

New Jersey Department of State The New Jersey Historical Commission

GRANT PROGRAM

Project Grant FY 2026 Cycle

Mission and Goals of the New Jersey Historical Commission Grant Program

New Jersey's people and varied resources have helped shape the mid-Atlantic region, the nation, and the world for more than 350 years. Its notable diversity of inhabitants was evident from its beginning. Due in no small part to its location, it has seen all the great themes of the nation's history play out within its borders. Its pivotal role during the American Revolution and early industrialization, the ongoing struggle for equality and civil rights, and its unparalleled legacy of technological innovation distinguish it in the historical record. For these and many other reasons, the study of New Jersey history is both engaging and relevant to the state's residents and visitors.

Mission:

The New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC) is a state agency dedicated to the advancement of public knowledge and preservation of New Jersey history. Established by law in 1967, its work is founded on the fundamental belief that an understanding of our shared heritage is essential to sustaining a cohesive and robust democracy.

The NJHC receives its funding primarily by legislative appropriation. It fulfills its mission through various initiatives, as well as an active grant program. This includes General Operating Support (GOS), County History Partnership Program (CHPP), and Project grants, in addition to a free archival evaluation service called the Caucus Archival Projects Evaluation Service (CAPES) and a free artifact evaluation service called Artifact Assessment Program (AAP).

Grant-making has been an integral part of the NJHC's activities for over fifty years. From its inception, Project Grants, followed by GOS and later CHPP grants, enabled the NJHC to strengthen New Jersey history organizations and activities statewide. In the last two years, the creation of new Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) and Inclusive History grant programs demonstrate the NJHC's commitment to supporting history organizations and programs that reflect the experiences of the state's diverse population, past and present.

With its FY 2026 Project Grant guidelines, the NJHC will take the next step towards its goal of telling diverse and inclusive stories about the past that invite participation from all New Jerseyans and innovative assessment strategies.

Goals of the Grant Program:

The goal of the grant program is to engage diverse audiences in the active exploration, enjoyment, interpretation, understanding, and preservation of New Jersey history. Grants are awarded to projects that achieve this objective. Successful proposals may do so through one or more of the following:

- Broadening, deepening, and diversifying the audiences for New Jersey history
- Strengthening existing New Jersey history organizations or programs
- Initiating new programming on New Jersey history
- Increasing accessibility of historical resources to diverse communities
- Increasing the body and quality of information on New Jersey history available to the public
- Preserving materials for the study of New Jersey history
- Promoting elements of New Jersey's history that have often been underrepresented in the past.

Project Grant Program Overview

Project grants must deliver high-quality, engaging New Jersey history to a diverse audience. The applicant must demonstrate that it practices professional standards specific to its discipline. Project grants are available to both individuals and organizations.

Project Grants at a Glance

- Applicants can request up to \$20,000 in support of their project.
- Applicants are only allowed to submit one application per Project grant round.
- Individuals and organizations are restricted to one open Project grant at a time.
- Organizational applicants are allowed to be recipients of both the GOS grant program and the Project grant program.

FY 2026 Changes to the Project Grant Guidelines

With an emphasis on continually revisiting and updating its grant guidelines to maximize programmatic impact, the New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC) has instituted the following changes for FY 2026:

- **Administrative Allowance for non-GOS Applicants:** Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the allowable percentage non-NJHC General Operating Support (GOS) recipients could request for administrative costs on projects has fluctuated between 30% and 35%. **For FY 2026 it will remain at the traditional 25% threshold.**

Recent Changes (pre-FY 2026) to the Project Grant Guidelines

- Organizations with annual budgets under the allowable threshold may partner together with a larger history institution to meet the budget **and** audience eligibility requirement for New Jersey history projects (see: Partnership Projects, Page 14).

- Organizations may only apply for Project Grant support from **either** the NJHC or their designated county re-grant agency (CHPP) in any calendar year.
- No organization may receive Project Grant funding for the same project for more than three (3) consecutive fiscal years.

Additional Notes

All applicants will receive written notification of the NJHC’s decision.

If an organization has more than one division and a budget more than \$500,000, each division is treated as a separate organization and may apply separately. No organization may submit more than three (3) unique applications for divisions/agencies under its purview in a single fiscal year.

Organizations with annual operating budgets of at least \$500,000 (and all divisions of such organizations) are expected to show a match equal to 50% of the grant request. The match need not all be in cash; it may include donated services such as the value of volunteer time, donated equipment or supplies, or donated storage or office space.

Organizations with budgets under \$500,000 do not have a match requirement.

FY 2026 Project Grant Deadlines

	<u>FY 2026</u>
<i>Intent to Apply</i>	March 10, 2025
<i>Application Deadline</i>	April 14, 2025
<i>Funding Level</i>	Applicants may request up to \$20,000
<i>Notification of Award</i>	July 2025

Eligible Project Types

The table below, while not exhaustive, lists common project categories and eligible applicants. Innovative projects of a type not listed below may be eligible and applicants are encouraged to discuss their proposed project with NJHC staff before submitting a Declaration of Intent (DOI).

Type of Project	Individuals	Organizations
Partnership Projects	No	Yes
Conservation of Historical Materials	No	Yes
Digitization Projects	No	Yes
Educational Initiatives	Yes	Yes
Exhibitions	No	Yes
Public Programs	No	Yes
Research	Yes	Yes
Publications	Yes	Yes
Digital Media	No	Yes
Film, Videotape, Radio	Yes	Yes
Smith Fellowships	Yes	No

Applicants should consult the **General Categories for Project Grant Proposals (See: Page 14)** for project-specific instructions

NJHC FY 2026 Funding Priorities and Evaluation Criteria

Applications for funding must include the following:

1. A detailed explanation of how the project will benefit the public including the following:
 - a. A substantive description of the current and potential audiences
 - b. A detailed plan for engaging current and potential audiences
 - c. A well-developed plan for assessing the impact of the grant-funded activity on audiences
 - d. A clear commitment to increasing diversity in audiences for New Jersey history, in the subject matter to be addressed in the proposed project, and in the composition of project and organizational personnel and leadership
2. Application of the highest professional standards to the planning and execution of the proposed activity, particularly as it relates to non-profit management, care of collections, and historical research
3. A realistic and appropriate budget
4. A detailed work plan and timeline outlining what will be accomplished when and by whom
5. Effective use of partnerships and collaboration at the local, state, or national level, wherever possible
6. A commitment to integrating inclusive history, whenever possible, and to telling underrepresented stories within programmatic content.
7. A strategy for consistently and effectively communicating the benefit of funded programs and activities to a broad audience.
8. Strategies for using the materials of New Jersey history to address contemporary issues, whenever possible.

These and all other elements of each application will be evaluated on how effectively they address the stated goal of the NJHC grant program, their demonstrated adherence to professional standards, and the degree to which innovation and on-going self-assessment have been applied to organizational planning and development.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include a wide variety of organizations, both public and private. If the mission of an organization does not exclusively focus on New Jersey history, it is essential that those applicants demonstrate the existence of and a commitment to both a historical mission and a viable program of public service to New Jersey history.

To apply **directly** to the NJHC for FY 2026 project funding, history organizations must meet the following criteria:

1. Have an annual operating budget of at least \$100,000 in non-state history funds. This budget figure should be based on income received for the applicant’s most recently completed fiscal year.

NOTE: The NJHC realizes that unique organizations exist that offer statewide history programming and services but have annual budgets under \$100,000. These organizations should contact the NJHC at (609) 292-6062 to determine eligibility.
2. Demonstrate that your organization has a significant impact on audiences beyond a 25-mile radius from your headquarters. This can include both virtual and/or in-person impacts.
3. Organizations with budgets under \$100,000 may partner together with a larger history institution to meet the budget **and** audience threshold on eligible New Jersey history projects.
4. Be in good standing with the NJHC, i.e., no overdue or unfulfilled contractual obligations from prior fiscal years.
5. All applicants must demonstrate adherence to professional standards specific to their discipline. All institutional applicants for FY 2026 project support are encouraged to enroll in a standards program (See: Page 16).
6. The NJHC will entertain proposals for continued funding for projects previously supported through this grant program. However, applicants must clearly demonstrate the public benefit of work already completed and identify how continued support will significantly extend the positive impact of previously funded work.
7. No organization may receive Project Grant funding for the same project for more than three (3) consecutive fiscal years.” (Co-Sponsored Projects excluded).
8. Organizations may **only** apply for Project Grant support from the **either** NJHC or their designated county re-grant agency (CHPP) in any calendar year.

NOTE: Organizations with budgets under \$100,000 may still apply for Project Grant support from the NJHC and GOS support from their county re-grant agency in the same calendar year.

Organizations that do not meet the eligibility criteria will apply directly to their respective designated county re-grant agency, for which the NJHC has made funding available to support eligible project proposals.

Ineligible Applicants

Applicants’ ineligible for NJHC project grant funding include:

1. Units of state or federal government.
2. Past NJHC grant recipients who have failed to fulfill the reporting requirements as stated in their executed grant contract.
3. Applicants receiving FY 2026 grant funds directly from the NJHC are not eligible for County History Partnership Program (CHPP) Project Grant support in calendar 2025.

For questions of eligibility, please call the NJHC at (609) 292-6062.

Special Concerns

The NJHC is committed to advancing inclusive history in all its grant programs and initiatives. In doing so, it especially encourages project proposals that seek to explore perspectives and priorities of underrepresented communities. Applications that address the following themes, in priority order by calendar year, are encouraged:

Memory and Memorialization (2025):

In 2025, the NJHC will center its programming on the theme of *Memory and Memorialization*. Drawing upon the RevolutionNJ theme *The Historical Process*, the NJHC will examine what we as a society choose to remember and the ways in which we commemorate the past. A particular emphasis will be placed on our memorialization of the past 250 years of American history in preparation for the Semiquincentennial in 2026. The NJHC welcomes projects that explore this concept through the lens of the 250th.

New Jersey and the United States Semiquincentennial: Revolution NJ (2026–2033)

The NJHC was designated the lead agency in New Jersey with responsibility to commemorate and observe the Semiquincentennial (250th anniversary) of the United States from 2026 through 2033. This initiative, Revolution NJ, will feature programs and events that encourage New Jerseyans statewide to consider the American Revolution, its context, and its legacy. Premised on the principle that the questions people faced during the Revolution remain vital today, this anniversary offers a platform for New Jerseyans of varied identities and experiences to consider the ideals that drove the Revolution and their implications over the last 250 years—from the Revolutionary era itself, to the fight for women’s suffrage, the development of transformative new technologies, the Civil Rights Movement, and beyond. The NJHC is especially interested in projects that expand interpretation of Revolutionary-era history and beyond to be more inclusive, relevant, and accurate, exploring un- and underrepresented figures, events, and themes of this period. Accordingly, Revolution NJ has developed a [Strategic Framework](#) and [Interpretive Framework](#) that applicants are strongly encouraged to reference and incorporate the documents into their application. These foundational documents outline the key strategic goals and interpretive guidelines for the Revolution NJ initiative. Eligible applications that specifically incorporate both documents into their projects and programming in preparation for the 250th in New Jersey are encouraged.

Applicants with any questions on the above special concerns are encouraged to call the NJHC at (609) 292-6062 prior to applying.

Review Process

Applications are reviewed by an independent peer-review process. Panelists review the proposals against the stated criteria.

Panelists and NJHC members adhere to the state guidelines on ethical standards. Review panelists and NJHC members abstain from commenting or voting on a proposal if they have:

1. Any recent relationship, financial or otherwise, with the applicant organization or any persons connected with the proposal; or
2. Played a meaningful role in the development of the proposal.

Staff members adhere to state guidelines on ethical standards. Staff does not comment or vote on any proposals.

Appeal Procedure

Applicants who wish to challenge award decisions may make a formal appeal. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the NJHC within 30 days of the date of the notification informing the applicant of the award decision. All appeals must be sent via Certified Mail or other trackable delivery service.

The appeal letter must discuss in detail why the applicant believes the NJHC's decision was in error. The applicant can only base their argument on the proposal provided; the NJHC will not consider revised application materials.

The appeal will be forwarded to every member of the NJHC for consideration at the next regularly scheduled NJHC meeting. The NJHC's decision on the appeal will be based on two elements: 1) the appeal letter; 2) the assessment of the original review panel and any explanatory material requested by the NJHC chairman from the Grants and Prizes Committee and/or the staff. The NJHC has the discretion to request an oral presentation. The applicant will be informed in writing about the NJHC's decision at the earliest opportunity. Should the NJHC revise its original decision and make an award, the amount would depend upon the availability of funding.

Ineligible Projects

1. Projects that do not relate to New Jersey history
2. Projects that were funded for the three (3) previous fiscal years
3. Project work that is completed before the grant is awarded
4. Conservation of collections of unidentified photographs
5. Conservation of materials owned by federal, county, or municipal governments
6. Construction, restoration, preservation of gravestones, commemorative statues, historical markers, and other non-interpretive items
7. Genealogical projects such as genealogies of specific families (unless applicants can demonstrate the usefulness of the projects to the understanding of New Jersey history)
8. Fiction and poetry
9. Projects of federal or state government agencies
10. Projects that are not accessible to the public
11. Publication of coloring books, cookbooks, and calendars
12. Purchase of collections, furniture, costumes, artifacts, or other items for collections
13. Restoration or preservation of structures
14. Recordings of public programs or oral history interviews without the production of transcripts that are accessible to the public
15. Projects that do not comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act

Eligible Expenses

1. Archival folders, boxes, and other materials for conservation of historical materials such as manuscripts, books, costumes, and photographs
2. Archival or research library user fees
3. Equipment purchases with the following restrictions: only institutions and organizations may use grant funds to purchase major items, such as computers or video cameras. All grant recipients, however, may use grant funds to purchase items such as inexpensive recording devices and computer software.
4. Equipment rental
5. Materials for fabricating and installing exhibitions
6. Microfilming
7. Oral history tape transcription
8. Payment of exhibition loan fees and shipping costs
9. Photography and photocopying
10. Production of promotional or advertising materials
11. Travel and maintenance for speakers and honoraria for speakers in the following amounts:
 - a. Keynote speaker, up to \$1,000; one keynote speaker per program
 - b. Main speaker, up to \$500
 - c. Chairperson or moderator, up to \$250
 - d. Panelist, up to \$175
 - e. Additional funds for higher honoraria may be requested if you can demonstrate the speaker's particular merits
12. Supplies to be used in the project (such as storage materials, office supplies, display materials, and materials for educational projects)
13. Travel and/or maintenance while conducting research
14. Travel expenses with the following limits:
 - a. Automobile travel: \$.47 per mile
 - b. Train or airplane fares (coach only; not first class)
 - c. Food and accommodations: up to \$150 per day
15. Publication costs, such as typesetting, printing, copyright permission fees, and binding
16. Wages or stipends for project personnel, such as conservators, curators, educational consultants, and researchers

Organizations that do not have a General Operating Support grant from the NJHC may request funds for administrative support in their Project grant application. The administrative support portion may not exceed 25% of the total request. Administrative support includes salaries of regular employees. It does not include fees for consultants or contracted services.

Budget requests for contracted services (e.g., microfilming, conservation work) or equipment

purchase must be accompanied by vendor price quotes that clearly describe the services or equipment.

Budget requests for speakers or consultant services (guest curator, designer, National Register research, etc.) must be accompanied by a letter of commitment from the consultant with a description of the services and pricing.

Ineligible Expenses

1. Field trips if that is the only component of the project
2. Purchase of books or prepackaged instructional materials
3. Purchase of items for collections
4. Purchase of refreshments for the project's audience
5. Retroactive funding (for example, an exhibition proposal may not include a request for funding for exhibition research completed before the submission of the application)

Application Package

The NJHC utilizes the [System for Administering Grants Electronically \(SAGE\)](#) for submission of all grant applications. Applicants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SAGE by visiting the NJHC website, History.NJ.gov, and registering for SAGE as early as possible.

Applicants **must** be submitted electronically by 3:00 p.m. on the due date (See: Page 3). Please note the NJHC does not accept late applications. The NJHC also does not review application packages for completeness. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the required materials have been submitted by the deadline.

The first step of the application process is to complete and submit a Declaration of Intent (DOI) via SAGE. This will be reviewed by NJHC staff for eligibility. Once this has been approved, you will then have access to the application.

The Application

Only complete applications will be reviewed. A complete application consists of the following elements:

General Information Form

Narrative Form

Budget Form and Budget Narrative

Resumes of key project personnel—paid or volunteer staff, consultants, speakers

Support materials such as brochures, catalogues, study guides, publications, strategic plans and studies, and other items that illustrate the operation and program and that support claims made in the narrative

Vendor price quotes and work descriptions (conservation proposals, microfilming, equipment purchases, digitization)

Documentation of commitment from any consultant or speaker with a description of the work to be done and his/her fee

Project specific required materials

Application Submission Certification Form

A. General Information Form

The General Information Form is a one-page document that includes a brief statement describing your project and your proposed grant period. Please note that the grant period is selected by the applicant. The grant period may not begin before grant awards are announced in July 2023 and must begin before the end of the fiscal year in which the grant is awarded. The fiscal year begins on July 1st and ends on June 30th.

Final Reports are due 30 days after the close of the grant period.

B. Narrative Form

All applicants must address the following. Please note, however, that there are project-specific requirements, which can be found under **General Categories for Project Grant Proposals** at the end of the FY 2026 Project Grant guidelines.

Clearly define the proposed project including a description of its purpose and the projected outcomes. Explain the contribution it will make to the exploration, enjoyment, interpretation, understanding, and preservation of New Jersey history.

Explain how this project relates to the mission and long-range plan of your organization, as well as the Commission's stated goals. Individuals only need to address how their project aligns with the Commission's funding goals.

Identify the project team and how they provide the most appropriate qualifications. Applicants utilizing the services of a consultant should include his/her qualifications. If a consultant has not yet been selected, please include a detailed RFP in the miscellaneous attachments section.

Explain how this project will reach a diverse audience. Describe your goals in terms of audience development and engagement. Include a discussion of the proposed project's relevance to the targeted audience.

Explain in detail how the project will be implemented and describe the strategies for completing the project. Describe how you plan to market the project to your target audience.

Describe your plans to evaluate your project and incorporate your findings into your future work.

C. Budget Form

Itemize requested funds. Be as specific as possible. Make sure that the total funds you are requesting on your budget form matches the request on the General Information Form and the Budget Narrative.

D. Required Attachments

This section of the application consists of materials that must be uploaded to SAGE. When uploading documents, please pay careful attention to SAGE's instructions regarding supported file formats and sizes.

1) Budget Narrative

Describe the costs of all expenses related to the proposed project. Identify all sources of funding

for the project. Provide a detailed itemization of how grant funds will be expended. Include a justification for all project-related costs.

2) Resumes

Provide resumes for all key personnel related to the project team, including volunteer staff and board members. Please note applicants who plan to utilize the services of consultants must also attach his/her resume.

3) Support Materials

Provide copies of support materials showing the organization's mission, programs, and activities, such as brochures, catalogues, study guides, programs, or relevant plans. Use these materials to illustrate a past record of accomplishment, especially in reference to activities like those for which support is requested.

4) Certification of Support

Applicants seeking support for educational initiatives must include a certification of support for the proposed project from a participating educational institution.

5) Documentation of Commitment to Participation

If your project will require the cooperation and involvement of consultants, organizations, or individuals that are not part your organization's regular staff, those individuals or groups must provide a document confirming their agreement to participate in your project, and that document must be included with your application. The documentation must include a description of the work to be done and the fee, if any.

6) Summary History of Organization

Institutional and organizational applicants must provide a brief history of the organization and describe its services and programs related to New Jersey history.

7) Copies of Manuscript, Representative Photographs, Script, or Script Treatment

Applicants for Publications and Media support must submit additional support materials, such as the text of a manuscript, sample video tapes, and script treatments.

8) Writing Sample

Applicants requesting funding for publication or writing-related projects must include a writing sample as part of their application. Samples should be 8-10 pages long and may be excerpted from larger works.

9) Vendor Price Quotes and Work Descriptions

Requests for funding of conservation and microfilming services, and equipment purchases must be accompanied by appropriate documentation (description of work to be done and itemized pricing on vendor letterhead or bid sheet).

10) Miscellaneous Attachments

Some organizations may find that they need extra space for attachments or a place to upload overly large attachments that needed to be broken into multiple documents. No applicant is required to upload anything into this form, but it is available to those who wish to use it.

E. Application Certification

This form is generated by SAGE and provides space for an electronic signature of the official representative of the organizational applicant. The signatures certify that the contents of the application are true and accurate, that the application has been approved by your organization's board, and that the organization will abide by all terms and conditions of a grant award should it become a recipient.

End Notes

Here is some additional information to assist an applicant's understanding of the NJHC's FY 2026 Project Grant guidelines.

Tax Liability:

All current and prospective grantees should consult their certified public accountant(s) or the U.S. Internal Revenue Service directly on questions relating to tax liability of individuals (that is, of persons as opposed to institutions) who receive New Jersey Historical Commission grants.

Grant-funded Products:

If the project has a tangible product, a copy of that product must be submitted with the final report or as soon as it is available. Any product of the project must be available to the public. "Product" refers to such items as books, articles, conference papers, finding aids (e.g., guides, collection descriptions), software, oral history transcripts, media productions, sets of slides, walking or driving tour materials, conference brochures or publicity, exhibition catalogues or publicity, or curriculum materials. The NJHC will transfer microfilms and oral history transcripts to the New Jersey State Archives. It will keep other materials or transfer them to suitable places at its discretion. Applicants must:

Provide one copy of any product other than microfilm to the NJHC. (For microfilm, see item below).

Deposit another copy of the product with a member library of the New Jersey Library Network. That library must agree to make its possession of the product known through the state database and to make the product available to the public through interlibrary loan, on-site use, or other means. The Network is a voluntary organization of all types of libraries funded by the State of New Jersey to provide state residents with equal access to library services and materials.

Submit the master and print negatives of microfilm products to the NJHC, who will transfer them to the State Archives for permanent storage in the State Records Center's microfilm vault. This ensures that the microfilm will be preserved and that the public will have access to it. The State Archives may make service copies for patron use. A service copy must be deposited with a member of the New Jersey Library Network.

Broadening, Deepening, and Diversifying:

Applicants need to show that they're not only cognizant of, but actively addressing the fact that today's audiences are significantly different from what they were just a decade ago, and that embracing this reality is essential to their long-term viability and success. The following definitions provided by the Wallace Foundation should prove useful in writing an application:

Broadening: Attract more of the same type of people, i.e., increase the number of participants, etc.

Deepening: Increase the current participant's level of involvement, i.e., single ticket buyers become subscription buyers, funders give more money, volunteers give more time, etc.

Diversifying: Attract different kinds of people, i.e., attract people who have never attended/participated in the applicant programs. This could entail placing greater emphasis on expanding the ethnic makeup of its audience, targeting previously underserved age groups and communities, and increasing programming for visitors with disabilities, among others.

There are numerous sources applicants can consult to better understand their potential audiences, such as the most recent United States Census Bureau (<https://www.census.gov/>) data. Diversity should be viewed in the broadest possible context. This includes, but is not limited to, race, gender, age, economic status, and persons with disabilities. This list should not be considered a definition, but rather a starting point for an applicant to use in exploring the diversity of their own audiences.

Final Advice

1. Before proceeding with the grant application, read the guidelines in their entirety.
2. Always keep in mind the funding priorities/evaluation criteria while completing the application.
3. Complete all required information accurately and consistently. Double-check all numbers.
4. Review the information on what the application package should contain. Double-check that all required attachments and support materials have been successfully uploaded in SAGE. Please refer to the SAGE guides on the NJHC's [History.NJ.gov](https://www.history.nj.gov/) homepage if you have any questions whatsoever about compatible document types.
5. Give yourself plenty of time to complete the application in SAGE by the due date. This will avoid last minute omissions and oversights. You will **not** be able to add or change anything in your application once the due date (April 14, 2025) and time (3:00 p.m.) has passed.
6. It is the applicant's responsibility to make sure their mailing address, telephone number, and email address are correct in SAGE. NJHC uses that information to contact applicants throughout the grant process.
7. Please note that the NJHC is **not** responsible for any inaccuracies or omissions regarding any aspect of your application in SAGE.
8. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the guidelines, please call the NJHC staff at (609) 292-6062.

General Categories for Project Grant Proposals

All project proposals should demonstrate a commitment to applying the highest professional standards for preserving and interpreting New Jersey history.

For more detailed information about meeting best practices standards for the history field, applicant organizations are encouraged to consult the [American Association for State and Local History's Standards and Excellence Program \(StEPs\)](#). Additional guidance regarding best practices and facility standards can be found at the [America Alliance of Museum's General Facility Report](#).

Partnership Projects

As noted under “Recent Changes to the Project Grant Guidelines” (see: Page 2), organizations with budgets under \$100,000 may partner together to meet the budget **and** audience threshold on eligible New Jersey history projects. While not mandatory, it is highly recommended that the organization with the higher budget and audience figures be the lead applicant in [SAGE](#).

All applicants for Partnership Projects **must** include in their budget narrative section (see: Required Attachments, Page 11) a complete breakdown of the budget for **each** organization taking part in the proposal. This should include a summary and itemization of all income received for each organization’s most recently completed fiscal year. Applicants should clearly differentiate this section from the traditional budget narrative required for the actual project itself.

PROJECT TYPES:

Conservation of Historic Materials
Digitization Projects
Educational Initiatives
Exhibitions
Public Programs
Research
Publications
Digital Media
Film, Videotape, Radio
Smith Fellowships

Conservation of Historical Materials

Applicants may apply for funds to conserve or make preservation copies of historical materials of significance to New Jersey history, such as manuscript collections; books; newspapers; photographs, postcards, paintings or other visuals; costumes; furniture; and other documented artifacts.

Municipal and county governments may not apply for funds to conserve or make preservation copies of public records. County and municipal agencies looking for guidance related to conservation, preservation, and other collections care issues should contact the New Jersey State Archives at (609) 292-1570.

Newspaper microfilming proposals must demonstrate that the newspaper was not included in the joint microfilming project conducted by the New Jersey State Archives (Department of State) and Rutgers University Libraries. For information on this project, contact New Jersey State Archives, PO Box 307, Trenton, NJ 08625, or call (609) 292-6260.

All applicants may apply for conservation projects to organize or describe historical materials by archival processing or the production of finding aids (catalogues, inventories, etc.). Archival supplies must meet professional standards.

Proposals must include the following:

1. Explanation of the project's importance for understanding and interpreting New Jersey history and interpreting your collection overall, and its relevance to the intended audience
2. Detailed description of the object or collection and a description of the physical condition of the material and the steps necessary to preserve it
3. Information about the vendor or vendors that will do the work, documentation that the firm is qualified to do the work, and a price quote and description of the work along with the budget
4. Detailed description of how the object or collection will be maintained, preserved, and cared for following the conservation treatment
5. Description of how the public will have access to the material

Unidentified objects and materials are not eligible for grant funding. Materials that are not accessible to the public and will not be made accessible to the public following the project, are not eligible for grant funding.

All applications for conservation projects must demonstrate that the storage areas for the collections will protect the materials from fire, flood, and water damage, be monitored to maintain stable temperature and relative humidity levels and, if necessary, contain air filtration or purification systems to keep out contaminated air. If the organization has inadequate facilities, the applicant must describe the plans for improving them. Applicants may apply for funds to support the purchase of appropriate equipment to do this under the General Operating Support (GOS) grant program. This equipment must meet professional standards.

Applications for microfilming support or for funds to preserve, stabilize, or conserve collections of photographs, postcards, paintings, paper, furniture, textiles, etc., must demonstrate that the work and storage conditions will adhere to professional standards.

Applicants should estimate the cost of microfilming projects before contacting a potential vendor. The applicant's project should plan to produce a master negative, a print negative (both to be deposited with the State Archives through the Historical Commission), and two service copies — one to be deposited with a member of the State Library Network and one for use by the organization.

If the material to be conserved consists of paper (manuscripts, books, maps, postcards, photographs, etc.), a professional assessment must be made of the conservation needs of the materials. If you do not have professional qualified staff to assess the materials, you may apply for a Caucus Archival Projects Evaluation Service (CAPES) survey. This program is offered free

of charge. This survey will assess the physical state of the materials and recommend steps to preserve or repair them. After the survey is finished, you may apply for a grant to carry out the survey's recommendations. A description of the service and the application instructions can be found at the Historical Commission's website, History.NJ.gov. Be sure to include your CAPES survey in your application package.

For non-paper historical conservation, a similar professional assessment must be made. As with CAPES, if you do not have professional qualified staff to assess the materials, you may apply for Artifact Assessment Program (AAP) support. A service of the New Jersey Association of Museums, there are no deadlines and organizations can apply anytime. AAP evaluations are performed at no cost to the organization and will provide work related to initial collection surveys and follow-up programming. A description of the service and the application instructions can be found at the Historical Commission's website, History.NJ.gov. Be sure to include all AAP information in your application package.

Digitization of Historical Materials

Applicants may apply for grant funds to fund projects whose goal is to make digital copies of images, sound recordings, and text-based collections. Proposals must confirm that the material is not already freely available to the public online through another institution or must make a compelling argument to justify the digital duplication of historical materials. Digitization projects must make use of professional standards, processes, and equipment in their execution.

Up-to-date information on current standards and practices for creating digital images, generating metadata, appropriate file formats, methods of storage, and other technical details can be found in the "[NARA Technical Guidelines for Digitizing Archival Materials for Electronic Access](#)," published online by the National Archives and Records Administration.

Additional materials that address digitization standards and best practices can be found on the website of the [Collections Care website](#) of the Smithsonian Institution, and "[Well-intentioned Practice for Putting Digitized Collections of Unpublished Materials Online](#)," published by the Society of American Archivists. A collection of additional reference materials can be found in "[Digital Conversion – Documents and Guidelines A Bibliographic Reference](#)," published by the Federal Digitization Guidelines Working Group.

Proposals must include the following:

1. Explanation of the project's importance for understanding and interpreting New Jersey history, and its relevance to the intended audience
2. Selection criteria or rationale explaining why your organization has chosen these specific materials to be digitized
3. Description of the steps necessary to digitize the material, and an explanation of the applicant's preservation plans to store and maintain both the original and digitized material
4. Information about the vendor or vendors that will do the work, documentation that the firm is qualified to do the work, and a price quote and description of the work along with the budget
5. Description of how the public will have access to the material. The description should

also include evidence of ability and commitment to maintain access to the digitized material following the conclusion of the grant period

Plans must be in place for preservation of the original historical materials following digitization. Storage areas must protect the materials from fire, flood, and water damage; maintain stable temperature and relative humidity levels; and, if necessary, contain air filtration or purification systems to keep out contaminated air. If the organization has inadequate facilities, indicate plans for improving them. Applicants may apply for funds to support the purchase of appropriate equipment to do this under the General Operating Support program. This equipment must meet professional standards.

All organizations engaging in the digitization of historical material must explain their plans for both a) handling and preserving the original items during and after digitization, and b) how they will maintain the integrity of resultant digital files going forward.

If the material to be digitized consists of paper (manuscripts, books, maps, postcards, photographs, etc.), a professional assessment must be made of the conservation needs of the materials. If you do not have professional qualified staff to assess the materials, you may apply for a Caucus Archival Projects Evaluation Service (CAPES) survey. This program is offered free of charge. This survey will assess the physical state of the materials and recommend steps to preserve or repair them. After the survey is finished, you may apply for a grant to carry out the survey's recommendations. A description of the service and the application instructions can be found at the Commission's website, History.NJ.gov. Be sure to include your CAPES survey in your application package.

Educational Initiatives

Applicants may submit proposals requesting support for the development of curriculum materials, courses, instructional strategies, or distance learning for children or adults. The Historical Commission encourages projects that put school systems and their teachers, librarians, or students in cooperative relations with historians and historical organizations. The NJHC seeks grant proposals for educational projects for any of several audiences — K-12, college and university students, and adults.

Applicants must explain clearly how the project will help students:

- Learn about New Jersey history, its people, institutions, or localities, or
- Understand New Jersey history in relation to broader trends in United States and/or global history

The project must comply with the [New Jersey Student Learning Standards](#), as applicable.

Proposals for the development of instructional materials should include:

1. A description of the audience for the materials and the appropriateness of the materials for this audience
2. A list of intended learning goals
3. A description of the need for these materials that explains how they will fill a gap in the existing literature on New Jersey history or culture and shows that they will not duplicate existing curriculum materials

4. A plan for evaluation of the materials and the evaluation of student achievement and learning.
5. A summary of the materials to be developed and a description of the resources to be used in the project
6. A letter of commitment or interest from an educational institution, confirming that there is a demand for the materials being developed and that they will be put into use once the project is completed

Exhibitions

Applicants may apply for funds to support any stage of the development of an exhibition: research, design, or fabrication. Please note, however, that the Commission does not support projects that request funding for all three phases simultaneously.

Proposals must establish the qualifications of the personnel doing the work, including, if possible, documentation of previous exhibition work. Commitments from consultants must be documented with a description of the work to be done and a statement of the fee for the work.

All outdoor and indoor interpretive signage must meet the established standards for presenting inclusive history. This includes, but is not limited to, the work of the [American Alliance of Museums \(AAM\)](#) and the [Inclusive Historian's Handbook](#).

Research and design phases of proposals dealing with Indigenous history must include a good faith effort to consult and gain input from the representative groups whose history is to be presented.

An exhibition research proposal should include an explanation of the purpose and subject of the exhibition, its major themes, and the research to be done.

A design or scriptwriting request should include an explanation of the purpose and subject of the exhibit, a description of its audience, an outline of its main sections, a list of objects to be displayed, photocopies of pictures of some of the objects, and documentation, if possible, of previous exhibits.

A fabrication expense request should include an explanation of the subject of the exhibit, an outline of the main sections, a checklist of objects to be displayed, photocopies of pictures of some of the objects, a draft of the script, a floor plan and some elevations (or their equivalent if the institution is small), information on the materials to be used in the presentation of the objects, documentation, if possible, of previous exhibits, discussion of the target audience and how the exhibition will be accessible to those with disabilities, and a publicity plan.

Applicants must also include plans for a thoughtful evaluation of the exhibition by a recognized expert in the field. Grant funds may be used to pay the evaluator. Plans for evaluation should seek to examine the overall success in engaging audiences, as well as the quality of research, design, and fabrication employed.

The Historical Commission will not fund an exhibition that merely displays objects without providing a historical context for their interpretation.

Public Programs

The proposal narrative for a public program (conference, symposium, lecture series, public archaeology program, etc.) should include the following:

1. A summary of the individual speakers' topics
2. A description of the program site (location, capacity, access, etc.) and a statement of how the program site meets the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act
3. If the program is to be recorded, it must be transcribed; copies of the transcripts must be accessible to the public and one copy must be filed with the NJHC.

Research

Research and writing proposals may cover a wide range of activities, such as:

1. Archaeological investigations
2. Nominations to the National or New Jersey Registers of Historic Places
3. Oral history projects
4. Research leading to a book, article, dissertation, or media production

Archaeology: Archaeological projects must be conducted by personnel who meet the [National Park Service's Professional Qualifications Standards](#), as formally codified in the [Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR 61](#). Written permission from the site owner must be included with the application.

Projects that involve archaeological survey on a publicly owned historic property that is listed on the NJ Register of Historic Places will require prior authorization of the Historic Preservation Office under the NJ Register of Historic Places Act. For more information about project authorization under the NJ Register of Historic Places Act, please see:

<https://www.nj.gov/dep/hpo/2protection/njrreview.htm>

Signage should also not provide detailed location(s) of the archaeology site that could lead to subsequent looting or risk of vandalism.

Nominations to National and New Jersey Registers of Historic Places: Grants may be requested for two types of projects:

1. Nominations of historic districts or individual historic properties for listing in the Registers
2. Thematic nominations of a group of related historic properties

For the first type of project, the proposal must include a certification of eligibility from the Historic Preservation Office, NJ Department of Environmental Protection. For projects of the second type, the proposal must include a letter from the Historic Preservation Office supporting the goals and objectives of the grant application. For both types of projects, the applications must also include some method for presenting the results of the project to the public. A portion of the grant may be budgeted for this purpose. Any register nomination for a privately owned site must include a letter of permission from the property owner.

Oral History:

Begin by discussing how the selected interviewees will contribute to the overall research. A good oral history project does not substitute for other types of historical research; it builds on them.

For oral history projects, applicants must:

1. Describe the project's goals and necessary research to prepare for the interviews.
2. Provide a list of who will be interviewed and the significance of each to the project's larger historical objectives.
3. Provide a detailed outline of the topics to be covered, in addition to proposed questions to be asked of each participant.

Unless the oral history project is a small part of a larger project, such as a classroom project, the audiotapes must be transcribed. Include transcription costs in the budget, arrange for legal releases so that others may use the transcripts, and discuss the arrangements to be made for the deposit of the transcripts in a suitable repository. Copies of the transcripts must be accessible to the public and one copy must be filed with the NJHC.

Applicants should adhere to the principles on oral history projects outlined by the [Oral History Association](#).

Research:

For research or writing grants applicants must:

1. Assess the major secondary literature on the subject
2. Assess, list, and describe the collections of primary sources to be used
3. Document the commitment of any consultant to be used; documentation must include a discussion of the work to be done and the fee
4. Explain how the results of the research will reach the public
5. Explain how the work will add to the body of knowledge about the history of New Jersey and will be relevant to the intended audience
6. Fully describe the work to be done with the funds
7. Identify where the research will be done

Publications

Applicants may apply for a grant to help write, compile, edit, or publish a book. The book may be an original work or a reprint, anthology, compilation, or other new publication of existing material. Evidence of the publication rights must be included in the proposal.

The Historical Commission encourages the publication of works that not only describe sequential events but also provide historical, social, and intellectual context. Whenever possible, works should link local and New Jersey history to the history of the United States as a whole.

The NJHC strongly recommends printing publications on archival quality paper (paper that meets the national standard ANSI.Z39.48 R2002).

The Historical Commission does not hold the copyright to materials produced with grant funds. However, the assistance of the Historical Commission should be acknowledged in the publication.

Editorial: Applicants seeking funds to edit a work or hire an editor must include a copy of the material to be edited as a supporting document. The project description must also include a detailed plan showing how the material will be organized into a book. Applicants who receive an editorial grant may apply for publication funds after the manuscript is completed.

Publication: Applicants seeking funds to publish a book must include a copy of the material to be published as a supporting document. The manuscript must have at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the chapters completed and be accompanied by a detailed outline of the remainder of the book. The anticipated publication date must be scheduled for no later than 18 months past the application deadline. The manuscript must contain all of the main text of the completed chapters and include whatever scholarly apparatus and bibliography the work will have. The front matter, index, or other material that cannot be finished until the production process is under way need not be submitted.

If the work is a photographic history, the text should be accompanied by photocopies of representative photographs from the book. In the project narrative, be sure to explain fully what the photographs portray, and how they will be incorporated within the text in relation to the history covered in the book.

Any publication proposal must include a quote from a qualified vendor detailing the publication cost.

The Historical Commission will not support projects that will be produced through self-publication. In most cases, strong preference will be given to scholarship that will be published by an academic press or a full-time publisher that has submitted the manuscript to the normal process of scholarly review, and which will be indexed and contain citations. Publications must be indexed, and grant funds may be used to cover the costs associated with indexing.

There are publishers in the market today (such as Arcadia Publishing and the History Press) that do not submit manuscripts to a scholarly review process before publication and may not include indexing and citations in their products. As these practices are basic hallmarks of quality scholarship and historical writing, applicants should consider these publishers carefully before submitting an application to publish through one of these companies.

Applications to publish a work of history through a publisher that does not adhere to these benchmarks must be accompanied by plans to provide a scholarly review before submission for publication from a qualified scholar. This review must be included in the final report for any successful project. If a scholarly peer review was conducted in advance of the application, that review should be included in the application package. Applications of this type must also provide a rationale for why a publisher of this nature has been selected instead of a publisher that does incorporate scholarly review processes, indexing, and citations. Applications that do not include these components, or which fail to make a compelling case for the utility of this method of publication, are not likely to be funded.

Media

Digital: Digital media projects include websites, social media platforms, and mobile applications. A website design may include items such as events calendars, program schedules, hours of operation, links to other sites, digitized maps, historical documents, or activities for teachers,

students, or other page visitors. Submit a list, description, or samples of the material to be digitized. Allowable expenses may include historical research, professional design, software purchases, and internet access fees.

Organizations must show:

1. A commitment to maintain the site after the grant has expired

Audio Programs and Documentaries: Applicants must include a copy of the completed script or detailed treatment and a sample of the applicant's work as a supporting document. A film treatment is a plan of the prospective film, including a content narrative, discussion of the film's sections, notes as to locations, on and off-camera interview or narration. A film treatment, while not as detailed as a script, should give the reader a clear and detailed picture of what the film will be about and how the content will be presented. Discuss the qualifications of those who will produce the program, the target audience, and how the program will be marketed and distributed.

The Historical Commission does not support applications that ask for funds for script costs and production costs simultaneously.

In the project narrative, describe the content of the planned program or documentary in detail, and explain what resources will be used to produce the script. Describe how it has been or will be researched. If it will include oral history interviews, discuss who was interviewed and why, and the disposition of the recordings and transcripts. Discuss the target audience or audiences.

Smith Fellowships

The Historical Commission offers a limited number of research fellowships (Samuel Smith Fellowships for Research in New Jersey History) to support applicants doing major research projects in New Jersey history, including doctoral dissertations and monographs. Fellowship awards are based on demonstrated expertise and the excellence of the project description. Established scholars should show a record of publication in the field. Graduate students must include a letter of recommendation from their dissertation director. All applicants must provide a research plan and explain the research project in detail, its relevance to New Jersey history, and how it will add to the body of knowledge about the topic. Fellowship support may be used for any expense associated with the project other than tuition or publication expenses.

Other Projects

Applicants with other projects in mind not found on this list should discuss their project proposal with Historical Commission staff.

Contact Information

Any inquiries and/or additional details on the above general categories for Project Grant proposals may be directed to the NJHC's Chief Grants Officer:

Shawn Crisafulli
(609) 826-3945

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