



Delaware Humanities Forum
Delaware Industrial History Initiative in the Digital Humanities (DIHI)
Request for Proposals

Overview

The Delaware Industrial History Initiative (DIHI), a new program of the Delaware Humanities Forum, supports programming initiatives in the digital humanities focusing on Delawareans' experience with industrialization and industrial decline. Programming supported by DIHI can include digital exhibits, podcasts, and other topically relevant digital artifacts that can be accessed on the internet. DIHI will exploit Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, so that exhibits can leverage its cartographic resources in new and creative ways. **Grants of up to \$7,000 will be made to successful applicants. Proposal deadline is March 31, 2010. Decisions will be announced by April 16. Programs must be up and running by March 31, 2011.**

Definition and Scope of Subject

Industrialization is one of the few common experiences linking together virtually every human being on the globe. We are, and have been, both producers and consumers, knitted together through broadening networks of exchange and communication. Seen from this perspective, recent globalization is merely the most recent chapter of industrialization—including the migration of industries and the draining of jobs from one region to another. Industries have life cycles. Finance and technology—and along with them workers, skills, livelihoods, resources, environmental change, waste, risk, and culture—move in complex and unpredictable ways, fickle with its favor.

But our most direct experience with industrial change—both growth and decline—occurs on the local level, where we share common experiences with friends and family, co-workers and neighbors. DIHI will capture the experience of Delawareans, across the different industries of all three counties and over time, to inform our state's civic discourse about who we are within the world of work, technology, and commerce, and where we want to go.

The state of Delaware provides a particularly interesting vantage point for a project of this nature. Although the Delawareans' experience with the chemical and finance industries are well known, tremendous diversity exists within the state, from industrial agriculture and aquaculture to renewable energy production. Moreover, the state is small, and the intimacy of residents' experiences with the ebb, flow, and consequences of the state's industries is more readily accessible to historical rendering. Our size permits a more comprehensive view of what is happening here. Straddling the Mason-Dixon Line, Delaware sits on the crossroads of north and south and provides an instructive alternative to the modernization narrative dominated by northern mill towns and free labor. The face of workers has also changed along with the work, as have origins of newcomers seeking jobs. Finally, having just lost their status as an auto-producing state and as a major financial center, Delawareans are having to confront the impact of de-industrialization and capital mobility.

Mode of Operation

DIHI will select and support projects proposed by the state's non-profit 501(c)3 organizations—museums, libraries, historical societies, universities and schools, neighborhood groups—that will retain control the content of the stories they tell. The program exists to partner with, advise, and financially support these agencies in helping them tell the stories they can best tell. It thus acts as both a patron and a clearinghouse.

DIHI also seeks to foster cooperation and synergies among these groups. **Agencies are strongly encouraged to pool resources or cooperate in in-kind arrangements.** For instance, university programs may be able to help local historical societies identify and interpret materials suitable for particular programs; alternately, two agencies who each have content critical to an innovative program, can pool resources and apply for DIHI support. Traditionally, Delaware's heritage agencies have been isolated from one another. Recently, Palinet has discovered that the majority of the heritage resources in the state's libraries and museums are inadequately preserved, poorly indexed, and functionally inaccessible. In these cases DIHI can act as a broker and can help develop synergies. More information on DIHI preservation support is given below.

The National Endowment for the Humanities, the source of DIHI funding, requires participants to match the funds that they request. In-kind resources, including any equipment and supplies purchased primarily to participate in DIHI, can serve for the purposes of the match.

The digitized artifacts remain the property of the participants. In order to ensure uniformity, they should confirm to the standard outlined in the DHF document, "Standards for Digitized Artifacts." Consultants for DHF will be able to assist participants with technical issues.

While the responsibility for DIHI projects will remain decentralized and under the control of DIHI participants, DHF will arrange for the centralized hosting and maintenance of the digital platform with a suitable partner.

Audience and Suggestions for Programming

DIHI programs will service multiple audiences:

- Delawareans generally will benefit from a historical perspective of its industries, whether in debates over public policy; initiatives by state, county, and city governments; or for personal interest. DIHI programs will foster participation in these conversations.
- Policy makers and their researchers will have a valuable resource.
- The content of DIHI programming can be integrated in school and university curricula, not only as a source for teachers, but also as the product of student assignments (e.g., oral histories).

- Visitors to the state can inform themselves on the richness of the state's past before their arrival; the programming may thus be a resource for state tourist boards.

Because of the diversity in such a universe of users, programming must be user-friendly. Online exhibits are one possibility. Student uploads of oral histories, videos, podcasts, and narrated slide shows are among the many possibilities that DIHI participants can pursue. Examples can include:

- Digitized photographs of a former industrial site that is arranged in a digital exhibit and tagged with GIS information. The user clicks on the picture which brings up a map with a superimposed thumbnail of the photograph indicating the area where the photograph's subject existed.

Selection of student-produced oral histories detailing, for instance, a neighborhood's experience with the closing of a mill or a farming community's efforts to adjust to the changes brought by large-scale industrial agriculture.

Podcast walking tours through a town's historic districts which includes photographs, maps, and narration that recount the economic life of the town.

Tagged map exhibits showing how the immigrant districts of a town have changed location and ethnic makeup over time. When the tool tip hovers over a neighborhood, the indexed contents of a database including demographic information, photographs, and oral histories is revealed which the user can access with a click.

Technical Support

Delaware Humanities Forum recognizes that many eligible participants in DIHI face financing and staffing challenges. In order that such challenges do not discourage participation in DIHI, Delaware Humanities Forum has partnered with museum and collections specialists at the University of Delaware and other organizations who have offered to advise interested organizations. Technical support can be made available to resolve digitization, preservation, and indexing issues. Financial support can be made toward these ends as part of the grant request.

Proposals (see Application Form) should be submitted by mail or email to:

Catherine E. Homsey
Program and Grant Officer
Delaware Humanities Forum
100 West Tenth St., Ste. 1009
Wilmington, DE 19801
(302) 657-0650 x14
ProgramOfficer@dhf.org

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