



Expand Massachusetts Stories FAQ

Note: FAQs were reviewed for updates on June 14th. None were made.

What if my organization isn't a non-profit/501(c)3?

You can still apply using an eligible fiscal sponsor that is a 501(c)3. Fiscal sponsors manage the grant funds. They must also sign a fiscal sponsor contract. You can find examples of fiscal sponsor agreements online; here is the sample you will find in the online application. Many organizations that regularly serve as fiscal sponsors for filmmakers have their own fiscal sponsor contracts. In the application, you will provide information about your fiscal sponsor.

What is the grant period? When can my project start and end?

Grant-funded work may begin as soon as you receive notification that you have been awarded a grant. Mass Humanities typically funds projects that take place within 16 months after the notification date. Within those 16 months, you can choose your own project start and end dates. These dates will become your project's "grant period." Mass Humanities will fund work on your project during the grant period you choose. Awarded projects will receive instructions about requesting an extension, if needed.

We're collaborating with another nonprofit on a joint project. How do we apply?

Mass Humanities encourages collaborations. For your application, one organization must be the Applicant Organization, taking responsibility for applying for the grant and managing grant funds. Make sure to identify any partnering organizations in your application, explaining their role in the project and their relationship with the Applicant Organization. You should also upload letters of commitment from your partner organizations.

Can the Project Director and the Humanities Advisor be the same person?

Yes, the Project Director may serve as the Humanities Advisor if the Project Director has the relevant humanities expertise to add to the humanities content of the project. If you are not sure whether it makes sense for your Project Director to serve as the Humanities Advisor, just email grants@masshumanities.org.

Can an application have more than one Humanities Advisor?

Yes! One advisor will be designated as the Humanities Advisor, but you may have additional advisors serving a variety of different roles on your project. The expertise of each advisor should be suited for the role they will play in the project.

Can the Project Director and Project Treasurer be the same person?

No. They must be different and must not be related to each other.

Must programs be provided for free?

No, but Mass Humanities gives priority to projects that make their programming as accessible as possible. Most of the public events we fund are free, and the chances of your project being funded will be higher if you keep ticket costs low.

An organization that requires membership dues for its events could open its grant-funded programming to the general public for free. A museum that has a standard entrance fee for its exhibits could have one or more days during the grant period when visitors will be admitted free of charge. If your organization participates in the EBT Card to Culture program, your application would also explain what EBT card holders need to do acquire tickets to your funded events. In all of these cases, your organization would describe in its application the plan for advertising these opportunities to your target audience.

Can I apply for a grant if my organization has no funds to contribute to the project?

No. Expand Massachusetts Stories grants require at least 10% of the matching funds to be in cash. The rest can be in volunteered time or services. The cash match can come from your organization's operating budget or from cash donations from other sources. Consider reaching out to a local community foundation, bank, civic club, local cultural council, and other potential supporters of your project.

Do you award partial funding?

No, Mass Humanities does not award partial funding. Mass Humanities grants are awarded in competitive grant rounds and the more reasonable your budget, the better chance you will have of being awarded funding.

If I submit my LOI early, will you make a decision on it before the LOI deadline?

We aren't able to make decisions on LOIs before the final submission date. However, you can ask a Program Officer to give you feedback on your LOI ahead of time if you have questions about the project's eligibility. Email grants@masshumanities.org and we will get back to you.

When can my funded project and public programs begin?

Grant-funded work may begin as soon as you receive notification that you have been awarded a grant.

Public programs may not begin until a month after your award notification date to ensure adequate planning and inclusion of the Mass Humanities logo on your publicity materials. Work on the project before you are notified of your award cannot be covered by Mass Humanities funds and cannot be included in your match.

What email address should I use when I set up my account for the online application system?

When you set up your account for our online application system, enter the email address of the person who will be assembling the application.

Once your LOI has been submitted, all correspondence from your Mass Humanities will go to this address.

Why can't I see/access my LOI or Application?

The most common reason is that you have logged in with a different email address than the one used to set up your account. Please also note that LOIs or applications that have been submitted are no longer available for editing. If you need to edit something you have already submitted but are unable to access the form, contact grants@masshumanities.org.