Book Festival Grant Guidelines

As part of Florida Humanities' affiliation with the Library of Congress Center for the Book, this funding opportunity is designed to support engaging public humanities programs at book festivals that celebrate the joy of reading, foster meaningful conversations between authors and readers, and encourage an appreciation of Florida's diverse literary landscape. Hosted in communities both large and small statewide, Florida Humanities-funded book festivals have featured engaging author and illustrator talks and book signings, writing workshops for aspiring authors, panel discussions with authors from diverse genres, reading activities for families and children, and many other literary-inspired events.

Award Amount: Up to $10,000

Spring 2027 Deadlines	**for festivals occurring July to December 2027**
January 27, 2027	Required Letters of Interest (LOI) due by 12pm (EST)
week of February 15	LOI decisions emailed to all applicants
March 31	Final applications due by 12pm (EST) for approved LOIs
week of April 26	Funding decisions emailed to all applicants
Grant period	May 1, 2027—30 days past festival end date

Fall 2027 Deadlines	**for festivals occurring January to June 2028**
August 11, 2027	Required Letters of Interest (LOI) due by 12pm (EST)
week of August 30	LOI decisions emailed to all applicants
October 6	Final applications due by 12pm (EST) for approved LOIs
week of October 25	Funding decisions emailed to all applicants
Grant period	November 1, 2027—30 days past festival end date

All grants are awarded on a competitive basis and are dependent on the availability of federal funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Florida HUMANITIES

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CENTER FOR THE BOOK FLORIDA AFFILIATE

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

(Updated November 2026)

Funding and Programming Overview

Florida Humanities has provided support for public humanities programming at book festivals statewide since 2021. With our support, thousands of Floridians and visitors to the Sunshine State have participated in hundreds of literary events and activities featuring noted authors and illustrators who have meaningfully contributed to our state's literary landscape.

Book Festival Grant funding may be utilized to support the design and implementation of public humanities programming presented through a variety of formats. Previously funded book festival activities have included:

- keynote presentations with local, regional, and nationally-recognized authors
- readings and moderated panel discussions with authors across various genres
- workshops for aspiring authors, poets, and illustrators
- designated activity areas for families including storytimes and hands-on literary activities
- open mic sessions for poetry readings and poetry slams

Funding has also been provided to support complementary activities designed to increase audience reach and accessibility. These activities may occur before, during and immediately after a book festival and have included:

- book clubs, reading and discussion groups, and book displays hosted by public libraries
- on-demand, pre-recorded author readings featured on a festival website
- public programs associated with "One Book, One Read", NEA Big Read, and National Poetry Month initiatives
- design and printing of brochures that highlight local authors and literary heritage sites
- school-based programming such as author visits and student writing workshops

Florida Humanities-funded book festivals and complementary public programs are typically free to attend and may occur over a single day, multiple days, or longer. Events may occur in-person, virtually, or in a hybrid format.

St. Pete Reads! Lit Fest (photo: Elan Vital Visuals)

Eligibility & Funding Priorities

Applications are accepted from Florida-based nonprofit organizations, state or local governments or one of their agencies, and federally recognized Native American tribal governments. Eligible applicants must have both a verifiable Unique Entity ID (available through SAM.gov) and Federal ID number (FEIN available from the IRS). The FEIN will be used to verify the organization's nonprofit and financial status using GuideStar.

Organizations that have **previously received a Book Festival Grant from Florida Humanities** must demonstrate how their proposed programming is reaching new or expanded audiences.

Organizations seeking support for an **inaugural Book Festival or with no prior experience hosting a literary event** must demonstrate a working partnership with an organization that has an established history of presenting literary-focused programming.

Applications will not be accepted from:

- individuals, for-profit organizations, foreign governments/ organizations
- organizations applying through a fiscal sponsor
- Florida Humanities does not accept direct applications from colleges and universities or their various departments for Book Festival Grants. However, we strongly encourage academic institutions interested in conducting public programming as part of a book festival to partner with an eligible non-profit organization to submit an application for support. The nonprofit organization must be the applicant organization, be integrally involved in the development and implementation of the proposed programming, and be responsible for all grant management and reporting including the expenditure of all awarded funds.

Applications from the following types of organizations and/or types of projects will be prioritized for support:

- small to mid-sized organizations with preference given to those with an annual operating budget of less than $500,000
- first time applicants and those who have never received funding from Florida Humanities
- organizations located in a Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO) or an economically distressed community
- projects designed for under-resourced audiences or communities
- projects that consider appropriate accessibility accommodations when planning their programming
- projects that are free and open to the general public

What We Don't Fund

Florida Humanities grants do not support:

- general operating expenses and core organizational functions such as fundraising and institutional advancement
- marketing and outreach (print or digital), including websites, primarily used for general organizational promotion
- capital or facilities improvements
- expenses directly related to the creation of works of visual or performing art (i.e. paintings, murals, sculptures, theater and dance performances). While Florida Humanities does not support artistic performances or artmaking activities, our grants may support analytical programming that uses the disciplines of the humanities to consider the historical or cultural significance of the arts through such activities as pre- and post-performance discussion programs, expert-led exhibit tours, and other forms of public interpretation and engagement.
- regranting or sub-awards
- contests, scholarships, prizes or gifts
- activities and projects primarily intended to advance a specific policy goal or political agenda or to influence legislation (advocacy)
- humanitarian or social service projects
- research and/or planning activities with no related public programming during the grant period
- creative or scholarly work by individuals including research, residencies, and travel
- professional development programs, trainings, conferences or other activities for academic, professional or membership organizations
- print or digital publications that do not directly complement public programming
- projects with youth as the primary audience that do not also include meaningful opportunities for engagement with a broader public audience
- alcohol, food and other entertainment-related expenses

In addition, **Book Festival grants do not support** the following types of activities:

- fundraisers
- events that celebrate a single author or cultural figure's literary achievements
- music, art, and cultural festivals where literature is not the main focus
- literary conferences that require a registration fee to attend and are not designed for the general public to attend

Florida Humanities grant recipients must also comply with all requirements of **2 CFR Part 200** - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

Your Audience

All projects should begin with a clear identification of the intended audience(s) and why they are important to your organization. Competitive proposals will offer programming that appropriately expands your organization's reach while meeting the community's needs and interests. If programming is designed for a specific audience (i.e. veterans, youth, seniors, families), an explanation must be provided regarding why that particular audience is the focus for program engagement and how the overall project will directly benefit that audience.

Florida Humanities is particularly interested in projects that reach **under-resourced audiences or communities**. Under-resourced audiences may be broadly defined as those whose access to the humanities are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics or disability.

Accessibility

To ensure our grant-funded programs and resources are more accessible to all, Florida Humanities encourages applicants to consider appropriate accessibility accommodations when planning their programming. These may include large print program materials, creation of materials in languages other than English or in Braille, sign language interpretation for live events, Spanish or other language interpretation, creation of closed captioning or subtitles, transcriptions for podcasts or other audio programming, and rental or purchase of assistive listening devices. Accessibility funding may not be used for costs associated with making a facility permanently more accessible. **Applicants may request up to $1,000 in accessibility funding to enhance their project.**

Your Project Team

The Project Team is comprised of individuals working collaboratively to design and implement the proposed project. All applicants are required to identify a **Project Director** who will be primarily responsible for the successful implementation of the overall project. The number of additional **team members** may vary greatly depending on the size and scope of your organization and project. Team members may come from both the applicant organization as well as from the outside community. They may include advisors, presenters, researchers, editors, technology experts, educators, and other individuals whose relevant skills and knowledge will directly contribute to the successful planning and delivery of all project activities. One person may also serve multiple roles in your project.

Southwest Florida Reading Festival

How to Apply

Before You Start

All grant requests must be submitted through Florida Humanities' online grants system – floridahumanities.org/apply.

- **Create a Florida Humanities online account**

If you are a first-time applicant, you will need to create an account at floridahumanities.org/apply before submitting an application. Prior applicants must utilize their existing online account. Not sure if your organization has an account? Please contact grants@flahum.org well in advance of the deadline for assistance.

- **Unique Entity ID and SAM.gov**

All applicants must have a verifiable Unique Entity ID through the System for Award Management (SAM.gov). The Unique Entity ID is a 12-character alphanumeric ID that replaced the DUNS number in 2022. Organizations are NOT required to have a full SAM.gov registration in order to apply for funding. Instructions for getting a Unique Entity ID can be found at https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration.

St. Pete Reads! Lit Fest (photo: Elan Vital Visuals)

STEP ONE: REQUIRED Letter of Interest

This funding opportunity requires the initial submission of a Letter of Interest (LOI) in Florida Humanities' online grants system. The LOI will include basic information about your organization, your proposed Book Festival and complementary activities, and estimated funding request. Review of this preliminary information ensures your organization meets our general eligibility requirements and your project is clearly aligned with our funding priorities before being invited to complete a full application.

Applicants must respond to the following questions in the LOI:

1. **Organizational Mission.** Describe the mission of your organization including core activities and primary audiences served. Note your organization's prior experience hosting literary activities.
2. **Festival History and Programming.** Provide a concise overview of your festival including the number of years it has been hosted by your organization and annual attendance numbers. Note the range of literary activities that have been offered as part of the festival. If this is an inaugural event, identify key organizational partners that will assist with festival planning and implementation.
3. **Proposed Programs and Dates.** Describe the festival literary activities for which you are seeking support. Include dates for your festival and all complementary programming.
4. **Request Amount.** Give your best estimate for the amount of funding you intend to request up to $10,000. This amount may change by the time you submit your final application.
5. **Requested Funds Description.** Share a brief description of the expenses you expect to include in your request.

LOIs are reviewed by a rotating team of Florida Humanities staff, board members and outside evaluators. **Please note that Florida Humanities does not provide evaluation feedback for denied LOIs.**

STEP TWO: Staff Consultation and Completion of Final Application

Applicants with an approved Letter of Interest will be given access to a final application in their online account. Prior to completing the final application, applicants are encouraged to schedule a brief phone or Zoom consultation with Florida Humanities' grants staff to discuss completion of their final application and project budget.

Application Narrative

All applicants are required to respond to the following questions in the final application:

1. Organizational Mission and Festival History

Describe the mission of your organization including core activities and primary audiences served. Note your organization's prior experience hosting literary activities as well as any prior Florida Humanities grants received. Provide a concise overview of your festival including the number of years it has been hosted by your organization and annual attendance numbers. Note the range of literary activities that have been offered as part of the festival. If this is an inaugural event, identify key organizational partners that have been identified to assist with festival planning and implementation.

2. Audience and Accessibility

Describe the primary audience(s) for your festival and its complementary activities. How does your proposed festival meet the needs and interest of your target audience(s)? Florida Humanities is particularly interested in projects that reach under-resourced audiences or communities as well as projects that consider appropriate accessibility accommodations when planning their programming. Provide an estimate of the total number of individuals to be served by this project.

3. Festival Programming

Identify the primary festival location and venue. Include a detailed description of the various literary activities that will be included in your festival and/or hosted as complementary events before or after the festival. Include program formats (i.e. in-person, virtual, hybrid), locations, and a timeline for all activities from planning and implementation to project evaluation.

4. Fees

Florida Humanities gives preference to programming and resources that are free to the public. If applicable, detail any fees associated with the proposed programming. If fees are charged, clearly explain all efforts to mitigate those costs for those for whom fees may pose a challenge or barrier for participation.

5. Project Team

List all members of your Project Team beginning with the Project Director. Include all individuals integral to the planning and implementation of your project. For each individual, provide no more than a one paragraph description of their exact role in the project, their area of expertise or other pertinent skills, and any relevant organizational affiliation(s).

6. Community Partners

Identify any key organizational partners you expect to work with on the proposed project. This may include staffing/volunteer support, financial support (cash or in-kind), assistance with delivery of programming or promotional activities, or development of program content. Letters of commitment from community partners are highly encouraged and should be included in the Support Documents section of your application.

7. Festival Vendors and Exhibitors

Describe your plans to include vendors and exhibitors at your festival. This may include areas for booksellers and publishers; display tables for literary-focused organizations, local businesses and community organizations; and designated areas for food vendors and entertainment activities.

8. Marketing and Promotion

Describe all methods to be used to promote this project to the general public and/or to the targeted audience(s) previously identified. Include specific media outlets (i.e. print, broadcast, social) and estimated reach for each.

9. Project Impact and Evaluation

Why is this project important to the identified audience(s) and how will it advance your organizational mission? What methods and tools will you use to assess the reach and impact of your project? How will you use the collected information to inform future programming?

10. Additional Comments

Applicants may share brief additional information that was not asked for but they feel will provide a clearer understanding of the proposed project or audiences to be served.

Application Budget

Requests may not exceed **$10,000** and Florida Humanities funds may only be used for allowable expenses incurred during the grant period. All project costs must be reasonable and necessary to accomplish project objectives. Eligible expenses may include:

- staff salaries directly related to the design and delivery of the proposed programming
- professional fees including honoraria and stipends for authors, literary presenters, humanities scholars, technical consultants, program evaluators and other individuals integral to the project
- reasonable travel, per diem, and lodging costs directly related to program delivery for project personnel
- rental of facilities or equipment necessary for program delivery
- program documentation and delivery expenses such as videography, audio recording, and costs related to hosting virtual programs
- accessibility resources as previously described
- direct project marketing expenses
- project evaluation expenses such as the development of assessment tools
- other costs not included above but which are essential to the project development and delivery. Applicants must be very specific in identifying these costs as reasonable and necessary as well as how they were calculated.

Estimated Cost Share

A minimum 1:1 cost share (i.e. match) is required for all Florida Humanities grants. The match can be entirely in-kind, entirely cash, or a combination of the two, and can be provided by the grant recipient and/or from other collaborating partners or organizations. All estimated cost share contributions must be incurred during the grant period and used to support activities included in the approved project application. Eligible cost share should include all estimated expenses not covered by Florida Humanities funds.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are also known as "administrative costs", "overhead" or "general operating costs". These are costs necessary for keeping your organization running on a day-to-day basis and include expenses such as insurance, rent or mortgage, utilities, and salaries and benefits associated with executive or administrative personnel who are not directly involved in your proposed project.

Florida Humanities allows organizations to include indirect costs of **up to 15% of the total requested funds** as part of your grant request or to help meet the cost share requirement. Applicants with a federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) may elect to request their approved NICRA rate from grant funds or include as cost share. All applicants using a NICRA rate are required to upload a copy of their NICRA agreement in the support documents showing that the proper rate is being used. If you elect to use the rate of 15%, no additional documentation is needed.

Sample Budgets

Applicants with an approved LOI will be provided with a sample project budget and further guidance regarding eligible and ineligible expenses for Florida Humanities funding.

Supporting Documents

All applicants are ***required*** to provide the following supporting documents:

- a copy of the organization's current year operating budget
- complete schedule of events for the proposed festival including dates and times for all activities
- a list of confirmed and pending participating authors including a short narrative bio of no more than one paragraph for each
- sample evaluation tool designed for the proposed activities

Reviewing and Submitting the Final Application

Final applications must be submitted by no later than 12pm (EST) on the deadline date. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered under any circumstances. We recommend submitting your application a few days prior to the deadline in the event of technical issues.

IMPORTANT: Before submitting the final application, please review your entire application by clicking on the "Application Packet" link to ensure all documents are uploaded properly. Once submitted, applicants will no longer be able to make any changes without contacting Florida Humanities staff.

STEP THREE: Application Evaluation

Proposals are evaluated competitively based on the eligibility requirements and funding priorities outlined in the current grant guidelines. An applicant's prior Florida Humanities funding history, if applicable, is also considered during the evaluation process.

All Book Festival proposals are reviewed by a rotating team of Florida Humanities staff and board members and outside evaluators. Each evaluator assigns a scaled score to each narrative response, the project budget, and the supporting materials included in each application. Evaluators are also required to provide substantive narrative comments for each proposal. Individual scoring is followed by a virtual meeting to allow each evaluator to share their comments with the entire evaluation team before individually assigning a final score to each application. The final scores of the evaluators are averaged and ranked to determine which proposals will receive funding based on the total amount of funds available to award. Evaluators may choose to fund projects in full or in part as well as request some applicants to submit additional information to Florida Humanities before a final funding decision is made.

All funding decisions are final and will be emailed to the project director by the date noted in the grant guidelines along with detailed grant management and reporting instructions.

Evaluator feedback for both approved and denied applicants will be provided upon request.

Need Help?

- **Contact our grants team** at grants@flahum.org well in advance of a LOI or grant deadline with any general questions regarding organizational or programmatic eligibility or for technical assistance with our online application portal.

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