



YOUTH-LED
humanities

COHORT GUIDELINES & SAMPLE APPLICATION

2024-2026



2024-26 Youth-Led Humanities Cohort Guidelines & Sample Application

Information Webinar: July 25, 2024 at 12:00 p.m.

Application deadline: August 19, 2024

Introduction

PA Humanities invites public libraries and out-of-school time (OST) sites to apply to be part of the **2024-26 Youth-Led Humanities Cohort**. Building on best practices from almost 15 years of Teen Reading Lounge (TRL), Youth-Led Humanities will support sites to create spaces of belonging that center youth in and through the humanities in meaningful and sustainable ways.

To support this work, selected sites will receive **\$5,000 in project funds** to implement youth-led humanities programming that centers the needs and interests of young people. Project funds can be used to support programming costs related to new or established Teen Reading Lounge programs or other unique youth-led humanities programs (new or established). In addition to project funds, selected sites will gain access to professional development opportunities like individualized coaching, regular communities of practice calls and invitations to workshops led by library leaders, and youth services and humanities professionals.

PA Humanities will host an informational webinar on **July 25th at 12:00 p.m.** to provide more information on the project and eligibility requirements. Please register if interested in applying for the grant; a recording will be available for those who can not attend.

https://pahumanities.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlft-utrjgtGdVIYwTvDC_dSYr6hOEA3pWJ

Applications are due by August 19th, 2024.

Questions? Please contact Julia Terry at jterry@pahumanities.org.

Youth-Led Humanities

After more than a decade of measuring impact and documenting best practices through Teen Reading Lounge, PA Humanities has learned that high quality humanities programs for youth can come in many forms. The practices that led to the success of TRL can be equally present in any program that includes humanities modalities such as critical reflection, civic engagement, dialogue and story-telling.

Youth-Led Humanities reflects the evolution of what we have learned from TRL about working with young people and supporting individuals doing youth humanities programming. This opportunity aims to expand our youth-led humanities' network and make space for sites that are already doing impactful humanities-based and/or youth-led programming. In short, we wish to create more opportunities for youth to lead and feel affirmed in humanities spaces by supporting a variety of activities.

Youth-Led Humanities project funds can support Teen Reading Lounge (new or established), **or** any youth programming that is humanities-based. We are interested in supporting sites that demonstrate, through their programming history and youth-serving goals, a commitment to:

- Providing high-quality humanities programming that reflect young people's interests and needs
- Supporting positive youth development through engagement in the humanities
- Centering diversity, equity and inclusion
- Providing inclusive, belonging spaces for youth
- Cultivating youth leadership and action

The Humanities

PA Humanities defines the humanities as more than just subjects of study in an academic setting. To us, the humanities cultivate understanding and connection through the sharing of human experiences. They are a practice for *anyone, anywhere* interested in reflecting on, celebrating and building knowledge about the human experience.

Storytelling, historical perspectives, personal interpretation, critical thinking and deliberative conversations are the tools and methods we recognize and use to practice the humanities (in any subject). Equipped with these resources, individuals can document their own culture by better understanding their past and present and shape their future. The practice of the humanities results in transformative insights, heightened empathy and a deeper knowledge of ourselves and our world.

Eligibility

This is an opportunity for public libraries, nonprofits and out-of-school time sites that are dedicated to serving and centering young people in their programs and culture, and a commitment to connecting with youth of color, youth experiencing poverty, or youth with other marginal identities. Sites must also:

- Be in Pennsylvania and serve Pennsylvania youth ages 12 - 18
- Be a public library or non-profit out-of-school time (OST) organization that prioritizes youth engagement and programming
- Be in good financial standing and able to manage project funds. **(Note:** applicants will be asked to submit their most recent audited financial statement for review so we can determine the financial health of the site and assess their ability to competently oversee grant monies.)
- Have staff that will be dedicated to programming and cohort activities like trainings, communities of practice and workshops
- Demonstrate that leadership is fully committed to this project and supports building spaces of belonging for youth

Benefits to Sites

In addition to receiving \$5,000 to support the development of the Youth-Led Humanities program each year for two years*, selected sites will have access to exclusive

professional development opportunities throughout the lifecycle of the project. These include:

- Peer support through regularly scheduled communities of practice
- Workshops and trainings lead by PA Humanities, library leaders, and other youth development experts
- Program planning and implementation coaching and support
- Youth leadership development opportunities through the PA Humanities' Youth Leadership Working Group. Sites selected for the program can nominate youth to be a part of this new and special opportunity that invites youth to provide input on program directions.

We believe creating a youth-led culture is a collective approach, and **we encourage teams of 1-3 staff to participate in the peer support and professional development that we provide to cohort members as much as possible.**

Bi-monthly community of practice meetings will focus on belonging and youth leadership, through equity, cultural competency, difficult dialogues and power analysis. This cohort will also receive special training from the Office of Commonwealth Libraries' [Project Ready](#) curriculum to help deepen understanding of systemic racism and develop humanities-based strategies to improve inclusion and engagement of youth with racialized and other marginalized identities.

**Year two funding pending final reports and availability of LSTA funding.*

Expectations of Selected Libraries

In addition to our review criteria, we are interested in working with partners that are open to collaborating with PA Humanities staff, evaluators and program advisors during the project and learning what makes this program successful. Selected sites must:

- Develop and run youth humanities programming that reflects TRL best practices
- Identify 1-3 individuals to actively participate in the cohort by attending bi-monthly Community of Practice meetings, one in person gathering, special topic workshops/trainings
- Submit itemized expense reports in order to receive project funds on a monthly basis
- Promote the program and work with community partners to recruit marginalized youth.
- Participate in all evaluation activities and data collection efforts that help PA Humanities and sites understand program outcomes and impacts.
- Nominate youth for statewide Youth Leadership Working Group
- Support PA Humanities advocacy efforts.

It's important for applicants to know that selected sites will be asked to provide a 50% match of program funding. These contributions, or cost share, can be outright funds and/or in-kind donations. Outright funds are direct contributions you receive in support

of a project. In-kind contributions may be donations of services, space, time, materials, equipment, etc., over and above your outright funds. Should you be selected for inclusion in the program, PA Humanities will provide additional guidance on what constitutes a match and how to track or report on it.

Selection Process and Review Criteria

Applications are reviewed by a committee of PA Humanities staff, library leaders and youth development advisors. In addition to being in good financial standing, successful applicants should demonstrate institutional commitment to:

- Inclusive youth programming. This can be Teen Reading Lounge or other humanities-based programming.
- Intentionally engaging marginalized youth in program planning and implementation
- Using the humanities to engage youth
- Demonstrate a strong understanding and awareness of barriers to inclusion and belonging.
- Leveraging existing partnerships with community partners and other community organizations serving youth and their families.

Applicants must also clearly define needs that project funding will meet and assets that will support successful implementation.

PA Humanities may conduct site visits and/or interviews as part of the application review.

How to Apply

Applications must be submitted online through our grant portal system.

Applications are due by Monday, August 19.

IMPORTANT: If you will be completing the application on behalf of your organization, you will need to [register](#) yourself and your organization on our [Grant Portal](#). **It will take up to 2 business days for your organization registration to be reviewed and approved before you can apply for grants, so if you decide to apply, we suggest you register now to avoid missing the application deadline.** [Click here to download our step-by-step Grant Portal Registration guide.](#)

Once you're registered and linked with your organization, applying is as quick and simple as 1—2—3.

1. [Log In](#) to access your existing account on our Grant Portal.
2. Navigate to **Programs** from the top menu bar.
3. Click on **Youth-Led Humanities 2024-26**, then click **Apply** to start your application.

Sites will be notified of selection for Youth-Led Humanities by mid September.

First year program activities can begin on or after October 1, 2024 and must conclude by May 31, 2025 (first year). Sites that complete reporting requirements and fully participate in cohort activities will be eligible for a second year of support (dependent on availability of state funding).

About PA Humanities

PA Humanities is an independent partner of the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#) and part of a [network of 56 state humanities councils](#) that spans the nation and U.S. jurisdictions. Today, across the commonwealth, we put the humanities in action to create positive change. Our programs and grants bring Pennsylvanians together to build avenues for civic involvement and community development, and for youth and adult learners to strengthen skills for school, work, and personal improvement. Our operations are funded in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities through the [Federal/State Partnership Office](#), with additional program funding from generous individuals, foundations, corporations, and government agencies.

Youth-led Humanities is made possible by Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds from the [U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) administered by the Office of Commonwealth Libraries, Department of Education, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Josh Shapiro, Governor. Additional support is provided by the [National Endowment for the Humanities](#), generous individuals, foundations, and corporations.

Application Form

Sites must apply online using our grant portal. However, below is the application in full so applicants can prepare in advance.

Reminder: Interested applications will need to [register](#) themselves and their organizations on our [Grant Portal](#). **It will take up to 2 business days for your organization registration to be reviewed and approved before you can apply for grants, so if you decide to apply, we suggest you register now to avoid missing the application deadline.** [Click here to download our step-by-step Grant Portal Registration guide.](#)

Questions? Contact Julia Terry at jterry@pahumanities.org.

APPLICANT & ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Application Contact:

- First and Last Name
- Email
- Phone

Recipient Organization (Library or OST site):

- Applying Organization Name
- Full Mailing Address
- Website
- Federal Tax ID
- UEI (Unique Entity ID)
- Organization Type: <select from list>
- Mission/Vision and/or programming/services

FINANCIAL PROFILE

- Non-Profit Status (choose one)
 - Tax-exempt 501(c)(3)
 - Not a 501(c)(3) but fiscally sponsored by a tax-exempt 501(c)(3)
 - Government entity (town government, school, town library, etc)
 - Federally recognized tribal government
 - None of the above
- Using Fiscal Sponsor: Yes/No
If yes:
 - Fiscal Sponsor Organization
 - Fiscal Sponsor Contact Name
 - Fiscal Sponsor Email
- Fiscal Year End Date
- Prior Fiscal Year Operating Budget: \$
- Total Teen Programming Budget: \$

- Is there anything else you'd like us to know about your finances?

OPERATIONS PROFILE

Staff & Board Profile

Place a "0" in the field if it does not apply.

- Total number of full-time staff
- Total number of part-time staff
- Total number of volunteers

- Number of staff dedicated to teen services
- Number of teen programs in last calendar year

Social Media

- Which social media accounts does the site currently use? Select all that apply.
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - X (formerly Twitter)
 - LinkedIn
 - TikTok
 - YouTube
 - Snapchat
 - Reddit
 - Discord
 - Other (specify)

COMMUNITY/AUDIENCE PROFILE

- Please tell us about the population you serve by providing percentages for the following demographic categories. Not sure? Check out [census.gov](https://www.census.gov).
 - % White or Caucasian
 - % Black or African-American
 - % Latino/a or Hispanic
 - % Asian or Asian America
 - % Native American
 - Total: <add to 100%>

- What percentage of the population you serve could be classified as low-income?

- Does your site use youth volunteers or have an official teen advisory board or group? Yes/No

NARRATIVE

Narrative Submission Method

- Would you prefer to submit a video response to the narrative questions instead of submitting typed responses on this application? Yes/No

If yes: Please provide the URL (<https://www.example.com>) to your video narrative. You may use a video platform of your choosing, but please ensure the video is no longer than 15 minutes and is available to us via this URL for the duration of the grant performance period through final report submission.

Narrative Questions

Limited to 10,000 characters (including spaces) each.

- 1) Why are you interested in being a part of Youth Led Humanities and what are your goals?
- 2) Please tell us how you will use the project funds. Provide as much detail as you can at this point.
- 3) Please tell us your site's experience with humanities programming, and include details about how youth have been involved.
- 4) Please describe the history of youth humanities programming at your site. How have youth influenced/contributed to your past program planning?
- 5) Please tell us about the young people in your community and how you create an inclusive and welcoming space for them in your organization. What partnerships, if any, support this?
- 6) Who on your team will take part in the community of practice and training opportunities? What training and support do you hope to receive through cohort participation?
- 7) Is there anything else you want us to know?

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

Optional: please upload any attachments you'd like considered as part of this application, such as materials related to a program, event, or initiative you are particularly proud of (flier, catalog, video/photo, webpage, etc.)

Supporting Web Link

If you prefer to provide the link to a program, event, or initiative webpage enter the URL (<https://www.example.com>) below.