

## **GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES**

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

*for use with proposals for the following program areas:*

Higher Learning  
Public Affairs

Applicants should consider the information below as a guide to submitting an invited proposal and related information to the Foundation. The Foundation reviews the proposal to make informed judgments about the merits of the project, its likelihood of achieving its stated goals, and the organization's capacity to carry out the project activities effectively. Should a grant be approved, the award letter will incorporate the terms of the final proposal. The Foundation's grantmaking policies and guidelines are located on the Foundation's [website](#).

### **Submission Format**

Upon initial invitation, registered applicants should submit their proposals and related information through the Foundation's grantee portal, Fluxx. They should then be prepared to work closely with program staff in revising and refining proposal materials, often through multiple drafts, before a final proposal is invited.

Some questions and/or sections on the proposal form may be relevant only in certain situations and some documents are only required with submission of a final proposal. A completed proposal record in the Foundation's grantee portal generally consists of the following parts:

### **Organization and Project Contacts**

The proposal record will already include the legal name of the organization that would receive the grant. Please confirm the legal name and enter the key organizational contacts for the proposed grant, including the principal investigator, grant management contact (person responsible for serving as a proposal liaison and providing reports to the Foundation), and head of the organization. Applicants may also add two additional contacts in the roles for financial or other contact and additional contact. Please note that there can be only one individual nominated for each role, and the Foundation will assign login credentials to those individuals. Key organizational contacts will have access to the proposal materials and will receive automated email alerts.

### **Proposal Information**

Please enter summary information about the proposed activities including a short title, a clear and concise description of the proposed work, the amount requested in US dollars (USD), and the length of time needed to complete the supported activities.

### **Proposal Narrative**

#### **Cover Letter**

When invited to submit the final proposal, please upload a cover letter on the organization's letterhead, signed by the principal investigator(s). The cover letter should be addressed to the Foundation staff lead and include the title and a brief summary of the project, the amount of funding sought, and the names and contact information of any collaborating institutions and individuals. The cover letter should also include reference to the Foundation's [Grantmaking Policies](#) and state that the organization will comply with these policies.

## Endorsement Letter

When invited to submit the final proposal, please upload a signed endorsement letter from the chief executive officer, vice chancellor, rector, or president of the organization if the head of the institution is not the principal investigator for the proposed grant. The letter—on organizational letterhead and dated on or after the cover letter—should refer to the proposed grant, the project title and timeframe, and the date and substance of the principal investigator’s cover letter.

## Proposed Activities and Rationale

Please upload a Word document of no more than 12 pages single-spaced, in 12-point font, that explains the proposed activities of, and rationale for, the project. Note that the Foundation values concision and objectivity in proposal narratives. While the substance and form of narratives will vary based on the proposed project, all narratives should provide the following information:

- a. the reason for the project, including an explanation of why it is important to the organization, its constituencies, and the field in which it operates, and the extent to which such activities are being addressed by other organizations in the field;
- b. for renewals of Foundation support, a brief description of previous Foundation grants awarded to the organization for the same purpose and their results;
- c. a schedule describing the major activities to be carried out and the division of responsibilities for the different components of the project;
- d. a description of expected outcomes and benefits of the project;
- e. an account, where appropriate, of how the organization will ensure the longer-term sustainability of project results and/or institutional changes supported by Foundation funding;
- f. an account of other sources of financial support for the project; and
- g. a description of the criteria to be used to assess the progress and success of the project.

## Proposal Details

The following questions should be answered directly in the grantee portal. The Proposed Activities and Rationale document should elaborate further on the roles and responsibilities of collaborators and consultants, and may include additional information on the other items below:

- a. Collaborating Organizations: List all organizations collaborating with the applicant organization that would be significantly involved in the conception, development and/or execution of the proposal activities, if any. For each organization, briefly describe the nature of the collaboration. If a collaborating organization would be receiving grant funds, please list the amount in the Grant Budget and Budget Narrative sections;
- b. Consultants: Briefly describe the proposed grant activities for which a significant portion of the grant budget would be paid to a third party in exchange for services. Amounts allocated to consultants and contractors should be provided in the Grant Budget and Budget Narrative sections. (see also the Foundation’s [“Guidelines for Grants Involving Consultants and/or Contractors”](#));
- c. Diversity and Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination: The Foundation is committed to diversity and inclusion in its grantmaking programs and to ensuring that its funds are deployed in workplaces and educational environments that maintain and enforce policies committed to safety, dignity, ethical conduct, and freedom from discrimination:
  - i. Diversity and Inclusion: Please describe how your organization defines and approaches diversity and inclusion in relation to its mission and operations. We ask that you include one or more examples of challenges and successes the organization has experienced with respect to diversity and inclusion. If the proposed grant is intended to address diversity and inclusion, please elaborate further in the Proposed Activities and Rationale document.

- ii. **Anti-Discrimination:** Please briefly describe your organization’s equal opportunity, anti-discrimination, and/or anti-harassment policies.
- d. **Financial Health:** Describe any financial difficulties or deficits the organization has experienced in the last three fiscal years, if applicable;
- e. **Leadership Changes:** Describe any recent or anticipated leadership changes and significant staff turnover relevant to the organization and/or proposed grant activities;
- f. **Intellectual Property:** If the proposed grant activities include the digitization of works or the creation of digital technology and/or digital products, such as software, databases, audio or video recordings, podcasts, and websites, please provide a detailed account of the intellectual property to be created, any rights or permissions that your organization would need to secure, the means by which the technologies and/or content would be distributed, including the type of license that your organization would issue to users, and how your organization would ensure the long-term sustainability of any digital or software products;
- g. **Investment Income:** Describe how grant funds would be managed, including the overall investment strategy and asset allocation, and how income would be calculated and allocated to the grant. If the organization cannot by law invest grant funds in interest- or income-generating instruments, please provide an explanation;
- h. **Strategies for successful grant execution:** This section should include an assessment of any factors that could potentially impede the timely and successful execution of grant activities and goals. Please outline these factors and briefly explain possible strategies for mitigating their effects on grant activities;
- i. **Administering Agents:** If the grant will involve any arrangements with or payments to administering agents, please describe the arrangements; and
- j. **Matching Requirements:** If the grant would be subject to a matching requirement, please provide a description of your organization’s strategies and timetable for meeting the match, details of the prospective donor base, and the projected uses for the match. Please note that only newly received gifts of cash or securities—in hand, valued at the time of transfer, and designated for the Foundation-supported project—can qualify as matching contributions. Pledges do not qualify.

## Grant Budget

A grant budget should be completed within the grantee portal. Please review the description of the Foundation’s expenditure categories (below) before completing the budget.

- a. The grant budget should only include the funds requested from the Foundation and exclude projected interest or investment income.
- b. A budget should be added for each reporting period, with the name of the period (e.g., Year 1) and the start and end dates of the period clearly indicated. Reporting periods are typically one year long. Please discuss the appropriate reporting period with Foundation staff in advance. There should be no gaps between budget periods.
- c. The budget should encompass all grant expenses, including amounts designated for collaborators and consultants.
- d. Final budgets should be reviewed by an individual with institutional responsibility for financial reporting and the name and contact details of the person who conducted the review entered into the portal in the Grantee Authorizations section.
- e. All budget amounts should be in local currency. If the local currency for the proposed grant is not USD, the exchange rate used to calculate the amount requested in USD, the date the rate was published, and the source of the rate should be cited where indicated. The exchange rate should be from a public source and correlate with rates published within a week of the date of the final proposal. Applicants may refer to rates available at [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com). Please note that the amount requested in the Proposal Information section should be in USD. The

Foundation makes payment of all awards in USD; applicants with budgets that are not in USD will be instructed to provide Foundation staff with a confirmation of the amount received in local currency within 30 days of payment of the award.

- f. If the proposal is accepted, annual reporting must follow the same expense categories set forth in the proposal.

### **Budget Narrative**

The budget narrative should describe and justify the cost assumptions for each expenditure category. It should not introduce new features of the project beyond what is presented in the Proposal Narrative and Proposal Details sections. While budget categories may vary according to the particular project, the Foundation uses set expenditure categories common to Foundation-funded projects. It is also possible to add up to five custom categories. If it is necessary to provide more detailed cost assumptions and breakdowns, a supplementary spreadsheet may be uploaded.

If the proposal requests only partial funding for project activities, the budget narrative should include a list of all other funding sources by category, the corresponding amounts and percentage of the total budget, and whether the funding is committed or potential. Please also describe contingency plans if the full project funding does not become available.

### **Expenditure Categories**

Salaries and Wages – Fellowships and Residencies: Total salaries, excluding benefits, for all fellowships, residencies, and scholarships. The budget narrative should list the base salary or stipend amount for each fellow or resident, the number of people in each position, and, if applicable, the FTE percentage allocation.

Salaries and Wages – Program: Total salaries, excluding benefits, for all programmatic employees, which may include salaries, stipends and/or course releases for the principal investigator, project director, artistic staff, and/or faculty. The budget narrative should list the base salary, the stipend and/or course release amount for each position, the number of people in each position, and, if applicable, the FTE percentage allocation.

Salaries and Wages – Administrative: Total salaries, excluding benefits, for all administrative employees involved in the grant-funded project or activities, which may include salaries for executive, finance, communications, and/or clerical staff. The budget narrative should list the base salary for each position, the number of people in each position, and, if applicable, the FTE percentage allocation.

Salaries and Wages – Other: Total salaries, excluding benefits, for any other staff not included in the above salary categories. The budget narrative should list the base salary for each position, the number of people in each position, and, if applicable, the FTE percentage allocation.

Benefits: Total benefit costs related to personnel involved with the proposed grant activities, including pension contributions, health insurance, and any other benefits. The budget narrative should describe how benefit costs were calculated.

Travel: Total travel costs, including expenses for all modes of transportation, meals, lodging, mileage reimbursements, and per diem payments. The budget narrative should provide a breakdown of the costs by activity and include the number of people and travel days. Please include the sources for the travel cost estimates.

Conferences and Meetings – Non-travel: Total non-travel costs associated with conferences, meetings, and workshops, including registration, catering, and facilities costs. The budget narrative should provide a breakdown of the costs by activity. Please note: funding of meal or catering expenses and venue rentals may vary depending on the project. Applicants should consult with program staff before including such expenses in the grant budget.

Equipment and Supplies: Total equipment and supplies costs, including any anticipated shipping, licensing, maintenance, and insurance costs. The budget narrative should include an itemized list of equipment and supplies to be purchased or leased along with the cost assumptions.

Consultants and Other Professional Services (including Artist Fees): Total consultant and other professional services costs not included in other budget categories. The budget narrative should describe any existing and/or anticipated agreements with third parties, including consultants, artists, and/or other vendors. The narrative should include a description of the work to be performed, whether the amount is based on a fixed price, or hourly or per diem rate, and whether it includes anticipated travel or other additional expenses. See also the Foundation's "[Guidelines for Grants Involving Consultants and/or Contractors](#)."

Subgrants/Regrants: If applicable, the total funds allocated for subgrants/regrants. For subgrants, the budget narrative should include the names of subgrantees, a description of the work to be performed by each subgrantee, and the amount of allocated funds. For regrants, the budget narrative should include the total funds to be regranted and describe the amounts expected to be awarded to each organization and/or individual.

Promotion, Marketing, and Advertising: If applicable, the total funds allocated for all promotion, marketing, and advertising costs associated with the proposed grant activities.

Occupancy Costs: If applicable, the total funds allocated for utilities and space rental associated with the project or development of the artistic work. The budget narrative should also designate the Foundation's percentage contribution to these occupancy costs. Please note: the Higher Learning program does not provide support for occupancy costs.

Additional Budget Categories: If applicable, the total funds allocated for use in any additional budget categories. Please describe the allocated amount and purpose for each category. Please add the custom category name to each budget period, even if there is no expenditure in that period.

## **Other Documents**

Please upload a copy of the following materials to the Proposal Documents section:

### Organization Documents:

1. a list of members of the organization's board of trustees or directors;
2. for applicants classified as supporting organizations under section 509(a)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, an affidavit of supporting organization status, (a sample is available from the Foundation on request); and
3. other supplementary materials as requested by program staff or as needed to explicate the proposed work.

### Endowment Grants

For organizations with endowments of less than \$100 million, proposals for endowment funds should include the following items:

1. a copy of the Investment Policy Statement ("IPS"), which must include the: (a) Asset Allocation Policy; (b) Spending Policy; (c) Rebalancing Policy; (d) Conflict of Interest Policy; and (e) roles and responsibilities of the board, the investment committee, staff, and consultants/advisors;
2. a description of the decision-making process for making changes to the IPS, and, if applicable, how and by whom managers are sourced and evaluated;
3. the current roster of investment managers;
4. the current members of the investment committee and the name of any investment consultant or advisor;
5. a summary of the actions taken and a list of attendees at the last four meetings of the investment committee, or the minutes of those meetings;

6. the current asset allocation;
7. investment performance for the past one, three, five, and ten years;
8. copies of the two most recent audited financial statements; and
9. should a grant be awarded, a commitment to provide, at the conclusion of each of the subsequent three fiscal years, the following:
  - a. a summary of the actions taken by the investment committee during the fiscal year and a list of the members who attended each meeting; and
  - b. a report on investment performance for the past one, three, five, and ten years.