grants.gov**

### **17. When is the deadline for submitting the application?**

Applications for NEH Humanities Connections grants must be submitted through and validated by Grants.gov by the deadline stipulated in Section D4 of the NOFO. Grants.gov will date- and timestamp your application after it is fully uploaded. Applications submitted after that date will not be accepted, except for limited situations covered by the NEH [late submission policy](#).

NEH suggests that you submit your application 48 hours prior to the deadline. Doing so will leave you time to contact Grants.Gov Applicant Support, should you encounter a technical problem. Grants.Gov Applicant Support 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 email message to [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). Always obtain a case number when calling for support.

### **18. 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>

## **Review and notification**

### **19. How will NEH review our application?**

NEH uses a peer review process based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section E1 of the NOFO to review applications. 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 Chair. By law, only the Chair is empowered to make an award. More details about NEH's review process are available [here](#).

### **20. How long must we wait to learn the outcome of our application?**

NEH will notify you of its decision by email at the time indicated in section E4 (Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates) of the NOFO.