



HumanitiesDC

HISTORY
LITERATURE
LANGUAGES
ETHICS
PHILOSOPHY
ARTS APPRECIATION

COMMUNITY CULTURE AND HERITAGE WORKSHOP – JANUARY 2026

Outline

- Intro to HumanitiesDC
- Community Culture & Heritage Grant Program:
 - Purpose
 - Details and requirements
- Brief introductions to you and your projects
- Components of a successful application & common issues
- Reviewing the application & weighted review criteria
- Q&A

Who We Are



Leah Gage

Community Grants Manager

- Oversees HumanitiesDC's grants portfolios;
- Main point of contact for Community Culture & Heritage Grants

lgage@humanitiesdc.org

202.770.3077 x 815



Hillary Steen

Community Grants Manager

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

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Lois Nembhard

Director of Grantmaking + Programs

- Oversees HumanitiesDC's Community Grants and Public Programs

lnembhard@humanitiesdc.org

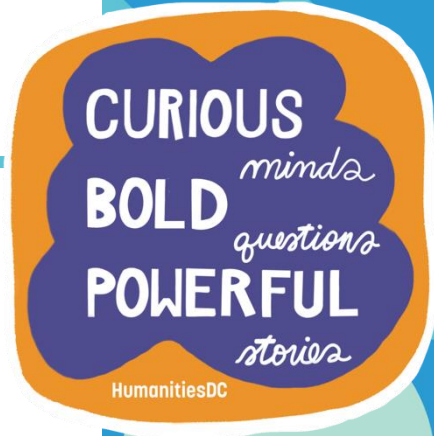
Who you are

- 30 seconds – name and organization affiliation (if any)
- Share out using your microphone or in the chat
- Tell us a bit about your proposed project.

HumanitiesDC: What we do

We connect curious people with bold questions to the powerful stories of our vibrant city. Through 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 - \$900K to 50-60 grantees across 8 wards



**Cycle I Now Open,
due February 18 at 5:59 pm**

Visions - Projects
+ Events

Community
Culture &
Heritage

Oral History
Interviewing -
DCOHC

**Cycle II: Opens March 3,
due May 1, 2026**

Beyond the
Archives -
DCOHC

Continuing
Oral History
Projects

General
Operating
Support

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 story's past: history, anthropology, archaeology;
- Our story's expressions: literature, linguistics, languages, arts history/theory/criticism;
- Our story's values: ethics, philosophy, comparative religion, law.

Community Culture & Heritage Grant Program

- Expand support for the humanities beyond academia and formal scholarship
- Empower residents and community organizations to give public voice to stories that interest and represent them
- Document and preserve the history and culture of DC
- Highlight untold or forgotten aspects of DC's history and culture
- Possible projects include written publications, multimedia (video, audio), websites, lesson plans, installations and exhibits. A final product should be complete by end of the grant period.

Community Culture & Heritage Project Examples



Writer and cultural curator **Tracy Chiles McGhee** produced **Salon Redux**, a toolkit for residents to host their own salon discussion events in the spirit of poet-playwright Georgia Douglas Johnson and her S Street Salon in the early 20th century

Filmmaker **Valeria Massarelli Sersante** received a CCH grant to fund the production of a short film, ***District of Pupusas***, documenting immigrant food culture in DC through the stories of different business owners



Jeronique Bartley

The Great 8 Fashion Tour



Key Grant Details

- Up to **\$10,000**
- Project period: **May 1, 2026, to April 30, 2027**
- Eligibility requirements: open to DC-based individuals, community groups (with one individual as primary grantee and point of contact), and non-profit organizations
- Individuals may choose to apply with a fiscal sponsor, but fiscal sponsors are not required. Fiscal sponsors must meet same eligibility requirements.
- In 2025, 19% of eligible applications received funding (2024: 24%; 2023: 29%)
- Approximately 10 awards available in 2026

Grantee Requirements

Grantees submit 2 reports:

- Interim report call in October 2026
- Final report due May 30, 2027

Final report includes documentation of all grant expenditures and project evaluation

Participation in Community Showcase



Photos from 2024 Community Showcase

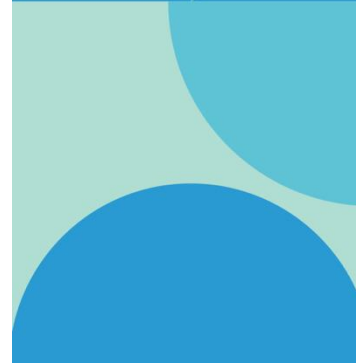
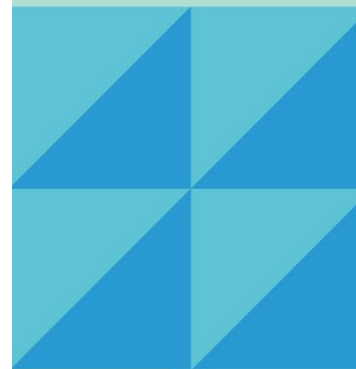
Allowable/Unallowable Expenses

100% of awarded grant funds must be applied to direct program costs, including...

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

The grant program CANNOT fund:

- Any non-program-related costs
- General operation expenses (rent, overhead/indirect, utilities)
- General office supplies
- Food and beverages
- Tuition and scholarships
- Debt reduction
- Re-granting
- Funding to government agencies



Components of Successful Applications

- **Humanities focus:** Project utilizes humanities to publicly explore human stories, culture, and experiences
- **Detailed project narrative** – assume the reviewers know nothing about your project or topic area
- Timeline is feasible and contains **specific dates and clear steps** toward completion of a public-facing-project
- Community partners are identified; applicant articulates **how community members will strengthen** the project.
- **All team members**, including the humanities scholar, **are identified and specific roles are clearly explained**
- Outreach plans identify **targets**, plans to conduct public outreach or seek public input are clearly outlined.



Common Application Issues

- Key personnel not identified, including humanities scholar
- Not enough detail
- Timeline misses key steps, falls outside of grant period
- Community collaboration response lacks specifics
- Budget items are not justified clearly in the budget narrative

Application questions to review

[Link to Foundant Instructions for creating an account](#)

- **Individual vs. Organizational applicant:** should match the registration; fiscal sponsors submit and sign the application; share your motivations in the individual statement of interest
- **Project Description:** be as detailed in the Project Summary, Description of Activities, and Timeline as possible. Assume the reader knows nothing about you or your proposed topic areas. Explain why your project focuses on the chosen humanities disciplines
- **Measuring Success**
- **Significance to the DC community:** share why this project deserves funding and how it will impact the DC public
- **Outreach Strategy**
- **Inclusion & Accessibility**

Application questions to review

- **Key personnel:** provide details that demonstrate team members have relevant experience to contribute to the project
- **Project Director:** will likely match the individual grantee info or be the primary point person in an organization to lead project activities. Should demonstrate relevant experience needed to direct the project.
- **Scholar:** must be identified in advance, and resume should show relevant expertise related to the project
- **Budget & narrative:** specific and detailed, a clear budget will show the reviewers that you know what you need to complete this project; narrative should explain expenses in detail

Weighted Review Criteria

Project description, feasibility, and timeline (25% of score)

- Clear and detailed description of the proposed project and its activities
- Timeline for completing a public-facing project is within the grant period and is feasible.
- Thematic connection to the humanities
- Achievable goals are described, and applicant has a clear plan for assessing project success

Connection to DC (25% of score)

- Demonstrated significance to the DC community
- Strong thematic connection to Washington, DC or specific DC communities, neighborhoods, or stories

Weighted Review Criteria

Public Engagement (25% of total score)

- Clear & effective plan for reaching the target audience
- Inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible (defined broadly to include financial, geographic, demographic, cultural and developmental accessibility); explanations for exceptions to this expectation are provided.

Capacity and Personnel (15% of total score)

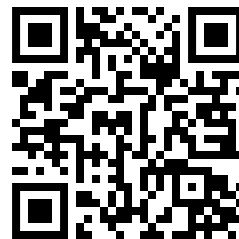
- The Project Director is capable of directing the project, as demonstrated by experience and role definition
- Humanities Scholar has relevant qualifications and their role is clearly defined
- If other team members are identified, reasoning for their involvement and an explanation of their role(s) is provided

Budget (10% of total score)

- Use of funds is clearly described
- All expenses are directly tied to project activities and are allowable

Application Review Process

- Submitted applications reviewed by HumanitiesDC staff for eligibility, then assigned to panels/groups of reviewers
 - Cycle I applications due **February 18 by 6:00pm**; Cycle II applications open March 3 and close May 1, 2026
- Reviewers are community members with strong ties to humanities in DC, scoring based on weighted review criteria (see RFPs) (3-4 weeks)
- Funding decisions are sent out approximately ten weeks after application deadline
- Grantees receive funds approximately two weeks after notification
- Interested in reviewing applications? [Click here](#) or scan the QR code for more info. Applicants may also be reviewers



Resources & Assistance

- Additional overview and grant-specific workshops listed below.
- [Sign up for virtual office hours](#)
- FAQ, sample application responses, and draft review also available
- Leah Gage – lgage@humanitiesdc.org
- Hillary Steen – hsteen@humanitiesdc.org

General Info Sessions

- [January 13 at 6pm](#) at Dorothy Height Public Library
- [January 20 at 5:30pm](#) (virtual)

Scan for all upcoming
info sessions



Grant Program Workshops (all virtual)

- [Jan 14](#), 12pm - Oral History Interviewing
- [Jan 16](#), 12pm - Visions – Projects + Events

Q & A



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