



# Humanities Vision Partnership Grant Request for Proposals

RFP Issued: November 7, 2019

Application Deadline: March 13, 2020, 11:59pm ET

## Project Period:

This opportunity is for projects conducted between May 15, 2020 and May 15, 2021.

## Access Assistance:

HumanitiesDC endeavors to make its applications as open and accessible as possible. If you are unable to access any materials on our site, please contact the staff member listed below for support. When contacting us, please include the following in your query:

- Nature of the accessibility issue.
- The web address of the content you are attempting to access
- Your preferred format for the content
- Your contact information

## Award Amount:

Applicants may request between \$5,000 and \$30,000 depending on the scope of their projects.

Applicants may submit one project application for this grant program in FY2020.

Please read this request for proposals in full before submitting an application.

## Staff Contact:

La'Tasha Banks – [lbanks@wdchumanities.org](mailto:lbanks@wdchumanities.org)

## About HumanitiesDC:

HumanitiesDC is the State Humanities Council for Washington, DC, and one of 56 such institutions found in every state and territory of the United States, each affiliates of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Founded in 1980, our mission is to:

*enrich the quality of life, foster intellectual stimulation, and promote cross-cultural understanding and appreciation of local history in all neighborhoods of the District through humanities programs and grants.*



# Humanities Vision Partnership Grant Request for Proposals

## What are the Humanities?:

Potential projects may focus on: “language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life.”<sup>i</sup>

## Summary:

Help us create exciting public humanities programs for the people of Washington, DC! This opportunity provides financial and capacity building resources to community organizations (partners) interested in creating innovative interpretations of humanities scholarship for public audiences.

Humanities Vision Grants are driven by the proposed final product; each grant will produce an educational resource that will be added to a publicly accessible, online archive. Each Vision grant project director will form a close partnership with the HumanitiesDC grants team over the course of the grant period. Directors will participate in information sharing and networking sessions, skills and subject-matter workshops, and a final public showcase over the course of the grant period.

This list of potential project types is non-exhaustive, and applicants are encouraged to think creatively about how they engage the public:

- Publications
- Film and Video (though applicants should consider the DC DOCS grant program)
- Tours
- Exhibits
- Curricula (though applicants should consider the Soul of the City grant program)
- Websites and other Digital Humanities Projects
- Archives
- Public Programming / Events
- Festivals

## What are we looking for?

**Originality** – Vision grants are for the public interpretation of new ideas, revelatory perspectives on settled scholarship, the illumination of hidden stories, and innovative methods of encouraging public engagement with the humanities. Prospective applicants should conduct a literature survey and environmental scan to ensure that they are breaking new ground in one or more of these ways.

**Strong scholar involvement** – One of the goals of HumanitiesDC’s partnership grant programs is to encourage productive relationships between humanities scholars and the public. All proposed projects must specify a scholar, and how that person will guide the project throughout the grant cycle. Typical scholars have an advanced degree in the humanities discipline most closely related to the proposed project and many have university affiliations, but an appropriate scholar does not always need these



# Humanities Vision Partnership Grant Request for Proposals

credentials. In every case, applicants must demonstrate the scholar has the appropriate expertise to serve in that role on the project and that the identified scholar has committed to working on the project throughout the grant cycle.

**Community partnerships** – HumanitiesDC was founded in 1980 as the DC Community Humanities Council, and our commitment to encouraging grassroots scholarship continues to be a part of our grantmaking. All proposed grant projects must demonstrate both how the community will benefit from the project and be actively involved in its creation. As indicated above, rigorous scholarship is an important part of any funded proposal, but the best applications will propose projects that create partnerships between academia and the public.

**Educational Product with Lasting Value** – Ultimately, every applicant, even those proposing public events or exhibits, must commit to producing a tangible educational product that can be archived in HumanitiesDC’s DC Digital Museum. This product is the primary expected result of all awarded grants and a crucial part of HumanitiesDC’s goal of building an online repository of films, publications, and other materials related to the humanities in Washington. In many ways, the delivery of a well-researched, original, and eminently useful final product at the end of the grant cycle is what determines the success of the grant.

**Work closely with HDC Staff** – The HumanitiesDC grants team strives to establish strong partnership-level relationships with their assigned grantee “cohort.” Key to this relationship is grantees’ willingness to participate in regular check-in and information-sharing meetings, professional development and capacity-building workshops, and networking opportunities. The grants team works with HumanitiesDC’s communications staff to promote grantee events and activities, and to seek press coverage for every funded project. Finally, grants staff serves as a sounding-board, giving advice and feedback on project activities and, ultimately, taking delivery of the final educational product. The proposal narrative should describe how the applicant will take advantage of this unique opportunity to partner with HDC.

## Other Required Proposal Elements:

- Identification of the project’s target demographic, primary humanities discipline, and Washington, DC Ward(s) served.
- A letter of support from the project’s fiscal sponsor, if different than the organization carrying out the project.
- A description of the key personnel who will work on the project.
- A timeline of project activities and milestones covering the full grant cycle.
- A marketing strategy for the project.
- A description of how the project’s performance will be evaluated.
- Audience participation estimates.
- A budget (in a provided template), and a budget narrative.
- A detailed plan for complying with relevant provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## Cash Match Requirement:

This grant program requires a 1:1 match designed to help applicants raise funds from non-government, third-party sources. The match may be comprised of any combination of cash or in-kind contributions. Funding from HumanitiesDC, the District of Columbia Government, or the United States Government may not be used to satisfy the match requirement.



# Humanities Vision Partnership Grant Request for Proposals

## Common Characteristics of Successful Applications:

- Will clearly articulate a single cohesive and definitive project rather than a nebulous list of programs or activities that are speculative and/or unconnected to a common theme.
- Will define a clear final product that can be added to the DC Digital Museum Archive and that will be useful to other public humanists and future researchers.
- Will demonstrate a deep understanding of the subject matter to be explored and the expected primary audience for the project.
- Will list as the Humanities Scholar an individual who demonstrates expertise in the project's particular subject matter **as well as** knowledge of the broader humanities field to be explored.

## How to Apply:

The HumanitiesDC grants portal can be accessed at <http://grantapplication.wdchumanities.org>. Please be sure to review the grant qualifications, terms and conditions for the program you are interested in before beginning an application. If you or your organization have applied for a HumanitiesDC grant before, please DO NOT create a new account. If you are having trouble accessing your existing account, please email the staff contact indicated in this RFP.

All HumanitiesDC grant applications are accepted via an online grant portal. Applications must be successfully submitted by 11:59pm on the day of the deadline. Applicants will receive a confirmation email when their proposals have been successfully submitted. Applicants should contact the applicable HumanitiesDC staff member immediately should they encounter any technical issues or if they do not receive a confirmation email. Incomplete or late applications or applications failing to meet the guidelines or eligibility requirements will not be assigned to the evaluator panels nor will they be considered for funding. HumanitiesDC does not accept mailed, emailed, or hand-delivered applications or required attachments. HumanitiesDC will accept reasonable accommodation requests from applicants with disabilities in advance of the application due date to assist them in submitting grant applications via mail, email, or hand-delivery. To make a request for reasonable accommodation contact the grants staff member listed on this RFP and allow time for the approval of the request.

## Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be a federally incorporated 501c3 non-profit organization.
- Must be registered with, and authorized to do business in, the District as either a "Domestic" entity (that is, an entity that was incorporated in the District) or a "Foreign" entity (that is, an entity that was incorporated in another state).
- Must register and comply with the regulatory requirements of the following agencies:
  - o District of Columbia Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) – Corporations Division (indicating an "active" business license status at the time of application and agreeing to maintain such status throughout the grant period).
  - o District of Columbia Office of the Chief Financial Officer, Office of Tax and Revenue (OTR).
  - o District of Columbia Department of Employment Services (DOES).
  - o United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS)



## Humanities Vision Partnership Grant Request for Proposals

- Must be able to obtain a certification of “Citywide Clean Hands” (CCH) from the District of Columbia Office of Tax and Revenue.
- Must be producing a program (or representing an organization producing a program if serving as a fiscal sponsor) in the Humanities, as defined here by the amended National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965:
  - o *"The term 'humanities' includes, but is not limited to, the study and interpretation of the following: language, both modern and classical; linguistics; literature; history; jurisprudence; philosophy; archaeology; comparative religion; ethics; the history, criticism and theory of the arts; those aspects of the social sciences which have humanistic content and employ humanistic methods; and the study and application of the humanities to the human environment with particular attention to reflecting our diverse heritage, traditions, and history and to the relevance of the humanities to the current conditions of national life."*
- Must be producing a program (or representing an organization producing a program if serving as a fiscal sponsor) that has 100% of its geographic focus on Washington, DC or one of its neighborhoods.
- Must be producing a program (or representing an organization producing a program if serving as a fiscal sponsor) that will occur within the grant period.
- Must be producing a program (or representing an organization producing a program if serving as a fiscal sponsor) that will have residents of Washington, DC as its primary audience.
- Must have a principal business office address that is located in the District of Columbia and is accessible to onsite review. Post office boxes will not be accepted.
- Must not hold any open grants awarded or administered by HumanitiesDC at the time of the application deadline.
- Must be in good standing with HumanitiesDC. Applicants with outstanding or delinquent reports or final products from previous HumanitiesDC grants must submit them completed and without deficiencies at least 30 days before the deadline for which they wish to apply.
- Prohibited applicants include: private clubs and organizations that prohibit membership based upon race, gender, color, religion, or any other classes identified in the District of Columbia Human Rights Act; for-profit (commercial) entities; political organizations; foreign governments; federal government entities; and District of Columbia government agencies.

### Fiscal Sponsorship:

Organizations without 501c3 non-profit status may apply through an organization serving as a fiscal sponsor provided that the fiscal sponsor organization meets all eligibility requirements in this RFP. Under this arrangement, the fiscal sponsor organization takes on all financial and legal obligations of the grant award. Fiscal sponsors may support no more than three grant programs at a time. Applicants applying through fiscal sponsors must use the fiscal sponsor’s organization account within the HumanitiesDC grants portal to submit their application. If the fiscal sponsor does not have an account, an authorized official from the fiscal sponsor organization must create one. Fiscal sponsors may not collect more than 10% of the total grant award as a fee for their services.

During the grant period for projects awarded via fiscal sponsorship, the fiscal sponsor organization contact and the project director will both be required to correspond with and submit information to HumanitiesDC’s grants officers. Fiscal sponsors should not be involved in the overall planning or execution of project deliverables – if HumanitiesDC finds evidence during the grant period that



# Humanities Vision Partnership Grant Request for Proposals

the fiscal sponsor has attempted to exploit the fiscal sponsorship policy to improperly submit multiple applications for projects in which they have a considerable stake, the grant agreement may be terminated by HumanitiesDC.

## Allowable Costs:

100% of awarded grant funds must be applied to direct program costs. This may include salary, consulting fees, and/or honoraria for individuals working on the project, but cannot include indirect costs, overhead, rent, utilities, or administrative fees. Other disallowed expenses include: food and beverages, tuition and scholarships, debt reduction, re-granting, costs related to fundraisers and special events, expenses unrelated to the execution of the project, and funding to foreign or domestic government agencies.

### Examples of Allowable Costs:

- Project supplies and equipment
- Venue rental fees
- Speaker or scholar honoraria
- Project transportation
- Equipment rental
- Marketing and promotion
- Exhibit design or construction
- Project consultant fees

### Examples of Disallowed Costs:

- Office rent, overhead, and utilities
- General office supplies and equipment
- Food and beverages
- Costs associated with the production of visual or performing arts projects
- Projects designed to be attended or used by a limited audience such as an organization's membership

Applicants may contact HumanitiesDC's grants staff with questions regarding allowable costs. Grantees will be required to detail all expenses in quarterly and final reports.

## Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access:

All applicants must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The ADA provides civil rights protection to individuals with disabilities in the areas of employment, services rendered by state and local government, places of public accommodation, transportation and telecommunication services. Organizations funded by HumanitiesDC must make reasonable accommodations to ensure that people with disabilities have equal physical and communications access as defined by federal law.

Organizations applying for funding from HumanitiesDC must include, in their grant applications, a response to the "Accessibility" section of its grant application that includes the following information:



## Humanities Vision Partnership Grant Request for Proposals

1. The process for formulating accessibility plans (e.g. creating an accessibility advisory committee, board and staff disability rights training, budgeting for reasonable accommodation requests, etc.).
2. The current process/status of an organization's physical accessibility. If the location is not barrier-free, include in the grant application a plan for project/program modification that ensures access in a barrier-free environment, when needed.
3. The current progress/status of the organization's accessibility in presenting activities – communications access (e.g. TDD, large print, or brail materials; audio description or assistive listening devices, ASL interpreted programs, etc.) and marketing/advertising.

In addition to detailed plans for its compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.C § 12101 et seq.), each applicant must demonstrate how the project will be inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible throughout the District of Columbia, beyond participants with disabilities. Successful applications will consider a broad definition of "accessibility" by addressing financial, geographic, demographic, cultural and developmental access. For more information, applicants may access the complete text of the ADA here: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/42/12101>. Note that neither HumanitiesDC or the District of Columbia government represent that this link leads to the latest version of the subject law.

### Technical Assistance Workshops:

HumanitiesDC schedules at least four technical assistance workshops for prospective applicants prior to the deadline for each cycle. Several of these workshops may be conducted via live webinars. These workshops, led by HumanitiesDC grants staff, provide information on grant qualifications, grant writing best practices, and navigation of the online grants portal. HumanitiesDC staff will not write applications for prospective applicants but will provide feedback on drafts. To request feedback, applicants must send a request by email to the grants staff member listed on the RFP no less than two weeks before the deadline. The technical grants assistance workshops are free and open to the public, but applicants are strongly encouraged to register via Eventbrite before attending. As the workshops are scheduled, the dates, times, locations, and registration links will be available on our website at <https://www.wdchumanities.org>.

### Application Review Process:

Qualified applications are submitted to a review panel comprised of Washington, DC residents with backgrounds and/or experience in humanities programming or scholarship. These panelists score the proposals assigned to them based on an established rubric that closely aligns with the questions in the application. After the reading and scoring period, panelists convene in person to discuss the merits and deficiencies of the applications in their cohort and to finalize their rankings under the guidance of HumanitiesDC grants staff and board members. All panelists, staff and board members are expected to remain impartial as they undertake their respective parts in the evaluation process. HumanitiesDC requires that all involved recuse themselves from review of any application that presents a personal or professional conflict of interest, and panelists must sign a statement acknowledging that they will adhere to this policy.

The rankings presented by the panelists are adjusted according to thematic, geographic, and audience diversity by the HumanitiesDC grants staff and a final slate of proposed projects are submitted to the HumanitiesDC board for approval.



# Humanities Vision Partnership Grant Request for Proposals

## Notification and Payment of Awards:

HumanitiesDC will notify applicants of their status (funded or denied) no more than 45 days after the application deadline. Grant award recipients will receive an official grant award letter through the online system which will include a link to submit acceptance forms and to sign the grant conditions. Denied applicants will be given one week to request a summary of panelist comments.

For award recipients, the date of payment is subject to the availability of funds and the processing of required documentation. Awards are disbursed via direct deposit, and all awarded applicants are required to submit an automated clearing house (ACH) form which is made available through the online grants portal.

## Additional Requirements and Information:

1. Project directors working on each awarded partnership grant will be required to attend an initial kickoff awards ceremony on **Monday, May 18th, 2020 from 12:30-1:30pm**.
2. Humanities Vision grants require a 1:1 match in any combination of cash or in-kind contributions.
3. All partnership projects will be supported by a member of the HDC grants team. This HDC consultant or staff member will be responsible for providing support and advice to project directors as well as ensuring that all project work is progressing smoothly.
4. The grants staff cohort leaders will schedule several required check-in sessions with partnership project directors over the course of the project period.
5. All partnership projects must participate in joint marketing and communications campaigns with HumanitiesDC during the grant period.
6. Applicants will be expected to identify the final educational product that will be archived in the DC Digital Museum.
7. Applicants will be expected to assign individuals to the following roles:
  - a. Organizational Sponsor – The chief executive or presiding board member of the applying or sponsoring non-profit organization.
  - b. Project Director – The person who will guide the daily operations of the project.
  - c. Humanities Scholar – A person with strong knowledge of both the project topic and the discipline or field.
  - d. Project Bookkeeper. – The person responsible for maintaining a record of expenses against the grant award. This person cannot be assigned to any of the other project roles.

## Terms:

1. Awardees agree to document all grant expenditures and provide a final report at the end of the project period using forms provided by HumanitiesDC.
2. Successful applicants will be awarded the full award at the beginning of the grant period but will be required to submit quarterly progress and budget reports. Failure to complete these reports according to the schedule may result in intervention on the part of grants staff up to and including a request to return disbursed funds.





## Humanities Vision Partnership Grant Request for Proposals

3. Any changes to the scope or budget (greater than 25% in any one category) of a partnership project must be communicated to HumanitiesDC in writing.
4. Awarded applicants will sign grant conditions that constitute a legally binding contract between HumanitiesDC and the applicant's organization or fiscal sponsor. The signatory will be legally obligated to complete the project under the terms of the grant conditions.
5. Other expenses that cannot be attributed to this grant award include: food or drink of any kind, the production or materials for creative or performing arts projects, and fundraising or membership cultivation events.
6. All final products generated as part of this partnership grant opportunity will be collected by HumanitiesDC for inclusion in the DC Digital Museum. Awarded grantees will retain shared, non-exclusive copyright to retain copies, publicly distribute, and publish derivative works based on the materials they collect.

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<sup>i</sup> From the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act, 1965 via <http://www.neh.gov>