

GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION GRANTS



(revised September 12, 2017)

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■ Introduction to Discussion Grants

Mass Humanities makes Discussion Grants to support public humanities projects—centered around moderated discussions—that benefit and engage Massachusetts residents. All nonprofit and government organizations that serve Massachusetts residents are eligible to apply, and all projects must be firmly grounded in the humanities and involve at least one Humanities Scholar.

The Humanities

Mass Humanities grants support projects that use history, literature, philosophy, and the other humanities disciplines, primarily to deepen public understanding of current social, political, and economic issues, thereby enhancing and improving civic life. More information is available online: masshumanities.org/about/the-humanities/.

Humanities Scholars

A humanities scholar is *usually* an individual with an advanced degree (M.A. or Ph.D.) in a humanities discipline who is actively engaged in research, writing, and/or teaching in that field. More information is available online: masshumanities.org/grants/scholars/.

Discussion Grant projects are usually formatted as one event or as a series of discussion events. Priority is given to projects that engage audiences with limited contact to humanities programming (*Engaging New Audiences for the Humanities*) and projects that respond to our current theme (*Negotiating the Social Contract*).

Engaging New Audiences for the Humanities (ENA)

To receive priority, an application must include a detailed and realistic plan for engaging new and larger audiences for humanities programs. Special consideration will be given to projects that involve audiences with limited access to the humanities, which include: young and working adults, incarcerated people, teens, and nursing home residents. More information is available online: masshumanities.org/grants/ena/.

Negotiating the Social Contract (NSC)

Our current theme, *Negotiating the Social Contract*, gives priority to projects that explore how Americans participate in creating and sustaining basic social and economic relationships that shape our society, both historically and in the present. Most successful projects ask participants to examine contemporary social-contract negotiations, in the context of a *particular* issue of interest to a *particular* community—such as immigration, gun rights/control, or participation in the democratic process. More information is available online: masshumanities.org/grants/social-contract/.

Discussion Grants carry a maximum of \$3,000. Projects that meet the *ENA* and/or the *NSC* incentives are eligible for a maximum of \$3,500. All recipient organizations must demonstrate a *cash* cost-share that equals or exceeds 10 percent of the total funds requested and a *total* cost-share (cash *and* in-kind) that equals or exceeds the total funds requested.

■ What Mass Humanities Does & Does Not Fund

Through Project Grants, Discussion Grants, and Local History Grants (SIRs and RIGs), the Mass Humanities Grants Program supports public humanities projects that benefit and engage Massachusetts residents.

Mass Humanities Regularly Funds:

- Humanities-based civic conversations
- Public lectures, conferences, and panel discussions
- Discussion events
- Research and inventory projects for local history organizations
- Museum exhibitions and related programming
- Programming to complement theatrical and artistic productions
- Oral history projects
- Walking tours
- Digital and audio humanities projects
- Film pre-production and distribution projects
- Interactive websites that function as public humanities programs
- Content-based professional development workshops for teachers
- Public humanities projects in many other forms

Mass Humanities Rarely Funds:

- Theatrical and artistic productions—unless the performers and production personnel (actors, stage hands, scriptwriters, etc.) are a primary audience benefitting from the project’s humanities content
- Preservation of objects or archival materials—unless directly related to a public program
- Scholarly research or writing—unless directly related to a public program
- Scholarships, fellowships, or travel to professional meetings
- Projects that result in academic credit for participants
- Purchase of supplies/equipment (over \$250 for a single project)
- Purchase of food/refreshments (over \$250 for a single project)
- International travel
- Honoraria/stipends over \$500 for single events

Mass Humanities Does Not Fund:

- Projects by individuals
- Websites, or other materials, used to promote the organization
- Capital improvements or operating expenses
- Construction or restoration
- Indirect costs of institutions
- Profit-making or fundraising projects
- Costs of entertainment
- Professional theatrical productions
- Projects that advocate a single point of view, ideology, or specific program of social action
- Projects for which the direct beneficiaries are primarily college students
- Projects aimed primarily at audiences outside Massachusetts
- Honoraria/stipends over \$1,000 for single events

All projects related to Native Americans must, whenever possible and reasonable, engage the agreement, advice, and cooperation of members of the Native community and follow NEH’s Code of Ethics for Projects Related to Native Americans, which is available online: www.neh.gov/grants/manage/code-ethics-related-native-americans.

■ Types of Discussion Grants

Discussion Grant projects allow for the exchange of thoughts, opinions, and ideas in response to almost any kind of text: films, talks, performances, tours, exhibits, lectures, and more. A Discussion Grant project may be a series of events, such as a film-and-discussion series; it may be a one-time event that includes active reflecting and discussing; or it may be something different, such as the creation of an exhibit or walking tour along with a discussion.

Discussion Grants are also made to nonprofit and government organizations to host popular Mass Humanities programs:

Family Adventures in Reading (FAIR)

FAIR brings children and adults together to enjoy outstanding and thought-provoking picture books. Three FAIR syllabi are available for use by educators, each organized around an overarching topic: *character, relationships, or community*. FAIR discussions are designed to engage even very young readers with complex ideas: what it means to be an individual in relation to others, how we grow and change, how we understand and encounter those who are different from us, how we define our goals and responsibilities, what we expect from society, and what we want and expect from the future. Educational resources and publicity materials are available online: masshumanities.org/programs/family-adventures/.

Literature & Medicine: Humanities, Health, & Healthcare

Literature & Medicine series use literature, journalism, and other texts to explore issues central to caring for people, whether they are well, sick, or dying. These projects stimulate discussions on various health issues, such as advanced and chronic illnesses, mental illness, and issues around death and dying. These series take place in a wide spectrum of civic, cultural, and service organizations: community centers, places of worship, faith-based organizations, hospitals, community health centers, libraries, and veterans and military/service organizations. Educational resources are available online: masshumanities.org/programs/literature-medicine/.

Reading Frederick Douglass Together and Civil Rights Discussions

Annual public readings of Frederick Douglass’s famous Fourth of July address, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” take place in communities throughout the state. When complemented by moderated discussions, these events are eligible Discussion Grant projects. Such Civil Rights Discussions—centered around Douglass’s speech or another speech or text by a civil rights leader—stimulate informed and open conversation around racial conflict and relations in the United States. Educational resources and publicity materials are available online: masshumanities.org/programs/douglass/douglass-resources/.

■ Grant Application Review Criteria

Grants are awarded in open competition on the basis of the following criteria:

Humanities Content

Are the humanities central to the project? Does the proposal clearly articulate the issues, questions, or themes to be addressed? Does the topic have current relevance, given the audience and location? Does the project allow for diverse points of view or responses?

Mass Humanities Priorities

Mass Humanities prioritizes projects that engage audiences with limited contact to humanities programming (through our *Engaging New Audiences for the Humanities* initiative) and projects that respond to our current theme, *Negotiating the Social Contract*. How well does the project respond to *ENA* and/or *NSC*?

Personnel

Are the humanities personnel right for this project, and are the scholars and other personnel involved well qualified for the roles they will play? Have the scholars been involved in planning the project?

Audience

Do the applicants have a clear sense of the audience they are trying to engage in the project? Are the topic, format, venue, and schedule appropriate for the intended audience?

Outreach

Does the proposal include a clearly outlined and effective plan and adequate budget for attracting the intended audience?

Do the outreach methods suit the intended audience? Is the plan realistic?

Plan of Work

Are the project's objectives clearly stated and achievable? Is the format workable and appropriate? Is the scheduling realistic? Are there enough people to pull it off, and is the ratio of volunteer to professional labor reasonable?

Budget

Do the project costs seem reasonable and justified? If additional funds are needed to complete it, is the plan for securing them feasible? Is the budget realistic in terms of the scale of the project and the anticipated results?

Organization Capacity

Does the sponsoring organization appear to have the capacity to implement the project successfully? Would this project take place without this grant? If a collaboration is involved, have both/all organizations made a commitment to the project?

■ Deadlines, Routines, & Procedures

Mass Humanities awards Discussion Grants three times each year, and the deadline schedule is available online:

masshumanities.org/grants/deadlines/.

Applicants may submit an online inquiry form (LOI) at any time, but a Discussion Grant LOI is due at least two weeks prior to the application deadline. If the project is eligible, staff will respond to the LOI with questions and suggestions. Once approved, each LOI/application is assigned to a staff member who works with the applicant as needed to develop the project and complete the application forms.

All nonprofit and government organizations are eligible to apply. A nonprofit does not need to be a 501(c)(3), but it must have begun the registration process with the IRS or have a fiscal sponsor. If using a fiscal sponsor, the applicant should list the fiscal sponsor as the "sponsoring organization" in the online application system.

Applicants may apply for only one grant at a time, and grantees may have only *one* grant open at a time. If you have an open grant, the final report must be submitted and approved *no later* than the application deadline. Applications from one organization—especially for the same or similar programs—submitted in successive years will be reviewed each time in competition with other proposals; continued funding cannot be promised.

Notification of a Discussion Grant award is approximately three weeks after submission. Funded events may take place no sooner than 30 days after the date of grant award notification. Discussion Grant projects are usually completed within one year.

Mass Humanities has publicity requirements for all grant recipients, which are available here: masshumanities.org/grants/publicity/.

If you have any questions about Discussion Grants, please contact Abbye Meyer (ameyer@masshumanities.org / 413-584-8440 ext. 102) or Melissa Wheaton (mwheaton@masshumanities.org / 413-584-8440 ext. 100) for support.

■ How to Apply Online

The Mass Humanities online grant application process has three parts: an inquiry form (LOI), an optional draft, and a final application.

Step 1: Submit an LOI

First, go to the Online Grant Application. If you don't already have an account, register by selecting the "Create New Account" button. You are prompted to enter your contact information, including a required email address, information about the organization, and its authorizing official. Your email address and password that you set up on the next screen will be your account logon. Please write your logon information down for future reference.

Once you have registered and created a new account, proceed to the "Applicant Page" and select the type of grant for which you're applying. An "LOI Page" will open; provide the necessary information on that page and click the "Submit Form" button. Your work on the LOI can be saved and returned to; it does not need to be completed in one sitting.

The information provided in the LOI helps staff determine if the project is eligible for MH funding in this grant category. If approved, you will receive an email notification and can then access the full application by logging on to the account. If declined, you will receive an email explaining why your project is ineligible for consideration, and will not be able to access the full application at that time.

Step 2: Create a Draft (Optional)

Drafts are *optional* for Discussion Grant applications. If you would like to submit a draft, communicate directly with your Program Officer. During the draft stage, *do not click on the “submit” button*. The “submit” button is reserved for the time when the final application is complete and ready to be submitted for consideration. Once the draft portion is complete, notify your Program Officer, who will review your draft application and provide you with feedback.

Step 3: Submit a Full Application

When the application, including all the supporting materials, is complete and ready for submission, press the “submit” button. Fields marked with * are required. Applications are due by midnight on the deadline date. In fairness to all applicants, all deadlines for grant applications are firm.

The above instructions appear online at: masshumanities.org/grants/applying-online/.

The online grant application system is available here: www.grantinterface.com/Process/Apply?urlkey=masshumanities.

Discussion Grant Application Materials

The final section of this document includes lists of questions for both the *Discussion Grant LOI* and the *Discussion Grant Application*. While the LOI asks preliminary questions, the application includes four in-depth sections: *Project Information*, *Nonprofit Sponsoring Organization Information*, *Personnel*, and *Uploads*. The *Uploads* section includes the following materials, explained here in detail:

Budget

The Budget Form (masshumanities.org/files/grants/onlineapp/dg_budget.doc) must be completed.

Funds may *not* be requested for expenses incurred before the beginning of the grant period, and expenditures made before the grant period may *not* be used in the cost-share.

Organizations must provide at least a one-to-one total cost-share. The *cash* cost-share must equal or exceed 10 percent of the MH funds requested, and the total cost-share (cash *and* in-kind) must equal or exceed the MH funds requested.

- Cash contributions—when actual money changes hands—may include paid staff time, travel costs, or expenses paid from the organization’s operating budget, registration fees, or other funding sources (except NEH).
- In-kind contributions may include the use of facilities, supplies donated to the project, and volunteer time. In Massachusetts, volunteer time is valued at approximately \$30/hour.
- Line items need not be matched equally.
- MH funds may not be used to pay indirect costs, but such costs may be included in the cost-share.

No more than \$1,000 of MH funds may be used for a stipend/honorarium for a single person at a single event. MH rarely approves stipends/honoraria over \$500.

MH funds may be used to pay for reasonable travel (transportation, lodging, and subsistence) expenses for project personnel (usually scholars and other speakers). MH rarely funds international travel (outside of Canada, Mexico, the U.S., and U.S. territories and possessions). MH funds for meals and lodging may not exceed \$250/day.

MH funds may not exceed \$250 for costs of food for project audiences/participants.

MH funds may not exceed \$250 for the purchase of reusable equipment needed for the project.

MH funds may not be used for tickets if the revenue from ticket sales goes to the sponsoring organization, but such costs may be included in the cost-share.

Project Scholar's Statement

The Project Scholar must prepare a short statement, using the Project Scholar's Statement Form (masshumanities.org/files/grants/onlineapp/dg_statement.doc), explaining humanities themes/questions/issues and anticipated moderation strategies for engaging audiences. The statement is *not* merely an endorsement of the project or a letter of commitment.

Resume/CV of the Project Scholar

Include a resume/CV of the Project Scholar. Please limit it to two pages. The resume/CV should present credentials for involvement in the project.

Events Listing

You must upload the completed Events Listing Form (masshumanities.org/files/grants/onlineapp/eventtemplate.doc) with information on both public and private events. If funded, your public events will be included on our website and in our monthly emails, so you must update Mass Humanities with any changes to your event(s) as soon as possible.

Application Contract

The Application Contract Form (masshumanities.org/files/grants/onlineapp/dg_contract.doc) must be uploaded with signatures from the Project Director and Project Treasurer.

All forms are available in the online grant application system and here: masshumanities.org/grants/downloads/.

■ Discussion Grant LOI & Application Questions

Below are complete lists of questions for both the *Discussion Grant LOI* and the *Discussion Grant Application*.

You can also generate these lists by clicking on "Question List" when in the online application system (<http://www.grantinterface.com/masshumanities/common/logon.aspx>).

Discussion Grant - 2018

Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities

Inquiry form

Preparation

Have you read about Mass Humanities' program priorities and about the humanities on the Mass Humanities website?

Choices

Yes

No

Project Title*

Mass Humanities will do public outreach using your title.

Character Limit: 100

Amount Requested*

Character Limit: 20

Timing of the Project*

Tell us when your project will begin and end. Most Discussion Grant projects are completed within a year.

Character Limit: 1000

Project Summary*

Describe your project. Name the organization, the amount of money being requested, and the type of project for which the money will be used. Briefly describe the format of the discussion event(s), the purpose of the event(s), and the intended audience(s). Include a brief introduction to the humanities topics—as well as any non-humanities topics—that the project will ask audiences to consider.

Character Limit: 2000

Describe the expected audience.*

Even if an event is “open to the general public,” you may have an idea of which people in the community may attend, and you may target specific groups. How will this project attract the targeted audience? Why is this project a good idea for the targeted audience?

Character Limit: 1000

Should this project be given priority under the "Engaging New Audiences" initiative?

If yes, please describe the ways your project will attract and engage audiences that are considered "new" to public humanities programming. If the project is NOT responding to this initiative, please leave blank. (Please refer to [Engaging New Audiences for the Humanities](#) on website.)

Character Limit: 1000

Humanities Issues*

Summarize the humanities-based theme(s) of your project. What issues and questions will be posed to audience members? Please include relevant information on texts or events connected to the discussion(s).

Character Limit: 1000

Should this project be given priority under the "Negotiating the Social Contract" initiative?

If yes, please describe here. If the project is NOT responding to this initiative, please leave blank. (Please refer to the website for details on the [Negotiating the Social Contract](#).)

Character Limit: 1000

Project Scholar*

Tell us about who is planning and moderating the discussion(s), or let us know if you would like us to help you find someone. If more than one humanities scholar will be involved, please designate one the primary Project Scholar, who will advise the entire project. (The Project Scholar must provide a short statement to include in the final application.)

Character Limit: 1000

Has the organization had a grant from us before?*

Choices

Yes

No

I don't know

How did you learn about Mass Humanities?*

Tell us how you found us.

Character Limit: 275

Mass Humanities Program Officer*

Have you spoken with a Program Officer about this particular project? Tell us who by selecting from the pull-down list.

Choices

Abbye Meyer

Rose Sackey-Milligan

David Tebaldi

I don't remember the name

I have not spoken with a program officer yet

Other comments or questions?

Character Limit: 1000

Discussion Grant - 2018

Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities

1) Project Information

Project Title*

Mass Humanities will do public outreach using your title.

Character Limit: 100

Amount Requested*

Character Limit: 20

Grant Period Start Date*

When will you begin grant-related work on your project? Grant-related work cannot begin until after the award notification.

Character Limit: 10

Grant Period End Date*

When will the grant-related work on your project be complete? Include about a month for reporting.

Character Limit: 10

Project Summary*

Describe your project. Name the organization, the amount of money being requested, and the type of project for which the money will be used. Briefly describe the format of the discussion event(s), the purpose of the event(s), and the intended audience(s). Include a brief introduction to the humanities topics—as well as any non-humanities topics—that the project will ask audiences to consider.

Character Limit: 2000

Discipline(s)*

Please select up to three relevant disciplines for your project. Make sure at least one is a humanities discipline. Non-humanities disciplines are indicated by asterisks.

Choices

African American Studies

African Studies

American Studies

Anthropology*

Archaeology

Architecture*

Arts: Criticism*

Arts: Fine & Visual (non-humanities)*

Arts: History
Asian Studies
Civics
Classics
Communications*
Comparative Literature
Criminology*
Economics*
Education
Environmental Studies
Ethics
European/Russian Studies
Film Studies
Folklore
Foreign Languages*
Gender Studies
General Humanities and Theory
Geography*
Geology*
Health & Medicine*
History
History: American
History: Local
History: Massachusetts
History: World
Immigration Studies
International Studies
Islamic Studies
Jewish Studies
Journalism
Jurisprudence
Labor Studies
Latin American Studies
Latino Studies
Library, Archive, Museum Studies
Linguistics
Literature
Literature in English (not American)
Literature: American
Literature: American (not in English)
Literature: Children's and Young Adult
Literature: Non-English
Literature: World
Lusophone Studies (Portuguese)
Media Studies
Medieval Studies
Middle Eastern Studies
Musicology
Native American Studies

Natural Sciences*
 Other Ethnic Studies
 Performing Arts*
 Philosophy
 Physical Education*
 Poetry
 Political Science*
 Psychology*
 Public Administration*
 Religion
 Rhetoric
 Science, Technology & Society*
 Sociology*
 Storytelling*
 Theater (playwriting or dramaturgy)
 Urban Studies
 Women's Studies
 Writing*

How will the project be organized?*

Explain the preparation required before the discussion event(s). Then, describe the format of the event(s), when and where the event(s) will be held, who will be involved, and how audience members will be able to access any necessary texts or events.

Character Limit: 2000

How will the discussion(s) be structured?*

Moderated discussions generally take one of two forms: either a small-group discussion in response to texts or events, or a panel discussion among invited guests with whom audience members will interact. Both forms rely on moderation and guidance from a humanities scholar, and Mass Humanities prioritizes projects that provoke active participation among audience members.

Character Limit: 2000

Describe the expected audience.*

Even if an event is “open to the general public,” you may have an idea of which people in the community may attend, and you may target specific groups. How will this project attract the targeted audience? Why is this project a good idea for the targeted audience?

Character Limit: 2000

Should this project be given priority under the "Engaging New Audiences" initiative?

If yes, please describe the ways your project will attract and engage audiences that are considered “new” to public humanities programming. If the project is NOT responding to this initiative, please leave blank. (Please refer to [Engaging New Audiences in the Humanities](#) on website.)

Character Limit: 1000

Humanities Issues*

Summarize the humanities-based theme(s) of your project. What issues and questions will be posed to audience members? Please include relevant information on texts or events connected to the discussion(s).

Character Limit: 1000

Should this project be given priority under the "Negotiating the Social Contract" initiative?

If yes, please describe. If the project is NOT responding to this initiative, please leave blank. Please refer to the website for details on the [Negotiating the Social Contract](#).

Character Limit: 1000

Describe your outreach and publicity plans.*

How will you publicize the project and grant from Mass Humanities? How will you publicize your planned event(s)? What materials will you create and rely on most? What sources are you able to use to get information to potential audiences? When will you begin your publicity plan?

Character Limit: 2000

2) Nonprofit Sponsoring Organization Information

Organization's DUNS #*

A DUNS number identifies your organization and is required to receive federal dollars. If your organization does not know its DUNS number or needs to register for one, please see the DUNS information sheet.

Character Limit: 10

Does your organization receive \$750,000 or more each year in federal funding?*

Do not include funds from Mass Humanities. The answer to this question will NOT affect your chances of receiving funding.

Choices

Yes

No

3) Personnel

Project Director's First and Last Name*

The Project Director organizes the project and completes online reporting.

Character Limit: 125

Project Director's Position/Title*

Character Limit: 75

Project Director's Address*

Provide a mailing address that includes the city, state, and zip code.

Character Limit: 250

Project Director's Email*

Character Limit: 125

Project Director's Daytime Phone Number(s)*

Character Limit: 100

Name & Email Address of the Person Submitting this Application

If you are submitting this application and are NOT the Project Director, provide your first and last names and your email address. Otherwise, leave blank.

Character Limit: 200

Project Treasurer's First and Last Name*

The Project Treasurer is the person who keeps track of project income and expenses, pays bills, and is responsible for financial documentation. The Project Director and Project Treasurer must be unrelated individuals.

Character Limit: 125

Project Treasurer's Position/Title*

Character Limit: 125

Project Treasurer's Address*

Provide a mailing address that includes the city, state, and zip code.

Character Limit: 250

Project Treasurer's Email*

Character Limit: 125

Project Treasurer's Daytime Phone Number(s)*

Character Limit: 30

Project Scholar's First and Last Name*

The Project Scholar has an advanced degree in a relevant humanities field, in-depth knowledge of the subject matter, and is prepared to moderate discussions.

Character Limit: 100

Project Scholar's Position/Title*

Provide the professional title and/or position of the Project Scholar.

Character Limit: 150

Project Scholar's Address*

Provide a mailing address that includes the city, state, and zip code.

Character Limit: 200

Project Scholar's Email*

Character Limit: 150

Project Scholar's Daytime Phone Number(s)*

Character Limit: 100

4) Uploads

Note: Uploaded documents show as uploaded only after you save the application. **Important information about upload fields:**

- Each field accepts only one document. You can replace a document previously uploaded simply by uploading another file (there is no delete button).
- You may need to combine multiple documents prior to uploading. If they are all of the same type, such as Word, you can combine them in Word before uploading. If they are mixed formats, you may need to turn them into PDF files and then combine them into one file before uploading.
- Creating PDF files: If you need one, you can download a recommended free PDF creator.
- Combining PDF files: Instructions can be found here if you need to combine multiple PDF files into one file for uploading.

Events Listing (private and public)*

Upload the completed events listing (doc) in this field. Update Mass Humanities with any changes to your event(s) as soon as possible.

File Size Limit: 2 MB

Project Scholar's CV/Resume*

Upload a resume or CV for the Project Scholar.

File Size Limit: 2 MB

Project Scholar's Statement*

The Project Scholar must prepare a short statement—of about 500 words and following the DG Statement (doc)—explaining humanities themes/questions/issues and anticipated moderation strategies for engaging audiences.

File Size Limit: 2 MB

Budget*

Upload the completed budget form (doc) in this field.

File Size Limit: 2 MB

Additional Upload

Your Program Officer may request, or you may want to provide, additional documents. For example, if you are proposing a series of discussions, you may upload a syllabus or schedule here.

Character Limit: 400 | File Size Limit: 3 MB

Signatures Document*

Download the application contract form (doc) to your computer. Complete the document with the signatures and information required. Scan as PDF or use the Fax-to-File service available in the Tools menu and upload the completed file here.

File Size Limit: 2 MB

For Submission: Complete the application including all the supporting materials. Fields marked with * are required. Click on the "submit" button to send your completed application to Mass Humanities.

For your records: For a complete finished application for your records, click on "print packet." A pdf will be generated of your entire application.