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NJCH invites New Jersey-based nonprofits to participate in the **Democracy Conversation Project (DCP)**. Eligible organizations may apply for \$500 to support the hosting of virtual, in-person, or hybrid programs that relate to democracy and civic engagement in the United States and encourage New Jerseyans to explore how their communities participate in the democratic process. DCP is part of NJCH's *Voices and Votes: Democracy in America* program, which also features a Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit that will tour six community colleges around the state in 2022-23.

Participating in DCP is easy! Eligible organizations may create their own program on a democracy-related topic, or simply choose from a list of 10 “off-the-shelf” programs created by humanities scholars and curated by NJCH. Programs may take the following forms:

- In-person public events, virtual events taking place on digital platforms like Zoom, Facebook Live, or other streaming platforms, or hybrid events with both in-person and virtual elements.
- Web-based exhibitions or recorded programs.
- Exhibitions, physical or digital.
- Reading and discussion programs (including purchase of books or development of guides).
- Oral histories, video oral histories, or other public history methodologies.

We recommend that you choose the program format and option that best suits your organization's capacities, needs, and audiences.

Curated NJCH Democracy Conversations Project programs include:

- A Vote, A Voice: Women's Suffrage and the Fight for Representation
- American Grotesque: Literature and Civic Life
- Civic Participation in Cancer Alley
- Disabilities Then, Disabilities Now
- Questioning the Questions of the US Census
- The Queer Housewives and Husbands of New Jersey
- We the People...Wait, Which People?
- What Exactly is “Fake News?”

- What's the Verdict?
- What is the Meaning of Free Speech?

*Please see p. 5-8 for full program descriptions

All DCP programs must take place between May 2022 and January 31, 2023. The funding supports personnel, materials, communications, and other eligible expenses associated with hosting a program. All organizations must match the NJCH DCP funding at least 1:1 with any combination of cash and in-kind support.

Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in DCP, you must apply on behalf of a New Jersey-based nonprofit organization or government entity, such as a public library, museum, historical society, academic institution, religious group, or community organization. *Applicants must be in good standing with state and federal tax entities to participate.*

Any materials purchased with this funding or any programs that take place with the help of this funding must be public-facing or contain a significant public component. All work must be related to the topic of democracy in America, broadly defined: issues such as voting/voting rights, protest, national identity, campaigning, civil rights, diversity, citizenship, political parties, and political symbolism are all relevant.

Organizations may choose to create their own program on a democracy-related topic **or** select an “off-the-shelf” program from a catalogue curated by NJCH. We recommend that you choose the option that best suits your organization’s capacities, needs, and audiences; there is no competitive advantage to picking an NJCH-curated program over your own!

All funding from this award must be expended and any public programs associated with this award must take place between May 1, 2022 and January 31, 2023. We especially encourage organizations to schedule their programs to take place before the end of 2022, in order to take full advantage of NJCH’s *Voices and Votes* exhibit tour and related publicity efforts.

Examples of eligible expenses (a partial list):

- Speakers, discussants, panelists, etc.
- Supplies and materials for programs.
- Tech needs (Zoom license, microphone, tech support, etc.).
- Marketing expenses (signage, graphic design, printing, ads, etc.).
- Exhibition costs.
- Staff expenses for the administration of this program.
- Training for staff or audiences in humanities methodologies or content.

Ineligible expenses:

- Fundraising expenses.
- Lobbying.
- Scholarships, awards, re-grants.
- For-credit coursework.

- Alcohol and entertainment.

Application Process

Applications are currently open and are accepted on a rolling basis. **To apply, please go to NJCH's online application system ([click here](#))**. Funds are limited, so please apply early!

Organizations that have not applied for any NJCH funding opportunities since September 2020 will need to create an account in our online grant application system. Returning applicants will be able to access the system using their account credentials.

A preview of the application form is available at the end of this document.

To ensure that the program reaches all of New Jersey's 21 counties, priority consideration will be given to nonprofits in counties that do not currently have confirmed programs. Please consult the [DCP webpage](#) for the most up-to-date list.

Questions about applying? Contact our staff at programs@njhumanities.org, we're happy to help!

Award Process and Program Scheduling

NJCH will notify organizations of DCP application decisions on a rolling basis. Successful applicants will be contacted and provided with an award letter, agreement, and other administrative materials. NJCH will execute the agreement and process the host site's award payment within 30 days of receipt of:

- Signed award agreement
- Copy of W-9

Organizations that have chosen to create their own DCP program will schedule their program independently and as outlined in their application.

Organizations that have chosen a DCP program from NJCH's curated catalogue will be given the name and contact information of their program's scholar in the award notification email. Your organization will be responsible for contacting the scholar and both parties will work together to find a mutually agreeable date, time, and format (in-person, virtual, or hybrid) for the program. You will be responsible for contacting NJCH after the schedule has been finalized to provide the event details. Please note: organizations that choose to host a program from NJCH's curated catalogue will be required to pay a minimum scholar honorarium of \$250 for virtual and \$325 for in-person programs. You will be responsible for paying the scholar directly from your DCP award funds; once the scholar's honorarium is paid, any remaining DCP funding may be used for other eligible program costs.

Organizations that have chosen a curated program may request a virtual, in-person, or hybrid format; however, *it is ultimately up to the scholar and the organization to come to a mutual agreement about which format is preferred*. We recognize and respect that everyone will have different risk factors and tolerances for in-person activity. Please be sure to communicate your organization's COVID policies to the scholar and to address their questions, requests, and concerns, particularly with respect to COVID safety and accessibility, prior to finalizing the schedule.

Host sites will be required to follow state and local guidelines regarding COVID. NJCH encourages host sites to be flexible and understanding in their program planning, and to be aware that they may need to adjust or reschedule planned in-person events if COVID levels rise in their community.

Reporting

Organizations that participate in the Democracy Conversation Project will be required to submit a short report 30 days after the conclusion of their program that summarizes how the funding was spent and

provides information about program attendance/audiences, use of materials, press coverage (if any), and any digital resources that result from the program.

NJCH Program Catalogue

A Vote, A Voice: Women's Suffrage and the Fight for Representation

Lucia McMahon, PhD, Professor of History and Department Chair, William Paterson University

Reflecting on the women's suffrage movement, Alice Paul remarked: "the movement is a sort of mosaic. Each of us puts in one little stone, and then you get a great mosaic at the end." This program examines the long history of women's activism over the course of the nineteenth century, to highlight the multi-faceted mosaic of the women's suffrage movement. While traditional accounts of the women's suffrage movement tend to focus on key events, such as the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 or the 1913 Women's Suffrage Parade held in Washington, DC, these famous moments were in fact part of a much larger movement that rippled across American society and politics. Participants will explore the diverse paths—from educational access and abolitionism to temperance and suffrage—that led women to engage in civic and public life to make a difference in their own communities.

Lucia McMahon, PhD is currently Professor and Chair of History at William Paterson University in Wayne, NJ, where she regularly teaches courses in historical methods, early national US history, and women's history. Her research broadly focuses on women's intellectual and educational history, with a particular focus on the recovery of relatively "unknown" women's voices and experiences. McMahon is the author of several books and articles, including *Mere Equals: The Paradox of Educated Women in the Early American Republic* (Cornell University Press, 2012), and *The Journal of Rachel Van Dyke, 1810-1811* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

American Grotesque: Literature and Civic Life

Mary Balkun, PhD, Professor of English and Director of Faculty Development, Seton Hall University

The grotesque has been used as a vehicle for social and political critique and commentary in American literature since its inception. In early works, such as captivity, enslavement, and travel narratives, grotesque characters and situations can help us understand what those authors, and very likely their readers, considered to be grotesque. In this way, they contribute to our understanding of the ways biases and preconceived notions have become codified in American thought. In the hands of later authors, such as Edgar Allan Poe, Harriet Jacobs, Mark Twain, Sherwood Anderson, and Ralph Ellison, the grotesque was used to expose disparities, inequities, and misbehavior of various kinds, a tradition that continues today. Beginning with an introduction to the grotesque, we will examine excerpts from a range of American texts in order to better understand the ways the grotesque has not only contributed to our literary tradition but also the ways it has provided a critical lens on American culture and civic life.

Mary Balkun's area of specialization is early American literature, with a focus on women's writing, poetry, and material culture. She is the author of *The American Counterfeit: Authenticity and Identity in American Literature and Culture* (University of Alabama Press, 2006), co-editor of *Transformative Digital Humanities: Projects, Case Studies, and Challenges* (Routledge), co-editor of *Women of the Early Americas and the Formation of Empire* (Palgrave 2016), associate editor of *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of American Poets and Poetry* (2005). She has published articles on early American topics, educational technology, and curricular change. She is currently at work on two book projects: *New World Upside Down* (University of Alabama Press), a study of the early American grotesque, and the forthcoming *Companion to American Poetry* (Wiley-Blackwell 2022).

Civic Participation in Cancer Alley

Thomas Belton, Independent Author, Journalist, and Environmental Scientist

Environmental rights in New Jersey might be a hot topic right now, but the discussion goes back centuries. How land was used 400 years ago still impacts our health and communities today; it continues to inform current debates about environmental protection, preservation, stewardship—and legislative policy. Through the lens of human-interest stories and environmental events, participants will discuss the environmental history of the state and how citizens can be informed and empowered to act.

Thomas Belton is an author, journalist, environmental scientist, and marine biologist who worked for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection for 25 years. His professional memoir, *Protecting New Jersey's Environment: From Cancer Alley to the New Garden State* (Rutgers University Press) was named a 2010 Honor Book by the New Jersey Council for the Humanities. As a research scientist, he has published hundreds of scientific articles and essays. His most recent essays include “The Making of an Environmentalist” (2021) in *Transformations Magazine*, and “Sea Level Rise and the Two Cultures” (2020) in *Superstition Review*. He is also a frequent op-ed writer for the *New York Times*, the *Baltimore Sun*, and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Disabilities Then, Disabilities Now

Nicole Belolan, PhD, Public Historian in Residence, Mid-Atlantic Regional Center for the Humanities (MARCH), Rutgers University-Camden

What was it like to be disabled before the era of curb cuts and accessible restrooms? Why should we care, and what does it tell us about how disabled people accessed the world in early America? Through an exploration of original artifacts from the scholar’s collection, participants will discuss what it was like to be disabled in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Highlighting a topic that affects everyone at one point or another, this session will increase awareness of disability history and disability justice and activism in America today.

Nicole Belolan is a historian of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American social and cultural history. She earned a PhD in the History of American Civilization at the University of Delaware. Currently, Belolan is the Public Historian in Residence at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Center for the Humanities (MARCH) at Rutgers University-Camden and the Co-Editor/Digital Media Editor for the National Council on Public History.

Questioning the Questions of the US Census

Karen Gaffney, PhD, Professor of English, Raritan Valley Community College

How much thought have you given to the Census? While most people know that the US government conducts a census every ten years (the last was in 2020), many people have never thought about the relationship between the census and race in the US. Understanding how census questions about race have upheld white supremacy for over two centuries can offer a valuable window into US history and the persistence of systemic racism today. This program will give you a framework to consider the census’s past—and present—and the potential to use it for justice in the future.

Karen Gaffney, PhD, is the author of *Dismantling the Racism Machine: A Manual and Toolbox* (Routledge 2018), an accessible introduction to race and racism with tools for action. She’s an English professor at Raritan Valley Community College, where she teaches courses on composition, gender, and race. She facilitates anti-racism workshops in the community and at conferences, and she runs a blog with resources, *Divided No Longer*, which works to call out white supremacy, understand it, and dismantle it. Find it here: <https://dividednolonger.com/>.

The Queer Housewives and Husbands of New Jersey

Alison Lefkowitz, PhD, Associate Professor of History and Director of Law, Technology, and Culture, New Jersey Institute of Technology

We often assume that before marriage equality, we had only “traditional” marriage. But changes to marriage progressed more strangely than we might expect, especially in New Jersey. This program will use court cases to rethink LGBTQ+ rights, marriage, and the law. Cases involving a judge refusing to grant a divorce for a woman after her husband was incarcerated for sodomy, alimony for a transwoman, and custody issues for LGBTQ+ parents will all be explored. Through these court cases, participants can consider how our state was sometimes a haven for LGBTQ+ people in the past, at other times deeply oppressive, and nearly always representative of the forces against which LGBTQ+ people have had to fight.

Alison Lefkowitz is an associate professor in the Federated History Department at the New Jersey Institute of Technology and Rutgers University-Newark. She is the chair of the NJIT Federated History department and the director of the NJIT Law, Technology & Culture program. Her book, *Strange Bedfellows: Marriage in the Age of Women’s Liberation*, came out with University of Pennsylvania Press in 2018. Her work also appears in the *Law & History Review*, the *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, the *Newark Star-Ledger*, and the *Washington Post*.

We the People...Wait, Which People?

Christopher Fisher, PhD, Associate Professor of History, The College of New Jersey

We’ve all heard those first three words of the preamble of the Constitution. But what does that mean? And can “We the people” mean different things at different times to different people? This complex topic can best be explored through historical moments and events. From sharecropping to immigration, participants can consider the concept of the changing meaning of citizenship and have an engaging and important dialogue about immigration today and the impact of the policies that affect us all.

Christopher Fisher, associate professor of history at The College of New Jersey in Ewing, NJ, earned a BA from Rutgers College and his PhD in history, with a focus on US diplomacy, from Rutgers University in 2001. His areas of expertise are the US in the twentieth century, cold war culture and diplomacy, the US in the World, American empire and imperialism, African American history, and Racism and Race Relations in the US.

What exactly is “fake news”?

Jason Luther, PhD, Assistant Professor of Writing Arts, Rowan University

The web creates an ideal environment for news and other content to spread like wildfire. Propaganda has existed as long as language itself; and yet, “fake news” seems somehow different. Is it? The digital world has changed how we give and receive information. But how do we track the origin and assess the legitimacy of the information that we receive? To effectively read and evaluate sources, we can develop a better awareness of how they reach us and how we read them. In this session, participants will examine fake news and ways to evaluate the kinds of sites, technologies, and processes that play a role in circulating falsehoods online.

Jason Luther, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Writing Arts at Rowan University. He received his PhD in Composition and Cultural Rhetoric from Syracuse University. Jason is specifically interested in writers and writing histories that happen outside of the classroom, specifically those amateur writers who have always made use of the tools and resources at hand to produce and circulate their own writing.

What is the Meaning of Free Speech?

Ian Drake, PhD, Associate Professor of Political Science and Jurisprudence, Montclair State University

Benjamin Franklin once said, “Without freedom of thought, there can be no such thing as wisdom—and no such thing as public liberty without freedom of speech.” The United States provides protections for free speech. Not only is actual speech protected, but so too is “expressive behavior” such as spending money on elections, burning a flag, and even nude dancing. Yet it has not always been this way. A fluid concept until the early twentieth century, it’s only been since the time of World War I that the First Amendment’s Free Speech Clause was reviewed in depth by American courts. Through an exploration of case law, participants will consider how the US Supreme Court has defined and redefined what free speech means, whether in wartime or peacetime and in many controversial contexts.

What’s the Verdict?

Ian Drake, PhD, Associate Professor of Political Science and Jurisprudence, Montclair State University

Each year, the Supreme Court receives over 8,000 case petitions for certiorari (consideration) and less than 1% are reviewed. The cases chosen are significant. In this session, participants are encouraged to consider some of the pending cases before the Court. Through an examination of texts and documents participants can, with the guidance of prompting questions, consider and discuss the contemporary political and moral concerns raised by what’s on the Supreme Court docket right now.

Ian Drake is an Associate Professor of Political Science and Jurisprudence at Montclair State University. He obtained his PhD in American History from the University of Maryland in 2010. His teaching interests include the American judiciary and legal system, the US Supreme Court and constitutional history, and the history and contemporary study of law and society. Prior to earning his PhD in history, he practiced insurance and tort law.

Please contact us at programs@njhumanities.org if you have any questions.

2022 Democracy Conversations Project

New Jersey Council for the Humanities

Application

Program Name*

This is the "identifier" for the request. If you are applying to host one of our curated programs, please use the title of that selection as the program name.

Character Limit: 100

Program Type*

Organizations that wish to host a DCP program have the option to either choose one of the programs curated by NJCH or create their own program on a topic related to democracy and civic engagement in the United States. Please select an option below; if awarded funding, your organization must use the funds for this selection.

Choices

We plan to host a NJCH-curated program

We plan to host our own program

Scheduling*

Please list a specific date or an approximate timeframe for when you would like to hold your program.

Note: Organizations that choose to host a curated program may not get their initial choice. After award notification, your organization will be responsible for contacting the scholar and both parties will work together to find a mutually agreeable date, time, and location (in-person or virtual).

Character Limit: 3000

Mission and Audience*

What is your organization's mission, vision, and primary programmatic work? This is a place for you to tell us about your mission, the kinds of programs you run, and the people who benefit from your work.

Character Limit: 3000

Program Audience*

Describe the primary audience for this program. How will you ensure their participation? This may involve marketing and publicity efforts, public outreach, partnerships, or motivating existing audiences. Please be sure to consider how your chosen program format — is it virtual? in-person? hybrid? — is suited to your primary audience.

Character Limit: 3000

Curated Program

Program Selection*

Please indicate which program from our curated offerings you are interested in bringing to your organization. Full program descriptions and scholar biographies are available in the program guidelines ([hyperlink](#)).

Note: NJCH will provide the scholar's contact information in the award notification email. Your organization will be responsible for contacting the scholar and both parties will work together to find a mutually agreeable date, time, and location (in-person or virtual) for the program. You will be responsible for contacting NJCH after the schedule has been finalized to provide the event details.

Choices

A Vote, A Voice: Women's Suffrage and the Fight for Representation
 American Grotesque: Literature and Civic Life
 Civic Participation in Cancer Alley
 Disabilities Then, Disabilities Now
 Questioning the Questions of the US Census
 The Queer Housewives and Husbands of New Jersey
 We the People...wait, which people?
 What exactly is "fake news"?
 What is the Meaning of Free Speech?
 What's the Verdict?

Selection Explanation*

Please explain why your organization is interested in hosting this particular program.

Character Limit: 3000

Bring Your Own Program

Program Description*

What is the program or work that this funding will support? Who are the individuals who will contribute to the program, whether internal staff or outside scholars or other experts?

Character Limit: 3000

Relevance*

Explain how your program relates to the topic of democracy and civic engagement in the United States.

Character Limit: 3000