



FY 2026

Miller

History

Fund

OVERVIEW



FY2026 Miller History Fund Overview

About the Maryland Center for History and Culture (MCHC)

- Founded in 1844, the Maryland Center for History and Culture (MCHC) is the oldest continuously operating cultural organization in the State of Maryland. MCHC collects, preserves, and interprets the history, art, and culture of Maryland. By exploring multiple perspectives and sharing national stories through the lens of Maryland, the MCHC inspires critical thinking, creativity, and community.
- A collection of 350,000 historical objects and artworks and seven million books, documents, and manuscripts are the foundation of innovative K-12 educational experiences, exhibitions, publications, library services, and public programs that annually engage nearly 100,000 people in Maryland and beyond. The *Miller History Fund* is an extension of MCHC's commitment to fostering a strong and sustainable Maryland heritage community.



FY2026 Miller History Fund Overview

Miller History Fund Overview

- The Miller History Fund is made possible by an annually recurring allocation from the state’s Preservation of Cultural Arts Fund. This fund was proposed by late Senate President Emeritus Thomas V. “Mike” Miller in the 2018 legislative session and enacted into law. MCHC named the fund—formerly known as the Pathways Grant Program—in Senator Miller’s honor in 2021;
- MCHC administers this grants program as an extension of our mission to educate people of all ages about the rich history and culture of Maryland and the nation.
- We strive to be transparent and accessible stewards of these state funds. Given the relatively small amount of funding, MCHC also works to ensure this program is targeted and responsive to the needs of our cultural sector. The program is evaluated and refined each funding cycle.



FY2025 Miller History Fund Guidelines

Important Dates

- **December 1, 2025:** FY2026 guidelines and materials published
- **December 15, 2025:** Virtual applicant workshop
- **January 09, 2026:** Letters of Intent (LOIs) due
- **February 06, 2026:** Full applications due
- **April 2026:** Award announcements made
- **June 2026:** FY2026 grant period begins for awardees

FY2026 Miller History Fund Guidelines



Applicant Eligibility

- Eligible applicants will steward and interpret historical collections as a core part of their mission activities. **The Miller History Fund’s definition of historical collections is inclusive of books and manuscripts, photographs, sound recordings and moving images, archaeological and ethnographic artifacts, art, historical objects, and material culture with a connection to the diverse history and culture of Maryland.**

FY2026 Miller History Fund Guidelines



Applicant Eligibility

- Eligible applicants will be government agencies or incorporated non-profit organizations in good standing with the State of Maryland and in operation for a minimum of one year in the State of Maryland. All applicants must have an annual operating budget below \$2 million. **Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis for departments and sub-units who can demonstrate their distinct mission but operate within larger organizations or agencies with a budget exceeding this threshold.**
- Applicants that are not primarily located in Maryland are *ineligible*.
- **Organizations that have received a past *Miller History Fund* grant must wait a minimum of one grant cycle after the conclusion of their awarded grant period to reapply.**

FY2026 Miller History Fund Guidelines



Project Eligibility

- The overarching goal of the *Miller History Fund* is to build the long-term resiliency and capacity of the stewards of Maryland's historical collections. Successful projects will demonstrate how grant funded activities lead to a stronger organization or heritage community in the future.
- We encourage applicants to secure outside expertise demonstrating a track record of success in their proposed project areas. This may come in the form of organizational partnerships or procurement of consultant services.



FY2026 Miller History Fund Guidelines

Examples of Eligible Projects

- New marketing initiatives
- Strategic planning
- Professional development for staff and volunteers
- Collections stewardship or digitization projects
- A campaign or fundraising feasibility study
- Sustaining public programs or exhibitions that build new audiences
- A new interpretive framework for a permanent exhibition



FY2026 Miller History Fund Guidelines

Examples of *Ineligible* Projects

- Capacity building projects for heritage organizations that do not steward historical collections as a primary aspect of their mission
- Capital projects such as building maintenance; new construction, or historic preservation
- Capital planning projects that are not directly related to collections storage facilities and care
- General operating support requests

Note that this is not an exhaustive list and the MCHC definition of capacity-building is intentionally broad.



FY2026 Miller History Fund Guidelines

Award Range & Funding Restrictions

- MCHC anticipates making four (4) awards of \$50,000 for 2026.
- No matching funds are required and the provision of “bonus points” for including matching funds has been removed.
- The *Miller History Fund* does not support existing staff salaries, though up to 25% of awarded funds may be directed towards general indirect or staffing costs.

FY2025 Miller History Fund Submission



accessible via:

<https://www.mdhistory.org/about/miller-history-fund/>

FY2025 Miller History Fund Submission



accessible via:

<https://mdhistory.submittable.com>

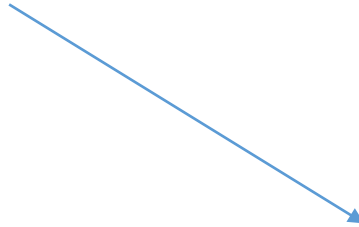
(Look for “FY2026 Miller History Fund”)


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FY2026 Miller History Fund Submission

Sample Message from
Submittable



Submittable 

Dear David,

Thank you for submitting your FY 2023 Miller History Fund Letter of Intent (LOI). We are reviewing your project idea and will be in touch to verify project eligibility or ask additional questions within five business days.

In the meantime, you may access the full application via the link below which you may copy and paste into your browser:

<https://mdhistory.submittable.com/submit/caf9fb80-4af3-49c3-8e84-db10c918b2b9/fy-2023-miller-history-fund-full-application>

Once you begin work and save a draft of your full application, it will be accessible whenever you log back into **Submittable**.

If you have any questions in the interim, please do not hesitate to contact me at grants@mdhistory.org. We appreciate your interest.

Sincerely,

David Belew
Vice President of Grants & Government Affairs

*Please do not reply to this email. If you have questions about your submission, please contact the organization directly. **Submittable** is not involved in the decision-making process of organizations using our platform.*

Sent by **Submittable**.
111 Higgins Ave #300, Missoula, MT 59802



FY2026 Miller History Fund Evaluation

Award Determination

- The *Miller History Fund* is designed to mitigate bias and provide transparent feedback to applicants that helps strengthen their organization and future applications.
- Proposals will be evaluated competitively by a rotating, third-party grant review panel made up of industry experts from Maryland and neighboring states. Panelists will disclose any relationships with applicant organizations and will recuse themselves from any proposal that poses a conflict of interest.
- Panelists will score applicants' proposals on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) based off the following seven (7) criteria:

FY2026 Miller History Fund Evaluation



Evaluation Criteria

- *Support of Maryland's 250 Commemoration*
 - *Heritage Value*
 - *Clarity*
 - *Relevancy*
 - *Impact*
 - *Expertise*
 - *Sustainability*

FY2026 Miller History Fund Evaluation



- ***Support of Maryland's Semiquincentennial Commemoration in 2026:***

In July of 2023, Governor Wes Moore authorized the [Maryland 250 Commission](#) to develop a commemoration of Maryland's many contributions to America's 250 years. This historic moment is a rare opportunity to advance Maryland's public history, engage the public, and conserve and share historical collections from the earliest years of our nation to the present. It is also an opportunity to rethink commemorations and explore voices and stories that have been excluded or obscured. These should be projects that support activities related to the Semiquincentennial, especially conservation and access projects for historical collections that represent the impact of Marylanders over the past 250 years.



FY2026 Miller History Fund Evaluation

- ***Heritage Value:***

Has the applicant demonstrated the social and academic value(s) of the historical collections they steward to Maryland's broader culture and their immediate community? Is this resource central to the applicant's mission? Has the applicant demonstrated the extent to which their historical collections are made accessible and relevant to the diverse population of Maryland?

- ***Clarity:***

Are the proposed project's purpose, scope of work, timeline, and roles and responsibilities clearly defined? Does the project budget clearly align with the project outcomes and has the applicant demonstrated that the projected costs are reasonable for the work provided?



FY2026 Miller History Fund Evaluation

- ***Relevancy:***

How does the project affect the organization's immediate community? Does it align with or complement an ongoing public initiative? Is the proposed project time-sensitive? For example, does it leverage an upcoming anniversary or is it required as soon as possible to save an imperiled collection or stabilize a struggling organization?

- ***Impact:***

Has the applicant demonstrated how the project increases their capacity to carry out their mission? How might their organizational operations and outlook improve as a result of successful completion of their project? How is that change realized in stewardship of their historical resource or value for the audience they serve? Projects that contribute to cross-organizational collaboration and the capacity and resiliency of Maryland's broader heritage community will be given special consideration.



FY2026 Miller History Fund Evaluation

- ***Expertise:***

Does the proposed project team have demonstrated expertise in the various activities needed for successful project completion? Expertise in this context could range from representation from the group the project proposes to serve for community-based projects to formalized conservation training for collections stewardship projects. Applicants should clearly describe the roles, responsibilities, and qualifications of project team members.

- ***Sustainability:***

Has the applicant demonstrated how the project impacts and organizational benefits will be sustained over time? Would a Miller History Fund grant be leveraged by other organizational resources such as additional funds, staff time, or volunteer time?



FY2026 Miller History Fund Evaluation

Bonus Points

Beyond the panelist review, applicants may receive up to four bonus points based on the following conditions;

Geographic Reach (2):

- Building capacity statewide is a guiding principle of *Miller History Fund*. Proposals submitted by applicants located outside of a designated Maryland Heritage Area, within counties that are underrepresented in the proposal cycle, or those located in priority counties that have not yet received *Miller History Fund Funding* may receive up to two bonus points.
- Priority counties home to heritage organizations that have not yet received funding: Allegany, Calvert, Cecil, Charles, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, and Wicomico.



FY2025 Miller History Fund Evaluation

Funding Determinations

- ***Funding Determinations:***

A perfect scoring application could receive 37 points with a score of 5 in all 7 evaluation categories and two (2) bonus points. Awardees will be determined based on a scoring curve and the availability of grant funds. Applicants will have access to their final scores as well as consolidated narrative feedback provided by the panelists' comments during their review.



FY2025 Miller History Fund Evaluation

Funding Determinations

Details About Maryland Heritage Areas:

Is your organization located within one of Maryland's 13 certified Heritage Areas? More information on this government program is available at:

<https://mht.maryland.gov/Pages/MHAA/heritage-areas.aspx>

Organizations located outside of a Maryland Heritage Area are not eligible for certain state funding opportunities. These organizations may be given special consideration for the Miller History Fund. Check the grant guidelines for more details.



Other Resources

- American Association of State & Local History (AASLH)
“Making 250: Field Guide” <https://aaslh.org/programs/250th/>

- Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS)
<https://www.ims.gov/>

“Heritage Health Information Survey”

<https://www.ims.gov/publications/protecting-americas-collections>

- Maryland Museums Association (MMA)

<https://www.mdmuseums.org/home>

- MD Two Fifty

<https://mdtwofifty.maryland.gov/>



Questions?

Please do not hesitate to contact program administrator Brian Lyles at grants@mdhistory.org.

We are here to help and are excited to learn more about your organization and project idea!