



Thanks to an allocation and legislative grant from the State of Rhode Island, RI Humanities is excited to announce the second cycle of our THRIVE general operating support grantmaking program. THRIVE provides funding for small cultural heritage organizations and local historical and preservation societies that support and strengthen Rhode Island's many diverse, dynamic communities.

Please read below for details on the program, including a timeline of key dates and an update on applicant funding priority.

### **What is the THRIVE Program?**

The FY25 THRIVE program will offer 22 general operating support grants of \$5,000 each to eligible organizations (see the [Who is eligible to apply?](#) section). Grant funds may be used for expenses related to organizational operations (see the [What can I use this grant award for?](#) section).

The application is open to any organization that fits the program's eligibility requirements (see the [Who is eligible to apply?](#) section). Please see the [What are the funding priorities?](#) section for information on the updated funding priorities for the FY25 cycle.

### **Application and Award Process:**

The application opens **Monday, September 16, 2024**. The deadline to apply is 11:59 pm EST on **Monday, October 28, 2024**. Applicants will be notified of decisions by **Friday, December 13, 2024**. Awardees must conclude their grant-funded activities by **Monday, June 30, 2025**, and will be required to provide a final report to complete their grant requirements.

### **Resources:**

A reference PDF of the application questions for new applicants to the THRIVE program is available [here](#), and a reference PDF of the application questions for returning applicants to the THRIVE program is available [here](#). Applicants must submit a completed application form online through the RI Humanities [grantmaking portal](#) by the application deadline to be considered.

RI Humanities staff are providing one-on-one support during office hours (see the [What if I need help?](#) section). If you have any questions, please contact RI Humanities grants staff at [grants@rihumanities.org](mailto:grants@rihumanities.org).

A recording and slides from the FY25 Grants Information Session will be on the [THRIVE page of our website](#) as soon as they are available.

# THRIVE Program FAQs

## Eligibility, Funding Priorities, and Use of Funds:

### *Who is eligible to apply?*

To be eligible for THRIVE funds, organizations must:

- Be located in Rhode Island and primarily serve Rhode Island residents and visitors;
- Be a non-profit registered with the State of Rhode Island (federal tax-exemption not required);
- Meet the definition of one of the two types of humanities organizations outlined below, as determined by organizational mission and programmatic activities:
  - *Cultural heritage organization*: an organization whose mission and programs include a focus on the preservation, perpetuation, and promotion of heritage, histories, and/or cultural practices and traditions representative of a particular culture and/or people.
  - *Local historical and/or preservation society*: an organization whose mission and programs are dedicated to the preservation, perpetuation, and promotion of the history and culture of a particular place.
- Have a current annual operating budget of \$150,000/year or less.
- Individuals, for-profit organizations, foreign entities, K-12 schools, institutions of higher education, state and local governmental entities, and non-profits that do not fit the above criteria are NOT eligible for this grant opportunity.
- Participation in any other RI Humanities grantmaking program will not affect eligibility or new/return applicant status for the THRIVE program.

### *What are the funding priorities? How will funding decisions be made?*

The application is open to any organization that fits the program's eligibility requirements (see [Who Is Eligible to Apply?](#)). The program accepts applications from both applicants who have not previously applied to the THRIVE program—known as new applicants—and applicants who have previously applied to the THRIVE program—known as return applicants. Previous applications to RI Humanities outside of the THRIVE program do not affect new/return applicant status for the program.

RI Humanities will grant THRIVE awards based solely on eligibility in relation to the funds available. Following the application deadline, RI Humanities staff will review applications for eligibility.

If there are more eligible applicants than resources available, then funding will be distributed based on the following order of priority (updated for the FY25 cycle):

1. Return applicants whose previous THRIVE application did not receive funding;
2. New applicants, with priority given to:
  - Organizations where the communities served by the organization are reflected in organizational leadership;
  - Organizations that are making efforts towards strengthening diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in their programs, services, and operations.

*There will be questions about these two areas in the application for new applicants. A diverse panel of RI Humanities Board members as well as community reviewers will evaluate applicant responses to these questions according to the rubric (available here) to make final recommendations. If a review panel is necessary, RI Humanities will consider age, gender identity or expression, disability, sexual orientation, geography, humanities experience, and other factors when curating this grant program's panel participants.*

3. Return applicants whose previous THRIVE application received funding.

### ***What can I use this grant award for?***

THRIVE awardees may use the funds towards the operational costs of the organization, including:

- Staffing.
- Rent and utilities.
- Program supplies and materials.
- Website and database development and maintenance.
- Marketing and communications.
- Technology equipment.
- Minor facilities repairs and/or improvements.
- Physical and digital accessibility improvements.
- Consultant fees.

If your organization has a question about a possible THRIVE expense not included in the categories above, please contact us at [grants@rihumanities.org](mailto:grants@rihumanities.org).

There is no cost-share/cash-match requirement for this grant opportunity.

### ***What can't I use this grant award for?***

Awardees who receive a grant through this program may NOT use the general operating support funds for the following:

- Expenses unrelated to the operations of the grantee organization.
- Purchase of alcoholic beverages.
- Purchase of firearms, guns, and/or explosives.
- Purchase of land and/or construction of facilities.
- Purchase of gambling equipment or anything related to gambling.
- Competitive regranting, prizes, or awards.
- Donation or loans to other individuals or organizations.
- Placement of funds in the custody of any individual.
- Pre-award costs prior to December 13, 2024.
- Promotion of a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view; advocacy of a particular program of social or political action; support of specific public policies or legislation; lobbying; political activities.
- Transportation of voters or prospective voters to polling places.
- Any fundraising or for-profit efforts, such as social events or benefits.
- Payment for entertainment or amusement activities (subject to approval).

- Undergraduate or graduate school activities (activities which are part of a graduate or undergraduate degree program, or for which academic credit is received).

## **Application Process, Timeline, and Resources:**

### ***How do I apply?***

Application opens **Monday, September 16, 2024**. The deadline to apply is 11:59 pm EST on **Monday, October 28, 2024**. Applicants must submit a completed application form online through the RI Humanities [grantmaking portal](#) by the application deadline to be considered.

A reference PDF copy of the application for new applicants to the THRIVE program is [available here](#). A reference PDF copy of the application for return applicants to the THRIVE program is [available here](#).

**Please note that you access the application for both new and return applicants through the same “FY25 THRIVE Grant Program” application form on our [grants portal](#). To see the correct questions, please answer the “New or Returning THRIVE Applicant” question at the top of the application.**

### **For New Applicants:**

After completing eligibility checks and providing contact information for your organization and authorized officials, the application consists of organizational overview and documentation questions, including your organizational mission statement; two narrative questions; and a plan to use the funds that you will provide by filling out a table in the form.

There will be questions about these two areas in the application. A diverse panel of RI Humanities Board members as well as community reviewers will evaluate applicant responses to these questions according to the rubric ([available here](#)) to make final recommendations.

If a review panel is necessary, RI Humanities will consider age, gender identity or expression, disability, sexual orientation, geography, humanities experience, and other factors when curating this grant program’s panel participants.

### **For Return Applicants:**

You will first complete eligibility checks and provide contact information for your organization and authorized officials. We will then ask if your organization mission statement, communities served, and programs and services have changed since your previous THRIVE application, and if they have, we will ask you to provide updated information. You will also have the option to share any other updates about your organization you’d like. You will then need to provide the overall summary of your organization’s budget for the current fiscal year and documentation of your registration with the State of Rhode Island as a non-profit, as well as your plan to use the funds. You will not have to complete the two narrative questions.

### **All applicants will need the following to complete the application:**

- **Two authorized officials from your organization.**

- The authorized officials of the organization are required to have legal and fiduciary oversight at your organization. Organizational positions that authorized officials hold include executive director, CEO, chair of the board, treasurer, or president. Typically, these individuals are authorized to sign contracts and checks on behalf of the organization. In the event of an award, the authorized officials are responsible for the scope of work and budget described in the grant application. They must serve as signatories on this application and for any grant awarded.
- **Overall summary of your organization’s budget for your current fiscal year.**
  - This could be a one-page Excel spreadsheet or PDF including total projected income and total projected expenses, with a breakdown of sources of income and categories of expenses. In your summary, please only count operating expenses and not capital expenditures. This would mean including any expenses included on an annual income statement (rent, payroll, program expenses), but not including purchases or expenditures that become assets on your organization’s balance sheet (investments, endowments, capital investments of property, equipment, furniture, etc).
- **Documentation of registration as a nonprofit corporation in good standing with the RI Department of State.**
  - We ask for a PDF of the “Entity Summary” for your organization from the RI Dept. of State’s website. You can find this by searching for your organization under “Search by entity name” on the RI DoS’s entity database: <https://business.sos.ri.gov/corpweb/corpsearch/corpsearch.aspx>. Once you have found the record for your organization, please click on the “Entity Name” in the entity results to see your organization’s “Entity Summary.” You can download this summary as a PDF. For an example of RI Humanities’s “Entity Summary” PDF, please [click here](#).

### ***What is the timeline for making decisions and for the submission of final reports for awardees?***

Grant award announcements will be made by **Friday, December 13, 2024** and funds will be disbursed to grantees in **January 2025**. Awardees must conclude their grant-funded activities by **June 30, 2025**.

All awardees will be responsible for completing a final report for their grant. There will be one required written final report due on **Tuesday, September 30, 2025**, through the RI Humanities grantmaking portal, and no other reporting requirements. The report will be brief and focused on assessing the impact of the award and ongoing grantee needs.

### ***What if I need help?***

Julia Renaud, Associate Director of Grants and Humanities Initiatives is available and happy to help you with your application and answer your questions!

We are offering the following grant support options:

- **Virtual Information Sessions:** These sessions include information on both our federally funded major and mini project grant programs, and our state-funded THRIVE general operating support program. They are especially useful if you’re new to the application process or considering submitting a major grant application. We have also implemented some minor revisions to this year’s programs for clarity, transparency, and accessibility, and we will discuss those, as well. A recording will be posted to our [website](#) soon.
- **One-on-One Support Sessions:** Staff offer applicant assistance during these drop-in office hours on a first-come, first-served basis. You can join the waiting room of the Zoom meeting at any

time during the designated window, and staff will let applicants in one at a time in order of arrival. Staff will spend a maximum of 15 minutes with each applicant.

- Register for office hours on **Monday, Sept. 23, 1:00-3:00 pm:**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMtcOChrTMtGtDDppv-oWokEPRVrEjVykg>
- Register for office hours on **Monday, Sept. 30, 1:00-3:00 pm:**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZluduyrrjgpE9LnOKQyeJGJhbzdYt0JmL9t>
- **Application Draft Feedback:** We can provide feedback on a draft of your application. If you would like to request our feedback, please save your draft in the grantmaking portal by October 7 and send us a request via email at [grants@rihumanities.org](mailto:grants@rihumanities.org).
- One-on-one support outside of the opportunities outlined above will be available as staff time allows. Please take advantage of the support provided as you consider your application. The sooner you begin the application process, the more time there will be for us to assist you!
- And, of course, you can always contact us at [grants@rihumanities.org](mailto:grants@rihumanities.org) with any questions.

### ***Where did the THRIVE general operating support program come from?***

RI Humanities is an independent nonprofit founded in 1973 as Rhode Island's state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), a federal agency. Over the last 50+ years, we have awarded over \$10 million in federal funds through 2,000+ grants for public humanities projects to seed, support, and strengthen public history, cultural heritage, civic education, and community engagement by and for all Rhode Islanders.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, nonprofits across the country experienced a surge in public demand for their services and simultaneously, an enormous reduction in their income. As part of the national pandemic response, RI Humanities administered over \$900,000 in federal relief funds through multiple grants, including working in collaboration with our colleagues at the RI State Council on the Arts to develop more equitable, accessible, and responsive grantmaking models.

The needs that the COVID-19 pandemic amplified did not begin with the pandemic, nor have they ended. With the insights gained from these experiences, RI Humanities pursued state funding for a regular general operating support program for the humanities sector. In 2024, the State of Rhode Island included \$100,000 in the State Budget for grants to humanities organizations. With these funds, we developed the THRIVE general operating support program, which supported 18 organizations. To find a list of the initial THRIVE grant recipients, visit the [Recent Grants page](#).

We are grateful to the State of Rhode Island for including \$100,000 in the 2025 State Budget for a second round of the THRIVE program, and to Speaker Joe Shekarchi and Representative Mary Ann Shallcross Smith for supporting an additional \$20,000 State Legislative Grant for the program. We also thank the Rhode Island Department of State for their support of and partnership on this program. We are proud that our state government has taken this historic step toward a long-term investment in one of Rhode Island's most important assets—our cultural heritage and our history—and thrilled for the opportunity to help the state's humanities sector thrive.