

Humanities Montana Grants Committee Meeting
January 25, 2023
Zoom, 12:00 PM

Present: Jennifer Corning (chair); Francine Spang-Willis; Carla Homstad; Jeremy Carl; Ray Ekness. Lathie Pool was absent. Staff: Kim Anderson (interim executive director) and Megan Sundy (grants manager).

Jennifer Corning called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m., welcomed the committee, and asked attendees to introduce themselves. Carla Homstad moved to approve the September 20, 2022 grants committee meeting minutes. Jennifer Corning seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Jennifer Corning asked Megan Sundy for a grants report. Megan shared her screen so that the committee could follow the slide presentation and addressed questions from the committee as needed. The grants report slides will be included in the board meeting packet and shared with the full board at the next board meeting.

Jennifer Corning thanked board and committee members for taking time to review, score, and provide comments for grant proposals. Kim Anderson added that the organization seeks to have at least 50% of board members review applications prior to award decisions and that 10 board members reviewed applications prior to this meeting and the average number of board member evaluations per application for this grant cycle was 8.

Jennifer Corning asked Kim Anderson for an update regarding the grantmaking budget for this fiscal year and for this award cycle. Kim explained that the full grantmaking budget for FY2023 is \$150,000 and that \$20,000 is earmarked for opportunity grants and \$40,000-\$45,000 is generally evenly distributed between each of the three annual grant cycles. She noted that the committee had flexibility and should feel free to award amounts deemed appropriate for the amount, number of submissions, and types of funding requests specific to each application round.

Jennifer Corning suggested the committee begin by discussing proposals with weighted average scores of 80% or above and by individual grant category.

The committee considered the following applications:

Research Fellowship applications (5 received, \$20,000 requested)

- A History of Latinos in Montana, \$4,000
Average Score: 97%
- Fifty-Six Counties, the radio show, \$4,000
Average Score: 86%
- ARCO, Herbert Bayer, and the Art of Extraction, \$4,000
Average Score: 85%
- The Horse Breaker, \$4,000
Average Score: 74%
- Book promoting critical public understanding of the Montana Constitution and Democracy \$8,000
Average Score: 61%

Regular grant applications (11 received, \$63,227 requested)

- First Voices. Three Fort Peck Stories: Assiniboine, Chippewa, and Sioux, \$10,000
Average Score: 94%
- Abundant Montana 2023 Local Food Guide Grow & Tell Stories, \$9,000
Average Score: 94%
- Gary Moulton Lecture & Dinner at the Annual Meeting of the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, \$2,500

- Average Score: 94%
 - Watershed People of Montana and Amazonia, \$6,767
Average Score: 92%
 - Brian Maguire: No One is Forgotten/ Missing and Murdered Indigenous People publication, \$10,000
Average Score: 91%
 - Connecting Montana to the World, \$5,000
Average Score: 89%
 - Loss & Legacy: Living Forward While Looking Back, \$4,000
Average Score: 86%
 - Annual Youth Concert, Gershwin's Magic Key, \$2,500
Average Score: 82%
 - Inclusive Infusion, \$6,000
Average Score: 73%
 - Illegal Abortion in Montana's Past & Possible Future, \$5,460
Average Score: 65%
 - AH-VEEP - Harmony With Our Earth - Earth Day Exhibition and Celebration, \$2,000
Average Score: 47%

Total Requested: \$83,227

Francine Spang-Willis was listed as a scholar for both the *Fifty-Six Counties*, *the radio show* and *Watershed People of Montana and Amazonia* proposals. To address potential conflicts of interest, Francine did not provide comments or score for these in Foundant and she recused herself from discussing and voting on both proposals in the grants committee meeting.

The discussion began with consideration of research fellowship applications. In particular, issues were raised about the *Fifty-Six Counties* project as a research fellowship opposed to a regular grant and whether the request should be led by the radio station to demonstrate efforts towards sustainability, feasibility, and well-vetted content. Focus then turned to the *ARCO, Herbert Bayer, and the Art of Extraction* project. There was some confusion about the project title (two different titles are listed in the application) and the content focusing on copper vs. petroleum extraction. Additionally, Jennifer and Jeremy raised questions about the project's capacity to reach a Montana audience and accessibility outside academia.

Discussion then moved to consideration of regular grant applications, beginning with the highest scoring proposals. Discussion about the *First Voices* project was positive with some concerns expressed that the applicant is an out of state organization and the project is not being led from within the community. However, the level of collaboration between Thresh, Inc. and other local and state-wide organizations comprised of representative community members was encouraging.

In review of the *Abundant Montana 2023 Local Food Guide Grow & Tell Stories* project, committee members liked the idea and topic areas but felt the distribution of the publication would be passive and expressed concerns about the humanities content and the potential perception that HM is supporting a specific view of appropriate agriculture in Montana.

Committee members found the *Gary Moulton Lecture & Dinner at the Annual Meeting of the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation* interesting and the request amount appropriate for supporting the public lecture component of the conference.

While considering the *Watershed People of Montana and Amazonia* project Kim and Megan noted that the proposal was responsive to the success and interest in a previously funded speaker series of similar nature. Jennifer saw a few gaps in the project timeline, Ray felt the budget was appropriate, and Carla suggested encouraging the applicant to approach Crow Agency with their programming.

Significant discussion ensued about the *Brian Maguire: No One is Forgotten/ Missing and Murdered Indigenous People* publication and focused on the request amount compared to project activities, engagement of the families of MMIW, concerns about the possible latent political assumptions, unconfirmed journalists, and reach of the catalogue. The committee decided that this was a good project but the organization should consider reapplying for the April 20, 2023 deadline after the project is more developed and can respond to committee concerns.

Discussion of both *Connecting Montana to the World* and *Loss & Legacy: Living Forward While Looking Back* recognized that both projects are unique offerings in Montana and both organizations are reputable and have a long history of delivering successful projects and worthwhile humanities content to Montana audiences. Although HM has funded both organizations repeatedly over several years committee members noted the significant program expansion and organizational capacity and recognized the reduced request amounts and evidence of other sustainable funding support for each project.

Application reviews concluded with consideration of the *Annual Youth Concert, Gershwin's Magic Key* project. There were questions about the budget, how funds would be used, and strength of humanities content. Kim and Megan provided clarification that funds would not be used to pay musicians and the conversation then moved toward the positives of supporting youth-based programming and expanding reach to rural communities near Helena.

Ray Ekniss moved to recommend the following award decisions to the full board...

PARTIAL FUNDING

Research Fellowships

- ARCO, Herbert Bayer, and the Art of Extraction, \$2,000

Regular grants

- Abundant Montana 2023 Local Food Guide Grow & Tell Stories, \$3,600
Personnel expenses ONLY
- First Voices. Three Fort Peck Stories: Assiniboine, Chippewa, and Sioux, \$5,000
Native scholar expenses ONLY

FULL FUNDING

Research Fellowships

- A History of Latinos in Montana, \$4,000

Regular grants

- Gary Moulton Lecture & Dinner at the Annual Meeting of the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation, \$2,500
- Watershed People of Montana and Amazonia, \$6,767
- Connecting Montana to the World, \$5,000
- Loss & Legacy: Living Forward While Looking Back, \$4,000
- Annual Youth Concert, Gershwin's Magic Key, \$2,500

DECLINE FUNDING

Research Fellowships

- Fifty-Six Counties, the radio show, \$4,000
- The Horse Breaker, \$4,000
- Book promoting critical public understanding of the Montana Constitution and Democracy \$8,000

Regular grants

- Brian Maguire: No One is Forgotten/ Missing and Murdered Indigenous People publication, \$10,000
- Inclusive Infusion, \$6,000
- Illegal Abortion in Montana's Past & Possible Future, \$5,460
- AH-VEEP - Harmony With Our Earth - Earth Day Exhibition and Celebration, \$2,000

Staff will communicate parameters of partial funding and allowable expenses to the appropriate applicants. Staff will also consult with Missoula Art Museum and advise them to consider submitting another application for the April 20, 2023 deadline and to provide more evidence of family support, a more detailed budget to include estimated fees for confirmed journalists, and a detailed evaluation plan.

Carla Homstad seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

TOTAL RECOMMENDED AWARD: \$35,367

Jennifer Corning thanked everyone and requested sending a Doodle poll to determine a date for a special grants committee meeting in March. Everyone agreed.

Ray Ekness moved to adjourn the meeting. Carla Homstad seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 1:38 PM

The Zoom call ended at 1:40 PM