

DC ORAL HISTORY COLLABORATIVE GRANTS

General Information and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

(Revised 12/20/2023)

What is the DC Oral History Collaborative (DCOHC)?

The DC Oral History Collaborative (DCOHC) documents, preserves, and celebrates the lived experiences of all Washington, DC residents and communities through oral history. The Collaborative accomplishes this by providing training, mentorship, resources, programs, and funding to current and aspiring oral historians.

Are there requirements I need to be aware of before applying for a DC Oral History Collaborative grant?

Yes. Please review the RFP carefully to understand all the requirements. For instance, there are a minimum number of interviews that need to be recorded, and there is a required, in-depth three-session workshop.

Do DC Oral History Collaborative grantees need to have prior experience?

No. DC Oral History Collaborative grant recipients do not need prior experience collecting or working with oral history interviews. Directors of each awarded project are required to attend an in-depth three-session workshop introducing participants to the field and practice of oral history at the start of their grant period. There is usually room for project teams to send additional members to the training, especially if they will be conducting interviews. Upon receiving the grant and completing the training, project teams become members of the Collaborative, qualifying them for ongoing advice, mentorship, and access to training and tools. Furthermore, they gain access to a growing support network of fellow community oral historians in DC.

Do DC Oral History Collaborative grantees need to complete a certain number of interviews?

Yes, DC Oral History Collaborative grantees must record interviews with a minimum of five interviewees. These interviews will be made available to the DC Public Library for inclusion in the [DC Oral History Collaborative collection within the library's People's Archive](#). A major goal of the DC Oral History Collaborative is to create a rich, diverse, and accessible resource for students, researchers, and anyone wishing to learn more about life in Washington, DC.

At the end of their grant period, DC Oral History Collaborative members submit their interviews with full transcripts, indexes, release forms, and metadata so they can be added to the collection in the People's Archive. Project Directors and interviewees retain the right to use the stories they collect even after they are submitted to the DC Public Library.

In the DC Oral History Collaborative budget, what is the difference between honoraria and salaries?

Honoraria are stipends that are paid to oral history narrators/participants to thank them for their time. Salaries are paid to the individuals implementing and supporting the program, such as those who interview narrators or write transcripts.

Will grantees for the DC Oral History Collaborative have to follow the standards of the Oral History Association (OHA)?

Grantees do not have to follow all the OHA standards. Some elements will be followed, especially related to follow-up activities that are required by our partnership with the DC Public Library. Grantees will learn OHA best practices at the required training, but they have flexibility in how they conduct the interviews.

I'm interested in receiving translation enhancement funding for my oral history project. When can I apply for this?

You will have the option of applying for translation enhancement funding as part of your DC Oral History Collaborative application; you will see the relevant questions as you complete the application in our online system.

I am interested in conducting oral histories and then doing additional activities around them, such as creating an audiobook or producing a showcase. Is this allowed under the DC Oral History Collaborative (DCOHC) grant?

The DC Oral History Collaborative grant is only for recording oral histories. If you want to create additional materials once the oral histories are collected, you must apply for a subsequent grant - such as DCOHC Beyond the Archives.

Additional Information about the DC Oral History Collaborative Grant

Required Workshops

All grant project teams must send at least one representative to participate in the full three-session workshop held at the beginning of the grant period. Each of the three sessions last for three hours and the whole workshop is held over the course of about a week. Objectives for the workshop include: understanding the DCOHC grant requirements, defining oral history, planning an oral history project, navigating the interview experience, and preparing oral histories for the archives. For each day of the workshop, participants will be asked to complete shared readings and some light homework assignments.

The session dates for each grant period are listed in the RFP, and grant applicants are responsible for saving those dates BEFORE they are notified of their grant status.

Deliverables

DC Oral History Collaborative grantees are required to submit their recorded oral histories to HumanitiesDC no later than 30 days after the end of grant period. Grantees are not required to complete the number of oral histories they estimated in their grant proposals but must record interviews with at least 5 different people. With each interview, grantees will submit: a transcript of the interview, an index of the interview, and a legal release form. Grantees will also complete a metadata spreadsheet based on a template provided by the DC Public Library.

- **The interview file:** Interviews may be recorded in audio or video. Submitted files should typically be uncompressed and non-proprietary though compressed files may be suitable for video interviews. Interviews should be submitted unedited except for in cases where certain redactions have been requested by the narrator.

- **The transcript:** The transcript is a verbatim replication of the spoken interview as a written document. The transcript should include a new entry each time a new speaker is heard on the recording. The cover page for the transcript should include the name of the project, the narrator's name, the interviewer's name, the date of the interview, the interview location (neighborhood name if it is a personal address), interview length, short interview summary, and a biographical statement about the narrator.
- **The index:** The index is like a table of contents for the interview. It will have an entry for each time the narrator begins to discuss something new. Each entry will include a brief description of the topic being discussed (e.g. "Mike discusses their early childhood in North Carolina".) The index should also include a cover page identical to that of the transcript.
- **The legal release form:** This form, provided by the DC Public Library, gives the library shared copyright of the oral history interview. This allows the library to make the interview part of its archive and to provide access to the public. The release form does not prevent the narrator or project director from using the oral history interview in any publication or other project.
- **The metadata spreadsheet:** This spreadsheet organizes much of the information found in the cover pages of the index and transcript and is used to create the descriptive content that researchers will see when accessing the oral histories in the archives. Grantees will produce a single metadata spreadsheet for their full project that will include rows for each of the interview files, transcripts, indexes, and photographs (**release forms are not included in the metadata spreadsheet**).

Grantees also have the option of submitting narrator photographs to be included in the archive provided that they, or their narrators, control the copyright to the submitted images.

Approximate Time Commitment:

The amount of time it takes to complete an oral history project can be dependent on many factors, but past grantees have indicated an approximate range of 20-50 hours per oral history interview. Included in this estimate are: attending trainings, conducting research and pre-interviews, scheduling and conducting interviews, editing transcripts, seeking narrator approval of transcripts, producing indexes, producing metadata, and administering the grant. It is, indeed, a lot of work to see the project through to the end, but this should not discourage anyone from applying. With proper preparation, planning, and flexibility, even an ambitious project can be completed within the grant period. HumanitiesDC staff and partners provide assistance throughout the project.

Likely Expenses:

The most common material expenses include recording equipment, storage media, printed communications collateral, and virtual interview platform subscriptions. But personnel, vendor services, and honoraria usually make up the bulk of grantees' budgets. Whenever possible, grantees should endeavor to pay themselves and their team appropriately for the work they put into the project. It is also suitable to pay honoraria to narrators in recognition of their time and contribution. Although there are many useful AI transcription services available, it is often more efficient to spend more to have your interviews transcribed by transcriptionists who make less mistakes that need to be corrected later.