Frequently Asked Questions

If your question is not listed below, please review the Application Guidelines. If your question is not addressed, email ATALM’s Grants Office at grants@atalm.org.

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1. GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q. When is the application deadline?
Applications must be submitted online by 11:59 p.m. (CT) on Monday, January 3, 2022. Late or incomplete applications will not be reviewed.

Q. What types of organizations are eligible?
- Tribal governments operating cultural facilities such as archives, libraries, community centers, arts councils, historical societies, or other types of organizations providing humanities and cultural programming.
- Native cultural institutions with non-profit status
- Non-native cultural institutions with non-profit status working in partnership with a state or federally recognized tribal entity
- Higher education institutions working in partnership with a state or federally recognize tribe.

Q: What constitutes a "Native cultural institution with a 501c3 status"?
"Native cultural institution with a 501c3 status" is a nonprofit that is led by enrolled members of a tribal nation and whose work/mission focuses on promoting Native cultures.

Q. How many organizations will be funded?
It is anticipated 175 organizations will receive funding from the pool of over $3 million.

Q. How much may we request?
Grants range from $5,000-$50,000.
Q. Can more than one cultural institution from my tribe apply?
Separate entities within a larger tribe or organization may apply and there will be no penalty for submitting two applications. For example, if a tribe has a library and a museum, each may submit an application as long as there is no overlap in project activities or budget requests. However, the organizations will be competing with one another for funding.

Q: Can a single organization receive funding for more than one project?
While a single entity, for example, a tribal library, may submit multiple grant applications for different projects, only one project per single entity will be funded.

Q: Can funds be used to construct or improve a new facility?
No, funds cannot be used for construction.

Q: How many events can we host during the grant period?
There is no limit on the number of events proposed, if they can be completed during the project period. Events must be relevant to the project and tied to the humanities.

Q: Can grant funds be used to cover a staff position not directly involved with the cultural institution or the proposed project? For example, can we engage Human Resources staff?
No. Staff positions must be directly related to the project. Indirect costs may be used to pay for administrative costs and overhead.

Q: How do I know if our organization meets the requirement that we have a history of offering humanities programming?
Refer to NEH’s “About” page or Programming Resources available on ATALM’s website for examples of humanities programs.

Q. Can a fiscal sponsor be used if my organization is not a non-profit or a tribe?
Yes. In the application, include the DUNS number of the fiscal sponsor, its EIN number, attach its IRS determination letter, and a letter of commitment.

Q. How will I be notified about the status of my application?
You will receive a confirmation email once your application is submitted. All applicants will be notified of their award status via email by January 31, 2022.

2. PROJECT PERIOD

Q. When are the start and end dates of the grant?
Projects can start no earlier than March 1, 2022 and end no later than February 28, 2023.

Q. What if I don’t need an entire year for my project?
Projects may be for less than one year but may not start before March 1, 2022.

Q. What if I can’t complete my project by February 28, 2023.
No extensions are allowed.
3. ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

Q. What expenses are allowable for the grant?
ARP funding is designed to provide cultural organizations with flexible funding to reaffirm and strengthen their roles, post-pandemic, as vibrant centers of humanities learning, conversation, and connection. The general goals of this ARP funding opportunity include:

1. To assist with creating or preserving jobs
2. Support or maintain general operations
3. Create or sustain humanities programs
4. Implement new humanities activities or sustain existing activities.

Examples of eligible expenses include:
1. Salary and benefit support for cultural institution workers engaged in humanities activities.
2. Costs related to humanities programming (in-person or virtual), such as book clubs, guest lectures, exhibition development, oral history collection, digitization projects, or heritage festivals.
4. Transporting students to events.
5. Marketing and advertising to support humanities efforts.

Q. Are there any ineligible expenses for the grant funds?
Yes. Ineligible expenses include:

1. Overlapping project costs with any other pending or approved application(s) for federal funding and/or approved federal awards.
2. Competitive regranting.
3. Cancellation costs.
4. Pre-award costs incurred more than 90 days before the subrecipient’s period of performance.
5. Equipment costs in excess of 20% of total project costs.
6. Travel. This does not pertain to local transportation.
7. Construction, purchase of real property, major alteration and renovation.
8. Collections acquisition.
9. Promotion of a particular political, religious, or ideological point of view.
10. Advocacy of a particular program of social or political action.
11. Support of specific public policies or legislation; lobbying.
12. Projects that fall outside of the humanities and the humanistic social sciences.

4. BUDGET AND FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Q. Are matching funds required?
No. Matching funds are not required.

Q. When the application asks for the organization’s annual operating budget, do I use the budget for the overall tribe or the entity submitting the application?
The budget should be for the department or unit requesting the funds. For example, the tribal museum’s budget should be listed, not the tribe’s.
Q: If I have my own budget form may I submit that with the application instead of using ATALM’s required budget form?
No, you must use the budget template provided by ATALM.

Q: I have more items than lines that are available on the budget form. What should I do?
Please consolidate expenses into the required ATALM budget template that has been provided. You can use the budget narrative to explain your budget in greater detail.

Q. Are indirect costs allowed?
Yes. Indirect costs are allowed. They are capped at 10% of salaries and wages, fringe benefits, materials and supplies, and transportation.

Q. What if my organization has a negotiated indirect cost that is greater than 10%?
For the purposes of the grant, indirect costs cannot exceed 10% of eligible expenses. There are NO EXCEPTIONS.

Q. If my organization is awarded a grant, how will funds be distributed?
Recipients may request advance payment in an amount sufficient to cover actual expenses for the first month of the project, most likely for March 2022. Thereafter, funds may be requested on a reimbursement basis.

5. COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

Q. How do I access the application?
Register at this link to begin your application. You may leave and return to your application at anytime prior to submission.

Q. May I preview the application form before completing it?
Yes. You may download a PDF preview of the application for reference; the application process is also covered in the project guidelines.

Q. May applications be submitted in hard copy?
No. Applications must be submitted online via the ATALM Submittable grants management system by 11:59 p.m. (CT) on Monday, January 3, 2022. Applications that are late or incomplete will not be reviewed.

Q. Can I edit my application after it has been submitted?
You may request to edit your application by contacting grants@atalm.org. Edits must be submitted before the deadline.

Q: Do I need to provide a DUNS number in my application?
Yes, you are required to submit a DUNS number at the application stage. If your institute does not have its own DUNS number, please consult with tribal administration.

Q. What if my organization does not have paid staff?
To be eligible for this program, you must have at least one paid staff person that can oversee the project.

Q. My project supports more than one of the COVID-19 Recovery Activities. May I select more than one?
No. Just select the most appropriate category. This is an eligibility question and is not scored as a part of your application.
Q. Why do I have to designate a tribe if I am not a tribal organization?
All projects must benefit Native communities. If you are a non-tribal organization, you must partner with a tribe. Please list the partnering tribe and provide a letter of commitment.

Q. How important is the project summary?
The project summary is extremely important. It is what reviewers see first and is what will be used to announce the project, if funded. It should describe the project, the problem it is addressing, who it serves, the amount requested, and the time frame.

6. LETTERS OF SUPPORT and LETTERS OF COMMITMENT

Q: What is the difference between a letter of support and a letter of commitment?
A letter of commitment is intended to demonstrate that a tribe or other named partner/consultant supports the project and is committed to participating. A letter of support does not obligate the organization or individual providing the letter.

Q. Who should letters of support and/or letters of commitment be addressed to?
Address letters of support to the ATALM Board of Governors, 6308 Harden Drive, Oklahoma City, OK 73118. Please do not mail letters of support. Letters of support should only be uploaded via the grants management platform.

Q. Are letters of support or letters of commitment required?
Letters of support are optional. Letters of commitment are required for all named entities or contractors. Letters of commitment should be on official letterhead and signed by an official of the organization.

7. PREVIOUS ARP FUNDING IMPACT ON ELIGIBILITY

Q. My organization previously received American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act funding through the NEH: Humanities Organization program. Are we eligible for this grant?
Your organization may have received some funding from ARPA, but not specifically from an NEH program. If this is the case, then, yes, your organization would be eligible. If your organization received funding specifically from NEH through ARPA funds, then, no, you would not be eligible. If you want to check your eligibility based on this, consult the list of NEH recipients, available on the ATALM program webpage.

Q: My organization received a grant from our state’s humanities council through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act funding. Does this disqualify us from applying for this grant opportunity?
No, you are not disqualified from this grant opportunity because you received funds ARPA funds through a state humanities council. Organizations that received funding directly from NEH’s Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan are ineligible. If you want to check your eligibility based on this, consult the list of NEH recipients, available on the ATALM program webpage.

Q. My organization previously received Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding from NEH or another agency. Are we eligible for this grant?
If you were previously funded under the NEH CARES program, this will not impact your eligibility for the American Rescue Plan program. Keep in mind that two or more applications for federal funding and/or approved federal award budgets are not permitted to include overlapping project costs.
8. CERTIFYING OFFICIAL

Q. What is a “certifying official”?  
The certifying official should be a person in your organization who has the authority to commit the organization to contracts. This may vary depending on the institution but is typically the director. 

Q. Can the certifying official be the same person as the Project Director and/or the person submitting the application?  
Yes. The certifying official can be the same person listed as the Project Director and/or the person submitting the proposal if they are able to submit applications for funding on behalf of their institution.

9. APPLICATION REVIEW

Q. What will reviewers consider when evaluating my application?  
1. IMPACT OF COVID-19: Does the applicant make a compelling case for how COVID-19 impacted its community?  
2. HUMANITIES PROGRAMS: Does the applicant demonstrate that it offers Humanities programming?  
3. PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Does the project help the applicant address hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic?  
4. HUMANITIES SCHOLARS OR CULTURAL EXPERTS: If the applicant is requesting funding for programming or projects, is there a presence of humanities scholars and/or tradition bearers?  
5. HUMANITIES STAFF RETENTION: The applicant has demonstrated the need to retain, rehire, or engage new staff to support its humanities-based program(s).  
6. PROJECT ACTIVITIES: Is the timeline feasible and are the proposed activities appropriate to ensure the success of the project?  
7. AUDIENCE: Does the applicant clearly identify its audience, describe its outreach/marketing plans, and articulate the number of people served by the project?  
8. PROGRAM GOALS AND EVALUATION: Are the project goals, intended results, and evaluation methods tied to the project activities and are they sufficient to determine if the project is successful?  
9. BUDGET FORM: Is the request reasonable? Are the items requested supported by the project narrative?  
   Does the budget justification make a compelling case for why the budgeted items are needed?  
10. OVERALL SCORE: How would you rank this application overall?

10. GRANTEE OBLIGATIONS

Q. What are the requirements if my organization is selected?  
1. Sign an agreement committing to fulfill the project as approved.  
2. Appoint a Project Director for the grant.  
3. Attend virtual grantee meetings when called by ATALM.  
4. Spend the ARP: Humanities Grants funding to support the activities cited in the approved application  
5. Share information about the grant with local media and government officials.  
6. Complete a six-month and final report.  
7. Participate in project evaluation.

11. QUESTIONS?

Q. What if I have questions about my application?  
After reviewing the Project Guidelines and reading the FAQs, you may e-mail grants@atalm.org