



North Carolina
humanities

Grant Guidelines

Community Research Grant
Community Engagement Grants
Large Grants



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Introduction

NC Humanities Mission

To connect North Carolinians with cultural experiences that spur dialogue, deepen human connections, and inspire community

NC Humanities Vision

A North Carolina enriched by the humanities and equipped with empathy, understanding, and respect.

At NC Humanities we know that access to public humanities programs is essential. The humanities stoke curiosity, promote dialogue, and allow people to better understand the diverse and complex world in which they live. They are a vital component of thriving communities, enhancing quality of life, and promoting economic development and civic engagement.

What We Support

NC Humanities has been a leading humanities funder in North Carolina since 1972. We welcome diverse projects from across North Carolina addressing different themes and using a variety of public humanities formats. NC Humanities' grant-making programs are a direct extension of our mission and vision, and we seek proposals which:

- Connect the public to 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.
- Engage diverse audiences in the exploration of their personal and collective stories, asking fundamental questions about identity and culture.
- Foster more informed and engaged citizens by using humanities-based cultural, historic, and analytic frameworks to contextualize experiences and support critical thinking.
- Forge partnerships with other institutions such as local cultural organizations, broadcast media stations, cultural heritage centers, universities and community colleges, veterans' centers, and libraries.
- Engage deep, community-focused projects which address topics that are relevant to the community and draw connections to broad themes or historical trends.
- Encourage long-term collaborations and partnerships at the local, state and/or national level.
- 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 adults and life-long learning.



Regular NC Humanities Grants

Community Research Grantup 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 may only submit proposals for project activities which **BEGIN AT LEAST** than eight weeks **AFTER** the submission deadline (see www.nchumanities.org for submission deadlines).

Notification: 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. NC Humanities 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 project activities which **BEGIN AT LEAST** than eight weeks **after** the submission deadline (see www.nchumanities.org for submission deadlines).

Notification: Grant awards are typically announced one month after the submission deadline.

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, exhibits, travel expenses including meals and lodging, publicity, exhibit fabrication 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. NC Humanities encourages programs which serve educators, veterans, and underserved communities in North Carolina.

Submission Timeline: The Large Grant application process consists of two phases, a Letter of Intent and an application (see www.nchumanities.org for submission deadlines). To be eligible for funding consideration, applicants can only submit proposals for project activities which **BEGIN AFTER** November 1st.

Notification: Grant awards are typically announced in mid-September.

Submission Instructions

- **Submission Method:** 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.
- **Grant Cycle Deadlines:** All deadlines for which NC Humanities is accepting proposals this fiscal year are posted on our website in November for the upcoming year.
- **Proposal consultations:** We **REQUIRE a consultation call** with NC Humanities 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 your proposal with one of our staff members. Please note, a full staff review of an applicant's draft proposal is available upon request until 3 weeks prior to a submission deadline.



What You Need to Know Before Applying

A. Applicant Eligibility

- Must be a not-for-profit organization (i.e. 501c3 or tax exempt governmental unit)
- Activities must take place in North Carolina
- Organization must have a DUNS number and be a registered entity in the System for Award Management (www.sam.gov). Please see the FAQ section for further details on this requirement.
- Organization must not be presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from receiving federal grants.

B. What are the humanities?

Our mission is to support the humanities in North Carolina. 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. NC Humanities is not able to support activities which fall outside the scope of the humanities.

We use the definition of the humanities provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities which include activities in the following disciplines:

- Language (both modern and classical)
- Literature
- History
- Jurisprudence (law)
- Philosophy
- Archeology
- Comparative religion
- Ethics
- The history, criticism and theory of the arts
- Social sciences which have humanistic content and/or employ humanistic methods

A point of clarification about the arts:

NC Humanities cannot fund activities around the creation/display of visual art (drawing, painting, sculpture, etc.) or the performance of art (drama, dance, music, etc.) or literary art (creative writing, autobiographies, memoirs, and creative nonfiction). In general, we do not award grants for creative literary programs or writing workshops unless they include considerable opportunity for public reflection, and discussion. As noted above, projects that focus on art history/criticism/theory (e.g., a lecture/discussion program in which a qualified humanities scholar explores artistic themes and helps put work in a larger social/historical context) are eligible. If your project includes arts-based activities, we encourage you to reach out to our staff for further guidance.

C. What makes public humanities programs different from academic humanities 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, views, and the broader context. It also encourages us to understand the values and views of others and even if they 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 must 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 politics 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 NC Humanities interprets the humanities and its application to public programs, please contact NC Humanities staff.

What Kinds of Projects Are NOT Eligible?

- Projects characterized by political or religious advocacy or bias (e.g., political campaigning, advocacy events, events that promote a single point of view, lobbying, those which only benefit members of a particular religious group).
- Client services in the following areas: social, psychological, legal, health, housing, training or counseling programs.
- Academic or professional conferences for a non-public audience
- College courses and seminars
- Building, restoration, preservation, or capital projects
- General operational support
- Fundraisers or events for profit
- Creative or performing arts activities (theater, dance, music, visual arts, or creative writing) without significant humanistic examination of their social, historical, or aesthetic context.

D. Defining Humanities Scholarship

Humanities scholars are those with training or experience qualifying them as professionals in one or more of the academic disciplines of the humanities. Scholars may have advanced degrees (MA or PhD) in a humanities field and/or regular appointments at an institution of higher learning. Alternatively, they may have developed a high level of expertise through immersion in a particular cultural tradition (i.e., a recognized culture bearer or community/tribal elder).

While welcomed and encouraged to participate in projects, artists and authors are not humanities scholars unless they also fulfill these criteria.

E. Note for Colleges and Universities

As led by our organization’s mission and charter, our primary goal is to increase public access to high-quality humanities programming. Proposals from colleges and universities must demonstrate a commitment to reach an audience beyond the campus community. To be competitive, such proposals should show strong community collaboration, partnerships, and a well-defined outreach/publicity plan.

Responses to frequently asked questions can be found in Appendix A at the end of this document.

Please continue reading for a full list of restrictions governing the use of grant funds, of policies governing grants, and the responsibilities for managing a grant.

Restrictions Governing the Use of NC Humanities Funds

Proposal consultations phone calls are great opportunities to discuss your specific budget request and how you want to use grant funds. Please note, NC Humanities requires a consultation call with staff prior to submitting a Large grant LOI and we strongly recommend a consultation call for our smaller grants.

A. ELIGIBLE Grant Expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Project Specific Services & Products
 - Scholar honoraria for lectures, facilitating discussions or workshops (please see section C for additional guidelines on fees)
 - 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 materials including discussion guides, catalogs, exhibition text, brochures, digital assets, publications, or other interpretive material
 - Exhibition design and fabrication, as well as crating and shipping
 - Scholarly or interpretation consultations
 - Development and fabrication of interactive program components
 - Program publicity expenses
 - Venue rentals for public presentations
 - Evaluation of the project's impact
 - Some consultant fees (see section C for additional guidelines on fees)
- Project Specific Research/Planning (these expenses are most appropriate for Community Research proposals)
 - 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 NC Humanities grants should be open to the public and free or low cost.

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

- NC Humanities CANNOT provide support for non-humanities activities, including:
 - Activities that center on the creative or performing arts (theater, dance, music, or visual arts; creative writing, autobiographies, memoirs, and creative nonfiction) unless the arts set the stage for a humanities program (significant examination of their social, historical, or aesthetic context).
 - Activities that center on health and social services unless they set the stage for a humanities program.
 - Self-help or problem-solving endeavors.
 - Development of dramatic adaptations of literary works.
 - Policy studies or social science research that does not address humanistic questions and/or utilize humanistic methods.
- NC Humanities CANNOT provide support for activities which seek to persuade the public, including:
 - Promotion of a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view (including promotion of a particular position, candidate, or political party).
 - Advocacy of a particular program of social or political action

- Support of specific public policies or legislation
- Lobbying
- NC Humanities DOES NOT provide support for general operations, including:
 - Purchasing organizational non-expendable items, such as equipment, buildings, art, artifacts, etc. above an immaterial value threshold of \$500. (Equipment is defined as tangible, nonexpendable personal property having a useful life of more than one year.)
 - Paying salaries to individuals who are administering the grant or supporting the project as part of a salaried job.
 - Paying for professional development or for new staff hires.
 - Paying for general operations, renovation, restoration, rehabilitation, or construction, strategic planning, or feasibility studies.
- NC Humanities DOES NOT provide support for publishing or academic research activities, including:
 - Paying for projects primarily devoted to research rather than interpretation for the general public.
 - Paying for projects intended primarily for students in formal learning environments or which satisfy requirements for educational degrees or formal professional training (though projects may include components that can be used in classrooms).
 - Paying for preservation, cataloging, or archiving projects that do not include significant public interpretive components.
 - Paying to develop print or digital publications (including encyclopedias) that are not an integral part of the larger project for which funding is requested.
- Additionally, NC Humanities CANNOT provide support for the following activities:
 - Unallowable expenses as defined in [2 CFR 200 Subpart E - Cost Principles](#).
 - Overlapping project costs with any other pending or approved application(s) for federal funding
 - Purchase of land or facilities, construction or renovation
 - Paying for expenses for travel or venues in foreign countries
 - Paying for air travel that is not undertaken on U.S. flag air carriers.
 - Paying for catering/food, except for the meals of program presenters, consultants, or participants in a full-day workshop. In conjunction with project activities, applicants may provide refreshments and/or lunches and dinners for their audiences through their cost share (cash or in-kind) contributions.
 - Regranting (granting award money out to another organization)
 - Obscene, libelous, indecent, or defamatory content (including hate speech, personal attacks, or material constituting harassment).
 - Popular entertainment for diversion or social activities.
 - Alcohol
- Please note, support for media components of projects is limited to \$5,000.

C. NC Humanities Cap on Scholarly Fees (Honoraria/Stipends/etc.) Paid From Grant Funds

- Events/Presentations – NC Humanities grant funds used to pay a humanities content 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 in grant funds for each component, for a total of \$800 in grant funds for the two lectures.
- Humanities Consultations – NC Humanities grant funds used to pay scholars for non-event/presentation-based work cannot exceed \$50.00 per hour.
 - For example, if a scholar is contributing 10 hours of work to design curriculum for a project, they could be paid a maximum of \$500.00 in grant funds for those hours.

Note, non-grant sources of funding may be used to augment compensation in excess of the caps above.



D. NC Humanities DOES NOT Provide Retroactive Funding

For Community Engagement and Community Research grants, funding is only available for to support activities that BEGIN at least eight weeks AFTER the submission deadline. For Large Grants funding is only available for to support activities that BEGIN AFTER 11/1. NC Humanities does not offer funding retroactively.

Policies Affecting NC Humanities Grants

Please note that NC Humanities grants are made with federal funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities, (CFDA number: 45.129) and many policies directly relate to statutes and policies governing the use of federal dollars. Violation of these restrictions could result in revocation of the grant by NC Humanities.

A. Applicant Eligibility

NC Humanities does not award grants to individuals, nor does it grant scholarships or fellowships. The applicant must be a not-for-profit organization (i.e., 501c3 or governmental unit) operating in North Carolina or a not-for-profit whose project activities take place in or serve North Carolinians. While the NC Humanities welcomes applications that involve educational institutions, the proposed project must reach a broader community of citizens than the campus community.

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, as defined by 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.”

- NC Humanities **cannot fund** activities in the practice of creative or performing arts (theatre, dance, music, or visual arts).
- NC Humanities **cannot fund** projects which advocate social or political action as public funds cannot be used to advocate personal/political points of view.

Humanists/humanities scholars must be involved in both the planning and implementation of NC Humanities funded projects.

- Note, “humanist” is typically defined by NC Humanities as an individual with an advanced degree (MA or higher) in a humanities discipline. Alternative qualifications could include humanities professional by training/certification, or a recognized content expert/culture bearer (i.e., tribal or community elder, firsthand accounts).

C. Required Grantee Cost-Share Ratio and Tracking

NC Humanities never provides more than a third of the resources needed to fully implement a project. Grantees and their project partners are expected to leverage or match NC Humanities grant monies to support the remaining two thirds of the project with other cash (from the applicant organization’s budget or other funders) and/or in-kind resources (donated time or services). This required cost share ratio is 2-to-1 for NC Humanities outright funds requested (i.e., if you request \$2,000 in NC Humanities funds you must provide a cost share match of at least \$4,000).

We report data to the National Endowment for the Humanities on how much private investment our grants leverage and we encourage you to be thoughtful about calculating your cost share match.

Cash and in-kind contributions to a project that are provided by a grantee are acceptable as cost



sharing when such contributions meet the following criteria:

- they must be verifiable from a grantee's records;
- they must not be included as contributions for any other federally-assisted program;
- they must be necessary and reasonable for the proper and efficient accomplishment of project objectives;
- they must be types of charges that would be allowable under the cost principles;
- they must be used to support activities that are included in the approved project work plan; and
- they must be incurred during the period of performance.

Any contribution that a grantee makes to a project must be based either on the cost incurred to provide that contribution or, in the case of donated buildings or equipment, on depreciation or a use allowance that is computed in accordance with the applicable cost principles. When a grantee is not able to calculate the exact cost involved in contributing its own equipment, space, services, etc. to the project, then the grantee must indicate in their project budget the basis for determining the value of the contribution. Any program income should be used to meet the cost sharing or matching requirement.

NC Humanities provides an in-depth Cost-Share Guidelines and Sample Tracking Sheet with the Grant Agreement to support our grantees in this effort.

D. Federal Debarment or Suspension

NC Humanities funds CANNOT be used to support organizations or individuals that have been Federally Debarred or Suspended. Applicants and Grantees are prohibited from doing business with any organization or person (as a recipient, subrecipient, contractor, or key employee) if they have been debarred or suspended by any federal department or agency.

E. Standard of Conduct

The NEH and NC Humanities stipulate 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.

F. Conflict of Interest

Recipients of grants from NC Humanities 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 NC Humanities funds in return for services rendered to the project. The range of people prohibited from receiving NC Humanities 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.

G. Unique Entity Identifier Number Federal Requirement

As of October 1, 2010, under the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), no organization can receive a subaward without providing a unique entity identifier (UEI, currently a Data Universal Numbering System or DUNS) 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>.

H. System for Award Management Registration Requirement

All grant applicants and grantees must be registered in the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#)



to be eligible for NC Humanities grant funds. It is completely **FREE** to register your organization in SAM, but you will need some information to get started. This [Quick Start Guide](#) has been created to assist you with the registration process. Grantees are REQUIRED to maintain a current SAM registration for the duration of their grant period of performance.

I. Compliance with Applicable Federal Laws

NC Humanities grants are made using federal funds (CFDA number: 45.129) from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Applicants must be in compliance with federal law and eligible to receive NEH subawards as outlined in the State Humanities Councils General Terms and Conditions, with special attention to Appendix A “[Administrative Requirements that Apply to Subrecipients](#)” items 8-10. This includes compliance with Nondiscrimination acts (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990), the Byrd Anti-Lobbying Amendment, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, U.S. Constitution Day Education Program (PL 108-447, Div. J. Sec.111(b)), Coordination of Geographic Information and Related Spatial Data (OMB Circular A-16 and Executive Order 12906)

Grantee must be compliant with labor standards set forth in [29 CFR Part 505, “Labor Standards on Projects or Productions Assisted by Awards from the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities.”](#)

J. Research Misconduct Policy

Applicants and Grantees must be in compliance with [NEH Research Misconduct Policy](#) and the [Code of Ethics for Projects Related to Native Americans](#).

K. Federal Debarment or Suspension

NC Humanities **CANNOT** fund organizations or individuals that have been Federally Debarred or Suspended. Applicants and Grantees are prohibited from doing business with any organization or person (as a recipient, subrecipient, contractor, or key employee) if they have been debarred or suspended by any federal department or agency.

Evaluation Criteria

To be competitive within the NC Humanities’ grant-making program projects must involve humanities scholars, scholarship, and engage the public. Proposals will be evaluated according to how well they fit with NC Humanities’ mission and priorities and by the following criteria areas:

1. Merit of Humanities Content

- Proposal demonstrates that humanities content (disciplines/methods/practices/resources) and core questions are central to the project activities and meet a community need.
- Proposal clearly presents the interpretive framework for the humanities content.
- Proposal has a qualified project team (both humanists and community leaders).

2. Project Goals and Outcomes

- Proposal clearly stated overarching goal with defined and measurable impact-oriented outcomes.
- Proposal demonstrates an appropriate evaluation plan to assess if stated outcomes were met.

3. Project Implementation Plan

- Proposal demonstrates that appropriate program format(s) and resources are engaged to address the humanities topic and community need.



- Proposal has clearly defined target audiences and is focused on public engagement. Audience stakeholders or feedback are involved in the design of project activities.
- Proposal demonstrates appropriate partnerships with relevant organizations or individuals. For campus-based projects proposal indicates strong community partners.
- Proposal has a clearly presented work plan and well-developed budget demonstrating that the scope of work is realistic and achievable for the organization and project team.

Responsibilities for Managing an NC Humanities Grant

If you are selected to receive a grant from NC Humanities our staff will send you information outlining the requirements for managing your award. Among other things you will be required to:

- Sign a Grant Agreement. This is standard language and is **non-negotiable**. We reserve the right to cancel the Agreement if you make significant changes to your project scope, purpose, activities, personnel, budget, or timeline without obtaining our permission.
- Comply with all Restrictions and Policies laid out in this document.
- Report any concerns or major changes regarding the grant funded activities and receive NC Humanities approval **prior to** the execution of any major changes.
- Acknowledge the support of NC Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities in your standard outlets (signage, website, annual report, etc.) as stipulated in the Grant Agreement.
- Maintain your entity's registration in the System for Award Management (www.sam.gov)
- Track your grant cost share match sources in detail and report the totals on your Final Report. NC Humanities provides this in-depth Cost-Share Guidelines and Sample Tracking Sheet in the Grant Agreement for our grantees use.
- Submit a Final Report as directed in the Grant Agreement that we send you. The Final Report will require the submission of stories of how this grant impacted your organization and the communities you serve, the number of humanities programs completed, estimates of the demographics and number of people each program event served, as well as a final budget report.
- Retain auditable records of grant funds for three years after the award is closed.

Note that the NC Humanities pays awards on an advance basis. However, depending on the size of your award there may be an installment schedule with the final payment (no more than 10 percent of the award) paid upon the grantee's completion of their Final Report.

Please continue reading for responses to frequently asked questions.



Appendix A: Common Applicant FAQs.

A. When can I apply for a grant?

NC Humanities 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 NC Humanities' fiscal year which runs November 1st - October 31st. NC Humanities encourages applicants to apply early in their project planning process.

B. How does my organization apply?

NC Humanities 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 NC Humanities opportunities. Please bookmark the login page for ease of access.
- **If 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 NC Humanities opportunities. Please bookmark the login page for ease of access.

C. Can individuals apply?

NC Humanities does not make grants to individuals. Individuals with a project idea may want to consult with a nonprofit organization in their community to determine whether this group shares their interests and would serve as the applicant for the grant.

D. Can I consult with NC Humanities staff about my project or as I prepare my application/LOI?

Yes! We strongly recommend setting up a phone consultation with NC Humanities staff as you prepare your proposal for our smaller grants. **Please note:** A phone consultation is REQUIRED for our Large Grant category, prior to the submission of an 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 NC Humanities staff review a draft of my application/LOI?

Yes! Staff feedback or commentary on an applicant's draft proposal is available upon request until 3 weeks prior to a submission deadline. Please email cpatton@nchumanities.org to request this service.

F. My museum/library/historical society is attached to city/county/state government, are we eligible?

Some museums and libraries are affiliated with units of local or Tribal government. These organizations are eligible for funding and are not required to have 501(c)3 status, however all other eligibility criteria are required. If your museum or library has a foundation or friends group with 501(c)3 status they are also eligible to apply.

G. My organization is new, and we do not have 501c3 status yet. Can we still apply?

Please contact our staff to discuss your specific circumstances. Fiscal Agents are not eligible to receive grants on behalf of an organization.



H. Does it take a long time to get a DUNS number? What if we don't get it in time?

It ordinarily takes 2 business days to receive a DUNS number. Please contact staff if your request for a DUNS number is pending when you submit your application. Applicants must have a valid DUNS number to be eligible to receive an award.

I. Does it take a long time to register in the System for Award Management? What if our registration isn't active by the submission deadline?

It can take up to a week for your registration to become active once you submit it. Please contact staff if your registration is not active by the submission deadline. The review of your proposal will continue on a conditional basis and it is your responsibility to notify NC Humanities once you receive confirmation that your registration is active.

All grant applicants and grantees must be registered in the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) to be eligible for NC Humanities grant funds. **It is completely FREE to register your organization in SAM**, but you will need some information to get started. This [Quick Start Guide](#) has been created to assist you with the registration process. Grantees are **REQUIRED** to maintain a current SAM registration for the duration of their award period.

J. What kinds of groups have received grants?

All applicants must be a nonprofit organization or not-for-profit governmental unit with an EIN (Employer Identification Number), current DUNS number registered to their entity, an active registration in the System for Award Management (SAM). **It is completely FREE to register your organization in SAM**, but you will need some information to get started. This [Quick Start Guide](#) has been created to assist you with the registration process. Grantees are **REQUIRED** to maintain a current SAM registration for the duration of their award period.

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. Please see our website for a full list of past funded projects.

K. Who is a humanist/humanities professional? How can we find humanities scholars 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. Alternative qualifications could include humanities professional by training/certification (i.e. a museum professional with humanities training). A wider definition includes humanities practitioners includes recognized cultural experts/culture bearers, such as community/tribal elders or those with special expertise in the lifeways, traditions, and worldviews of a particular culture.

While welcomed to participate in projects, artists and authors are not considered humanities scholars unless they also fulfill these criteria.

L. How can my organization find humanities professionals to help us plan and carry out our project?

Consider contacting a university, college, or community college humanities department for help. NC Humanities staff can provide advice and assistance identifying humanities scholars.

M. What kinds of project formats are eligible?

A sample list of potential projects includes, but is not limited to:

- Reading-and-discussion programs

- Organizing a panel/lecture/conference/symposia of humanities subject matter experts and facilitated community discussion about challenging and/or relevant issues
- Exhibitions
- Discussions following performance activities
- Oral history collection and interpretation
- Workshops for educators
- Community conversation series in which diverse residents creatively address community challenges, guided by the perspectives of the humanities
- Producing humanities-based traditional or digital media (film, podcast, sound recordings, online media, etc.)
- Interpretation of historic sites, houses, neighborhoods, and regions, which might include living history presentations, guided tours, exhibitions, and public programs
- Developing thought-provoking community activities to extend the content reach of exhibitions, publications, films, or performances and deepen an audience's understanding of a subject. For example, a museum exhibition might be accompanied by a website, mobile app, or discussion programs
- Creating guides or materials to complement a program that provides access to humanities expertise and deeper questions on the issue (this includes materials for use by K-12 educators)

F. What Kinds of Projects Are NOT Eligible?

- Projects characterized by political or religious advocacy or bias (e.g., political campaigning, advocacy events, events that promote a single point of view, lobbying, to benefit members of a particular religious group).
- Client services in the following areas: social, psychological, legal, health, housing, training or counseling programs.
- Academic or professional conferences for a non-public audience
- College courses and seminars
- Building, restoration, and preservation capital projects
- General operational support
- Fundraisers or events for profit
- Creative or performing arts activities (theater, dance, music, visual arts, creative writing) without significant humanistic examination of their social, historical, or aesthetic context.

N. How will my proposal be evaluated?

To be competitive within the NC Humanities' grant-making program projects must involve humanities scholars, scholarship, and engage the public. Proposals will be evaluated according to how well they fit with NC Humanities' mission and priorities and by the following criteria areas:

- Merit of Humanities Content
 - Proposal demonstrates that humanities content (disciplines/methods/practices/resources) and core questions are central to the project activities and meet a community need.
 - Proposal clearly presents the interpretive framework for the humanities content.
 - Proposal has a qualified project team (both humanists and community leaders).
- Project Goals and Outcomes
 - Proposal clearly stated overarching goal with defined and measurable impact-oriented outcomes.
 - Proposal demonstrates an appropriate evaluation plan to assess if stated outcomes were met.

- Project Implementation Plan
 - Proposal demonstrates that appropriate program format(s) and resources are engaged to address the humanities topic and community need.
 - Proposal has clearly defined target audiences and is focused on public engagement. Audience stakeholders or feedback are involved in the design of project activities.
 - Proposal demonstrates appropriate partnerships with relevant organizations or individuals. For campus-based projects proposal indicates strong community partners.
 - Proposal has a clearly presented work plan and well-developed budget demonstrating that the scope of work is realistic and achievable for the organization and project team.

All proposals must:

- Be grounded in sound humanities scholarship
- Be public in nature. Either reaching a broad public audience or a particular group underserved by the humanities.
- Provide analytical interpretation to deepen public understanding of significant humanities topics or questions.
- Involve a team of humanities scholars or practitioners and community leaders who contribute to all phases of the project.
- Offer engaging content approached through a variety of perspectives.
- Encourage dialogue and the exchange of ideas.

O. What makes a proposal more competitive?

Competitive applications strongly demonstrate the following evaluation criteria:

1. Merit of Humanities 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.
 - c. The project team for competitive proposals include all of the following: strong humanists, community leaders and stakeholders, and established institutional partners.
 - d. The qualifications and potential contributions of the advising humanists/scholars should be clearly and their roles in the project should be significant.
2. Project Goals and Outcomes
 - a. Competitive proposals have a clearly identified goal and anticipated outcomes which demonstrate why it is important that the project be conducted and what success looks like for their project. Competitive proposals have specific, achievable outcomes for their project activities (i.e., what knowledge, behaviors, or attitudes will be changed because of the 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. Competitive proposals have a clear evaluation plan on how they will collect data to assess the effectiveness of their activities in generating the intended outcomes and impact.
3. Project Implementation Plans



- a. Competitive proposals select appropriate and creative 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.
- c. Competitive proposals have creative and strong public engagement woven throughout their project activities.
- d. Competitive proposals clearly convey humanities content and increase the accessibility of humanistic ideas.
- e. A competitive proposal has a clear and specific budget with reasonable project costs and clearly intends to use grant funds for eligible expenses.
- f. 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 preference is given to projects that provide free access to materials and events produced with grant funds.

P. When will decisions be made on my application/LOI?

Application review times vary by grant category. Notification is provided to the applicant through our online grant portal.

- 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 June and on the application phase in September.

Thank you for reviewing this document, if you didn't see your question covered, please reach out to our staff at 704.687.1521 or email cpatton@nchumanities.org.