



## **SHARP Grant Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What are the humanities?**

[According to the NEH](#), the humanities include, but are not limited to, the study, interpretation, and discussion 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.

In practice, humanities programming typically involves people in learning, thinking, and talking about important aspects of their own and especially other people's experience of living. Humanities programs typically provide context, and use stories about what people, real or imaginary, have done and how they have lived or might live; ideas about how things are or could be; as well as poems, art, music, or important or interesting objects to ground discussions, exhibitions or presentations.

### **Why is MHC offering two different SHARP grants, and what is the difference between them?**

Because we want to support as many Maine organizations doing public humanities work in the state as we can, we are offering grants for:

1. General Operating Support for organizations with missions rooted in the humanities. These grants can cover a wide range of general organizational costs, which could include programming costs.
2. Project Support for organizations whose mission is NOT rooted in the humanities, but who have a humanities-centered project they would like to offer their communities as part of recovery from the effects of the pandemic (see guidelines for more detail).

## **Can we apply for both kinds of MHC SHARP grants?**

No, organizations can either apply for general Operating support OR project support. We ask that all organizations with humanities-based missions apply for a SHARP General Operating Support grant, as that will provide the most flexibility in how funds can be used. **Exception** - humanities organizations not awarded a grant for operating support may apply for a project grant.

## **Eligibility**

### **Who is eligible to apply for a SHARP grant from MHC?**

These funds are intended to support Maine non-profit organizations whose mission and work involves the humanities or want to develop a public humanities project. Organizations must have faced and be moving forward from hardship due to economic impacts related to the coronavirus. Maine-based nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, state and local governmental agencies, and federally recognized Native American tribal governments are all eligible to apply.

### **Who is NOT eligible to apply?**

Individuals; for-profit organizations; non-Maine based organizations. Please note- organizations may not apply through a fiscal sponsor to meet eligibility requirements.

### **We are not a registered non-profit- can we apply for a grant through a fiscal sponsor?**

Unfortunately, not. However, if your organization will be partnering on a humanities-based public project with an organization that meets eligibility requirements, and both organizations are actively involved in planning, etc., that organization can apply for a SHARP Project Grant for you both.

**My organization is not eligible for MHC's SHARP Recovery Grants, but is at risk of closing if it does not find additional funding. Can an exception be made for us?** Unfortunately, no.

### **I have an open grant with MHC. Can I still apply for SHARP Grant?**

Yes, as long as your organization meets the rest of the criteria. Program expenses may not overlap between the two grants; the SHARP Grant may not serve as cost-share for your grant.

### **We have an overdue grant report for MHC. Can we still apply?**

Please apply if you are eligible BUT make sure that you complete any overdue MHC grant reports (including the CARES Relief Act final report) as soon as possible. All applicants need to be in good standing by the time the SHARP applications are reviewed. Please contact us with questions.

### **Can I receive SHARP Grant and still qualify for another MHC grant?**

Yes! Receiving a SHARP Grant will not impact your ability to apply for MHC's other grants.

### **We received a CARES Relief Grant from last year. Can we apply for a SHARP Grant?**

Yes, if you have submitted your final report you may apply.

**We have applied for other emergency funding (grants and/or loans). Can we still apply for a SHARP Grant?**

Yes. It is important to look at any restrictions for how each type of funding may be spent. For example, you can apply for SHARP Grant if you have applied directly to other federal grant programs (including NEH), but funds you request from us may not be used for costs covered by other federal funds. Make sure to read all guidelines for funds you've applied for.

**Who should we contact if we need help determining whether we are eligible to apply?**

Review the grant guidelines and FAQ, then reach out to Maine Humanities Council grants staff with remaining questions. Because we are working remotely, we ask that you email your questions to Lizz Sinclair at [lizz@mainehumanities.org](mailto:lizz@mainehumanities.org). Please be sure to include your phone number in case we need to call you. Please allow a business day for a response.

## **Use of Funds**

**What can the funds be used for?**

Project Grants can fund direct costs associated with offering a proposed public humanities program/project. For example, this might include costs for staff time; books and materials; honorariums for facilitator/scholar/speakers; and publicity. (This is not an exhaustive list).

General Operating Support Grants for humanities-focused organizations can fund general operating costs, such as salary, utility bills, etc.; strategic planning and capacity building efforts related to preparing, responding to, and recovering from the coronavirus; technical/consultant needs related to a digital transition or in support of preservation and access programs (equipment costs cannot exceed 20% of an award); and equity assessments and planning related to the coronavirus and the economic crisis. In addition, these grants can also support costs associated with offering humanities programs, including the expansion, due to the effects of the coronavirus, of outdoor and virtual humanities programming and activities from traditional environments to those that are more accessible.

**What CAN'T the funds be used for?** The NEH prohibits the use of federal funds for: activities that promote political/religious viewpoints; advocacy of a particular program of social or political action; support of specific public policies or legislation; lobbying; cancellation costs; collections acquisition; the preservation, organization, or description of materials that are not regularly accessible for research, education, or public programming; environmental sustainability; construction and major alterations and renovations; equipment costs in excess of 20% of total project costs; fundraising; travel; overlapping project costs with any other pending or approved application(s) for federal funding and/or approved federal awards; funds for activities supported by other non-NEH federal funds; and regranting.

Funds also cannot be used for projects that fall outside of the humanities and the humanistic social sciences (including the creation or performance of art; creative writing, autobiographies, memoirs, and creative nonfiction; and quantitative social science research or policy studies).

**Please refer to the SHARP Grant guidelines; contact us with questions regarding funding restrictions.**

## **Application**

### **Can I save a draft of my SHARP Grant application and come back to it?**

You can return to your draft application as often as you wish prior to submission. Be sure to save your answers often as you complete the application.

**Does the character limit on the application boxes include spaces?** Yes, it does.

**Can we mail the application?** No. Applications must be submitted via the on-line platform.

### **We are not sure if we have a DUNS number, or I know that we don't. Can we still apply?**

Yes, you can still apply– BUT we recommend that you go to [Dun & Bradstreet's website](#) to check your number or apply for one right away. It can take some time to process requests and SHARP funds cannot be dispersed to your organization without it. It is free.

**If we get our DUNS number after we have submitted our SHARP Grant application to MHC, should we send it to you?** No, please wait. If your organization is awarded funds, we will ask you for the DUNS number when we contact you about your award.

**When are applications due?** The application deadlines are listed in the guidelines. Applications must be submitted before midnight on the given date; late submissions not accepted. We strongly advise submitting before 2pm that day in case you run into difficulties.

**How will I know if my application was received?** Once you submit your application, you will receive an automatic confirmation. If you don't, please check to see if it was caught in your spam filter (check junk mail and trash folders), then contact us.

### **What kind of paperwork will we need to fill out if we are awarded a grant?**

If your organization receives a grant, you will need to sign and return an agreement. You must provide a DUNS number in the agreement. If you don't have a DUNS number yet, you can apply for one, free of charge, online, through [Dun & Bradstreet](#).

### **If we are awarded a grant, will we need to do any reporting?**

Yes. We will ask you to complete a final report and will send the form to everyone awarded a grant. While we are still determining the details you'll need to provide, expect to include a narrative describing the impact of these funds on your organization and how you spent them.

### **How can I learn more?**

MHC will be hosting **informational webinars** about the SHARP Grants. Each session will include an overview of the two grant types, eligibility, and application requirements, and time will be set aside for Q&A. Informational webinars will be held on the following dates and times:

### **For an overview of both grants and special focus on General Operating Support:**

Friday, Aug. 20 (10-11 am); Monday, Aug 23 (10-11 am); Wednesday, August 25 (3-4 pm); Thursday, Aug. 27 (3-4 pm)

### **For Project Support Grants:**

Thursday, Oct. 7 (3-4 pm) and Friday, Oct. 14 (10-11 am)

## Register online for an information session

Sessions are free but registration is required. Sessions with low registration numbers may be cancelled due to lack of interest. Send questions for the information sessions via email to [lizz@mainehumanities.org](mailto:lizz@mainehumanities.org); please include the session you will be attending and your phone number in case we need to reach you.

## **I'm interested in talking with someone about applying. Who do I contact?**

The best way to contact us is by emailing Lizz Sinclair, Program Coordinator for Grants & Partnerships ([lizz@Mainehumanities.org](mailto:lizz@Mainehumanities.org)). Please send your questions and include your phone number. Please allow at least one business day for a response. Because of the volume of applicants, we strongly encourage you to read the FAQ sheet and guidelines (and ideally attend an information session) before reaching out to MHC staff.



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