During the COVID-19 crisis, the state and jurisdictional humanities councils are uniquely positioned to provide recovery funding to museums, historic sites, and other nonprofit organizations affected by the pandemic. The humanities councils serve the smallest and most vulnerable communities and institutions and are able to reach areas that receive few other cultural resources. To meet this need, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) will issue approximately 40 percent of its national American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 appropriation directly to the state and jurisdictional councils to support subawards to eligible entities for general operating support and humanities programming to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the coronavirus. The Mississippi Humanities Council will have approximately $700,000 to distribute through two different grant programs: ARP Museum Relief Grants; and ARP Humanities Recovery Grants.

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1. About the Mississippi Humanities Council

The Mississippi Humanities Council is an independent nonprofit 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 worked to foster the public’s understanding of historical, literary and philosophical perspectives on the human experience.

WHAT ARE THE HUMANITIES?

The humanities enrich our understanding of the human experience in the past, present and future. The humanities disciplines, as defined by Congress, 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

Through language, literature and the arts, human beings express their knowledge about their cultural heritage and reflect on its meaning. 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.

2. ARP Grants

The MHC is offering two different grant programs to help public humanities organizations prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the coronavirus.

ARP Museum Relief Grants – designed to help humanities-based museums cover general operational expenses. Museums must be able to document at least $50,000 in lost revenue (admissions; venue rental; net gift shop sales) between May 1, 2020 and April 30, 2021. Memberships may be counted as admissions. Eligible museums may request up to $20,000 to cover such operational expenses as:

• Salary support, full or partial, for one or more positions.
• Facilities costs such as rent, mortgage, utilities, insurance, and maintenance.
• Other costs required to sustain the organization.

No matching funds are required for Museum Relief Grants. **Funds must be expended by November 30, 2022.**

ARP Humanities Recovery Grants – designed to help public humanities organizations recover from the COVID-19 crisis. Recovery can be defined in multiple ways: reengaging with audiences; developing new public humanities programs; relaunching old programs; transition to outdoor, digital, and virtual programs; capacity building and strategic planning; equity assessments and planning related to coronavirus and the economic crisis. Eligible organizations may apply for up to $15,000. Up to half of the request may be for operational expenses related to the proposed project (including staffing) as long as the applying organization is a humanities-focused organization. According to NEH rules, organizations whose missions falls outside of the humanities are not eligible to receive funding for general operating costs under ARP. Arts-focused organizations should contact the Mississippi Arts Commission for information about its ARP grant program. Arts-focused organizations that also do significant public humanities programming may apply for ARP Humanities Recovery Grants to fund specific humanities projects, though they may not request general operating costs.

Organizations may apply for both Museum Relief Grants and Humanities Recovery Grants. Organizations that receive Museum Relief Grants are not eligible to apply for the
July 15th Recovery Grant deadline; they must wait and apply for the August 16th deadline. Recipients of Museum Relief Grants are not eligible for operational expenses through Humanities Recovery Grants. Museums that receive ARP operational support from both MHC and the Mississippi Arts Commission are not eligible for Humanities Recovery Grants. Organizations that receive ARP grants are also eligible to apply for MHC’s regular and minigrants, but not for the same program or scope of work.

Cost-share is not required for either grant program, though voluntary cost-share can be accepted for Humanities Recovery Grants.

**FUNDING CRITERIA**

Funding by MHC in any given round depends on the quality of proposal, funds available, and the number of proposals received. MHC attempts to allocate funds equitably across the state’s Congressional districts to serve as many Mississippians as possible. ARP Grants will be disbursed based on financial need and the quality of proposed humanities programming.

### 3. Are You Eligible for a Grant?

ARP Grants are designed to help public humanities organizations prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the coronavirus. These ARP grants are open to organizations constituted for nonprofit purposes, accredited public and 501(c)(3) institutions of higher education, state and local governmental agencies, and federally recognized Native American tribal governments. Any applications from college or university entities must be focused on public-facing humanities programming beyond their campus community. Public libraries are not eligible to apply since the ARP has set aside funds for public libraries, which will be distributed by the Mississippi Library Commission.

Organizations or groups that apply for grants from MHC must be constituted for nonprofit purposes and must be engaged in public humanities work. It is not necessary that such organizations or groups be incorporated or have tax-exempt status. MHC does not award grants to for-profit entities. **As per federal rule 2CFR 25, grant applicants must obtain a DUNS number.**

MHC will not support the following in ARP Grants:

- Overlapping project costs with any other pending or approved application for federal funding and/or approved federal awards
- Funds for activities supported by other non-NEH federal funds
- Pre-award costs from before March 15, 2021
- Equipment costs in excess of 20% of total project costs
- Any travel costs
- Construction, purchase of real property, major alteration and renovation
- Collections acquisition
Promotion of a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view
- Advocacy of a particular program of social or political action
- Support of specific public policies or legislation
- Lobbying
- Projects that fall outside of the humanities (including the creation or performance of art; creative writing, autobiographies, memoirs, and creative nonfiction; and empirically based social science research or policy studies)

Organizations may not apply for MHC’s ARP Grants to cover the same expenses for which they have applied to other federal entities. They may receive funding from other ARP programs (including grants from NEH, and NEA) to cover different expenses.

4. Allowable Expenses

For Museum Relief Grants, allowable expenses include:
- Staff salaries & benefits
- Promotion costs
- Utility costs
- Insurance
- Supplies (defined as items less than $5000)
- Equipment (items over $5000; can’t be more than 20% of expenses)
- Other operational costs

For Humanities Recovery Grants, allowable expenses include:
- Staff salaries & benefits (can’t be more than 50% of expenses)
- Scholar honoraria
- Program supplies (defined as items less than $5000)
- Program promotion costs
- Nonprofit training from entities like the Alliance for Nonprofits and Philanthropy
- Strategic planning expenses related to coronavirus recovery
- Consultant fees related to coronavirus recovery
- Venue costs
- Miscellaneous program costs

According to NEH rules, travel expenses are not allowed under ARP grants.

5. How to Apply

Step One: Contact MHC staff.

To make the best use of your time, MHC will help you determine whether your organization or project is eligible before you apply. Applicants are encouraged to contact the executive director, Stuart Rockoff (srockoff@mhc.state.ms.us), or the assistant director, Carol Andersen (carol@mhc.state.ms.us), via email or via phone (601) 432-
Staff will give you guidance on how to craft a successful application and answer any questions you have.

Step Two: Submit your completed application via email.

The simple application form is available for download as a Word document from the MHC website. We prefer you submit your grant application in Word format by email to grants@mhc.state.ms.us. Museum Relief Grants applications are due June 15th. Deadlines for ARP Humanities Recovery Grants are July 15 and August 16.

Humanities Recovery Grant applications must also include MHC resume sheets for each scholar or consultant paid with grant funds. All grants must include a detailed budget narrative explaining how grants funds will be spent.

Step Three: What happens next?

You will receive notification by email of funding decisions within four weeks of your application submission. If MHC funds your grant request, you will receive an award packet detailing your next steps. If MHC does not fund your request, you will receive an email explaining our decision.

6. Budget Tips and Terms

Your budget should be an accurate and complete estimate of the financial resources needed to carry out the project. For Humanities Recovery Grants, you may identify two sources of support:

- Mississippi Humanities Council ARP grant funds
- Cost-sharing provided by the sponsoring organization (cash or in-kind) or cash contributions from third parties (including other federal entities)

For Museum Relief Grants, you will only identify MHC grant funds.

The total budget is the sum of all resources available from these two categories. Use the budget narrative to show precise amounts and how your costs are reasonable and directly related to the project activities you propose. Cost-sharing funds are welcomed but not required for ARP Humanities Recovery Grants. Cost-share cannot be accepted for ARP Museum Relief Grants.

Expenditures

The budgeted expenditures for the project must be made between the beginning and ending dates of the proposed project period. Grant periods may begin as early as March 15, 2021 and no later than December 1, 2021. Grant periods must end by November 30, 2022.

Fiscal Agent
The applicant shall designate a fiscal agent, who will assume responsibility for authorizing expenses and making disbursements of funds according to the provisions of the approved budget for the project. **The project director may not act as financial officer.**

The fiscal agent 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.

**Personnel**

ARP Museum Relief Grants may be used to pay organizational staff. Staff costs may be up to 50% of ARP Humanities Recovery Grants. Be sure to specify in the budget narrative which staff positions will be supported by the grant funds. If you have applied for other ARP Act grants and programs for certain staff costs, you may not ask for funding for the same positions from MHC. You may receive funding from other ARP Act programs to cover different expenses.

**7. Definition of Terms**

**Authorizing Official**

A person with authority to legally obligate an organization to the grant agreement.

**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. Cost-share is welcomed but not required for ARP Humanities Recovery Grants. Cost-share cannot be accepted for Museum Relief Grants.

**DUNS Number**

A unique nine-digit identification number for each physical location of a business. D-U-N-S Number assignment is free for all businesses required to register with the federal government for contracts or grants. The DUNS system enables the government to better track the spending of federal funds.

**EIN Number**
The Employer Identification Number (EIN), also known as the Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) or the Federal Tax Identification Number, is a unique nine-digit number assigned by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to business entities operating in the United States for the purposes of identification.

**Fiscal Agent**

Person who will manage fiscal matters related to the grant.

**Grant Period**

The period in which the granted project takes place. Grant periods must end by November 30, 2022. They may begin as early as March 15, 2021.

**Honoraria**

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

**Humanities Scholar**

Humanities scholars include the following:

- Any person teaching in a humanities discipline at an accredited institution of higher learning in this state or who is retired or on leave from such a position.

- A person professionally educated in a traditional liberal arts field, holding the M.A. or Ph.D. degree in such a field, who has taught, written or done research in that field.

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. Estimate the dollar value of in-kind contributions based on what these services would normally cost.

**Project Director**

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

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