

# NEH SUMMER SEMINARS & INSTITUTES FOR SCHOOL TEACHERS

## APPLICATION INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

Summer Seminars and Institutes for School Teachers are offered by the National Endowment for the Humanities to provide teachers an opportunity for substantive study of significant humanities ideas and texts. These study opportunities are especially designed for this program and are not intended to duplicate courses normally offered by graduate programs. On completion of a seminar or institute, participants will receive a certificate indicating their participation. Prior to completing an application, please review the enclosed letter from the project director (or letter downloaded from the director's website, if available) and consider carefully what is expected in terms of residence and attendance, reading and writing requirements, and general participation in the work of the project.

A **seminar** for school teachers enables 15 participants to explore a topic or set of readings with a scholar having special interest and expertise in the field. The core material of the seminar need not relate directly to the school curriculum; the principal goal of the seminar is to engage teachers in the scholarly enterprise and to expand and deepen their understanding of the humanities through reading, discussion, writing, and reflection. An **institute** for school teachers, typically led by a team of core faculty and visiting scholars, is designed to present the best available scholarship on important humanities issues and works taught in the nation's schools. The 25 to 35 participating teachers compare and synthesize the various perspectives offered by the faculty, make connections between the institute content and classroom applications, and often develop improved teaching materials for their classrooms. Please note: The use of the words "seminar" or "institute" in this document is precise and is intended to convey differences between the two project types.

### ELIGIBILITY

These projects are designed for full-time teachers including home-schooling parents, but other K-12 school personnel, such as librarians and administrators, may also be eligible to apply, depending on the specific seminar or institute. Substitute teachers or part-time personnel are not eligible. Applications from teachers in public, private, and religiously-affiliated schools receive equal consideration.

Teachers at schools in the United States or its territorial possessions or Americans teaching in foreign schools where at least 50 percent of the students are American nationals are eligible for this program. Applicants must be United States citizens, residents of U.S. jurisdictions, or foreign nationals who have been residing in the United States or its territories for at least the three years immediately preceding the application deadline. Foreign nationals teaching outside the U.S. are not eligible to apply.

Applicants must complete the NEH application cover sheet and provide all the information requested below to be considered eligible. Individuals may not apply to study with a director of a seminar or institute who is a current colleague or a family member. Individuals must not apply to seminars directed by scholars with whom they have previously studied. Institute selection committees are advised that only under the most compelling and exceptional circumstances may an individual participate in an institute with a director or a lead faculty member who has previously guided that individual's research or in whose previous institute or seminar he or she has participated. An individual may apply to **only one** project in any one year. Anyone found to have applied to more than one project will be ineligible to participate in any seminar or institute that year.

### SELECTION CRITERIA

A selection committee reads and evaluates all properly completed applications in order to select the most promising applicants and to identify a small number of alternates. (Seminar selection committees consist of the seminar director, a school teacher who is usually a participant in a previous NEH seminar, and a colleague of the director. Institute selection committees consist of three to five members, usually all drawn from the institute faculty and staff members.) While recent participants are eligible to apply, project selection committees are directed to give first consideration to applicants who have not participated in an NEH-supported seminar or institute **in the last three years** (2005, 2006, 2007). Recent participation in NEH's Landmarks of American History and Culture Program does not negatively affect eligibility or competitiveness.

The most important consideration in the selection of participants is the likelihood that an applicant will benefit professionally and personally. This is determined by committee members from the conjunction of several factors, each of which should be addressed in the application essay. These factors include:

1. effectiveness and commitment as a teacher/educator;
2. intellectual interests, both generally and as they relate to the work of the project;
3. special perspectives, skills, or experiences that would contribute to the seminar or institute;
4. commitment to participate fully in the formal and informal collegial life of the project; and
5. the likelihood that the experience will enhance the applicant's teaching.

When choices must be made among equally qualified candidates, several additional factors are considered.

**Preference is given to applicants who have not previously participated in an NEH seminar or institute, or who significantly contribute to the diversity of the seminar or institute.**

## **STIPEND, TENURE, AND CONDITIONS OF AWARD**

Teachers selected to participate in six-week long projects will receive a stipend of \$4,200; those in five-week projects will receive \$3,600; those in four-week projects will receive \$3,200; those in three-week projects will receive \$2,400; and those in two-week projects will receive \$1,800. Stipends are intended to help cover travel expenses to and from the project location, books and other research expenses, and living expenses for the duration of the period spent in residence. Stipends are taxable. Applicants to all projects, especially those held abroad, should note that supplements will not be given in cases where the stipend is insufficient to cover all expenses.

Seminar and institute participants are required to attend all meetings and to engage fully in the work of the project. During the project's tenure, they may not undertake teaching assignments or any other professional activities unrelated to their participation in the project. Participants who, for any reason, do not complete the full tenure of the project must refund a pro-rata portion of the stipend.

At the end of the project's residential period, participants will be asked to submit on-line evaluations in which they review their work during the summer and assess its value to their personal and professional development. These evaluations will become part of the project's grant file and may become part of an application to repeat the seminar or institute.

## **APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

This application packet should be accompanied by a letter from the project director that contains detailed information about the topic under study; project requirements and expectations of the participants; the academic and institutional setting; and specific provisions for lodging, subsistence, and extracurricular activities. If you do not have such a letter, please request one from the director of the project in which you are interested before you attempt to compete and submit an application. In some cases, directors have websites for their projects and the information letter may be downloaded from their website. **All application materials should be sent to the project director at the address listed on the program poster. Sending application materials to the Endowment will result in delay.**

## **CHECKLIST OF APPLICATION MATERIALS**

A completed application consists of three copies of the following **collated** items:

- the completed application cover sheet,
- a detailed résumé, and
- an application essay as outlined below.

In addition, it must include two letters of recommendation as described below.

### **The application cover sheet**

The application cover sheet must be filled out on line at this address:

<<http://www.neh.gov/online/education/participants/>> Please fill it out on line as directed by the prompts. **When you are finished, be sure to click on the "submit" button.** Print out the cover sheet and add it to your application package. Note that filling out a cover sheet is not the same as applying, so there is no penalty for changing your mind and filling out a cover sheet for more than one project. A full application consists of the items listed above, as sent to the project director.

### **Résumé**

Please include a résumé detailing your educational qualifications and professional experience.

### **The Application Essay**

The application essay should be no more than four double-spaced pages. An essay should usually be written in response to the information contained in the director's letter. It should address reasons for applying; the applicant's interest, both academic and personal, in the subject to be studied; qualifications and experiences that equip the applicant to do the work of the seminar or institute and to make a contribution to a learning community; a statement of what the applicant wants to accomplish by participating; and the relation of the project to the applicant's professional responsibilities.

### **Reference Letters**

The two referees should be chosen carefully. They should be familiar with the applicant's professional accomplishments or promise, interests, and ability to contribute to and benefit from participation in a community of intellectual inquiry. They should specifically address these issues in their recommendations. Letters from colleagues who know the applicant's teaching and from those outside the applicant's institution who know the applicant's habits of mind are often more useful than letters from school administrators. Referees should, if possible, be familiar with the work of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the seminars and institutes program. It is helpful for referees to read the description of the project sent by the director and the application essay. If an applicant has previously participated in an NEH summer seminar or institute, a recommendation from the director or lead scholar of that program would be useful. Please ask each of your referees to sign their name across the back of the sealed envelope containing their letter, and enclose the letters with your application.

### **SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS AND NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE**

Completed applications should be submitted **to the project director** and should be **postmarked** no later than March 2, 2009.

Successful applicants will be notified of their selection on April 2, 2009, and they will have until April 15 to accept or decline the offer. Applicants who will not be home during the notification period should provide an address and phone number where they can be reached. No information concerning the status of an application will be available prior to the official notification period.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT:** Endowment programs do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age. For further information, write to NEH Equal Opportunity Officer, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20506. TDD: 202/606-8282 (this is a special telephone device for the Deaf).