



Democracy, Journalism, and the Informed Community Grant Guidelines

This special grant opportunity provides support to Maine non-profit organizations for projects that deepen the public's knowledge and appreciation of the vital connections between democracy, the humanities, journalism, and an informed community. The Maine Humanities Council is eager to support projects that invite Maine communities to ask questions and start discussions about these connections in their daily lives—questions like: What do we need to know for democracy to thrive? What role do journalists and media representatives play in informing our community? How can we identify biases in the information we consume? How do we assess the credibility of so much media content? And more! Funding for these grants is provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation via the Federation of State Humanities Councils.

Funds

- Applicants may request up to \$3,000.
- Grants are for programs and projects related to the theme of the grant (described above) undertaken by non-profit organizations across Maine.
- Funding match and/or cost-share is required.
- Funds cannot be used to cover general operating expenses.
- Funds cannot be used for projects that promote a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view or discriminate against persons or groups.

Priorities

- Organizations serving and led by members of communities traditionally under-resourced in the humanities are encouraged to apply.
 - These groups include people of color, people who identify as LGBTQ+, people who live in rural areas, people with disabilities, people who identify as immigrants or refugees, and people whose first (or only) language is not English. (Please note that this is not an exhaustive list.)
- It is the aim of the Maine Humanities Council to maximize the impact of available funding.

Project Criteria

MHC is looking for projects that:

- Expand Mainers' understanding of what news is and can be.
- Examine the role of journalists and other media representatives.
- Deepen knowledge and appreciation of the vital connections between democracy, journalism, the humanities, and informed community members.
- Have guidance from someone with deep expertise in the project topic.
- Involve the community in the project's process.
- Offer a creative approach to public engagement, using a variety of strategies and involving community partners.

The strongest proposals:

- Make a clear connection with the theme of the grant and the project.
- Have clear goals.
- Clearly state what form the project will take (panel discussion, public talk, etc.)
- Present a well-thought-out budget that details how MHC funding will be used, includes the project's total costs, accounts for the required cash and/or in-kind match, and explains how you reached these figures were reached.

What could projects look like? That is up to you! The project could be an exhibit, film, podcast, conference, or a presentation, but it can also take different forms. Projects may be entirely new, or build on existing activities or initiatives. They may be simple or elaborate, large or small. We are excited to support programs and projects with broad public outreach, humanities content, strong participation from a scholar or topic expert, and robust support from partners in the community. The point is to get people thinking and talking together. When in doubt, ask us if your idea for a project might fit.

We want to support programs and projects that engage communities in discussions about this topic that will be meaningful to them. Think about:

- Who do you want to engage?
- Who you could partner with?
- What kind of experts would make your project rich? (Please reach out to MHC staff if you need assistance connecting with a content expert or scholar for your project)
- What you would like to explore?
- How would you like to explore it?

Projects *must be completed by May 1, 2022*

Final reports will be due *no later than June 1, 2022.*

Eligibility

- 501(c)(3) organizations registered in Maine.
- Maine Tribal organizations.
- Maine public libraries.

- Government agencies; universities, colleges, academic departments; public, private, or parochial schools; churches.
- Fiscal sponsorship is allowed.

Not eligible: Individuals, for-profit organizations, political or advocacy organizations, entities with significant public funding, organizations with an overdue final report for an MHC grant.

Because this is a special grant opportunity:

- We will accept applications from organizations that have been awarded an MHC related grant this year (though preference will be given to those who have not).
- Organizations receiving this grant may apply for other MHC related grants.

Application Review

- Applications will be reviewed by a panel of staff and Board members of the Maine Humanities Council.
- Applications will be evaluated based on the strength and clarity of the project's content, connection with the theme of the grant, goals, outreach plan, budget, and our stated priorities.
- Grant notifications will be made within 8 weeks of final submission.

To Apply

- The application period will open **September 8, 2021**
- Application must be received by midnight, **October 14, 2021**
- Apply online: https://mainehumanities.formstack.com/forms/djic_application

Information Sessions

We will be hosting information sessions online:

- **Tuesday, September 14 (3 PM)**
- **Friday, September 17 (10 AM)**
- **Thursday, September 23 (3 PM)**

[Register online for an information session](#)

Further Questions

Email questions to Lizz Sinclair at lizz@mainehumanities.org; Please be sure to use the subject heading "Democracy Grant" and include your phone number in case we need to reach you. Please allow a business day for a response.