

# Mississippi Humanities Council Grant Application Guidelines

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*If you have trouble accessing this application online, please contact the Mississippi Humanities Council, 601.432.6752 or [grants@mhc.state.ms.us](mailto:grants@mhc.state.ms.us)*

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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. The Council is committed to making its programs accessible to as many Mississippians as possible and expects grant recipients to do the same.

### 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 humanities experts, 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. Grants We Offer

The MHC grants program seeks to fund projects that stimulate meaningful community dialogue, attract diverse audiences, are participatory and engaging, and apply the humanities to our everyday lives. Grants may be used to support public humanities programs, exhibits, the planning of larger projects, and the development of original productions in film, television, radio, podcasts, or online resources.

### MINIGRANTS

Grants of \$2,500 or less are considered minigrants. There are no deadlines for minigrants, though applications must be received at least four weeks via our [online portal](#) before the program or proposed grant period begins.

### REGULAR GRANTS

Grants greater than \$2,500 are considered regular grants and are capped at \$10,000. Regular grants may be used to support larger public humanities programs, conferences, exhibits and the development of original productions in film, television, radio, podcasts, or online resources.

Deadlines for applying for regular grants are May 1 and September 15. Proposals must be completed via our [online portal](#) by midnight to [grants@mhc.state.ms.us](mailto:grants@mhc.state.ms.us) on these dates. Programs and expenditures may not occur fewer than eight weeks after the deadline date you selected.

Early submissions are not processed until the official deadline for that funding cycle. For example, if you submit an application on January 1 and the next grant deadline in your category is May 1, MHC will not process your application until May 1.

### ORAL HISTORY GRANTS

With funding from the Mississippi Legislature through an appropriation to the Department of Archives and History, the Mississippi Oral History Project has captured the stories of our state since 1999. Groups may apply for grants to support oral history projects that relate to the experiences of Mississippians. All grantees must arrange with a public archive in Mississippi to accept, catalogue and make accessible all recordings collected with a Mississippi Humanities Council oral history grant. If you need assistance identifying a public archive for your project, please contact the Mississippi Humanities Council. Oral history grant applicants are strongly encouraged to develop a plan to use, disseminate or exhibit the interviews once they are completed.

Grant limits and deadlines are the same as for minigrants and regular grants. Thus, Oral History Grants of \$2,500 or less may be submitted anytime, but at least four weeks before the project begins; deadlines for Oral History Grants between \$2,501 and \$10,000 are May 1 and September 15. All oral history grant applications must be submitted through our [online portal](#).

### FUNDING CRITERIA

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.

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

MHC grants are intended to support projects that use humanities disciplines to increase understanding of the human experience. Project activities are primarily intended to serve Mississippians and must be free and open to the public. Organizations or groups that apply for grants from MHC must be constituted for nonprofit purposes. 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 rules, grant applicants must obtain a free Unique Entity ID (UEI) as the primary means of identification required to receive federal funding. Organizations seeking MHC funds are **REQUIRED** to provide the Unique Entity ID (UEI) for grant applications. Typical organizations eligible for grants include:

- Private nonprofit organizations
- Institutions of higher education
- State, local and federally recognized Indian tribal governments
- Community and cultural organizations
- Educational and professional groups
- Museums
- Libraries
- Public agencies
- Non-commercial radio and television stations

MHC will not support the following:

- programs that have an admission fee or registration charge
- projects primarily intended to promote an organization or its programs
- salaries of employees associated with the applying organization construction, preservation or renovation of facilities or purchase of equipment over \$10,000
- acquisitions or additions to collections

- alcoholic beverages
- food costs for audiences unless food is central to the program
- courses for academic credit
- fellowships, scholarships and prizes
- travel to professional meetings
- individual research projects unless they are directly supporting a public humanities program
- 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
- No MHC grants funds may be used for political lobbying activities

**Individuals and for-profit groups are not eligible to apply for MHC grants.** While nonprofit organizations may collaborate informally to share grant funds, the name of only one organization may appear on the application. A staff member from that organization will be the lead organizer or project director. All applying organizations must have a UEI. Contact the MHC if you have questions about this requirement.

It is essential that the applicant organization and humanities experts collaborate in preparing the grant application. Please state on your application whether your proposed speakers have accepted your invitation to participate on the scheduled dates. Participating humanities experts should understand that their audience will consist of the general public, not just other humanities experts.

## **4. How to Apply**

### **Step One: Discuss your project with MHC staff.**

To make the best use of your time, MHC will help you determine whether your project is eligible for our grant program before you apply. Via email or phone, applicants must contact the Executive Director or the Assistant Director a minimum of four weeks before the grant deadline you select to discuss your project. Staff will give you guidance on how to craft a successful application and answer any questions you have.

### **Step Two: Submit a rough draft of your grant application**

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a draft of their grant application, including proposed budget, at least two weeks prior to the deadline. MHC staff will offer constructive feedback and suggestions on how to strengthen the application. To submit a draft, click the “save and resume” button at the bottom of the page in the online grant portal. You will then be sent a link to the application via email. Forward that link to [grants@mhc.state.ms.us](mailto:grants@mhc.state.ms.us). MHC staff will then be able to review your draft application.

### **Step Three: Submit your written application.**

All grant applications should be submitted via our [online portal](#). If this is not possible for you, contact MHC staff. All applications must be received by the deadline to be considered.

#### **All applications must include a Description of Proposed Project that includes the following information:**

- A description of the program and its goals, as well as plans for publicity and evaluation.
- Applicant's previous experience with similar programs and with MHC.
- An explanation of how the proposed project will benefit the applicant's organization and/or the community.
- Outline of the format and schedule of events for each program in the project, including the names of humanities experts involved, their topics, and the date and location of any public programs.
- For oral history grants, an explanation of how the interviews will be used and where they will be archived.

Applications also include a grant application checklist; detailed information for each program participant paid with grant funds; and a detailed budget narrative section explaining how grant funds will be spent.

### **Step Four: What happens next?**

You will receive notification by email of funding decisions within four weeks of your submission of a minigrant, and within eight weeks of the application deadline for a regular grant. Please note we do not process early submissions until the official deadline for that funding cycle.

If MHC funds your grant request, you will receive an award letter and a packet detailing your next steps via email. If MHC does not fund your request, you will receive a letter explaining our decision.

## **5. Keys to a Successful Proposal**

### **Humanities experts actively involved**

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

### **Potential audience members are involved in the planning**

People who represent the potential audience should participate in designing the grant project, through planning, execution of the project and follow-up evaluation. Projects that cover topics related to specific groups—such as ethnic minorities, senior citizens or women—should specifically include representatives from those groups on 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 location 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.

### **Program reflects balance of views**

Proposals that address public policy questions and controversial issues should provide a balance of viewpoints, avoiding advocacy or bias. Humanities experts with expertise in a range of viewpoints should be involved in the planning and implementation phases of program development.

### **Have an adequate evaluation plan**

Evaluation of the success of a project is an essential part of good programming. Understanding the response of a program's audience is crucial to planning future programs. Grant applicants must describe their evaluation plan in their project narrative. Evaluation forms distributed to audience members should solicit demographic information in addition to qualitative responses to the program. Awarded grantees will receive a sample audience evaluation form that may be adapted to your particular program. The project director's final grant report must contain an assessment of the success of the program based on audience evaluation.

### **Have a strong publicity plan**

Publicity is a critical part of every successful project. An appropriate and effective plan for promoting the program must be described in the grant narrative. The first step in successfully publicizing a program is carefully defining its purpose and intended audience. Submit your application well in advance of your program date to allow adequate time for publicity.

Attractive, striking, and informative publicity well in advance of your programs will encourage people to attend. We strongly encourage you to send press releases, announcements and invitations to newspapers and radio and television stations, as well as using various forms of social media to publicize the event. In addition, we encourage you to send promotional materials about the program to Mississippi's Congressional delegation and local legislators. We encourage you to cooperate with other local groups and organizations to help publicize your program or project.

*Please note that all print and other publicity materials must acknowledge MHC support and include the MHC logo, available for download [Here](#).*

## **6. Budget Tips and Terms**

Your budget should be an accurate and complete estimate of the financial resources needed to carry out your proposed project. You may identify three sources of support:

- 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 as well as a space to detail projected costs.

### **Expenditures**

The budgeted expenditures for the project must be made between the beginning and ending dates of the proposed project period. When projects require more than the requested amount from MHC, explain how you will find additional funds to complete the project. (See explanation under Cost-Sharing.)

### **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 agent.**

The fiscal agent must agree to follow the fiscal policies of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Mississippi Humanities Council. They will agree to maintain financial records and make them available for audit for up to three years from the end of the project date. 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.

### **Indirect Costs**

Per federal rule 2 CFR §200.414 (f), the Mississippi Humanities Council will honor any federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) for grants made with federal funds. Any nonfederal entity that has never received a federal NICRA may charge a de minimis rate of 15% of modified total direct costs. For grants made with state funds, including oral history grants, indirect costs may not be charged.

## **Personnel**

Most applicants accumulate cost-sharing through the contributed time of project staff, especially the project director and volunteers. Humanities experts and other project participants are paid honoraria; however, large honoraria for speakers, panelists, and consultants are discouraged. If a humanities expert's honorarium exceeds \$1,000, we will expect the applicant to share the cost and not seek the full amount from the MHC, or to offer an equal amount of cash match in the overall project budget. Applicants may consult MHC staff to discuss reasonable honoraria. The Council will not pay honoraria for employees of the applicants' organization.

## **Facilities**

An MHC grant cannot pay the applicant institution to rent its own meeting spaces or equipment. The cost or value of such rental may be counted toward the cost-share.

## **Travel**

Travel plans should be itemized by number of trips, points of origin and destination, means of transportation and length of stay. Mileage expenses for privately owned automobiles will be reimbursed at the prevailing government rate of the state of Mississippi or the actual cost of domestic coach class airfare, train, bus or other public transportation with receipts. Actual cost of meals and lodging can be reimbursed with receipts.

## **7. 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. Applicants are encouraged to be comprehensive in their in-kind calculations, which may exceed the amount of grant funds requested.

NOTE: Many organizations meet the cost-sharing requirement through donated goods and services, such as the estimated value of volunteers' time, meeting space provided free of charge or donated materials. Most applicants accumulate cost-sharing through the contributed time of project staff, especially the project director and volunteers. MHC staff is available to help you determine your cost-sharing contributions.

MHC recognizes that all cost-sharing or matching funds may not be in hand at the time of application. However, you must describe how you expect to meet the matching requirements.

The Mississippi Humanities Council requires that all grants over \$2,500 must be matched in part by cash. **For grants greater than \$2,500, a cash match of 10% is required.**



## 8. 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.

### UEI Number

Organizations seeking MHC funds are REQUIRED to provide the Unique Entity ID (UEI). Organizations can receive their free UEI on the SAM.gov website.

### 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. Organizations without paid employees often don't have an EIN number. Grantees are not required to have an EIN number.

### Fiscal Agent

Person who will manage fiscal matters related to the grant.

### Grant Period

The period in which the granted project takes place. Grant applicants determine the length of the grant period, which should include sufficient time after the project to complete and submit all final reports. Grant periods should not begin less than four weeks after minigrant deadlines and eight weeks after major grant deadlines. **No grant funds may be spent or obligated before the start of the grant period or after the grant period ends.**

### Honoraria

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

### Humanities Disciplines

See "What are the Humanities?"

## **Humanities Scholar/Expert**

Humanities experts and experts 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 experts by virtue of life experiences, expertise, or achievements, such as publications, in one of the fields of the humanities. Please consult with MHC regarding special cases.

## **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.

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

3825 Ridgewood Road - Room 317 - Jackson, Mississippi 39211

Tel: 601-432-6752 - Fax: 601-432-6750

Email: [grants@mhc.state.ms.us](mailto:grants@mhc.state.ms.us) – MHC Homepage: <http://www.mshumanities.org>