



MINNESOTA HUMANITIES CENTER (MHC) GRANT FUNDING 2025-27

Underrepresented Cultural Studies Materials FAQ

General Information

Q. What is the Underrepresented Cultural Studies grant?

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

This grant supports individuals and organizations, that will work to develop high-quality academic, cultural, and ethnic studies materials for communities that do not have adequate cultural and ethnic studies materials, or who are underrepresented in those materials. These materials must support Minnesota K-12 students from underrepresented communities without a formal writing system that is primarily orally based. These communities include but are not limited to Hmong, Karen, Somali, and Oromo cultures. The legislation further provides that projects awarded under this grant must work with school districts that intend to use the materials.

Q. How much funding is available this biennium for Underrepresented Cultural Studies Materials grants?

The Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC) will award \$400,000 (less administrative costs) during the 2025-27 biennium. All funding for Underrepresented Cultural Studies Materials grants will be awarded through a competitive process.

Q. What is the maximum amount I can request under the Underrepresented Cultural Studies Materials grant?

The maximum amount an applicant can request is \$125,000.

Q. When is the application period for Underrepresented Cultural Studies Materials grants?

MHC will begin accepting applications for Underrepresented Cultural Studies Materials grants on July 30, 2026, and the application period for Underrepresented Cultural Studies Materials grants will close on **October 2, 2026, 6:00 pm.**

Q. What if I do not provide a letter of intent or desire to collaborate from a Minnesota licensed teacher or school district official?

Your application will be considered incomplete, and you will not be eligible to receive an award.

Q. What if my project does not support the Hmong, Karen, Somali, and Oromo cultures?

Your application will be reviewed provided that your project serves a community that is primarily orally based and does not rely heavily on a formal writing system.

Eligibility

Q. What types of projects are eligible?

Projects must:

- Develop high-quality academic, cultural, and ethnic studies materials for communities that do not have adequate cultural and ethnic studies materials, or who are underrepresented in those materials,
- Create materials that support Minnesota K-12 students from underrepresented communities without a formal writing system that is primarily orally based, including but not limited to Hmong, Karen, Somali, and Oromo cultures.

Q. Who is eligible to apply for an Underrepresented Cultural Studies Materials grant?

- If the applicant is in good standing with the IRS,
- If the applicant is in good standing with MHC, and
- If the applicant is working to:
 - Develop high-quality academic, cultural, and ethnic studies materials for communities that do not have adequate cultural and ethnic studies materials, or who are underrepresented in those materials,
 - Create materials that support Minnesota K-12 students from underrepresented communities without a formal writing system that is primarily orally based, including but not limited to Hmong, Karen, Somali, and Oromo cultures.

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 Briza Maldonado at briza@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 individuals and organizations based in Minnesota.

Q. Can I use funding for an existing project?

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

Q. Can school districts apply for this grant?

No, this funding is for non-profit and for-profit community organizations as well as individuals.

Q. Can I sell the materials that I develop as part of the project for profit?

Any projects supported by Legacy funding must be available for free or at a reduced cost.

Q. Can my project focus on specific grades or does it have to cover all of K-12?

Yes, the project can focus on specific grades or grade levels so long as they are in the K-12 range.

Q. What educational standards do the materials have to follow?

MHC is not providing guidance on what the materials should be or what standards should be followed. We encourage interested applicants to connect with their school district or educator partners to identify what standards they are following and their needs regarding ethnic and cultural studies materials.

Q. What should the letter of support from a school district official or licensed educator address?

The letter should be able to articulate how the materials developed as part of this project will be used to further ethnic and cultural studies in partner schools or classrooms.

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 25 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 Briza Maldonado, Grants Administrator, at briza@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 Briza Maldonado, Grants Administrator, at briza@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 November 30, 2027, to allow for your final reporting to be finished and submitted by December 31, 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.