MINNESOTA HUMANITIES CENTER (MHC) GRANT FUNDING 2025-27

Cultural Heritage FAQ

General Information

Q. What are Arts & Cultural Heritage (Legacy) grants?

Arts & Cultural Heritage (Legacy) grants are grants awarded to individuals and organizations to create, celebrate, and teach the art, culture, and heritage of the many diverse cultural groups that make up Minnesota, including but not limited to Indigenous organizations, communities whose culture and heritage have been historically underrepresented, recent immigrant communities, and veterans.

The Minnesota Legislature expects that individuals and organizations receiving a grant under this fund will:

- Preserve and honor the cultural heritage of Minnesota,
- Provide education and student outreach on cultural diversity,
- Support the development of culturally diverse humanities programming, including arts programming by individuals and organizations, or
- Empower communities in building identity and culture, including preserving and honoring communities whose Indigenous cultures are endangered or disappearing.

Q. How much funding is available this biennium for Cultural Heritage grants?

The Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC) will award $4,868,000 (less a 5.5% administrative fee). All funding for Cultural Heritage grants will be awarded through a competitive process.

Q. What is the maximum amount I can request under the Cultural Heritage grants?

The maximum amount an applicant can request is $300,000.

Q. My organization was named for priority consideration, what does this mean?

The Minnesota Legislature identified the following organizations within the legislation to be given priority:

- Art from the Inside,
- Arts programs in the Moorhead cultural mall,
- Arts programs in the Maplewood cultural mall,
- Asian Economic Development Association,

- Capri Theater,
- Minnesota State Band,
- Fight for Your Dreams,
- HIRPHA International for Oromo youth programs,
- Hmong Cultural Center,
- Midnimo,
- MN Zej Zog,
- People in Action,
- Phyllis Wheaatley Community Center,
- Safe Summer Nights,
- Siengkane Lao, MN
- Stairstep Foundation, and
- Walker West Music Academy.

The legislation does not require that MHC award a grant to an organization that has been identified within the legislation as a priority organization. The above identified priority organizations will need to apply under the competitive grant process in order to receive funding.

Q. When is the application period for Cultural Heritage grants?

MHC will begin accepting applications for Underrepresented Cultural Heritage grants on September 3, 2026, and the application period for Cultural Heritage grants will close on **Monday, October 26, 2026, 6:00 pm.**

Eligibility

Q. Who is eligible to apply for a Cultural Heritage grant?

An applicant is eligible to apply for funding:

- 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:
    - Preserve and honor the cultural heritage of Minnesota,
    - Provide education and student outreach in cultural diversity,
    - Support the development of culturally diverse humanities programming, including arts programming, by individuals and organizations, or
    - Empower communities in building identity and culture, including preserving and honoring communities whose Indigenous cultures are endangered or disappearing.

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

An applicant 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 applicant 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 MHCs Grants Administrators at grants@mnhum.org. MHC may grant 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'm receiving 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 individuals and 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.

Technical Assistance

Q. Can we receive technical assistance from MHC?

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

Q. Can we receive feedback from MHC about our application before we submit it?

Yes, MHC is available to help review drafts of your proposal no later than Friday, October 9, 2026. Once you are awarded a grant, please do not hesitate to reach out and contact MHC with any of your questions so we can ensure prompt payment to you.

If, unfortunately, your proposal is not funded, please reach out to MHC for feedback as we have found that such feedback increases the success rate of subsequent proposal requests. Pending the volume of activity within the grant cycle, it may take MHC up to thirty (30) days to respond.

Contact MHCs Grants Administrator, at grants@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, you do not need to submit your application online. If you need accommodation to submit a hard copy of your application to MHC, at grants@mnhum.org.

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

No. There can only be one applicant recognized by MHC as the lead applicant. While you may submit multiple applications as a lead applicant, you may only be awarded one grant. Additionally, you may identify multiple collaborators on any application you file with MHC.

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 consider in deciding how much to request?

The following expenses may be considered 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 considered within a grant proposal:

1. Reimburse costs incurred before the grant agreement is fully signed,
2. Start, match, add, support or complete any type of fundraiser or benefit,
3. Support investments (such as improvements, construction, property, or equipment),
4. Purchase promotional giveaway items such as t-shirts, keychains,
5. Fund out-of-state expenses, such as out-of-state travel and lodging and contractor expenses,
6. Pay for expenses or other institutional overhead costs that are not directly related to the activities outlined in the project proposal.
7. Food expenses when expenses are either (i) incurred during the planning phase of the project, or (ii) are not essential to the final program.
8. Wages, salary, and benefits of staff for the time that such individuals are not working on the project.

If you have any questions concerning whether an expense can be included within a grant proposal, contact MHCs Grants Administrators, at grants@mnhum.org

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

If you request funding in the amount of $25,000 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 2023 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 2023 or forward).
- If your annual revenue was no more than $49,999, you must submit the last financial statement (for example, income statement and balance statement) reviewed by your board.

Failure to timely provide financial documents to MHC may 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. MHC completes a three-step review process including: 1) initial eligibility review to assess applications are complete, with all attachments provided, and the application meets statutory requirements, 2) Panel Reviews to assess against the criteria & alignment with legislative intent, scored against a rubric, and grant award amounts are recommended, and 3) a financial review to assess financial documents within posted guidelines provided in the Request for Proposal. The amount of time this takes varies depending on the number of applications received. Funding recommendations are made to MHC's CEO, who makes the final funding determination.

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. 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 works at a minimum, with the awardee to:

a. Ensure that all financial reports required to be submitted to MHC under the grant agreement are timely and accurate,
b. Produce all financial reports as supporting documentation for the grant to MHC or other Minnesota governmental entities when requested, 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 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

Q. What happens after we receive notice that we are awarded a grant?

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

MHC will also forward information on how you can access MHC's online grants management system. The online grants management system is the primary means by which MHC communicates with Grantees. To facilitate communication with MHC, please become familiar with the online grants management system. MHC will also forward information to you on how you access MHC Grantee Toolkit.

Finally, MHC will forward information to you on how you can 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 expended?

Grant funds should be used by December 31, 2027, with final reporting to be finished and submitted by January 31, 2028.

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.

Q. What information must I submit to request payment from MHC?

To request payment from MHC, you will need to provide a transaction report setting forth expenses incurred and information as to whether spending on the project is consistent with the budget for the project.

Q. Once my payment request from MHC has been approved, when can I expect to receive payment?

MHC will issue payment within thirty (30) days once your payment request has been approved.

Q. What training is required once the proposal has been accepted?

All Grantees, awardees, and their Fiscal Sponsor, are required to participate in one Grantee orientation that is consistent with their grant agreement. No other training is required.

While not required, many successful awardees take advantage of MHC's Grantee Resources and establish regular consistent communication with MHC's grants team who can provide coaching and directions to ensure successful completion of your grant within the terms of your grant agreement.

Q. Does MHC expect awardees to acknowledge their award?

Yes! Minnesota law requires recipients of the Legacy grants to acknowledge receipt of such funding to the general public. The grant agreement between the awardee and MHC will set forth the Legacy logo, MHC logo, and acknowledgment language that should be used by the awardee. MHC anticipates that for Legacy grants that awardees and Grantees will include the Legacy logo, MHC logo, and acknowledgment language in public and annual reports.

Q. Will I have to submit progress reports on the grant agreement?

Yes, Grantees will be required to submit one interim report, and your grant agreement will outline the schedule as to when your interim report is due to MHC.

Q. Can I pay individuals working on the grant with cash?

No. Due to the difficulty in creating and maintaining electronic files and paper documentation for cash transactions, the State of Minnesota does not allow awardees to pay vendors with cash.

Q. Can I use PayPal? Can I pay individuals working on the grant with gift cards?

MHC strongly discourages the use of PayPal, Venmo, or any similar online payment processor by a grant awardee. MHC also strongly discourages the use of gift cards by a grant awardee. A grantee must seek MHC approval for these types of payments in advance.

Q. Can I get reimbursed for expenses I incurred expenses after I receive notice that my proposal has been accepted but the grant agreement has not been executed?

No, Minnesota law prohibits reimbursement of any expenses prior to execution of a grant agreement. Therefore, please sign and return your grant agreement to MHC as soon as possible to maximize the expenses for which you may seek reimbursement.

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 or more 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.