



## **Publicizing Your Historical and Cultural Heritage Grant**

Promoting your project raises awareness of your work while generating support and anticipation for the completed project. This is exciting news, and people in your community want to know about your work and feel connected to it as it progresses.

Here are some publicity ideas you can use and some tips for the best approach.

### **Pitch Your Story to Local Media**

- First, do your research. Identify local newspapers, TV shows, radio stations, etc. who might be interested in your project. Identify individual reporters that this story might appeal to. Your best bet may be editors and reporters who cover arts and culture, education, or local news.
- Draft a press release on your project. (You'll find a template included below as a starting point.)
- Identify your spokespeople. This should be someone who knows the project well and is prepared to discuss it with a reporter. Develop your key messages and practice giving interviews. (See additional resources for spokesperson prep tips.)
- Send the press release via email to your reporter list. (Today, most reporters prefer an email over a phone call for initial contact.) Make sure your email subject line is interesting, so it will stand out in the reporters' inboxes.
- If possible, take the time to send a personalized email to the reporter with the press release; this is more likely to generate a response than an email blast to a large list of people.
- Wait to see what response you get from reporters. Give them a few days to respond before following up by phone or email.
- When following up, ask if they saw your press release and also be prepared to share a short summary of the project and why it fits their outlet well. You also may want to think about future ideas related to your project to pitch if the reporter unable to do a story at this time.

- If a reporter does respond to your pitch and is interested in covering it, be prepared to act quickly. Media move fast and are often on tight deadlines, so a quick response is appreciated and often vital. You don't want them to move onto another story because they couldn't get a hold of you.
- Make it easy: provide facts, photos, and info on who's available for reporters to interview upfront. If they ask you follow-up questions about your project, stick to what you know. Don't speculate.
- Don't get discouraged if you don't hear back from every reporter. Reporters get many press releases, emails, and phone calls with story ideas, and they aren't able to cover everything. Don't hound them for coverage; if you don't hear back after a follow-up or get a no, it's best to move on to another reporter.
- Don't forget to leverage your contacts! Friends with the local newspaper editor? Did a story with the radio station last year? A reporter who knows you and has worked with your organization before is a great relationship to have. These contacts are more likely to respond to a phone call or email from you with a story idea. If your story isn't a good fit for your contact's beat, ask them which of their colleagues they'd recommend you talk to.
- After a story: You got coverage - great! After a story goes to air or print, send a thank you email to the reporter for their time. If there are opportunities to follow up on the story in the future, (like your project wrapping up or another major milestone), let the reporter know or circle back with them as other opportunities arise.

### **Promotion Using Your Organization's Own Channels**

Your organization likely has several channels that can be used to promote your grant and keep your audience up-to-date on your project. Some channels include:

- Website
  - Newsletter (print or email)
  - Social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc.
  - Blogs or other publications
  - In-person meetings and community events
  - Advertising, as budget allows
- Take stock of what ways you can communicate with your audience about this project and think about where your audience is likely to look for information and is the most active. These days your organization doesn't need to have a presence on every online platform; it's more about having a presence that makes sense for your audience and your capacity to create content.

- Provide regular updates on your project on whatever channels you use. Share media coverage, write project updates, take pictures, and have volunteers share their stories. You can also recycle content between different platforms; for example, turning your blog post into a Facebook post and linking to the longer blog write-up.
- Create a communications calendar mapping out how often to promote your project and key dates to share content with your audience.
- A rule of thumb for social media: Write short and include visuals (photos/video). Especially on social media, users are skimming content, so make your writing is brief and digestible. A longer analysis of your project might be better for a website, blog, or organizational newsletter.

### **Promotional Events**

Hosting an event for the community, your members, elected officials, and local media is a great way to promote your project. Here are some ideas that could make sense for your project:

#### **Kick-off Event**

- Host a kick-off event at the site where you will be undertaking the majority of the work. Make it as simple or involved as you would like with event elements that might include refreshments, programs, lectures, and more.
- Provide a tour and give a presentation about the nature of the project.
- Offer the media photo opportunities and interviews.

#### **Sneak Peek of Work in Progress**

- Determine the best times to invite the community and media back to see the progress of the project. Consider hosting a sneak peek at a time when the project has reached a key milestone.

#### **Celebrate the Completion**

- Host an event with members of your organization, the community, elected officials, and the media to preview/tour the completed project. Offer up interviews to the media.
- If the nature of your project allows, consider a ribbon-cutting ceremony where dignitaries cut a ribbon to signify the project is now open and complete.
- Further engage the members of your organization and community by hosting a thank you reception for project donors, chairs, supporters, and volunteers.

Download an editable version of of [Legacy Grant Press Release Template](#)

## **Press Release Template**

<Organization Logo>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact:** <Insert name><Insert job title><Insert phone number><Insert email address>

**<Insert Organization> Awarded a <Insert Dollar Amount> Legacy Grant to Support <Insert Project Name/Brief Description>**

**<INSERT CITY>(<Insert Month> <Date><Year>)** – <Insert Organization> is pleased to announce that it has received a <insert grant dollar amount> Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grant.

This funding will be used to <insert project description> (what details or timeline are known? What steps are involved to complete this project? Is this part of a larger effort or building on previous work?)

<insert quote about the project's local/regional impact from organization spokesperson>

Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants are administered by the Minnesota Historical Society based on the recommendations of its Historic Resources Advisory Committee, a volunteer citizen panel made up of representatives of local, county and statewide historical and cultural organizations across the state.

The grants program is made possible by the Legacy Amendment's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the vote of Minnesotans on Nov. 4, 2008. The Legacy Amendment supports efforts to preserve Minnesota land, water and legacy, including Minnesota history and cultural heritage.

**<Insert Boilerplate Info About Your Organization>**

### **About the Minnesota Historical Society**

The Minnesota Historical Society is a nonprofit educational and cultural institution established in

1849. MNHS collects, preserves and tells the story of Minnesota's past through museum exhibits, libraries and collections, historic sites, educational programs and publishing. Using the power of history to transform lives, MNHS preserves our past, shares our state's stories, and connects people with history. Visit us at [mnhs.org](https://mnhs.org).

## **FAQs**

### **Q: Do I have to use the Legacy logo in my materials? What are the guidelines?**

A: Yes. The legislature requires the use of the Legacy logo on materials about projects funded by the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment, where practical. Logo files and additional guidelines are available on the [Legislative Coordinating Commission's website](#).

### **Q: How should I acknowledge the Minnesota Historical Society's and Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund's role in this grant?**

A: The best phrasing acknowledges both the state's funding support and MNHS: "Our organization has received a Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grant through the Minnesota Historical Society. These grants are made possible by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund of the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment."

Minnesota Historical and Cultural Grants are state-funded by the Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund. The Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) administers the grant program on behalf of the state based on recommendations from the [Historic Resources Advisory Committee](#).

### **Q: What does MNHS do to promote these grants?**

A: MNHS sends out a statewide press release for each funding cycle of Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants. [Here's an example](#). Grants are also frequently featured in the [Local History News e-newsletter](#) put out by the MNHS Heritage Preservation department.

All Legacy-funded projects are also featured in the [legacy.mn.gov website database](#), and MNHS submits an annual Legacy Report to the legislature every January, detailing how funding administered by MNHS is spent. [Legacy reports can be found on the MNHS website](#).

### **Q: Who should I contact in the MNHS Heritage Preservation Office to give a quote about our project for a reporter, our website, etc.?**

A: Please contact Allison Ortiz, MNHS Communications Manager, [allison.ortiz@mnhs.org](mailto:allison.ortiz@mnhs.org) or 651-259-3051.

## **Additional Resources**

### Legacy Logos and Usage Guidelines

- <https://www.legacy.mn.gov/legacy-logo>

### Spokesperson Tips

- [Preparing Your Company Spokesperson for Media Interviews](#)

### Writing a Press Release Tips

- [How to Write a Press Release \(The Definitive Guide 2020\)](#)
- [10 Knock-Their-Socks-Off Press Release Headline Writing Tips](#)

### Photography Tips

- [PR Tips: 21 ways images can make or break your press releases](#)
- [6 Tips for Better Photographs](#)

### Social Media Tips

- [Social Media Tips from 32 Leading Nonprofits](#)
- [Social Media for Nonprofits: How to Make an Impact with Little Budget](#)

### Books

- [Modern Media Relations for Nonprofits: Creating an Effective PR Strategy for Today's World](#)