Program Guidelines

Experimentation is as foundational to the humanities as it is to science. All of us who do humanities work need time and space to feed our own creativity and learn from each other. That is what the Humanities Lab is for.

Launching in spring 2023, this pilot program provides a space for organizations to experiment with new program ideas, learn about new program models, and push their own practices in exciting directions. Participants will meet for regular learning sessions as a cohort while simultaneously developing a new project idea. NJCH will provide funding to support program participation and to pilot new projects.

Whether you are new to the humanities or want to break out of old habits, the Humanities Lab will be a place for you to learn and grow with others who share your goals.

Learning and Program Work

- Cohort learning sessions that include a guest speaker and/or case study of a public humanities project as well as time to workshop project ideas within the cohort.

- Individual meetings between participants and NJCH's Director of Programs to collaborate on project development.

- Assignments that break down the project development process and examine foundational components of public humanities programs.

- Participants will create a plan and budget for their new project.

- Participants who wish to pilot their new project will be guaranteed funding up to $5000 to support that work, with final funding decisions made by the cohort members themselves.

- Monthly (optional) meet-ups during the pilot project period for ongoing support.

Funding

- Each organization selected for Humanities Lab receives an award of $500 to support the time they will spend on program work.

- At the conclusion of the learning sessions, each participating organization in the cohort may submit their new project proposal for additional funding up to $5000 to pilot that work in the 6 months following the program.

- Participant organizations are not required to pilot their projects at this stage, but the funding is guaranteed if they wish to do so. *(Please note: this additional funding is only available at the time of the program and full, active participation in the Humanities Lab is required to be considered for funding. Organizations are not guaranteed funding if they bring the project*

proposal to NJCH through a different program or at another time, and only organizations that have completed the full Humanities Lab program will be considered for this funding.)

- Proposals will be reviewed by members of the Lab cohort and awards finalized collectively.

Who is this program for?

Humanities Lab is a process-driven program that combines learning about public humanities practice with the development of a new project. Those who have either not begun or are very early in the process of developing a project would be a good fit for this program. Participant organizations are required to attend all program activities and follow the Lab's process for developing projects.

This is not a grant program. If your organization is working on an established program or project, Humanities Lab is not the place for you. You may want to consider applying for an NJCH grant: https://njhumanities.org/grants/grants-overview/.

- If you have an inkling of an idea for a project but need time and support to develop it, Humanities Lab was created for exactly that purpose.

- If you want to expand the types of programs you offer or explore new ways of engaging with audiences but feel like you have a lot to learn, Humanities Lab will introduce you to people doing interesting public humanities work in a lot of different ways and push you to think about how you can approach your work using different methodologies.

- If you have too many ideas and need a place where you can think them through and get some feedback, the Lab will provide a cohort of other people to be that sounding board.

- If you are looking for a community of like-minded individuals who care about the humanities, this program will diminish your solitude.

- If your organization is not humanities missioned but you believe that public humanities programs would provide new outlets for your work, Humanities Lab is a great place to learn about what's happening in public humanities.

Eligibility

Nonprofit organizations, state and local government, and unincorporated community groups are eligible to apply for Humanities Lab. For-profit organizations or businesses and individuals unaffiliated with an eligible institution are <u>not eligible</u>.

- Applicant organizations must be based in New Jersey and do the majority of their work in the state and/or for the benefit of the people of New Jersey.
- Applicants who have open NJCH grant or are currently participating in another NJCH program (such as Community History or Informed NJ) must get approval from NJCH staff to apply for this program.

- Applicants must commit to participating in all program activities and may identify up to 3 people from the organization to participate. Representatives from each organization may include paid staff, volunteers, and/or community members.

Program Priorities

Humanities Lab supports NJCH's strategic goals to convene communities for the purpose of resource sharing and encouraging collaboration and to expand and diversify the humanities. With those goals in mind, we strongly recommend that organizations with at least one of the following characteristics consider applying for this program:

- Small organizations with budgets less than $500,000.
- Organizations that prioritize the perspectives of traditionally marginalized people. (For example, organizations whose primary mission, intentions, and practices are by, for, and about the art, culture, and histories of people of color, LGBTQ+ communities, people with disabilities, non-English speakers, recent immigrants, etc.) We encourage you to explain the unique perspective of your community in your application, as this is not a comprehensive list.
- Non-humanities-missioned organizations, such as arts, social services, community or neighborhood groups, science or environmental, cultural organizations.
- Organizations that have not received NJCH funding in the recent past.

Timeline

- Application deadline: (Extended to) April 28, 2023
- Notification of decisions: by May 12, 2023
- Onboarding meetings with each organization: May 15-26, 2023 (virtual, by sign up)
- Cohort learning sessions (mornings, 10-noon, dates finalized with selected participants):
    - June 8 or 10, 2023 – in person
    - June 29 or 30, 2023 – virtual
    - July 20 or 21, 2023 – virtual
- Individual project review meetings: July-August (virtual or in person, by sign up)
- Project plan and budget due: August 25, 2023
- Cohort meeting: September (in person, TBD)
- Pilot project period: October 1, 2023-March 31, 2024
- Final reports due: June 30, 2024

Further Information

If you're not sure if Humanities Lab is right for you or you have questions that you'd like to talk through before applying, get in touch. Email Gigi Naglak, NJCH's Director of Programs, at gnaglak@njhumanities.org or schedule a virtual meeting at https://calendly.com/gnaglak/njch-consultation.

An information session about this program was held on March 16, 2023.
> Webinar recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jaPrmQGQG-s
> Presentation slides and notes: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jaPrmQGQG-s