



MINNESOTA HUMANITIES CENTER (MHC) GRANT FUNDING 2025-27

Youth Literary FAQ

General Information

Q. What is the Youth Literary grant?

The Youth Literary grant is funded through Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (Legacy Fund) and administered by the Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC).

This grant supports individual authors and organizations, creating and producing books for youth across the state. Funded projects must:

- Amplify arts, culture, and heritage in Minnesota.
- Expand access to art, culture, and heritage.
- Provide free opportunities for the public to engage with arts and culture for free or at reduced cost to allow access for economically disadvantaged individuals and families in Minnesota.

The Legislation further identifies that grant funding must be used for the creation and distribution of books for youth that celebrate cultural expression with a focus on excellent creative work and an educational value.

Q. How much funding is available this biennium for Youth Literary Grants?

The Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC) will award \$500,000 (less administrative costs) during the 2025-27 biennium. All funding for Youth Literary grants will be awarded through a competitive process.

Q. What is the maximum amount I can request under the Youth Literary Grant?

The maximum amount an applicant can request is \$50,000.

Q. When is the application period for Youth Literary grants?

MHC will begin accepting applications for Youth Literary grants on July 30, 2026, and the application period for Youth Literary grants will close on **September 11, 2026, 6:00 pm.**

Eligibility

Q. What types of projects are eligible?

Projects must:

- Involve the creation and distribution of books for youth in Minnesota,
- Represent new work or new additions to existing work,
- Take place within Minnesota,
- Celebrate cultural expression with a focus on creative work and education value, and
- Provide books at free or a reduced cost, to allow access for economically disadvantaged youth and families in Minnesota.

Q. Who is eligible to apply for a Youth Literary grant?

Applicants may apply for funding if:

- The applicant is in good standing with the IRS,
- The applicant is in good standing with MHC, and
- The applicant is working to:
 - to create and distribute books for youth in Minnesota, that celebrate cultural expression with a focus on creative work and education value.

Applicants may work with a fiscal sponsor if needed.

Q. What does it mean to be “in good standing” with IRS and MHC?

An organization is in good standing 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. An organization 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 Grants Administrator Elizabeth Neary at Lizzie@mnhum.org. MHC may consider granting an exemption to an organization that is not in good standing if the applicant uses a fiscal agent.

Q. Am I eligible to receive funding from MHC if I receive funding from another source such as a Foundation, a Legacy funder (Minnesota Historical Society or the Minnesota State Arts Board), or a state administrative agency (Department of Administration, Department of Education, or Department of Employment and Economic Development)?

Yes, you may receive funding from MHC but only if the activities and costs that you seek within your MHC proposal are not covered by another funder. For example, if you need \$100,000 for your entire project and you have received \$50,000 from the Department of Administration, you may receive up to \$50,000 from MHC for eligible expenses that are not covered by the grant from the Department of Administration.

Q. Can organizations outside of Minnesota apply for this funding?

No, this funding is only for individual authors and organizations based in Minnesota.

Q. Can I charge for the books?

Applicants must provide books free or at a reduced cost, to allow access for economically disadvantaged youth and families in Minnesota.

Q. Can I use funding for an existing project?

No. Funding must support new work or new additions to an existing project.

Technical Assistance

Q. Can we receive technical assistance from MHC?

Yes, MHC is available to provide technical assistance to complete online submissions until the close of the deadline. Contact the MHC Grants team by email at grants@mnhum.org to request technical assistance.

Q. Can we receive MHC feedback about our application before submission?

Yes, MHC is available to review drafts of your proposal if submitted no later than September 4, 2026, at 5:00pm.

If your proposal is not funded, please reach out to MHC for feedback. Pending the volume of activity within the grant cycle, it may take MHC up to thirty (30) days to respond.

Contact Elizabeth Neary, Grants Administrator, at Lizzie@mnhum.org, with technical assistance questions.

Application Submission

Q. I don't have access to a computer. Do I have to apply online?

The preferred method for applying for an MHC grant is to apply online. However, accommodation is available. If you are unable to submit an application via the online portal, please contact MHC at grants@mnhum.org before the deadline to request an alternate submission format. Requests must be approved in advance, and any hard-copy application must be received by the deadline.

Q. Can there be co-applicants on a grant?

No. MHC recognizes only one lead applicant per application.

Q. Can I submit multiple applications?

You may submit multiple applications as a lead applicant, but you may be awarded only one grant.

Q. Can I be listed as a collaborator if I am a lead applicant on an application?

Yes. You may be listed as a collaborator on multiple application(s).

Q. Can I apply for funds to host a benefit or fundraiser?

No, Minnesota law prohibits Legacy funds from being used to support a benefit or fundraiser.

Q. What should I consider as I am deciding how much to request?

Applicants, at a minimum, should consider the scale and scope of their projects, alternative possible funding sources, and the duration of the project in determining the amount to request.

MHC provides information sessions, one-on-one support, and resources to help applicants factor all the various considerations (size of project, reach and impact, project updates, and financial tracking and reporting requirements), when determining how much to request.

We strongly recommend applicants take advantage of MHC support in developing project ideas and drafting requests for funding. Review of past grant cycles shows applicants who sought support and incorporated feedback from MHC prior to their submissions, were more successful in reviewing awards. Please contact us early in the open application period so we can be as helpful as possible.

Q. What type of expenses can I include when deciding how much to request?

The following expenses may be included within any grant proposal:

- Wages, salary, and benefits of staff working on the project for the hours (hourly employee), or proportionate salary (management employee) spent by the individual working on the project, and
- Compensation due to independent contractors for designing, administering, and implementing the project including paying an artist a stipend or fee for their work.

There are some expenses that **should not** be included within a grant proposal:

1. Costs incurred before the grant agreement is fully signed,
2. Start, match, add, or complete any type of capital campaign,
3. Capital costs (such as improvements, construction, property, or equipment),
4. Benefits and fundraisers,
5. Promotional giveaway items such as t-shirts, keychains,
6. Fund out-of-state expenses, such as out-of-state travel and lodging and contractor expenses,
7. Indirect costs or overhead charges not directly related to the activities outlined in the project proposal,
8. Food expenses when expenses are either (i) incurred during the planning phase of the project, or (ii) are not essential to the final program,
9. Wages, salary, and benefits of staff for the time that such individuals are not working on the project, and
10. Cash/Gift card payments.

If you have any questions concerning whether an expense can be included within a grant proposal, contact Elizabeth Neary, Grants Administrator, at Lizzie@mnhum.org

Q. What type of financial documents do I need to submit with my application?

If you request funding in the amount of \$50,000 or more, you need to submit the following financial documentation with your application:

- If your annual revenue was \$750,000 or more last year, you must submit your most recent certified financial audit (must be 2024 or forward).
- If your annual revenue was at least \$50,000 but less than \$750,000, you must submit your most recent IRS Form 990 (must be 2024 or forward).
- If your annual revenue was \$49,999 or less, you must submit the last financial statement (for example, income statement and balance statement) approved by your board.

Failure to provide financial documents to MHC before the application deadline will prohibit the applicant's grant proposal from being considered by MHC.

Q. When will I be notified about my application?

Application reviews start immediately following the closing of the grant line. The amount of time this takes varies depending on the number of applications received.

Fiscal Sponsor

If you need a Fiscal Sponsor, you will be considered the awardee, and the Fiscal Sponsor will be considered the Grantee under the grant agreement with MHC. A Fiscal Sponsor may not charge you, the awardee, more than ten percent (10%) of the total grant award.

Q. What is a Fiscal Sponsor?

A Fiscal Sponsor is an organization that partners with the awardee to provide financial oversight for the grant. At a minimum, the Fiscal Sponsor is responsible for:

- a. Ensuring that all financial reports required under the grant agreement are accurate and submitted on time,
- b. Providing financial reports and supporting documentation to MHC or other Minnesota governmental entities upon request, and
- c. Maintain all financial reports and supporting documentation for six (6) years after completion of the grant as required by Minnesota law.

The awardee remains solely responsible for ensuring that all programming is implemented as described within the grant agreement.

Q. What is the responsibility of a Fiscal Sponsor?

A Fiscal Sponsor agreement must be secured at the time of application. A Fiscal Sponsor must maintain all necessary records to show and account for the use of grant funds awarded to the Grantee. Under [Minn. Stat. §16C.05, subd. 5](#), A Fiscal Sponsor should ensure that all books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices relevant to the grant contract are maintained for a minimum of six (6) years from the end of the grant contract to allow for examination upon request by MHC, the State of Minnesota, the State Auditor, or the Legislative Auditor.

A Fiscal Sponsor is required to participate in a Grantee orientation training session consistent with the terms of the grant agreement and the initial grant award by MHC to the Grantee. Failure to participate in the orientation training session may result in suspension of the grant contract.

Grant Award

MHC will forward correspondence to you to ensure that grant funds can be promptly distributed to you. You will be asked to submit W-9 and ACH authorization paperwork to MHC.

MHC will also provide information on how to access MHC's online grants management system, which is the primary way MHC communicates with Grantees. To facilitate communication with MHC, please become familiar with this system. MHC will also share information on how you access MHC Grantee Toolkit.

MHC will also provide information on how to attend Grantee orientation training. If you have a Fiscal Sponsor, both you and your Fiscal Sponsor are required to attend the Grantee orientation, consistent with the terms of the grant agreement.

Q. Is there a date by which funds must be spent?

If you are awarded funding, your funds must be spent by May 31, 2027, to allow for your final reporting to be finished and submitted by June 30, 2027.

Q. Is the online grants management system the only way MHC communicates with Grantees?

No. While MHC relies primarily on the online grants management system for most communication with Grantees, MHC can and does communicate with Grantees by phone, email, and written correspondence.

Q. How often does MHC make payments?

Payments are made by MHC to Grantees as outlined in the grant agreement that has been negotiated with the Grantee.

Post Award

Q. Will I need to provide a final progress report to MHC?

Yes. The grant agreement will detail that a final report is due to MHC. MHC will use information from your final report to update the Legislature and the public on the success of your project.

Q. What financial reporting must I provide MHC when the grant has been completed?

Upon conclusion of the grant agreement, the Grantee or Fiscal Sponsor must provide information to allow MHC to conduct a financial reconciliation. The level of financial reporting that must be provided to MHC when the grant has been completed is dependent on the amount awarded and whether the Grantee or Fiscal Sponsor obtained an advance. All grant agreements of \$50,000 will require one (1) on-

site visit by MHC. Detailed information about what financial reporting needs to be provided can be found in the Grantee orientation training, Grantee Toolkit, and grant agreement.