

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](#).

Project Types:

Conservation of Historic Materials

Digitization Projects

Educational Initiatives

Exhibitions

Public Programs

Research

Publications

Digital Media

Film, Videotape, Radio

Performances

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 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 Commission's website, <http://history.nj.gov>. Be sure to include your CAPES survey 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. 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.

In order to comply with standard best practices for digitization projects, all organizations engaging in the digitization of historical material must also prepare microfilm copies of the material being digitized.

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, <http://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 world 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.

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. 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.

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.

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. Describe the project's goals, necessary research to prepare for the interviews, who will be interviewed and why, and subjects or themes to be covered in the interviews. Provide a detailed outline of the topics to be covered.

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 expense.

Other Projects

Applicants with other projects in mind not found on this list should discuss their project proposal with the Grants Program Officer.

Contact Information

Any inquiries and/or additional details on the above general categories for Project grant proposals may be directed to the following NJHC grant officer:

Shawn Crisafulli
(609) 826-3945

Shawn.Crisafulli@sos.nj.gov