Humanities
MONTANA

MINI-GRANTS

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Grant Website:
https://www.humanitiesmontana.org/mini-grants/

This document contains guidelines for submitting a grant application to Humanities Montana. Please apply for all Humanities Montana grants using our online grant application forms. NOTE: All grants are awarded subject to the availability of funds.

Grant Type
Mini-Grant

Maximum Award
Up to $2,000

Required Match
None

Application Deadline
At least 4-6 weeks before project activities

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Mini-Grant Overview

Program Summary

Humanities Montana's Mini-Grants are rapid-response grants awarded to eligible organizations across Montana to support programs and projects that strengthen community through storytelling, conversations, learning, and reflection on our shared human experience.

These grants are designed to support a vast array of bold and innovative projects that gather multiple perspectives and worldviews in thoughtful consideration of humanities ideas and content. Supported projects advance the humanities in Montana by increasing public access to humanities programming through which residents of our state can learn about our rich and diverse past, present, and future. We look to elevate the voices of those whose stories have not been told, raise awareness of critical conversations surrounding the current issues of our time, and encourage civic engagement of our citizens and residents.

Projects must be grounded in humanities scholarship and incorporate an approach that is thoughtful, balanced, and analytical; proposals must demonstrate the potential to attract a broad general audience.

Mini-grant projects must
- Focus on a clearly defined humanities theme(s) and appeal to a broad Montana audience
- Build on sound humanities scholarship
- Deepen public understanding of significant humanities questions
- Approach a subject analytically, presenting a variety of perspectives
- Involve humanities scholars (academic, professional, or subject-expert) in all aspects of the project; all projects require at least one confirmed subject expert
- Employ appealing and accessible formats that will actively engage the general public in learning
- Include public programming such as discussions, lectures, or presentations
- Demonstrate support and involvement of communities and cultures represented in project content and activities or specifically address why they are not involved (e.g., projects that involve Native American communities or cultures must include letters of support from participating scholars, researchers, and/or program participants from that specific community outlining their involvement)
- Include sufficient outreach/publicity and evaluation plans where appropriate

Mini-grant projects <u>cannot</u>
- Present a one-sided, uncritical treatment of an issue
- Focus on personal instead of public concerns
- Promote a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view
- Involve political advocacy
- Advocate for a particular program of social or political action
- Support of specific public policies or legislation
- Support lobbying
- Support candidates running for political office
- Involve obscene, libelous, indecent, or defamatory content (including hate speech personal attacks, or material constituting harassment)
- Involve non-public meetings of organizations (although Humanities Montana will consider funding programs open to the public but held in conjunction with a group's meeting)
- Support events and programs that would raise funds for general operations, profit-making groups, or commercial purposes
- Museum or library acquisitions, except in unusual circumstances
- Creation and performance of arts programs
- Fall outside of the humanities; the creation or performance of art; creative writing, autobiographies, memoirs, and creative nonfiction; policy studies; and social science research that does not address humanistic questions and/or utilize humanistic methods

Deadlines

Grant consultations and requests for application pre-reads must be completed at least two weeks prior to the application deadline. Both are contingent upon staff capacity. [Schedule your consult using the link provided on our website.](#)

Mini-grant <u>applications are accepted on a rolling basis</u> while funding is available. The award process is competitive and funding is limited. Applications are reviewed monthly and applicants will be notified of award decisions within 6 weeks of their submission.

Eligibility

Eligible applicant organizations must be established in the United States or its jurisdictions as one of the following:
- **Private nonprofit organizations**
- **Accredited institutions of higher education**
- **State, local, and federally recognized Native American Tribal governments and agencies (schools, libraries, museums, etc.)**

- **Groups of persons that form an association to carry out a project for approved nonprofit purposes**
- **Individuals (research fellowships ONLY)**

Other considerations:
- **Non-public/membership organizations or groups** that apply to the councils for funding **must be constituted for nonprofit purposes**.
- **Individuals (with the exception of research fellows)** and other organizations, including foreign and for-profit entities, **are ineligible.**
- **Applicant organizations must not function solely as fiscal agents or fiscal sponsors** but must make substantive contributions to the success of the project (see Substantive Involvement section below).

A Unique Entity ID (UEI) and Federal Tax ID (EIN) or proof of tax-exempt or nonprofit status are required to apply. Per 2 CFR § 25.300, Humanities Montana may issue subawards with federal funds only to organizations that have obtained and provided their Unique Entity Identifier. Subrecipients are required to complete registration with the System for Award Management (SAM) to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier.

Supported projects may be stand-alone or part of a larger organizational initiative.

Repeat proposals are allowed. However, applicants should be aware, that when they submit proposals for annual programs or "repeat" projects of essentially the same format, Humanities Montana expects a request for substantially less funding than for initial projects, and we expect to see some innovation in the project.

Multiple requests for support of the same project either through Mini-Grants or Community Project Grants in the same fiscal year are not allowed. Organizations may receive up to one Mini-Grant and one additional grant in another category in the same fiscal year, as long as the requests are for separate and unique projects.

Substantive Involvement

Humanities Montana only awards grants to organizations, not to individuals or companies instituted for for-profit purposes (e.g., LLCs). Applicants working with fiscal sponsors must consult with Humanities Montana staff to assess substantive involvement and determine eligibility before submitting an application.

Organizations engaging solely in fiscal sponsorship activities (e.g., proposal submissions, reporting, fulfillment of contractual obligations, maintaining IRS status) may not apply on behalf of ineligible applicants. However, an applicant organization that makes

substantive contributions to the success of the project, may be eligible. Only applicant organizations meeting some or all of the requirements of substantive involvement listed below are eligible to apply.

Eligible applicant organizations make some or all of the following substantive contributions:
- Monitoring the progress of a project
- Contributing to the work plan, research plan, budget, outreach plan, fundraising plan, and/or distribution plan
- Contributing to choices of personnel who work on a project, including project scholars and staff
- Consulting with other project personnel regarding humanities themes and intellectual approaches to the content
- Providing direction, advice, and/or mentorship to project leadership
- Providing input on grant product(s) prior to completion
- Participating in engagement, direction, and/or supervision of independent contracted professionals
- Contributing to the development of ancillary resources to support the project
- Contributing to outreach and public engagement

If awarded, the applicant organization will be required to submit a signed agreement outlining their substantive involvement and contributions to the project.
[Learn more about managing subawards and subrecipient responsibilities.](#)

Allowable/Unallowable Expenses

Mini- grant funds may NOT be used toward
- Expenses incurred outside of the approved grant period of performance.
- Operating expenses of existing organizations for renovation, restoration, rehabilitation, or construction (including building materials and construction of exhibits)
- Equipment, property, or other capital purchases (unless approved as a direct cost by Humanities Montana)
- Meals or refreshments for an audience
- Alcoholic beverages or entertainment costs
- Fiscal agent and fiscal sponsor fees
- Costs for activities performed by federal entities or personnel
- Preservation or cataloging of materials and collections
- More than 10% of the total award amount for executive director/CEO salary expenses

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- Indirect project expenses exceeding 10% of the total award amount unless your organization has a federally negotiated indirect cost rate (NICRA).

  If your organization has a federally negotiated indirect cost rate, Humanities Montana must use the negotiated indirect cost rate for the purposes of this award. You will need to upload a copy of your NICRA agreement with your application if this applies to your organization.

- Outreach and engagement events and other distribution activities completed before the approved project start date or after the project end date (period of performance/grant term) included in formal subaward partnership agreements

Allowable Costs/Expenses

Direct costs include expenses directly accountable to your proposed project activities and the fulfilment of your project outcomes.

Examples
- *LIMITED* **Personnel expenses,** salary expenses for staff responsible for conducting key project activities, but no more than 10% of overall requested amount may be allocated to an Executive Director's salary.
- **Project contractor/consultant/scholar expenses**, panel participation, public presentations, research, and expert services to improve quality of humanities content, general honoraria, etc.
- **Project-related travel/per diem**, such as lodging and mileage for project staff, contractors, consultants, and scholars. All original receipts should remain with your organization for audit and tax purposes.
    o Mileage reimbursement (round trip travel to/from location = # of miles x reimbursement rate) — Humanities Montana allows mileage expenses for personal car use pursuant to the standard business mileage reimbursement rate determined by the IRS. This rate is subject to change. [Visit the IRS website for more information.](#)
    o Lodging (location, # of nights x nightly rate = total expense)
    o Meals – Only allowable with prior written approval
- **Project activities that directly support project design**, development, implementation, and evaluation efforts.
  Examples include:
    o Promotion/publication expenses for printing costs (posters, programs, etc.), advertising through news outlets (newspaper, television, radio), and social media
    o Rental (only) of facilities and equipment, such as meeting space, audio/visual equipment, etc.

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- **Other expenses** need to be approved by Humanities Montana prior to inclusion in your proposed budget.

Indirect costs are costs that your institution incurs for common or joint objectives and that you cannot readily identify with a specific project or activity.

Examples
- Other sponsored activities
- 10% de minimis and base (e.g., Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC), "salaries," "salaries & fringe") and whether the activity and rate are on- or off-site
- If your budget includes more than one indirect cost rate or base, list them as separate entries (for example, your project includes activities that occur both on and off campus)

You are not required to claim indirect costs. However, if you charge indirect costs to the project, you must not charge those same costs to the project as direct costs.

For organizations WITHOUT federally negotiated indirect cost rates – No more than 10% of your overall request award amount may support such expenses as the depreciation on buildings, equipment, and capital improvements; operations and maintenance expenses; accounting and legal services; and salaries of executive officers. If you do not have a current indirect rate agreement with your cognizant agency but intend to negotiate one, provide additional detail in your budget justification. (See Appendix for more information)

For institutions WITH federally negotiated indirect cost rates (NICRA) - Except as provided in 2 CFR § 200.414(c)(1), Humanities Montana must use the negotiated rate(s) in effect at the time it issues your award and will not adjust the rate(s) throughout the life of your award.

If applicable, you will need to include a copy of your NICRA agreement, the name of your cognizant federal agency, and a point of contact with your application. (See Appendix for more information)

Reference NEH's General Guidance on Calculating Indirect Costs for more information.

Unallowable Costs/Expenses

X Personnel – More than 10% of overall requested amount allocated to an Executive Director's salary.
X Travel – Travel expenses unrelated to the project.

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> **X Project Activities** – **Food Costs** associated with receptions, social gatherings and events, lobbying, entertainment, and networking are not allowable. The purchase of alcohol is not permitted.
>
> **X Project Activities** – Capital expenditures, equipment, special purpose equipment, general purpose equipment is unallowable, unless Humanities Montana has given prior written approval.

Other Considerations

In accepting an award, **the applicant organization/subrecipient agrees to** use grant funds in accordance with the Humanities Montana grant award letter and subaward partnership agreement.

Project and budget modifications must be approved and documented by Humanities Montana at least 30 days before the grant term ends.

Records of project expenditures must be maintained by fellowship awardees.

All materials publicizing or resulting from grant activities must contain the appropriate acknowledgement of Humanities Montana support.

Rights to materials (scripts, films, television and radio programs, viewer and listener guides) will ordinarily remain with the grantee. However, if Humanities Montana has provided over 25% of the total funding for such materials, plans for future use or distribution must be discussed with Humanities Montana for approval prior to implementation. In addition, the grantee must assure Humanities Montana that utilization of material funded under a grant will be sought on the basis of maximum possible right for non-commercial use or distribution.

Humanities Montana respects Tribal data sovereignty and recognizes the importance of Indigenous Knowledge by acknowledging tribes' inherent right to govern the collection, ownership, and application of data and resources. We will work closely with applicants from Tribal organizations and communities to ensure award management policies respect and align with Tribes' needs.

Incomplete, nonresponsive, or ineligible applications will not be considered for funding.

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered for funding.

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Applicants with outstanding final reports from a previous award or program from Humanities Montana are ineligible, and their proposals will not be considered for funding.

Application Instructions

You must apply using our online grant application. To apply for a Mini-grant, you must complete one application form and upload a series of required and conditional forms.

Take note of the character limits, formatting instructions, and acceptable document format files for each section in the online application.

Read instructions carefully to ensure your narrative is comprehensive, succinct, well organized, and free of technical terms and jargon so that peer reviewers can understand the proposed project.

Application questions are available for download on our website.

In your application, you will be asked to provide:
- A project name and brief project summary (1–2 sentences)
- The total amount requested
- An estimated timeframe for project activities (start and end dates)
- Organizational information: name, description of the organization, website (optional), organization type
- Detailed project description: project narrative, humanities content, name, qualifications, and letter of commitment from at least one humanities expert, key activities and timeline
- A proposed budget for the project
- A budget narrative providing an explanation for each budget line-item figure
- Name and contact information for a fiscal manager
- Project management and leadership contact information
- A copy of the CEO Approval and Certification Letter signed by your authorizing official
- A Unique Entity ID (UEI)
- An EIN and form W9

You will be prompted to upload documents or provide links to relevant websites within the online application. If you are unable to upload or provide a link you may email your documents to our grant office.

Application Review & Selection

Selection Criteria

Applications for Mini-grants will be judged on the following:

- The applicant organization's **eligibility** to receive an award from Humanities Montana and completeness of the application.
- The likely **contribution of the project to public understanding of the significance of the topic and the humanities ideas** the project engages with; the quality of the scholarship and analytical perspectives informing the project.
- The **responsiveness to a clearly defined and evidence-based need** such as a gap in knowledge, skills, and understanding of specific humanities ideas; the value and benefit to Montana citizens and communities; adequate knowledge of, established rapport, and representation of cultures and communities represented in the project; the estimated size of the audience, the potential for broad public appeal; the quality of the distribution plan; the engagement of collaborative partnerships.
- The **quality of the project work plan** and its articulation of specific, measurable, and realistic goals, activities, outreach, and evaluation efforts within an achievable time frame.
- The **feasibility** of the project work plan; the likelihood that the applicant will achieve the project's goals; and the appropriateness of the project's costs.
- The qualifications and potential **contributions of the advising scholars**, key organizational staff, and any additional experts.

Review Process

The Humanities Montana proposal review process awards grants on a competitive basis. Funding is limited. Staff and board members evaluate applications based on the review criteria and approve projects monthly.

Common reasons for rejecting an application include Humanities Montana's limited budget, insufficient detail, lack of substantial humanities content, inadequate participation of qualified humanities personnel, insufficient or restricted audience, advocacy or lack of balance in addressing issues, and insufficient budget detail or justification.

Award Announcements

Award decisions are typically announced to the applicant in writing six weeks after submission.

Applications may be funded (in whole or in part) with or without conditions, returned for revision and/or resubmission, or rejected. Humanities Montana's return of an application for revision and resubmission does not assure approval of the revised application.

Assessment of Risk and Other Pre-Award Activities

Following initial award selection, Humanities Montana staff conduct a risk assessment for selected applications. Staff consider the applicant's past performance, if applicable; analyze the project budget; assess the applicant's management systems; confirm the applicant's continued eligibility; and evaluate compliance with public policy requirements.

This assessment guards against the risk that federal financial assistance might be wasted, used fraudulently, or abused. After completing its risk assessment, Humanities Montana will determine whether making an award would be consistent with organizational policies, whether it must impose any special terms and conditions, and what funding level is appropriate. Humanities Montana may elect not to issue awards to applicants with management or financial instability that affects their ability to comply with the terms and conditions of the award.

Award Management

The Award Management Guide provides detailed instructions for grantees to manage awards from start (date of award decision) to end (submission of final report). The guide can be found on our website.

Humanities Montana Contact Information

All interested applicants must consult with Humanities Montana's grants office via phone, email, virtual meeting, or in person prior to submitting a grant application.

Humanities Montana
311 Brantly, Missoula, MT 59812
Main office: (406) 243-6022
Email: info@humanitiesmontana.org

Megan Hill Sundy
Grants & Evaluation Director
(406) 243-6067
megan.sundy@humanitiesmontana.org

www.humanitiesmontana.org
Humanities Montana, 311 Brantly Missoula, MT 59812 | 406 243-6067 | megan.sundy@humanitiesmontana.org
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