Grab That Dough!
Getting a Minnesota Historical & Cultural Heritage Grant

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Disclaimer

- Not an MNHS or Grants Office employee
- This presentation is based solely on my experiences with & understanding of their grants
- Be sure to read the MNHS grants site thoroughly & follow up with them for any questions

About MNHS Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants

- Projects must be based in Minnesota
- Funds projects focused on preserving Minnesota’s history and cultural heritage
- Available to
  - Educational institutions
  - Units of state or local government
  - Nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations
  - Federally recognized tribes based in Minnesota
- Not made to individuals

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http://legacy.mnhs.org/grants
Getting Ready

- Verify & be able to document that you are an eligible applicant (educational institutions, state or local government units, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, federally recognized tribes based in MN)
- Determine which of your organization's long-range plans would be served by an eligible grant-funded project
- Refine your idea into a well-defined project: well-planned, thoroughly described, meets applicable professional standards

Choosing & Defining a Project

- Remember the grant is project-driven
- Determine which grant category best fits your project: community history projects, historic preservation projects, or structured grants
- Review grant evaluation criteria
- Research actual costs
- Be sure your grant can be completed in 12 months
  - if your grant isn't fully & accurately completed at the end of the grant period, you may have to return ALL funds

Grant Categories:

Community History Projects

- Full details found in Grants Manual
- Each category has things that aren't funded
- Oral history
- Research & writing
- Interpretive programs & public education
- Publications
- Collections care & management
- Museum & archives environments
- Digital conversion & reproduction

Structured Grant Projects

- Minnesota Encyclopedia content
- General conservation assessment & long-range preservation plan
- Historical organization self-assessment using StEPs
- Evaluation of building HVAC systems
- Planning for redesign of museum lighting
- Develop a disaster plan
- Acquire primary resources on microfilm
- Acquire microfilm reader/printer/scanners
- Minnesota Bookshelf
- Scholarship to national conference held in MN

Review Process

- Small/structured grants are reviewed by Grants Office staff members with expertise related to the project category & administrative policy
- Eligible, ready projects are recommended for action to the MNHS Executive Council
- Ineligible projects and those needing revision are sent back to applicants with feedback
- Unsuccessful applicants are encouraged to reapply in future grant cycles after adjusting for feedback
- Notification ~8 weeks after application deadline

Proposal Review Criteria

- Is complete
- Meets eligibility requirements
- Is for a project
- Supplements traditional funding sources
- Follows appropriate professional standards
- Meets financial reporting requirements of MN Statute 16B for Grants Management
- Has a realistic budget
- Can be completed on time, within required time frame
- Produces measurable outcomes
Applying for a Grant

- Review & understand Grantee’s Responsibilities
- Request an account in the MHS Grants Portal
- Make sure your organization authorizes you to create an account
- Read & follow all application & submission directions
- Check deadlines (http://legacy.mnhs.org/grants/ deadlines)
- Ensure your application is complete
- Watch your email AND snail mail for notifications, & be prepared to respond quickly

Grantee’s Responsibilities

Many responsibilities – these are just a few highlights:
- Abide by MS 16B
- Changes must be in writing & must be approved by MNHS
- Must acknowledge Legacy grants using Legacy Logo and language
- Final report submitted within 30 days of assigned grant end date
- Work conducted ethically and transparently
- Work done by professionals & to high standards

Application Strategies

- Start planning well in advance of deadlines
- Read guidelines thoroughly
- Contact the Grants Office with any questions & consider setting up a meeting to discuss your proposal
- Request your Grants Portal account well ahead of time
- Write clearly & concisely
- Answer all questions & include any required supplemental materials
- Remember grant reviewers probably aren’t familiar with your organization
- Be realistic & accurate when planning your project
- Proofread your application before submitting

Award of Grant

- Remember it takes ~8 weeks after the application deadline before grant notifications go out
- Do not start your project before receiving a decision from the Grants Office
- Be prepared to respond quickly to a snail mail notification (sign & return contract)

Project Period & Completion

- Don’t start until you’ve received notification your grant has been awarded
- Conduct your project
- Follow all requirements in your grant contract
- Payment will be received by your organization’s finance office & distributed from there
- Document your work & spending
- Contact the Grants Office with any questions
- Final project reports due 30 days after end date

Conducting Your Project

- Scheduling your work & staying on track
- Working with contractors, volunteers, other staff members
- Selecting and ordering supplies
- Consider sharing your grant project experience after completion, & plan ahead for this
- Document everything
Documenting Your Work

- Spreadsheet to track hours & tasks, funds, etc.
- Writing and updating manuals, policies, procedures, etc. as you go
- Writing reflective memos
- Remember the work you applied to do
- Check contract language re. required final products & be sure to fulfill those requirements
- Check final report questions & keep notes to use when responding
- Create your own systems to help you as you go

Monitoring Completed Projects

- Retain project records for possible audit
- Be prepared for possibility of meeting with Grants Office staff members and/or having on-site visits
- And finally...

Get ready for your next grant!

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