



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

DIVISION OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

MEMORANDUM

March 16, 2020

TO: Directors of Summer Seminars and Institutes for 2020

FROM: Carol Peters, Director, Division of Education Programs

RE: Your Project and the Coronavirus

We want you to know that you and your projects are much on our minds as the coronavirus disrupts our plans and routines. Indeed, we have heard from many of you and would like to offer guidance and reassurance as you approach the implementation phase of your project.

Let us start with the most immediate: selection, notification, and acceptance of participants.

Participant Selection

- Please proceed with the selection of participants as planned, holding discussions remotely as needed.
- We also recommend selecting a larger-than-normal alternate pool, as you may need to call on more than the usual number of replacements this year. Consider devising a strategy (a grouping or ranking system, for example) for whom to invite as openings become available. Arranging this group in a meaningful way will ease your burden later, particularly if you decide to name all who you deem qualified as alternates. The specifics of how you do this is at your discretion.

Participant Notification and Acceptance

- We also ask that you notify all applicants as planned on (*not before or after*) **March 27**.
- Please consult the February 27th email (attached) concerning what needs to be communicated and/or provided to those whom you have accepted at this time, and include the **notification date change** below.
- You may also include some language that makes them aware that the program is conditional upon a generally healthy environment this summer and that they will be consulted should alternative plans need to be made.
- NEH would like to extend the time that successful applicants have to accept or decline your offer to participate. Please allow them until **Friday, April 10, 2020** (one week later than the original April 3) for this.
- After **April 10** you may proceed to fill any open spots with alternates.
- For those who accept, we recommend you advise them to wait to arrange travel until plans are more certain and, then, to purchase refundable airline tickets.

Moving Forward

It is impossible to predict where we will be as the spring season progresses. Please adhere to the **Calendar of Action Dates** for now; however, it may be necessary to make various adjustments should circumstances keep us from gatherings and travel. To prepare for possible project changes:

- First, consult the Terms and Conditions of your award. Pay particular attention to cancellation clauses for travel and/or housing arrangements. It is critical that you work closely with your institution's grants administrator to know what can and cannot be done at this stage. NEH is not able, for example, to cover payment for activities that have not taken place or for housing that is not used.
- Should this pandemic prove more protracted than we hope, Education staff will provide further details regarding the options you have for your program. These will include holding your seminar or institute virtually, postponing it, or cancelling it altogether.
- We fully understand that making such changes is difficult and that implementing them may prove complex. We plan to make every effort to give you the tools you need to make and execute the right decision for you in as timely a manner as possible.

Our Division of Education Program staff hopes you know that we are as excited about these projects as you are. We aim to strike a balance between providing suitable guidance and not overwhelming you. Know that we are working behind the scenes to prepare for the next steps, if they are needed.

Please remember to contact your program officer should you have additional questions or concerns as we navigate these new waters together.