

The University of Cincinnati Office of Research

Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (AHSS) Catalytic Grants

Up to \$25,000 in project support can be requested

Program Overview

The Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (AHSS) Catalytic Grant program affirms UC's commitment to comprehensive research excellence by investing in the forms of scholarship and creative activity that define success in arts, humanities, and social sciences disciplines. The program supports UC faculty, working individually or in teams, to advance high-impact scholarly and creative work. It recognizes that impact in AHSS fields is often demonstrated through peer recognition, visibility, and influence rather than large external grant awards alone. AHSS Catalytic Grants are intended to catalyze faculty progress toward discipline-valued outcomes, including awards, fellowships, publications, juried or invited creative works, selective external funding opportunities, and other external accolades.

Funding for AHSS Catalytic Grants is up to \$25,000. Applicants are encouraged to request budgets appropriate to their proposed activities rather than the maximum award amount. The project period can range from 12-18 months. The number of awards is dependent on available funding.

Key Dates

RFA Released: February 6, 2026

Application Deadline: March 6, 2026 at 5:00 pm ET

Grantees Announced: Week of April 6, 2026 (*anticipated*)

Award Period: can start no later than June 30, 2026

Eligibility

- Eligible applicants must be faculty members working on a project in the arts, humanities, and/or social science disciplines.
- Individual faculty or teams of faculty may apply. For teams, a Faculty Lead must be identified.
- The Faculty Lead must have at least an 80% FTE appointment at UC.
- Faculty holding a primary appointment in one of UC's affiliates (CCHMC, VA) are eligible to contribute effort to a team but may not be the Faculty Lead.
- Faculty at all stages of their career are eligible and encouraged to apply.

Program Scope

AHSS Catalytic Grants are intended to support projects in which modest, well-timed investments can enable meaningful scholarly or creative advancement. Projects should demonstrate a clear pathway to discipline-valued recognition.

Examples of supported outcomes include, but are not limited to:

- Completion or advancement of a scholarly book, monograph, or edited volume
- Publication of an article in a high impact peer reviewed journal
- Competitive fellowship, residency, or award applications
- Juried, invited, or commissioned exhibitions, performances, or other creative activities
- Selective external grants that are prestigious or field-defining, regardless of dollar amount
- Digital or public-facing creative or humanities scholarship that is recognized by the field
- Scholarship designed to inform policy

Application Submission

Applicants must submit applications via e-form. When the form is ready to accept applications, the live link to apply will be posted on the tile for the AHSS Catalytic Grants program located at: <https://research.uc.edu/funding/overview>.

Applicants are expected to adhere to the guidelines. Applications that do not adhere to program guidelines may not be reviewed.

Application Information Required

The faculty lead must provide their name, UC email, UC ID-number, [ORCID](#), college, department/unit.

All proposals should be written for a general university audience in terms readily understood by those who are not experts in the field. Avoid jargon, acronyms, or other technical terminology.

The application should contain the following information and will be submitted as a form.

- **Project Title**
- **Faculty Lead:** Name, title, college, and department of the lead UC faculty applicant.
- **Internal and Affiliate Collaborators:** Names, titles, colleges, and departments of UC-based or affiliated collaborators.
- **External Collaborators:** Names, titles, and organization names of external collaborators.
- **Project Rationale (1,500 characters maximum):** Describe the scholarly, creative, or public-facing problem, question, or opportunity this project addresses and its significance within your discipline or field.
- **Project Plan & Activities (3,000 characters maximum):** Describe the activities, methods, or creative processes you will use to advance the project and achieve the proposed outcomes.

- **Anticipated Scholarly or Creative Outcomes** (*1,500 characters maximum*): Describe the expected discipline-valued outcomes of this project (e.g., publications, exhibitions, performances, public humanities products, awards, fellowships, invited works, or selective external funding opportunities).
- **Catalytic Pathway and Sustainability** (*1,500 characters maximum*): Explain how this award will serve as a catalyst for future scholarly or creative success, including plans for external funding, recognition, dissemination, partnerships, or continued project development beyond the grant period.
- **Project Period:** Include an anticipated start and end date. The start date can be no later than June 30, 2026. The award period must be 12-18 months.
- **Project Budget:** Itemized budget with a maximum request of **\$25,000**. Applicants are encouraged to request budgets appropriate to their proposed activities rather than the maximum award amount.
- **Budget Justification:** Narrative justification describing how requested funds will support the proposed activities.
- **Supplemental Materials (optional):** Applicants may provide supplementary materials, such as figures, media files, websites, and/or external links to support the written application. All materials must be combined into one document.

Allowable Costs

Allowable expenses must be clearly justified and aligned with project goals. These may include:

- Research or creative materials or production expenses
- Archival or fieldwork travel
- Research assistance or technical support
- Publication and distribution costs (e.g., image permissions, indexing, editing, translation)
- Modest salary support or course release when directly tied to project needs

The types of allowable costs supported by this program can be found at: [Office of Research Internal Funding Budget Guidance](#).

Review Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by a committee made up of faculty members in Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and Office of Research representatives. Grants will be awarded using the following criteria:

- Scholarly or Creative Merit – Quality, originality, and contribution to the discipline
- Catalytic Potential – Likelihood that the proposed support will enable discipline-valued recognition or advancement
- Feasibility – Appropriateness of the scope, timeline, and budget
- Skills, Expertise, and Background – The applicant/team has the necessary skills, expertise and background to undertake the proposed work.

Metrics of Success

The AHSS Catalytic Grants are intended to position faculty for future discipline-valued recognition. While the indicators below are not expected to be achieved by the end of the award, the program seeks to support progress toward external recognition and longer-term scholarly or creative impact. Examples of such indicators include:

- Applications for or receipt of awards, fellowships, prizes, or other forms of peer recognition
- Advancement toward books under contract, completed manuscripts, or realized creative works
- Invitations, juried selections, commissions, or residencies pursued or secured
- Increased national or international visibility of the funded work
- Subsequent external funding, when relevant to the discipline or project

Awardees will submit a brief final report describing project activities, outcomes achieved to date, and progress toward discipline-valued recognition.

Review & Selection Process

All applications will be reviewed by a team assembled by the Office of Research. All applicants will receive written feedback on their application. We intend to notify applicants of the outcome by mid-April.

Award Conditions

- All related work and activities resulting from the internally funded research efforts must acknowledge “University of Cincinnati, Office of Research, (and the name of the particular internal program)” as the research funding source.
- Awardees must submit a final “impact” report that describes project outcomes, deliverables and impacts upon completion of the project at the end of the funding term.
- Awardees agree to serve as a reviewer for this and other UC Office of Research internal funding programs for two years following the date of award.

QUESTIONS? Contact research@uc.edu