

Request for Proposals

Visualizing Democracy: Contemporary Conversations

The New Jersey Council for the Humanities requests proposals for Visualizing Democracy: Contemporary Conversations, an initiative seeking digital projects that will explore, curate, and visualize a recently created “conversation” archive on the state of democracy within New Jersey and beyond. Proposals selected for commission will receive an award of \$2500-5000, depending on the scale of the project. Final projects will sit beside the collection of Democracy Conversation Project (DCP) responses, submitted by New Jersey residents, on NJCH’s website.

AT A GLANCE

Application Deadline: June 14, 2023 at 11:59 pm.

Award Amount: \$2500-5000

Project Timeframe: All projects must be completed by October 16, 2023.

Eligibility: Individuals, or teams of individuals. The call is open to New Jersey residents or students attending New Jersey-based schools (age 18 or older).

Contact: Any questions about applying or eligibility can be directed to Allie Marchesani, Programs Intern at amarchesani@njhumanities.org

Project Description

Applicants may consider a wide range of creative digital mediums for their proposed projects, including, but not limited to data visualization, GIS mapping and story mapping, graphic design, animation, short films or illustrations, mobile apps, and virtual exhibitions. If they are offered a commission, applicants will have three months to complete their projects. Proposals must be submitted through the application form, [available here](#).

Proposals submitted outside of this application form will not be considered. The application form will include a space to request the amount of funding needed to complete work on the project. This call seeks proposals for digital content only. Final projects will be reviewed and approved by NJCH staff prior to being published.

Background

Over the past two years, DCP has facilitated discourse about the state of our democracy among New Jersey residents. The project kicked off in 2021 through a series of virtual conversations with public figures hosted by eight New Jersey community colleges. Public conversations about democracy with scholars and other experts continued throughout 2022 and New Jersey’s tour of the Smithsonian

traveling exhibit, Voices & Votes: Democracy in America. In the spring of 2022, NJCH further expanded the Democracy Conversation Project by allowing residents to directly contribute their own reflections on this topic through a portal on NJCH's website or via physical "Storyboxes" placed at libraries and other cultural institutions in 17 locations across the state. The responses were collected on the [program's website](#). *Visualizing Democracy* seeks proposals that draw on digital humanities skills and principles to enliven New Jersey residents' reflections on the state of our democracy collected in the DCP website archive.

Eligibility, Process, and Timeline

This project is open to New Jersey residents or students attending New Jersey-based schools (age 18 or older). Proposals may come from individuals, or teams of individuals may apply together.

Proposals must be submitted via the NJCH application form [available here](#) by June 14, 2023 at 11:59 pm. Incomplete proposals or late submissions will not be considered. Proposal components include:

- Description of the vision for the project, including how it interprets the DCP archive and how it will be accomplished (500-750 words)
- Project team bios (150-300 words per participant) and work samples (optional)
- Budget narrative (500-750 words)

Proposals will be reviewed by a selection committee made up of artists and digital humanities practitioners, who will select a limited number of submissions to commission. The exact number of proposals selected will depend on the number of applicants and the scale of the projects. **All applicants will be notified of awards no later than July 14, 2023.**

Proposals accepted for commission will receive their award in two parts: \$1000 at the time of award and the balance upon acceptance of completed projects by NJCH.

All projects must be completed by October 16, 2023.

What will make a successful proposal?

Applicants are encouraged to deeply explore the archive before constructing their proposal. Successful applications will show a clear and direct connection between their proposal and the archival material and demonstrate how their proposed project enhances user engagement with the content.

Proposals may focus on certain interpretive themes (such as those based on location, age, policy, etc.) that applicants identify within the archive and feel are important to highlight, or projects may explore what silences exist in this archive and whose stories are left untold. This is not a comprehensive illustration of an "interpretive" project, but merely provides a couple of examples of how successful projects will seek to interpret the existing material.

Successful applications will also demonstrate thoughtful consideration of expenses required to successfully develop and complete the project within the given timeframe. NJCH would expect the majority of the award would be used by the team member(s) as a stipend to cover the time required to

do the work of the project. Other expenses may include stipends to external consultants for their time and work, tech services, materials, travel, event planning, and any other relevant expense needed to complete the project.

Project teams are encouraged to consider ways that they can use their awards to promote community engagement with their projects and prolong its impact beyond its temporary display on NJCH's website, though engagement beyond this project is not a requirement. Such types of engagement could include community events, community-engaged selection or curation input, other means of promoting or displaying the project, etc.

Notifications of award will be made no later than July 14, 2023, after which work can begin on selected projects. Projects must be completed (ready for virtual exhibition) by October 16, 2023. Commissioned works must be made accessible to NJCH upon completion and will then be shared widely on NJCH platforms (including social media and the DCP website) and announced to the press. The intellectual property of the project will forever remain with its producer(s), whether individual or project team, but NJCH has a license to feature these projects and it is the responsibility of the project team to notify NJCH of any restrictions for this use.

Although projects will not be featured indefinitely on NJCH's website, project participants are the owners of their work and are encouraged to display and share their projects in any format for however long they choose.

Contact

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