



New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC) Inclusive History Grant Guidelines Fiscal Year 2024

About the Grant Program

Background

As the nation prepares to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the United States in 2026, Revolution NJ, New Jersey's official planning initiative for the anniversary, seeks to engage and provide support for history organizations dedicated to telling a diverse and inclusive story of the state's past. A recent study of New Jersey history organizations, conducted on behalf of Revolution NJ, revealed that a lack of primary source documentation and general ability to conduct historic research at many sites, limits their ability to interpret themes from a broader and more nuanced perspective (see **Appendix II – References** for report information). The New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC) is pleased to introduce a new grant program focused on supporting research and interpretative planning at public history and cultural sites in New Jersey.

Mission

Inclusive History Grants will fund the exploration of under-represented narratives in New Jersey history with a goal of expanding inclusive, community-centered interpretation and resources offered by historic sites and history organizations (see **Appendix I – Definitions** for definitions and examples of this type of work). Grants can be utilized in support of research and interpretative planning efforts that seek to tell a more diverse and complex story for a public audience.

The Inclusive History Grant Program was developed in alignment with Revolution NJ's [Strategic](#) and [Interpretive](#) Frameworks. Grants will actively address the initiative's goals to:

- Tell a diverse and inclusive story about America's past that invites participation from all New Jerseyans.
- Encourage the growth of organizational capacity at New Jersey's history organizations so that they are better able to attract, engage, and serve visitors, both during and after Revolution NJ.
- Demonstrate how understanding the complexity of our history helps us to respond to the present and prepare for the future.

Grant Amount

Applicants can request up to \$25,000 in support of their project. There is no organizational budget requirement for applicants. Organizations with annual operating budgets of at least \$500,000 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. There is no match requirement for organizations with budgets under \$500,000.

Inclusive History Grant Deadlines

Declaration of Intent to Apply (DOI)	October 16, 2023
Application Deadline	November 17, 2023
Notification of Award	Winter 2024

Grant Period

The grant period is March 2024 to March 2025. Final reports are due 30 days after the close of the grant period.

Who Can Apply

Eligible Applicants

- Eligible applicants are history organizations and historic sites. There is special encouragement for historic sites that interpret the Revolutionary War in New Jersey in preparation for the 250th anniversary of the United States in 2026.
- Individuals may apply on behalf of an organization, but must submit a certification of support for the proposed project from that organization to confirm participation (see [page 4 > How to Apply > Application Package](#) for more information).
- Organizational applicants must be a documented 501(c)(3) nonprofit history organization based in New Jersey.
- Prospective applicants must be up-to-date and compliant with State of New Jersey commercial recording and [charities registration](#) requirements.

Ineligible Applicants

- Individuals working independently and not on behalf of an historic site or history organization.
- Units of state or federal government. Please note that we will accept applications from [Officially Recognized Friends Organizations](#) (ORFO) representing state-owned historic sites.
- Individuals or organizations that received Inclusive History Grant Program funding in FY 2023.

Use of Funds

Eligible Expenses

- Research expenses in support of exhibitions, education initiatives, educational resources, programs, or any product that will be made available for public engagement (see [Appendix III – Project Types](#) for additional information about projects).

- Types of research may include:
 - Archival research
 - Oral histories
 - Archaeological investigations
 - Research related to a building, structure, or space that broadens interpretation of the site
 - Genealogical research that expands understanding of underrepresented histories in New Jersey
- Types of research expenses may include:
 - Wages or stipends for consultants and researchers
 - Archival or research library user fees
 - Equipment purchases or rentals (for example: recording devices and computer software)
 - Oral history tape transcription
 - Photography and photocopying
 - Supplies to be used in the project (such as storage materials, office supplies, display materials, and materials for educational projects)
 - Travel expenses while conducting research with the following limits:
 - Automobile travel: \$.35 per mile
 - Train or airplane fares (coach only; not first class)
 - Food and accommodations: up to \$100 per day
- Expenses related to interpretative planning. This may include the hiring of a consultant(s) to guide an interpretative planning process or to update an existing interpretative plan. It may also include the funding of research (see above) to inform interpretative planning (see **Appendix III – Project Types** for resources related to interpretative planning).

Please note: Applicants can use funding from an Inclusive History Grant to continue or to build on work from a project previously funded by the NJHC or through the County History Partnership Program (CHPP). Organizations that do not have a General Operating Support (GOS) grant from the NJHC may request funds for administrative support in their application. The administrative support portion may not exceed 25% of their total request. Administrative support includes salaries of regular employees. It does **not** include fees for consultants or contracted services.

Ineligible Expenses

- Expenses that directly fund the operations of a program, project, or exhibition. This grant program is situated to support the research and interpretive planning processes that are foundational to these products, but not the products themselves.
- Projects that do not relate to New Jersey history.
- Research that does not contribute to a product that will eventually be accessible to the general public.
- Work that is completed before the grant is awarded.

- Fiction and poetry.
- Recordings of oral history interviews without the production of transcripts that are accessible to the public.
- Genealogical research that focuses on a single family history and does not contribute to a broader and more inclusive public understanding of New Jersey history.

Evaluation Criteria

Each Inclusive History Grant proposal will be evaluated on the following:

- The project is clearly defined and supported by a distinct plan, timeline, and budget that articulate the organization's ability to complete the work. Organization staff and hired consultants or researchers are capable and have the bandwidth to complete the work.
- The expertise and experience of consultants, researchers, and staff assigned to the project are well-suited and align with the scope and goals reflected in the proposal.
- The proposed research or interpretive planning focuses on uncovering or expanding on diverse narratives in New Jersey history and seeks to present a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of our past.
- The proposed research or interpretive planning will support eventual exhibitions, education initiatives, educational resources, or products that will be made available for public engagement.
- The proposal clearly shows how the proposed research or interpretive planning process will lead to engagement with a diverse public audience. The project considers how the work will both include and reflect community.
- The proposed research or interpretive planning will increase the capacity of the organization to reach audiences, expand interpretation, and sustain inclusive history practice moving forward.
- The proposal outlines methods for evaluating the work and utilizing evaluation data to guide future projects at the organization.

How to Apply

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.

Applications **must** be submitted electronically by 3:00 p.m. on the due date. 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.

Application Package

All applications for the Inclusive History Grant Program will consist of the following **required** materials. Any application submitted without any of the following will **not** be considered.

A. **General Information Form**

The General Information Form is a one-page document that includes a brief statement describing your project.

B. **Narrative Form:** The following prompts should be addressed, clearly labeled, and presented in the following order.

- 1) Please clearly define the proposed research or interpretative planning work including a description of its purpose and project outcomes.
- 2) Explain how the work will contribute to a more nuanced, diverse, and inclusive understanding of New Jersey history at your site or organization.
- 3) How will the results from the research or interpretative planning be made accessible to a broad public audience? How will this work be relevant and engaging for a diverse audience?
- 4) How will this project increase the capacity of your organization, especially as it pertains to reaching diverse audiences?
- 5) 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.
- 6) Provide a detailed timeline and plan for how the work will be accomplished.
- 7) Describe your plans to evaluate the work.

C. **Budget Form:** Itemize requested funds. Be as specific as possible

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 work. 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 their resume(s).

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 similar to those for which support is requested.

4) **Certification of Support**

Individuals applying on behalf of an organization or site must include certification of support for the proposed work from that 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) **Vendor Price Quotes and Work Descriptions**

Requests that including equipment purchases and other research services must be accompanied by appropriate document (description of work to be done and itemized pricing on vendor letterhead or bid sheet).

7) **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.

Grant-funded Products

If the work results in a tangible product, a copy of that product must be submitted with the final report or as soon as it is available. Tangible products may include a final report on research from a consultant or researcher; a new or updated interpretative plan; transcripts from an oral history project; an archaeological report; or other products resulting from research such as documentation of key findings (copies of archival documents, photographs, etc.).

Review Panels and Committees

All applications received by the deadline are distributed to independent evaluation panels composed of experts familiar with nonprofits, their management, and the challenges they face. It is the applicant's responsibility to submit a complete application. Panels will evaluate all proposals against the stated criteria and achieve consensus on the merits of each. Panelists will make recommendations to the NJHC's Grants and Prizes Committee. The recommendations of the Committee will be forwarded to the NJHC for final decision. Awards will be voted on in public session.

Ethical Standards

Staff, review panelists, and NJHC members adhere to the state guidelines on ethical standards. They 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.

Notification

Applicants will be formally notified in writing of the decisions by the NJHC. Awards may come with specific conditions. These conditions will be explained in the award letter and contract. The NJHC expects to announce the Inclusive History Grant Program recipients on December 8, 2022.

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.

Contact Information

Any inquiries about the Inclusive History Grant Program guidelines, SAGE, and completing the DOI and application may be directed to Shawn Crisafulli, Chief Grants Officer, at 609-826-3945 or Shawn.Crisafulli@sos.nj.gov.

Appendix

Appendix I. Definitions

- A. **DEAI:** The NJHC adheres to the American Alliance of Museums (AAM)'s definitions of Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) – [AAM DEAI Definitions](#)
- B. **Public History:** According to the National Council on Public History, the term public history is defined as “the many and diverse ways in which history is put to work in the world.” See more in [How Do We Define Public History?](#)
- C. **Inclusive History:** The NJHC loosely defines inclusive history as history practice that acknowledges and welcomes different perspectives and experiences in understanding and interpreting the past. For more, please visit [The Inclusive Historian's Handbook](#).
- D. **Community-Centered History Work:** To help illustrate this type of work, please see below a list of some examples and resources.
 - 1) [Collaborative Practice](#) (Inclusive Historian's Handbook)

- 2) [Partner Power: A Technique for Building More Authentic Community Partnerships Right from the Start](#) (OF/BY/FOR ALL)
- 3) [How the Greenwood Art Project United a Community in Reflection and Vision for the Future](#) (AAM)
- 4) [10 Unique Ways Museums Can Connect with Their Community](#) (AASLH)
- 5) [The Participatory Museum](#) (Nina Simon)

Appendix II. References

- A. [New Jersey's Revolutionary War Sites: Site & Visitor Readiness Assessment](#) (2020)
- B. [Revolution NJ Strategic Framework](#)
- C. [Revolution NJ Interpretative Framework](#)

Appendix III. Project Types

- A. **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. If the property to be affected by the proposed archaeological project is listed in the New Jersey Register of Historic Places, then permission of the Historic Preservation Office must also be obtained.
- B. **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.

Oral history 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](#).

- C. **Research:** Grants supporting research should address the following.
 - 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

- D. **Interpretive Planning:** Interpretive planning guides museums in the development and design of informal learning products that center the needs and experiences of audiences. Interpretive plans are often based on themes that are relevant, responsive, and inclusive of the communities an institution serves. Although interpretive plans are most closely associated with interpretation, education, and visitor experience, strong plans can also serve as a resource for the museum’s administration and fundraising efforts. For more information on interpretive planning and suggestions for implementing a new or updating an existing plan, see the following resources.
- 1) [Comprehensive Interpretive Planning](#) (National Park Service)
 - 2) [Interpretive Planning Tools for Heritage Areas, Historic Trails, and Gateways](#) (National Park Service)
 - 3) [Interpretive Planning for Museums](#) (Marcella Wells, Barbara Butler, Judith Koke)
 - 4) [Interpretation Planning Workbook](#) (California State Parks)
 - 5) For organizations initiating an interpretive planning process in anticipation of the 250th anniversary of the United States in 2026, please review the Revolution NJ [Interpretive Framework](#). We also encourage applicants to review and incorporate the initiative’s goals and vision as outlined in the [Strategic Framework](#).
 - 6) [Making History at 250: The Field Guide for the Semiquincentennial](#) (AASLH)

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