

America250 Mississippi Grant Program Guidelines

Mississippi Humanities Council & the America250 Mississippi Commission

If you have trouble accessing this application online, please contact the Mississippi Humanities Council, 601.432.6754 or carol@mhc.state.ms.us

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1. About the America250 Mississippi Grants Program

As Mississippi prepares to mark the 250th anniversary of the United States in 2026, the America250 Mississippi Grants Program invites communities across the state to take part in this historic commemoration. Established by the America250 Mississippi Commission, this program aims to empower local organizations to honor their unique histories, foster a deeper understanding of Mississippi's vital role in the American story, and inspire meaningful engagement with our shared heritage. By supporting public events and initiatives during the semiquincentennial, the program seeks to create lasting legacies that will help future generations of Mississippians appreciate and celebrate the rich and diverse tapestry of our state's past.

While Mississippi was not one of the 13 original colonies, our state has been the crucible for implementing the principles set forth by the Declaration of Independence, namely freedom and equality. Our story is America's story. The expansion of freedom in American history begins with the Revolution but continues with the Civil War, emancipation and Reconstruction, where Mississippi was center stage. What Abraham Lincoln called "a new birth of freedom" in the Gettysburg Address had as large an impact in Mississippi as any other state. During the 20th century civil rights movement, Mississippi was once again at the center of this American story of the struggle for freedom.

Three types of grants are available to nonprofit, educational and local governmental organizations to support educational and commemorative programming about the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States: Legacy Grants, Program Grants, and Mini Grants. These grants will support programs that celebrate this milestone, highlight our state's history and its contributions to the United States, and explore how the ideals of

America's founding and the effort to create a more perfect union have shaped the Mississippi experience.

Applicants are encouraged to develop projects that explore at least one of the following themes:

We the People – Inspired by the founders' ideals, generations of Mississippians have fought for their rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This theme explores how the definition of "We the People" has evolved over time, highlighting Mississippi's pivotal role in expanding the definition of American citizenship.

The Power of Place – Mississippi's landscape and communities have been shaped by centuries of change. This theme invites projects that examine how place has influenced the development of Mississippi's unique identity and how your community's story contributes to the state's shared narrative.

Mississippi in the American Story – Mississippi has played a vital role in the nation's history. This theme supports projects that examine how Mississippi has been at the center of major American events and movements—political, economic, social and cultural—underscoring the state's impact on the broader American story.

Mississippi Traditions – Mississippi is renowned for its creative spirit and cultural traditions. This theme celebrates the state's rich heritage in literature, music, visual arts and folklife—from Choctaw and Chickasaw traditions and the birth of the blues and country music to the literary giants who sought to explain a place like Mississippi to the world - and explores how creativity and tradition sustain and inspire Mississippians today.

2. Grant Types, Amounts & Deadlines

1. Legacy Grants

- **Purpose:** To support larger projects that enhance a community's capacity to explore and promote local history, leaving a lasting legacy for future generations.
- **Eligible Projects Include:** Examples include expansion or enhancement of local history museums, development of multimedia historical tours, publication of community histories, community-wide oral history or archival projects, online exhibits, or substantial documentary media projects.
- **Grant Amount:** Up to \$20,000
- **Cost Share:** Must be matched 1:1, with at least 50% of the match being cash, the remainder can be in-kind.
- **Deadlines:** December 1, 2025; February 1, 2026

2. Program Grants

- **Purpose:** To support local celebrations of the semiquincentennial and public programs that explore the themes of America250 Mississippi.
- **Eligible Projects Include:** Festivals, concerts, lecture series, living history programs, theatrical productions, local history projects, literary events, traveling exhibits, oral history initiatives, discussion programs, and other public commemorative events.
- **Grant Amount:** Up to \$10,000
- **Cost Share:** Must be matched 1:1, with at least 10% cash, the remainder can be in-kind
- **Deadlines:** September 15, 2025; November 15, 2025; January 15, 2026; March 15, 2026.

3. Mini Grants

- **Purpose:** To provide accessible, flexible funding for small-scale, grassroots projects and local activities commemorating America250.
- **Grant Amount:** Up to \$5,000
- **Cost Share:** Must be matched 1:1 with either cash or in-kind, or a combination.
- **Deadlines:** Rolling deadlines until mini grant funds are exhausted.

Proposals must be submitted online [here](#) by 5:00 p.m. on deadline days. Programs and expenditures may not occur fewer than four weeks after the deadline date you selected. While grant periods may begin earlier, all funded programs must take place in 2026. Early submissions will not be reviewed until the deadline for which you are applying. Funding in any given round depends on the quality of proposals, the funds available, and the number of proposals received. We will attempt to allocate funds broadly across the state's counties and regions to serve as many Mississippians as possible.

3. Are You Eligible for a Grant?

America250 Mississippi grants are intended to serve Mississippians. Events funded by program grants and mini grants should be free and open to the public. Organizations or groups that apply must be Mississippi-based and constituted for nonprofit purposes. It is not necessary that such organizations or groups be incorporated or have tax-exempt status. Typical organizations eligible for grants include:

- Private nonprofit organizations
- Local or statewide historical societies
- Institutions of higher education
- State, local and Indian tribal governments
- Community and cultural organizations
- Educational and professional groups
- Museums
- Libraries
- Public agencies & municipalities
- Non-commercial radio and television stations

- Convention & Visitors Bureaus

America250 Mississippi grants may not be used to support:

- projects primarily intended to promote an organization or its programs
- salaries of employees associated with the applying organization or other overhead costs
- alcoholic beverages
- projects that advocate or promote a particular political, ideological, religious or partisan point of view

Individuals and for-profit groups are not eligible to apply for America250 Mississippi grants. Since the committee seeks to distribute these funds widely across the state, priority in each grant round will be given to communities that have not already received a Program or Legacy grant. We strongly encourage applying entities to partner with other local organizations on your project. While nonprofit organizations are encouraged to collaborate, only one organization will be the official applicant. An employee or volunteer of that organization will be the lead organizer or project director. Projects are only eligible to receive one grant. Organizations may not receive more than one America250 Mississippi grant.

4. How to Apply

Step One: Discuss your project with MHC staff.

The Mississippi Humanities Council is available to help you determine whether your project is eligible for the America250 Mississippi grant program before you apply. While not a requirement, you may reach out to MHC staff via email or phone several weeks before the grant deadline you select to discuss your project. Staff will give you guidance on how to craft a successful application and answer any questions you have.

Step Two: Submit a rough draft of your grant application

Applicants may submit a one-page draft description of their proposed project, along with a draft budget, for review before submitting a formal application. As time allows, MHC staff will offer constructive feedback and suggestions on how to strengthen the application. Grant application drafts may be sent via email to carol@mhc.state.ms.us.

Step Three: Submit your online application.

All applications must be received by the deadline to be considered. You will receive an email receipt from the Mississippi Humanities Council when your application has been received.

Access the application portal [here](#).

All applications must include a description of the proposed project that includes the following information:

- Description of project or program and its goals.
- Applicant's previous experience with similar projects or programs.
- An explanation of how the proposed project relates to the themes of America250 Mississippi and how it will benefit the applicant's community.
- If a public program is planned, include an outline of the format and schedule of events, including the names of project advisors, experts and/or performers involved.

Step Four: What happens next?

All completed grant applications will be reviewed by the America250 Mississippi Grants Committee, which consists of representatives from the America250 Mississippi Commission and the MHC. In most cases, you will receive notification by email of the committee's funding decisions within two weeks of your application deadline. If your grant request is funded, you will receive an award letter and a packet detailing your next steps. If your request is not funded, you will receive a letter explaining the committee's decision.

5. Keys to a Successful Proposal

Partner with other local organizations

Collaborations between local organizations to reach as broad an audience as possible are strongly encouraged. Though only one organization should be the applying entity for the grant, we encourage you to establish a broad-based local planning committee.

Potential audience members are involved in the planning

People who represent the potential audience should participate in designing the grant project, through planning, execution of the project, and follow-up evaluation. Projects that cover topics related to specific groups—such as ethnic minorities, senior citizens or women—should specifically include representatives from those groups on the project committee.

Grant projects should be accessible to all segments of the population, and no one should be excluded because of race, sex, age or disability. For instance, the location selected for a program should be accessible to all persons who might wish to attend. Grant recipients/project directors are expected to make all reasonable efforts to make programs accessible to citizens with disabilities. If you have questions regarding accessibility, please contact the Mississippi Humanities Council.

Have a strong publicity plan

Publicity is a critical part of every successful project. An appropriate and effective plan for promoting the program must be described in the grant application and should clearly link the funded project to the statewide observation of the semiquincentennial. The first step in successfully publicizing a program is carefully defining its purpose and intended audience. Submit your application well in advance of your program date to allow adequate time for publicity.

Attractive, striking and informative publicity well in advance of your programs will encourage people to attend. We strongly encourage you to send press releases, announcements and invitations to newspapers and radio and television stations, as well as using various forms of social media to publicize the event. We also encourage you to cooperate with other local groups and organizations to help publicize your program or project.

All funded programs will be branded as official America250 Mississippi events. Grantees will be required to use the official America250 Mississippi logo and acknowledge MHC and America250 Mississippi as funders of the program. The MHC and America250 Mississippi logos are available for download [here](#).

6. Budget Tips and Terms

Your budget should be an accurate and complete estimate of the financial resources needed to carry out your proposed project.

The application form provides space to summarize expenditures for the project. If you enter a figure into a budget category on the budget form, a narrative box will pop up for you to give specific details about these cost estimates.

Expenditures

The budgeted expenditures for the project must be made between the beginning and ending dates of the proposed project period. When projects require more than the requested grant amount, explain how you will find additional funds to complete the project.

Fiscal Officer

The applicant shall designate a fiscal officer who will assume responsibility for authorizing expenses and making disbursements of funds according to the provisions of the approved budget for the project, as well as completing expenditure reports at the conclusion of the project. **The project director may not act as fiscal officer.**

The fiscal officer must agree to follow the fiscal policies of the Mississippi Humanities Council. He or she will agree to maintain financial records and make them available for audit for up to three years from the end of the project date. When the applicant institution

is a college or university, the fiscal officer must be selected by the school's accounting office or other office responsible for grants management.

Travel

Travel budgets should be itemized by number of trips, points of origin and destination, means of transportation and length of stay. Applicants may use the state reimbursement rate of 70 cents per mile toward transportation costs for privately owned automobiles or the actual cost of domestic coach class airfare, train, or bus. Costs for meals and lodging during travel should be reasonable.

7. Cost-Share

All MS250 grants must be matched 1:1. Each organization applying for a grant must provide for the project's cost-sharing contributions in cash and/or in kind. The combined total of cash and in-kind contributions must at least equal the amount of MHC funds. Applicants are encouraged to be comprehensive in their in-kind calculations, which may exceed the amount of grant funds requested.

NOTE: Many organizations meet the cost-sharing requirement through donated goods and services, such as the estimated value of volunteers' time, meeting space provided free of charge or donated materials. Most applicants accumulate cost-sharing through the contributed time of project staff, especially the project director and volunteers. MHC staff is available to help you determine your cost-sharing contributions.

MHC recognizes that all cost-sharing or matching funds may not be in hand at the time of application. However, you must describe how you expect to meet the matching requirements.

Legacy Grants must be matched with at least 50% cash, either from the applying organization or other funding sources. Program Grants require at least a 10% cash match. Mini grants may be matched with all in-kind contributions.

8. Definition of Terms

Authorizing Official

A person with authority to legally obligate an organization to the grant agreement.

Contractual

Contracted services related to the grant project, which can include scholar honoraria, technical experts, and consultants.

Cost Share

The value of the cash or in-kind contribution to the project by the grantee or parties other than the Mississippi Humanities Council

EIN Number

The Employer Identification Number (EIN), also known as the Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) or the Federal Tax Identification Number, is a unique nine-digit number assigned by the Internal Revenue Service to business entities operating in the U.S. for the purposes of identification. Organizations without paid employees often don't have an EIN number. Grantees are not required to have an EIN number.

Fiscal Officer

Person who will manage fiscal matters related to the grant.

Grant Period

The period in which the granted project takes place. Grant applicants determine the length of the grant period, which should include sufficient time after the project to complete and submit all final reports. Grant periods should not begin less than four weeks after the grant deadline. **No grant funds may be spent or obligated before the start of the grant period. Final reports will be due 30 days after the grant period ends. Grant periods must end before December 31, 2026.**

Honoraria

The stipends or fees paid to project consultants, performers, or speakers for their professional services.

In-Kind Contributions

Services, facilities, publicity, volunteer time or other non-cash contributions in support of a project. Estimate the dollar value of in-kind contributions based on what these services would normally cost.

Project Director

The individual responsible for managing all aspects of a project, including its planning, promotion, conduct and evaluation.

If you have any questions, please contact MHC for assistance at (601) 432-6752.

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