



# 2020 Heritage Grant Guidelines

## Purpose and Scope of Grants Program

The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area was designated by Congress in November 2003 in recognition of the magnitude and abundance of historical, cultural, and natural heritage assets in Western North Carolina and their significance to the history of our nation. The distinction helps draw national and worldwide attention to our region's rich heritage and encourages the preservation and celebration of our heritage resources.

The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership's Management Plan calls for preserving, interpreting, and developing the heritage resources of Western North Carolina in five thematic areas:

- Agricultural heritage
- Cherokee heritage
- Craft heritage
- Music heritage
- Natural heritage

These distinctive facets of the region's heritage were the basis for the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area designation in 2003.

To help accomplish the goals and objectives of the Management Plan, the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership, a 501(c)3 nonprofit, offers matching grants to provide and leverage funding for new projects across the region that preserve, interpret, and develop heritage resources within these thematic areas and that expand economic opportunity.

The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership especially encourages applications for projects that:

- involve active partnerships between organizations.
- leverage substantial matches from project participants and other grantors.
- are regional or multi-county in scope.

Funds for the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area's grants program are federal dollars provided through the National Park Service.

## What Types of Applicants Are Eligible to Apply?

The following types of organizations serving the 25-county Blue Ridge National Heritage Area region are eligible to apply for a grant:

- units of state and local government
- federally-recognized Indian tribes

- academic institutions
- non-profit organizations with 501(c)3 or 501(c)6 tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service

BRNHA does not provide grants to individuals.

Applicants may submit no more than one application per grant cycle. Only one project may be proposed in a single application.

### **What Types of Projects Are Eligible for a Grant?**

To be eligible for a grant, a project must meet all of the following criteria:

1. The project must be located in the 25-county region of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, which includes the Qualla Boundary. The 25 counties are: Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Surry, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, Yadkin, and Yancey.
2. The project must fit within one of the grant categories (described in the *Grant Categories* section). If a project appears to fit within more than one grant category, the applicant should indicate which category is the closest fit.
3. The project must be focused on one or more of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area's core interpretive themes: Agricultural Heritage, Cherokee Heritage, Craft Heritage, Music Heritage, and Natural Heritage.
4. The grant applicant must provide or secure at least an equal contribution of matches from non-federal sources (see the *Matching Contributions* section of the guidelines).
5. The grant applicant should demonstrate strong local support by including three to five letters of support from local or regional organizations that can speak to the importance of the proposed project. These organizations may be named as partners in the project or they may simply share a common cause with the work of the applicant. Such organizations may include: arts councils or guilds, chambers of commerce, tourism authorities, historic preservation organizations, land conservancies, community colleges/colleges/universities/schools, state government agencies, regional councils of governments, or local governments.
6. The project must constitute a new activity for the applicant rather than the continuation of an existing program. Expansion of an existing program to serve new audiences and/or explore new content may constitute a new activity. **FOR THIS GRANT CYCLE ONLY, THERE IS AN EXCEPTION:** Applicant organizations that have received a grant award from BRNHA in a prior grant cycle may instead request support for the continuation of an existing program if it fits within one of the grant categories and meets all other grant cycle criteria.

Funds may not be used for fundraising, lobbying, or for-profit ventures.

## **Grant Amounts**

The maximum grant award is \$16,000.

The minimum grant award is \$1,000.

As noted above, the grant applicant must provide at least an equal contribution of matches from non-federal sources (see the *Matching Contributions* section of the guidelines).

## **Grant Categories**

### Historic Building Renovation

Funds in this category are available for the rehabilitation, renovation, and restoration of historic buildings, structures, and sites to provide an engaging and educational visitor experience.

Projects must meet all of the following conditions:

1. The buildings, structures, and sites must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places or have a pending application for such a listing.
2. Properties must be owned by a government entity or a local nonprofit organization.
3. Properties must be open for public visitation.
4. The project activity to be funded by the grant must result in an educational use or visitor experience focused on one or more of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area's core interpretive themes (Agricultural Heritage, Cherokee Heritage, Craft Heritage, Music Heritage, and/or Natural Heritage).

Funding in this category is available for both planning and implementation. Planning may include consultations and the preparation of master plans, architectural designs, architectural surveys, or applications for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Grant funds may not be used to acquire real property or an interest in real property.

Funds are not available for the addition or renovation of restrooms.

### Open Space Planning

Funds in this category are available for master plans and/or project plans for the preservation of open spaces and agricultural lands, including those that sustain the integrity of habitats, plant and wildlife populations, forest and agricultural production, water quality, and scenic values. Such projects may also include planning for developing recreational resources associated with open spaces such as parks, community gardens, greenways, non-motorized trails, and blueways.

Funds in this category are only available for planning activities, not for implementation or construction.

### Ecosystem Restoration

Funds in this category are available for upland or watershed restoration activities on sites that are publicly owned. Projects should include hands-on learning experiences or other interpretation/education for the public.

### Interpretive Exhibits, Programs, and Products

Funds in this category are available for the development and implementation of exhibits, public programs, theatrical performances, demonstrations, classes, workshops, tours, documentaries, oral histories, videos, podcasts, blogs, and sound recordings. The exhibits, programs, and products may be web-based. Funds are also available for professional consulting to design and/or improve interpretive exhibits, programs, and products.

Projects must be focused on the interpretation of one or more of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area's core interpretive themes: Agricultural Heritage, Cherokee Heritage, Craft Heritage, Music Heritage, and Natural Heritage.

Projects that involve tradition bearers should include appropriate compensation for their services and expenses.

Funds are not available for:

1. Festivals, concerts, and concert series.
2. Books.
3. Products that are intended to be used primarily as fulfillment tools for fundraising efforts.

### Marketing Materials

Funds in this category are available for the development, placement, and distribution of promotional materials and media, videos, trail maps, and visitor brochures to market heritage sites, trails, and attractions. Marketing materials may be web-based.

The heritage sites, trails, and attractions to be marketed must represent or showcase one or more of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area's core interpretive themes: Agricultural Heritage, Cherokee Heritage, Craft Heritage, Music Heritage, and Natural Heritage.

Funds are not available for paid advertising.

Preference will be given to projects that market multiple sites across county lines.

Applicants are encouraged to incorporate sustainable tourism principles, resource use, and messaging.

### Training Programs

Funds in this category are available for the development and implementation of programs, classes, or workshops that are designed to train nonprofit organizations, businesses, and individuals in preservation, interpretation, marketing, and/or business development. This may include (but is not limited to) training for businesses, farmers, craft artists, musicians, and other tradition bearers interested in generating income from heritage-related activities.

Projects must be focused on one or more of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area's core interpretive themes: Agricultural Heritage, Cherokee Heritage, Craft Heritage, Music Heritage, and Natural Heritage.

### Music Venue Improvements

Funds in this category are available for facility upgrades (such as sound systems, seating, lighting, and dance floors) at venues that present traditional music and dance. Such traditions include: old-time music, bluegrass, blues, gospel, early country music, and shaped-note music, as well as the dancing associated with these genres.

The venues must be owned and operated by a nonprofit organization or a local government.

Grant funds may not be used to acquire real property or an interest in real property.

Funds are not available for festivals, concerts, or concert series.

Funds are not available for the addition or renovation of restrooms.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Grant applications will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- *Public benefit.* This includes the project's economic impact as well as social impacts, community impacts, and quality-of-life impacts. Also included is the project's potential to promote public understanding and appreciation of the heritage resource(s).
- *Significance of the heritage resource(s)* to be preserved, interpreted, developed, or marketed.
- *Geographic scope of project.* Greater consideration will be given to projects that are regional or multi-county in nature.
- *Partnerships.* Greater consideration will be given to projects that involve active partnerships between organizations.

- *Leveraging.* Greater consideration will be given to projects with matches that exceed the grant request and/or which consist primarily of cash contributions.
- *Quality of plans for implementing and evaluating the project.*
- *Capability.* Evidence of sufficient management and financial ability to complete the project.
- *Local support.* Evidence that the project has support within the local or regional community.
- *Consultation.* Evidence that folklorists or historians have been consulted if the project interprets historical or cultural facts.
- *Sustainability.* For projects that are intended to continue beyond the life of the grant, greater consideration will be given to those that show a strong potential for sustainability.
- *Use of local contractors.* Applicants are encouraged to use contractors from the region wherever possible.
- *Environmentally responsible use of resources.* Applicants are encouraged to incorporate environmentally friendly principles, practices, and messages in the design and implementation of their projects wherever possible.

### **Eligible Project Costs**

Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership grant funds may be used to cover project costs that are necessary and reasonable for the accomplishment of project objectives. Such costs may include labor, services, materials, equipment (with a per-unit cost of \$5,000 or less), supplies, and travel. Grant funds may not be used to purchase real estate or real property.

The grant application must include a completed Project Budget Form, which provides a framework for itemizing the project budget.

Applicants may include indirect costs in their proposed grant budgets. Indirect costs are costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one project or program (including the proposed grant project) that are not readily apportioned between those projects or programs. Examples may include the costs of rent, utilities, and accounting.

If an applicant has a current negotiated indirect cost rate with a Federal agency, that rate may be requested in the grant proposal. If the applicant does not have a current negotiated indirect cost rate with a Federal agency, the applicant may use a rate of 10% of the direct costs to be charged to the grant. Indirect cost rates may not be applied to the costs of equipment, however. Applicants have the option of not including indirect costs in their grant budgets.

By way of illustration, a grant applicant requesting \$9,000 in direct project costs could opt to include another 10% in indirect costs in the proposed grant budget. The total request would amount to \$9,900 (\$9,000 direct + \$900 indirect). In the same scenario, the total match would need to be at least \$9,900.

## **Matching Contributions**

To be eligible for a grant, the applicant must provide at least an equal (dollar-for-dollar) match for the proposed project. The match may come from another grant, from the applicant organization, from its partners in the project, or from any combination thereof. All of the match must come from non-federal sources.

The match may consist of real dollars or in-kind (non-cash) contributions of labor, services, materials, equipment, supplies, and/or travel expenses that are necessary and reasonable for the accomplishment of project objectives. Purchases of real estate or real property may not be counted as a match. Overhead and general administrative costs are not acceptable matches (but some overhead and general administrative costs may be included as a grant expense per the discussion of indirect costs above). Donated professional services and volunteer labor may be counted as matches. Real dollar matches are preferred over in-kind contributions. Matching contributions may begin to be made before the date of the grant award, but there must be a significant overlap between the time period of the matching contributions and the time period of the grant award.

All sources of matching contributions must be documented at the time of application. This must include a letter signed by the applicant organization's financial officer or authorized representative which documents the amount of matching funds being contributed to the project budget. Matching contributions that have been secured at the time of application are preferred. If the match is pending (e.g., from another grant application), the application should note the date the match is expected to be confirmed.

Any project funded by a BRNHA grant will be required to provide verifiable documentation that matching funds have been spent and that matching in-kind contributions have been received.

## **Reimbursement**

Grant funds are provided on a reimbursement basis—that is, grant funds are provided only after project costs are incurred and paid for by the grant recipient. To request a reimbursement, the grantee must submit a progress report and documentation of paid expenses and matches, including receipts, paid invoices, and a ledger of expenses charged to the grant. Documentation of in-kind contributions must be itemized to show the amount and value of contributed labor, services, and materials.

If there is a compelling need for advance funds to start the project, the applicant may request a partial advance payment in the grant application. The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership will consider such requests on a case-by-case basis. Partial advance payments may

not exceed 50% of the total grant award. Advance payments that are approved will be made upon signing of the grant agreement.

### **Grant Application Submittal**

The deadline for grant applications is **Thursday, October 1, 2020**. If mailed, applications must be *postmarked by that date*. If delivered, applications must be received in our office by the close of business (5:00 pm) on that date. Submissions by fax or by e-mail will not be accepted.

Applications should be addressed to:

Grants Committee  
Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership  
195 Hemphill Knob Road  
Asheville, NC 28803

Submit two complete copies of the application and all supporting documents. Print the application on 8 ½ by 11 white paper with one-inch side margins. Use a paper clip or a binder clip to hold the application together, but please *do not use staples or other kinds of binders*.

Letters of support may be included with the application (preferred) or mailed separately if postmarked by the application deadline.

Address letters of support to:

Grants Committee  
Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership  
195 Hemphill Knob Road  
Asheville, NC 28803

BRNHA will send an acknowledgment that we have received your application.

### **Timeline for 2020 Grants Program**

2020 grant cycle announced	June 2020
Deadline for grant applications	October 1, 2020
Applicants notified of funding decisions	by February 1, 2021

### **Application Review Process**

Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership staff will review all submitted applications and provide comments to the BRNHA Grants Committee. Applications that are materially incomplete will not be considered for funding. The Grants Committee will then review the applications, drawing on advisors as needed, and make funding recommendations to the BRNHA Board. The BRNHA Board will make the final decision on grant awards. Grant applicants may be asked to provide clarifications and additional information during the review process.



Additional review by the National Park Service and/or the State Historic Preservation Office may be required for some projects.

The 2020 grant cycle is expected to be competitive. In previous grant cycles, fewer than half of grant applications received were funded.

### **Terms of Grant Awards**

- **Project Manager:** Grant applicants must appoint a Project Manager who will act as the primary contact between the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership and the grantee.
- **Notification:** All grant applicants will receive written notification regarding grant award decisions.
- **Minimum Grant Amount:** No grant will be awarded for less than \$1,000. Hence, the total cost of proposed project must be at least \$2,000 when factoring in matching contributions.
- **Grant Administration Orientation Meeting:** After notification of the grant award, the Project Manager or a designated representative of the grant recipient organization may be required to attend a grant administration orientation meeting.
- **Grant Contract:** The grant funds will be administered through a grant contract between the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership and the grant applicant. *The grant award is not official until both parties have signed the grant contract.*
- **Effective Project Start Date:** The effective date for the start of the project will generally be the date the contract is signed by both parties. At the discretion of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership, the effective project start date may be as early as the date the award is approved by the BRNHA board. *Expenses incurred prior to the effective project start date are not eligible for reimbursement.*
- **Grant Period:** The grantee will have up to 12 months from the effective project start date to complete the project.
- **Project Changes:** The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership must approve any changes in the scope or timeframe of the grant contract prior to the initiation of such changes.
- **Grant Acknowledgment:** The grantee will be required to acknowledge the funding support of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership and to display a sign with such an acknowledgment at the project location, if applicable. The acknowledgment should incorporate the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area logo. Grantees will also be required to acknowledge the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area in all materials announcing the grant award or implementation/completion of the grant project. Finally, grantees will also be required to send a letter to their Congressional and State

representatives to notify them that their project has received a federal grant award through the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership.

- **Final Reports and Publicity:** Upon completion of the project, the grant recipient will be required to submit a final project report in a standard format provided by the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership. Final reports should include an evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the project. Grantees may be asked to participate in scheduled media events announcing the completion of the project.
- **State Historic Preservation Office Review:** Projects may require additional review by the State Historic Preservation Office to determine if there may be any adverse impacts to historic or archaeological sites. Applicants may be required to submit more detailed project information, maps, and photographs for this review.

### **Grantee Responsibilities – Federal Regulations**

Grant awards from the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership are made with federal funds received from the National Park Service. Because the grant dollars are federal in origin, grant recipients must comply with applicable federal regulations regarding the use and administration of federal funds. These regulations set standards for such administrative activities as procurement and record retention and govern the use of copyrighted work.

Grantees must comply with the Office of Management and Budget’s Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (also known as the OMB “Super Circular” or “Uniform Guidance”). These regulations are published as part of the Code of Federal Regulations and can be accessed online at:

[www.ecfr.gov](http://www.ecfr.gov)

(Search for Title 2 – Grants and Agreements, and then select Part 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements.)

In the Uniform Guidance, grantees are considered subrecipients, while the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership is considered a recipient and a pass-through entity.

Grantees must also:

- Comply with all applicable federal laws including but not limited to Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act, Secretary of Interior Standards, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. More information can be found on the following web pages:

<http://www.achp.gov/106summary.html>

<http://www.nps.gov/nagpra/>

[http://www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/fhpl\\_ntlenvirnpolcy.pdf](http://www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/fhpl_ntlenvirnpolcy.pdf)

<http://www.ada.gov/>

- Have an audit performed that meets the requirements of the OMB Uniform Guidance whenever the organization expends \$750,000 or more in federal funds (*cumulatively*) during a fiscal year and provide a copy of the audit to the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership.
- Allow inspection of program records and project by the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership and authorized federal agencies during the project and for up to three years following project completion.
- Carry liability insurance with a minimum limitation of \$1,000,000 per person for any one claim, and an aggregate limitation of \$3,000,000 dollars for any number of claims arising from any one incident. Grantees' contractors and subcontractors shall also carry this level of liability insurance.
- Provide workers compensation protection for its officers, employees, and representatives. Grantees' contractors and subcontractors shall provide workers compensation for their employees and representatives.

### **Additional Federal Regulations**

#### Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Provides that: No person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance (Section 601).

#### Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

Provides that: No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any programs or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

#### The Age Discrimination Act of 1975

Provides that: No otherwise qualified person in the United States shall, on the grounds of age, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

#### Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Provides that: No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from participation in, or denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

#### Fair Labor Standards Act

All personnel employed on projects or productions which are financed in whole or in part through federal financial assistance will be paid not less than the minimum compensation as determined by the Secretary of Labor in Parts 3, 5, 505 of Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. No part of any project shall be performed or engaged in under working conditions that are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to the health and safety of the employees engaged in the project.

The Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988

Requires that employees of the grantee not engage in unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of controlled substances in the grantee's workplace or work site.

**Information and Assistance**

If you have questions about the grants program, please contact:

Rob Bell  
Senior Director of Programs  
Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership  
Asheville, NC  
[rob@blueridgeheritage.com](mailto:rob@blueridgeheritage.com)