



Sustaining the
Humanities through the
American Rescue Plan

Grant Guidelines

PA SHARP GRANT GUIDELINES

Introduction

As part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the Pennsylvania Humanities Council (PHC) and other state and regional humanities councils are distributing funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities' SHARP (Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan) program. This legislation recognizes both the financial realities of the on-going pandemic recovery and the vital importance of the humanities to economic and civic life.

Through its approximately \$1.2 million PA SHARP program, PHC will provide up to \$20,000 in flexible funding to support the growth and recovery of the humanities in Pennsylvania. This is an opportunity to reimagine, reinvent, and re-envision humanities work through planning, capacity building, and creative programming. In addition to grants for Programs and General Operations and Capacity Building, PHC will partner with grantees to develop a special statewide learning network, the PA SHARP Learning Network, that fosters resource sharing, networking, professional development, and mutual support.

PA SHARP and the PA SHARP Learning Network are open to organizations with a humanities-based mission and organizations conducting humanities programming.

The grant portal will launch by September 1, 2021, and applications are due by midnight on **October 1, 2021**. Notifications of funding will be made by November 23, 2021. Funded activities must start no later than January 1, 2022 and must end by December 31, 2022.

About the Pennsylvania Humanities Council

The Pennsylvania Humanities Council's mission is to champion the humanities as a means to spark civic engagement, build community, educate, inspire, and make change that lasts. We believe the humanities are accessible and useful to everyone. We put people first, ensuring the stories, values, assets, and perspectives of each community we serve impact the outcomes of our programs. We create and encourage spaces where everybody belongs and can find common ground, speak their truth, and work together for collective action. Our focus is on continually innovating and growing—always looking for new and better ways to serve the people of Pennsylvania. Our work centers on sharing tools and building networks, working towards a future without barriers, where people take the lead

in making meaningful change in their own communities.

When the coronavirus pandemic first arrived, PHC rapidly responded by reallocating its program funding for emergency support through Pop-Up Grants for Cultural Producers and then later distributed an additional \$780,500 through PHC CARES, part of the CARES Act of 2020. In finding the most effective ways to meet the emerging needs of the humanities in Pennsylvania, PHC developed relevant and accessible webinars, educational programs, and learning networks. PHC's PA SHARP program is a continuation and expansion of this essential growth and recovery work.

Purpose of Funding

The stated purpose of PA SHARP funding is to help organizations working in the humanities to “prevent, prepare for, recover from, and respond to” the coronavirus pandemic. This program will not only help address current financial challenges, but also be an opportunity to establish an active professional community, the PA SHARP Learning Network, leading the statewide recovery in partnership with PHC. PA SHARP provides a new platform for grantees to reimagine, reinvent, and re-envision the work they do through planning, capacity building, and creative programming. The goal is to support and lead Pennsylvania's recovery and renewal—giving everyone in Pennsylvania the opportunity to thrive.

PA SHARP Learning Network

From lifelong learning and youth development to civic engagement and cultivating a sense of belonging, the tools and outcomes of the humanities are essential for Pennsylvanians to reconnect and heal. The PA SHARP Learning Network will address the urgent need for the humanities by bringing together people passionate about creating inclusive, engaged communities and ready to lead the statewide recovery alongside PHC. PA SHARP Learning Network activities may include community of practice meetings, informational webinars, and other professional development and networking opportunities. Members will find inspiration in meaningful conversations, celebrate achievements with like-minded professionals, and share resources that make a difference.

Eligibility

PHC strives to distribute funding equitably across the state and seeks to grow a state-wide network of people and organizations that value and practice the humanities.

Eligible organizations for PA SHARP grants must be a certified 501(c)(3) in the state of Pennsylvania and serve a Pennsylvania audience. Organizations must have the equivalent of at least one full-time **paid** employee, and have been in operation for at least one year. Accredited institutions of higher education and state and local government agencies are also eligible.

To apply for PA SHARP's General Operating and Capacity Building support, organizations must have a mission rooted in the humanities, such as a cultural and ethnic organization, museum, historical society, public library, literature or media organization, or public archive. To apply for Program support, organizations must be either a humanities-based organization or must have demonstrated experience offering public humanities programming that is responsive and open to the community.

We believe the humanities are practiced by Pennsylvanians every day, and they foster spaces where people feel like they belong. Nonprofits use the humanities to cross barriers, share stories, and work together on the things that matter most. Program grants will support the many Pennsylvania nonprofit organizations carrying out meaningful humanities-based projects and programs in their communities. For more on humanities organizations and humanities practices at other nonprofits, check out our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

Organizations and groups **not** eligible for PA SHARP funding 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

Applications from colleges or universities must demonstrate engagement with the community and be focused on public-facing humanities programming beyond their campus.

What are the Humanities?

PHC finds the human connection in the humanities. It is through the humanities that we come to understand, support, and celebrate the human experience. Storytelling, historical perspectives, personal interpretation, education, creativity, and deliberative

conversations are the tools that the humanities provide all of us. Equipped with these resources, people can document their own culture and move forward in shaping their communities. The results are transformative insights into ourselves and our world, inspiring us to work together for a more equitable society. Dialogue leads to learning and civic engagement, which drives us to collective action.

These are some of the amazing things the humanities can help us accomplish when we come together:

- o Building connections
- o Making spaces for new voices
- o Creating empathy and a sense of belonging
- o Supporting vibrant local communities
- o Fostering resiliency and healing
- o Developing leadership skills
- o Lifelong learning and improving critical thinking
- o Challenging prejudices

With the power of the humanities, we come to understand and connect through the sharing of human experiences.

Funding Priorities

PHC welcomes applications from any Pennsylvania organization that meets all the eligibility requirements.

However, we do want to especially encourage first-time applicants, non-humanities missioned organizations (Program support only), and small to medium-sized organizations to apply (those outside of this range are welcome to apply as long as they are eligible).

PHC also values diversity and belonging with an inclusive approach to engagement in the humanities. We are most interested in working with organizations that consciously, through their actions, work to build an understanding of their community and intentionally develop programs with them and their interests, assets, and identities in mind.

Funding Details

Requests can be up to **\$20,000** for either PA SHARP General Operating and Capacity Building or Program support. No matching funds are required. Organizations can only

apply for one opportunity.

General Operating and Capacity Building Grants

Funding requests in this category are open to humanities-missioned organizations.

Expenses can include:

- o staffing/personnel, rent/utilities, administrative costs;
- o strategic planning and capacity building efforts related to preparing, responding to, and recovering from the coronavirus;
- o reimagining business models, developing new strategies for marketing, community engagement, and strengthening diversity, inclusion, equity and belonging efforts.

Program Grants

Funding requests in this category are open to both humanities-missioned organizations and organizations that may not be humanities based but do humanities programming.

Expenses in this category can include:

- o costs associated with reimagining or adapting programming and community engagement efforts;
- o technical/consultant needs related to a digital transition for public humanities programming (equipment costs cannot exceed 20% of an award);
- o expansion, due to the effects of the coronavirus, of outdoor and virtual public humanities programming and engagement.

Restricted Costs

Because PA SHARP funds are federally sourced, there are some restrictions on what funding can be used for. Some expenses PA SHARP funds cannot be used for are:

- o projects that fall outside of the humanities and the humanistic social sciences;
- o overlapping project costs with any other pending or approved application(s) for federal funding and/or approved federal awards;
- o competitive re-granting;
- o indirect costs;
- o travel (both foreign and domestic);
- o equipment costs (in excess of 20% of project costs);
- o collections acquisition or the preservation, organization, or description of materials that are not regularly accessible for research, education, or public programming;
- o promotion of a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view and/or the advocacy of a particular program of social or political action.

This is not a full list. Refer to our **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** on our [PA SHARP webpage](#) to see all restrictions.

How to Apply

PA SHARP applications are due October 1, 2021. To apply, you must use PHC's [grant portal](#). Note: the grant portal works with most common web browsers and operating systems.

To help you prepare your application, watch our information webinar online and download the PDF preview application and FAQs at pahumanities.org/pasharp.

When you apply, please have your organizational information, estimated annual attendance for 2019, 2020, and 2021, and financial documents ready, including:

- o a PDF of your most recently filed 990, 990EZ or most recent audited financial statement;
- o current annual budget;
- o record of expenses and income for fiscal years 2019, 2020, and 2021.

Note: Before PA SHARP awards are distributed, grantees must have a DUNS number, which may be obtained [online](#). It typically takes one to five business days to get your DUNS number. We encourage applicants to start this process as soon as possible.

Review Process

PA SHARP applications will be reviewed by a team of external reviewers made up of cultural representatives, community members, and humanities organizations from across the state, as well as PHC staff and board members. Reviews will take place in October 2021. Applicants will be notified by November 23, 2021.

PA SHARP applications will be assessed by external reviewers on their organization's track record with humanities work and case for growth and recovery funding to support the next phase of their programming and inclusively engage their community. PHC will place importance on building new relationships across the state, prioritizing first-time applicants, non-humanities missioned organizations (Program support only) and small to medium-sized organizations.

Grantee Responsibilities

If you receive a PA SHARP grant from PHC, you will be asked to:

- o virtually sign paperwork through HelloSign;

- o provide details on funded activities and confirm how you'll use your grant;
- o provide your organization's DUNS number if you did not provide it in your application;
- o submit an activity report, financial report, and final report (PHC will provide instructions and materials) at the end of the performance period;
- o acknowledge PHC in all marketing and promotions materials;
- o send a letter to your legislator about your award and activities.

In addition, PHC is creating the **PA SHARP Learning Network** for grantees to connect with one another and share experiences, strategies, and lessons learned. Grantees can expect several virtual events throughout the year and are strongly encouraged to participate in these activities.

Support & Questions

PHC staff are available and happy to provide guidance on determining eligibility, choosing a grant type, completing an application, addressing narrative or budgetary questions, as well as troubleshooting technical difficulties. **Please direct questions to Program and Communications Associate, Taylor Tolton-Kain at ttolton@pahumanities.org.**