



2024 Visions - Projects & Events Grant Request for Proposals (RFP)

RFP Issued: December 11, 2023

Application Deadline: February 20, 2024 at 5:59 PM

Project Period: May 1, 2024 - April 30, 2025. Funds must be spent during the project period (also known as the "grant period").

Grant Type: Program

Maximum Award Amount: \$25,000.

About HumanitiesDC:

Washington DC is a vibrant, historical city full of curious people who have big questions, bright ideas, and unique experiences to share. These human stories allow us to navigate the complexities of our past, present, and future. The humanities help us learn from history and literature, empathize through language and comparative religion, and challenge our assumptions with philosophy and ethics. They are a compass for interpreting what humans make and exploring what makes us human. Founded in 1980, HumanitiesDC is one of 56 state councils supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities to ensure the humanities are available to all. Our grantmaking and programs allow us to celebrate, elevate, and connect local voices that bring our city to life.

Applicant Eligibility:

Only DC-based nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply. Individuals must apply through a DC-based nonprofit fiscal sponsor (see "Fiscal Sponsorship" section for more details). Applicants may apply for and receive only one program grant per year but could also apply for and receive one non-program grant (i.e., either Capacity Building or Youth in the Humanities).

Summary:

Help us create exciting public humanities programs for the people of Washington, DC! The Visions - Projects & Events grant opportunity funds the creation or continuation of innovative interpretations of humanities scholarship for wide public audiences. Applicants are encouraged to think creatively about how they engage the public. These interpretations can include, but are not limited to, feature-length documentary films, documentary shorts, festivals or conferences, publications and curricula, tours and exhibits, digital humanities projects, and archive creation. All projects must be thematically focused on Washington, DC

and must benefit District residents. This opportunity is part of the Humanities Grant Program supported with funding from the District of Columbia Government through the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

Application Accessibility:

With equity as one of our [Values](#), we are focused on broaden[ing] access, inclusion, and diversity in all our work to create structures that share power and core decision-making. We are committed to becoming a more inclusive and accessible organization where everyone can participate fully in our grantmaking process. If you are unable to access any application materials on our website or Foundant, please contact the staff member listed below.

Staff Contact: Hillary Steen, Community Grants Manager, grants@humanitiesdc.org, 202.770.3077 x812

Funding Scope:

Visions - Projects & Events funds the creation and sustainability of innovative interpretations of humanities scholarship for wide public audiences. All projects must incorporate relevant humanities scholarship into the stories that they tell and have an advisor or partner who is knowledgeable about the relevant field or subject matter. These funds can support ongoing programs or limited-time activities. Collaboration with other partners is encouraged but not necessary.

Projects must include:

- A Specific Connection to Washington, DC: Projects should connect to DC society, culture, history, and/or residents. Although projects may be connected to national issues, the primary scope and audience is focused on DC.
- A Humanities Focus: Projects must incorporate relevant humanities scholarship with specific focus on one or more central humanities disciplines. Topics should be innovative, unique, and/or of strong interest to a wide audience.
- Strong Scholar or Expert Involvement: Each project will include a humanities-based scholar, historian or expert as an advisor or partner who is knowledgeable about the relevant field or subject matter and dedicated to helping guide the project to completion. The scholar should have formal training and/or lived experience in the topic.
- Community Partnership: All proposed grant projects should demonstrate both how the targeted community will benefit from the project and be actively involved in its creation. Projects must be inclusive, equitable, and publicly accessible.

Project examples include:

- Neighborhood organizations partnering with local experts to create walking tours that explore the various layers of a community;
- Conferences focusing on the connection between national issues and their impacts on DC residents;
- Humanities organizations holding space for dialogue around civic engagement;
- Educational organizations creating an exhibition with a humanities theme as it relates to DC residents;
- Documentary films that tell a humanities story about Washington, DC*;
- Planning or execution of an event, conference, festival, or other gathering**;
- Development of humanities-focused publications and curricula;
- The development or enhancement of archives, websites, and other digital humanities projects.

*Applications for documentary films must describe the topic summary, project stage and timeline, marketing strategy, and a detailed list of public programming. All completed films must be made available for non-commercial, educational use.

**Events, conferences, festivals, or other gatherings should promote DC-focused humanities topics for the public. They should create networking opportunities for humanities professionals, a platform for scholars and local experts, and/or a space for people wanting to explore a humanities-based topic or area of interest. Additionally, they must be open to the public and include some portion of free or affordable programming.

Weighted Review Criteria

Applications are reviewed and weighted based on the criteria below. The review process is explained in the *Application Review Process* section of this RFP.

- Capacity and Personnel - 30%
The Project Director has the experience and expertise necessary to bring the project to completion. The Humanities Scholar or Community Expert has relevant qualifications for the proposed project. Their role is clearly defined and lends legitimacy or intellectual authority to the project. Other team members and collaborators are clearly identified and explained as necessary.
- Project description, feasibility, and timeline - 45%
The applicant has provided a clear and detailed description of the proposed project and its activities. Project has a clear connection to Washington, DC culture, history, or residents. The audience's experience of and participation in the project is explained. The timeline is within the grant period and feasible.

Achievable goals or impacts are described, and the applicant has a clear plan for assessing the project success.

- Community Collaboration - 15%

The proposal described an effective plan for reaching and engaging the project's target audience. The project will be inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible (defined broadly to include financial, geographic, demographic, cultural and developmental accessibility); consider any explanation provided for an exception to this expectation.

- Budget - 10%

The applicant clearly describes how funds will be used, and all expenses are directly tied to the proposed project activities. Budgeted expenses are allowable. (Unallowable expenses include food and beverages, tuition and scholarships, debt reduction, re-granting, and funding to foreign or domestic government agencies. If the applicant is using a fiscal sponsor: no more than 10% of the grant can go to the fiscal sponsor.)

Cash Match Requirement:

There is no matching requirement for this grant program. However, if the proposed activities cost more than the amount requested, applicants will be asked to describe other secured/planned funding sources in the application that will enable the proposed project to be completed.

Eligibility Requirements:

Applicants applying for this grant must:

- Be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that is registered and authorized to do business in Washington, DC with a physical mailing address in the District. DC residents should comprise most of its constituents.
 - The organization must be registered as either a "Domestic" entity (an entity that was incorporated in the District) or a "Foreign" entity (an entity that was incorporated in another state).
- Register and comply with the regulatory requirements of the following agencies:
 - 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).
 - District of Columbia Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Office of Tax and Revenue (OTR).
 - District of Columbia Department of Employment Services (DOES).

- United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
- Obtain a certification of "[Citywide Clean Hands](#)" from the District of Columbia Office of Tax and Revenue. This is required if the applicant is chosen for funding, but all applicants are encouraged to get this before submitting an application. The certification must be dated no more than 30 days before it is sent to HumanitiesDC.
- Not appear on the DC Government's Excluded Parties [List](#) per the DC Office of Contracting and Procurement.
- Must have a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). UEI is a number issued by the System for Award Management (SAM) to identify businesses and other entities that do business with the federal government. The UEI has replaced the DUNS number as the authorized identifier for the federal government. [Click here for more information on UEI.](#)
- Be in good standing with HumanitiesDC (no delinquent reports). Any current grantees who wish to apply for new funding must complete their project before receiving any new funds, and they must contact the staff contact listed above before submitting a new application. Be able to provide proof of eligibility at any time during the grant period. Any awardees found ineligible after the award date must return all grant funds to HumanitiesDC.
- Agree that by signing the conditions document and accepting the funds, they will comply with: (a) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (which provides that grant recipients must take adequate steps to ensure that people with limited English proficiency receive the language assistance necessary to afford them meaningful access to grant-related programs, activities and services); (b) Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin); (c) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex); (d) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; (e) the Americans with Disabilities Act (which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disabilities); (f) the Age Discrimination Act of 1973 (which prohibits discrimination against those 40 years or older); (g) the Labor Standards under Sections 5i and 7g of the National Foundation of the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965; and (h) the regulations issued pursuant thereto by the National Endowment for the Humanities (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Chapter XI)."
- Apply to only one grant opportunity in Cycle I. Cycle I applicants and grantees may also apply for one grant in Cycle II.

Individuals cannot directly apply for this grant opportunity, but they may apply through a fiscal sponsor that meets the above eligibility requirements.

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; foreign governments; federal government entities; and District of Columbia government agencies.

Fiscal Sponsorship:

Individuals or community groups without 501(c)3 non-profit status must apply through a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that serves as a fiscal sponsor. This fiscal sponsor must meet all organizational eligibility requirements as noted in this RFP, including being a registered entity in Washington, DC.

A fiscal sponsor takes on all financial and legal obligations of the grant award. Fiscal sponsors may support no more than three HumanitiesDC grants at a time. Applicants applying through fiscal sponsors must use the fiscal sponsor's organization account within the HumanitiesDC grants portal (Foundant) to submit their application. If the fiscal sponsor does not have an account, an authorized official from the fiscal sponsor organization must create one. HumanitiesDC will endeavor to work primarily with the team conducting the project. However, because fiscal sponsor organizations have fiduciary and financial responsibility for their supported grants, it will be necessary for representatives from the fiscal sponsor to review and sign off on funding applications, financial documents, and grant agreements. No more than 10% of the grant award may be used to pay a fiscal sponsor.

Please note that all eligibility requirements noted in this RFP - except for the 501(c)(3) requirement - must apply to the sponsored organization/individual. Sponsored entities must be located in DC, for example, and they cannot use a fiscal sponsor to hide the fact that they owe taxes to the DC government.

Allowable Costs:

100% of awarded grant funds must be applied to direct program costs. This may include salary, consulting fees, and/or honoraria for individuals working on the project, but cannot include indirect costs, overhead, rent, utilities, or administrative fees. Other disallowed expenses include food and beverages, entertainment, social activities, tuition and scholarships, debt reduction, re-granting, costs related to fundraisers and special events, expenses unrelated to the execution of the project, and funding to foreign or domestic government agencies. Grantees will be required to document, through materials such as receipts, paid invoices, credit card or bank statements, payroll reports, and cancelled checks, all expenses paid with HumanitiesDC funds in their final reports.

ADA Compliance and Accessibility:

All organizational 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.

Applicant organizations with 15 or more full time employees and/or that are applying for funding for public events must provide the following information in their application to demonstrate compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.C § § 12101 et seq.):

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.).
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 braille materials; audio description or assistive listening devices, ASL interpreted programs, etc.) and marketing/advertising.

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 District of Columbia government represent that this link leads to the latest version of the subject law.

Technical Assistance for Applicants:

HumanitiesDC will host general information sessions about all grant opportunities, as well as workshops specific to each grant program. These sessions will be recorded and available on our website. One-on-one office hours with staff will also be available. Details can be found in the [Community Grants](#) section of our website.

How to Apply:

HumanitiesDC grant applications are accepted via Foundant, our online grants portal. Foundant can be accessed at <http://grantapplication.wdchumanities.org>.

Applications must be successfully submitted by 5:59 pm on the day of the deadline.

If you or your organization have applied for a HumanitiesDC grant before, please DO NOT create a new account. Instead, log into Foundant with your existing account, with your email address serving as your username. Please contact the Grants Manager listed above if you need help accessing your account. More detailed instructions about Foundant are found on our website.

Applicants will receive a confirmation email when their proposals are 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 considered for funding.

HumanitiesDC will consider reasonable accommodation requests from applicants with disabilities to assist them in submitting grant applications via mail, email, or hand delivery. This request must be made at least five business days before the application deadline. To make a request for reasonable accommodation, please contact the Grants Manager identified at the beginning of this document.

HumanitiesDC reserves the right to change or rescind grant opportunities if we do not receive sufficient funds and/or if other unexpected situations occur.

HumanitiesDC may accept or deny all applications submitted for funding if that is determined to be in the best interest of the organization.

Application Review Process:

- HumanitiesDC staff review all submitted applications for eligibility. Ineligible applicants are notified immediately and are allowed to appeal our decision.
- Eligible applications are reviewed by community members who have experience in humanities programming or scholarship in DC and understand the role that HumanitiesDC plays in the city. Reviewers are trained by HumanitiesDC staff. They read and evaluate their assigned applications and convene for a group discussion. They then finalize their comments and individual scores, which are collated and averaged. Applications are funded based on the average scores they receive.

- Everyone involved in the review process is expected to remain impartial. HumanitiesDC requires that reviewers recuse themselves from the review of any application that presents a personal or professional conflict of interest.
- If you, or someone you know, are interested in being a grant reviewer, please complete the [intake form](#) on our website. You may be both an applicant and a grant reviewer, but you will not review applications within the same grant program you apply to.

Notification and Payment of Awards:

HumanitiesDC will notify applicants of their status (approved or denied) approximately eight weeks after the application deadline. Grant awards are approved and certified in Foundant. Awards are disbursed via direct deposit within a month after the acceptance form is correctly submitted. The full grant is typically awarded at the beginning of the grant period. If funding is not available at the beginning of the grant period, grants might be awarded in installments. Denied applicants may request a summary of panelist comments.

Grant Award Terms:

1. Recipients agree to document all grant expenditures.
2. Any changes to the scope, budget (greater than 25% in any one budget category), or project period must be requested in writing in advance.
3. Awardees are required to submit an interim report as described below. Failure to complete this report on time may result in intervention on the part of HumanitiesDC up to and including a request to return disbursed funds.
4. Awardees are required to submit a final report as described below. Failure to do so satisfactorily might affect eligibility for future grants.
5. To receive the grant award, approved applicants must sign and submit a Grant Agreement Form that constitutes a legally binding contract between HumanitiesDC and the applicant's organization or fiscal sponsor. The signatory will be legally obligated to complete the project under the terms of the Grant Agreement Form.

Reporting:

The required interim and final reports are submitted through Foundant. Grants managers will review reports and provide feedback within 30 days.

- The interim report will be due **October 15, 2024**. This report includes an explanation of funds spent and a brief overview of progress to date.

- The final report will be due on **May 30, 2025**, which is 30 days after the end of the grant period. This report includes an explanation of funds spent, documentation of all expenditures, and a project evaluation.

Close Out:

Grants are successfully closed once grants managers approve the submitted final report. A complete final report notes that funds were spent, the project is completed, and there are no outstanding issues to address. Any unspent funds are returned to HumanitiesDC. Grantees risk losing eligibility for future grants if they fail to submit their reports and achieve a successful grant closeout.