RHODE ISLAND COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES

GRANT GUIDELINES

September 2023

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, and other fields of the humanities, are central not only to formal education, but to the daily lives of a free and diverse people. For more information about how we think about the public humanities, please refer to our Glossary on p. 12.

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.

The Council funds nonprofit organizations and individuals to deliver meaningful humanities projects 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 applications that help us achieve these goals.

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**

- **Key terms and concepts**

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 applications via forms in our online application portal, which can be reached by visiting our website at rihumanities.org. We cannot accept applications 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 application. Please contact us at grants@rihumanities.org or (401) 273-2250.

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 application effective. We are happy to review drafts of your application as well!

OUR GRANTMAKING CALENDAR

All materials must be submitted to the Council through the online grants portal by **11:59 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 application to be considered, and in fairness to other applicants, **we cannot make any exceptions to our deadlines.**

Please note that **applicants cannot submit a major grant Letter of Intent form and a mini grant application for the same project**. Please contact grants@rihumanities.org with any questions.

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 required Letter of Intent form to begin the mini grant application process.		Applicants are encouraged to contact Council staff to discuss their project idea and verify eligibility prior to submitting an application. We are happy to talk to you!
STEP 2 Application drafts submitted to Council staff (optional)	At least two weeks before the quarterly deadline	If you would like feedback on your draft, please save it directly in the online portal and email us to request review.
STEP 3 Application deadline	1st of February, May, August, and November	Applications must be submitted online by 11:59 p.m. EST.*
STEP 4 Review of applications	6 weeks	Board members and community members review applications.
STEP 5 Award decision notifications	Middle of the following month	Applicants will be notified of award decisions by email.

*Updated as of August 2023.

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

	ACTION	DATES	WHAT THIS MEANS
MAJOR GRANT CYCLE			
STEP 1	Letter of Intent forms accepted through online grants portal	October 1 – December 1*	Submitting a Letter of Intent (LoI) form is required to submit a major grant application. The form is non-binding, and is an opportunity for staff to check the eligibility of your project and offer feedback.
STEP 2	Staff review of Letter of Intent Forms	October 15 - December 15*	Staff will respond no later than two weeks from your submission. If your LoI is accepted, you will gain access to the major grant application.
STEP 3	Application drafts submitted to Council staff (optional deadline)	December 8*	Staff are happy to offer feedback on application drafts. To receive feedback, please submit your LoI by Nov. 8 and your draft by Dec. 8.
STEP 4	Council staff offers feedback on application drafts (optional deadline)	December 21	Feedback on drafts is returned through the online grants portal by December 21.
STEP 5	Full application deadline	January 15	Full applications must be submitted online by 11:59 p.m. EST*.
STEP 6	Review of applications	January 15 – March 15	Board members and community members review applications.
STEP 7	Award decision notifications	by March 20	Applicants will be notified of award decisions by email.

*Updated as of August 2023.

DOCUMENTARY FILM & MEDIA GRANTS

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

The Council makes documentary film and media grants through our major and mini grant programs. Requests to support documentary films have their own unique application at the major grant level. It is unusual that we award a production-level grant for a film or media project that we have not previously supported; please contact staff to discuss.

- Individuals and organizations may apply for a **research project mini grant** for research and development of a film or media project.

- Organizations may apply for a **development-level major grant** (capped at $5,000).

- Organizations may apply for a **production & post-production-level major grant** (capped at $12,000).

HOW TO APPLY FOR A DOCUMENTARY FILM & MEDIA GRANT		
PHASE 1	**PHASE 2**	**PHASE 3**
Research (research project 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 provide research sources and name of humanities scholar 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

Please note that, as of September 2023, eligible individuals and organizations may apply for research mini grants and public project mini grants. Only eligible organizations may apply for major grants.

Organizations are eligible to apply for a mini or major grant if:

• You have a current 501(c)3 or equivalent tax-exempt status. Fiscal sponsorship is accepted.

• You are a municipal or state government (including a school or library) or a state, local, and/or federally recognized Indian tribal government.

• 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 major or mini grant with the Council. If you are a current grantee, we encourage you to reapply after you have satisfactorily closed your grant.

Individuals are eligible to apply for a mini grant if:

• Your project is not part of a degree-related pursuit or faculty research project.

• 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 major or mini grant with the Council as a project director or authorized official. If you are a current grantee, we encourage you to reapply after you have satisfactorily closed your grant.

• If you wish to apply for a major grant, you must work with an eligible non-profit sponsoring organization. Fiscal sponsorship is accepted.

Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) Requirement

In order to keep track of how federal money is disbursed, the federal government requires all organizational recipients of federal money to register for a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). As the Council grants federal money, we require all organizational applicants to obtain a UEI and submit it as part of their application. Individual applicants are exempt from this requirement. For instructions on how to obtain a UEI, please visit this website: https://bit.ly/UEIrich

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

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

Project Director Responsibilities
The **project director** is the person primarily responsible for managing and executing the project. On a grant to an individual, this is the role of the individual grantee. On a grant to an organization, the project director is often the point person for the project on staff at the organization. If an organization is serving as a fiscal sponsor for an individual, the project director will be the individual. The project director **cannot** also serve as the authorized official.

Authorized Official Responsibilities
For an organizational grant, the **authorized official** is the person with legal and fiscal responsibility for the grant on behalf of the sponsoring organization. In a non-profit, 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, business, or sponsored projects office. The project director **cannot** also serve as the authorized official.

Nonprofit Sponsoring Organization Responsibilities
In the event of an award to an organization, the **nonprofit sponsoring organization,** the grantee of record, 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 reports as required. Acceptance of an award also requires the sponsor's agreement to additional award terms and conditions.

Repeat Funding & Hiatus Policy

Applicant organizations who have applied for and received major grant funding over the past four consecutive years are subject to the Council's Hiatus Policy. This policy does not pertain to the Council's mini grant program.

Hiatus Policy: An applicant organization may apply for and receive up to four years of consecutive major grant funding. Following the fourth year of funding, the applicant organization is ineligible for major grant funding from the Council for one year. Following the year-long hiatus, the applicant organization will then be eligible to apply for the Council's major grant funding for another consecutive four years.

This policy has been enacted to encourage diversity and equity in the Council's grantmaking.

Resubmission of a Declined Application

If your application 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 Grant Agreement, which is derived from NEH's General Terms and Conditions for Awards. The Grant Agreement is made available upon grant award. If you have questions, please contact Council staff.

Permission for Use of Property

Please note that the Council's funding may only be used to support activities that have permission for use of property.

Project Accessibility

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

Project Partner

We consider a project partner to be any individual or organization other than the grantee that is contributing time and/or resources towards the project's realization in collaboration with the grantee. Working with partners is not required, but can strengthen a project and increase its reach and impact.

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 research project mini grants, the project director is considered the primary project scholar. Regardless of the type of project, you are encouraged to connect with additional scholars 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 or training, 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 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, as well as in all grant-funded events and products.

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 their identified outcomes. If you would like information on how to create an evaluation plan, please refer to the Council's Evaluation Toolkit on the Grantmaking page of our website.

OUR BUDGET REQUIREMENTS

Why We Ask for a Budget

Your budget tells us what money you need to complete your project, how you will spend the funds, and what kind of support you are receiving. The Council requires you to submit a full project budget, not just a budget describing 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, or in other words, does not fund project expenses incurred before the grant award is made.**

Budget To-Dos

- 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 that the line items you'd like the Council to fund are eligible for funding by the Council (see "Line Items We Do Not Fund" section).
- Use the Council's **Budget Template,** linked on the Granmaking page, to plan and submit your budget.
- Use the **Budget Detail** section of the application to provide any additional information that you would like to share.
- **Finally, make sure all the numbers add up.**

Cost-Share Requirement

The Council requires a one-to-one cost-share match for organizational applicants. This match allows the Council to meet our own match requirement for our funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. 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 (for example, if you are requesting $2,000 from the Council, you must have at least $2,000 in your budget from other cash and/or in-kind contributions, and your total budget must be at least $4,000) . Please note: any funds of federal origin cannot contribute to your match.

Budget Template

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

Line Items We Do Not Fund *

- Creation of art or performances in the arts.
- Promotion of a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view; advocacy for a particular program of social or political action; support of specific public policies or legislation; lobbying.
- 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.
- A/V equipment purchases.
- Archival acquisitions.
- Economic development activities.

*Other restrictions may apply.

A Note on Budgetary Restrictions and Caps

The Council caps the amount of funding we contribute towards certain line items. Keep these caps in mind when preparing your budget.

- **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 permanent staff 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 (Organizations only):

- *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.

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

What are the humanities? What is humanities content? What are humanities methods?

The humanities are a collection of disciplines and practices focused on human thought, history and culture. According to the founding legislation of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the federal agency affiliated with RI Humanities, humanities disciplines and practices include, but are not limited to:

- 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.

There are disciplines and practices in the humanities beyond this list, including civic education and cultural heritage. If you are not sure whether a discipline or practice falls under the humanities, please contact us at grants@rihumanities.org.

As described by the National Humanities Center, "Humanities research adds to our knowledge of the world, as scholars investigate differences between cultures and communities around the world and across time, consider the ways art is made and received, or unveil the undercurrents that have shaped history. Humanities education encourages students to think creatively and critically, to reason, and ask questions."

Humanities content refers to topics in any of the disciplines and practices within the humanities.

Humanities methods include, but are not limited to, research on humanities content, close reading, documentation, investigation, interpretation, critical analysis, storytelling, contextualization, dialogue, discussion, and debate.

Please note that the humanities are different from "humanitarianism," or the promotion of human welfare writ large. The humanities are also distinct from the practice of the fine and performing arts.

What are the public humanities?

The public humanities are what happens when people engage together with humanities content and methods outside of academic formats. Historical and cultural museums, cultural heritage societies, historical sites, libraries, and historical and preservation societies are all examples of public humanities organizations, and schools, colleges, and universities also participate in public humanities work. However, the public humanities can, and often do, happen outside of organizations, led by community practitioners.

Public humanities projects can take many forms—an exhibition documenting the history of a neighborhood, a cultural heritage festival celebrating an ethnic community, a panel discussion on the historical context of a piece of theater, a documentary film examining a regional culture, a digital video series educating voters on the legislative process, and so on. Please explore the descriptions of grant-funded projects on our Recent Grants page to get a sense of the tremendous creativity and diversity within public humanities projects.

In the context of your grantmaking program, what is a research project, and what is a public project?

RI Humanities is proud to support **research projects** at the mini grant level that explore humanities content using humanities methods. We prioritize funding projects that have a clear connection to and impact in Rhode Island. Both individuals and organizations can apply for research project funding at the mini grant level *(continued on next page)*.

Research projects are typically driven by one, or several, key research questions that the grantee seeks to investigate. By the project's end, the grantee has come to some key findings related to these research questions, which they then share with the public through their chosen format (lecture, panel discussion, exhibition, website, etc.). The significant majority of time and expenses within research projects are typically allocated to the research component of the project rather than the public presentation of the findings. Sometimes research is conducted as a phase of a larger project, such as a documentary film, and sometimes, the research is the entire project.

RI Humanities is also proud to support **public projects** that explore humanities content using humanities methods. We prioritize funding projects that have a clear connection to and impact in Rhode Island. Both individuals and organizations can apply for public project funding at the mini grant level; only organizations can apply for public project funding at the major grant level.

These **public projects** can take many forms, but what they have in common is 1) their focus on humanities content and methods, and 2) their engagement with communities as co-creators, collaborators, partners, participants, and audience members.

Public projects typically are focused on the creation of public-facing outputs (an event series, exhibition, podcast, walking tour, festival, website, and so forth). The significant majority of time and expenses within public projects are typically allocated to the development and implementation of these public-facing outputs.

What kind of documentary film and media projects you support?

RI Humanities is proud to support **documentary film and media projects** that explore humanities content using humanities methods. We prioritize funding projects that have a clear connection to and impact in Rhode Island.

As described on p. 6 of the Guidelines, we offer three phases of funding for documentary film and media projects. If an individual or organizational applicant seeks support for the research phase of the project, they should apply for a research mini grant. If an organization seeks support for the script development or production/post-production phases of the project, they should apply for a documentary film and media major grant at the appropriate level. Please note that only organizations may apply for major grants.

What is civic health?

The National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) describes **civic health** as "the way communities are organized to define and address public problems." As stated in the *2022 Rhode Island Civic Health Index*, co-produced by RI Humanities, "Civic health reflects the strength and resiliency of our communities." Civic health can be assessed by evaluating five categories:

- **Community well-being**, or the material and social conditions that individuals face daily;
- **Social connection**, or the informal, interpersonal connections among individuals;
- **Public participation**, or individuals' voluntary contributions of time and resources to public life;
- **Collective understanding**, or how individuals understand local issues and factual information about their communities and governments;
- **Engagement with government**, or how individuals of different citizenship statuses interact with and participate in local, tribal, state, and federal governments.

How do the humanities relate to civic health?

The founding legislation of our federal agency affiliate, the National Endowment for the Humanities, states that "democracy demands wisdom and vision in its citizens." RI Humanities believes that the humanities are uniquely equipped to cultivate this wisdom and vision, and to bolster Rhode Island's civic health. Our 2022 report, *Culture Is Key: Strengthening Rhode Island's Civic Health through Cultural Participation*, identifies the many ways that the work of Rhode Island's cultural sector contributes to Rhode Island's civic health, including by bridging differences and facilitating social bonding; illuminating diversity of community identity and experiences; and supporting cultural resilience and continuity.