

New York Council for the Humanities

GRANT GUIDELINES

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Founded in 1975, the **New York Council for the Humanities** helps all New Yorkers lead vibrant intellectual lives by strengthening traditions of cultural literacy, critical inquiry, and civic participation. The Council is a private, not-for-profit organization and an independent affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, from which it receives major support. The Council also receives funding from the New York State Legislature, corporations, foundations, and individuals. In addition to the grants program, other programs of the Council include:

- **Reading Between the Lines:** A free book discussion program for New Yorkers that offers innovative discussion programs for adults who want to explore humanities topics in depth.
- **Speakers in the Humanities:** A speakers bureau that makes a wide variety of lectures by New York's humanities scholars available to not-for-profit organizations.
- **Speakers in the Schools:** A program that offers top-notch lectures on a broad range of humanities subjects to high school students across New York State.
- **State Humanities Month:** A month-long celebration of the humanities in New York, including programming in every region of the state, held every October.
- **Together—Book Talk for Kids & Parents:** A new Council program that brings together parents and their 9-to-11-year-old children to explore and debate important issues about American identity and life, using the shared context of books.

To learn more about these programs, visit www.nyhumanities.org.

New York Council for the Humanities

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I. Overview of Grants Program

The Council's grants program is designed to provide financial support for public programming that brings humanities scholars and scholarship to a general audience, and conceived and implemented by not-for-profit organizations across New York State. The program is divided into two categories, Mini Grants and Major Grants, which are described below in "Award Categories and Deadlines." Given our obligation to the entire state and our awareness that some communities may possess fewer humanities resources than others, we give special consideration to projects that reach underserved populations; to projects that, with out funding, might not take place; and to organizations that need financial seed money in order to secure long-term support.

The Humanities

The humanities are a group of disciplines that include history, literature, philosophy, ethics, jurisprudence, linguistics, comparative religion, and the history, theory, and criticism of the arts. Social sciences that employ qualitative approaches such as cultural anthropology, archaeology, and political science, as well as interdisciplinary areas such as folklore, women's studies, and American studies are also considered humanities disciplines.

Humanities Scholars

A humanities scholar is an individual with particular training or experience qualifying him or her as a professional in one or more of the above disciplines. The typical qualifications are an advanced degree (M.A. or Ph.D.) in a humanities field of study, and a regular appointment at a recognized institution of higher learning. However, individuals without an advanced degree or who are not affiliated with a college or university may qualify as humanities scholars because of their methods of research, inquiry, and teaching. The Council also recognizes that scholarship and knowledge-gathering are defined differently in different cultures, and respects such diversity of training and preparation as consistent with our understanding of the humanities as fields and as methods of inquiry.

The Scholar's Role in a Public Humanities Project

Humanities scholars strengthen public projects by providing both a broad humanistic perspective and specific in-depth knowledge. They may play many roles in a Council-funded project including, but not limited to:

- Helping shape the content and focus of an exhibit or program;
- Writing critical and interpretive materials such as exhibit, web, or brochure text;
- Reviewing program materials developed by others such as exhibit, web, tour, or brochure text;
- Making public presentations or participating in panel discussions or interviews.

Public Audiences

Public audiences are composed of the general, lay public. Programs are eligible for Council funding *only if they are intended for and open to a public audience*. Programs that are designed primarily for a closed group, such as members in a particular organization, are ineligible for funding.

Projects the Council Does and Does Not Fund

Grants from the Council are designed to help public audiences learn more about the humanities. The Council favors applications that display a critical approach, and encourages projects that pose questions rather than answering them—that explore the "why" rather than simply the "how." *The centrality of*

humanities scholars and scholarship in Council-funded projects is essential. We also favor projects that bring the humanities to new audiences. Some appropriate formats for these projects include, but are not limited to:

- Lectures, conferences, symposia, and panel discussions intended for the general public;
- Planning or implementation of exhibitions;
- Film screenings or readings combined with interpretive discussion;
- Interpretive brochures, docent scripts, or walking tours;
- Exhibition catalogues with significant humanities scholarship;
- Radio programs;
- Internet presentations such as online exhibitions or moderated discussions.

The Council *does not* fund:

- Projects not centrally concerned with the humanities;
- Grants to individuals;
- Professional development ;
- Creative and performing arts, including performances, readings, dramatizations, and the creation or exhibition of contemporary art. The Council will consider projects that utilize the creative and performing arts as a catalyst for discussion or other interpretive endeavors. However, the humanities component must be clearly central to the activity or portion of the project for which a Council grant is being sought;
- Film or video productions;
- “How-to” workshops;
- Scholarly research projects, including oral histories;
- College or training courses, scholarships, awards or fellowships;
- School programs;
- Projects that advocate a particular political or social party, ideology, or action;
- Programs intended primarily for members of an organization;
- Professional or scholarly conferences;
- Programs with high admission fees. Modest admission fees may be charged to help cover direct project costs. A helpful benchmark is to consider the cost of a movie in your region;
- Capital expenditures: equipment, land, buildings, building renovations, etc.
- Food and beverages for audience members, or any costs related to receptions;
- Archiving, cataloguing, transcription, or preservation projects;
- Historical reenactments;
- Expenses incurred or paid out before a Council grant is made;
- Annual or recurring support for any project.

State Humanities Month

Applicants are strongly encouraged to plan public programs during State Humanities Month (October). Projects that receive awards become the beneficiaries of a statewide publicity campaign by the Council. For more information see “Award Categories and Deadlines” below.

II. Guidelines for Applicants

Eligibility

- Any not-for-profit organization or institution with IRS tax-exempt status in New York State is eligible to apply. Questions about tax-exempt status may be directed to the IRS non-profit hotline at 877-829-5500.

- Projects must be rooted in one or more of the humanities disciplines, integrally involve humanities scholars, and be intended for public audiences.
- Projects must comply with federal nondiscrimination statutes, federal debt status, debarment and suspension requirements, and drug-free workplace requirements.
- Organizations may only receive *one* (1) Major Grant and *one* (1) Mini Grant per calendar year.
- Only *one* (1) Major Grant application may be submitted per deadline.
- An applicant may have both a Major Grant and a Mini Grant application before the Council at the same time, but the proposals must represent different projects.
- All Council grants are matching grants. This means that that the Council’s award must be equaled or exceeded by the project’s total budget.

Award Categories and Deadlines

- **Major Grants** are for project requests of more than \$2500. While there is no upper limit on the amount that can be requested, grants awarded generally do not exceed \$20,000. Partial Major Grants may be awarded based on merit. Other constraints may also affect the amount that can be offered, regardless of merit. The two postmark deadlines* for Major Grants are:

- **November 1** (notification in late March)
- **March 1** (notification in late June)

** If the deadline falls on a holiday or weekend, the postmark deadline is the next business day.*

- **Mini Grants** are for project requests of between \$250 and \$2500. Generally proposals in this category are for single events or for projects that are modest in scope and have a short timeframe. Mini Grants may also be requested for exhibition planning (for small exhibitions Mini Grants can be requested for both planning and implementation). ***Mini Grants may be submitted at any time; a decision will be made within 4 weeks.*** * To insure inclusion in State Humanities Month publicity, Mini Grant applications for October events must be postmarked by:

- **May 15** (notification in late June)

**You must submit your Mini Grant application in ample time to credit the Council in all related publicity (see “Publicity Requirements” below).*

Publicity Requirements

Grant applicants must submit their proposals with sufficient time to credit the Council in all publications and announcements *after notification* including press releases, advertisements, invitations, posters, flyers, and brochures, as well as broadcast and web coverage related to the project including that of your co-sponsors. If you apply without sufficient time for an adequate publicity campaign that includes crediting the Council, your application will not be considered.

How Applications Are Reviewed

Council staff members, including Program Officers and the Executive Director, review all applications. Outside evaluators also reviews all Major Grant applications. Final decisions on Major Grants are made by a committee of the Council’s Board of Directors. Decisions on Mini Grants are made by Council staff. All decisions are final.

Some Important Final Planning Notes

- Program staff is available to field questions about planning a project or the application process. Call 212-233-1131 x24 or email nych@nyhumanities.org.

- If you are awarded a grant, you will have entered into an agreement with the Council, the terms of which will state that you must notify the Council in writing *prior* to making any changes to your original proposal. Significant changes to your project must be approved by the Council. Changes that, in the opinion of the Council, significantly alter the project as originally proposed could result in the recession of the grant.
- All awarded grants are paid in at least two installments, never as a lump sum. Payments are released upon the completion of the paperwork supplied with each agreement.