



2024 Capacity Building Grant Request for Proposals (RFP)

RFP Issued: March 4, 2024

Application Deadline: May 1, 2024, at 5:59 PM

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

Grant Type: Non-Program

Maximum Award Amount: \$25,000

About HumanitiesDC:

At HumanitiesDC, we connect curious people with bold questions to the powerful stories of our vibrant city. 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. We believe the humanities (history, literature, language arts, ethics, philosophy, culture, and arts appreciation) are a powerful tool to help all Washingtonians, and others connected to the District of Columbia, deepen their relationships with the city and each other through the sharing of unique and universal stories, the fostering of intellectual stimulation, and the promotion of cross-cultural understanding. By increasing understanding and appreciation, we help build more equitable, thriving, and rich communities in Washington DC. Every year, HumanitiesDC does this work by using community-informed grantmaking to invest in local scholars, experts, and organizations, as well as engaging all residents through partnership-based public programming.

Applicant Eligibility:

Humanities-focused, DC-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations with annual budgets of \$2 million or less are eligible to apply. These organizations must have an explicit mission and track record of working in the humanities. Eligible non-profit organizations may include community & cultural heritage organizations, museums, historic sites, preservation and historical societies, and education organizations with a significant humanities focus.

This does not include organizations that occasionally tackle or delve into humanities-based themes or activities, and usually does not include organizations with a primary mission of creating or performing arts. We use the following definition: "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 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.” ([National Endowment for the Humanities \(NEH\)](#))

Applicants may apply for and receive only one non-program grant per year but could also apply for and receive one program grant (i.e., Community Culture & Heritage, DC Oral History Collaborative (DCOHC), DCOHC Extension, DCOHC Beyond the Archives, or Visions - Projects & Events).

Summary:

This grant opportunity funds projects that strengthen the capacity of humanities-focused 501(c)(3) organizations to advance their mission and serve communities across Washington, DC. With this support, organizations will be better positioned to continue producing high-quality humanities work that reaches and serves the District and its residents. Applicants will propose distinct capacity building projects, such as building a communications strategy, improving volunteer recruitment, ensuring thoughtful leadership succession, updating an organization’s technology, or improving how it measures its outcomes. 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: Leah Gage, Community Grants Manager, grants@humanitiesdc.org, 202.770.3077 x 815

Funding Scope:

We define capacity building as an investment in the effectiveness and future sustainability of an organization. Specifically, we fund distinct capacity building projects, such as developing a communications strategy, improving volunteer recruitment, ensuring thoughtful leadership succession, updating technology, and improving the measurement of outcomes. Applicants are encouraged to focus on one or two projects.

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.

Organization Profile (50% of total score)

- The applicant organization has an explicit mission and track record in the humanities in DC.
- The applicant clearly defines and demonstrates an understanding of their core audience.
- The applicant's programming is responsive to the needs and desires of its core audience. They describe how they define and measure success and demonstrate that their programming has been successful.
- The Project Director has the experience and expertise necessary to bring the project to completion.
- Other team members and collaborators are clearly identified and explained as necessary.

Community Outreach, Access, and Inclusion (20% of total score)

- The applicant clearly defines and demonstrates an understanding of the community they serve.
- The applicant has programming and services that are inclusive and accessible. This includes, but isn't limited to, financial, geographic, demographic, cultural, and physical inclusion and accessibility.
- The applicant has leadership and staff that represent its core audience and the community it serves, or the applicant describes a reasonable plan for doing so.
- The applicant describes effective methods to reach and engage its target community.

Project depiction, feasibility, timeline, and goals (20% of total score)

- The applicant has provided a clear and detailed description of the proposed project. It is clear how this project will advance the organization's capacity to achieve its mission.
- The timeline is within the grant period and is feasible.
- Achievable goals or impacts are described, and the applicant has a clear plan for assessing how the project will contribute to the organization's capacity to achieve their mission.

Budget (10% of total score)

- 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.)

Cash Match Requirement:

There is no matching requirement for this grant program. However, if the proposed activities cost more than the amount requested, applicants are strongly encouraged to describe other secured/planned funding sources in the Budget Table and Narrative.

Eligibility Requirements:

Organizations applying for this grant must:

- Be incorporated as a nonprofit with a federally designated tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) code, as evidenced by an IRS determination letter that is dated at least one year prior to the application deadline date.
- 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).
- Have a physical mailing address in the District. DC residents should comprise most of its constituents.
- Register and comply with the regulatory requirements of the following agencies:
 - District of Columbia Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection (DLCP)
 - 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.
- A humanities focus must be central to the mission and/or primary activities of the organization. Please refer to the "Applicant Eligibility" section for our definition of the term "humanities."

Applicants may be asked at any time during the grant period to provide proof of eligibility. Any awardees found ineligible after the award date must return all grant funds to HumanitiesDC.

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

Fiscal sponsorship arrangements are prohibited for this grant. All applicants must be 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations.

Allowable Costs

This grant is intended to support capacity building efforts. Expenses related to these efforts may include salary, consulting fees, rent, utilities, information technology, or administrative fees. Prohibited costs 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 Potential Applicants:

HumanitiesDC has recorded general information sessions about all grant opportunities, which are currently available on our website. HumanitiesDC will also host workshops specific to each grant program. These sessions will be recorded and available on our website. Office hours with staff will be available for more individualized conversations. Details and frequently asked questions can be found in the [Grant Opportunities](#) 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, do not create a new account. Instead, log into Foundant with your existing account, with your email address serving as your username. Please contact grants@humanitiesdc.org or the Grants Manager listed above if you need help accessing your account. More detailed instructions about how to access Foundant are found [here](#).

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. 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. 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 organization. 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 **November 15, 2024**. This report includes an explanation of funds spent and a brief overview of progress to date.
- The final report will be due **May 30, 2025**. This report includes an explanation of funds spent, documentation of all expenditures, and a project evaluation.

Close Out: [OBJ]

Grants are successfully closed once grants managers approve the submitted final report. A complete final report demonstrates 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.