

Mass Humanities Reading Frederick Douglass Together Summer Fellowship- The Shared Reading Tradition

Program Scope:

Mass Humanities is seeking qualified candidates to conduct research and synthesize research on the origins shared reading tradition of Frederick Douglass’s influential address, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” both nationally and in the Commonwealth. The research will be used by Mass Humanities to support the forthcoming launch of ReadingFredrickDouglassTogether.org, a website and national resource for readings. Mass Humanities believes Douglass’ words belong in public spaces and has supported readings in town squares, community centers, churches, museums, libraries, and parks.

Timeline:

Research to commence June 1, 2023 and end with deliverables submitted August 30.

March 1st – May 12th	Proposals accepted and interviews to occur on a rolling basis.
June 1st	Work begins with twice monthly check-ins with Mass Humanities to address challenges, track progress and timelines
August 30th	Final work submitted

About Mass Humanities:

Mass Humanities is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. We create opportunities for the people of Massachusetts to transform their lives and build a more equitable commonwealth through the humanities.

Background on the project:

Each year Mass Humanities supports public readings and discussions in Massachusetts of Frederick Douglass’s famous Fourth of July address, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” through our Reading Frederick Douglass Together grant. Each community considers the meaning of the speech in the past and its resonances in the present. This shared reading tradition began prior to the establishment of our grant opportunity, but no account of its origin or its relationship to broader African American public memory traditions exists. Mass Humanities believes in fostering robust civic engagement and champions opportunities for all communities in Massachusetts to reinvigorate our democracy by telling, sharing, and reimagining the diverse stories and ideas of our Commonwealth—together. As a part of our work to advance new ideas about historical

texts and connect neighbors in meaningful conversations about what it means to be a free and equitable society, Mass Humanities will create a resource website for Reading Frederick Douglass Together that will educate participants about the shared reading tradition, embedded in African American public memory. The research conducted by our Reading Frederick Douglass Together Fellow will create an account of the tradition of community readings of Frederick Douglass's Fourth of July address, and their place within African American public memory traditions both nationally and in the Commonwealth.

Project Funding:

The fellowship is made possible with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities under the initiative *A More Perfect Union*.

Requirements:

The ideal candidate will:

- Have education and/ or experience in history, African American studies, American studies, archives or other related fields
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of ethical scholarly research practice
- Demonstrate ability to synthesize information
- Demonstrate ability to work independently
- Communicate information effectively
- Exhibit accuracy, attention to detail, consistency, and ability to meet multiple deadlines

Benefits

- \$4,000 stipend to be paid (80% at the time of appointment. Remaining 20% upon completion)
- Expansion of professional networks
- Contribution to a national website that will be a resources schools, organizations and individuals.

Proposal

We look forward to reviewing your proposal. Interested candidates should submit a proposal (written, video or presentation format) responding to the following.

- What previous experiences qualify you for undertaking this research?
- How does this research align with your personal and professional goals?
- Explain research plan from start to finish, including methodology, timelines, and indicators for completion.
- What do you envision as a deliverable at the completion of the fellowship?

Proposal format:

Candidates can choose their preferred proposal format, using the following guidance for length.

Written: 1 to 2 pages single-spaced

Video: 4 to 6 min

Slide Presentation: 12-18 slides

Required Supplemental material:

- Two research work samples and/or links to published work
- Resume or CV
- 1 to 2 references

Submit the document to jobs@masshumanities.org with a subject line: RDFT Traditions Fellow.