

ALABAMA PUBLIC HUMANITIES GRANTS

Grant Guidelines

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OUR MISSION

The Alabama Humanities Alliance exists to provide context, build empathy, and make our state a more vibrant place to live. All through the humanities.



ABOUT US

Founded in 1974, the Alabama Humanities Alliance (AHA) serves as the primary source of grants for public humanities programming in Alabama. As a nonprofit and nonpartisan statewide organization, we're passionate about using the humanities to make Alabama better. AHA supports programs that encourage impactful storytelling, lifelong learning, and civic engagement. We believe the humanities can bring Alabamians together and help us better connect with the communities we call home.

AHA awards Alabama Public Humanities Grants on an ongoing basis. These grants support public humanities programming in communities statewide, helping to promote the appreciation and understanding of history, literature, civics, culture, and more.

NOTE: On April 2, 2025, the U.S. Department of Government Efficiency terminated AHA's longstanding partnership with the National Endowment for the Humanities — and, with it, the federal funding that had sustained AHA's statewide grantmaking. As a result, AHA paused all of its grantmaking. Thanks to support from individuals and philanthropic foundations, AHA is once again offering Mini Grants, as of May 19, 2025. AHA's Media Grants and Major Grants remain suspended.

ABOUT THE HUMANITIES

The humanities are a set of disciplines related to human culture and the study of how people process and document the human experience. The humanities emphasize analysis, interpretation, and dialogue to provide cultural context to stories and ideas that allow us to reflect on who we are as individuals and members of a global society. Exploring humanities subjects — such as Alabama's history, storytelling, cultures, traditions, and more — encourages critical thinking and gives us the opportunity to relate to others.

AHA defines the humanities disciplines as follows:

- Languages
- Literature
- History
- Philosophy and ethics
- Jurisprudence
- Archaeology
- Comparative religion
- Art history, theory, and criticism
- Social sciences employing humanistic methods



AHA STAFF CONTACT

AHA's grants director is available to provide guidance on eligibility, project ideas, budget questions, and technical difficulties. Comments and suggestions are based solely on prior experience with grant review sessions and do not guarantee funding.

Applicants may contact AHA's grants director, Graydon Rust, at grust@alabamahumanities.org or by [scheduling a call](#). Additional information is available online at alabamahumanities.org/grants.

WHO WE FUND

The Alabama Humanities Alliance awards grants to Alabama-based nonprofit organizations, accredited public and 501(c)(3) institutions of higher education, state and local government agencies, and federally recognized Native American tribal governments. All applicants must have an EIN and must be in good standing with AHA and the federal government.

Applicants often include the following types of organizations:

- Libraries and archives
- Museums and historic sites
- Cultural and community organizations
- Civics clubs and historical societies
- Religious organizations
- Colleges and universities
- Municipalities and government entities
- Film, television, and digital media producers

AHA regularly awards grants to organizations that have a primary mission that falls outside of the humanities, including organizations focused more on the arts and social services, as long as the funding supports a public humanities project.

AHA *does not* award grants to individuals, for-profits, federal agencies, or out-of-state organizations. AHA considers organizations as "in-state" if they are registered in Alabama, have a physical presence in Alabama, or regularly serve an Alabama audience.

AHA *does not* award grants to organizations through fiscal sponsors or agents. Partnerships are allowed, but an eligible organization must lead as the primary applicant and serve as the grantee.



WHAT WE FUND

AHA awards grants to support public humanities projects for a variety of topics and formats, and encourages applicants to develop imaginative proposals for their audiences. (Note: See page 6 for a breakdown of primary project components.)

The three essential components of successful grant proposals are:

1. Public participation
2. Strong humanities content
3. Direct involvement of humanities scholars.

AHA often funds the following types of projects:

- Lectures and panel discussions
- Conferences and symposia
- Cultural and literary festivals
- Reading discussions
- Teacher workshops
- Temporary/traveling exhibitions
- Public and oral history projects
- Moderated art talks
- Documentary films or series
- Podcasts, apps, digital media

WHAT WE DON'T FUND

AHA does *not* fund lobbying, fundraising; general operating support; construction or restoration; the publication of books; permanent installations; or food and beverages outside of travel costs. AHA *does not* fund projects that promote a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view; that advocate for a particular program of social or political action; or that support specific public policies or legislation.

AHA does *not* fund general arts education or projects that emphasize the creative process of art rather than the interpretation and discussion of humanities content, such as the cultural, aesthetic, or historical contexts of art. AHA rarely funds costs related to artmaking, art classes, concerts, creative writing, theatrical performances, or playwriting.

AHA is *unlikely* to fund projects that emphasize, motivation, empowerment, leadership, economic development, research or scholarship, study towards an academic degree, or the *process* of learning without significant interpretation and discussion of specific humanities content.



GRANT CATEGORIES

ACTIVE: Mini Grant (up to \$2,500)

Designed for flexibility, Mini Grants feature a simplified and quicker application process to support a broad range of projects. Mini Grants are offered monthly/on a rolling basis and evaluated monthly. Mini Grants do *not* have a minimum required cost share match. Project activities cannot begin until at least 45 days after the application deadline.

CURRENTLY SUSPENDED: Major Grant (up to \$10,000)

Major Grants are offered three times a year and support a broad range of projects. Major Grants require a 1:1 cost share match, including cash and in-kind contributions. Project activities cannot begin until at least 60 days after the application deadline.

CURRENTLY SUSPENDED: Media Grant (up to \$15,000)

AHA's annual Media Grants provide support for large documentary films, television and radio programs, and digital or web-based projects. Media Grants require a 2:1 cost share match, including cash and in-kind contributions. Project activities cannot begin until at least 90 days after the application deadline.

APPLICATION PROCESS

AHA encourages all applicants — and particularly first-time applicants — to contact AHA's grants director to discuss project ideas and verify eligibility before beginning the application process. Contact Graydon Rust at grust@alabamahumanities.org or by [scheduling a call](#).

Optional draft proposals: AHA is committed to providing support throughout the application process, including feedback on preliminary applications meant to strengthen final proposals. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a preliminary application, composed of a draft narrative and budget, to AHA for feedback on eligibility and allowability. Preliminary applications must be submitted through the online portal at least one month before the final application deadline.

How to apply: AHA's application process is entirely digital. To apply for a grant, you must first create an account through our [Online Grant Management System](#).



APPLICATION DEADLINES

Grant category	Preliminary application	Final application	Award notification
Mini Grant	One month prior	First of each month	30 days
Major Grant*	February 15 June 15 October 15	March 15 July 15 November 15	45 days
Media Grant*	May 15	June 15	75 days

**AHA's Major and Media Grants are suspended, effective April 1, 2025, due to the federal termination of our longtime partnership with the National Endowment for the Humanities.*

NOTE: Funded activities may begin:

- 45 days after the final application deadline for Mini Grants
- 60 days after the final applications deadline for Major Grants
- 90 days after the final application deadline for Media Grants

GRANT REQUIREMENTS I: PRIMARY PROJECT COMPONENTS

I. Public participation

AHA-funded projects should connect the public to humanities topics and themes through programs that respond to community interest, encourage dialogue, and stimulate audiences to think critically about humanities topics. Projects must be open to a non-academic audience and should target a diverse audience, including underserved populations and locations.

AHA prioritizes funding programs that are open to the public at no cost. Applicants may, however, charge modest fees when necessary. When charging fees, AHA encourages applicants to offer scholarships, free admission days, and other flexible admission policies to keep projects accessible to the broadest possible audience.

Applicants may design projects to target a particular population, such as teachers, veterans, the elderly, or the incarcerated. However, applicants may not limit participation to dues-paying members of a specific organization. For programs held at colleges or universities, applicants must demonstrate a commitment to reach an audience beyond the campus community.



II. Humanities content

The subject and topic of all AHA-funded projects must include one or more of the humanities disciplines (see page 2). Humanities content should be central to the project and adequately explored and interpreted through quality humanities scholarship.

Applicants should present humanities themes and content to their audience in an engaging format that stokes curiosity, promotes reflection, and allows people to better understand the vibrant and complex world in which we live.

Public programs should encourage dialogue by presenting balanced viewpoints and raising questions among scholars and the audience.

III. Humanities scholars

AHA-funded projects must include the involvement of at least one humanities scholar to provide in-depth knowledge of the humanities content and support adequate interpretation of the material. AHA defines a humanities scholar as an expert in one or more humanities disciplines.

A scholar's expertise may result from holding an advanced academic degree in the humanities, from a verifiable record of working, teaching, or publishing in the humanities, or from serving as the keeper of community traditions and knowledge. Examples of scholars include a tribal elder, an independent expert on American Literature, and a history professor at a university.

Humanities scholars may serve the project in a variety of roles, including as consultants, researchers, presenters, and evaluators. In general, humanities scholars must have expertise relevant to chosen topics and should be involved in both the planning and implementation of the project. AHA prefers to fund projects that connect the audience directly with scholars.

While AHA only requires one humanities scholar per project, applicants should connect with additional scholars when appropriate. For major and media grant applications, applicants must involve at least one scholar who is not also serving as the project director. Applicants may also benefit from the involvement of professionals who may not meet the definition of a humanities scholar, including public educators, artists, librarians and archivists, and scholars from non-humanities disciplines.



GRANT REQUIREMENTS II: ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Cost share

The amount and type of cost-sharing, or cost-matching, required for AHA-funded projects varies by grant. In general, the cost share consists of all project expenses not attributed directly to potential funding provided by AHA, including funding from the applicant's own budget, cash raised from third-party sources, anticipated program income (such as admission fees), or in-kind contributions (donated time or services).

All cash and in-kind contributions provided to a project by a grantee are acceptable as cost sharing when they meet the below criteria. They must be:

- Verifiable from grantee's records
- Necessary and reasonable for the proper and efficient accomplishment of project objectives
- Used to support activities that are included in the approved project narrative
- Incurred during the grant period
- Allowable under applicable federal cost share requirements

When an applicant is not able to calculate the exact cost involved in contributing its own equipment, space, services, etc. to the project, then the applicant must indicate in the project budget the basis for determining the value of the contribution.

Program income

Program income is gross income that is earned or received by an awardee from the activities supported by award funds or from products resulting from award activities. It includes, but is not limited to, income from fees for services performed and from the sale of items produced under an award; usage or rental fees for equipment of property acquired under an award; admission fees; broadcast of distribution rights; and license fees and royalties on patents and copyrights.

Program income does *not* include rebates, credits, discounts, and interest earned on any of them. Awardees may use the program income that they generate during the award period to meet their cost-sharing requirements. Awardees may deduct the costs incident to the generation of program income — if these are not already charged to the award — to determine program income. AHA places no restrictions on the use of program income earned after the award period.



Project Director

AHA requires all applicants to name a Project Director who is responsible for managing and implementing the grant project. The Project Director should ensure compliance with the grant guidelines and terms of the grant agreement, and help prepare the narrative and financial portions of all reports.

Financial Officer

AHA requires applicants to name a Financial Officer to oversee all record-keeping and accounting of grant funds, matching contributions, and services received. The Financial Officer may *not* also serve as the Project Director. The Financial Officer is usually a qualified accountant or bookkeeper and may be from the applicant organization or a third party. The Financial Officer, in consultation with the Project Director, should help prepare the financial portion of all reports.

Project evaluation

AHA requires applicants to submit an evaluation plan that is appropriate for assessing the project's identified goals. Evaluations are meant to gather the feedback necessary to improve future programming and may include audience surveys and questionnaires, independent evaluators, and evaluation consultants.

Grant period

The grant period encompasses both the period of performance and budget period for each grant award. All project activities must be completed within the grant period and all project costs attributed to the award, including the applicant's cost share match, must be incurred within the grant period.

Applicants request their own grant period start and end dates based on their project timeline. The grant period may begin after a required waiting period that allows AHA to review applications and begin the administrative requirements of grant awards. The waiting period begins on the final application deadline and lasts 45 days for Mini Grants, 60 days for Major Grants, and 90 days for Media Grants. The grant period may remain open for up to two years.

Repeat funding

AHA will not fund multiple grants with overlapping grant periods to the same organization, and AHA will not fund the same project through awards to multiple organizations.



For colleges and universities, AHA considers each academic department or affiliate as a separate organization when considering repeat funding. For municipalities, library systems, and other large institutions with multiple locations or affiliates, AHA may consider each affiliate as a separate organization when considering repeat funding.

In the case of annual programs or long-term projects, AHA will only fund the same program or project for **three** consecutive years. After the third year, organizations must sit out one calendar year before reapplying for the same project. When sitting out a year, applicants may apply for funding for a different project.

AHA will consider an organization's past award activity as an example of the organization's capacity to plan, execute, and administer successful projects. AHA will also consider and evaluate each application on its individual merits and does not guarantee repeat funding.

Post-award responsibilities

Grantees must remain in compliance with AHA guidelines over the course of their funded projects. Grantees are also expected to recognize AHA's support in any promotional materials about their project; a media toolkit is available from AHA for this purpose.

Applicants may contact AHA for sample copies of grant agreements and other resources related to post-award responsibilities, such as reporting requirements, financial management standards, acknowledgment of support, and compliance with applicable federal laws.

GRANT REQUIREMENTS III: BUDGET REQUIREMENTS

AHA requires all applicants to submit a project budget using AHA's budget narrative template supplied on all application and reporting forms. The applicant's budget should illustrate how the applicant will spend AHA funding and the estimated cost share match, including cash and in-kind support from both the applicant and third-party sources.

All project costs must be reasonable, necessary to accomplish project objectives, and incurred during the grant period. Costs should be valued in relation to rates paid for similar work, current market prices, or fair rental charges. Grantees must follow standard accounting procedures for all grant awards.

An organized and thorough budget bolsters a proposal and instills confidence in AHA's reviewers that the applicant has the capacity to complete the project successfully. The line items included in the budget should be well-researched and organized into the following categories:

1. Administration

AHA does not directly fund administrative expenses, but applicants may apply direct administrative costs to their cost share match. Such expenses often include salaries, including fringe benefits, for personnel such as the Project Director, Financial Officer, and other personnel employed by the applicant who are directly involved in project management.

Applicants may include volunteer services as cost shares if the service is an integral and necessary part of the project. Volunteer services should be calculated at a rate paid for similar work by the organization or by other employers in the same labor market.

2. Honoraria

Honoraria includes payments to humanities scholars, professionals, and other resource personnel directly involved in the project. Expenses for salaried employees of the applicant's organization are not eligible for AHA funding and should be included as cost share match, except in the case of salaries and fees for production staff involved in media grants. Applicants may employ interns, students, or similar positions for project activities if individuals are not receiving academic credit for their work.



3. Travel

Applicants may request travel expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items for travel costs that are necessary, reasonable, and directly attributable to specific project work. These costs may be charged on an actual cost basis, on a per diem or mileage basis, or on a combination of the two, based on the organization's established travel policies.

Necessary airfare must be undertaken on U.S. flag air carriers at the customary standard commercial airfare (coach or equivalent), the federal government contract airfare, or the lowest commercial discount airfare unless otherwise approved. AHA does not fund international travel.

4. Supplies

Applicants may request funding for supplies based on the cost of purchased items. AHA regularly funds consumable supplies such as office materials or resources that the applicant will give away to program participants to increase participation, including copies of books. AHA does not fund costs for promotional items and memorabilia, such as gift bags, t-shirts, and souvenirs.

AHA does not typically fund purchases of non-consumable supplies that the applicant will continue to use beyond the current project, including computers, furniture, or software. Applicants should justify requests for non-consumable supplies in the notes section of the budget. AHA does not fund archival or institutional acquisitions.

5. Facilities and equipment

Applicants may request funding to rent venues, meeting spaces, production facilities, etc. to carry out project activities. Applicants are often able to secure facilities at no cost, or at reduced rates, and may include donated space as in-kind cost share match.

AHA does not fund purchases of equipment, defined as tangible, nonexpendable personal property having a useful lifespan of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$10,000 or more per unit. Applicants *may* request funding for equipment rentals.



6. Promotion and publicity

Applicants may request promotional and publicity expenses to advertise the grant project, including through direct mail, radio and television, and social media. AHA does not fund advertising and public relations costs designed solely to promote the grantee or activities beyond the grant project.

7. Other expenses

Applicants may request funding for other necessary expenses as allowable per AHA guidelines. We recommend verifying eligibility of other expenses with AHA before submitting a final application.

8. Indirect costs

Indirect costs are expenses that the applicant incurs for common or joint objectives that the applicant cannot directly attribute to project activities. Indirect expenses generally include overhead and administrative costs such as office equipment purchases, liability insurance, executive salaries, accounting, and legal services.

Applicants may charge indirect costs at a rate of 15% of total direct costs. Applicants also may use unrecovered indirect costs as part of their cost share match.

