



Request for Proposals (RFP) Children’s Museums September 2023

OVERVIEW

MHC, organized as a non-profit organization, is Minnesota’s affiliate to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The academic disciplines of the Humanities help us to express, examine, and learn what it means to be human. MHC’s vision is a more just society that is curious, connected, and compassionate.

The Minnesota Legislature passed the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment (Legacy Amendment) in 2008 to ensure clean water, preserve opportunities for Minnesotans to enjoy nature, parks, and trails, and to appreciate arts and culture that exists within the State. The Legacy Amendment increases the state sales tax by three-eighths of one percent to create the Legacy Fund – 19.75% of the Legacy Fund is dedicated to the arts and cultural heritage fund.

Individuals and organizations that receive funding from the Legacy Fund are expected to:

- Amplify arts, culture, and heritage in Minnesota,
- Increase the depth and breadth of Minnesotans who will connect with arts, culture, and heritage, and
- Provide opportunities for individuals for free or at reduced cost to allow access for economically disadvantaged individuals and families in Minnesota to attend Legacy programs.

During the Minnesota Legislative session that ended in 2023, the Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$3,200,000 to the Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC) from the Legacy Fund to administer grants to Children’s Museum. The legislation from the Minnesota Legislature specifically identified the Minnesota Children’s Museum of St. Paul for a direct appropriation of \$1,000,000 over the next two years.

This RFP only concerns opportunities that exist for Children’s Museums in Minnesota for the remaining competitive \$2,200,000 in grants.

Funding Availability

MHC will award \$2,200,000 in Children’s Museum grants, less allowable administrative fee to MHC for design, award, and monitoring of the grant program.

Timeline

RFP posted	September 14, 2023
Informational sessions (online)	Oct 26 & Nov 6, 2023
Applications due no later than 11:59 p.m. CDT	December 11, 2023
Applications under review	January 2024
Award notifications (grant agreement negotiations begin)	February 2024

Eligibility

With the exception of the Minnesota Children’s Museum in St. Paul, any Children’s Museum in Minnesota, that is in good standing with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), in good standing with MHC, and has no outstanding open grants with MHC is eligible.

Any Children’s Museum is in good standing with the IRS when it has completed all IRS reporting requirements and can receive tax-deductible charitable contributions. MHC uses the [IRS Tax Exempt Organization Search](#) to confirm compliance.



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Any Children’s Museum that has failed to complete a prior grant, has a history of inconsistent and inaccurate financial reporting, or a history of overdue reports may not be in good standing with MHC. If you are unsure whether you are in good standing with MHC, please contact Laura Adams at laura.adams@mnhum.org. MHC may grant an exemption to an organization that is not in good standing if the applicant uses a fiscal agent.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

If you have any questions about this RFP please contact:

Laura Adams
Minnesota Humanities Center
Grants Administrator
987 Ivy Avenue East
St. Paul, MN 55016
Laura.adams@mnhum.org

All applicants are strongly encouraged to contact MHC in advance of submitting a full proposal. MHC will discuss proposal ideas, help align ideas with funding criteria, outline ideal project (and grant payment) timelines, and review budgets for allowable expenses and scope. MHC is available and committed to helping applicants submit the strongest application possible. We will attempt to respond within 48 hours of the question being submitted by phone or email.

MHC will host a series of public information sessions for anyone interested in applying. Information will include details about criteria, eligibility, tips for successful applications, and how to apply online:

Thursday, October 26, 2023, at 12:00 p.m.	Virtual
Monday, November 6, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.	Virtual

Zoom links for the public information sessions can be requested from Laura Adams at laura.adams@mnhum.org.

If applying in English is a barrier or you need a reasonable accommodation to submit your application, please contact Laura Adams at laura.adams@mnhum.org.

APPLICATION

Applicants are encouraged to apply online through MHC’s grants management system. You may access the Children’s Museum grants application [here](#). Applicants may review the full application [here](#). We recommend reviewing the full application prior to logging on and setting up an account. You may save your initial application entries and subsequently return to the document to finish your application.

All applications must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. CDT, December 11, 2023. Mailed applications must be post-marked December 11, 2023.

Please do not submit any additional materials other than what is requested, such as binders or photos, in the application. Unrequested materials will not be reviewed.



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Financial Information Submission

There is no limit to the amount of funding that can be requested by an applicant. If you request funding in the amount of \$25,000 or more, you need to submit the following financial documentation with your application:

- Grant applicants with annual revenue over \$750,000 need to submit their most recent certified financial audit.
- Grant applicants with annual revenue over \$50,000 but less than \$750,000, need to submit their most recent IRS Form 990.

Legacy Funding Limitations

Legacy prohibits funds from being used to:

- Cover costs expensed before the grant agreement is fully signed,
- Start, match, add, or complete any type of capital campaign,
- Support capital costs (such as improvements, construction, property, or equipment),
- Pay for indirect costs or other institutional overhead charges not directly related and proportional to, and necessary for, the activities outlined in the project proposal,
- Support benefits and fundraisers,
- Purchase promotional giveaway items such as t-shirts, keychains, and
- Fund out-of-state expenses such as out-of-state travel.

Grant Payments

Minnesota law, as enforced by the Department of Administration, provides the manner in which MHC may issue payments to grantees. Grant funds cannot be issued until MHC has received a fully executed Agreement from the grantee. Reimbursement is the preferred and default method of payment under state guidelines. Under the Reimbursement model, upon the grantee providing information that expenses have been incurred, MHC will forward funding reimbursement to the grantee.

Grantees may also receive a partial advance under Minnesota law. Under the Advance model, the grantee may receive the following partial advance depending on the amount of the grant:

- If the grant is \$10,000 or less, the maximum that can be advanced is 75%.
- If the grant is more than \$10,000 but less than \$50,000, the maximum that can be advanced is 50%.
- If the grant is more than \$50,000, the maximum that can be advanced is 25%.

Grantees will not receive any additional funding under their grant award until a financial reconciliation has occurred. Advances may only be provided under Minnesota law to Grantees who do not have a history of late reports, poor performance, or financial risk. Grant payments will not be made when the grantee has past due progress reports.

MHC is required to hold ten (10) percent of the total award to a grantee until all reporting requirements are met. Upon completion of a grant, MHC conducts a financial review of the expenses incurred by the grantee. Minnesota law requires MHC to conduct a more in-depth financial review of the expenses of grantees that obtain an advance.



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Public Data

Once your proposal is opened by MHC, your proposal becomes public data under Minnesota law. Public data under Minnesota law means information that MHC would be required to disclose upon a request from a member of the public.

If you want to disclose a trade secret or proprietary information within your proposal that you do not wish to later become public data, you will need to identify the trade secret or proprietary information as "Confidential" to MHC when you submit your proposal.

SELECTION PROCESS

Funding decisions will be made on a competitive basis and independent review panels will be convened to assist in the determination. The funding opportunity will begin on September 14, 2023. We anticipate being able to respond to completed applications in February 2024.

Selection Criteria and Weight

Applicants will go through an initial financial review process. Each applicant will be reviewed on a 125-point scale. The scoring factors and weight that applications will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Project Details (30)
 - How well does the project support Arts and Cultural Exhibits and/or Educational Outreach in the areas expressed within the Legislative language (select as many as applicable but at least one of the following):
 - Youth education
 - New exhibits
 - Outreach to underserved and diverse communities
 - Programming that celebrates cultural diversity
- Community Involvement (30)
 - How were stakeholders involved in developing this grant proposal and how were their ideas incorporated?
 - How will stakeholders be involved going forward?
- Project Management (30)
 - How will project be completed on a timely basis?
 - How will reporting of expenses and hours be correctly reported?
 - How goals for the project will be achieved?
 - If applicable, how will compliance with Minnesota competitive bid laws be ensured?
- Evaluation (20)
 - Is success of the project clear?
 - Is evaluation process clear as to methodology?
- Impact (15)
 - What audience are you attempting to reach with your project?
 - How do you expect to impact the audience you are attempting to reach?



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PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

During the course of the project, you should remember that upon completion of the project you will be asked to provide:

- A statement of program income and expenses to date compared to the original budget,
- Details about measurable outcomes achieved to date,
- Details on evaluating the results of funded programming to date, and
- An invoice for any payment request.

MHC may ask you additional questions to fulfill Legislative Coordinating Commission reporting requirements. MHC is responsible for updating the LCC's website with information from Grantee reports that inform, educate, and demonstrate to the public how funds are being expended consistent with the Legacy Amendment.

Grant Monitoring

If you are awarded \$50,000 or more in grant funding, consistent with Minnesota law, MHC will conduct at least one monitoring visit during the grant period.

Grant Bidding Requirements

If you seek to use grant funds awarded to hire or retain a third party, you must use the following processes:

- \$100,000 or more, must undergo a formal notice and bidding process.
- Between \$25,000 and \$99,999, must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of three (3) verbal quotes or bids.
- Between \$10,000 and \$24,999, must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of two (2) verbal quotes or awarded to a targeted vendor.

You must use all possible steps to assure that targeted vendors from businesses with active certifications through the following entities:

- [State Department of Administration's Certified Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged and Veteran-Owned Vendor List](#)
- Metropolitan Council's Targeted Vendor list: [Minnesota Unified Certification Program](#)
- Small Business Certification Program through Hennepin County, Ramsey County, and City of St. Paul: [Central Certification Program](#)

You must not contract with any entity that is suspended or debarred in Minnesota. [Suspended/Debarred Vendor Information](#)

You must also maintain standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and the actions of your employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts. Documentation justifying a single sole source bid should also be maintained.

Interim Report

Depending on the amount of award, you may be required to prepare an Interim Report for MHC to demonstrate adequate progress in fulfilling the terms of your award. The terms of your Interim Report will be, if applicable, stated within your grant agreement with MHC.



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Final Report

At the end of the reporting period identified within your Grant Agreement, you will be required to submit a final report to MHC. MHC will also engage in a final reconciliation of your expenses under the terms of the Grant Agreement. Your last payment under the terms of the Grant Agreement will not be sent to you until you send your final report and reconciliation has been completed.

Audits

Minnesota law requires all grantees to maintain their books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices relevant to their grant for examination by the Minnesota Legislative auditor or Minnesota state auditor for a minimum of six (6) years from the grant agreement end date or the state retention requirements, whichever is later.

Non-Discrimination and State Contract Compliance

Minnesota law requires all grantees to agree not to discriminate in violation of the Minnesota Human Rights Act and to abide by Minnesota law that requires ensuring equal opportunity within contracting.