

Grants Roundup

From January through June 30, 2026, the Alabama Humanities Alliance awarded 31 Mini Grants to nonprofit organizations across Alabama, totaling more than \$71,000. You can learn more about these grantees on the pages that follow.

AHA's grants help promote the understanding of our shared history, literature, culture, art, and more. These funded programs connect Alabamians to our past, to the world around us and, ultimately, to each other. AHA grant recipients often include libraries, arts centers, schools, museums, historical societies, universities, senior centers, chambers of commerce, cultural organizations, literacy groups, and more.

In 2026, AHA has prioritized grant applications that connect with America's 250th anniversary — by either exploring our founding history and principles or by sparking community conversations about our past, present, and future. For more on AHA's current grant offerings — including the return of our Major Grants (up to \$15,000 per project) — visit alabamahumanities.org.



A historical demonstration during the "America's 250th" series at Huntsville's Alabama Constitution Hall Park.

2026 Alabama Speaks Stillman College | Tuscaloosa

The Alabama Speaks speaker series invites Tuscaloosa and the surrounding community to engage with a richly woven tapestry of stories, ideas, and perspectives that shape our shared experience. Rooted in the humanities — history, literature, philosophy, and culture — the series brings together Alabama-centric scholars, artists, and community leaders to spark meaningful dialogue on the

issues, traditions, and values that define Alabama while connecting us with our global community.

AGS Summer Seminar Alabama Genealogical Society, Inc. | Statewide (Montevallo)

"Roots, Resting Places and Revelations: How Genealogy Research Uncovers It All" is an America at 250-themed summer seminar for both novice and seasoned genealogists. This event takes place at American

Village and features talks on a broad range of topics that influence genealogy research — including, for instance, intelligence and counterintelligence during the American Revolution, as well as African American funeral traditions, the changing landscape of Alabama cemeteries, and more.

America's 250th at Alabama Constitution Hall Park Alabama Constitution Village Foundation | Huntsville

Alabama Constitution Hall Park has a monthly public speaker series in observance of America's 250th anniversary. Each monthly event addresses a distinct theme aligned with America 250 priorities and current best practices in public history. Programs feature historians, educators, and cultural practitioners, and incorporate discussion, primary-source interpretation, and live demonstrations to strengthen civic engagement and historical literacy.

America 250: Family Stories That Shaped a Nation Northeast Alabama Genealogical Society | Gadsden

This is a one-day educational event designed to strengthen participants' research skills through expert-led instruction, comprehensive materials, and story-sharing. The event title is part of Northeast Alabama Genealogical Society's 27th annual genealogical seminar, which is themed around "Everyday People, Everyday Records: Genealogy from our Nation's Beginning."

America's 250 Years of History: Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts Tri-State Expo Juneteenth Affairs | Dothan

The nation's 250th freedom anniversary involves not only the victorious Revolutionary War, but multiple chapters in its historical, ever-evolving search for freedom. Two of those chapters of freedom were the 1960s movements for civil and voting rights in the South. This program evaluates the philosophies and tactics that challenged the definition of American citizenship and voting rights of the 1960s.

Baldwin: Letter to My Nephew Southern DanceWorks | Birmingham

Baldwin: A Letter to My Nephew is a multidisciplinary performance and community engagement project inspired by James Baldwin's 1963 essay. Southern DanceWorks is partnering with the Magic City Poetry Festival to offer "Baldwin: Letter to My Nephew Reading Discussion and Workshop," focused on fostering an analysis and discussion of the essay, a historical examination of Baldwin's time in Birmingham, and communal

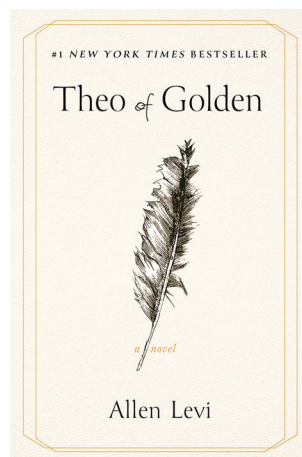
dialogue around Baldwin's wisdom and broader literary contributions.

Civic Tapestry: Weaving History into Public Life Troy University | Troy

Troy University's Office of Civic Engagement is providing an opportunity for local youth to better understand the critical role of history in public life by exploring local and civil rights history through an intergenerational oral history initiative, as well as a visit to The Legacy Museum.

Community Read: Theo of Golden Florence-Lauderdale Public Library | Florence

The Florence-Lauderdale Public Library hosts a month-long series of programs and activities based on themes from Allen Levi's novel, *Theo of Golden*. All events include activities for all ages, experts to discuss the book's themes and meanings, and public programming at the library.



The Florence-Lauderdale Public Library hosted a 2026 community read of *Theo of Golden*, a novel about "the power of creative generosity, the importance of wonder to a purposeful life, and the invisible threads of kindness that bind us to one another."

"We're thankful for the Alabama Humanities grant that allowed us to bring national humanities speakers to our AI Symposium, exposing our community to a broad spectrum of ideas and establishing the U.S. Space & Rocket Center, and Alabama, as a leader in the AI discussion."

—Nancy Noever, U.S. Space & Rocket Center (Huntsville)
"AI Symposium 2025: Exploring the Relationship Between the Human Condition and Artificial Intelligence"

Cultivating Meaning and Identity Within Art History University of West Alabama | Sumter

The University of West Alabama's Department of Communications & Creative Arts invites undergraduates, graduates, and community members within Sumter County to explore the theme "Meaning and Identity Within Art History." This experience includes four trips to Birmingham and Montgomery area museums and to Rural Studio sites in Greensboro. Alan Brown, Ph.D., a UWA English professor, presents a lecture correlating to this project theme.

Emancipation Proclamation Jubilee United Federation of Artistic Minds | Huntsville

This public-facing festival commemorates the legacy of the Emancipation Proclamation through community-centered interpretation, dialogue, and cultural expression. Anchored in Alabama's

local history, the jubilee engages scholars, artists, and residents in examining the meaning of emancipation and its ongoing relevance. The project connects history to community life and encourages meaningful participation across diverse audiences.

Freedom School 2026 Higher Ground Society | Statewide (Elba, York, Daphne)

Inspired by the Freedom Schools of the 1960s, Higher Ground hosts three Saturday community education workshops in Elba, York, and Daphne — examining the omitted people, places, philosophies, and practices that have advanced social progress. Led by scholars with deep knowledge and experience with Alabama and its history, the Freedom School sessions draw connections between past and present social challenges within American society. Each session emphasizes history, community, and education.

“The AHA grant award allowed us to offer meaningful, engaging experiences that would not have been possible otherwise — especially in a rural area with limited access to arts resources. AHA fills a critical gap in funding that we cannot find elsewhere.”

—Kelly McKenzie, Monroe County Heritage Museum (Monroeville) “Monroeville Literary Festival”

From Denial to Access: Education and Freedom in the Blackbelt E&B Fields Community Service Programs | Akron

A Juneteenth community roundtable honoring African American educators age 75 and older who attended segregated schools and later taught during desegregation in Alabama’s Blackbelt. Through guided conversation, they will share personal stories of resilience and the journey toward greater educational access, preserving local history for future generations.

Gee’s Bend Oral History Project Sew Gee’s Bend Heritage Builders | Boykin

Francesca Charley, a fifth-generation Gee’s Bend quilter with a BA in Anthropology from the University of Alabama, is recording interviews with Gee’s Bend residents and artists like Loretta Pettway Bennett, John Adam Gragg, Annese Ross Jackson, Marlene Bennett Jones, and Tinnie Dell Pettway. A scholar partner for this project is Stacy Morgan, a UA professor who teaches African American

art history, American folklore, and popular culture. Recordings and transcripts will be shared online.

Iron Hills Folk School Humanities Night Sand Mountain Cooperative Education Center | Birmingham

The Iron Hills Folk School, a people-driven institution designed to foster lifelong learning, hosts a “Humanities Night,” featuring three scholars exploring the theme of belonging in an era of “social recession.” This interdisciplinary panel will engage with the audience to investigate how to rebuild third spaces and communal identity through the lens of social history, psychology, and political economics.

Judge Frank M. Johnson, Jr. Institute Oral History Project The Judge Frank M. Johnson Jr. Institute | Montgomery

This project captures the stories, memories, and accounts of events from people who knew, worked with, or were affected by the rulings of Judge Frank Johnson in order to preserve these stories for future historical and educational use.

The objective is to preserve — on video, for future generations — stories from history as a resource on the life and times of Judge Frank Johnson and the constitutional civil rights cases that changed the course of America.

Launching the AI Ethics “Iron Bowl” University of Alabama | Tuscaloosa

Alabama’s historic rivalry meets civic dialogue on the role of artificial intelligence. This intercollegiate ethics debate brings together student teams from The University of Alabama and Auburn University to analyze and discuss real-world cases involving A.I., technology, and society. The public attends as observers and joins a moderated Q&A afterward, transforming the debate into a broader civic conversation.

Lawrence County Chautauqua Lawrence County Chautauqua | Moulton

A modern-day Chautauqua is an adult education and cultural movement that brings together lectures, performances, and historical reenactments to communities focusing on a specific theme. These events provide “living

Sacred Harp singing featured in an AHA-funded episode of the Alabama Folklife Association’s podcast in 2025.





Author Phyllis Biffie Elmore (at left) at a 2026 reading of her Sumter County-based memoir, *Quilt of Souls*, hosted at Hoover Public Library.

history” through scholars and actors portraying historical figures. The goal is to educate, entertain, enlighten, and empower the people of Lawrence County and the surrounding area.

MAAFA Commemoration 2026 Culture Connexions | Montgomery

The Montgomery community is invited to gather for the 15th Annual MAAFA Commemoration at Riverfront Park, along the Alabama River. MAAFA (MAH-AH-FA), derived from Kiswahili, means “great calamity.” Introduced by scholar Marimba Ani, Ph.D., the term names the Middle Passage and the multigenerational legacy of enslavement also known as the African Holocaust. This commemoration invites participants to reckon with this history through an African lens.

Maybe Something Beautiful Spring Camp National Hook Up of Black Women | Birmingham

A five-day spring camp for K-5 grade students that uses literature and the arts to explore themes of community responsibility, creativity,

and collective well-being. Centered on the children’s book *Maybe Something Beautiful*, by Isabel Campoy and Theresa Howell, the camp engages students in reading, guided discussion, and collaborative art — “making” that highlights how learning and creativity can transform and uplift communities.

Montgomery Photo Festival: 2026 Juror Talk Society of Arts & Crafts | Montgomery

The Montgomery Photo Festival brings Carol McCusker, Ph.D., to jury its annual photo competition and present a free public talk in the Georgine Clarke Alabama Artists Gallery. Dr. McCusker speaks on the history of photography, beginning with examples from Daguerre in the early 1800s and citing examples from every era of major innovation in photography — up to the present day and including groundbreaking artists like Zanele Muholi.

Music on the Mountain Burritt on the Mountain | Huntsville

Music on the Mountain is a public humanities program at Burritt on the Mountain that explores the musical

and cultural traditions of North Alabama through live performances and interpretation in Burritt’s historic park. Presented during Huntsville Music Month, the program connects visitors to regional history through folk music, storytelling, and hands-on experiences that highlight how music reflects community life and cultural heritage across generations.

Project Threadways Symposium: Echoes of the Forks of Cypress Project Threadways | Florence

The annual Project Threadways symposium unites scholars, makers, students, and others to explore history, community, and power through the lens of fashion and textiles. The 2026 symposium will feature a screening of the film *Echoes of the Forks of Cypress*, created by Frederick Murphy. Following a screening at the Shoals Theatre, there will be a facilitated panel discussion with three descendants of the storied North Alabama plantation.

Race and Religion in Dialogue University of Alabama in Huntsville | Huntsville

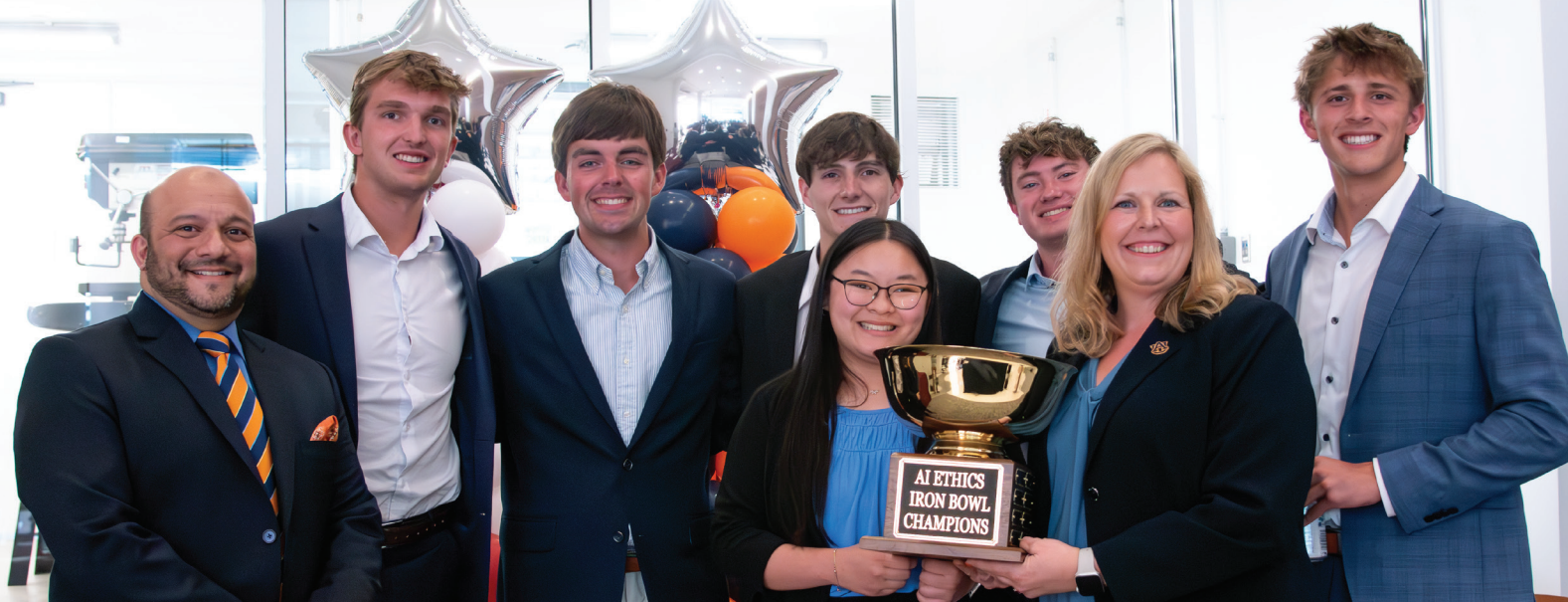
From the colonial period to present day, the U.S. has been deeply shaped by the relationship between race and religion. Michael O. Emerson, Ph.D., headlines a series of events on the 25th anniversary of his co-authored book, *Divided by Faith*. Dr. Emerson engages this public audience in conversation about our past and shared future through an interfaith dialogue, a seminar on the study of religion, and a guest lecture on religion, race, and culture.

Senior Prom Reimagined Birmingham AIDS Outreach, Inc. | Birmingham

Senior Prom Reimagined is a documentary film project exploring Alabama’s LGBTQ history through oral history interviews, archival imagery, and an immersive prom event. This film aims to capture, and preserve, the resilience, humor, heartache, and humanity of an older generation of Alabamians, whose stories can now serve as inspiration for younger generations.

“AHA helps us connect individual family stories to Alabama’s broader cultural history, while making it possible for us to deliver high-quality programs that preserve Alabama’s heritage and promote critical thinking in genealogical research.”

—Lynn M. Schlick, Alabama Genealogical Society “Alabama Genealogical Society Summer Seminar” (Gadsden)



Auburn University took home the inaugural AI Ethics Iron Bowl championship in 2026. This AHA-funded program brought together students from Alabama and Auburn to consider ethical decision-making in the age of artificial intelligence. Photo: Sena Nane.

Summer Blues Camp 2026 Alabama Blues Project | Tuscaloosa

Summer Blues Camp 2026 is a one-week program that concludes with a free public concert. The camp is open to all students ages 6 to 18. Children get hands-on experience with both traditional instruments and handmade African instruments, learning about the histories associated with the instruments. Blues Camp not only introduces children to the Blues as an art form, but also teaches how it has influenced modern music and culture.

Summer Workshop for Middle and High School Social Studies Teachers Auburn University at Montgomery | Montgomery

AUM hosts up to 30 teachers for a one-day workshop that offers both content and examples of assignments and activities that teachers can use with their students. Topics include history, economics, political science, civic virtues, and geography, based on feedback from the workshop AUM held last year, with a focus on interactive and experiential learning. Priority is given to teachers from public schools in the

10 counties surrounding Montgomery.

Sumter County Voices and Visions: Quilts, Songs, and Stories from Sumter County Southern Music Research Center | Birmingham

The Southern Music Research Center is collaborating with a diverse network of local organizations to present author Phyllis Biffle Elmore in a series of three events devoted to the historic African American quilting and singing traditions of Sumter County, Alabama, where Elmore was raised. Events include a reading of Elmore's memoir, *Quilt of Souls*; a community quilting and storytelling session; and a public conversation about Sumter County's significant musical legacies.

Titusville Community Ambassadors Project Titusville Development Corporation, Inc. | Birmingham

This project is helping to train docents for the Titusville community, preparing residents to conduct guided historical tours. A custom handbook and materials from the community's cultural heritage program serve as

learning aids, along with field trips, a class project, and a public presentation. College students serve as project facilitators. The goal is to support community revitalization by restoring a sense of pride and contributing to the local tourism economy.

Unearthing a Forgotten History: Life on the Land Before Bellingsrath Bellingsrath Gardens and Home | Theodore

Bellingsrath Gardens and Home is one of South Alabama's most iconic public historic sites, yet the property's older history, including as Lisloy Plantation and Parker Place fish camp, remains underexplored. An archaeological investigation of the grounds is under way. AHA support is helping to translate findings into educational opportunities that give voice not only to the story of the landscape, but also to the lifescape of the people who lived and labored there.

Voices from the Stacks: School Librarians' Evolving Role in K-12 Generative AI Education University of Alabama | Tuscaloosa

"Voices from the Stacks" brings together K-12 school librarians, educators, parents, and community members to explore the librarian's evolving role amid generative artificial intelligence. Through community conversations, a public lecture, a library display, a resource guide, and a public forum at the Tuscaloosa Public Library, the project shares practitioners' voices alongside scholarship on AI literacy, information ethics, and librarians' historic role in guiding information revolutions.

AHA's 2025 Grantees

Mosaic magazine did not publish in 2025, but we certainly took note of the community-enriching grantee projects that took place all across Alabama!

Read all
about our
2025
grantees
at the QR
code here.



2025 Impact

The humanities, for a better Alabama

We see a future for a better Alabama by nurturing the best in us as people.

Our work is a public service that promotes lifelong learning, strong communities, a healthy democracy, and prosperity for all Alabamians.



2025 Highlights



Alabama History Day

Engaged 2,500 students and teachers statewide in grades 6-12. The 2025 state contest took place at Troy University at Montgomery; our '26 contest is at American Village.



Bridging Divides

AHA hosted a Healing History convening in Montevallo and a Woven Together event in Birmingham, bringing Alabamians together across differences to discover all we share in common.



Museum on Main Street

AHA's Smithsonian partnership brought another traveling exhibit to Alabama. SPARK! Places of Innovation visited Sylacauga, Dothan, Brewton, Uniontown, Athens, and Fort Payne.



Teacher Scholarships

Since 2003, our Jenice Riley Memorial Scholarship has now awarded \$100,000 to Alabama teachers, supporting history and civics projects; '25 Riley Scholars came from Geneva, Florence, Russellville, and Huntsville.

**AHA original programming and grantee programming combined.*