

Mississippi Humanities Council

Grant Application Forms and Guidelines

Copies of the guidelines and application forms are available in alternative formats upon request.

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The Mississippi Humanities Council is funded by Congress through the National Endowment for the Humanities to provide public programs in traditional liberal arts disciplines to serve nonprofit groups in Mississippi. Twenty-two Mississippians serve four-year terms as volunteers, five of whom are appointed by the governor and the rest elected by the Council. Half of the members are public, half academic, and every effort is made to maintain balance by race, gender, and geographic distribution to assure representation for all Mississippians. All interested persons are invited to nominate themselves or others to the Council. Call (601) 432-6752 for more information. The Mississippi Humanities Council does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age. The Mississippi Humanities Council is committed to every reasonable effort to make its programs accessible to as many Mississippians as possible and expects grant recipients to do the same. Copies of the guidelines and application forms are available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact MHC if you have questions.

INTRODUCTION

The Mississippi Humanities Council is an independent organization affiliated with the National Endowment for the Humanities. Established in 1972 on the premise that the humanities are relevant to any enterprise involving serious thought, discussion, and decision-making, the Council has maintained a commitment to foster the public's understanding of historical, literary, and philosophical perspectives on human experience. The humanities are both fields of knowledge and processes of critical thinking about and reflection on the ideas, writings, and events of our cultural heritage. The humanities disciplines, as defined by Congress, include languages and literature, classics, history, archaeology, jurisprudence, philosophy, ethics, comparative religion, history and criticism of the arts, and social sciences employing historical and philosophical approaches. The contributions of scholars, writers, and researchers in such fields as philosophy, ethics and jurisprudence enrich the civic dialogue in a democratic society. Insights about the past from archaeology and history enable us to interpret the present and plan for a better future. Through language, literature, and the arts, human beings express and reflect on the meaning of life.

MISSION STATEMENT

In the belief that learning about the past and interpreting the present will allow our society to provide a better future for everyone, the Mississippi Humanities Council seeks to create and foster opportunities for the people of this state to understand themselves and others and to place their lives in the larger context of the human condition. To accomplish this mission, the MHC will use the processes and disciplines of the humanities to focus on four areas: Books and Reading, Mississippi History and Culture, Civil Discourse, and Capacity Building.

OBJECTIVES

- Developing a well-defined and clearly focused statewide humanities program in cooperation with organizations, institutions, and agencies;
- Assisting local and statewide organizations to plan and conduct public projects in the humanities;
- Encouraging scholars in the humanities to share their learning and insights in order to increase the public's understanding of the humanities disciplines;
- Creating educational resources to extend the insights of the humanities to people of all ages;
- Providing public recognition for exemplary leadership which contributes to an understanding of cultural heritage and values;
- Helping citizens to understand better their roles in a democracy;
- Improving the quality of humanities education in the schools.

The Mississippi Humanities Council encourages and supports activities that make the humanities accessible to the people of Mississippi. A principal means of achieving this goal is awarding grants to non-profit organizations which plan and sponsor humanities activities for the benefit of citizens throughout the state.

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

How do I plan a humanities project?

Grant projects must be based on one or more of the areas of the humanities. The humanities include:

- literature, classics, languages, and linguistics;
- history and archaeology;
- philosophy, jurisprudence, ethics, and comparative religion;
- history, criticism, and theory of the arts;
- social sciences employing historical or philosophical approaches.

The application should include an explanation of the humanities content and methods of the project and its goals. This explanation should give the Council a clear notion of the direction the project will take and the format for achieving the stated goals.

The content and methods of humanities disciplines differ from the quantitative or value-free aspects of the social and natural sciences as well as from the creative or performance aspects of the fine arts. As fields of knowledge, the humanities should not be confused with particular philosophies, such as secular humanism, or specific social action programs or movements, such as humanitarianism.

Do I have humanities scholars actively involved?

Humanities scholars should be professionally educated persons primarily engaged in study, research, writing, or teaching in one or more of the humanities disciplines. Usually humanities scholars have received the M.A. or Ph.D. degree in one of the humanities disciplines. They may be retired, not employed, or on leave from a professional position in the humanities. In some cases, individuals will be considered humanities scholars by virtue of special experiences, expertise, or achievements, such as publications, in one of the fields of the humanities.

Humanities scholars should participate in all phases of the planning, conduct, and evaluation of project activities. They contribute their analytical and teaching skills to encourage the public to engage in critical thinking and interpretation.

Have I considered audience involvement?

Project activities are primarily intended to serve Mississippi citizens. Persons who represent the potential audience must participate in designing the grant project. They should be involved in its planning, conduct, and follow-up evaluation. Projects which cover topics, issues, and problems related to specific groups, such as ethnic minorities, senior citizens, or women, should specifically include representatives from those groups. They should be part of the project committee.

Grant projects should be accessible to all segments of the population, and no one should be excluded because of race, sex, age, or disability. For instance, the place selected for a program should be accessible to all persons who might wish to attend. Grant recipients/project directors are expected to make all reasonable efforts to make programs

accessible to citizens with disabilities. If you have questions regarding accessibility, please contact the Mississippi Humanities Council.

Have I proposed an adequate evaluation plan?

A draft of an audience evaluation form specifically devised for each particular program should be included in the application. The evaluation should solicit basic demographic information from the audience including age group, sex, ethnicity, Congressional district, and home state if not from Mississippi. MHC can provide a sample evaluation form.

Final reports for grant projects include an overall evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the activities. The project director's final report should answer the questions about the degree to which the objectives were achieved, the impact on audience and participants, the number in attendance, and the quality of the discussions. Finally, unless the requirement is specifically waived by MHC, an outside evaluator assigned by MHC and paid with MHC funds must be engaged to attend and assess in a written report each project.

Have I included a plan for publicity?

Publicity is a critical part of every successful project. An appropriate and effective plan for promoting the program must be described in the application. The first step in successfully publicizing a program is carefully defining its purpose and intended audience. Attractive, striking, and informative publicity will encourage people to attend programs. Press releases, announcements, and invitations should be sent to newspapers and radio and television stations. Applicants are encouraged to cooperate with other local groups and organizations in audience development for humanities programs. Applications must be submitted well in advance of the program date to allow adequate time for publicity, and all projects must be well publicized in advance. Promotional materials and information should be sent to Mississippi's Congressional delegation and local legislators.

All print and other publicity materials must acknowledge MHC support.

What activities are ineligible?

Because the Mississippi Humanities Council must make the best use of its resources and avoid duplication of efforts by other funding sources, certain types of activities are not eligible for humanities grants.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

MHC will not support the following:

- projects which are primarily intended to promote an organization or its programs;
- long-term staffing;
- construction, preservation, or renovation of facilities or purchase of equipment;
- acquisitions or additions to collections;
- alcoholic beverages or entertainment;
- food costs for audiences;
- courses for academic credit;
- fellowships, scholarships, and prizes;
- travel to professional meetings;

- research, unless it is essential to the development of the humanities content of the project;
- publications, or performances or presentations of works of art, unless they are essential in conveying the humanities content of the project to a non-academic audience;
- projects that advocate or promote a particular political, ideological, religious, or partisan point of view;
- projects examining controversial issues without the balance of competing perspectives.

GENERAL APPLICATION PROCEDURES

The Mississippi Humanities Council awards grants to non-profit organizations to sponsor projects which use the knowledge and insights of one or more areas of the humanities to increase understanding of any aspect of human experience. Typical organizations eligible for grants include the following:

- colleges and schools;
- community and cultural organizations;
- educational and professional groups;
- museums and libraries;
- public agencies;
- noncommercial radio and television stations.

Individuals and for-profit groups are not eligible to apply for MHC grants.

The written application is the basis for assessment of a proposed project through a competitive review process. The application should clearly demonstrate that the project meets the requirements of the appropriate grant category. A narrative which provides additional information about the project should be attached to the application form. The narrative should be concise, clear, and free of technical language.

Collaboration between the applicant organization and humanities scholars is a vital part of the preparation of grant applications. The application should state explicitly whether the principal program participants have accepted the invitation to serve on the dates listed on the application. Humanities scholars selected should understand the importance of interaction with members of the public as well as with other scholars.

MHC urges all applicants to contact the staff well ahead of deadlines to discuss project ideas

The staff will review preliminary drafts when time permits. Such staff reviews can help keep applicants' projects in line with MHC guidelines and assist in other ways such as locating appropriate scholars or others with desired expertise, making budget estimates, and providing other kinds of technical assistance.

YOU SHOULD PHOTOCOPY APPLICATION FORMS AS OFTEN AS NECESSARY, THEN DUPLICATE THE COMPLETED FORMS FOR THE

REQUIRED NUMBER OF COPIES. DO NOT USE ORIGINALS, AS YOU MAY NEED THEM FOR FUTURE APPLICATIONS.

MISSISSIPPI HUMANITIES COUNCIL GRANTS

MINIGRANTS

Requests of \$1,500 or less are considered minigrants. **Minigrants must be submitted at least eight weeks in advance of the program date.** Deadlines for submitting Minigrant requests are Jan. 15, April 15, July 15 and Oct. 15. **Two copies with original signatures and five additional copies are required.** Minigrant applications are found beginning on page 18 and should be photocopied as necessary. One copy of other supporting materials should be submitted.

PLANNING GRANTS

MHC will consider requests of \$1,500 or less for humanities program planning. Use of MHC funds is usually limited to consultant honoraria and travel. The same proposal form is used for planning grants and minigrants. **Planning grants must be submitted at least eight weeks in advance of the program date.** Deadlines for submitting planning grant requests are January 15, April 15, July 15 and October 15. **Two copies with original signatures and five additional copies are required.** Minigrant and planning grant application forms are found beginning on page 18 and should be photocopied as necessary. One copy of other supporting materials should be submitted.

REGULAR GRANTS

Deadlines for submitting requests for more than \$1,500 and up to \$7,500 are April 15 and September 15 of each year. **Regular grants must be submitted at least 12 weeks in advance of the program date. Applicants must submit 25 copies of regular grants, two with original signatures.** A separate narrative discussion, a budget explanation and fully completed resume sheet for each principal project participant should be included. One copy of other supporting materials should be submitted.

The narrative description for minigrants, planning grants, and regular grants should include the following:

- description of the program and its goals, the context in which it has been developed, and the manner in which it will be publicized, conducted, and evaluated;
- applicant's previous experience with similar programs and with MHC;
- explanation of why the proposed project will benefit the applicant organization and/or community;
- outline of the timetable, format, and schedule of events for each program in the project; include names, dates, locations, topics, and presentation and discussion techniques.

The proposal should also include the following:

- completed and signed grant application checklist;
- fully completed and signed application resume sheet for each paid program participant, giving background and qualifications and emphasizing why the person's credentials are particularly appropriate for the project;
- detailed budget narrative which indicates why costs are necessary and how amounts were calculated.

MEDIA GRANTS

Media grants support the development of original productions in film, television, radio, or computer media (website and CD-ROM) which interpret and present the humanities. Humanities scholars should collaborate with media producers and other skilled technicians to produce a high-quality work based on texts or research in the humanities. Examples of successful formats are documentary, docudrama, and dramatization, but other formats are encouraged.

The media application, which uses the same forms as other kinds of MHC applications, should also provide a detailed explanation of the involvement of humanities scholars in the development of the script or treatment. Grants are available to support such productions at pre-production and post-production phases. Sponsors are encouraged to apply for a preproduction grant in order to ensure involvement of humanities scholars from the very outset of the project and throughout its entire process.

The terms of grant awards require that two copies of all materials produced under the grant be deposited with the state humanities council; if the proposal involves the duplication of expensive items (films, CD-ROM), the budget should provide for MHC copies. One half inch VHS copies of video productions are preferred.

SPEAKERS BUREAU

Three (3) copies of the Speakers Bureau application form must be submitted at least two weeks in advance of the program. In all cases, applications should be submitted far enough in advance of the program to allow for appropriate publicity to draw a substantial attendance. Speakers Bureau application forms are available online at www.mshumanities.org.

BUDGET PRINCIPLES

The budget should be an accurate and complete estimate of the financial resources needed to carry out the proposed project. Three sources of support can be identified:

- Mississippi Humanities Council grant funds;
- cost-sharing provided by the sponsoring organization (in cash or in kind);
- cash contributions from third parties.

The total budget is the sum of all the resources available from these three categories. The application form provides space to summarize both income and expenditures for the project. This summary should be supplemented by a budget narrative containing

sufficient detail to demonstrate that the costs are reasonable and directly related to the plan of activities described in the application.

Expenditures

The budgeted expenditures for the project must be made between the beginning and ending dates of the project period. When projects require more than the amount from MHC, the applicant will be expected to obtain additional funds through contributions from third parties. (See explanation under Cost-Sharing Sharing.)

Fiscal Agent

The applicant shall designate a financial officer who will assume responsibility for authorizing expenses and making disbursements of funds according to the provisions of the approved budget for the project. The financial officer must agree to follow the fiscal policies of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Mississippi Humanities Council. He or she will agree to maintain financial records and make them available for audit for up to three years from the end of the project date. The project director may not act as financial officer. When the applicant institution is a college or university, the fiscal agent must be selected by the school's accounting office or other office responsible for grants management.

Personnel

Most applicants accumulate cost-sharing through the contributed time of project staff, especially the project director and volunteers. Scholars and other project participants are paid honoraria; however, large honoraria for speakers, panelists, and consultants are discouraged. Applicants can consult MHC staff to discuss reasonable honoraria. The Council will not pay honoraria for employees of the applicants' organization.

Travel

Travel plans should be itemized by number of trips, points of origin and destination, means of transportation, and length of stay. Allowable transportation costs are 25 cents per mile for privately owned automobiles or the actual cost of coach class air fare, train, bus, or other public transportation with receipts. Actual cost of meals and lodging can be reimbursed with receipts.

Other Expenditures

No grant funds may be expended for indirect costs. Indirect costs can be allowed as part of the cost-sharing provided that the federal government has approved an indirect cost rate for the grantee. Factors which are included in the development of an indirect cost rate may not be listed separately as direct cost items in the budget.

Project Income

Admission and registration fees are discouraged, because all MHC programs must be open to the entire public. Any net income generated by project-related activities shall be applied to the expense of the project or deducted from the amount of the grant. Provisions must be made for persons who choose not to pay for meals, program materials, etc., but

desire to hear a speaker or participate in MHC-funded portions of the program, and these persons must be made to feel welcome.

COST SHARE

Each organization applying for a grant must provide for the project's cost-sharing contributions in cash and/or in kind. The combined total of cash and in-kind contributions must at least equal the amount of MHC funds. The Council recognizes that all cost-sharing or matching funds may not be in hand at the time of application; however, it expects some assurance that the applicant can reasonably expect to meet the matching requirements.

The Mississippi Humanities Council requires that all grants over \$1,500 must be matched in part by cash. For grants of \$1,500-\$3,000, a cash match of 10% is required. Recipients who have received three grants of \$3,000 or more in the last five (5) years must match dollar-for-dollar with third-party donations all amounts over \$3,000.

In all cases, costs incurred by a grantee, as well as in-kind and cash contributions that are used to meet cost-sharing requirements, must be verifiable. Records must also indicate the basis for determining the value of in-kind contributions.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Cost Share

The value of the cash or in-kind contribution to the project by the grantee or parties other than the Mississippi Humanities Council.

Evaluator

A person familiar with MHC programs and the disciplines of the humanities who attends and assesses an MHC-funded program. The project is assigned an evaluator by the MHC staff and the project director is responsible for contacting and making arrangements with the evaluator. Evaluators are paid by the project with MHC funds. Their honoraria and travel costs should be included in the MHC portion of the budget.

Honoraria

The stipends or fees paid to project participants for their professional services.

Humanities Disciplines

As defined by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the humanities disciplines include the knowledge and study of literature, classics, languages, linguistics, history, archaeology, philosophy, jurisprudence, ethics and comparative religion, the history, criticism, and theory of the arts, and social sciences employing historical or philosophical approaches.

Humanities Scholar

Any person teaching in a humanities discipline at an accredited institution of higher learning in this state; a person professionally educated in a traditional liberal arts field,

holding the M.A. or Ph.D. degree in such a field, who is currently teaching, writing, or doing research in that field, or who is retired or on leave from such a position, or who is an independent scholar with these qualifications. In some cases, individuals will be considered humanities scholars by virtue of special experiences, expertise, or achievements, such as publications, in one of the fields of the humanities.

In-kind Contributions

Services, facilities, publicity, volunteer time, or other non-cash contributions in support of a project. In-kind contributions do not involve cash outlays, but the value of such contributions is calculated at the rate equivalent services would cost.

Project Director

The individual responsible for managing all aspects of a project, including its planning, promotion, conduct, and evaluation.

Project Participant

A humanities scholar or person with expertise in a particular area who is actively involved in the project. Does not refer to members of the general audience.

If you have any questions, please contact MHC for assistance at (601) 432-6752.

DEADLINES

Applications for regular grants are accepted at least twelve weeks in advance of the program date. **Deadlines for applying for regular grants are April 15 and September 15.** Proposals must be postmarked by these dates or must be delivered to the office by 5:00 p.m. on these dates.

Applications for minigrants and planning grants are accepted at least eight weeks in advance of the program date. **Deadlines for submitting minigrant request are January 15, April 14, July 15 and October 15.** Proposals must be postmarked by these dates or must be delivered to the office by 5:00 p.m. on these dates. Applications for media grants are accepted in accordance with the above category guidelines.

Receipt of grant applications is acknowledged by postcard. If you do not receive an acknowledgement of receipt for your application, please contact MHC. Notification of award follows in about six weeks for regular grants and about four weeks for other grants.

GRANT FUNDING

Funding by MHC in any given round depends on the quality of proposals, on the funds available, and on the number of proposals received. MHC attempts to allocate funds equitably across the state Congressional districts to serve as many Mississippians as possible.