A blue and red logo with text and numbers

Description automatically generated

**America 250-Ohio Winter 2024 Grant Cycle - Frequently Asked Questions**

This page lists the most frequently asked questions that we’ve encountered about our grants program. If you have a question that isn’t addressed here, contact a program officer at 614-461-7802 or [grants@ohiohumanities.org](mailto:grants@ohiohumanities.org).

**How competitive is the AM250-Ohio grant program?**

Please note that past performance is not indicative of future grants rounds. For the first cycle of AM250-Ohio grants, 75 applications were received. 23 grants worth nearly $400,000 were awarded.

The success rate was 30.6% overall.

* For Trillium, the success rate was 38%.
* For Buckeye, the success rate was 27%.

While more funding will be available for the next cycle (approximately $600,000 between Buckeye and Trillium), we expect significantly greater demand for the funding as well.

**Applying for a Grant**

**How far in advance of my project should I submit an application?**

As you plan your project’s timeline, it’s best to plan at least 3 months from the time you start the application process to the time you receive your award, assuming that your project is chosen for funding.

**Can I apply for funding for a public event in 2026?**

No, applications for the March round of AM250-Ohio are for projects in which all of the grant funds and most of the activities will occur between June 15, 2024 and May 31, 2025, which is the period of performance.

**Can Ohio Humanities staff help me before I submit an application?**

Yes! In fact, you should contact a Program Officer early in the process of planning your project. We’re happy to help you talk through your plans and to offer suggestions of how your project can best fit within the guidelines. Due to the high number of applicants and the limited time available, Ohio Humanities staff will not review drafts of applications. We’re here to help you submit a successful application!

**Who are the key personnel associated with a grant?**

An **authorizing official** is the representative of the sponsoring organization who has authority to submit the grant application on behalf of that organization. The authorizing official also makes sure that grant responsibilities are met on time.

A **project director** is the person responsible for coordinating the project. This person serves as the liaison with AM250-OHIO and Ohio Humanities staff and is responsible for preparing interim and final reports.

A **project bookkeeper** is an individual who is experienced in standard accounting procedures. The project bookkeeper is responsible for receiving, disbursing, and accounting for all grant and cost-share funds. The project bookkeeper and project director may not be the same person.

**Subject Matter Experts** are integral to every project that we fund. These individuals should ensure accuracy in the project, provide relevant context, and contribute to the interpretative work of the project from a historical and/or humanities perspective. Experts should align with one of the following:

* A K-12 educator who has been trained to teach relevant Social Studies or ELA content
* A staff member or educator of a museum or a cultural, educational, or civic institution that has a mission of historical or cultural education
* An individual with an advanced degree (MA or PhD) who researches and/or teaches relevant subject areas at the college level
* A history, humanities, or arts/culture professional
* Experienced professionals in the heritage and related aspects of the tourism industry

**Living History:**

**Scholar Performer:** A person who develops and presents a first-person interpretation of a historical figure grounded in significant research about the individual’s life and time.

Special requirements for living history and historical reenactment projects: AM250-OH will hold living history projects to a high standard of documented research and quality performance.

* Scholar-performers must demonstrate extensive knowledge about the individual presented and the context of that person’s culture and times. Composite characters may only be used for relatively anonymous figures (e.g., canal digger or steelworker).
* Scholar-performers should have training in theater performance. Projects that make use of historical interpreters must provide a video of the presenter with the application (a link to a video online).
* Projects involving historical reenactment must depict events that originally occurred in Ohio and in the general area where the contemporary project will take place. The events must be relevant to the War for American Independence and related events in the late 18th century.
* The presentation of members of historically persecuted groups, such as members of Native American tribes or enslaved peoples, must be a member in good standing of the relevant group.
* **Reenactment:** Historical reenactment (or re-enactment) is an educational or entertainment activity in which individuals dress in historic uniforms or costumes and follow a plan to recreate aspects of a historical event or period.

**What is a sponsoring organization?**

The sponsoring organization is the nonprofit organization that submits the grant application, receives the grant award, sponsors the proposed project, and is accountable for appropriate use of grant funds.

**Reporting**

**What reports will I need to submit if I am awarded an AM250-Ohio grant?**

After you are officially awarded funds through AM250-Ohio, you will first need to complete a **Grant Agreement**. Similar to a contract, this document explains the roles and responsibilities of AM250-Ohio and their fiscal agent, the Ohio History Connection, and the sponsoring organization. The **Request for Initial Disbursement** is integrated into this document, and that is how you formally request an initial payment from AM250-Ohio.

The second document you’ll need to complete is an **Activity Data Form**. You will need to list the public activities that are planned as part of the grant. We will use the activity information on our website calendar.

The third document you will need to complete is the **Final Report**. On this form, you’ll provide the information for activities that happened, including attendance information, final budget numbers, and a set of narrative questions that will help you reflect on the project.

The final document you will submit is the **Final Disbursement Form**. You’ll need to provide an Excel sheet detailing the final budget of the project. This form will also require signatures from the three key personnel. These signatures can be collected either in person (inked) or virtually. If you want to collect digital signatures but need assistance, please contact [grants@ohiohumanities.org](mailto:grants@ohiohumanities.org).

**Budget**

Based on the first cycle of funding and conversations among the grant panelists, we offer the following clarifications for common budget questions.

**What kinds of expenses does AM250-Ohio prioritize when choosing to fund a project?**

For most sponsoring organizations, our top priority is funding the labor necessary for public programs. This includes the research, preparation, production, and presentations associated with a program.

**Is the grant program able to fund the creation and installation of monuments?**

Requests for support for research related to the historical or cultural components of a monument are eligible. Projects that communicate the history represented by a monument or similar physical items are eligible. Requests to cover the physical construction and installation of the monument or substantial permanent signage are considered a capital investment and thus are not eligible for AM250-Ohio grant funds.

**Are digital applications designed for installation on smartphones and similar devices a priority for the AM250-Ohio grants program?**

Panelists had a generally low opinion of project requests that required the downloading of yet another application onto a smart phone or related device to function. Web-based projects that allow users to access the material via already extant applications such as a web browser were viewed more positively. Furthermore, funding for projects that serve an already installed base of users or that come with exceptional outreach and sustainability plans may be competitive in future cycles. Requests for funding to develop historical or cultural content that can be distributed across multiple platforms (digital app or web), print, or physical (signage in community) will be considered a best practice.

**What kinds of public event costs are a priority for the AM250-Ohio grant program?**

Costs related to the historical and/or cultural component of the projects that align with the AM250-Ohio mission and grant guidelines are the priority. Adjacent costs for a significant public event—such as bathrooms, tents, security, etc.--remain eligible but should constitute are small portion of the overall request (approximately less than 30%).

**Can we write grants from multiple sponsoring organizations that contribute to the same project or benefit the same sponsoring organization?**

No, organizations cannot circumvent the limitation on the number of open grants by having different organizations apply for the same project. If this may apply to your project, please contact one of the program officers to discuss the particular situation. Please note that the program officer may request to have a representative from all of the applying organizations on the call at the same time.

**What does cost-share mean?**

Cost-share means project costs that are not covered by the AM250-Ohio grant. No cost-share is required.

**What is the difference between cash cost-share and in-kind cost-share?**

**Cash cost-share** is actual monies committed to the project. This can come from the sponsoring organization, from money raised from outside sources like foundations and corporations, and from anticipated program income from participants.

**In-kind cost-share** is donated services, goods, or facilities. Examples of this type of cost-share include volunteers’ time committed to the project, supplies, or office space. In-kind cost-share should always be counted at the current market value of the goods or services.

**How much of the grant can be put toward equipment?**

Equipment costs covered by an AM250-Ohio grant should be 20% or less of the total grant amount. In other words, if you’ve been awarded a $10,000 grant, the maximum amount allowed to be spent on equipment is $2,000. We define equipment as tangible, non-expendable property having a useful life of more than one year.

**What are indirect costs, and how much of the grant can be directed toward them?**

“Indirect costs” refer to expenses that aren’t easily attributable to a specific budget category. Paying for utilities like heat, light, or water are necessary for organizations to operate but aren’t easily metered, so the indirect costs line accounts for these types of expenses.

**Am I allowed to charge admission to a program after I receive funding?**

Our main purpose is to make high-quality humanities content available to every person in the state of Ohio, regardless of their ability to pay. As such, we generally prefer programs we fund are free and open to the public. However, if your organization regularly charges admission, you may continue to do so. But we strongly recommend that you create opportunities for free or reduced admission fees to individuals who request it.