



Dear Public School Colleague,

We are pleased to announce our 2018 National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Institute for School Teachers: *Voices from the Misty Mountains, Appalachian Culture and the Power of Storytelling*. We invite you to join us in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, as we explore an array of Appalachian writers, music-makers, storytellers, traditions and places. Additionally, NEH Summer Scholars will attend several Contemporary American Theater Festival (CATF) and will have the opportunity to work with superb Appalachian playwrights and writers, performers, and CATF actors and directors, who will perform a staged reading of an original play by Appalachian writer Denise Giardina. We will also explore the writing of Silas House, the poetry of Frank X Walker, the storytelling of Adam Booth, and the work of other talented Appalachian artists. Public school scholar-teacher participation in the NEH Summer Institute is supported by a generous grant from the NEH, which provides a stipend designed to cover travel, food, lodging, books, and supplies for the institute, as well as tuition if teachers wish to receive graduate credit for their work (see **Institute Details** link).

Located on a high bluff of the Potomac River in the heart of the Appalachian Blueridge, Shepherd University is in historic Shepherdstown, West Virginia, the oldest town in the state and originally surveyed by George and Charles Washington. Shepherdstown, with its original Federalist and Victorian buildings and homes, is 65 miles from Washington, DC, and serves as a gateway to the Appalachian region. Shepherdstown is home to the nationally acclaimed Speak Storytelling Series, <https://www.speakstoryseries.com/>, and the Contemporary American Theater Festival, <http://www.catf.org/>, bringing the “newest plays to the oldest town in West Virginia.” Shepherd University likewise hosts the Appalachian Heritage Writer’s Project and Festival, <http://www.shepherd.edu/ahwir>, which brings each fall and throughout the year a variety of Appalachian programs to the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia and surrounding states.

Voices from the Misty Mountains, <http://www.shepherd.edu/neh>, will run from **July 8-28, 2018**, and will encourage participants to explore a variety of topics while enjoying this extraordinary and beautiful setting, including Antietam Battlefield and Harpers Ferry. In addition to reading and discussing a variety of superb literary works and considering the cultural and historical underpinnings provided by the music and storytelling of the region, NEH Summer Scholars will develop a useful project, such as a teaching unit, a creative project, or a professional conference paper; the institute, therefore, will be both inspirational and practical. Past NEH Misty Mountains projects can be found on the website link at <http://www.shepherd.edu/neh/misty-mountains-projects-and-past-participants>

Teachers from all over the country and from every discipline and grade level are encouraged to apply, as we seek to bring together an array of diverse voices to enhance and contribute to our understanding of the region of Appalachia. In addition to interacting with artist-in-residence, novelist and playwright Denise Giardina, we will also be joined by novelist Silas House and poet Frank X Walker; storyteller Adam Booth who will host a storytelling workshop; Civil War Director Dr. James Broomall who will take NEH teachers on a tour of Antietam Battlefield, Harpers Ferry, and Storer College; Appalachian Studies and History Professor Dr. Ben Bankhurst; CATF Founding Director Ed Herendeen; Shepherd University Performing Arts Director and Appalachian native Rachael Meads, who will lead discussions about the music of the region and host a front porch Appalachian Music and Culinary event, as food is an important part of Appalachian culture. Institute Project Director and Appalachian Studies scholar,

editor, and 2006 West Virginia Professor of the Year Dr. Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt, will lead discussions about the literature and culture. Theater and storytelling workshops will also be part of the activities, as performance is an important part of teaching. The final week of the institute will find teachers participating in an Appalachian Roadtrip that will bring to life the literature studied and reinforce the power and prominence of place in all of the Voices from the Misty Mountains that will inform the Institute. Teachers will see Hawks Nest State Park, the New River Gorge and Bridge, a West Virginia coal mine and company town, the abandoned railroad town of Thurmond (now a National Park), and the Charleston Cultural Center and Museum.

This NEH Summer Institute for School Teachers is intended for K-12 educators who wish to discover and explore the rich and diverse culture and literature of Appalachia in order to expand their own knowledge and enthusiasm for the diversity of the American cultural landscape and the heritage of a region that is often misunderstood but always fascinating. The Scarbough Library, <http://www.shepherd.edu/libweb/>, will provide participants with the resources necessary to create practical or creative projects from the Summer Institute for School Teachers. The Shepherd University [Graduate Studies](#) Program will offer Professional Graduate Credit to any participants who wish graduate recognition for their work in the institute.

The deadline for all application materials for *Voices from the Misty Mountains* is March 1, 2018. Twenty-five participants will be selected from across the country to participate. Interested teachers will find links to application materials at the *Voices from the Misty Mountains* website at <http://www.shepherd.edu/neh/> and at the NEH website at <http://www.neh.gov/>. **Applicants must apply online first at the NEH site, download their application and send the required materials to the address below.** Applicants will be notified of acceptance on **March 31.**

Applications must include the official NEH application cover sheet, submitted online at the NEH website: <http://www.neh.gov/>. Hardcopies of required materials must also be mailed directly to **Brenda Feltner, Shepherd University, PO Box 5000, Shepherdstown, WV 25443.** The hardcopy package (or a scanned PDF with all materials) must include the following: **1) copy of NEH Application Cover Sheet; 2) 2-3 page application essay which includes how the *Voices from the Misty Mountains* Summer Institute for Teachers will specifically benefit the work of the applicant; 3) Resumé; and 4) two letters of recommendation.**

Sincerely,

Sylvia Bailey

Shurbutt

Sylvia Bailey Shurbutt, NEH Project Director

<http://www.shepherd.edu/neh>

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