



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ) & APPLICATION TIPS (Revised December 2024)

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### ELIGIBILITY & APPLICATION SUBMISSION

#### **What are the humanities?**

The National Endowment for the Humanities defines the humanities as the following:

“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.”

HumanitiesDC sees the humanities as a compass for interpreting what humans make and exploring what makes us human. Through history, literature, language, religion, philosophy, and ethics, the humanities guide us in learning from our experiences, empathizing with different perspectives, and challenging our assumptions.

#### **What is a humanities organization (relevant to the eligibility requirements of the [General Operating Support grant](#))?**

A humanities organization is a 501(c)3 non-profit with an explicit mission and track record of working in the humanities (as defined above). Eligible non-profit



organizations may include community and 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. Sign up for office hours if you'd like to gain more clarity around organization eligibility.

If your organization is not a humanities organization according to the above definition, but would like funding for humanities projects, you may be eligible for other grants from HumanitiesDC.

**My organization is not a 501(c)(3); can we apply for funding?**

Organizations without 501(c)(3) status may apply for *Community, Culture, & Heritage* and all three DC Oral History Collaborative (*Oral History Interviewing, Continuing Oral History Projects, and Beyond the Archives*) grants. You must designate an individual to be the primary point of contact for the grant application and grant agreement.

Organizations without 501(c)(3) status may not apply for *Visions - Projects & Events* and *General Operating Support* grants. Community groups must apply for the *Visions - Projects + Events* grant through a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving as a fiscal sponsor, provided that the fiscal sponsor organization meets all eligibility requirements in the RFPs. Fiscal sponsors are not eligible to apply for the *General Operating Support* grant.

**I do not live in DC / my organization is not based in DC. Am I eligible to apply?**

No - all individual grantees must provide proof of DC residency through an official ID or document (bank statement, utilities statement, or lease agreement). All community groups and non-profit organizations applying for grants must be based in DC; non-profit organizations must have a fixed street address in Washington, DC.

Interested applicants who are not based in DC but who have project ideas that are thematically focused on DC may partner with an individual or organization that resides in DC and is willing to apply on behalf of the project team and serve as the grantee.

**What is the definition of a community group?**

A community group is an organization that does not have 501(c)(3) non-profit status.

**Can individuals apply for HumanitiesDC grant opportunities?**



Individuals are eligible to apply for the [Community Culture & Heritage](#) grant and all [DC Oral History Collaborative grants](#). Please read the RFPs for the full eligibility requirements. Individual applicants are encouraged to seek advice regarding the tax implications of receiving a grant award directly. HumanitiesDC does not provide tax advice.

Individuals may not apply for *Visions - Projects & Events* grants by themselves. Instead, they must apply through a fiscal sponsor that is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Individuals (and fiscal sponsors) cannot apply for the *General Operating Support* grant.

### **Can applicants apply for more than one grant?**

In Cycle I 2025, applicants may apply for the *Oral History Interviewing* grant as well as one additional program grant; however, applicants may only receive one program grant and one non-program grant (*General Operating Support*) each calendar year.

### **What is the difference between a program grant and a non-program grant?**

Our grant opportunities can be divided into two categories: program and non-program. Our program grants fund a specific program or project. Program grants include our [Community Culture and Heritage grant](#), *Visions - Projects & Events* grant, and all [DC Oral History Collaborative grants](#). In 2025, the only non-program grant offered is the [General Operating Support grant](#).

### **If I have previously received funding as an individual, can my 501(c)(3) apply for funding too?**

Yes, as long as the organization meets our eligibility requirements as outlined in the RFP, the 501(c)(3) organization is likely able to apply for funding too.

### **My organization does not have a fixed address. Is a street address necessary?**

Yes, each applicant organization must include a DC address. P.O. Boxes and UPS addresses are not permissible. If the organization is DC-based, but does not have a fixed address, it could choose to use the address of someone in the leadership of the organization, such as the board chair or executive director.

### **Is my organization required to provide a UEI number to apply?**

HumanitiesDC no longer requires organizations to provide a UEI number.

### **I am a current (2024) grantee and would like to apply for additional funding. Is this allowed?**



Yes. Current grantees may apply for funding. However, if selected for 2025 funding, any new grant funds would not be distributed until previous grants are successfully closed (all funds spent or returned to HumanitiesDC and all reports completed).

**I am part of a large organization, and my colleague already has a grant from HumanitiesDC. Am I allowed to also receive a grant, either as an individual or as an organization?**

This is likely permissible, but please discuss your specific situation with our staff during office hours.

**Can my organization receive funding to expand or continue an existing project, even if the original project was not funded by HumanitiesDC?**

Yes, that is allowable.

**If I already received funding from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities (CAH), can I receive funding from HumanitiesDC?**

Yes, with one exception. If you received a General Operating Support from CAH for this year, fiscal year 2025, you may not also receive a *General Operating Support* grant from HumanitiesDC this year.

**Are fiscal sponsors required to be based in DC?**

Yes, fiscal sponsors must be DC-based nonprofit organizations and meet the eligibility requirements of the grant program. Sponsored entities must also reside in DC.

**My project is focused on DC, as well as other communities. Can I still apply for funding?**

HumanitiesDC-funded projects must demonstrate a strong connection to Washington, D.C. to be eligible for funding. If you have questions about your specific project and its eligibility, schedule a meeting with us during office hours.

**If approved for funding, can a grant be paid to an entity other than the grant applicant?**

No, grant funds will only be awarded to the grant applicant.

FUNDING FOR ARTISTS AND THE ARTS

**HumanitiesDC provides arts funding, right?**

HumanitiesDC can and does fund artists and artistic expressions used in public humanities displays. However, we are not an arts organization and do not fund artistic performances and other art projects that are not deeply rooted in the humanities.

### **What are some examples of art-related projects you fund?**

- Artists can explore, document, and record moments in history with their art, provided there's a level of interpretation provided through the programming
- Artists can explore, document, and record their own artistic communities and movements through oral history, documentary, and other public programming
- Artists can host events and festivals to celebrate cultures, communities, practices

## FINANCIAL

### **Can I use grant funds to compensate individuals who share their stories, expertise, or time?**

Yes! We highly encourage grantees to pay personnel.

In some cases, an honorarium might be appropriate. We encourage applicants to follow best practices for this. Currently, HumanitiesDC suggests a minimum \$200 honorarium, however, the grantee should choose an amount that works best for their proposed budget based on the number of collaborators and their level of commitment to the project.

### **Is equipment considered an allowable cost for program grants?**

Yes, if the equipment is used for the specific program in question. Equipment should be noted under "Supplies" in the budget form.

### **Do organizations need to be audited to receive funding?**

No, organizations are not required to be audited to receive funding.

### **Are funds for individuals considered taxable income?**

Yes, grant funding to individuals is considered taxable income. HumanitiesDC does not provide tax advice.

### **Do any grants require matching or cost-sharing?**

No, there is no match requirement for any of our grants. We do encourage applicants to show in your budget the other sources of funding for your project, if any.

### **Am I required to keep receipts?**

Yes, all grantees are required to submit documentation of ALL funded expenses with their final reports. Acceptable documents include receipts, paid invoices, cancelled checks, credit card and bank statements, and other documents showing that expenses have been paid.

## GENERAL

### **Am I required to submit a final product to HumanitiesDC as part of a grant-funded project?**

Grantees who receive *Community Culture and Heritage*, *Visions - Projects + Events*, *Beyond the Archives*, or *General Operating Support* grants are not required to submit any final products as part of their grant. HumanitiesDC does not collect final projects. However, all applicants to the *Community Culture and Heritage*, *Visions*, and *Beyond the Archives* grant programs must propose projects that are intended for public consumption.

Grantees who receive *Oral History Interviewing* and *Continuing Oral History Project* grants are required to submit their oral history recordings, indexes, transcripts, consent forms, and metadata spreadsheets to the People's Archive at the end of their project period. This process will be covered in great detail during training and is facilitated through the use of TheirStory software, which is freely available to grantees.

### **Do I retain the right to use any products created as part of my HumanitiesDC grant?**

Yes, you retain the right to use, as you see fit, products created as part of your grant.

### **What are the meeting requirements for grantees?**

We ask that all grantees attend a ~20 minute orientation call at the beginning of the grant period to meet the grants staff and members of the grantee cohort and to learn about their reporting requirements. *Community Culture & Heritage* grantees may be required to attend brief planning meetings to prepare for the annual Community Showcase.

*Oral History Interviewing* grantees are required to attend 3 in-person training sessions at the beginning of their grant period; their grant orientation session will be built into these trainings. They are also required to meet with grants staff roughly halfway through the project period to discuss project progress.

### **What is a "humanities scholar/community expert" and are they required as part of my application?**

Humanities scholars/community experts are required for *Community Culture and Heritage*, *Visions - Projects + Events*, and *Beyond the Archives* grant projects. This individual should be knowledgeable about relevant field or subject matters and dedicated to help guide the project to completion. Humanities scholars may have

formal training and academic experience in the humanities and/or lived experience through their personal or community heritage as a culture bearer, public humanities practitioner, or community historian.

**Can the grant project director be the required “expert” for the grant program?**

Yes, if they meet the definition of expert as described in the RFP and application.

**Does the expert need to live in Washington, DC?**

No, the expert does not need to live in Washington, DC.

**Do you have recommendations for first-time applicants?**

We strongly encourage applicants to have your proposal reviewed prior to submission by someone who is unfamiliar with your project. All grant applications are reviewed by a panel of community volunteers who may have no prior knowledge of your work or proposed project. An external set of eyes can help identify what is not clear and when you don't provide the requested information.

**Does HumanitiesDC provide technical assistance, application feedback, and/or suggestions for which grant to apply to?**

Yes!

- Attend one of our [in-person or virtual info sessions and workshops](#)
- View [recordings](#) of grant workshops if there are no upcoming workshops scheduled
- [Schedule a meeting with us during office hours](#)
- At least one week before the grant application due-date, save your application as a draft and email [grants@humanitiesdc.org](mailto:grants@humanitiesdc.org) with a request to review your draft application

**Can HumanitiesDC staff review my draft application before the deadline?**

Yes, staff can review draft applications that are submitted at least one week before the application deadline. Please note that while staff can point out areas of deficiency in relation to application requirements, they can't tell you whether your application will be funded.

**I thought HumanitiesDC had other grant opportunities. What happened to them?**

Each year, HumanitiesDC reviews our grant opportunities to determine changes for the following year. Although a past opportunity may not be available anymore, previous applicants and grantees are likely still eligible for the current offerings.

**HumanitiesDC used to offer a *Youth in the Humanities* grant. Does HumanitiesDC still support youth engagement work?**

Yes! All of our program grants are available to support youth-focused projects and organizations, provided they meet the other eligibility requirements in the RFP. While HumanitiesDC no longer offers the *Youth in the Humanities* grant, which provided general operating support to youth-focused humanities non-profits, these organizations are still eligible to apply for the *General Operating Support* grant, which supports all DC-based humanities-focused non-profits.

## DC ORAL HISTORY COLLABORATIVE GRANTS

### **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 DCOHC grant?**

Yes. Please review the RFP carefully to understand all the requirements. For instance, *Oral History Interviewing* grantees are required to record a minimum number of interviews and attend a three-session workshop at MLK Public Library.

### **Do DCOHC grantees need to have prior experience with oral history?**

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 DCOHC grantees need to complete a certain number of interviews?**

*Oral History Interviewing* and *Continuing Oral History Projects* grantees must record interviews with a minimum of five interviewees (narrators). 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 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, *Oral History Interviewing* and *Continuing Oral History Projects* members submit their oral history recordings, indexes, transcripts, consent forms, and metadata spreadsheets 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.

*Beyond the Archives* grantees do not conduct interviews, and there is no minimum number of interviews they must use in their projects.

**In the budget table, 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 DCOHC grantees 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.

**Can I conduct interviews in a language other than English? If so, can I put funding towards translation needs?**

Yes! We encourage grantees to conduct interviews in a language that is most understandable for the narrators.

You can apply for additional funds specifically to translate oral history interview transcripts into English, or to translate English transcripts into a language that will make the interviews more accessible to narrators' communities. You will see the relevant questions as you complete the application in our online system.

**I am interested in conducting oral history interviews and then doing additional activities around them, such as creating an audiobook or producing a showcase. Is this allowed?**

*Oral History Interviewing* and *Continuing Oral History Projects* grants are only for recording and archiving oral history interviews. If you want to create additional materials once the oral histories are collected, you must apply for a subsequent grant – such as *Beyond the Archives*.

**What existing archives can be used for *Beyond the Archives* projects? And do applicants have to choose these archives on their own?**



Any existing archives may be used. These archives do not necessarily have to be found in formal, public institutions, but it is the applicant's responsibility to find and ensure that they have the proper permissions to access and use the archives themselves. Oral histories recorded under HumanitiesDC grants can be found in the [People's Archives](#) at the DC Public Library.

### **What is involved in the required workshops?**

All *Oral History Interviewing* 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 grant requirements, defining oral history, planning the project, navigating the interview experience, and preparing deliverables 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.

### **What are the required deliverables?**

*Oral History Interviewing* and *Continuing Oral History Projects* grantees are required to submit their recorded oral histories to HumanitiesDC no later than 30 days after the end of grant period. Grantees 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.

*Beyond the Archives* grantees do not have required deliverables like those listed above.

### **How long does it take to complete an *Oral History Interviewing* project?**

The amount of time it takes to complete a project depends 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.

### **What are some likely expenses for *Oral History Interviewing* projects?**

The most common material expenses include recording equipment, storage media, and printed communications collateral. 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.

### APPLICATION TIPS

1. Engage in one of the many applicant support opportunities offered by HumanitiesDC:
  - a. Attend one of our [in-person or virtual info sessions and workshops](#) in-person or virtual info sessions and workshops
  - b. View [recordings](#) of grant workshops if there are no upcoming workshops scheduled
  - c. [Schedule a meeting with us during office hours](#) Schedule a meeting with us during office hours
  - d. At least one week before the grant application due-date, save your application as a draft and email [grants@humanitiesdc.org](mailto:grants@humanitiesdc.org) with a request to review your draft application with a request to review your draft application
2. If you or another person at your organization has applied for HumanitiesDC funding in the past, **do not create a new account in the grants portal**. Contact HumanitiesDC at [grants@humanitiesdc.org](mailto:grants@humanitiesdc.org), and we will connect you to the existing organization profile.
3. If you are considering applying through a fiscal sponsor, you can contact HumanitiesDC at [grants@humanitiesdc.org](mailto:grants@humanitiesdc.org) to discuss eligibility and to ensure that your application is properly submitted.
4. Read the full RFP for the program you are interested in before beginning your application. This will help ensure that your request properly reflects the scope and requirements of the grant.
5. If you are applying for a project grant (as opposed to a *General Operating Support* grant), aim to articulate a single cohesive and definitive project.
6. Be sure your application demonstrates a deep understanding of the subject matter to be explored and the expected participants and partners for the project.
7. Assume that the external community reviewers have no prior knowledge of your topic. Ask someone unconnected to your project to read and provide feedback on your proposal. If something is unclear to them, it will likely be unclear to the reviewers too.



8. Download the proposal narrative questions and draft responses in a separate word processing document. Then, copy them into the grant application once they are complete and edited.
9. Double-check all your application attachments and uploads. It is easy to accidentally upload a blank budget form.
10. Double-check that you responded in full to every question on the application. In most cases, even a single character will validate a required field. This means that just because the system says you've filled out all the questions, some could still be blank.