Grant Proposal Guidelines

Community Research Grant
Community Engagement Grants
Large Grants

Table of Contents

Introduction

Mission Statement

The North Carolina Humanities Council serves as an advocate for lifelong learning and thoughtful dialogue about all facets of human life. We facilitate the exploration and celebration of the many voices and stories of North Carolina's cultures and heritage.

Background

The North Carolina Humanities Council develops among North Carolinians an understanding of and appreciation for the humanities that can transform the way they see themselves and their communities. In support of these goals, the Council is committed to the following:
- An interdisciplinary approach to the humanities
- Dialogue
- Discovery and understanding of the humanities--culture, identity, and history
- Respect for individual community members and community values
- Humanities scholarship and scholars to develop humanities perspectives
- Cultural diversity and inclusiveness
- Informed and active citizenship as an outgrowth of new awareness of self and community

Types of Council Grants

- **All applications must be submitted using our online application system by midnight on the day of the deadline. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Submission of an application does not guarantee approval.**
- All deadlines for which the Council is accepting proposals this fiscal year are posted on our website.
- **Proposal consultations:** We **require a consultation call** with NCHC staff to submit a Large grant LOI and **strongly recommend** setting up a consultation for our smaller grants.
    - **Please click here to schedule a phone consultation to discuss your project, our application process, or you proposal with one of our staff members.**
    - **Please note:** while we are always available for questions, a full staff review of an applicant's draft proposal is only available upon request until 2 weeks prior to a submission deadline.

Community Research Grant ....up to $2,000

Community Research Grants provide up to $2,000 to support the incubation, development, or planning of a public humanities project. Allowable expenses include honoraria or travel/meals/lodging for humanists consulting on the project, to support planning meetings, or for research activities of a limited scope which are connected to a forthcoming public humanities project.

Submission Timeline: To be eligible for funding consideration, applicants can only submit proposals for projects which begin **no sooner than eight weeks from the submission deadline.** Grant awards are typically announced one month after the submission deadline.

Community Engagement Grant..up to $3,500

Community Engagement Grants provide up to $3,500 to support the implementation of public humanities projects. Typical expenses include scholar stipends, scholar travel/meals/lodging, publicity, exhibit fabrication, and certain other expenses connected with a project of limited scope.

Project formats can include, but are not limited to, lecture/discussion series, exhibitions, presentations and workshops. The Council encourages programs which serve educators, veterans, and underserved communities in North Carolina.

Submission Timeline: To be eligible for funding consideration, applicants can only submit proposals for projects which begin **no sooner than eight weeks from the submission deadline.** Grant awards are typically announced one month after the submission deadline.

- Projects are expected to connect the public and quality humanities scholarship through programs that respond to community interest, encourage dialogue, and stimulate audiences to think critically about a broad range of humanities topics.
- Projects are expected to engage diverse audiences in the exploration of their personal and collective stories, asking fundamental questions about identity, work and culture.
- Projects are expected to provide a larger cultural, historical, and analytical framework to support critical thinking and foster more informed, understanding, and engaged citizens.

The Council encourages competitive proposal which include the following:

- Encourage partnerships with other institutions such as local cultural organizations, broadcast media stations, cultural heritage centers, universities and community colleges, veterans' centers, and libraries.

- Foster more informed and engaged citizens by using humanities-based cultural, historic and analytic frameworks.
- Engage either deep, community-focused subjects that address topics that are relevant to the community and draw connections to broad themes or historical trends

Large Grant .... **up to $20,000**

Large Grants provide up to $20,000 to support public humanities projects of a wide or extended scope. Typical expenses include scholar stipends, travel expenses including meals and lodging, publicity, and certain other expenses connected with a project of an extended scope.

Project formats can include, but are not limited to, lecture/discussion series, exhibitions, presentations and workshops. The Council encourages programs which serve educators, veterans, and underserved communities in North Carolina.

Submission Timeline: To be eligible for funding consideration, applicants can only submit proposals for projects which begin **no sooner than November 1st. The Large Grant application process consists of two phases, a Letter of Intent and application.**

- Projects are expected to connect the public and quality humanities scholarship through programs that respond to community interest, encourage dialogue, and stimulate audiences to think critically about a broad range of humanities topics.
- Projects are expected to engage diverse audiences in the exploration of their personal and collective stories, asking fundamental questions about identity, work and culture.
- Projects are expected to provide a larger cultural, historical, and analytical framework to support critical thinking and foster more informed, understanding, and engaged citizens.

The Council encourages competitive proposal which include the following:
- Encourage long-term collaborations and partnerships at the local, state and/or national level.
- Forge partnerships with other institutions such as local cultural alliances, broadcast media stations, cultural heritage centers, university humanities programs, veterans' centers, and libraries.
- Foster more informed and engaged citizens by using humanities-based cultural, historic and analytic frameworks.
- Include complementary components that deepen an audience's understanding of a subject. For example, a museum exhibition might be accompanied by a website, mobile app, or discussion programs.
- Engage either deep, community-focused subjects or large national/regional projects.
    o To be competitive for funding, locally-focused projects should address topics that are relevant to the community and draw connections to broad themes or historical trends.

What You Need to Know Before Applying

A. What are the humanities?
The humanities are a set of disciplines that help us respond to the fundamental human questions of "who we are and how ought we to live" by encouraging reflection about values and ideas.
The humanities disciplines, according to the NEH, include but are not limited "to the study and interpretation of language, both modern and classical; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; and those aspects of the social sciences which have humanistic content and employ

humanistic methods."

B. **What makes a <u>public</u> humanities program different from other kinds of academic programs?**

All of us hold beliefs and assumptions which shape the way we see the world, whether we are examining a contemporary issue or our understanding of an historical event. A public humanities program helps make us more aware of the connection between our values and the views that we express in public and private life. It also encourages us to understand the values of others and how their views may differ from our own.

A good public humanities program makes us think in new ways by presenting different points of view about an issue or a topic and by asking questions without providing specific answers. A humanities program moves beyond facts and information (what, where, and when) to questions of interpretation and analysis (i.e., "What is the meaning of this story?" or "How can we learn from it?" or "Which version of the story do we chose to believe and why?"). Although the particular focus of how we understand human experience may differ from discipline-to-discipline, these questions of interpretation and analysis connect inquiry and meaning to how we live our lives.

The founding legislation of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) states, "Democracy demands wisdom and vision in its citizens" and so public humanities projects go one step further to incorporate how understanding gained from humanities disciplines help us give meaning to our "diverse heritage, traditions, histories, and the current conditions of national life."

Additionally, the NEH defines humanities projects are those that "seek to understand and explain the significance of what people have thought, done, and achieved, both in the past and in our time. These projects explore topics like the philosophy, literature, art, and music that people create; the battles that they fight; the polities and societies in which they live; the social forces that unite and divide them; the work that they do; and the religions in which they believe."

For further discussion and clarification of how the North Carolina Humanities Council interprets the humanities and its application to public programs, please contact Council staff.

Common Applicant FAQs.

A. **When can I apply for a grant?**
The Council offers several grant cycles each year, please check our website www.nchumanities.org for the most current cycles and submission deadlines. Cycle deadlines are typically announced in November for the Council's fiscal year which runs November 1st - October 31st. The Council encourages applicants to apply early in their project process.

B. **How does my organization apply?**
The Council only accepts applications and LOIs electronically through our online system.
- **If you are new to the online system, you will need to [create an account prior to applying.](#)** Once you have created your account and are logged in to your Applicant Dashboard, click "Apply" in the upper left-hand corner to view an alphabetical list of all open Council opportunities. Please bookmark the login page for ease of access.
- I**f you have previously created an account, [please click here to login.](#)** Once on your

Applicant Dashboard click "Apply" in the upper left-hand corner to view an alphabetical list of all open Council opportunities. Please bookmark the login page for ease of access.

C. **What if an individual has an idea for a project?**
The North Carolina Humanities Council does not make grants to individuals. Individuals with a project idea may want to consult with a nonprofit organization to determine whether this group shares their interests and will serve as the project sponsor.

D. **Can I consult with Council staff about my project or as I prepare my application/LOI?**
Yes! We strongly recommend setting up a consultation with NCHC staff as you prepare your proposal for our smaller grants and require it for our Large grants prior to submitting and LOI.
If you would like to discuss your project idea, the application process, or a draft proposal with one of our staff members please click here to schedule a phone consultation.

E. **Can Council staff review a draft of my application/LOI?**
Yes! Staff feedback or commentary on an applicant's draft proposal is available upon request until 2 weeks prior to a submission deadline. Please email cpatton@nchumanities.org

F. **What kinds of groups have received grants?**
All applicants must be a nonprofit organization with an EIN (Employer Identification Number) and current DUNs number registered to their entity (see the end of this document for instructions on how to request a DUNs number assignment).
Successful applicants have included libraries, museums, religious institutions, universities, colleges, community colleges, tribal organizations, civic clubs, home-extension units, arts councils, city and county governments, community-based organizations, and ad hoc groups created for the sole purpose of carrying out a project.

G. **How can my organization find humanities professionals to help us plan and carry out our project?**
A humanities scholar is defined as someone with an advanced degree (at least an M.A.) in a humanities discipline. A wider definition includes lay scholars, such as community elders with special expertise in the life-ways, traditions, and worldviews of particular cultures.

North Carolina Humanities Council staff can provide advice and assistance identifying humanities scholars who could be willing to participate and have experience in public programs. You may also want to contact a university, college, or community college humanities department for help.

H. **What kinds of project formats are supported?**
Past funded projects have included: reading-and-discussion programs, lectures, conferences, seminars, symposia, exhibits, digital and traditional media projects, discussions following performance activities, oral histories, and teacher workshops.

Possible projects include, but are not limited to:
• Community conversation series in which diverse residents creatively address community challenges, guided by the perspectives of the humanities.
• Permanent or traveling exhibitions available to public audiences.
• Interpretation of historic sites, houses, neighborhoods, and regions, which might include living history presentations, guided tours, exhibitions, and public programs.
• Proposed projects may also include complementary components that deepen an audience's

understanding of a subject. For example, a museum exhibition might be accompanied by a website, mobile app, or discussion programs.

I. How will my proposal be evaluated?
North Carolina Humanities Council-sponsored programs must involve humanities scholars, scholarship and the public and are aimed at a wide, community-based audience. Proposals will be evaluated according to how well they fit with the mission and goals of the Council and by the following areas:

- Humanities merit and intellectual content
- Qualification of project team with (community and humanist advisors)
- Public engagement and audience definition
- Appropriate format and program resources
- Clear goals and measurable outcomes
- Potential long-term impact or replicability of the program
- Defined work plan and budget
- Project's contribution to the Council's commitment to supporting public humanities programs throughout the state

All proposals must:
- Be grounded in sound humanities scholarship and be public in nature
- Provide analytical interpretation to deepen public understanding of significant humanities questions
- Involve a team of humanities scholars and community leaders who contribute to all phases of the project
- Attract a broad public audience or target a particular group underserved by the humanities
- Offer engaging content approached through an appropriate variety of perspectives
- Encourage dialogue and the exchange of ideas.

J. What makes a proposal more competitive?
Competitive applications strongly demonstrate the following evaluation criteria:
1. Humanities merit and intellectual content
   a. Competitive proposals go beyond the mere presentation of factual information about a project to examine the larger significance of the subject and the humanities scholarship informing the project; the extent to which the project offers an analytical perspective on the themes and ideas that underlie it to stimulate critical reflection.
   b. Competitive proposals must convey a solid grasp of the project's subject and the related scholarship.
2. Format and program resources
   a. Competitive proposals select appropriate and creativity formats to deliver their project's humanities content which are relevant to their intended audiences and project themes, and ideas.
   b. Competitive proposals clearly demonstrate how their project activities will effectively communicate an analytical interpretation of their subject matter for public audiences.
3. Clear goals and measurable outcomes
   a. Competitive proposals have clearly identified goals that demonstrate why it is important that the project be conducted and what success looks like for their project. Competitive proposals have specific expected outcomes for their project activities (i.e. what behaviors or attitudes will be shifted as a result of this project).
   b. Competitive projects incorporate both activity/process measures AND outcome measures (i.e. activity – completed 3 workshops serving 200 educators AND

outcome - 90% of educators in the workshop stated they are very likely or extremely likely to incorporate this new content into their classroom practice)
    c. The likely effectiveness of the proposed evaluation of the project's impact.
4. Public engagement and audience definition
    a. Competitive proposals have creative and strong public engagement woven throughout their project activities.
    b. Competitive proposals clearly convey humanities content and increase the accessibility of humanistic ideas.
5. Qualifications of the project team and humanist advisors
    a. The project team for competitive proposals include all of the following: strong humanists, community leaders and stakeholders, and established institutional partners.
    b. The qualifications and potential contributions of the advising humanists/scholars.
6. Defined work plan and budget
    a. A competitive proposal has a clear and specific budget with reasonable project costs and intends to use grant funds for eligible expenses (see next section for specific examples).
    b. A competitive proposal's budget includes resources from multiple partners or advisors that will ensure the project will achieve its goals in a timely and efficient manner.

All other considerations being equal, the program will give preference to projects that provide free access to materials produced with grant funds.

K. When will decisions be made on my application/LOI?
Application review times vary by grant category.
- For our Community Engagement and Community Research grant categories, decisions are typically announced a month following the submission deadline.
- For our Large grants, decisions are typically announced on the LOI phase in May and on the application phase in September.

Restrictions Governing the Use of North Carolina Humanities Council Funds

A. ELIGIBLE Grant Expenses typically include, but are not limited to:
Proposal consultations: We require a consultation call with NCHC staff to submit a Large grant LOI and strongly recommend setting up a consultation for our smaller grants.
- Project Specific Services & Products
  - Scholar honoraria for public lectures, facilitating discussions or workshops
  - Meetings with scholars and other content advisors, program partners, and audience representatives
  - Development and production of curriculum guides and other materials for teachers and students
  - Development and production of program or discussion guides including catalogs, exhibition labels, brochures, digital assets, publications, or other interpretive material
  - Exhibition design and fabrication, as well as crating and shipping
  - Design of any of the interpretive formats to be used
  - Development and construction of interactive program components
  - Program publicity expenses
  - Venue rentals for public presentations

- Evaluation of the project's impact
- Project Specific Implementation Planning
  - Planning and conducting project-specific training for docents, discussion coordinators, or other interpretive leaders
  - Research into the humanistic topic
  - Travel to archives, collections, sites, or other resources

Activities funded by North Carolina Humanities Council grants should be free or low cost and open to the public.

B. INELIGIBLE Grant Expenses typically include, but are not limited to:

- The Council CANNOT provide support for non-humanities centered projects, including:
  - Support projects that center on the creative or performing arts (theater, dance, music, or visual arts) unless the arts set the stage for a humanities program.
  - Support self-help or problem-solving endeavors
  - Develop dramatic adaptations of literary works
  - Support projects that center on health and social services unless they set the stage for a humanities program.
- The Council CANNOT provide support to projects that seek to persuade the public, including,
  - Support projects that seek to persuade participants of a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view
  - Support projects that advocate a particular program of social action
- The Council does not provide support for organizational or operational activities, including:
  - Purchase organizational non-expendable items, such as equipment, buildings, art, artifacts, etc. above an immaterial value threshold of $500.
  - Pay salaries to individuals who are administering the grant or supporting the project as part of a salaried job
  - Pay for professional development or for new staff hires
  - Pay for general operations, renovation, restoration, rehabilitation, or construction, strategic planning or feasibility studies
  - Pay for indirect or overhead costs for a project
- The Council does not provide support for publishing or academic research activities, including:
  - Pay for projects primarily devoted to research rather than interpretation for the general public
  - Pay for preservation, cataloging, or archiving projects that do not include significant interpretive components
  - Pay to develop print or digital publications (including encyclopedias) that are not an integral part of the larger project for which funding is requested
- Additionally, the Council CANNOT provide support for the following activities:
  - Pay for expenses for travel or venues in foreign countries
  - Pay for food costs, except for the meals of program presenters or consultants
  - Pay for projects intended primarily for students in formal learning environments or that satisfy requirements for educational degrees or formal professional training (though projects may include components that can be used in classrooms).
  - Support for obscene, libelous, indecent, or defamatory content (including hate speech, personal attacks, or material constituting harassment).
  - Support popular entertainment for diversion, liquor, or social activities. In conjunction with project activities, applicants may provide refreshments and/or lunches and dinners for their audiences through local cash contributions.
  - Please note, support for media components of projects is limited to $5,000.

C. **The Council Cap on Honoraria/Stipends Paid Using Grant Funds**
Council grant funds used to pay a speaker/scholar/presenter cannot exceed $400 per individual, per project component. For example, if a scholar gives two lectures during the course of a project they can be paid a maximum of $400 for each component, for a total of $800 for the project.

D. **The Council CANNOT fund organizations that have been Federally Debarred or Suspended.**

E. **The Council Does Not Provide Retroactive Funding**
Funding is for projects that begin no less than eight weeks after the submission date of the award for grassroots grants and no less than eight weeks from the award decision for large grants. North Carolina Humanities Council does not offer funding retroactively. While expenses incurred prior to the grant award are not reimbursable from North Carolina Humanities Council funds, these expenses may be used as part of the sponsor's match when accurate documentation of in-kind services has been maintained.

Policies Affecting North Carolina Humanities Council Grants

A. **Sponsor Eligibility**
The sponsoring organization must be a nonprofit organization operating in North Carolina or a non-profit sponsor whose project focus is of interest to North Carolinians. The North Carolina Humanities Council does not award grants to individuals nor does it grant scholarships or fellowships. While the North Carolina Humanities Council welcomes applications that involve educational institutions, the proposed project must reach a broader community of citizens. We encourage programs that engage adults and life-long learning.

B. **Humanities Content**
Topic Eligibility - The subject of the project must be within or addressed by one or more of the humanities disciplines. The humanities disciplines, according to the NEH, include but are not limited "to the study and interpretation of language, both modern and classical; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; and those aspects of the social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods."
   - The North Carolina Humanities Council cannot fund projects which center on the creative or performing arts (theatre, dance, music, or visual arts) unless the arts set the stage for a humanities program.
   - The North Carolina Humanities Council cannot fund projects which advocate social or political action as public funds cannot be used to advocate personal/political points of view.
Humanities Scholars - must be involved in both the planning and implementation of North Carolina Humanities Council funded projects.

C. **Grantee Cost-Share**
The North Carolina Humanities Council never provides more than 50% of the resources needed for a project. Project sponsors and all persons and organizations connected with a project must match North Carolina Humanities Council grant monies with in-kind and/or cash contributions 2-to-1 to the amount of North Carolina Humanities Council outright funds requested (i.e. if you request $2,000 you must match at least $4,000).

D. **Standard of Conduct**
The NEH stipulates that officers, employees, and agents of the project sponsor will neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from prospective contractors or parties to the project who might hope to receive financial or other benefit from being associated with it.

E. **Conflict of Interest**
Recipients of grants from the North Carolina Humanities Council must be careful to avoid real or apparent conflicts of interest in disbursement of grant funds. Such a conflict would arise if, for example, the project director or head of the sponsoring organization chose a spouse or relative to receive North Carolina Humanities Council funds in return for services rendered to the project. The range of people prohibited from receiving North Carolina Humanities Council funds without special approval include immediate family members, spouses, business partners, or employers of the people who make decisions on participants in the grant for the sponsor. Violation of these restrictions could result in revocation of the grant by the North Carolina Humanities Council.

F. **DUNs Number Federal Requirement**
As of October 1, 2010, under the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), no organization can receive a sub grant award without providing a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to the awarding agency. A DUNS number is a nine-digit number established by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (D&B) to uniquely identify business entities. This number can be obtained from D&B by telephone at 866 705-5711 or through their website, http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform.

G. **Organization Must be Eligible to Receive Federal NEH Funding**
Council grants and programs are made using federal funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Applicants must be in compliance with federal law and eligible to receive NEH sub awards as outlined in the State Humanities Councils General Terms and Conditions, with special attention to Appendix A "Administrative Requirements that Apply to Regrantees" items 8-10. CFDA number: 45.129

For more information, please contact:

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