DISCUSSION GRANT GUIDELINES FOR
OPEN DISCUSSION GRANTS

(revised January 23, 2017)

CONTENTS

OPEN DISCUSSION GRANTS

Open Discussion grants are made for public humanities projects that include facilitated discussions along with any other humanities-based project format. *Open Discussion* grants allow for freedom of form, content, and audience.

Partly inspired by the traditional *Reading & Discussion* series, an *Open Discussion* 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. Rather than requiring reading, *Open Discussion* projects allow for the exchange of thoughts, opinions, and ideas in response to almost any kind of text or other source of content: films, talks, performances, tours, exhibits, lectures, and more. The only format requirements are that there be a source of content and that the project include face-to-face facilitated discussion.

In general, Mass Humanities prioritizes funding projects that respond to our current thematic initiative *Negotiating the Social Contract* and projects that engage those whose contact with public humanities programming is limited (see our *Engaging New Audiences* initiative).

Applicants may apply for this *Open Discussion* grant in order to create a modified version of a *Reading & Discussion*, *Common Good Reads*, *Literature & Medicine*, *Family Adventures in Reading* (FAIR), or *Civil Rights Discussion* project. Please contact Abbye Meyer or Rose Sackey-Milligan if you have questions.

Eligible Applicants:
- All nonprofit and government organizations that serve Massachusetts residents are eligible to apply for *Open Discussion* grants.

Grant Amounts:
- All nonprofit and government organizations are eligible for a **maximum $3,000** for an *Open Discussion* project. Organizations are asked to demonstrate at least a one-to-one in-kind and/or cash match.
- An additional $500 is available for projects that respond to Mass Humanities' *Engaging New Audiences* initiative, making the **maximum $3,500**.

Projects and Participants:
- *Open Discussion* grant applicants develop their own themes and procure their own materials.
- *Open Discussion* grant applicants ensure at least 8-12 discussion participants.
- Funds may be used for all reasonable project-related expenses, with the exceptions of food, travel, salaries, and capital expenses. Please see the budget guidelines for specific instructions, and please contact staff for help.

- *Open Discussion* projects must involve a humanities scholar who plans (and perhaps also facilitates) discussions.
- All discussions must be moderated or facilitated, and Project Directors are free to engage their own scholars and facilitators. Please contact Abbye Meyer or Rose Sackey-Milligan for suggestions of and referrals to scholars.

Application Process:
- Discussion Grant deadlines are bimonthly, and notification is within three weeks of submission.
- LOI forms must be submitted online at least two weeks before the application deadline. You may contact Mass Humanities staff or submit an LOI form online at any time.
- Submit your online LOI form at least ten weeks ahead of your (first) intended event, so that you can then submit your online application and prepare your outreach plan.
- For guidance in scheduling a discussion project, please see our *Discussion Grant Coordinator's Guide (pdf)*.

Outreach and Publicity:
- For guidance in publicizing a discussion project, please see our *Discussion Grant Coordinator's Guide (pdf)*.
- General publicity requirements for all Mass Humanities grant recipients are available online.

Evaluation:
- All discussion project directors are asked to report audience counts and to distribute and collect participant surveys, so you will need to begin planning evaluations before your project ends.
- Funded projects will receive forms and directions on how to evaluate and report on *Open Discussion* events or series. All forms are available online.

DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

Create an account, and then submit your LOI form for a Discussion Grant. If your LOI form is approved, you will be given access to the grant application, which closely resembles the LOI form but requests more detailed information. Once you have begun the application, click on "print question legend" to generate a pdf with a list of all fields and their instructions for the application. Please contact Abbye Meyer, Rose Sackey-Milligan, or Melissa Wheaton for support.

There are four sections of the application that must be completed, and these directions provide requirements and suggestions specific to an *Open Discussion* application:

1) **Project Information**: This section of the grant application asks about the form and content of your *Open Discussion* event or series.

   o **Title of Project:** Please create a title for your project, which may also serve as a title for the discussion(s). (Mass Humanities will do outreach using your title.)

   o **Amount Requested:** This amount is simply the total funds requested from Mass Humanities. The maximum for an *Open Discussion* is either $3,000 or $3,500 (see grant amounts), and you will figure out your needs by writing a budget (see below).

   o **Project Summary:** The Project Summary is the first text about your proposed series that readers will encounter, and it generally starts with one or two very clear sentences that provide basic information (including the organization, amount of money requested, the audience, the issues and materials being discussed, and whatever else might be important for a reader to know right away). The first sentence could take this form: "[Organization] is requesting $[Amount Requested] for

[Project Title], an *Open Discussion* project for [audience] that will [include anything you are creating, # of sessions, time of year, location, and/or whatever else is most important/notable]." Then you can get into more detail about your proposed project.

o **Should this project be given priority under Mass Humanities' *Engaging New Audiences* Initiative?** Mass Humanities gives priority to projects that fit into the *Engaging New Audiences* initiative. In this field, please note the ways your project will serve audiences that are considered "new" to public humanities programming. If your intended audience does *not* fit into the initiative, you may simply skip this field.

The easiest way to make the case for priority is to select at least one of the provided options to show that your participants likely lack easy access to programs because they live in a community with high poverty rates, because they are new to the United States, or because they cannot or do not leave their residences. Links are provided for checking towns and cities against Massachusetts averages—according to 2014 numbers published by the United States Census Bureau—and for using 2007 numbers published by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Please check ALL that apply:

   o Project serves residents of a MA city/town that has a poverty rate greater than the MA average—11.6% in 2014 (data at http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/POP645214/25,00).
   o Project serves residents of a MA city/town that has an average per capita income below the MA average—$36,441 in 2014 (data at http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/POP645214/25,00).
   o Project serves residents of a MA city/town that has more foreign-born residents than the MA average—15.3% in 2014 (data at http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/POP645214/25,00).
   o Project serves residents of a MA city/town in which more than 10% of public school students qualify as FLNE (First Language Not English) students—list at FLNE document (pdf).
   o Project serves residents of a MA city/town with a district high-school dropout rate that is higher than the MA average—1.9% in 2015 (data at http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/dropout.aspx).
   o Project serves people who are circumscribed in their movements, such as residents of a MA correctional facility, nursing home, assisted living center, hospice center, or hospital.
   o Project is being organized by a public library with only one staff member.
   o Project involves special outreach methods and/or collaborations to reach new audiences. Please describe below.
   o Other. Please describe below. Please make a case for why the people served by your project *should* be considered new audiences for the humanities.

o **Should this project be given priority under Mass Humanities' *Negotiating the Social Contract* Initiative?** Mass Humanities also gives priority to projects that fit into the *Negotiating the Social Contract* initiative. In this field, you may want to consider specific themes and topics your project will address.

o **How will the project be organized**? You should explain when and where the event or the series will be held, how you and the facilitator will organize the time (each discussion event/session is generally 90 minutes to three hours), and how participants will be able to access materials and texts or other sources of content.

o **Timing of the Project: Tell us when the project will begin and end.** You should note the date of the event or the dates of all of the series' sessions, along with any other relevant information.

- o **Describe the expected audience(s)/participants.** Even if an event or series 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. This is the place to explain those goals and expected outcomes.

- o **What are the reasons this project seems to be a good idea for your audience?** In this text box, provide the information to answer the question.

- o **Describe your outreach plan.** Provide some information about your publicity plan and names of people responsible for or willing to help with publicity. What materials will you create and rely on most? How will you create and replicate them? What lists or news sources are you able to use to get information to potential participants? When will you begin your publicity plan?

2) **Sponsoring Organization**: Enter information about the sponsoring organization, including the type of organization and the DUNS # of the organization.

- o **DUNS #:** The federal government has adopted the use of DUNS numbers to track how federal grant money is allocated. 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, visit Dun & Bradstreet website. Information on how to obtain a DUNS number can be found at masshumanities.org/files/grants/duns.pdf. Your grant application *cannot* be submitted without this number.

- o **Does your organization receive $750,000 or more each year in federal funding**? The answer to this question does not bear on the grant in any way.

3) **Personnel:** In this section, provide information about the project personnel.

- o **The Project Director** is responsible for organizing the project and completes online reporting.

- o **The Project Treasurer** 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; the Project Director may *not* also serve as the Project Treasurer.)

- o **The Project Scholar/Facilitator** for an *Open Discussion* project must be a humanities scholar who plans (and perhaps also facilitates) discussions.

- o If the person filling out the application is not the Project Director, you may choose to add an additional name with contact information.

4) **Uploads:** This section of the application has five parts.

- o **Project Schedule:** Download the event listing form (doc) (which includes space to list the confirmed facilitator(s)), complete it, and upload final listing.

- o **Project Scholar/Facilitator CV/Resume:** Upload the CV or resume of the project scholar/facilitator.

- o **Budget:** Download the budget template (doc), complete it, and upload final budget (see budget instructions below).

- o **Signatures Document:** Download application contract form (doc). An application is not considered complete without names and signatures of all parties. Once both signatures have been obtained, scan or use the available "fax to file" tool and upload the signed contract form.

- o **Additional Upload:** *Open Discussion* applications frequently require an additional upload. You may need to provide additional information about a text or other source of content used for the event or series, you may need to provide an additional CV or resume, or you may need to provide materials related to putting on an exhibit, talk, lecture, or performance that will provoke discussion. Please check with a Program Officer if you are unsure about needs and requirements.

DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE BUDGET

Organizations are asked to demonstrate at least a one-to-one in-kind and/or cash match. There is no cash cost-share requirement. Use the actual estimated costs in your community (not those in the sample budget) for printing, phone, and other expenses.

Please estimate all of your cash and in-kind efforts. The easiest way to count in-kind contributions is to list everything and everyone contributing to the project, and estimate costs as if all items or volunteer time had to be paid for. Some common items considered in-kind contributions are: use of meeting facilities, copying and duplication, and use of a phone. Some services generally contributed are: the coordinating and outreach work by program staff and/or volunteers. Paid staff time dedicated to the project but not covered by the grant should be recorded in the cash match column; all volunteer time should be recorded in the in-kind match column.

A) Personnel
- o **Scholars and Facilitators**
  - ▪ MH Funds and/or Cash Match: We suggest a flat fee of $300 per session for scholars/facilitators who are facilitating or planning events/sessions.
  - ▪ In-Kind Match: If scholars or facilitators will be putting in additional time for which they will not be compensated (for additional preparation, for example), please value this time at their current hourly rate and indicate the total value of volunteered time here.
- o **Other Personnel**
  - ▪ MH Funds and/or Cash Match: Project Directors and/or other contributors to the project should value their time at their current hourly rate, determine how much of their time will apply to the project, and indicate the total value of contributed paid time here. Applicants that receive extra funding are expected to use the additional $500 for additional hours of time spent organizing and/or publicizing events/sessions.
  - ▪ In-Kind Match: If volunteers are involved, indicate the value of their time here (use the current federal rate). Applicants will need to keep track of volunteers' time.

B) Travel
- o MH Funds and/or Cash Match: In exceptional circumstances, travel funds may be requested for scholars/facilitators *with explicit permission from a Program Officer*.
- o In-Kind Match: Travel for scholars/facilitators from within the state (or nearby areas) may be counted as an in-kind match. Use the current federal rate.

C) Supplies
- o Funds for supplies needed for other sources of content for discussion events and series, including films, talks, performances, tours, exhibits, competitions, lectures, and more, may be requested from Mass Humanities, or they may be counted as in-kind of cash contributions.
- o Funds to cover duplicating or printing books, reading materials, and survey forms may be requested from Mass Humanities, or they may be counted as in-kind or cash contributions.
- o MH funds *may not* be used for food and refreshments. Costs for these items should be listed as part of a cash match.

D) Postage
- o Postage expenses for outreach or communication with participants can be charged to the grant or considered a cash or in-kind contribution.

E) Rental (space and equipment)

o   If the meeting space is not free to the project, MH funds may be used for rental, or estimated rental value may be included as in-kind contributions. Use reasonable rates for your area.

F) Telephone
o   Calls made before the application is approved may not be charged to the grant or be counted as in-kind contributions. Monthly base charges during the project may be counted as in-kind.

G) Publicity
o   MH Funds and/or Cash Match: Cash expenses for publicizing the program, such as the printing of posters, flyers, and bookmarks, may be included as funds requested or as cash matching contributions. You can get an estimate from a printer and include it in the budget.
o   In-Kind Match: Time spent on promotion may be counted as an in-kind contribution. News releases or stories carried in newspapers, announcements broadcast on radio and TV, notices in newsletters, etc., can count as in-kind matches. You can generally assume that, with normal publicity, at least $300 worth of this free publicity will be contributed to the project.

H) Other
o   Child care services and janitorial costs may be included in the grant budget as cash request or match, or as in-kind match if volunteered.

Below is a sample budget for an exhibit with three discussion sessions at a community center that is eligible for the additional $500.

Category	Explanation	MH Funds Requested	Matching Amounts		Source of Matching Amounts	Line Totals
			Cash	In-kind		
A. Personnel 1. Scholars and Facilitators	$300/session facilitated by Name (Scholar) x 3 sessions ($900); $300 for exhibit planning.	$600	$0	$600	Facilitator's contribution.	$1,200
2. Other Personnel	Name (Project Director) organization and research: 20 hours at $50/hour ($1,000); Name (Project Treasurer) administration: 2 hours at $50/hour ($100); Exhibit planning committee (Project Director, Scholar 2, Artist, Community Center staff member): $300 each ($1,200); Two volunteers for exhibit: 18 hours each at $27/hour ($972).	$1,700	$600	$972	Community Center staff salary; Volunteers' contributions.	$3,272
B. Travel (from MH only in exceptional cases)	Name (Scholar) travel: 30 miles x 4 sessions (planning and discussion) at .575/mile ($69).		$0	$69	Facilitator's contribution.	$69
C. Supplies	Designing (4 hours at $50/hour ($200)) and printing exhibit labels ($200); mounting and framing for exhibit ($600); food for opening ($400).	$600	$0	$800	Community Center's staff salary and operating budget.	$1,400
D. Postage		$0	$0	$0		$0
E. Rental (space & equipment)	Space at community center (room rental @ $300).	$300	$0	$0		$300
F. Telephone		$0	$0	$0		$0
G. Publicity	Designing (1 hour at $50) and printing of 200 flyers ($20); distributing flyers (6 volunteer hours at $27/hour ($162).	$0	$70	$162	Community Center staff salary and operating budget; Volunteer's contribution.	$323
H. Other (please specify)		$0	$0	$0		$0
TOTALS		$3,200	$670	$2,603		
TOTAL COST SHARE			$3,273			
TOTAL PROJECT COST (MH funds + cash match + in-kind match)		$6,473				