



Grant Guidelines

The WHC

The Wisconsin Humanities Council (WHC) supports and creates programs that use history, culture, and discussion to strengthen community life for everyone in Wisconsin. The WHC believes that educational and cultural programs rooted in the humanities have a vital role to play in making our communities stronger. By talking and learning together, community members deepen their understanding and appreciation of who they are, and what they hope their lives, communities, and world can be.

WHC Grants

WHC grants fund projects across the state, in communities of all sizes, for participants of all ages and backgrounds. We have funded museum exhibits, book discussions, lecture series, guided tours, humanities festivals, oral history projects, teacher institutes, and various other programs. We do not fund individual research or the creation of artwork, including workshops focusing on the craft of writing. We require projects to involve experts in ways that bring diverse and balanced perspectives. Projects must be designed for a general audience (i.e. not a college or university audience).

Any nonprofit organization in the state of Wisconsin, or unincorporated group that is formed for the purpose of implementing an eligible public humanities project, may apply for funding. Unincorporated groups do not need formal tax-exempt status. All grant-funded projects must serve Wisconsin residents, although the subject matter does not have to be specific to the state.

The WHC awards two types of grants on a competitive basis:

Mini-Grants

- \$2000 maximum award
- Four deadlines every year: February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1
- Decisions made by a WHC board subcommittee within one month of submission

Major Grants

- \$10,000 maximum award
- Three deadlines every year: April 15, August 15, and December 15
- Decisions made by the WHC board in June, October, or February, respectively

If you need help with proposal development, or are developing a media project, please contact WHC staff for additional guidelines and/or information.

Consultation

We encourage you to discuss your project with WHC staff. We can advise you on project design, help make sure your project meets our guidelines, and offer suggestions for developing a competitive proposal. First-time applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a draft of their application for feedback. Please note that we require draft proposals at least *one month in advance* of a grant deadline for proper review.

Criteria

The WHC uses the following criteria to judge grant proposals. We believe that strong public humanities projects...

- *...reflect the interests of the community being served.*
To bring people in the door and touch their lives, projects must be designed from the start with attention to the needs and interests of a defined audience. Successful applicants must show that they know their audience, and that the proposed project will succeed in attracting and serving that audience.
- *...promote and strengthen connections between people within communities.*
For a humanities program to strengthen community life, it should open the door and actively attract all kinds of community members. Collaboration among organizations is one way to accomplish this.
- *...bring people together to explore and share ideas.*
When community members come together in a thought-provoking way, the humanities can deepen our understanding of the world and each other. Strong humanities programs encourage us to ask questions and reflect. When our commonalities and differences are part of the conversation, good humanities programs are designed so that those commonalities and differences are explored meaningfully and respectfully.
- *...foster observation, inquiry, analysis, and/or reflection.*
One of the hallmarks of the humanities is their encouragement of careful thought. Rather than telling people what to think, strong humanities programs start by asking good questions and then offer ways for participants to inform themselves and consider multiple perspectives.
- *...are firmly grounded in the humanities.*
Strong public humanities programs engage humanities experts and community members so that both local knowledge and academic expertise are respected.
- *...promote Wisconsinites' understanding of the character and conditions—past, present, and future—of the places in which we dwell, and the ways in which we live.*
Quality public humanities programs engage the state's diverse citizenry about our individual and collective experiences.

- ...reflect the sponsoring organization's commitment to improvement.

We hope grant recipients learn from their past work and strive to improve the quality and/or reach of what they offer the public.

Finances

All grants require matching funds that are equal to or greater than the amount requested from the WHC. Matching funds may be cash and/or in-kind. Examples of in-kind match include the dollar value of facilities, services, talents, and the time that individuals contribute to a project.

Funds from the WHC may be requested for such reasonable project-related expenses as honoraria for humanities experts, per diem and travel expenses for project personnel, printing and publicity, facility rental, and materials necessary for the project. Ineligible expenses include capital expenses, indirect or overhead costs, expenses related to fundraising, any expenses related to an archival project, museum acquisitions, re-granting of WHC funds, and staff salaries.

Applicants are required to submit a budget. Specific instructions are provided with the grant application. For detailed information about fiscal rules and regulations, consult our Guidelines for Fiscal Agents https://www.wisconsinhumanities.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/WHC_Guidelines_for_Fiscal_Agents-7-1-19.pdf

The Humanities and Humanities Experts

The humanities are the evolving ideas and the accumulated knowledge about human history and culture that help us make sense of our lives and encourage us to think imaginatively and critically about the world. It can be helpful to think of the humanities in terms of the academic disciplines that they typically include:

Archaeology

The history, theory and criticism of the arts

Ethnic Studies

History

Languages

Literature

Religious Studies

Cultural Anthropology

Ethics

Folklore

Jurisprudence

Linguistics

Philosophy

Women's Studies

And those aspects of the social sciences that employ historical or philosophical approaches, such as human geography.

The public humanities, at the core of the WHC mission, emphasize the meaningful and creative engagement of general audiences.

A humanities expert is ordinarily someone with an M.A. or Ph.D. in a humanities discipline or who is otherwise well-qualified to bring a humanities perspective to a project. Examples of the latter include museum curators and tribal elders, or individuals who are acknowledged cultural experts within their communities. In considering the suitability of a humanities expert for a particular project, the WHC looks for breadth and depth of knowledge that is relevant to the project. We encourage the use of experts who have worked with general audiences and have

demonstrated the capacity for encouraging the expression of, and reflection upon, multiple points of view.

Digital Humanities

The digital humanities is a dynamic field and projects such as websites, mobile applications, games, and virtual environments can significantly contribute to the public's engagement with humanities ideas. Evolving media technologies can empower communities and scholars to research and represent the humanities in interesting and original ways. The WHC is committed to helping fund the most compelling digital public humanities projects throughout the state. Projects that can be described as "digital humanities" should address the criteria described above.

Advocacy

The WHC funds projects that address public policy issues; however, we look for projects that employ experts in ways that bring diverse and balanced perspectives to such discussions. The WHC does not fund projects that advocate for a particular position.