

MINI GRANTS GUIDELINES

AZ HUMANITIES

Read. Think. Grow.



FY 2026-2027



GRANTS@ARIZONAHUMANITIES.ORG | WWW.AZHUMANITIES.ORG

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Connecting with Arizona Humanities Staff

Staff can provide guidance on eligibility, project ideas, budget questions, and they can assist you with any technical difficulties. Comments and suggestions are based solely on prior experience with grant review sessions and do not guarantee funding. Email grants@azhumanities.org

Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in a Mini Grant. Arizona Humanities is proud of our long history of supporting a wide range of public humanities projects.

The Arizona Humanities Mission:

Arizona Humanities builds a just and civil society by creating opportunities to explore our shared human experiences through discussion, learning, and reflection.

What are the Humanities?

The humanities include disciplines related to human thought and culture. These include, but are not limited to, the following: anthropology, archaeology, art history and criticism, religious studies, ethics, history, jurisprudence, linguistic, literary criticism, and philosophy. The humanities help us explore the human experience – the stories and ideas that help us reflect upon who we are as individuals and as members of a global society.

Our History

[Arizona Humanities](#) (AH) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and the AZ affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Founded in 1973, AH supports public programs that promote understanding of the human experience with cultural, educational, and nonprofit organizations across the state. Through providing accessible and enriching educational programs, we strive to help Arizonans better understand themselves and the world around them.

What We Fund

Arizona Humanities supports innovative, community-based public programs that use humanities disciplines to connect Arizonans to the cultures, peoples, and histories of the state and beyond. We welcome project proposals from a wide range of nonprofit, educational, and governmental organizations that encourage innovative public humanities programming.

Proposed projects should stimulate thoughtful community conversations, build new audiences for the humanities, innovate new methods in the humanities, and advocate for the importance of the humanities in a democracy. Projects should use the humanities to provide context, depth, and perspective to issues of significance to Arizonans.

Program formats include, but are not limited to:

- Interactive lectures and discussions
- Exhibits
- Publications (must be published through a third-party, peer-review process)
- Public broadcasts; online and/or radio
- Film documentaries
- Discussions before or after performances

If awarded a grant, the applicant organization is responsible for the project and budget described in the grant application. By applying, the organization agrees to the Arizona Humanities Grant Guidelines. It is the organization's responsibility to appropriately supervise the Project Director and ensure the project takes place as described, to use Arizona Humanities funds only as allowed, to acknowledge Arizona Humanities funding in conjunction with the project, and to submit project reports as required.

Acceptance of an award also requires the organization's agreement to additional award terms and conditions.

Grant Process



Apply or manage your grant using the Arizona Humanities Grants and Programs Dashboard at: www.grantinterface.com/Common/LogOn.aspx?urlkey=azhumanities.

You can check the status of your grant at any time by logging into the dashboard. All notifications for your grant will be sent via email from the dashboard. Add **administrator@grantinterface.com** to your safe sender list to ensure timely receipt of important grant notifications.

Mini Grant Overview

Applicants may request up to \$2,500 in Mini Grants per fiscal year (May 1st – April 30th). Mini Grants can be used for capacity-building, program planning, and implementation of programs. Capacity-building may include training and education for constituents to help plan and/or implement public humanities engagements. The goal of Mini Grants is to foster the humanities programs and capacity-building of small organizations with limited funding and encourage partnerships and collaboration between nonprofits.

Priority is given to organizations with an annual budget of \$500,000 or less. You must include a copy of the organization's annual budget with the application. If you are applying from a department or unit within a parent organization, please use the budget of your department/unit. Organizations with budgets that exceed \$500,000 will need to provide an impact statement in the application. Larger institutions may also partner with a smaller institution that will lead the program or project.

Mini Grant Funding Timeline

Application period: Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the AH fiscal year (May 1st – April 30th) until funds are exhausted.

Deadline: Proposals must be submitted to the Grants and Programs Dashboard at least 60 days prior to the project start date. Project start and end dates will be determined by the applicant and must be included in the application.

Review Process: Applications are reviewed by Arizona Humanities and a decision will be made within fifteen (15) days of the application submission. Applicants will be notified of award decisions through the Grants and Programs Dashboard.

Grant Agreement: If awarded, grantees must review and sign the Grant Agreement within seven (7) days of award notification. The grant agreement will be assigned in the Grants and Programs Dashboard. Funds cannot be released without a signed Grant Agreement.

Project Period: Mini Grant project periods are up to 12 months from the start date indicated on the application. Only project costs incurred within the project period (project start date to project end date) are eligible.

Final Reporting: A final report is due 90 days after the end of the project period. The final report documents will be assigned through the grants and programs dashboard and will include:

- Final Report Narrative
- Activities Summary with Audience Count
- Upload for Publicity Materials
- Upload of Grant Products (Such as photos of events; booklets; video clips; publications; etc.)
- Final Financial Report
- A request to notify your congressional representatives of your award to demonstrate the impact and importance of humanities funding.

Mini Grant Eligibility

1. Eligible applicants include private nonprofit 501(c)3 organizations; local, tribal, and state governments; institutions of the federal government; and academic institutions.
2. Applicant must be in “good standing” with Arizona Humanities, i.e., you do not have an overdue grant report or a previously defaulted grant.
3. Applicant organization must have an active SAM Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and SAM CAGE Code (see below).
4. The organization has not reached the \$2,500 limit in Mini Grant funds during the current fiscal year.
5. Must follow the outlined Personnel, Evaluation, and Cost Share Requirements. (pg. 8-11)

***Note on Fiscal Sponsors:** It is unallowable to use a fiscal sponsor to solely accept grant funds on your behalf. We do encourage partnerships. Your partner can accept funds, as long as they can and will contribute to the project.

Out-of-State Applicants

Non-Arizona based organizations and individuals can apply but should be prepared to articulate the impact their project will have in Arizona. We prioritize funding for projects with a clear Arizona connection.

SAM Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and SAM CAGE Code

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has adopted the use of System for Award Management (SAM) Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and SAM Commercial and Government Entity Code (Cage Code) as a way to keep track of how federal grant money is dispersed. All applicants will be required to have a SAM UEI and SAM CAGE Code. See registration instructions below.

What is the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)?

- A UEI is a 12-character alphanumeric value.
 - Managed, granted, and owned by the government.
 - Serves as the authoritative unique entity identifier used by the federal government.
-

What is a SAM CAGE Code?

- The SAM CAGE Code is a five-character ID number used by the Federal Government to identify vendors.
- Required for businesses, organizations, or agencies that [plans to receive payments from the federal government including regrants through state and jurisdictional humanities councils.
- Must be renewed yearly.

How can I obtain a SAM UEI and SAM CAGE Code? You can obtain both by [registering here](#).

- The UEI replaced the DUNS number beginning April 4, 2022. If your organization obtained a DUNS number and SAM CAGE Code prior to April 4, 2022, then a UEI has already been assigned you. You may still need to renew your organization's SAM CAGE Code. • You may check the status of your organization's UEI and SAM CAGE Code at sam.gov
- The SAM UEI will be provided immediately upon registration. The SAM CAGE Code can take 12-15 days after submission to become active.

***Please Note:** As the process of obtaining a SAM CAGE Code can take some time, please begin this process ASAP. If you have any questions or are concerned you will not receive the SAM CAGE Code by the application due date, please contact Arizona Humanities staff.

Project Scoring & Requirements

The competitiveness of the proposed project is based on the following criteria:

- Project is relevant to AH's mission by providing public programming with opportunities to explore shared human experiences through discussion, learning, and reflection.
- Project is non-partisan and impartial in regard to political, religious, or ideological viewpoints.
- Project establishes a community need and humanities-based public program(s) that will meet the need identified.
- Budget is detailed and realistic, with AH funds directed to humanities content.
- Application demonstrates the organization's capacity to carry out the project. AH will review the personnel, organizational readiness, and marketing sections of the application to determine organizational capacity.
- Application demonstrates a clear and appropriate plan to evaluate program success in delivering the humanities content and other specified goals.
- Humanities scholar(s) are appropriately qualified to meet the purpose of the humanities project.

Project Requirements

Accessibility

Your project should connect the public with the humanities at no cost and be accessible. Projects with nominal costs (ex. \$10 or less) must demonstrate in the proposal how funds will support the program goals. Projects should be geared toward broad and diverse general audiences and must allow for differing points of view.

Note for Colleges and Universities

Our primary goal is to increase public access to quality humanities programming. We accept project proposals from colleges and universities that demonstrate a commitment to reach an audience beyond the campus community. Such proposals should show strong community collaboration, a well-defined outreach and publicity plan, and stated audience goals.

Logo Use and Acknowledgment Requirement

Federal regulations stipulate that credit be given to Arizona Humanities funded projects in all promotional materials affiliated with the projects (marketing materials, press releases, etc.). Grantees must specify that the project is funded, supported, or made possible by a grant from Arizona Humanities. A [Grantee Communications Toolkit](#) is available with logos, sample posts, and press releases.

Personnel Requirements

Arizona Humanities requires all projects have a designated Project Director, Authorizing Official and Humanities Scholar(s). One person may act in multiple roles if they meet the personnel requirements stated below.

Project Director Definition and Responsibilities

The Project Director is responsible for the implementation of the project, is the primary contact with Arizona Humanities for project administration and oversight, and is responsible for submitting final reports.

Authorizing Official Definition and Responsibilities

The Authorizing Official is the person with the responsibility to sign legal contracts on behalf of the applicant organization. Their primary obligations include: record-keeping and accounting for the grant funds, matching contributions, and services received. The Authorizing Official may be the Executive Director, Chair of the Board, President, etc.

Humanities Scholar Definition and Responsibilities

Arizona Humanities requires the involvement of humanities scholars to support a broad humanistic perspective, as well as in-depth knowledge in a particular field of study. As defined by Arizona Humanities, a humanities scholar meets one or more of the following qualifications:

- Holds an advanced degree (M.A. or higher) in the humanities discipline;
- Is a recognized expert with a verifiable record of working, teaching, and publishing in the humanities discipline and/or is acknowledged as such by other scholars in the field; or is a Native American elder or traditional teacher involved in a project whose focus is on their particular tribe(s).

The consulting Humanities Scholar should be involved in the planning of the project and be able to demonstrate to the grant reviewers how humanities content is reflected in the program. Every proposal is required to have at least one consulting Humanities Scholar.

Humanities Scholars can play many roles in a project, including, but not limited to:

- Consultant or advisor on humanities content to develop and help shape ideas into a humanities project.
- Researcher or writer of critical and interpretive materials, essays, and text for exhibitions; curricular materials; script treatments; catalogues, etc., to accompany a project or program.
- Evaluator upon project completion to assess whether and/or how the project's learning goals were met.

Grant Evaluation Requirement

Evaluations help us learn how effective projects are in communicating humanities content and meeting identified goals. We require you to submit an evaluation plan and sample evaluation instruments that are appropriate for assessing your project's goals.

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- Organizations may develop and implement an evaluation plan in-house. This is the most common method.
- Independent evaluators may be hired as part of your Arizona Humanities grant to evaluate projects and submit a written report to Arizona Humanities. Their evaluation plan and methodology should be outlined in the grant proposal. Evaluators should be unaffiliated with project personnel and staff to qualify as independent.
- Evaluation consultants, who specialize in evaluation methodology, may be hired as part of your Arizona Humanities grant to evaluate program design and delivery. Consultant's evaluation plan and methodology should be outlined in the project proposal.

Keep the following questions in mind when creating your evaluation plan. There is space in the evaluation section of the application to outline your evaluation plan and explain why you think the chosen methodology is best for your specific program.

- What is your goal(s) in providing a humanities program? Goals should go beyond audience numbers and address the humanities content and the identified community need.
- How does the program help reach this goal(s)?
- What is the evaluation indicator that will measure the success of the program in meeting those goals?

Cost Share Requirements

Arizona Humanities requires a one-to-one in-kind or cash match of all projects. Matching consists of all project expenses not attributed to the Arizona Humanities grant, including both cash and in-kind contributions made to the project by the applicant and third parties. The total cost sharing must at least equal the total funds requested from Arizona Humanities. Please note that any funds of federal origin cannot contribute to your match but must be noted in your budget.

In-kind contributions refer to contributions from an applicant organization to the project, such as: staff salaries and volunteer time, services, facilities, and internal funds. This also includes goods and services donated by a third-party or partner organization. Contributions funded through an organization's indirect cost rate (NICRA or 15% de minimis) must be subtracted from in-kind contribution totals. [In-Kind Match Guide](#).

Third-party cash contribution refers to non-federal third-party, cash donations made to the organization for the proposed program. Unlike in-kind contributions, cash contributions may not come from an organization's board or board member, the project director, or any other individual who might be seen as benefiting financially by supporting the proposed program. The donation must be committed to the specific project at the time of the grant application, and a letter from the donor(s) must be included in the proposal.

Budget Requirements

Why we ask for a budget

A budget is an illustration of the monetary aspects of your project. It tells us what money you need to complete your project, specifically how you will spend the funds, and what kind of support you are receiving. An organized and thorough budget bolsters a proposal and instills confidence in our reviewers that you have the capacity to succeed. Arizona Humanities requires you to submit a FULL project budget, including an indication of how you plan to spend the Arizona Humanities funds requested. The line items included in your budget should be well-researched and organized into appropriate cost centers. Arizona Humanities does not fund retroactively; therefore, only project costs incurred during the project period are eligible. (See page 4).

Basic Tips / What we are looking for in a budget

- Plan how much money is needed to complete your project.
- Categorize your project expenses into line items, e.g., scholar honoraria, travel, library fees, design, printing, mailing, etc.
- Verify the eligibility of the line items for which you seek Arizona Humanities funds.
- Use the Budget Narrative section to list any additional funding support for your project, including names of other funding organizations and amounts pledged or received and any other pending grant requests.
- Use the Budget Narrative section to explain any non-traditional items in your budget, as well as any notes or information you would like the panel to consider.
- Make sure that you have accounted for all costs to mitigate surprises mid-project.
- Finally, make sure all the numbers add up.

Indirect Costs

Arizona Humanities allows requests to include indirect costs according to the following:

Indirect Costs are costs that are incurred for common or joint objectives and therefore cannot be readily identified with a specific project or activity of an organization. Items regarded as indirect costs include equipment and capital improvement, operations and maintenance expenses, salaries, accounting and legal services.

Indirect costs are computed by applying a federally negotiated indirect cost rate to a distribution base. For applicants seeking reimbursement for indirect costs: please review carefully your institution's Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) to make sure you are using the most appropriate rate in your application budget. You will be required to submit a copy of your organization's NICRA with your application.

An applicant organization that has never had a negotiated indirect-cost rate may use the de minimis rate of 15 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC). If chosen, this method must be used consistently for all federal awards until the organization chooses to negotiate a rate. For more information regarding the MTDC, [click here](#).

Line Items We DO NOT Fund

- Academic fees or other degree-related expenses, including academic research and courses
- Archival acquisitions
- Creation of art or performances in the arts
- Direct social action or political action, e.g., counseling, legal or medical services, economic development activities, lobbying
- Economic development activities
- Equipment purchases (exceptions may apply where rental costs exceed purchase value)
- Fellowships or scholarships
- Foreign, non-economy, or extensive domestic travel
- Fundraising or for-profit activities
- Restoration work and construction work
- Fiscal Agent Administration Fees
- Direct salary replacement for permanent staff outside of indirect cost rates. Part-time staff may be offered honoraria if funds will be used for hours above what the applicant organization currently offers them.
- General operating expenses outside the 15% de minimis rate for indirect costs or your organization's NICRA.
- Food and beverage costs associated with receptions, social gatherings and events, lobbying, entertainment, and networking. NOTE: Allowable food costs must be fundamental to the project and indispensable for carrying out the scope of the project. Food costs must be reasonable and necessary to carry out the programmatic purposes of the award.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is an organization required to submit an Intent to Apply form?

No, an Intent to Apply is not required for Mini Grants.

Does Arizona Humanities provide any support for writing a Grant application?

Yes. Arizona Humanities encourages prospective applicants to contact us directly and discuss the project before submitting the grant application. We can advise applicants on creating an eligible project and a competitive grant application. We do not review draft applications.

What role should a humanities scholar play in a project?

A Humanities Scholar should be involved in the planning of the project and assist in developing the humanities content for your program.

Are individuals eligible to apply for an Arizona Humanities grant?

No. Eligible applicants include organizations constituted for nonprofit purposes; civic, service organizations; local, tribal, and state governments; and academic institutions.

Does Arizona Humanities fund art or performance projects?

Arizona Humanities funds art-based projects that seek to interpret, analyze, or otherwise explain the social or historical context and elements of the creative arts. Arizona Humanities does not provide funding for the creative or performing arts elements of a public program, or the honoraria and travel expenses of individual artists.

How does a program “use the humanities to address contemporary social issues?”

Competitive Arizona Humanities grant proposals will use the humanities to contextualize and analyze perspectives of contemporary social and political issues and provide an organized framework for respectful and civil dialogue. Projects should not advance a specific policy agenda.

Can an organization apply for multiple grants in the same year?

Yes, but organizations must not have reached the \$2,500/year limit in Mini Grant funds.

Will previous awards from Arizona Humanities affect my proposal?

Arizona Humanities will use an organization's past Arizona Humanities grant funding activity as an example of the organization's capacity to plan and execute successful projects as well as to administer a grant award. Each application, however, will be considered and evaluated on its individual merits, and repeat funding is not guaranteed.

What qualifies as an "in-kind contribution" and "third-party cash contribution"?

In-kind contributions refer to contributions from an applicant organization to the project, such as: staff salaries and volunteer time, services, facilities, and internal funds. This also includes goods and services donated by a third-party or partner organization. Contributions funded through an organization's indirect cost rate (NICRA or 15% de minimis) must be subtracted from in-kind contribution totals.

Third-party cash contribution refers to non-federal, third-party, cash donations made to the organization for the proposed program. Unlike In-kind contributions, cash contributions may not come from an organization's board or board member, the project director, or any other individual who might be seen as benefiting financially by supporting the proposed program. The donation must be committed to the specific project at the time of the grant application, and a letter from the donor(s) must be included in the proposal.

How are grants reviewed?

Mini Grants are reviewed by Arizona Humanities staff and approved by the Executive Director.

If an application is not awarded, can the organization resubmit an application in a future cycle?

Yes. Please consult with Arizona Humanities regarding the outcome of the review scoring and discussion before resubmitting in future grant cycles.

Tips for Submitting a Successful Application

Murphy's Law. There are no exceptions to our deadlines. Do not wait until the last minute! Remember, rushed applications tend to look sloppy. Take advantage of staff counseling to help you shape your ideas and prepare your application.

Funders love a good story. Along with quantifiable data, include descriptive and qualitative language while avoiding jargon and buzz words. Help us to envision your project with you.

What's your inspiration? How did you come across this idea? Why you? How are you uniquely qualified to undertake the project? Passion can be contagious

Articulate the need for the project. Are you addressing an issue of community concern? Does your project or initiative align with a new strategic vision to move your work forward? Why would we want to invest in your ideas? Testimonials are very helpful for communicating impact.

Fuzzy numbers and unexplained budget items. Nothing strikes fear in the heart of funders like an inflated budget. They might love your idea but lose confidence in your ability to administer the grant.

Bell curve philosophy. Do not ask for more than you need, thinking we'll cut your budget anyway. Our philosophy is to fund requests to the fullest extent possible. So please be resourceful and ask for only what you need to [execute] implement your project.

Resourcefulness. In the current economic climate, funders are hurting too. Are you being economical? Are you leveraging resources?

Collaboration. Funders love to see people working together to deliver a stronger program. This is not an easy task. Make sure relationships and roles are clear.

Balance. Funders love to be on the cutting edge without being too experimental. Innovation and creativity are key concepts, but a proven track record goes a long way.

Build your web presence. Not only does it build your audience reach and extend your project's longevity, but this is how funders find out more about you.

Who is your audience? Be clear about whom you intend to serve and how they will find out about your project.

Don't Assume. For repeat applications, each grant review is new and unique. Reviewers may not be familiar with your organization or project. Repeat funding is not guaranteed.

Sloppy prose or vague language. Proofread your proposal. Ask others to read it for clarity. Use clear, quantifiable language. And please, don't use AI. We will be able to tell.

Hyperbole, contentious ideas, generalizations, grandiose language. "A little-known fact..." "Most Arizonians know nothing about..." Show, don't tell, and avoid making claims to support your program.

Grants are contracts. Describe clearly what you plan to execute with the grant dollars. Phase your project accordingly. Don't promise more than you can deliver.

Expect paperwork. Arizona Humanities administers grant dollars of federal origin which require a lot of documentation. Review reporting requirements so you know in advance what to expect. Maintain good files. Keep receipts for everything.

Review thoroughly. Once applications are submitted, you will no longer be able to make any changes.

Ask Questions. We encourage everyone to read the grant guidelines. Reach out to staff to discuss your project.

Answer all Questions. Make sure you address every question in the grant application. Be clear about what you are requesting Arizona Humanities to fund.