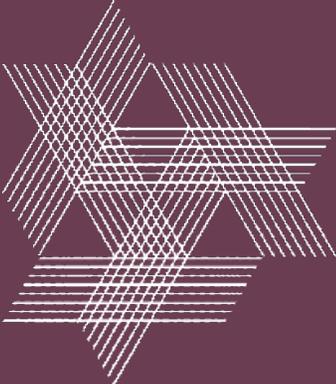


RHODE ISLAND COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES



GRANT GUIDELINES

July 2021



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WELCOME!

Thank you for getting to know us better.

The Council is proud of our long history supporting a wide range of public humanities projects: documentary films that have gone on to premiere at Sundance Film Festival, win Emmys, and gain national broadcast on PBS; research projects that have examined everything from wartime gardening in Rhode Island to how racial integration affected the state's Black baseball leagues; and public projects that have shared stories of Rhode Island's diverse communities through oral histories, exhibits, and publications, to name only a few. We look forward to adding your inspiration to our list.

Please review this document closely to learn more about our grant opportunities and application process.

OUR HISTORY

Rhode Island has an important legacy of promoting the humanities in public life. Our own U.S. Senator Claiborne Pell, recipient of the Council's 2006 Lifetime Achievement in the Humanities Award, was one of the primary sponsors of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965, which created the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The Rhode Island Council for the Humanities was founded in 1973 as an independent, nonprofit affiliate of the NEH.

Our founding purpose—which remains largely unchanged today—is to promote public understanding and appreciation of the tradition of thought and accomplishment that we call the humanities. Our work is based on the conviction that history, literature, philosophy, theology, civics, the arts and other fields of the humanities, are central not only to formal education, but to the daily lives of a free and diverse people.

MISSION STATEMENT

Rhode Island Council for the Humanities seeds, supports, and strengthens public history, cultural heritage, civic education, and community engagement by and for all Rhode Islanders.



WHAT WE FUND

The Council funds nonprofit organizations and individual researchers to deliver meaningful humanities programs to the Rhode Island public.

Through our grants program, we aim to stimulate new research in the humanities, spark thoughtful community exchange, build new audiences for the humanities, innovate new methods in the humanities, and advocate for the importance of the humanities in a lively democracy. We invite you to submit proposals that help us achieve these goals. See the Featured Grants section of our website for sample projects: rihumanities.org/grants/featured-grants/.

Please closely review the various sections of this document to learn more about:

- **The details of each step in our grantmaking process**
- **Our calendar of grantmaking, including when award decisions will be announced**
- **Our funding guidelines and restrictions**
- **Tips for submitting successful applications**



OUR GRANTMAKING PROCESS

The Rhode Island Council for the Humanities maintains two levels of grant support available throughout the year: 1) quarterly mini grants and 2) annual major grants. The processes and deadlines differ for mini and major grants.

We accept proposals via our online application forms, which can be reached by visiting our website at www.rihumanities.org. We cannot accept proposals by mail or e-mail; please take the time to get to know our online system.

Our fiscal year runs from November 1st to October 31st and because our funding comes from a mix of private and public sources, our grants budget changes from year to year.

We encourage you to speak with us about your project before submitting your proposal. Many applicants find this part of the process useful. We can tell you more about our funding priorities and give you feedback about what will make your proposal competitive. We are happy to review drafts of your proposal as well!

OUR GRANTMAKING CALENDAR

All materials must be submitted to the Council through the online grants portal by **5:00 p.m. EST** on the day of the established deadline. Deadlines that fall on weekends or holidays are honored on the next business day. Please pay close attention to our grant deadlines. We want your proposal to get its fair consideration, but in fairness to other applicants and to the process, **we cannot make any exceptions to our deadlines.**



Quarterly Mini Grant Cycles and Deadlines (requests up to \$2,000):

QUARTERLY MINI GRANT CYCLES

ACTION	DATES	WHAT THIS MEANS
STEP 1 There is no pre-registration or filing of an intent to apply for the mini grant application process.		Applicants are encouraged to contact Council staff to discuss their project idea and verify funding availability prior to submitting a proposal.
STEP 2 Proposal drafts submitted to Council staff (optional)	At least two weeks before the quarterly deadline	Staff reviews and provides feedback on polished drafts within a week.
STEP 3 Full proposal deadline	1st of February, May, August, and November	Full proposals must be submitted online by 5:00 p.m. EST.
STEP 4 Council review of proposals	6 weeks	
STEP 5 Award decision notifications	Middle of the following month	Applicants will be notified of award decisions by mail.

Major Grant Cycle and Deadlines (requests up to \$12,000):

MAJOR GRANT CYCLE		
ACTION	DATES	WHAT THIS MEANS
STEP 1 Intent to apply registration forms accepted	October 1 – November 1	Pre-registration for the major grant deadline is mandatory. Intentions are non-binding; however, they must be submitted online by 5:00 p.m. EST on November 1 for you to be eligible to submit a full proposal.
STEP 2 Council staff approval of intents	November 1 - 7	If pre-registrants have permission to move forward to the full application phase, they will be notified by November 7.
STEP 3 Proposal drafts submitted to Council staff (optional deadline)	December 1	Polished drafts will be accepted by staff for preliminary review.
STEP 4 Proposal drafts reviewed by Council staff	December 1 – December 20	Staff reviews and provides feedback on polished drafts received prior to December 1. Feedback is returned by December 21.
STEP 5 Full proposal deadline	January 15	Full proposals must be submitted online by 5:00 p.m. EST.
STEP 6 Council review of proposals	January 15 – March 15	
STEP 7 Award decision notifications	by March 20	Applicants will be notified of award decisions by mail.



DOCUMENTARY FILM & MEDIA PROPOSALS

We generally follow a two- and sometimes three-phase approach to funding documentary film. The phases are outlined in the table below. Filmmakers are encouraged to contact Council staff to discuss their project early in its idea phase.

Requests to support documentary films have their own unique application at the major grant level. The deadlines are the same as the major and mini grant processes. It is only on a rare occasion that we fund finishing or post-production dollars for a film that we have not previously supported. Filmmakers may also apply to our **mini grant program** for research or development of their film project. Additionally, we offer the intermediary phase of script development as a development-level **major grant** request capped at \$5,000. For production or post-production dollars, applicants must have assembled footage of their work-in-progress. We require production-level film grant recipients to produce a final cut of the film for our archive and hold a free public screening in Rhode Island.



HOW TO APPLY FOR A DOCUMENTARY FILM & MEDIA GRANT

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3
Research (mini grants)	Script Development (development-level major grant)	Production & Post Production (production-level major grant)
Requests up to \$2,000 can be made at quarterly mini grant deadlines.	Requests up to \$5,000 may be made at annual major grant deadline.	Average production awards range from \$8-12K. Requests may be made at annual major grant deadline.
Sample of previous film work is encouraged, but not required	Requires sample footage; footage may be from previous project	Requires sample footage from current work-in-progress
Must produce a bibliography and research plan with application	Applicants must produce a film treatment, trailer, or working script at close of grant.	Must produce final cut of film and hold a free public screening in Rhode Island at close of grant

ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY

Organizations may apply for a grant if:

- You have a current 501(c)3 or equivalent tax-exempt status. Fiscal sponsorship is accepted.
- You are in “good standing” with the Council, i.e., you do not have an overdue grant report or a previously defaulted grant.
- You do not currently have an open grant with the Council. If you are a current grantee, we encourage you to reapply after you have satisfactorily closed your open grant.

Individuals may apply for a mini grant if:

- You are planning to do research in the humanities. If you are not doing research, you must find the appropriate fiscal sponsorship of your project and apply for a public project grant.
- You have formulated a solid plan for how you intend to make your research findings public (e.g., lecture, panel discussion, website, radio/television broadcast, podcast, published essay, or book). We encourage you to secure letters of interest from hosting venues or partners.
- Your research is not part of a degree-related pursuit or faculty research project.
- You do not currently have an open grant with the Council. If you are a current grantee, we encourage you to reapply after you have satisfactorily closed your open grant.

DUNS # Requirement

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has adopted the use of DUNS numbers as a way to keep track of how federal grant money is dispersed. Therefore, all institutional grantees (individuals are exempt) must obtain a DUNS number before the Council can disperse any awarded funds. If your institution needs to obtain a free DUNS number, please follow the instructions found on the NEH website: neh.gov/grants/manage/duns-number-requirement.

Authorized Official & Nonprofit Sponsoring Organization Responsibilities

The **authorized official** of the sponsoring organization is the person with primary responsibility for the record-keeping and accounting for the grant funds, matching contributions, and services received. The authorized official may be the executive director, chair of the board, or president. In academic institutions, this person is often the director of the grants or business office. The project director **cannot** also serve as the authorized official.

In the event of an award, the **nonprofit sponsoring organization** is responsible for the project and budget described in the grant application. By applying, the sponsor agrees to the Council’s Grant Guidelines. It is the sponsor’s responsibility to appropriately supervise the project director and ensure the project takes place as described, to use Council funds only as allowed, to acknowledge Council funding in conjunction with the project, and to submit project reports as required. Acceptance of an award also requires the sponsor’s agreement to additional award terms and conditions.

Funding Colleges and Universities

Our primary goal is to increase public access to quality humanities programming. We accept 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.

Out-of-State Applicants

Organizations and individuals based outside Rhode Island are eligible to apply, but should be prepared to articulate the impact their project will have in Rhode Island. The Council prioritizes funding for projects with a clear Rhode Island connection.

ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY (continued)

Repeat Funding & Hiatus Policy

Applicants who have applied for and received grant funding for the same program over four consecutive years are subject to the Council's Hiatus Policy:

An applicant may apply for and receive up to four years of consecutive major grant funding for the same program. Following the fourth year of funding, the applicant must sit out for one year before reapplying for the same program. This policy has been enacted to encourage diversity and to foster innovation in programming. During hiatus, the applicant may apply for funding to support a **substantially different** program.

Resubmission of a Refused Application

If your proposal does not receive funding, we strongly encourage you to consult with staff prior to resubmitting an application.

NEH Restrictions

Since the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities is an independent affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, we are responsible for ensuring that grantees are aware of the legal mandates that apply whenever federal funds are disbursed. For more information, review the Council's Regrant Agreement, which is derived from NEH's General Terms and Conditions for Awards. The Regrant Agreement is made available upon grant award. If you have questions, please contact Council staff.



OUR GRANTMAKING PARAMETERS

Project Accessibility

Your project should connect the public with the humanities, at no cost, and be accessible. Programs should be geared toward a broad and diverse general audience and must allow for differing points of view.

Humanities Scholar Requirement

We require that all projects centrally involve humanities scholars to support the representation of knowledge from one or more humanities disciplines. For independent research projects, the applicant is considered the primary project scholar. In both cases, you are encouraged to connect with additional scholars/experts in the field where appropriate.

Humanities scholars may be academic humanists (university faculty, researchers, and graduate students with advanced degrees in one or more of the humanities disciplines); or public humanists (without formal institutional affiliation, but actively engaged in humanities study with a public record of scholarship, e.g., culture bearers – tribal or neighborhood elders, storytellers, or practitioners of traditional cultural forms).

We require the involvement of humanities scholars to support a broad humanistic perspective as well as in-depth knowledge in a particular field of study. 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.
- **Lecturer, presenter, panelist, or moderator** appearing in a film or public program.
- **Evaluator** upon project completion to assess whether and/or how the project's educational outcomes were met.

Logo Use and Acknowledgment Requirement

Grantees must prominently acknowledge the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities in all promotional materials affiliated with their funded projects. Therefore, you are encouraged to plan ahead to determine whether your timeline will allow you to appropriately plan for publicity. Your publicity must be scheduled to take place after award notifications are made.

Council logos will be provided upon award. If you have any questions about usage, please contact Council staff.

Project Evaluation Requirement

Evaluation helps us learn how effective projects are in communicating humanities content and meeting identified outcomes. We require you to submit an evaluation plan that is appropriate for assessing your project and is representative of your organization's size and experience. Please refer to the Council's Evaluation Toolkit on the Grantmaking page of our website for additional information and advice.

Please Note: Evaluation consultants, who specialize in evaluation methodology, may be hired as part of your Council grant to evaluate program design and delivery. A consultant's evaluation plan and methodology should be outlined in the grant application.



OUR 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, 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. The Council requires you to submit a FULL project budget, NOT a simple indication of how you plan to spend the Council funds requested. The line items included in your budget should be well-researched and organized into appropriate line items.

The Council does not fund retroactively; therefore, an application for a project that will incur costs prior to an award decision will be disqualified.

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 Council funds.
- Use the Council's **Budget Template** to plan and submit your budget.
- Use the budget narrative section of the application to list any additional funding support for your project, including names of other funding organizations, amounts pledged or received, and any pending grant asks.
- Use the budget narrative section of the application to explain any unusual or non-traditional items in your budget.
- Make sure that you have accounted for all costs so that there will be no surprises mid-project.
- **Finally, make sure all the numbers add up.**

Cost-Share Requirement

The Council requires a one-to-one match for nonprofit applicants. Individual grant applicants are exempt from this requirement. Matching funds consist of all project expenses not attributed to the Council grant, including both cash and in-kind contributions (donations of goods and services) made to the project by the applicant and third parties. The total match must at least equal the total funds requested from the Council. Please note: any funds of federal origin cannot contribute to your match.

Budget Template

The Council has devised a **Budget Template** for grant proposals that clearly delineates line items requested and those contributing to the cost-share. Applicants must use our Budget Template when submitting a proposal. The Budget Template is available on our website: rihumanities.org/grants/grantmaking.

Line Items We Do Not Fund *

- Food or beverages
- Academic fees or other degree-related expenses, including academic research
- Fellowships or scholarships
- Courses
- Foreign, non-economy, or extensive domestic travel
- Book publication
- Fundraising or for-profit activities
- Restoration work, construction work, and/or capital costs
- Creation of art or performances in the arts
- Equipment purchases
- Archival acquisitions
- Direct social action or political action, e.g., counseling, legal or medical services, lobbying
- Economic development activities

*Other restrictions may apply.

OUR BUDGET REQUIREMENTS (continued)

A Note on Budgetary Restrictions and Caps

The Council has enacted the following caps listed below pertaining to certain line items. Keep these caps in mind when preparing your budget. Any infringements of established caps will be deducted from the overall award amount.

- **Honoraria / Contracted Service:** You may ask the Council to contribute up to \$300 towards honoraria for scholars; the amount depends on the scholar's level of involvement and normally ranges from \$100 to \$300. Projects that engage scholars in a much deeper role, similar to having a scholar-in-residence, may apply for more than \$300.

In instances where the relationship between the scholar and institution is better represented by a contracted service agreement, the Council allows for requests up to \$2,000. In such cases, a letter of commitment from each scholar detailing his or her role in and commitment to the project is required, accompanied by a CV or resume. (Examples where scholars may be hired for contracted services include: long-term research projects; conducting oral histories; and scholar-in-residence agreements.)

In either case, the sponsoring organization may choose to further compensate the scholar using non-Council funds.

- **Permanent Staffing:** Major grant applicants may apply for up to \$2,000 per person to cover expenses related to direct staffing (including salaries and benefits) devoted to the execution of a funded project.
- **Mileage:** The Council subscribes to the business mileage reimbursement rate issued by the IRS to calculate the deductible costs of operating a car (also vans, panel or pickup trucks) for business. The IRS releases a new federal mileage rate at least once a year; visit www.irs.gov for more information about the year's rate.

- **Travel:** Domestic, economy fares only.
- **Accommodation:** Council contribution not to exceed \$150/day.
- **Indirect Costs:**
 - *What are indirect costs?*

Indirect costs are costs which are incurred by an organization in the execution of its activities that cannot be readily identified with a particular activity. Indirect costs include general overhead costs, such as: bank, payroll processing and audit fees, liability insurance, office equipment purchases or maintenance not directly related to the project, and salaries and benefits of executive or administrative personnel who are not directly engaged in the project.

- *Can I include indirect costs in my budget?*

For organizations with a current federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA): Organizations that have a current federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) may use that established indirect cost rate in their project budget, and may list this indirect cost as either a Council-funded expense or as part of the cost-share. A copy of the NICRA should be submitted with applications for funding. Also note that costs included in the NICRA should not additionally be listed as separate expenses in a project budget.

Organizations without a current federal Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA): For organizations that have never had a NICRA (and are NOT a state or local government, or Indian Tribe receiving more than \$35 million in direct federal funding) may alternatively use in their project budgets a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct cost (MTDC) of the request from the Council. MTDC includes all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, and travel. Please note that rental costs are excluded from the 10% calculation. For more information on MTDC, please visit: www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/2/200.414.

TIPS FOR SUBMITTING SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

Elements of Strong Proposals & Key Points to Keep in Mind

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 our staff's counseling to help you shape your idea 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 stumble 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. We 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. Please be resourceful and ask for only what you need to execute your project.

Resourcefulness. Are you being economical? Are you leveraging additional 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.

Hook us in! Are you bringing a new spin or idea to the table?

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 are intending to serve and how they will find out about your project.

Sloppy prose or vague language. Proof read your proposal. Ask others to read it for clarity. Use clear, quantifiable language.

Hyperbole, contentious ideas, generalizations, grandiose language. "A little known fact..." "Most Rhode Islanders know nothing about..." Show, don't tell. Avoid overgeneralizations.

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. The Council 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!

QUESTIONS? Please feel free to reach out to the grants staff listed on our website: rihumanities.org/about/staff-board