

Expand Massachusetts Stories Grants – Advancing Equity Track

Expand Massachusetts Stories grants offer up to \$20,000 for projects that collect, interpret and/or share narratives about the Commonwealth, with an emphasis on the voices and experiences that have gone unrecognized, or have been excluded from public conversation.

Applications open on February 5, 2024.

Projects should use the tools of the humanities—inquiry, contextualization, and reflection—to improve our shared understanding of Massachusetts’ peoples and places. Organizations are encouraged to explore and amplify previously unacknowledged voices from the past; make space for the lived experiences of Massachusetts residents from historically excluded communities; reconsider well-known stories from new perspectives; or provide opportunities for people to engage their understandings of their communities through the humanities. Successful proposals will demonstrate how the project contributes to a more inclusive story of Massachusetts. Mass Humanities is especially interested in projects based in the knowledge and wisdom that exists locally. Expand Massachusetts Stories Grants are made possible by support from the Barr Foundation and the Mass Cultural Council.

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There are three application tracks for Expand Massachusetts Stories proposals.

Advancing Equity Track: Up to 15 applicants whose projects are led by people from historically excluded communities, and whose organizations meet additional criteria, will be selected for the Advancing Equity Track. Selected applicants will develop final applications through a non-competitive review and approval process that includes cohort workshops and application development support with Mass Humanities staff and additional advisors. Proposals not selected into the track that are still eligible for Expand Massachusetts Stories grants may apply through the Open Track (below).

Grant Snapshot

Maximum Grant: \$20,000

Key Dates: LOIs due April 5, 2024 /
Application workshop June 21 2024 /
Final application August 2, 2024
Notification August 30, 2024.

Eligibility: Small non-profits and organizations that receive non-profit funds planning public programs, led by people from historically excluded communities, to tell meaningful stories about Massachusetts’ past or present.

Sound like you? Keep reading.

Open Track: Open to all eligible applicants and projects, proposals in the Open Track will be reviewed through a competitive application process.

Climate Change Track: Open to all eligible applicants; proposals in the Climate Change Track will apply through the Open Track and will be reviewed through a competitive application process. Read “Expand Massachusetts Stories of Climate Change” below.

You are reading the Advancing Equity Track guidelines. For Open Track and Climate Change Track guidelines click [here](#).

Amount of Funding

Applicants can request up to \$20,000 in project funds. For projects awarded grants, Mass Humanities will award requests in full.

No matching funds are required.

Questions?

Program Officers can help you assess the eligibility of your project and answer questions about applying.

Book at 45-minute appointment with a Program Officer:

Raeshma Razvi: <https://calendly.com/rrazvi-mass/consultation>

Latoya Bosworth: calendly.com/lbosworthma

Marie Pellissier (Climate Track focus): <https://calendly.com/mpellissier-mh>

Katherine Stevens: <https://calendly.com/kstevens-3>

Can't make the available times or want another way to reach out? Email your questions to grants@masshumanities.org.

Timeline

- February 5, 2024 - Letter of Inquiry (LOI) Opens
- April 5, 2024 – LOI Due
- By May 17, 2024 Selection Notification
- June 21 – In-person application workshop
- August 2, 2024 – Applications due
- August 30, 2024 – Application Approval

Why a Track?

Projects that surface or share people’s stories, especially stories of historically excluded communities, take time and care to prepare. For small organizations, and projects led by people from under-resourced communities, the time it takes to prepare a project and application is a significant investment.

Through the Advancing Equity Track, Mass Humanities will honor that investment in time with application support and a commitment to fund projects that meet Mass Humanities criteria.

Track Selection: Potential applicants start by submitting a Letter of Inquiry, also known as an LOI. In the LOI, applicants explain the basic ideas of their project and answer questions about their organization. At the LOI stage, projects do not need to meet all eligibility requirements described in the guidelines, but applicant organizations will need to meet the eligibility requirements for the Advancing Equity Track. A committee of past grantees and experienced project leaders will review LOIs and select up to 15 applicants to participate in the track. When selecting track participants, the review committee will prioritize the following:

- Projects that align with the goals of the Expand Massachusetts Stories grant opportunity.
- Projects that are led by historically excluded communities.
- Proposals that have the capacity to be successful in the application development process.
- Applicants that would benefit from the application development process.

What happens if my project is selected? Applicants in the track have their projects pre-recommended for funding approval when they work with a Mass Humanities program officer and humanities experts to prepare their application. To prepare their application participants will:

- Receive direct feedback on their initial project idea from a committee of past grantees and experienced project leaders.
- Take part in a project development workshop with fellow applicants.
- Meet one on one with a Mass Humanities Program Officer to develop an application that meets Mass Humanities requirements for humanities projects, planning and design, and use of funds.

Advancing Equity Track Eligibility

To be eligible for the Advancing Equity Track applicant's projects must have leadership roles (such as project director, program director, lead curator, lead designer) for people of color or other communities historically excluded from humanities leadership, and meet 2 of the 4 following criteria:

- The applicant organization has an annual operating budget of \$300,000 or less.
- The applicant organization has 2 or fewer full time equivalent staff.
- The applicant organization has never received a grant from Mass Humanities.
- The applicant organization is based-in and primarily supports communities of color.

Applicants must also meet the basic eligibility requirements for all applicant organizations.

Basic Eligibility Requirements

Applicant organizations must:

- Be a 501(c)(3), non-profit, fiscally-sponsored association or filmmaker (see below), state or federally recognized tribe, or non-federal government organization.
- Serve Massachusetts residents.
- Be in compliance with state and federal regulations which bar discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, disability, age, or sexual orientation, and which require accessibility for persons with disabilities. Specifically:

- [The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 \(ADA\)](#)
- [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 \(Section 504\)](#)
- [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#)
- [Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972](#)
- [The Age Discrimination Act of 1975](#)

Fiscally sponsored applicants: Ad-hoc groups, filmmakers, and non-profit organizations without 501(c)(3) status must find an eligible 501(c)(3) organization to be their fiscal sponsor. Fiscal sponsors manage the grant funds and are identified in the application. They must also provide a signed fiscal sponsor agreement for upload in the online application. The LOI provides links to sample agreements and additional resources.

Mass Humanities does not award funding to individuals.

Applicants need to have completed any past Mass Humanities grant projects and submitted their final report one week before their final application is due for a new grant application. There are three exceptions to this rule:

- Organizations can have open 2024 Reading Frederick Douglass Together grants.
- Organizations can be fiscal sponsors on more than one Mass Humanities grant at a time.
- Colleges and universities can have more than one grant open at a time if those grants are for different departments or institutes.

Project Eligibility

Expand Massachusetts Stories grants can fund a wide range of projects. Applicants selected into the Advancing Equity Track will work with Mass Humanities to develop an application that meets the following project criteria. At the LOI stage, proposals should show potential to meet these criteria.

To be eligible, proposed projects need to:

- Have the goal of making narratives of Massachusetts accessible to Massachusetts residents at minimal cost to participants.
- Have a clear objective and completion date.
- Use the tools of the humanities—inquiry, contextualization, and/or reflection (see “What are Humanities Subjects and Methods”).
- Be supported by a humanities advisor (see “What is a Humanities Advisor”).
- Primarily serve audiences outside of 4-year college faculty and students.

Potential projects may include

- Oral histories
- Community-centered museum exhibitions
- Facilitated discussions about underrepresented aspects of local histories
- Exhibits and programs focused on new interpretations of collections
- Short documentary films (15-30 minutes) or digital media projects that present new insights into the lives of Massachusetts residents past or present
- Teacher professional development focused on connecting Massachusetts narratives to K-12 curriculum

- Programs that use inquiry, contextualization, and/or reflection to support residents in recording and exploring their lived experiences

Special Project Requirements

Film projects, oral history or story collection projects, and projects related to Native American and Indigenous communities have additional requirements. See the Film Requirements, Oral History and Story Collecting Requirements, and the Code of Ethics for Projects Related to Native Americans in the Appendix.

What is a Humanities Advisor?

A Humanities advisor contributes to a project with their deep knowledge of humanities subjects or methods. They are recognized by their peers for their expertise, or by a community as a bearer of its knowledge and traditions. For example, a humanities advisor can be someone who has earned an advanced humanities degree from a university, or a humanities advisor can be a tribal elder and educator. Some humanities advisors may have knowledge of a subject matter relevant to the proposed program. Some may be experts in a kind of humanities inquiry or method. Projects can have multiple humanities advisors on their team, but at least one advisor will provide a resume and statement explaining how their humanities knowledge will inform the proposed program.

What are Humanities Subjects and Methods?

The humanities help us explore who we are as individuals, as members of a society, and as inheritors of the past. According to the National Endowment for the Humanities, the humanities include the following fields of learning: literature, language, history, philosophy, archeology, comparative religion, law, ethics, interpretation of the arts, and social sciences that use humanities methods. Of course, new humanities fields and topics emerge all the time. Many go by different names. What they share is a method that values inquiry into individual and shared experience, connection to others' ideas and experiences, and reflection and interpretation.

What Expand Massachusetts Stories Grants Cannot Fund:

- Work undertaken or supplies purchased before or after the grant period
- Profit-making or fundraising projects; capital campaigns, or organizational strategic planning
- Re-grants to other organizations
- Direct social service, e.g., counseling, therapeutic, legal, or medical services
- Projects primarily focused on the creation of art or artistic performances
- Professional theater productions
- Costs of entertainment or alcohol
- Tickets costs if the revenue from ticket sales goes to the applicant organization
- Capital improvements, construction, or restoration
- Lobbying or advocacy projects for specific public policies or legislation
- The promotion of a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view
- Scholarships or prizes
- Production of full-length (longer than 40 minutes) documentary films
- General operating costs (outside of indirect project costs)

Requirements for Project Budgets

Mass Humanities funds can cover many types of project costs, from research hours, to exhibit design, to printing, publicity and more. On our budget forms, you explain the costs of the project during the

grant period, how much of those costs you are asking Mass Humanities to cover, and how you plan to cover the rest of them.

If your proposal is accepted into the application stage, Mass Humanities staff will work with you to apply these rules to your project budget.

Budget Limits

Mass Humanities limits spending on certain kinds of project costs:

- Speaker Stipends/Honoraria: We fund up to \$500 per speaker, per event.
- Reusable Equipment: We fund up to \$1,000 for the purchase of reusable equipment needed for the project. Equipment cost requests should be kept to a reasonable percentage of the total Mass Humanities funds requested.
- Receptions: We fund food costs for receptions up to \$300 per project.
- Food: Reasonable food costs for program participants (such as lunch at a teacher's institute or food for youth in an after-school program) are allowed.
- Lodging: We fund lodging up to \$250 per person, per day.
- Travel: Reasonable travel costs for project personnel, such as out-of-town speakers, are allowed. Mass Humanities rarely funds international travel (originating outside of Canada, Mexico, the U.S., and U.S. territories and possessions).

Indirect Costs

Mass Humanities funds may be used to cover a portion of your indirect costs. Indirect costs are often called "overhead" or "operating costs." They don't go directly to the project, but they are necessary to do things like keep the lights on while staff works, manage financial transactions, and cover insurance.

Calculating Indirect Costs: Calculate your indirect cost request as 10% of the total direct project costs you are asking Mass Humanities to fund.

For example, an organization seeks \$4,000 for direct costs like renting a space it does not own, paying speakers, and printing fliers. Using a 10% rate, it calculates its indirect costs as \$400. Its total funding request (direct plus indirect) is \$4,400.

How to Apply

Using Mass Humanities Online Application System

All LOIs and grant applications are submitted via Mass Humanities online application system. Here's how it works:

Starting your online LOI

If your organization already has an account in Mass Humanities online grant system, log in and make sure that all of the contact information is up to date.

If you are new to your organization and do not have the previous account login information contact grants@masshumanities.org.

If your organization is new to Mass Humanities, you will need to create an account.

Note: If your organization has previously applied for a Mass Humanities Project, Discussion,

Local History, or Reading Frederick Douglass Together grant using a fiscal sponsor as the applicant, you may also need to create an account. This new account will be for your organization not your fiscal sponsor. In the application, you will provide information about your fiscal sponsor. Email grants@masshumanities.org if you think you may need assistance.

Creating an Account

To create an account in the online grants system you will need to provide the following information:

1. Name, address, phone number, and email address of the person responsible for managing the application. The email address you enter here is important for two reasons:
 - The email address and password you enter at this stage will become your account login. You will need them whenever you want to log in to the online grants system. Make sure you save them for future use.
 - The email address will become the primary contact for your grant application. All notifications about the progress of your application, and all information should you be awarded a grant, will be sent to this address.
2. Name and IRS Tax Identification Number of the applicant organization.
 - Note: If your organization does not have a Tax Identification Number you may enter 99-9999999. In the application, you will be asked to provide the Tax Identification Number of your fiscal sponsor. Filmmakers should apply as “[First Name] [Last Name] – Filmmaker.”
3. Address and phone number of the applicant organization.

Accessing and completing application forms

1. Accessing the Online LOI Form: When you log in to your online account, go to the “Apply” page and select the “Expand Massachusetts Stories – Advancing Equity Track” grant. A “LOI” form will open. Work on answering the questions. Your responses save automatically so that you can work on the form over a few sittings. You can also click the “Save Draft” button to receive confirmation that your answers are saved. When you’re done, click the “Submit” button.
2. Applicant Selection Notification: All notification will come from the online grants system. Check your spam filters to make sure that you do not miss an email.
3. Accessing the Online Application: If your proposal is selected into the track, you will be able to open an “Application” form in the online grants system.
4. Submit Application: Make sure you’ve answered all of the questions marked with a *. Double-check any additional documents you’ve uploaded and press “Submit.” As always, leave time to troubleshoot technical glitches. Your final application is due by 11:59pm on the final application deadline.

5. Final Application Notification: Expand Massachusetts Stories grant applicants will be notified of their award by August 30, 2024. All notification will come from the online grants system. Check your spam filters to make sure that you do not miss an email.

Payment, Reporting, and Publicity

- Funded projects with awards less than \$10,000 will receive 90% of their award upon submitting their grant contract. Remaining funds will be awarded upon completion of a brief final report on project outcomes and use of funds.
- Funded projects with awards of \$10,000 and above will receive 45% of their award upon submitting their grant contract. Grantees can request an additional 45% of their award after completing an optional interim report. All remaining funds will be awarded upon completion of a final report on project outcomes and use of funds.
- Funded projects that need to make major changes to the scope, timeline, format, key project staff, or budget changes of more than \$2,000 per-line item should submit a “change request” form in the online grants system for approval.
- Funded projects will acknowledge Mass Humanities and the source of funds in publicity.

APPENDIX

Special Project Requirements

FILM PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Mass Humanities supports short documentary films project that explore humanities themes through collaborations between humanities experts and documentary filmmakers. Grant funded projects must produce a film, in the 15-30 minute range, ready for distribution by the end of the grant period. Mass Humanities can fund all parts of the production process that adhere to our general budget rules.

Mass Humanities will not fund the production of full-length documentary films but can fund projects that supports distribution of a completed film through audience education and engagement.

ORAL HISTORY AND STORY COLLECTION REQUIREMENTS

Oral history and story collection projects are eligible for Mass Humanities funding if the gathering, sharing, and gaining insight into a community’s story is central to the project.

Projects whose primary aim is training individuals in storytelling performance are not eligible for Expand Massachusetts Stories grants.

All oral history or story collection project proposals should demonstrate that the project meets the following conditions:

1. A specific group of subjects and a strategy for getting them interviewed.
2. The involvement of an oral interview specialist. This person may be the humanities advisor, or the project may have both an interview specialist and a humanities advisor who brings other necessary knowledge to the project.
3. An interpretive/editorial deliverable that intentionally shares samples of the interviews. For example, an exhibit, public presentation, program, or website/page.

4. Training for interviewers that includes interview technique and equipment use, ethical responsibilities, and education about the topic or community that is the focus of the project.
5. Technology: Use digital technology only. For advice, visit the Oral History Association's website. Video is permissible but best practices recommend an audio recording be made simultaneously for back-up and transcription.
6. A plan for storing and making interviews publicly accessible. Projects that plan to store interviews in a public archive should conform with standards of technology, privacy, and historical scholarship such as described in the Principles and Best Practices of the Oral History Association. Be specific about equipment, plans, and commitments.
7. Recorded interviews must be accompanied by a legal release. There is no standard form.
8. Projects that involve teaching must have commitments from teacher(s) and school, as well as indicate how the project is aligned with the MA Curriculum Standards.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROJECTS RELATED TO NATIVE AMERICAN & INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

National Endowment for the Humanities Code of Ethics Related to Native Americans

Mass Humanities award recipients have the responsibility of ensuring that researchers and scholars working on projects related to Native Americans, Aleut, Eskimo, or Native Hawaiian peoples adhere to the following provisions:

Every effort should be made in advance of project design and execution to engage the agreement, advice, and cooperation of members of the Native community in planning and execution of the project and in the disposition and results from the project. This should be communicated to the Native community and the anticipated consequences and results of the research or data-gathering should be explained as fully as possible to the individuals and groups likely to be affected.

Where research or exhibition of materials involves the acquisition of material (objects and documents) and transfer of information on the assumption of trust between persons, the rights, expressed interests and sensitivities of those originating the material must be safeguarded.

There is an obligation on the part of the scholar/ researcher/principal investigator to reflect on the foreseeable repercussions of research and publication on the participant population and to inform them of the probable impact.

Native community consultants have the right to remain anonymous or be specifically named and given credit if they so choose. This right should be respected where it has been explicitly promised.

Where there is no clear understanding to the contrary, sources should be kept confidential. Because funded proposals, grant reports and other written material in the Endowment's possession are available to the public, no identifications contrary to the wishes of the community consultants should appear.

Investigators using recording devices such as cameras or tape recorders or the technique of oral interviewing are also subject to the above criteria. Subjects under study should understand the capacities of such machines and should be free to accept or reject their use.

Individuals or group community consultants should be fairly compensated (through reciprocal exchange or monetary payment) for their services/ information and there may be no exploitation of subjects under study. Scholars should make every attempt to guarantee appropriate credit (in the form of co-authorship or co-investigatorship) and the distribution of financial rewards where appropriate for

products resulting from projects.

Any report or work considered for publication (and where applicable and possible, films or exhibitions) should be deposited with the Native representatives of the elders and traditional leaders of the community. Every effort should be made to see that such a representational body has an opportunity to view the films or exhibitions which result from work undertaken in the community.

This Code should not interfere with or preclude any formal agreements made between researchers and Native peoples for the course of research undertaken with Federal funds. Further, the Code does not preclude or supersede ethical codes subscribed to and endorsed by various professional associations, but rather intends only to make clear the standards expected of those receiving Endowment funds.

This Code conforms to the principles of Public Law 95-341 as amended (the Indian Religious Freedom Act), Public Law 89-665 as amended (the National Historic Preservation Act), and other relevant public laws governing relations with native peoples of North America. Those who direct projects that are subject to the Code of Ethics are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the laws on which it is based to ensure full compliance with the Code. Although the body of the law and customs on which the Code is constructed is rooted in relations with native peoples of North America, researchers are urged to follow it whenever living cultures and peoples are involved.