

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH INVENTORY GRANTS



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RESEARCH INVENTORY GRANTS

Mass Humanities seeks to enhance the interpretation and presentation of history in Massachusetts. Recognizing the difficulty of planning research projects or public programs that rely on uncatalogued or unexamined collections, Mass Humanities will fund projects that assess and inventory specific collections for their research potential. Projects must either be designed with a research question in mind or approach a specific part of the collection. General inventories and inventories being prepared for national register or historic district nominations will not be considered.

The [Research Inventory Grant](#) program is designed to help small historical organizations identify primary source research materials in preparation for a more extensive research project or a public program. Institutions that successfully complete an inventory project are encouraged to apply for a [Scholar in Residence](#), [Discussion](#), or [Project](#) Grant focused on the same materials or content.

Please contact [Patty Bruttomesso](#), [Abbye Meyer](#), or [Rose Sackey-Milligan](#) if you have questions about Mass Humanities or would like to explore how to develop your proposal.

Eligible Applicants and Grant Amounts:

- Historical organizations in Massachusetts (library history rooms, societies, museums, commissions, and sites) with operating budgets of under \$75,000 are eligible for a *maximum \$2,000 Research Inventory Grant*. Organizations are asked to demonstrate at least a one-to-one in-kind and/or cash match.
- Funds may be used to pay the person who takes the inventory and/or for archival, storage, or preservation materials directly related to the project, as well as other project-related costs. Please see the budget guidelines for specific instructions, and please contact staff for help.

Research Inventory Projects:

- Focus on a specific collection or portion of a collection defined by a topic and research question (e.g. “the 11 boxes that came from Mrs. X who did research on the X family,” or “our twentieth-century manuscript-based materials to examine the economic aspects of rural life);
- Focus on resources relevant to its mission (e.g. define buildings within the purview of the organization that will become part of a historical tour, and sources of information about those buildings);
- Assess the designated materials or resources for their evidential and informational value.

Project Personnel:

- [Project Director](#). The applicant institution must designate a staff or board member who monitors the progress of the project and ensures that the person taking the inventory has access to the collection.

- **Inventory Taker.** The inventory may be conducted by a staff member, volunteer, or outside consultant as long as this person:
 - Demonstrates an understanding of the historical significance of the collection to be inventoried;
 - Prepares the inventory according to professional archival standards or in such a way that it is useful to outside researchers.

What May Be Inventoried:

- Primary source materials, such as manuscripts, published records, photographs, artifacts, or other materials in the collection of the applicant organization that relate to one or more specific research questions, as well as resources that bear on the mission and programming of the organization.

Project Deliverables:

- The end product of a *Research Inventory Grant* project may be a catalog, an inventory, or a finding aid. Each individual collection record must contain a content description, retrievable by topics or key words relating to the guiding research question.
- In general, projects should take place over a period of one to six months.
- Project results must be made widely available to the public: deposited in a public library or archive, published online, or in a readily available brochure.

Application Process:

- *Research Inventory Grant* deadlines are four times a year, 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 eight weeks ahead of your intended start date, so that you can then submit your [online application](#).

Outreach and Publicity:

- [General publicity requirements](#) for all Mass Humanities grant recipients are available online.
- For guidance in publicizing a *Research Inventory Grant* project, feel free to use the [Discussion Grant Coordinator's Guide](#) (*pdf*), using the pages that pertain to your project.

Evaluation:

- All project directors are asked to report volunteer contributions, so you will need to keep track of those.
- Funded projects will receive forms and directions on how to evaluate and report on *Research Inventory Grants*. All forms are available online.

Examples of Projects Eligible for a Research Inventory Grant:

- A historic house museum is planning to include the history of slaveholding on the property in its interpretation. To know whether there is enough information available, the Society inventories family correspondence (of the family that owned the house) held at various local repositories, as well as its own newspaper collection, with respect to the history of slavery at the house and plantation.
- A local historical society owns a large but un-inventoried collection of cartoons featuring a local person of state and national prominence during and after the Civil War. The motivation to inventory the collection is two-fold: the organization is planning a Civil War exhibit, and it wants to be ready so that anyone doing research for a Civil War exhibit can use the collection.
- The history room of a library inventories the papers of a large historical paper mill. The result is an online exhibit and a publicly-available finding aid.
- A network of regional historical societies receives a grant to create an inventory of regional resources on the California Gold Rush. Subsequently, the organization produces a website on the topic, as well as a finding aid.
- A local historical society inventories and transcribes the extensive correspondence of a large and longtime local family (early 1800s to 1960s). The project causes the society to rethink its interpretive frameworks

and understand that local farming required “flexibility, a commitment to community, and willingness to perform many activities not usually considered within the classic definition of farming,” such as brokering real estate, undertaking, and running a store. The organization subsequently creates a multi-part public reading of “conversations” created with the letters.

DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

Create an account, and then submit your LOI form for a Local History 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](#) 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 a *Research Inventory Grant* application:

- 1) **Project Information:** This section of the grant application asks about the form and content of your *Research Inventory Grant* project.
 - **Title of Project:** Please create a title for your project. (Mass Humanities will do outreach using your title.)
 - **Amount Requested:** This amount is simply the total funds requested from Mass Humanities. The maximum for a *Research Inventory Grant* is \$2,000, and you will figure out your needs by writing a budget (see below).
 - **Project Summary:** The Project Summary is the first text about your proposed project 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 issues and materials being researched/inventoried, 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], for [name of inventory taker] to inventory [what you want to inventory], asking [research questions or issues].” Then you can get into more detail about your proposed project, specifically including a sentence about the questions and issues the project tackles.
 - **Timing of the Project:** Tell us when the project will begin and end.
 - **How will the project be organized?** You should explain when and where the inventorying work will be done; how you and the inventory taker will organize the time; what system, platform, or software will be used for the inventory; what the deliverables will be; how the inventory will be disseminated; and any other pertinent logistical details.
 - **Describe the expected audience(s)/participants for the products and any program related to this project.** Feel free to answer this question briefly.
 - **Why are you taking on this project?** How does this project relate to your organization’s mission and how is it part of your current five-year plan? The project has to be a step in developing your organization’s programs (such as an exhibit, tour, or public event). How specifically will it lead to the development of a program? What is the occasion for taking on this particular question/collection? How does the theme/issue matter to the organization?

- **Describe your outreach and distribution plans.** Mass Humanities grant guidelines ask that you publicize having received a grant for this project. *RIG* guidelines stipulate that you make the resulting inventory available to the public. How will you do either/both? 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:

- **DUNS number:** 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. It is easy to get one but may take a few days.
- **Does your organization receive \$750,000 or more each year in federal funding?** Since you can only apply for a *RIG* if your operating budget is smaller than \$75,000, the answer is “no.”

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

- **The Project Director** is responsible for organizing the project and completes online reporting.
- **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.)
- **The Inventory Taker** for a *Research Inventory Grant* project must be someone who has experience with archival inventorying, and who has a sense of the historical context and value of the materials. The work may be done by a staff member, volunteer, or someone from outside the organization.
- 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.

- **Events Listing:** If the project includes any events, public or private (not work sessions, but presentations—for instance a presentation of what was done at the end of the project), please download the [events listing template](#) (doc), complete it, and upload final schedule.
- **Project Scholar/Inventory Taker CV/Resume:** Upload the CV or resume of the inventory taker.
- **Budget:** Download Local History Grants [budget template](#) (doc), complete it, and upload final budget (see budget instructions below).
- **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.
- **Additional Upload:** If your program officer requested any additional documents, or if you wish to submit additional documents, you may do so here.

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, archival supplies the organization contributes to the project, use of a phone, website fees, fees for Collections Management Software, and the cost of such items as scanners or printers if they are obtained for the project. Some services generally contributed are: the coordinating, inventory or other project work by volunteers, 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

- **Scholars and Inventory Takers**
 - MH Funds and/or Cash Match.
 - In-Kind Match: If scholars or Inventory Takers 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.
- **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.
 - 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

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

C) Supplies

- Funds for supplies may be requested from Mass Humanities, or they may be counted as in-kind of cash contributions.
- MH funds *may not* be used for food and refreshments for any events. Costs for these items should be listed as part of a cash match.

D) Postage

- 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)

- Rental for space and/or equipment may be counted as part of the match, the cash match if it is paid for rather than valued.

F) Telephone

- 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 part of the match.

G) Publicity

- MH Funds and/or Cash Match: Cash expenses for publicizing the project 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.
- 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.

Below is a sample budget for a *RIG* project.

Category	Explanation	MH Funds Requested	Matching Amounts		Source of Matching Amounts	Line Totals
			Cash	In-kind		
A. Personnel 1. Scholars and Facilitators	Inventory taker Mary White \$25 per hour for 65 hours	\$1,250				\$1250
2. Other Personnel	Joanne Green Project Director 10 hrs @ \$25; Jack Black, Curator, data entry; Shelley Orange (PR); Mike Forrest (treasurer); Volunteers to work one-to-one with MW for 40 hours	\$250		\$1620	Green 10 hours to work with MW @ \$27; Jack Black 6 hours @ \$27; Shelley Orange 2 @hrs #27; Mike Forrest 2 hours @ \$27; volunteers (40 x \$27 = 1080)	\$1870
B. Travel (from MH only in exceptional cases)						0
C. Supplies	Archival boxes 10@ \$5.90 + tax and SH plus more etc. (specific list with items and prices)	\$500		\$100	Archival folders (\$100)	\$600
D. Postage						0
E. Rental (space & equipment)						0
F. Telephone						
G. Publicity						
H. Other (please specify)			\$280		Website Fee (\$30); Scanner (\$250);	\$280
TOTALS		\$2,000	\$280	\$1720		
TOTAL COST SHARE			\$2000			
TOTAL PROJECT COST (MH funds + cash match + in-kind match)		\$4000				\$4000