

Expand Massachusetts Stories Grants – Open Track and Climate Change 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.

There are three application tracks for Expand Massachusetts Stories proposals.

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.

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

Grant Snapshot

Maximum Grant: \$20,000

Key Dates: Application Support Webinar 4/23/2024; Applications due 5/31/2024; Award Notification 9/27/2024

Applications Requirements: 1000-2500 words, excel budget sheet, key resumes, letters of commitment, humanities advisor statement, sample materials where applicable.

Eligibility: Non-profits and organizations that receive non-profit funds planning public programs to tell meaningful stories about Massachusetts’ past or present.

Sound like you? Keep reading.

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

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

Expand Massachusetts Stories of Climate Change

In 2024, Mass Humanities will award up to 10 grants to Expand Massachusetts Stories projects that focus on how communities in Massachusetts affect and/or are affected by climate change, with a particular emphasis on projects that surface the knowledge, experiences, values, and/or strategies for resilience and mitigation, held by communities in harm's way.

How to apply: Applicants for the Climate Change Track will apply through the Expand Massachusetts Stories – Open Track. In the Open Track application they will:

- Indicate their interest in the Climate Change Track
- Answer additional questions about their project.

Project Requirements: All eligibility rules and project requirements for Expand Massachusetts Stories – Open Track apply to projects in the Climate Change Track. Climate Change Track grants do not support capital projects, feasibility studies, or collections preservation.

Application Review: Applications for the Climate Change Track that are the best fit for the opportunity will be reviewed by a Climate Change Track committee. Any applications not selected for review by the Climate Change Track committee will be reviewed with Open Track applications.

Before You Start

We recommend checking in with a Mass Humanities Program Officer before beginning the application process. 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? Complete an eligibility self-check (see "Eligibility Checklist") or email a description of your project to grants@masshumanities.org.

Attend Application Webinars: Mass Humanities will host a webinar April 23 to walk applicants through

Mass Humanities requirements, key application questions and definitions, and budget rules. Video of the webinar will also be posted to Mass Humanities' website.

Amount of Funding

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

Projects must match Mass Humanities' award with an equal amount in additional funds and donated services. See "Budget Requirements" for details.

Timeline

- 2/5/2024 – Applications Open
- 4/23/2024 – Applicant Webinar
- 5/31/2024 – Applications Due
- 9/27/2024 – Award Notification

Expand Massachusetts Stories Grant - Eligibility

Who is Eligible to Apply?

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 application 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.

What Kind of Projects are Eligible?

Expand Massachusetts Stories grants can fund a project at either the planning or implementation stage.

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 public 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.

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).

Matching Requirements

Mass Humanities funding can only cover up to half of your total project costs. The rest must come from other sources, which can include your organization's operating budget. These costs covered by other sources are called your "cost share." There are two different kinds of cost-shares, depending on how the support is given:

Cash-share: Cash-share support is when actual money changes hands — when your organization pays for things like work, supplies, external venue rentals, travel costs or fees. The cash can come from your organization's operating budget, from ticket sales or registration fees, and from other grants and donations.

In-kind-share: In-kind support is a cash-less donation. It includes things like free use of facilities, supplies donated to the project, and volunteered time. In your budget, you'll be asked to determine the cash-value of these donations. For example, in Massachusetts, volunteer time is valued at approximately \$30/hour.

Matching Requirement: Applicant organizations must at least equally match the amount of funding requested of Mass Humanities, through a combination of cash and in-kind contributions. This is often called a “one-to-one match.” It helps you show who else (including your organization) is making a financial commitment or volunteer contribution to the project.

Cash Match Requirement: At least 10% of your matching funds must be a cash-share. The rest can be in-kind contributions.

Example: Imagine the total cost of your project is \$30,000. You request \$15,000 from Mass Humanities. You match that request with \$1500 in cash from a community foundation grant and \$13,500 in volunteer hours and services, or \$15,000 total. Your match (\$15,000) equals the amount you requested of Mass Humanities (\$15,000).

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.

Example: Imagine you request \$4,000 for direct costs like renting a space your organization does not own, paying speakers, and printing fliers. Using a 10% rate, you calculate your indirect costs as \$400. Your total funding request (direct plus indirect) is \$4,400.

Eligibility Self-Check

Use the following checklist to help assess your eligibility.

- Work on my project takes place after September 27, 2024.
- I’m not seeking funding for an event that takes place before October 27, 2024.
- My project plans to have deliverables by January 2026.
- My organization is a non-profit, government or recognized tribal entity, or fiscally sponsored project.
- My project is not for the purpose of advocating for specific legislation or social programs.
- My project is not for direct social services (counseling, therapy, legal advice or representation).
- My project is not primarily focused on the creation of a performance or work of art.
- My project focuses on finding or sharing under-recognized stories of Massachusetts.
- My project benefits the public, beyond 4-year college students.
- My project is free or low-cost for participants.
- My project is supported by a humanities advisor.
- I understand the matching requirement and feel confident in meeting it.

Not sure about your answers? Book an appointment with a Program Officer.

Review Criteria

Every application is unique. When writing your application, help us envision your project by giving illustrative examples and specific details. These are the criteria we look for when reviewing projects:

Humanities Content and/or Methods: The humanities are central to this project. The proposal demonstrates sound approaches to humanities content and/or methods. The project allows for diverse perspectives among participants and/or audiences. The humanities advisor has relevant and appropriate humanities expertise for their role in the project. If applicable, additional humanities advisors have relevant and appropriate humanities expertise for their roles in the project.

Expand Massachusetts Stories: The project will surface, interpret and/or share stories of Massachusetts, particularly stories that have been unrecognized in or excluded from public conversation. The project will expand public understanding of these Massachusetts stories. The project's topic will be relevant to Massachusetts residents. The project's approach aligns with Mass Humanities' values and goals, where applicable. If applicable, the project engages communities or individuals whose stories it represents in the program's development.

Organization and Personnel: The proposal demonstrates that the major project personnel are well-qualified for their roles. There are enough project team members to successfully complete the project. The applicant organization appears to have the capacity to successfully implement this project. The applicant organization has sufficient funds to complete the project or feasible plans to obtain sufficient funds. If applicable, key partners or collaborators have demonstrated their support for the project.

Audience and Outreach: The proposal demonstrates a clear sense of the audience that the project will engage. The topic, format, venue, and/or schedule are appropriate for engaging the audience. The outreach plan includes sufficient time for reaching participants. The outreach plan is appropriate for the intended audience. Mass Humanities will be appropriately recognized in the project publicity and deliverables.

Project Plan: The proposal presents a coherent project (i.e. it is not merely an assembly of disparate work). The project's deliverables are clearly articulated. The work activities described in the application are sufficient for achieving the project deliverables. The work activities described will be well-coordinated, with any necessary benchmarks and/or advisory points identified. The project's timeline is realistic.

Budget: The Mass Humanities-funded project costs are reasonable and justified. The project budget is realistic in terms of the project's scale. The cost shares appear reasonable and feasible for the organization. Mass Humanities funding will make an impact on this project.

In addition to these criteria, Mass Humanities also considers regional diversity and organizational diversity in review.

How to Apply

Using Mass Humanities Online Application System

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

Starting your online application

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 Application Form: When you log in to your online account, go to the “Apply” page and select the “Expand Massachusetts Stories – Open Track” grant. An application 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. 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.

3. Final Application Notification: Expand Massachusetts Stories grant applicants will be notified of their award on September 27, 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 source of funds in publicity.

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.
