

Connecticut Humanities Council

Cultural Heritage Development Fund

Grant Eligibility Guidelines



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I. INTRODUCTION TO THE CONNECTICUT HUMANITIES COUNCIL AND TO THE CULTURAL HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT FUND

The *Connecticut Humanities Council* (CHC) is an independent, publicly supported foundation, established in 1973 as a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). In addition to funds regularly awarded by NEH, the Council receives substantial financial support from the State of Connecticut, foundations, corporations and individuals.

The mission of the Connecticut Humanities Council is to deepen understanding of, broaden appreciation for and encourage participation in the humanities among the people of Connecticut. Its programs demonstrate the value of the humanities — history, literature, philosophy and related disciplines — in shaping our public and private lives. To achieve these ends, the Council awards grants to nonprofit organizations for public projects in the humanities and also conducts a wide array of programs and humanities initiatives itself. Since its inception, the CHC has awarded over \$18 million to nonprofit organizations across Connecticut.

The Connecticut General Assembly established the Cultural Heritage Development Fund in 1995. Its primary purpose is to make Connecticut's cultural heritage a significant resource for visitors and residents of the state. Grants to historical societies, museums and other cultural institutions strengthen an understanding of the state's past and improve the ability of these institutions to convey that story effectively to the public and enhance the visitor's experience. A secondary purpose is to support projects addressing broader topics in the nation's cultural heritage that might also inform and attract visitors to the state.

II. ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for CHDF support, an applicant must:

1. Be incorporated as a private, nonprofit organization, or as a city or municipality in the state of Connecticut
2. Regularly provide heritage programs to the public

Ineligible projects and activities include:

1. Projects from profit-making organizations or institutions, agencies of the State of Connecticut, or from individuals (individuals interested in fellowships and stipends for individual research should contact the Division of Research Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities, 202-606-8438. Web site: www.neh.fed.us)
2. Projects directed at persuading an audience to a particular political, philosophical, religious, or ideological point of view or which advocate a particular program of social action or change
3. Projects intended primarily to create musical compositions, dance, paintings, sculpture, poetry, short stories, novels, or other artistic products or art installations

- that are not interpretive (individuals interested in support for artistic projects should contact the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism's Division of Arts, 860-256-2800. Web site: www.cultureandtourism.org)
4. General operating expenses other than staff support (inquiries for this type of support should be addressed to the Institute for Museum and Library Services, 202-606-8539. Web site: www.imls.gov)
 5. Projects for renovation, restoration, rehabilitation or construction of historic sites (applicants interested in preservation grants should contact the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism's Division of History, 860-566-3005. Web site: www.cultureandtourism.org and the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, 203-562-6312. Web site: www.cttrust.org)
 6. Support for individual fellowships, graduate education, or for university-based projects that require participants to register for academic credit
 7. Acquisition of artifacts, works of art or documents
 8. Purchase of office equipment for the purpose of general operations
 9. Costs associated with social events or fund-raising activities
 10. Documentary films and videos, with some exceptions (applicants with projects that include video or multimedia components MUST contact CHC staff to discuss eligibility)

III. REQUIREMENTS

The following guidelines apply to all CHDF program categories. Please note that some categories have additional requirements (see categories for details).

1. The disciplines of the humanities must be central to all projects and the methods of the humanities—critical thinking, analysis and interpretation—must be similarly evident.

The humanities are areas of professional study distinguished by their focus on the uniquely human elements of our world. They examine and interpret the individual's place in the whole human enterprise: our language, our past, our present society and our future as a species. Unlike the natural sciences and certain branches of social sciences, which aim at quantitative explanation and description, the humanities explicitly address questions of value — not only what is and has been significant in human thought and action, but why it has been so. And although the humanities have much in common with the arts, they are analytical rather than expressive, reflective rather than active, critical rather than intuitive. Collectively, the humanities reflect our curiosity about ourselves and the creations of human culture.

The humanities traditionally include the disciplines of: History; Language; Literature; Linguistics; Philosophy; Ethics; Jurisprudence; Comparative Religion; and the History, Criticism and Theory of the Arts.

2. *All CHDF awards must be matched dollar for dollar.* In-kind contributions and cash offered by project sponsors are allowable as match. ***Implementation grants between***

\$5,000 and \$25,000 must demonstrate a 25% cash match from external funding sources (i.e. a request for \$20,000 would need to demonstrate a \$5,000 external match. Implementation grants over \$25,000 must demonstrate a 50% cash match from external sources (i.e. \$50,000 request would need to demonstrate a \$25,000 external match).

3. The CHC places a high priority on projects that will lead to improved visitor experiences and be of interest to the general public and employ appealing and accessible program formats that will actively engage the general public in learning. Ideally, all CHDF implementation awards should result in increased visitation over the life of the project and enhanced tourism activity in Connecticut. The CHC encourages applicants to take proactive approaches to creative collaborations, or outreach to new or underserved audiences in an effort to reach more people.

IV. GRANTING CATEGORIES

The *Cultural Heritage Development Fund* has several distinct granting categories: *technical assistance, planning, implementation, and professional development*. Each is described below. While the application instructions are standard for all CHDF proposals please note that each category has specific objectives to be included.

1. Technical Assistance Grants (up to \$10,000)

Applicants may seek self-study grants through this grantline to address institutional needs. Technical Assistance grants support strategic planning, collections assessment for the development of humanities themes, and/or strategies for site interpretation and presentation (including electronic). Grants may be used to engage the services of professional curators, content specialists and other advisors. Funds are also available to enable the applicant's staff and volunteers to visit exemplary sites for study or to establish relationships with other institutions or professionals in the state. Technical Assistance proposals carefully lay out the problems and describe the process to address them. The conclusion of a successful Technical Assistance project generally results in a comprehensive report on the study's recommendation and an action plan for implementation.

Example: The Essex Historical Society received a \$5,000 technical assistance grant to engage a curatorial consultant to help a team of volunteers properly identify the strengths of their collections in an effort to better interpret Essex history. The consultant also helped to establish appropriate collections management policies and procedures and trained a team of volunteers to implement the recommendations.

Example: The Kent Historical Society received \$4,861 to engage a museum consultant to work with the staff and board to identify strengths and weaknesses and develop strategies and an action plan for managed growth and increased activity. The consultant organized a series of focus group meetings with board and community members for input.

2. Start-up Grants (up to \$10,000) and Planning Grants (up to \$25,000)

CHDF *pre-planning* and *planning* grants provide the essential resources to allow applicants to develop the conceptual and logistical aspects of a heritage project with care. Start-up and planning proposals identify the project team and the work plan and describe the process to develop a fully developed project.

Start-up grants allow applicants to collaborate with subject matter experts, designers, museum educators or other technical advisors to identify and develop a proposed project's main themes and interpretive strategies; conduct visitor research; select program formats most likely to engage visitors; clarify the approach of educational materials and other programs for visitors; and begin work with marketing professionals on effective marketing plans.

Example: The Simsbury Historical Society received a \$10,000 start-up grant to convene a team of consultants including a historian, a museum educator, a curator, marketing expert, and an exhibition designer to begin plans to reinterpret the Phelps Tavern. The grant enabled the Society to gain a firmer command of the ideas that would shape the project, conduct visitor research, identify key advisors and programming partners and produced a preliminary plan the project's format.

Planning grants flesh out these core project decisions and produce well-organized, fully detailed implementation applications. Our expectation is that at the end of the planning period all elements and strategies of the project should be fully developed and a clear budget and workplan for implementation established. Implementation funding may be sought from the CHDF (see section three below) or from other sources. *The receipt of CHDF planning assistance does not guarantee implementation support from the Council.*

Planning grants support such activities as the research and scripting of temporary, traveling and permanent exhibitions (both traditional and online); development of interpretive plans for period houses and historic sites; creation of living history programs, special events and festivals which interpret and illuminate significant aspects of Connecticut history and heritage; and the design of attendant interpretive materials for the general public that help make the state's rich cultural heritage come alive for visitors (includes catalogues, interpretive brochures, walking tours and guidebooks, audiovisual presentations interactive computer/videodisc displays and online exhibitions and tours). The CHC has a special interest in projects that make use of technology (such as Web sites) to broadly disseminate content and projects that encourage regional collaboration among heritage partners and others (such as heritage trails and heritage destinations.).

Example: The Simsbury Historical Society received \$15,500 in planning support to prepare the final script, object checklist and design for the exhibition and develop an interpretive plan for the Phelps Tavern. The grant enabled the Society to engage a curator, a museum educator, historians, an exhibition designer and marketing expert

to see the project through. The grant produced exhibition designs, a script and object checklist, and a furnishings plan for the period rooms.

Example: The town of Lebanon received \$5,000 to begin planning for an enhanced visitor experience to the town and its many historic sites. The overall goal of this project was to encourage a successful collaboration to assure that a visitor's experience to the town was more informative, more convenient, and more enjoyable. The first phase of the project involved a historian and interpretation expert. Together they inventoried the relevant resources in the community and made recommendations regarding opportunities for a coordinated interpretive storyline, and increased coordination and cooperation such as a common volunteer training program, sharing of resources, joint publicity and marketing and co-sponsored events.

Example: The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation received \$19,307 in planning support to develop an interactive web site to reveal the rich material collected on the history of town greens in Connecticut. The grant enabled the Trust to engage a web designer to design the site and navigation mechanisms. In addition, the Trust brought together a team of consultants including a photo researcher, a historian and a writer to script the site and identify images. The grant produced a web site prototype.

3. Implementation Grants (up to \$75,000)

Implementation grants support the actual production and fabrication of heritage programs and products, once planning is completed. Applications should reflect thoughtful humanities content, well-developed project scripts, finalized schedule of events, clear work plans and detailed production budgets and comprehensive plans for project marketing.

Example: The Simsbury Historical Society received \$67,005 in implementation support their permanent exhibition in their Phelps Tavern Museum, "The Entertainment of Strangers, 1786 - 1849". The grant included the reinstallation of period rooms and the fabrication of exhibitions interpreting the Phelps family, the house and site, as well as the story of travel, lodging, cooking and entertainment in the 19th Century. The grant also supported the development of a new docent script, marketing and signage.

Example: The Historical Society of the Town of Greenwich received \$20,000 for a Web site highlighting experiences of Greenwich residents during the Civil War. The Web site carefully integrated the Society's rich archival material and historical research. The grant included support for designers and web technicians to make this a user-friendly site for teachers, students and the general public.

Special Requirements:

Proposals for exhibitions and site reinterpretation must include a “descriptive walk-through” to describe the typical visitor experience section by section. Explain how the takeaway message will be conveyed. Include five to ten illustrations of objects or images. Exhibition proposals should integrate the text labels into the narrative for all the major themes. Include a complete object checklist in the addendum as well as a floor plan and at least one elevation drawing (hand drawn is acceptable.).

Heritage trails or walking tours must include samples of the proposed signage.

Publications must describe the content (including brief abstracts of essays), author(s), format, estimated print run, and distribution plans. Explain how the publication will enhance the project.

Public programs and special events must supply confirmed lists of speakers or performers and describe the content of each presentation. Describe the expected audiences.

Audiovisual and/or multi-media components must describe each component and how it relates to the project. If possible, include the script, treatments, or story line and a description of the images to be used. Describe the user experience.

4. Professional Development Grants (up to \$25,000)

Professional Development grants support conferences, seminars, workshops, publications and other opportunities for museum professionals and Connecticut historians to engage in critical dialogue about issues of scholarship, museum practice and the interpretation of Connecticut heritage. The purpose of the grantline is to encourage Connecticut historians to sharpen their own understanding of their craft and to assist museum and historical society staff and boards to stay abreast of current thinking in the field. The CHC gives special priority to workshop proposals from groups of museums and historic sites with common concerns.

Example: The Connecticut League of History Organizations received a \$12,116 Professional Development grant to develop and host a series of “best practices” seminars introducing museum staff and volunteers to the latest techniques and theories in collection care and management. At the conclusion of the series, participants were called back for a Case Study/Application and Review session to share their accomplishments

Example: Current interest in the changing forms and functions of the American family in the post-World War II era of mass communications and changing family structure inspired the Association for the Study of Connecticut History to seek a \$5,000 professional development grant to organize a one-day conference for both academics and museum professionals. This conference examined the interactions

between children and their families in the Colonial period and discussed the transformations of family culture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The primary goal of the conference was to establish a dialogue between historians and those who study material culture to make the history of the family more accessible to visitors to historic houses.

Example: A consortium of large and small museums from Old Lyme to Stonington hosted a series of docent training workshops to introduce front-line staff to local history stories in an effort to better link the heritage organizations together. They developed an interpretive map to help visitors find sites with similar stories and collections.

V. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Persons or groups interested in applying for funds are strongly urged to consult with Council staff early in the planning process and well before the submission of a formal application. Pre-application discussions often eliminate expenditures of time and energy on proposals that might be ineligible for CHC funding and help applicants prepare strong, competitive applications. Council staff may be able to suggest improvements in program structure, publicity arrangements or budgetary allocations and can often put applicants in contact with institutional or individual resources appropriate to their projects.

Staff will also supply samples of funded applications; and comment on a draft (staff comments are not part of the formal review process and have no impact on the final outcome of the proposal.) Applications must meet specific program guidelines to be considered by the Council. Applicants should understand, however, that meeting basic guidelines does not guarantee funding. The application process is highly competitive; requests for funding often far exceed available funds, therefore, grants are awarded on a competitive basis to the strongest applicants.

Application deadlines are:

- ❑ For proposals seeking more than \$5,000: February 1, May 1, August 1, November 1 or the first working day thereafter.
- ❑ For proposals under \$5,000: The first day of every month or the first working day thereafter.
- ❑ For proposals seeking \$2,500 or less: Rolling deadline.

Completed CHC application forms with all supporting materials must be received in the Council office no later than 5:00 p.m. on the day of the deadline, or the first working day following if the deadline occurs on a weekend or holiday. For the application to be valid, the signatures of both the *project director* and the *fiscal agent* must appear on the budget page. The signed application signifies the applicant's agreement with Council policies and procedures as set forth in these guidelines and attests to the accuracy of the information provided. Incomplete applications will be turned back and late applications will be reviewed the following quarter.

Application forms are available upon request from the CHC office or may be found on CHC's Web site (www.CtCulture.org). Please specify the grantline and program category under which you plan to apply when requesting materials and application forms.

The application form itself contains a detailed list of instructions and a check-list. *Applicants are urged to read this document carefully.*

VI. REVIEW PROCESS

The Council awards grants in free and open competition. Proposals under \$5,000 are reviewed within three weeks of submission. Applications over \$5,000 are reviewed quarterly.

All applications are initially reviewed by staff for completeness and conformance with Council guidelines. Staff may make inquiries with the project director or participants to clarify any matter on which more information may be needed and may turn back, for further development, proposals which fail to meet Council guidelines.

Applications are forwarded to the Council's Application Review Committee three weeks after submission. Discussion on each application is led by a Council member (a "Council Advisor") who may contact the project director and other key project personnel to discuss the proposal and confirm project details. The 14-member Application Review Committee is made of the general public, humanities scholars and museum professionals who meet six weeks after the submission of proposals. Committee recommendations are presented to the Full Council four weeks later and announcements are made to applicants.

Applications are considered on their individual merits, in the context of the quarter's proposals as a whole, and in light of available funds. A set of funding recommendations is forwarded to the full Council for final decision three weeks later. The Council discourages the resubmission of declined proposals without substantial revisions.

The Application Review Committee is asked to apply the following seven criteria:

Humanities Focus: Are the humanities themes of sufficient significance to warrant public support? Are the appropriate scholars involved in a meaningful way? Are the themes solid and properly developed?

Project Format: Is this project properly structured to convey its humanities themes to its audience?

Audience Potential: Is the projected audience of sufficient size to warrant funding? Is the project itself designed in a way that will engage the audience at the project site? Are procedures outlined to measure the size of that audience at the project site? Will it be a sufficient attraction on its own, or, in the case of small scale site, does it contribute in a

meaningful way to related sites in the area that together offer an appealing package for visitors?

Marketing Effectiveness: Is the marketing strategy well thought through and focused on a target audience? Are marketing and design professionals involved? Is the local tourism council involved?

Project Personnel: Is the project team properly qualified? Are museum, design and program professionals involved where appropriate? Are their responsibilities clearly defined?

Work Plan: Is the work plan realistic?

Budget: Do expenses reflect real determination of cost or are they estimates? Are matching costs and contributions substantiated and realistic?