# PA SHARP

Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan

## FAQs

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1. **What is American Rescue Act funding? What is its intended purpose?**
   The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) received $135 million in supplemental funding to assist humanities organizations and other cultural institutions affected by the coronavirus pandemic as part of the $1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) approved by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by President Joseph R. Biden. Approximately $51.6 million in funding is being distributed to the state and territorial humanities councils, including the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, to provide recovery funding to museums, libraries, archives, historic sites, and other nonprofits impacted by the pandemic in their state or jurisdiction. The primary purpose of ARP funding is to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the coronavirus.

2. **How much will PHC distribute?**
   PHC will distribute approximately $1.2 million through its PA SHARP program, providing up to $20,000 in flexible funding to support organizations across the state in their recovery and relief efforts. Grants will be offered in two categories, General Operating and Capacity Building, and Programs.

3. **What's the difference between General Operating and Capacity-Building grants and Programs grants? How do I know which one I'm eligible for?**
   General Operating and Capacity Building grants are for humanities-based organizations **only** and should be used to support organizational expenses like staffing/personnel; rent/utilities; strategic planning and capacity building efforts related to preparing, responding to, and recovering from the coronavirus; and reimagining business models, developing new strategies for marketing, community engagement, and strengthening diversity, inclusion, equity and belonging efforts.

   Program grants are available for both humanities-missioned organizations **and** other non-profits that do humanities work. Examples of expenses in this grant category include costs associated with reimagining or adapting programming and community engagement efforts; technical/consultant needs related to a digital transition for public humanities programming; program execution and/or expansion of outdoor and virtual public humanities programming and engagement.

4. **Are there restrictions on activities and expenses?**
   Because PA SHARP funds are federally sourced, there are some restrictions on how the funds can be used. Restrictions include:
   - projects that fall outside of the humanities and the humanistic social sciences (including the creation or performance of art; creative writing, autobiographies, memoirs, and creative nonfiction; and quantitative social science research or policy studies)
   - overlapping project costs with any other pending or approved application(s) for federal funding and/or approved federal awards
   - competitive re-granting
   - cancellation costs
   - equipment costs in excess of 20% of total project costs
   - travel (both foreign and domestic)
   - construction, purchase of real-estate property, major alteration and renovation
   - environmental sustainability
   - collections acquisition
   - the preservation, organization, or description of materials that are not regularly accessible for research, education, or public programming
   - promotion of a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view
   - advocacy of a particular program of social or political action
   - support of specific public policies or legislation
   - lobbying
   - private functions or programs that are not open to the public and ADA compliant (inaccessible to people with disabilities)
   - purchase of alcohol
   - unallowable expenses as defined in [2 CFR 200 Subpart E - Cost Principles](#)

5. **Can you explain what you mean by "performance or creation of art" being restricted? Does that mean performing arts organizations are ineligible for this opportunity?**
   Because this opportunity is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, whose sole purpose is to support humanities work, funds cannot be used to support the performance or creation of art. Requests for that type of programming are strictly prohibited.

   Performing arts organizations may be eligible for program support if they can demonstrate a track record of integrating the humanities into their work, and their request is for humanities programming. Some examples of that could

include: a panel discussion with artists and scholars on the themes and cultural significance of the art; a community discussion about the themes in a work of art; exploration of the history of the performance or artwork; and storytelling and reflection on the human experience and how that impacts the creation of art.

6. **Can my organization apply for both grants?**
No, organizations can only apply for one grant. If you want to discuss which category is right for you, please contact PHC staff.

7. **The guidelines state that applications are encouraged from "small to medium-sized" organizations. What are the parameters for small to medium-sized?**
We are encouraging small to medium-sized organizations to consider applying. PHC defines small to medium-sized organizations as having operating budgets between $150,000 (or less) and $499,000.

8. **If my organization is outside of the small to medium-sized budget range, can I still apply?**
Yes, PHC will accept applications from eligible organizations of **any** budget size.

9. **Can you provide more details on the requirement that organizations have the "equivalent of one full-time employee?"**
Organizations must have the equivalent of one-full time PAID employee. This can be several part-time employees whose hours add up to full time. Volunteers and consultants, even if they work the equivalent of full-time hours, do not fulfill this requirement.

10. **What do you mean by a humanities-based or missioned organization?**
A humanities organization has a mission explicitly connected to the humanities along with a track record of specifically working in the humanities, as opposed to a group that occasionally tackles or delves into humanities-based themes or activities. Some examples include, but are not limited to:
    o **Cultural and Ethnic Organizations**: This category includes organizations dedicated to the study, preservation, and/or dissemination of the history and culture of ethnic groups.
    o **History Organizations**: This category includes historical societies and their support organizations, historical preservation groups and their support organizations, historic houses, folklore/folklife organizations, place-based learning organizations, cultural sustainability organizations, and other organizations with a historical focus.

- o **Humanities Museums**: This category includes organizations that acquire, preserve, research, exhibit, and provide for the educational use of works of art or objects/artifacts that are related to the study of humanities content.
- o **Literature Organizations**: This category includes organizations that promote the study or appreciation of books and/or literature.
- o **Humanities Education**: Organizations that offer classes, seminars, and workshops in the humanities (which include but are not limited to literature, languages, history, philosophy, religious studies, art history, and interdisciplinary humanities programs—like ethnic studies, gender and sexuality studies, and American studies).
- o **Media, Journalism, and Documentary Organizations**: Organizations that are committed to covering humanities themes and/or telling the stories, happenings, or histories of communities that are informed by the members of those communities, challenge predominant narratives, and/or nurture critical analysis of media.
- o **Libraries**: These organizations include operating public libraries that offer public humanities programming.

11. **What is a BIPOC or AAPI organization?**

PHC defines BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) or AAPI (Asian American Pacific Islander) -centered organization as organizations with a mission and programming that is explicitly reflective of a community or communities of color, and where the board, staff, and collaborators include a significant representation of that community. A BIPOC or AAPI-centered organization is defined by the following organizational characteristics:
- o Primary mission, intentions, and practices are BY, FOR, and ABOUT art, heritages, histories, cultures, and communities of color.
- o Intention of the organization is to perpetuate, promote, and present heritage, histories, or cultural practices that are representative of a culture, a people, and/or is given form by those cultural practitioners;
- o Board and staff are at least 50% BIPOC or AAPI individuals.

12. **Who is not eligible to apply for a PA SHARP grant?**

Organizations and groups not eligible include:
- o Individuals
- o For-profit businesses
- o Organizations supported by a fiscal agent
- o Religious, political, or advocacy organizations
- o Fiscal sponsors
- o K-12 institutions
- o Suspended, debarred, or delinquent on federal debt

13. **I am an arts organization. Am I eligible?**
Yes, Pennsylvania arts organizations can apply for PA SHARP funding but <u>only for program grants.</u> Arts organizations are not eligible to use funding on general operating expenses like staffing, rent, and administration or capacity-building activities.

14. **I am a library. Am I eligible?**
Pennsylvania public libraries are eligible for PA SHARP grants. Your headquarters or administrative entity should apply. Foundations or friends groups with 501(c)(3) status may apply on behalf of your library as well. Eligibility is based on criteria for the individual library. College/university libraries and independent research libraries may apply as well.

15. **Are colleges, universities, or academic departments eligible?**
Yes, colleges or universities are eligible but must demonstrate engagement with the community and be focused on public-facing humanities programming beyond their campus.

16. **I am not a 501(c)(3). Can I use a fiscal agent or sponsor to apply for a grant?**
No, this grant opportunity does not allow for fiscal sponsors.

17. **Is a match required for the PA SHARP grant?**
No match is required for this opportunity. However, organizations that can match are encouraged to do so.

18. **I have never received a grant from PHC before. Can I apply?**
Yes, as long as you meet the eligibility and funding requirements for the grant you are seeking.

19. **I have applied for other emergency funding (grants and/or loans). Can I still apply for a PA SHARP grant?**
Yes, you may still apply for PA SHARP funding even if you requested similar funding from other state-wide agencies or funders, including the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). However, organizations <u>cannot apply for overlapping costs and/or the same project or program</u>. PHC encourages you to look at each funder's guidelines closely to determine restrictions.

20. **What is the deadline for the PA SHARP grant? When will I hear if I received the award?**

    The application deadline for PA SHARP grants is October 1, 2021. Organizations will be notified of funding decisions by November 23, 2021.

21. **If I am awarded a PA SHARP grant, when can I expect the funds?**

    Once all grant paperwork is signed and received by PHC, disbursement of funds typically takes about 2-3 weeks. It is recommended that, if possible, organizations enable electronic funds transfer to expedite this process. PHC will ask for banking information during the grant contracting process to ensure funds are distributed in a timely manner.

22. **When must funds be used by? Is there a particular start date for using funds?**

    Grantees have approximately one year to spend their funding. Activities associated with the grant must start no later than January 1, 2022 and must end no later than December 31, 2022.

23. **What is a DUNS number and how do I get one?**

    A DUNS number, which stands for Data Universal Numbering System, is a free, unique nine-digit number issued by Dun & Bradstreet to a single business entity that allows the federal government to track grantees. To receive federal funding, grantees must obtain and retain a DUNS number. A DUNS number may be obtained from D&B by telephone at 866.705.5711 or online. It typically takes one to five business days to get your DUNS number. However, due to the pandemic, wait times may increase. We encourage applicants to start this process as soon as possible.

24. **Are there reporting requirements?**

    Yes, grantees will be required to submit an activity report and confirm their proposed budget at the beginning of their grant period and a final report 90 days after the end of the grant period. Organizations should expect to report on how funds were used, all activities supported by grant, audiences reached, and the impact of funding on their organization and community.

25. **The application mentions a PA SHARP Learning Network. What is that?**

    We learned from our past relief grant opportunity, PHC CARES, that grantees want to connect with similar organizations to share ideas, strategies, and issues

during these uncertain times. PHC will intentionally build networking opportunities into this grant opportunity in the form of virtual community of practice calls, webinars, and convenings. Participation is open to the staff of all our grantees.

26. **How do I access the PA SHARP application?**
Organizations must use PHC's grant application portal to apply for this opportunity which can be accessed through our website at pahumanities.org/pasharp. Returning applicants will need their username and password to get into the system. New applicants will be asked to create an account to begin the application.

27. **Can I save my application and come back to it?**
Yes, the PHC grant application portal allows applicants to save and return to your application.

28. **Who do I contact if I have questions?**
PHC staff are happy to provide guidance on determining eligibility, completing an application, addressing narrative or budgetary questions, as well as troubleshooting technical difficulties. **Please direct any questions to Taylor Tolton-Kain, Program and Communications Associate at ttolton@pahumanities.org**