



## New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC) COVID-19 Grant Program Guidelines Fiscal Year 2021

**Background:** The COVID-19 pandemic has and will continue to have a profound effect on New Jersey's history community. With the closing of sites and resulting loss of earned income, staffs have been reduced, budgets slashed, and programs cancelled or shifted to digital platforms. The New Jersey Historical Commission (NJHC) will continue to work proactively to support history organizations and practitioners through this crisis. This one-time, supplemental COVID-19 Grant Program will build on existing support to not only benefit history organizations today, but to create stronger and more viable institutions in a post-pandemic environment.

**Mission:** The goal of the COVID-19 Grant Program is to address this new reality and the challenges it presents. This includes assisting organizations in sustaining essential full and part-time personnel, promoting virtual programming with an emphasis on reaching underserved audiences, and enhancing necessary health and safety protocols in response to the pandemic.

**Grant Amount:** \$5,000 single awards. The NJHC will not require an in-kind or cash match for this program.

**Grant Availability:** The NJHC envisions awarding approximately thirty (30) COVID-19 Grant Program awards.

**Eligible Applicants:** Applicants must be a documented 501(c)(3) nonprofit history organization based in New Jersey. Organizations must also have had at least one (1) year-round, part-time employee working a minimum of 20 hours per week in an administrative capacity prior to March 2020 or annual income of at least \$50,000 in the last completed fiscal year prior to the pandemic.

**Eligible Expenses:** All grant funds will be distributed for the following uses only:

- (1) Maintaining staffing and other critical services – e.g., collections care, security costs, etc. – during the pandemic.
- (2) Purchasing essential equipment such as personal protective equipment (PPE) and plexiglass barriers to ensure the safety of staff and visitors.
- (3) Expanding virtual history programs and services to students, parents, teachers, and the public.

**How to Apply:** All applications and required documents (see below) for the COVID-19 Grant Program will be submitted via e-mail by the due date to the following e-mail address: [njhc.programs@sos.nj.gov](mailto:njhc.programs@sos.nj.gov). A confirmation e-mail will follow confirming receipt of the materials. Late and/or amended applications will not be accepted beyond the due date.

**Due Date:** All applications must be submitted by **5 p.m. on Friday, April 9, 2021**.

**Application Package:** All applications for the COVID-19 Grant Program will consist of the following required materials. Please make sure all documents are clearly labeled. Any application submitted without any of the following will not be considered.

- (1) COVID-19 Grant Program Eligibility Form:** Completed and scanned (See: Page 4)
- (2) Current Evidence of Not-for-Profit Status:** Applicants must be registered as not-for-profit corporations and provide documentation of current evidence of not-for-profit status. This can be either an IRS determination or a document from the State of New Jersey showing non-profit status.
- (3) One (1) of the following:** (a) the most recent IRS Form 990; (b) an updated professional audit or financial review; or (c) a copy of the last board-approved fiscal year budget.
- (4) Itemized Budget Narrative:** An itemized budget narrative outlining how the applicant plans to spend the proposed \$5,000 grant award, specific to the eligible expenses listed above. It should **not** exceed two (2) pages in length.
- (5) Application Narrative:** The application narrative should **not** exceed three (3) pages in length, must be typed with no smaller than 12-point font, have a minimum of 1” margins on four sides, and spacing at no less than 1.5 lines per line of text. The following questions should be addressed, clearly labeled, and presented in the following order:
  - (a)** Explain in detail how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted your organization. This includes, but is not limited to, staffing, programming, fundraising, and the overall budgetary condition of the institution.
  - (b)** How has your organization adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic? What steps have you taken to fulfill your organization’s mission during this crisis?
  - (c)** Briefly note any prior federal assistance (e.g., Paycheck Protection Program) your organization has received since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - (d)** How will you use this \$5,000 grant given the eligible expenses above?
  - (e)** How will receiving the grant benefit the long-term resilience of your organization?
  - (f)** The impact of COVID-19 has disproportionately affected Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities in New Jersey. The NJHC would like to know what steps your organization has taken (i.e., before and/or during the pandemic) to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Briefly describe which the following actions you have implemented:
    - We have BIPOC Executive Staff Leadership
    - We have BIPOC Board Executive Leadership
    - We have BIPOC staff
    - We have BIPOC board members
    - We make intentional programmatic investments serving BIPOC and/or other marginalized NJ communities.
    - We have an explicit DEI and Access policy/practice that go beyond traditional employment statements.

**Scoring Criteria:** All applications will be scored using a point system for each section and sub-section. It is as follows:

- Budget Narrative (0-10 points)
- Application Narrative
  - Questions “a” through “e” (0-10 points each)
  - Question “f” (0-18 points)

**Review Panels and Committees:** All applications received by the deadline are distributed to independent evaluation panels composed of experts familiar with nonprofits, their management, and the challenges they face. It is the applicant's responsibility to submit a complete application. Panels will evaluate all proposals against the stated criteria and achieve consensus on the merits of each. Panelists will make recommendations to the NJHC's Grants and Prizes Committee. The recommendations of the Committee will be forwarded to the NJHC for final decision. Awards will be voted on in public session.

**Ethical Standards:** Staff, review panelists, and NJHC members adhere to the state guidelines on ethical standards. They abstain from commenting or voting on a proposal if they have: (1) any recent relationship, financial or otherwise, with the applicant organization or any persons connected with the proposal; or (2) played a meaningful role in the development of the proposal.

**Notification:** Applicants will be formally notified in writing of the decisions by the NJHC. Awards may come with specific conditions. These conditions will be explained in the award letter and contract. The NJHC expects to announce the COVID-19 Grant Program recipients in May 2021.

**Appeal Procedure:** Applicants who wish to challenge award decisions may make a formal appeal. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the NJHC within 30 days of the date of the notification informing the applicant of the award decision. All appeals must be sent via Certified Mail or other trackable delivery service.

The appeal letter must discuss in detail why the applicant believes the NJHC's decision was in error. The applicant can only base their argument on the proposal provided; the NJHC will not consider revised application materials.

The appeal will be forwarded to every member of the NJHC for consideration at the next regularly scheduled NJHC meeting. The NJHC's decision on the appeal will be based on two elements: 1) the appeal letter; 2) the assessment of the original review panel and any explanatory material requested by the NJHC chairman from the Grants and Prizes Committee and/or the staff. The NJHC has the discretion to request an oral presentation. The applicant will be informed in writing about the NJHC's decision at the earliest opportunity. Should the NJHC revise its original decision and make an award, the amount would depend upon the availability of funding.

**Contact Information:** Any inquiries and/or additional details on the COVID-19 Grant Program may be directed to the NJHC's Chief Grants Officer Shawn Crisafulli at (609) 826-3945 or [Shawn.Crisafulli@sos.nj.gov](mailto:Shawn.Crisafulli@sos.nj.gov).

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# COVID-19 Grant Program Eligibility Form



**Organization Name:**

**Organization Address:**

**Contact Name, Title, Phone Number, and e-mail for purposes of this application correspondence:**

**My organization meets the following eligibility criteria:**

- At least one (1) year-round, part-time employee working a minimum of 20 hours per week in an administrative capacity prior to March 2020.
- Annual income of at least \$50,000 in the last completed fiscal year prior to the pandemic.
- Both.

**Please provide your organization's current annual income for the last completed fiscal year:**

**How many combined full-time and part-time employees does your organization currently employ:**

**What percentage of your actual pre-COVID-19 annual audience are you serving now?**

**What percentage of your virtual pre-COVID-19 annual audience are you serving now?**