



Utah Humanities Council

Basic Guidelines for Competitive Grants to Nonprofit Organizations

NOTE: These guidelines are updated occasionally as part of UHC's ongoing evaluation of its grant program. Please check UHC's website to make sure you have the most up-to-date version. This set of guidelines was updated 11 July 2007

What is the Utah Humanities Council?

The Utah Humanities Council (UHC) provides lifelong learning through programs that explore diverse traditions, values, and ideas. UHC's programs help us understand the past, participate fully in the present, and actively shape the future.

Since its establishment in 1975 as an independent nonprofit agency, UHC and its programs have reached every corner of the state, involving thousands of people as planners, participants, and audiences. Nonprofit organizations such as libraries, historical societies, museums, local arts and humanities councils, civic and service organizations, public radio and television stations, educational institutions, local and state government agencies, ad hoc groups, and others collaborate with UHC. A volunteer board of directors, representing a wide variety of disciplines and communities, makes policy, directs planning, evaluates programs, and judges grant proposals.

What are Competitive Grants to Nonprofit Organizations?

Competitive Grants provide financial support for projects designed to increase public understanding and appreciation of the humanities, and are awarded on a competitive basis. Each application is judged according to its individual merit and its contribution to UHC program objectives. Each grant project awarded UHC funds must include at least one live program in which the public is invited to discuss or otherwise engage with the humanities topics and themes raised as part of the project.

What projects don't qualify for Competitive Grant funding?

UHC does not award Competitive Grant funds for:

- creative or performing arts.
- projects completed prior to application.
- professional conventions or invitational meetings.
- political action or advocacy.
- receptions, food, or entertainment.
- indirect costs/overhead.
- building construction, maintenance, renovation, or preservation.
- property, building, or equipment purchase.
- international travel.
- regular school activities or student projects.
- scholarships or tuition for college or training courses.
- deficits.
- major acquisitions.
- fund-raising events/products.

What organizations are eligible to apply for Competitive Grant funding?

Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations such as libraries, historical societies, museums, local arts and humanities councils, civic and service organizations, public radio and television stations, educational institutions, local and state government agencies, and ad hoc groups. (Official nonprofit status is not required.) Academic institutions that submit applications are strongly encouraged to collaborate with community groups. Competitive Grants are not made to individuals.

How much money can my organization receive through the Competitive Grant program?

\$5000 per application is the maximum. Smaller requests (\$1500–\$3000) are encouraged.

What is the Competitive Grant deadline?

Competitive Grants are awarded semiannually. Below are the relevant deadlines and notification dates for this program. *All applicants are required to submit a draft application.*

<u>DRAFT DEADLINE</u>	<u>FINAL DEADLINE</u>	<u>NOTIFICATION DATE</u>
February 1	March 1	May 1
August 1	September 1	November 1

What basic criteria must a project meet in order to qualify for a Competitive Grant?

While meeting the following basic criteria does not guarantee funding, applicants can strengthen their case for funding by making sure their proposed projects:

- are rooted in the humanities.
- enlist the participation of one or more humanities scholars in both planning and execution of your project.
- be designed and publicized to attract a public audience.
- provide a balance of viewpoints (if addressing social or public policy issues). The following eight points explore these basic criteria in greater detail.

What does UHC mean when it says a project needs to be "rooted" in the humanities?

All programs must have as their focus at least one of the following areas of study—history, literature, philosophy or ethics, languages or linguistics, comparative religions, cultural anthropology, archaeology, jurisprudence, folklore, history and/or criticism of the arts, and such interdisciplinary fields as ethnic studies, gender studies, and international studies.

Does UHC fund art projects?

UHC is not a good funding source for art projects, and does not provide funding for creative or performing arts elements of public programs.. Components of projects dealing with the visual, literary, or performing arts are only eligible for UHC funding if they seek to interpret or analyze the artistic form in question using critical, historical, ethical, or other humanities-oriented perspectives. A UHC grant may not be used to fund artists' travel, honoraria, or other expenses, though funds may be used to cover similar expenses for a humanities scholar to put the art in historical and/or critical context.

Will UHC fund author readings or creative writing workshops?

UHC is not a good funding source for author readings or creative writing workshops. However, a program led by an author that primarily seeks to place his/her work in comparative, cultural, or analytical context may be considered for UHC funding.

How must humanities scholars be involved in my organization's proposed project in order to qualify for UHC funds?

Humanities scholars must be included in your project as presenters, planners, or other primary personnel. There are several ways for a person to qualify as a humanities scholar:

- The person may have academic credentials, such as an advanced degree in one or more of the humanities disciplines listed above. A scholar's role in the proposed project must be linked to his or her credentials. A scholar with credentials in American literature, for instance, would not be a good fit for a project dealing with world politics, nor would a lecture series on business ethics be well served by enlisting the participation of a historian of medieval Europe.
- If the person lacks an advanced degree in the humanities, he/she may still qualify as a scholar if he/she can provide UHC with a record of equivalent expertise in the humanities. The grant applicant must be able to demonstrate that the presenter's work is respected by scholars in the field. Personal experience in a given subject is **not** enough to qualify someone as a humanities scholar under UHC's granting guidelines.
- UHC may also consider some non-traditional presenters, such as elders or tradition bearers in ethnic communities, to be humanities scholars. This alternative process requires that the grant applicant provide a rationale in the written proposal for why the non-traditional presenter should be considered a humanities scholar. Questions to consider in providing this rationale are: Is the person in question recognized by his/her community as a spokesperson for the group? What criteria did his/her community use in establishing him/her as a tradition bearer? Are these the same criteria the applicant is asking UHC to consider in establishing the person in question as a humanities scholar?

What should the required humanities scholar's role be in the proposed project?

Humanities scholars strengthen a project by providing a broad humanistic perspective as well as in-depth knowledge. They play many roles, including, but not limited to:

- performing specific services for the project director, such as reviewing exhibit text, script treatments, or copy for catalogs or brochures.
- helping shape the content of an exhibition or other program.
- making public presentations or participating in panel discussions.
- writing critical and interpretive materials for brochures, catalogs, exhibits, script treatments, etc.

Will my academic conference qualify as a "public program" under UHC's granting guidelines?

To qualify for UHC funding, programs must be designed for and open to a general public audience, rather than a private or scholarly audience. Applicants should incorporate a strong public programming component into each proposed project. Directors of programs that will attract a primarily academic audience must provide a written plan for how they will attract a non-academic, community audience to the program. For UHC's grant review committee, projects that benefit only a small group tend to be less competitive than projects that have a broader impact and attract a larger and more diverse audience.

Must my organization incorporate a live public program with discussion into the proposed project in order to qualify for UHC funds?

UHC does not fund projects that do not include at least one live public program with public discussion. Projects that do not encourage or facilitate discussion may not be competitive in UHC grant reviews.

What does UHC mean when it says grant projects must be "balanced" in order to qualify for funding?

UHC does not fund one-sided projects. In programs that deal with controversial social issues or matters of public policy, fair consideration and expression must be given to alternative viewpoints. Project directors must also seek to contextualize or analyze controversial issues through the disciplines and methods of the humanities, rather than advancing a public policy agenda.

Are some project formats more competitive than others?

Acceptable formats vary widely; they include lectures, conferences, panel discussions, public institutes, exhibits, and publications, as well as film, video, or audio production, distribution, or broadcast. UHC strongly encourages active audience participation, and prefers formats that provide opportunities for discussion. Living history presentations, while popular, must be accompanied by lectures or panel discussion led by qualified scholars to be competitive in UHC's grant process.

How does my organization apply for a Competitive Grant?

Please see *Application Instructions for Competitive Grants to Nonprofit Organizations* and *Application Checklist for Competitive Grants to Nonprofit Organizations* for details.

Does UHC offer help with the application process?

UHC staff members are happy to advise you on completing the Competitive Grant application, to suggest appropriate humanities scholars, or to help you troubleshoot any obstacles you may encounter. UHC strongly encourages potential applicants to call in the early stages of project planning in order to get staff help and gauge UHC's interest in their project. Staff suggestions are based on experience with previous grant review sessions and board discussions regarding UHC's granting criteria. Even the most careful attention to addressing these suggestions, however, **cannot guarantee funding**. UHC's grant review is always a competitive process, with more funds requested than are available to grant. Every review is influenced by the quantity, quality, and diversity of other proposals under consideration.

Must my organization submit a draft application for UHC staff review?

Yes. All applicants must send a draft, including Cover Sheet, Budget Form, Budget Explanation, Executive Summary, and Narrative Proposal. Drafts must be complete. UHC staff will review the draft and make suggestions on how the application might be strengthened. *Signatures are not required on draft applications.*

When should my organization send in its draft application?

Send one copy of your draft application to UHC no later than the applicable draft deadline listed above. (In some cases, a one-week extension to the draft application deadline may be granted by UHC's program officer.) Early submission is encouraged. You may fax draft applications to 801-531-7869. The more complete your draft application is, the more helpful UHC's program officer will be able to be in giving advice for the final application.

Will my organization be required to publicize the proposed event/project and credit UHC fully in publicity materials?

Yes. Grantees are expected to publicize the events or portions of events for which they received UHC funding, and credit UHC in that publicity. Without this credit, UHC is invisible to the people of Utah, to potential donors, to state and federal legislators who decide on our appropriations each year, and to the audiences we provide with thousands of dollars worth of public programming. Because our programs occur all over the state, in venues such as college auditoriums, museums, and libraries, it is natural for audiences to assume that the host institution is wholly responsible for the program they are enjoying. While the host always contributes its share, without UHC the program might not take place. UHC's ability to raise funds for future grants hinges on our visibility to the public and policymakers.

Is my organization required to develop an evaluation plan for measuring qualitative outcomes as part of the written Narrative Proposal?

Yes. Applicants are required to define the anticipated changes (or *outcomes*) that will take place among individuals or within communities as a result of a proposed project, and then measure those outcomes and report on them to UHC. It is not easy to measure outcomes, in part because change often happens slowly and evaluation requires regular follow-up to be successful. But measuring outcomes (such as changes in an individual's attitude, awareness, opinions, ideas, or ability to solve problems) is important because it helps both UHC and the applicant make a case for continued existence. Evidence of outcomes is also an essential element in successfully raising funds.

An applicant to UHC's grant program is responsible for developing a plan to measure the proposed project's outcomes—including using a questionnaire—and communicating the information collected as part of that process to UHC. UHC provides a sample questionnaire as part of the Competitive Grant application materials. Applicants may modify the questionnaire, but they must still use questions that measure outcomes.

In final reports to UHC, applicants should also submit information on the number of people who attended UHC-funded events, but UHC will not be satisfied with statistical information only.

What general advice does UHC have for completing the final application?

Grantwriting is a competitive process. The grant review committee, composed of UHC board members, may decide to fund a proposal fully, to offer a reduced amount, to fund subject to the fulfillment of certain conditions, or to reject an application. UHC staff does not vote on applications or make funding recommendations. Following the suggestions below won't necessarily guarantee your project will be funded, but they may help you improve your chances. For further advice, see the *Application Checklist for Competitive Grants to Nonprofit Organizations*.

- Finalize all project details and obtain commitments from key personnel and program hosts before submitting your final application. Open-ended applications without finalized details may not be funded.
- Have someone not associated with the project proofread your application and give you suggestions before submitting it.
- A sloppy application makes a poor impression. Double-check your budget figures. Avoid jargon. Proofread carefully.
- Read and follow guidelines carefully. Use appropriate formats. Follow posted word and page limits. Use required forms and follow written instructions. Meet deadlines. Be concise. Remember that an application that does not follow the guidelines may

end up being disqualified. Give your project the best chance of being funded by following the rules.

- Be persuasive. Inform and motivate the grant review committee without being demanding. Your grant application should be able to stand on its merits. Emphasize opportunities rather than problem.

How are Competitive Grant applications reviewed?

UHC staff members, including the program officer, review all Competitive Grant applications after the required draft deadlines of February 1 and August 1, and provide applying organizations with advice for strengthening the application for the final deadlines of March 1 and September 1. Final decisions on Competitive Grants are made by a committee made up of members of UHC's Board of Directors. UHC staff members do not vote on applications.

When will I know if my organization has received UHC funding?

UHC staff will notify you by telephone and mail of the board's decision by the applicable notification date above. Inquiries before that date will not be answered.

Will a good track record of using UHC funds well in the past help my organization get a grant this time?

A good track record may help your chances of securing new funds, just as a bad track record may hurt your chances. A good track record, however, is not a guarantee of future funding. Sometimes new applications and new locations may take priority. UHC will consider whether previous grants to the applicant have met UHC's expectations.

What are the responsibilities of the project director and fiscal agent if our Competitive Grant application is approved?

The signatures of the project director and fiscal agent on the application form indicate that they agree to:

- credit the Utah Humanities Council in all publicity and printed materials, and verbally at events.
- submit a written final report, as well as evaluation materials, at the project's conclusion (see <http://www.utahhumanities.org/GrantAdmin.htm>).
- submit a financial report, including auditable records of UHC grant funds and matching contributions (see <http://www.utahhumanities.org/GrantAdmin.htm>).
- notify UHC immediately of any change in the schedule or scope of your project.
- include a link to UHC (www.utahhumanities.org) on your organization's website.
- comply with governmental non-discrimination and debarment statutes (see *Federal Statutes that Apply to Organizational Grant Applicants* below).

What process must I follow in making changes to my project after an award is made?

If you are awarded a grant, and sign and return the grant agreement included with your award letter, you will have entered onto an agreement with UHC, the terms of which state that you must notify UHC in writing prior to making any changes to your original proposal. Significant changes to your project must be approved by UHC. Changes that, in UHC's opinion, significantly alter the project as originally proposed could result in rescission of the grant. Examples of changes that require approval include:

- redirection of UHC funds.
- replacement of scholars or change in the role of scholars.

- replacement of project director or fiscal agent.
- change in the scope, purpose, activities, or duration of the project.

Must my organization provide a 1:1 match for all UHC funds?

Yes. UHC will provide no more than 50% of a project's total cost. Each applicant must be able to show at least one dollar in in-kind donation or cash to match each UHC grant dollar requested. This information must be entered into the Budget Chart on the application form, as well as in your written Budget Explanation. UHC strongly encourages applicants to cover as many administrative costs as possible with matching contributions (personnel, space, supplies, etc.) Although cash match is strongly encouraged, it is not required. The required match may be entirely in-kind.

"In-kind matching" refers to contributions for which the applicant does not pay cash, such as services, facilities, publicity, and volunteer time, including services or expenses paid by a third party.

"Cash matching" refers to direct project expenses—the applicant organization's cash expenditures for activities of this specific project, such as paying honoraria and travel expenses or printing posters. Employee salaries also fall into the category of cash matching.

When a grantee is not able to calculate the exact cost involved in contributing its own equipment, space, services, etc., to the project, then the grantee must indicate in the project budget the basis for determining the value of the contribution.

May we charge an admission fee as part of our project?

UHC expects that most programs it funds will be free and open to the public. In the event that a fee must be charged, any revenue must be shown as direct costs of the proposed program, and must be justified in the written Budget Explanation. If there is no fee revenue shown in the grant application, UHC assumes that the program is free. Events for which large admission fees are charged are less competitive under UHC granting guidelines than events that are free or charge only a nominal admission fee.

Are there limits to the amount we can ask for in order to offset per diem and travel costs?

UHC will only cover \$80 per night for lodging, coach rate airfare, and \$.40 per mile if traveling by car. The maximum UHC per diem is \$30. All maximums are per person.

May my organization use grant funds for a project it has already started or one that will run beyond the stated grant period?

No. If a grant is awarded, UHC funds may be used only for expenses incurred within the official grant period, which may begin no earlier than the notification date. All project activities using UHC funds must take place within the grant period. Funding is never made retroactively.

May my organization ask for more money from UHC if it runs out?

Applications for grant supplements are not encouraged. When a grant is approved, the grant award figure that appears on the agreement is the maximum that UHC will release for the project. If the need arises for additional funds for a project that has received a UHC grant, the original applicant organization must submit a new application, using the standard application form and process. This application would be reviewed in competition with new grant applications at the next grant review meeting. Because UHC's maximum grant is

\$5000, it is extremely unusual for the board to approve a cumulative amount of more than \$5000 for a single project.

Will my organization be required to document the way it has used UHC funds?

Yes. Grant recipients must maintain documentation of the expenditure of UHC funds and of both cash and in-kind matching contributions to be included in the final report to UHC. Records must be available for federal, state, or UHC audit for seven (7) years following submission of the final report.

May my organization copyright materials produced under a grant award from UHC?

Yes. Grant recipients have the right to copyright materials under a grant award from UHC. The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and UHC reserve a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use any products, including copyrighted materials, arising out of UHC grant activities. This use of copyrighted materials is not intended to interfere with or disadvantage Grantee in the sale or distribution of the product. All such property is subject to a Freedom of Information Act request for research data. UHC will not sell or distribute these materials for profit or distribute them to profit-making or public broadcasting agencies.

NOTE

The following language must be used on all materials publicizing or resulting from grant activities:

Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition/website do not necessarily represent those of the Utah Humanities Council or the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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FEDERAL STATUTES THAT APPLY TO ORGANIZATIONAL GRANT APPLICANTS

All grant applicants to the Utah Humanities Council must comply with federal statutes. Applicants must not be presently debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in federal assistance programs, and no persons shall be excluded from participation in the proposed project on grounds of race, color, creed, sex, national origin, disability, or age.

Applicants must agree to remain in compliance with these statutes for the duration of the grant period and to provide immediate written notice to UHC if the certification is in error or if changing circumstances make it no longer accurate.