



NORTH CAROLINA
HUMANITIES
C O U N C I L

MANY STORIES, ONE PEOPLE

Grant Proposal Guidelines

Large Grants
Grassroots Grants
Planning Grants

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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.

Values

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

General Criteria

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, including the following:

- Community involvement and its reflected diversity
- Strength of scholar(s)
- Potential long-term impact or replicability of the program
- Nature of the topic and intended audience
- Project's contribution to the Council's commitment to supporting public humanities programs throughout the state

Types of Council Grants

All applications must be submitted using our online application system by midnight on the day of the deadline. All deadlines for which we are accepting proposals this fiscal year are posted on our website.

Planning Grant up to \$750

Planning grants provide up to \$750 to secure the assistance of humanities scholars or consultants to plan a project. Allowable expenses include consultants' stipends and reimbursements for travel, meals, and lodging. To be eligible for funding consideration, applicants can only submit proposals for projects which begin **no less than eight weeks after the deadline**. Grant awards are typically made month after submission.

Grassroots Grant up to \$3,500

Grassroots grants provide up to \$3,500 for scholar stipends, travel expenses including meals and lodging, publicity, and certain other expenses connected with a project of limited scope. To be eligible for funding consideration, applicants can only submit proposals for projects which begin **no less than eight weeks after the deadline**.

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Grant awards are typically made month after submission.

The Council encourages competitive projects that:

- 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

The Council's Large grants connect the public and quality scholarship through programs that respond to community interest, encourage dialogue, and stimulate audiences to think critically about a broad range of humanities topics. Large grant funded projects engage diverse audiences in the exploration of their personal and collective stories, asking fundamental questions about identity, work and culture. By providing a larger cultural, historical, and analytical framework, this grant category fosters more informed, understanding, and engaged citizens, thereby transforming lives and communities. Additionally, Large grant projects should encourage long-term collaborations and partnerships at the local, state and/or national level.

The Large grant category provides funds for humanities projects of extended scope that involve both humanities scholars and wide, community-based public audiences. Project formats can include, but are not limited to, lecture/discussion series, performance/discussions, exhibit/discussions, educator workshops, veterans programs, and film/video productions.

The Council encourages competitive projects that:

- 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.
- 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.
- Engage either deep, community-focused subjects or large national/regional projects.
 - 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 makes a humanities program different from other kinds of programs?

An important goal of the humanities is to encourage reflection about values and ideas through interdisciplinary programs. All of us hold beliefs and assumptions which shape the way we see the world, whether it is a contemporary issue or our understanding of an historical event. A humanities program makes 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.

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A good humanities program makes us think in new ways. It questions without providing pat answers. It presents different points of view about an issue or a topic. 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?”). These are the kinds of questions that humanities disciplines ask about any subject. Although the particular focus of how we come to understand human experience may differ from discipline-to-discipline, what is consistent is the necessity of rigorous inquiry and connecting meaning to how we live our lives. Humanities projects incorporate how understanding gained from the study of such disciplines helps us reflect on and give meaning to our “diverse heritage, traditions, histories, and the current conditions of national life.” **As the founding legislation of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) states, “Democracy demands wisdom and vision in its citizens.”**

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.” 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.

B. How do we 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 help you locate humanities scholars who are willing to participate and have experience in public programs. If you have a topic in mind, staff can provide a list of individuals with matching interests and expertise. You may also want to contact a university, college, or community college humanities department for help.

C. What kinds of groups have received grants?

Successful applicants have included libraries, schools, 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.

D. 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.

E. What kinds of project formats are supported?

Some of the projects the North Carolina Humanities Council has funded include reading-and-discussion programs, lectures, conferences, seminars, symposia, media projects (radio, television, film, video, DVD, web), performance activities with discussion (such as plays, staged

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reading, and original performance initiatives), oral histories, photographic exhibits, museum exhibits, the creation and dissemination of printed materials, and teacher workshops.

Possible projects include:

- 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.

F. What are the basic grant requirements?

All grant projects must:

- Be grounded in sound humanities scholarship
- Provide analytical interpretation to deepen public understanding of significant humanities questions
- Involve a team of humanities and community scholars 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.

G. How will my proposal be evaluated?

Competitive applications will go beyond the mere presentation of factual information to examine the larger significance of a subject and stimulate critical reflection. Applications must convey a solid grasp of the project's subject and the related scholarship, indicate why the proposed subject matters, and clearly demonstrate how the chosen formats will effectively communicate an analytical interpretation of the subject matter to general audiences.

Competitive applications must respond to the following evaluation criteria:

1. Intellectual content and humanities significance
 - a. The significance of the subject and the humanities ideas; the quality and relevance of the humanities scholarship informing the project; the extent to which the project offers an analytical perspective on the themes and ideas that underlie it.
2. Format and program resources
 - a. The appropriateness, quality, and creativity of the concept for organizing and presenting the material to effectively convey the humanities content to the audience; and the appropriateness of the materials and resources that support the project's interpretive themes and ideas.
3. Audience
 - a. The appeal of the subject and the accessibility of the ideas to the intended audience. The clarity and significance of the take-away ideas that are conveyed; the appeal of the content to audiences.
4. Project team
 - a. The experience and technical skills of the project team; the quality of the project team's previous work; and the likelihood that the institutional partners (if any) will collaborate effectively.
5. Humanities advisers
 - a. The qualifications and potential contributions of the advising scholars.
6. Work plan and budget
 - a. The likelihood that the applicant will achieve the project's goals in a timely and

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efficient manner; the appropriateness and reasonability of the project costs.

7. Overall evaluation

- a. The likely effectiveness of the proposed evaluation of the project's impact.

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

Restrictions Governing the Use of North Carolina Humanities Council Funds

A. Eligible Expenses

North Carolina Humanities Council funds may be used for:

- Meetings with scholars and other content advisers, program partners, and audience representatives
- Research into the topic
- Travel to archives, collections, sites, or other resources
- Development and production of program or discussion guides, exhibition labels, brochures, digital assets, publications, or other interpretive material
- Design of any of the interpretive formats to be used
- Planning and presentation of public programs and publicity materials
- Evaluation of the project's impact
- Planning and conducting project-specific training for docents, discussion coordinators, or other interpretive leaders
- Development and production of curriculum guides and other materials for teachers and students
- Exhibition design and fabrication, as well as crating and shipping
- Development and construction of interactive program components
- Publication costs for complementary materials, including catalogs and curriculum guides
- Publicity expenses

All activities funded by North Carolina Humanities Council grants must be free and open to the public.

B. No 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. A North Carolina Humanities Council "in-kind contributions" documentation form will be sent to the project director upon approval of the proposal.

C. Stipend Limits

The stipend payment to a speaker, scholar, or presenter for a single presentation in a program cannot exceed \$400 in North Carolina Humanities Council funds.

D. Ineligible Expenses

North Carolina Humanities Council grant funds **cannot be used to:**

- a. Purchase equipment, buildings, or other non-expendable items, such as art, artifacts or equipment

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- b. Create encyclopedias, or projects for preservation, cataloging, or archiving that do not include significant interpretive components
- c. Develop print or digital publications that are not an integral part of the larger project for which funding is requested
- d. Pay salaries to individuals who are administering the grant as part of a salaried job
- e. Pay for professional development or for new staff hires
- f. 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)
- g. Pay for projects primarily devoted to research rather than interpretation for the general public
- h. Develop dramatic adaptations of literary works
- i. Cover expenses for venues in foreign countries
- j. Pay for general operations, renovation, restoration, rehabilitation, or construction, strategic planning or feasibility studies
- k. Pay for projects that seek to persuade participants of a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view
- l. Pay for projects that advocate a particular program of social action
- m. Cover indirect costs
- n. Support obscene, libelous, indecent, or defamatory content (including hate speech, personal attacks, or material constituting harassment).
- o. Cover food costs, except for the meals of program presenters or consultants.
- p. In addition, grant funds cannot be used for 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.

Policies Affecting All North Carolina Humanities Council Grant Categories

A. Sponsor Eligibility

The sponsoring group 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 give 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 Scholars

Humanities scholars must be involved in both the planning and implementation of North Carolina Humanities Council funded projects.

C. Topic Eligibility

The subject of the project must be within or addressed by one or more of the humanities disciplines. 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

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advocate social or political action. Public funds cannot be used to advocate personal/political points of view.

D. Sponsor Cost-Share

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).

E. 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.

F. 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.

G. 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>.

For more information, please contact:

North Carolina Humanities Council
320 East 9th Street, Suite 414
Charlotte, NC 28202
Email: nhc@nchumanities.org
Phone: [\(704\) 687-1520](tel:(704)687-1520)
Fax: [\(704\) 687-1550](tel:(704)687-1550)