

CThumanities

CAPACITY GRANTS

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

GUIDELINES

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GUIDELINES

Connecticut Humanities Fund (CTHF) Capacity Grants support Connecticut organizations that bring [the humanities](#) to the public. Grants are awarded to help organizations think strategically, better understand their audiences, become better stewards of their assets and operations, and plan for a more sustainable, financially secure future. Funded projects may include:

- Board assessments and training
- Staff training and professional development
- Strategic planning
- Marketing assessments and planning
- Audience assessments
- Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) assessments, planning, and training
- Financial assessments and planning
- Development (fundraising) assessments and planning
- Collections and archival assessments, planning, and digitization
- Object preservation and conservation
- Interpretive assessments and planning
- Technology assessments, planning, and upgrades

Organizations may have only one (1) Capacity Grant open at a time. Applicants may only apply for one (1) Capacity Grant at any application deadline.

1.1 FUNDING PRIORITIES

CT Humanities (CTH) gives priority to projects that:

- Include significant humanities expertise and content;
- Explore topics and stories in an inclusive, diverse, equitable, and accessible manner;
- And do one or more of the following:
 - Help cultural institutions create programs and resources aligned with state education standards that enrich K–12 classroom learning;
 - Support civic and community learning opportunities that encourage dialogue and critical thinking in order to strengthen and promote our civic health;
 - Foster community collaboration in service to the public among organizations, groups, and/or municipalities;
 - Increase an organization's internal capacity, adaptability, and resiliency;
 - Ensure access to the project's content and resources beyond the length of the grant.

Projects that help the public better understand and contextualize community issues or current events, relate the past to the present, and/or are Connecticut focused are encouraged.

If your project involves or interprets Indigenous history or cultures, please also note [CT Humanities' Indigenous Values Statement](#).

1.2 WHO CAN APPLY

An applicant organization must:

- Be incorporated in the state of Connecticut for at least one year as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization governed by a board of directors that meets regularly **OR** be a city or municipality in the state of Connecticut **OR** be a Connecticut-based federally or State recognized tribe
- Provide significant programming and/or services to the public on a regular basis, including open hours and special events, or function as a professional service organization that supports humanities program providers
- Be in compliance on all terms and conditions of all previous Connecticut Humanities grants

The following are not eligible for funding:

- For-profit organizations
- Individuals
- Agencies of the state of Connecticut, including state universities, state parks and historic sites
- Organizations not in compliance with terms and conditions of previous Connecticut Humanities grants

1.3 FUNDING LIMITS AND PROJECT DURATION

Awards may not exceed \$20,000. All Capacity Grant project periods are twelve (12) months in duration, beginning on the day the CTH Board of Directors vote to adjudicate awards (see section 1.8 below). All CTH grant funded activities must occur and be completed within the twelve (12) month project period.

1.4 ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

- Staff salary and wages for work directly related to the project
- Honoraria and fees for consultants and other outside professionals
- Travel expenses directly related to the project
- Photocopying of worksheets and handouts
- Purchase or licensing fees for equipment, software, or other materials that are directly related to project activities

Please note the following expense limits:

- Technical Assistance from consultants may not exceed \$10,000 of total request.

1.5 MATCHING REQUIREMENTS

Capacity Grants must be matched dollar for dollar.

Matching funds for a Capacity Grant may consist of any combination of:

1. In-kind contributions made to the applicant organization solely for support of the project, including:
 - Donated services, including volunteer time dedicated to the project
 - Donated materials and supplies
 - Donated or loaned equipment
 - Donated or loaned rental space not owned by the grantee
2. Cash contributed to the project by the applicant, including:
 - Fees paid directly to consultants
 - Materials, supplies and equipment purchased exclusively for the project
 - Rental fees for equipment and space
 - Contracted services
 - Cash from partners
 - Salaries and wages of applicant and partner staff dedicated to this project
3. External cash contributions from donors and/or third parties specifically for the project in the form of grants, gifts or bequests. (Note: If an admission or registration fee is required to attend a grant-funded activity, those fees may not be counted as an external cash contribution.)

Please note that funding from the State of Connecticut cannot be used for matching purposes.

1.6 FUNDING EXCLUSIONS

- Projects advocating a particular political, philosophical, religious or ideological point of view or a particular program of social action or change
- Projects intended primarily to create musical compositions, dance, paintings, sculpture, poetry, short stories, novels or other artistic products
- Renovation, restoration, rehabilitation or construction of historic sites
- Book printing or publication
- Curricula for classes not accessible to the general public
- Endowments
- Individual fellowships, graduate education or university-based projects that require participants to register for academic credit
- Acquisition of artifacts, works of art or documents
- Capital improvements to applicant site and/or facilities
- Purchases of capital equipment, buildings or land
- Repayment of loans or debt service
- Costs associated with social events or fundraising activities
- Purchase of food, alcohol, refreshments or catering services, including food purchased during travel or as a per diem
- Retroactive funding for activities undertaken before the start of the proposed grant period
- Undocumented expenses

- Ticket or admission fee underwriting or reimbursement
- Indirect costs or overhead expenses at the applicant organization, including, but not limited to, insurance, taxes, administrative and grant management fees, employee benefits and site operating expenses
- Honoraria, stipends or professional fees for applicant organization's board members
- Honoraria, stipends or professional fees for elected officials or declared candidates seeking public office
- Honoraria, stipends or professional fees for active CTH board members and staff

1.7 REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS

Capacity Grant applications must include:

- A CV or resume of up to 3 pages for all consultants and lead staff members participating in the project that demonstrates appropriate skills to carry out the project
- A proposal or invoice prepared by the selected consultant that defines the scope of work the consultant would perform and lists professional fees to be charged, if applicable
- Letters of commitment from the project's key partners and collaborators, if applicable (a template is linked within the application)
- A project budget using the CTH Budget Form (linked within the application)
- The applicant organization's current board list with names & contact information in PDF format
- The applicant organization's current year operating budget and previous year operating budget

1.8 APPLICATION DEADLINE SCHEDULE

Capacity Grant applications are accepted twice a year and are due to CTH by 11:59pm on November 1, 2026 and May 1, 2027. Award notifications for applications received by the November deadline are made by the first business day of February, and award notifications applications received by the May deadline are made by the first business day of July.

1.9 HOW TO APPLY

Applications must be submitted using [Connecticut Humanities' online grant portal](#).

Before applying, it is highly recommended that organizations contact CTH Grants staff (grants@cthhumanities.org) to discuss your project idea, especially for first-time applicants. If Grants staff are contacted within a week of the deadline, they may not have the capacity to schedule a meeting.

If you would like an optional draft review, you must save your draft in the CTH Grant Portal and email staff at grants@cthhumanities.org requesting a draft review no later than two weeks before the application deadline. Both consults and draft reviews are done in order of requests received and pending CTH staff availability.

Please note the following application errors that will cause an application not to be considered by the review committee:

- Applications submitted from an ineligible organization (see Section 1.2)

- Applications from organizations that have not submitted the final report for an existing open Capacity Grant by the application deadline
- Applications for projects unrelated to the humanities
- Incomplete applications
- Applications that do not use the required CTH Budget Form (linked within the application)
- Applications with project budgets where 25% or less of the CTH funding requested is for Eligible Expenses (see Section 1.3). Please note that grants awarded containing items on the Funding Exclusions list will have those items and amount requested removed from their award amount (see Section 1.6)
- Applications with project budgets containing 25% or less of the requisite matching fund requirements (see Section 1.4). Please note that grants awarded containing insufficient matching funds will have their award reduced accordingly
- Applications that are submitted after the application deadline or are left in draft mode but not submitted by the application deadline

No edits may be made to an application once the grant deadline has passed. Please review your application carefully before submitting it.

If an applicant experiences technical difficulties when submitting their application, the applicant must reach out to CTH Grants Staff either by phone or email (grants@cthumanities.org) within 12 hours of the grant deadline to alert CTH of the technical difficulties. Incomplete applications where the applicant organization did not contact Grants Staff within 12 hours of the grant deadline will not be considered.

For more information on the application process, visit: <https://cthumanities.org/grant-application-process/>

1.10 POST-SUBMISSION INFORMATION

- For information about CTH's grants review and awards management processes, visit: <https://cthumanities.org/grant-application-process/#grant-approved>
- You can also find resources for grantees, including a checklist of tasks to complete post-award, a Public Relations Toolkit, and information about your final report on our Resources for Grantees page: <https://cthumanities.org/resources/>
- All awarded grants are subject to CT Humanities' Intellectual Property Policy. You can learn more about this policy and how it impacts your projects here: <https://cthumanities.org/intellectual-property-policy/>