



HumanitiesDC

HISTORY
LITERATURE
LANGUAGES
ETHICS
PHILOSOPHY
ARTS APPRECIATION

Outline

- HumanitiesDC
- *Visions – Projects + Events* grant overview and past examples
- Room introductions
- Grant specifics
- Application questions
- Review process

Who We Are



Hillary Steen

Community Grants Manager

- Oversees HumanitiesDC's grants portfolios
- Main point of contact for Visions grant-related questions

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Director of Grantmaking + Programs

- Oversees HumanitiesDC's Community Grants and Public Programs

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What We Do

At HumanitiesDC, we connect curious people with bold questions to the powerful stories of our vibrant city. Through our grantmaking and public programs we help build a community where all can engage in intellectual exchange, reflect on our connected stories and celebrate our various cultures.



- Curated Public Programs – Community Journalism, Culture Series, DC Oral History Collaborative (DCOHC), Fellowships
- Community Grants - \$1M to 60+ grantees across 8 wards



2025

HUMANITIESDC.ORG

GRANT APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN!



HumanitiesDC

Cycle I: Due February 18, 2025, at 5:59 pm

Visions -
Projects +
Events

Community
Culture &
Heritage

Oral History
Interviewing -
DCOHC

Beyond the
Archives -
DCOHC

Cycle II: Opens March 4, due May 1, 2025, at 5:59 pm

General
Operating
Support

Continuing Oral
History Projects -
DCOHC

What are the Humanities?

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.

They help us understand...

- ❖ Our past, through history, anthropology, & archaeology
- ❖ Our story's public expressions, through literature, language, and art history/theory/criticism
- ❖ Our story's meaning, through ethics, philosophy, comparative religion, and the law

Link to the [National Endowment for the Humanities Definition](#)

Visions – Projects + Events Grant

- Eligibility: DC-based nonprofit organizations. Interested individuals or informal groups must apply through a fiscal sponsor.
- Maximum Award: \$25,000
- Project Period: May 1, 2025 – April 30, 2026
- Projects connect the public with humanities research, knowledge and/or ideas. Although projects may be connected to national or global issues, the primary themes and audience are DC-based
 - Ex: documentary films, festivals or conferences, curricula, tours, exhibits
- Approximately 20 awards available in 2025; 23% of submitted applications got funding in 2024
- Application due February 18, 2025

[Link to RFP](#)

Visions – Projects + Events Project Examples

Gay Pride in DC: 50 Years of Protests and Parties is a project with Rainbow History Project. They will create an exhibit on the History of DC Pride to be displayed on Freedom Plaza during WorldPride, in addition to creating an accompanying online portal. The physical exhibition will be "evergreen" content that can be used around the city for years to come.



2024 DC Day of Archaeology Festival is a project with Archaeology in the Community. This project will support initiatives during the first ever DC Archaeology Month, with events throughout the city throughout the month in partnership with other local institutions.

Who You Are - 30 seconds

- Name
- Organization Affiliation (if any)
- Tell us a little about the project you're considering
 - How is it connected to the humanities?

Humanities Scholar/Community Expert

- Projects must include a humanities scholar or community expert who is knowledgeable about the proposed subject matter to inform the project design, implementation, and/or evaluation. In some cases, it may make sense for the Project Director to also serve as the Humanities Scholar, but this should be explained in the application.
- 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. They lend legitimacy or intellectual authority to the project
- Required for: *Beyond the Archives – DCOHC, Community Culture & Heritage*, and *Visions - Projects + Events*

Allowable/Unallowable Costs

The grant program CAN fund:

- Salary/wages
- Stipends/honoraria
- Project supplies and equipment
- Virtual presenting platforms
- Space rental
- Project transportation
- Project publicity and promotion
- Fiscal sponsor (up to 10% of award)

The grant program CANNOT fund:

- Any non-program-related costs
- General office supplies
- Rent, overhead/indirect, utilities, restoration
- Food and beverages/entertainment/social activities/fundraisers
- Tuition and scholarships
- Debt reduction
- Re-granting
- Funding to 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.
- Fiscal sponsors assume all financial and legal obligations:
 - Application submission
 - Funding acceptance
 - Interim and final report submissions
- No more than 10% of the grant award may be used to pay a fiscal sponsor
- Applicants applying through fiscal sponsors must use the fiscal sponsor's organization account within our grants portal
- Eligibility requirements noted in RFP still apply to the fiscal sponsors

Required Reports

- Interim report due November 1, 2025: explanation of funds spent and brief overview of progress to date.
- Final report due May 30, 2026: Report includes explanation of funds spent, documentation of all expenditures, and project evaluation.

Q&A Break

Weighted Review Criteria

- Capacity and Personnel - 30%

The Project Director is capable of directing the project, as demonstrated by experience and how their role is defined in the application. The Humanities Scholar or Community Expert has relevant qualifications for the proposed project, and their role is clearly defined and lends legitimacy or intellectual authority to the project. If other team members and collaborators are clearly identified, the reasoning for their involvement is explained. An individual's role in different aspects of the project's planning, development, and/or implementation is explained.

- Project Description, Feasibility, and Timeline - 30%

The applicant has provided a clear and detailed description of the proposed project and its activities. The timeline is within the grant period and feasible. The project has a thematic connection to Washington, DC and is accessible to the public. There is a clear connection to the humanities. Achievable goals or impacts are described, and the applicant has a clear plan for assessing the project success.

Weighted Review Criteria, Cont.

- Community Collaboration and Public Engagement - 30%
The applicant demonstrates the project's significance to the DC community. The applicant has demonstrated how the project would be strengthened through collaboration and public engagement. There is a clear and 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); if a project is geared more for a particular demographic rather than the general public, this reasoning is clearly explained.
- 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.)

Key Application Questions

Grants portal instructions

Applicant Information

- This grant is only for organizations
- Fiscal sponsors submit application on behalf of sponsored entity (and sign submitted application)

Capacity and Personnel

- Project director has experience/interest with project topic professionally or personally. They are the driver of the project activities and usually the point of contact.
- Don't necessarily need team members, but projects benefit from this (so project director doesn't do everything themselves, community buy-in, etc.)
- Humanities scholar is chosen thoughtfully. Explain how they are knowledgeable about the relevant field/subject matter and their role in the project.

Key Application Questions, Cont.

Project Description, Feasibility, and Timeline

- Explain WHY your project focuses on the chosen humanities discipline(s)
- Details! This is where you explain what the project actually entails
- HumanitiesDC funds can ONLY be spent during project period: May 1, 2025 – April 30, 2026
- You define what "success" means

Community Collaboration and Public Engagement

- Target audience can be as broad or narrow as you want, just explain why
- What makes your project important or interesting to DC residents specifically?
- Name potential partners and methods of contacting them. What will they do? Don't need a final list of partners in application, but at least thoughtful ideas
- How will the public learn about the project?

Key Application Questions, Cont.

Budget

- DETAILS for budget narrative. Explain each budget category by line item, provide equations as needed for more complicated calculations (like salaries)
- Don't need something in every budget category
- Can redirect funds as project progresses, budget is only a plan

Accessibility

- Required if organization has 15+ staff members AND/OR you're hosting a public event

Successful Applications

- Strong connection to the humanities and DC residents
- Scholar is identified and their qualifications are relevant to the project, they have a clear role
- Specific ideas and explanations for community partners, team members, and outreach
- Timeline is realistic and within the grant period
- Thoughtful ways to manage success
- Well-organized and clear budget explanation without unallowable costs
- DETAILED

Common Application Issues

- No explanation of importance of project to DC residents
- Activities seem unrelated to purpose of project
- Unclear descriptions of partnerships and team involvement/selection
- Scholar seems unqualified
- Timeline is too vague
- Budget is not justified in budget narrative
- Looks like application was written in a rush
- NOT DETAILED

Application Review Process

- All submitted applications reviewed by HumanitiesDC staff for eligibility
- Eligible applications reviewed by reviewers - community members with strong ties to humanities in DC
 - Reviewers score applications based on review criteria (available in RFP and application)
- Staff review of highly-scored applicants (i.e. likely grantees)
- HumanitiesDC's Board affirms review process was followed
- All eligible applicants are told about decision approximately eight weeks after application deadline
- Grantees receive funds approximately two weeks after notification
- Interested in reviewing applications? [Check out our website!](#) You may be both an applicant and a grant reviewer, but you would not review applications for the same grant program you apply to.

Q&A



HumanitiesDC

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