# SHARP Grant for Humanities Organizations Request for Proposals

RFP Issued: August 31, 2021

Application Deadline: October 11, 2021, 11:59pm ET

## Summary:

As the State Humanities Council for Washington, DC, HumanitiesDC is honored to administer the "Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan" (SHARP) grants funded by the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act via the National Endowment for the Humanities. These grants provide general operating support to non-profit cultural organizations, working in the public humanities field, that are facing immediate economic challenges related to the coronavirus pandemic. Priority for awarding the funds will be to help organizations continue their existing or planned public humanities programs by retaining staff and maintaining their financial obligations.

## Grant Period:

November 16, 2021 – November 16, 2022

## Access Assistance:

HumanitiesDC endeavors to make its applications as open and accessible as possible. If you are unable to access any materials on our site, then please contact the staff member listed below for support. When contacting us, please include the following in your query:

- Nature of the accessibility issue.
- The web address of the content you are attempting to access
- Your preferred format for the content
- Your contact information

## Award Amount:

For general operating support, these awards will allow for organizations to continue their existing or planned public humanities programs by retaining staff and maintaining their financial obligations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are the maximum available award amounts listed by the organizational budget:

Up to $20,000 for organizations with budgets of $300,000 or below (averaged over the last three years)

Up to $30,000 for organizations with budgets between $300,000 and $1,000,000 (averaged over the last three years)

Up to $40,000 for organizations with budgets over $1,000,000 (averaged over the last three years)

Applicants may receive only one grant from this program in this fiscal year. Please read this request for proposals in full before applying.

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## Staff Contact:

Anaia Peddie - apeddie@wdchumanities.org

## About HumanitiesDC:

HumanitiesDC is the State Humanities Council for Washington, DC, and one of 56 such institutions found in every state and territory of the United States, each affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Founded in 1980, our mission is to:

*Enrich the quality of life, foster intellectual stimulation, and promote cross-cultural understanding and appreciation of local history in all neighborhoods of the District through humanities programs and grants.*

## What are the Humanities:

The Humanities encompass: "language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life."[1]

## What are Humanities Organizations:

A humanities organization has a mission explicitly connected to the humanities along with a track record of specifically working in the humanities, as opposed to a group that occasionally tackles or delves into humanities-based themes or activities.

In order to apply for a general operating grant, you must be one of the following types of organizations:

- **Cultural and Ethnic Organizations:** This category includes organizations dedicated to the study, preservation, and/or dissemination of the history and culture of ethnic groups.
- **History Organizations:** This category includes historical societies and their support organizations, historical preservation groups and their support organizations, historic houses, folklore/folklife organizations, place-based learning organizations, cultural sustainability organizations, and other organizations with a historical focus.
- **Humanities Museums:** This category includes organizations that acquire, preserve, research, exhibit, and provide for the educational use of works of art or objects/artifacts that are related to the study of humanities content.
- **Media, Journalism, and Documentary Organizations:** Organizations that are committed to covering humanities themes and/or telling the stories, happenings, or histories of communities that are informed by the members of those communities, challenge predominant narratives, and/or nurture critical analysis of media.
- **Literature Organizations:** This category includes organizations that promote the study or appreciation of books and/or literature.

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[1] From the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, 1965 via http://www.neh.gov

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- **Humanities Education:** Organizations that offer classes, seminar, and workshops in the humanities (which include but are not limited to literature, languages, history, philosophy, religious studies, art history, and interdisciplinary humanities programs – like ethnic studies, gender and sexuality studies, and American studies). Literacy programs and English-language acquisition (ELL/ESL) programs are also eligible in this category.
- **Libraries and Archives:** These organizations include operating libraries and archives (excluding those that are purely science- and medicine-focused). Combination museum-libraries can be treated as museums or libraries.
- **Consortiums, alliances, and collectives of above-named groups**.

If your humanities organization does not fit into any of the above classifications, then please contact us to discuss your eligibility for a general operating grant.

## What are we looking for?

- Description of the organization's central activities, with emphasis on its typical humanities programming.
- Estimate of how much income the organization has lost as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Description of the public humanities programming lost or threatened by the Covid-19 pandemic and other impacts the pandemic has had on the organization.
- Explanation of how the organization plans to continue or alter that programming and/or a description of alternative public humanities programming the organization will produce.
- Description of how the funds would be used should a grant be awarded.

## Other Required Proposal Elements:

- Identification of the organization's target demographic, primary humanities discipline, and Washington, DC Ward(s) served.
- Listing of key personnel whose positions would be impacted by the grant award and their roles in the organization.
- A timeline for expenditure of the funds.
- A budget (in a provided template), and a budget narrative.
- A detailed plan for complying with relevant provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## Cash Match Requirement:

There is no matching requirement for this grant program.

## How to Apply:

The HumanitiesDC grants portal can be accessed at http://grantapplication.wdchumanities.org.  Please be sure to review the grant qualifications, terms and conditions for the program you are interested in before applying. If your organization has previously applied for a HumanitiesDC grant, then please DO NOT create a new account. If you

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are having trouble accessing your organization's existing account, please email the staff contact indicated in this RFP.

All HumanitiesDC grant applications are accepted via an online grant portal. Applications must be successfully submitted by 11:59pm on the day of the deadline. Applicants will receive a confirmation email when their proposals have been successfully submitted. Applicants should contact the applicable HumanitiesDC staff member immediately should they encounter any technical issues or if they do not receive a confirmation email. Incomplete or late applications or applications failing to meet the guidelines or eligibility requirements will not be assigned to the evaluator panels nor will they be considered for funding. HumanitiesDC does not accept mailed, emailed, or hand-delivered applications or required attachments. HumanitiesDC will accept reasonable accommodation requests from applicants with disabilities in advance of the application due date to assist them in submitting grant applications via mail, email, or hand-delivery. To make a request for reasonable accommodation contact the grants staff member listed on this RFP and allow time for the approval of the request.

## Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be a federally incorporated 501c3 non-profit organization.
- Must be registered with, and authorized to do business in, the District as either a "Domestic" entity (that is, an entity that was incorporated in the District) or a "Foreign" entity (that is, an entity that was incorporated in another state).
- Must register and comply with the regulatory requirements of the following agencies:
  - o District of Columbia Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) – Corporations Division (indicating an "active" business license status at the time of application and agreeing to maintain such status throughout the grant period).
  - o District of Columbia Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Office of Tax and Revenue (OTR).
  - o District of Columbia Department of Employment Services (DOES).
  - o United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- Must be able to obtain a certification of "Citywide Clean Hands" (CCH) from the District of Columbia Office of Tax and Revenue.
- Must be an organization which, as a core part of its mission, produces public programs in the Humanities, as defined here by the amended National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965:
  - o *"The term 'humanities' includes, but is not limited to, the study and interpretation of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of the social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life."*
- Must be an organization for which Washington, DC residents comprise most of its constituents.

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- Must have a principal business office address that is in the District of Columbia and is accessible to onsite review. Post office boxes will not be accepted.
- Must be in good standing with HumanitiesDC. Applicants with outstanding or delinquent reports or final products from previous HumanitiesDC grants must submit them completed and without deficiencies at least 30 days before the deadline for which they wish to apply.
- Prohibited applicants include: private clubs and organizations that prohibit membership based upon race, gender, color, religion, or any other classes identified in the District of Columbia Human Rights Act; for-profit (commercial) entities; political organizations; organizations whose primary focus is in the performing or visual arts (see the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities for applicable funding opportunities); organizations with no paid staff; universities; foreign governments; federal government entities; organizations receiving significant federal funding;  and District of Columbia government agencies.
- Must have a valid DUNS number (https://www.dnb.com/duns-number.html). Organizations do not need to have a DUNS number to apply but will not be able to receive funding until one is obtained.

## Fiscal Sponsorship:

Fiscal sponsorship arrangements are prohibited for this grant.

## Allowable Costs:

This grant is intended to support general operating expenses. These may include salary, consulting fees, rent, utilities, information technology, or administrative fees. Prohibited expenses include food and beverages, tuition and scholarships, debt reduction, re-granting, and funding to foreign or domestic government agencies.

Applicants may contact Anaia Peddie at apeddie@humanitiesdc.org with questions regarding allowable costs. Grantees will be required to detail all expenses in their final reports.

## Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access:

All applicants must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The ADA provides civil rights protection to individuals with disabilities in the areas of employment, services rendered by state and local government, places of public accommodation, transportation and telecommunication services. Organizations funded by HumanitiesDC must make reasonable accommodations to ensure that people with disabilities have equal physical and communications access as defined by federal law.

Organizations applying for funding from HumanitiesDC must include, in their grant applications, a response to the "Accessibility" section of its grant application that includes the following information:

1. The process for formulating accessibility plans (e.g., creating an accessibility advisory committee, board and staff disability rights training, budgeting for reasonable accommodation requests, etc.).

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2. The current process/status of an organization's physical accessibility. If the location is not barrier-free, include in the grant application a plan for project/program modification that ensures access in a barrier-free environment, when needed.
3. The current progress/status of the organization's accessibility in presenting activities – communications access (e.g., TDD, large print, or brail materials; audio description or assistive listening devices, ASL interpreted programs, etc.) and marketing/advertising.

In addition to detailed plans for its compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.C § § 12101 et seq.), each applicant must demonstrate how its work will be inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible throughout the District of Columbia, beyond participants with disabilities. Successful applications will consider a broad definition of "accessibility" by addressing financial, geographic, demographic, cultural and developmental access. For more information, applicants may access the complete text of the ADA here: https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/42/12101. Note that neither HumanitiesDC nor the National Endowment for the Humanities represent that this link leads to the latest version of the subject law.

## Technical Assistance Workshops:

HumanitiesDC schedules at least one technical assistance workshops for prospective applicants prior to the deadline for each cycle. These workshops may be conducted via live webinars and led by HumanitiesDC grants staff to provide information on grant qualifications, grant writing best practices, and navigation of the online grants' portal. HumanitiesDC staff will not write applications for prospective applicants but will provide feedback on drafts. To request feedback, applicants must send a request by email to the grants staff member listed on the RFP no less than two weeks before the deadline. The technical grants assistance workshops are free and open to the public, but applicants are strongly encouraged to register via Eventbrite before attending. As the workshops are scheduled, the dates, times, locations, and registration links will be available on our website https://www.humanitiesdc.org/.

## Application Review Process:

Qualified applications are submitted to a review panel of volunteers with connections to the Washington, DC-area humanities, arts, and culture community. These panelists will score the proposals assigned to them based on an established rubric that closely aligns with the questions in the application. HumanitiesDC staff will produce a slate of proposals recommended for funding based on the panelists' aggregate scores. This slate will be submitted to the full board for approval. All panelists, staff and board members are expected to remain impartial as they undertake their respective parts in the evaluation process. HumanitiesDC requires that all involved recuse themselves from review of any application that presents a personal or professional conflict of interest, and panelists must sign a statement acknowledging that they will adhere to this policy.

## Risk Management Assessment:

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HumanitiesDC may elect not to fund applicants with management or financial instability that affects their ability to implement the terms and conditions of the award (2 CFR §200.205). Applications that have received a favorable objective review are reviewed for other considerations that include past performance, as applicable; cost analysis of the project budget; assessment of management systems; continued applicant eligibility; and compliance with any public policy requirements. You may be asked to submit additional programmatic or administrative information (such as an updated budget or supporting documentation) or to undertake certain activities (such as negotiation of an indirect cost rate) in anticipation of an award. However, such requests do not guarantee that an award will be made. Following review of all applicable information, HumanitiesDC's grants staff will determine whether an award can be made, if special conditions are required, and what level of funding is appropriate. Award decisions are discretionary and are not subject to appeal to any HumanitiesDC official or board.

## Notification and Payment of Awards:

HumanitiesDC will aim to notify applicants of their status (funded or denied) no more than 30 days after the application deadline. Grant award recipients will receive an official grant award letter through the online system which will include a link to submit acceptance forms and to sign the grant conditions.

For award recipients, the date of payment is subject to the availability of funds and the processing of required documentation. Awards are disbursed via direct deposit, and all awarded applicants are required to submit an automated clearing house (ACH) form which is made available through the online grants' portal.

## Acknowledgements and Recognition of Funding:

All award recipients will be required to acknowledge HumanitiesDC, NEH, and the ARP Act in written and promotional materials related to their acceptance of the grant and any projects or impacts it has on their organization.

Below is sample language:

- Funding for these grants has been provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act economic stabilization plan.
- This program is made possible by funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the federal ARP Act.
- Funding has been provided to [grantee] from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the 2021 The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021.

- Funding for these grants has been administered by HumanitiesDC from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the 2021 The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act of 2021.

Please remember to also include the NEH federal seal and usual disclaimer language applicable to all NEH-funded projects, events, and grants.

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Specific guidance and logos will be provided to awarded applicants.

## Additional Terms and Requirements:

1. The HumanitiesDC grants staff will schedule at least one check in session with recipients over the course of the grant period.
2. Awardees agree to document all grant expenditures and provide a final report at the end of the project period using forms provided by HumanitiesDC.
3. Any changes to the scope or budget (greater than 25% in any one category) of a grant must be communicated in advance to HumanitiesDC in writing and approved by HumanitiesDC.
4. Awarded applicants will sign grant conditions that constitute a legally binding contract between HumanitiesDC and the applicant's organization.