



Maine Humanities Council Facilitator Handbook

MHC is in a process of bringing all of our programs in line with our [mission, vision](#) and [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion plan](#). This means that we recruit, assign and support MHC facilitators and speakers in some new and different ways. We deeply value the growing diversity and range of experiences among our facilitators. MHC facilitators are such a core community to MHC. MHC facilitators make programs happen. We are very excited that our facilitator network has grown considerably and now is much wider in geographic range, range of lived experiences, professional experiences and racial and ethnic diversity. We will continue to welcome new facilitators and are also committed to provide robust training, support and professional development opportunities for all MHC facilitators.

This document is an explainer about MHC facilitator logistics from recruitment, onboarding, assignment and support. For guiding documents about substantive facilitation practices see our [“Talking About Texts”](#) booklet as well as other documents in the [facilitator toolkit area](#) of the MHC website.

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Recruitment & Onboarding

Recruitment

We have two recruitment methods:

1. [MHC welcomes applications from anyone who wishes to apply via application on our website](#). We strongly encourage current MHC facilitators, site partners and participants to apply or to refer people to apply. We review applications twice per year (April & September). We conduct interviews and invite candidates into our facilitator network based on their experience and interests.
2. Several times per year we partner closely with a community-based organization to invite people within their community to become facilitators with MHC. We also ask those people to complete an application and interview.

Our goal is to recruit, assign and support facilitators across the state of Maine in line with our mission, vision and program goals. We prioritize applications from people who:

- demonstrate an interest and passion in the humanities
- demonstrate interest and/or experience in facilitation practice that fosters genuine reciprocal communication
- are physically located in as wide a geography as possible across the state of Maine
- are deeply connected and rooted in their communities
- have been traditionally marginalized from humanities resources including people who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, including Latinx people and people of Middle Eastern & Asian descent, people who identify as LGBTQ+, people who live in rural areas, people with disabilities, people who identify as immigrants or refugees, and people whose first (or only) language is not English. *(Please note that this is not an exhaustive list.)*

Onboarding & Orientation

Once facilitators officially join the MHC facilitator network, we ask new facilitators to complete the [profile form](#) and attend a new facilitator orientation. We also ask new facilitators to observe at least one Discussion Project session (or 2). New facilitators are paid a \$50 stipend for each program observation & orientation attendance.

The orientation is mandatory for all new MHC facilitators. Returning facilitators are also welcome to attend if never attended before. The orientation is offered twice per year (January & August). Attendees are paid a \$50 stipend. The orientation is generally a 2-hour online commitment. In-person orientations may be offered in the future.

Assignment & Logistics

Apprenticeship & Mentorship

MHC offers the opportunity for facilitators to team up to co-facilitate with a seasoned MHC facilitator to practice skills before facilitating solo. This apprenticeship season is available to all new facilitators as well as returning facilitators who would like extra support and/or practice.

Pay Rates

MHC staff determine rates to offer all of our facilitator & speaker independent contractors. We aim for the rates to be standard and equitable. We do not determine rates on an individual basis. We review our rates annually and welcome feedback. The [current rates](#) are available below as well as in the facilitator toolkit.

For all independent contractors, MHC reimburses mileage based on the federal rate (\$.575 per mile for 2021) as well as other associated travel costs such as tolls.

Standard Rate - \$200 per session

This rate applies to most MHC assignments. Sessions generally last 90 minutes. This rate includes all necessary planning and preparation time. If a group cancels or reschedules abruptly, staff work with the contractor to find a suitable amended rate.

Apprentice Rate - \$125 per session

This rate applies to new facilitators and speakers who are assigned to train with an experienced facilitator for a project.

Augmented Rate - \$50 additional per session

This rate applies when the facilitation or speaking assignment requires extra labor above and beyond the average: when a contractor is asked to mentor an apprentice or when the assignment includes extra effort, time, or emotional labor. At staff discretion, we may offer \$50 x 2 additional per session when a contractor is asked to mentor an apprentice as well as engage with an assignment that requires extra effort or emotional labor.

Observation/Training - \$50 per session

This rate applies to attendance at mandatory training and for program observations.

Assignment & Tiers

We cannot guarantee facilitators assignments each season (nor do we require facilitators to accept assignments each season). Facilitation work with MHC is periodic, temporary, independent contractor work. We strive to offer assignments equitably and fairly. We want to be transparent about how we make assignment offers.

You can expect to hear from us in about the following months about assignments:

- May about Summer Discussion Project
- August about Fall Discussion Project
- December about Spring Discussion Project

Facilitators are always welcome to check in with Jan about their assignment status.

We maintain three tiers of active facilitators. An explanation about the tiers is below. We hope this system and explanation provides an opportunity for facilitators to assess and communicate their relationship with MHC regularly. Facilitators are welcome to step up, step back, request a conversation with staff at any time.

Tier 1 facilitators meet one or all of these criteria:

- they are new to MHC,
- are located in a geography where MHC needs additional facilitators to carry out programs
- are a member of a community who has been traditionally marginalized from the humanities: Black, Indigenous, People of Color, including Latinx people and people of Middle Eastern & Asian descent, people who identify as LGBTQ+, people who live in rural areas, people with disabilities, people who identify as immigrants or refugees, and people whose first (or only) language is not English. *(Please note that this is not an exhaustive list.)*

Tier 2 facilitators are important and valued MHC facilitators who meet one of these criteria:

- uphold and commit to MHC goals, mission and vision
- have been with MHC for many years
- have access to institutional and professional humanities opportunities and resources
- are physically located in a geography that is dense with MHC facilitators

Tier 2 facilitators may be asked to mentor apprentice facilitators.

Tier 3 facilitators:

- are apprentices or co-facilitators and are assigned to pair up with another facilitator.
- are facilitators with a particular specialty or niche

MHC staff will prioritize assigning facilitators in tier 1 each season. In addition to tier, MHC staff matches the proposed program and partner with a facilitator whose experience, expertise and interest and geographic proximity (if applicable) correspond to the program application. We aim to rotate facilitators and groups so that our facilitators are not always working with the same partners. We've found this is great for both the partners and facilitators.

Every 2 years, MHC will assign and assess tiers and be in communication with facilitators.

MHC maintains a list of facilitators who are open to being contracted directly by our partners.

Please let us know if you would like to be on this list.

Logistics

Once a facilitator has been assigned to a Discussion Project, they will be assigned an MHC staff point person for the project.

MHC will provide a contract to the facilitator that outlines the stipend rate and the facilitator responsibilities. ***MHC needs the signed contract returned within two weeks of issuance in order to effect payment at the conclusion of the program.***

Facilitators collect participant evaluations during the last session of the program (via Survey Monkey or printed paper copies provided by MHC).

At the conclusion of the Discussion Project, the facilitator must complete a [program evaluation](#) as well the [Travel/In Kind Form](#). ***These forms are a required by our accountant and must be received in order for MHC to process payment.***

Observation & Feedback

Each season, MHC staff will provide our facilitators with feedback from the site partner and participants in their Discussion Project.

Because we are a small staff and are often running 30 programs at a time, staff cannot visit all programs. We prioritize staff to visit new facilitators and new partner programs. We also ask facilitators to visit each other's groups to conduct peer observation and offer feedback to one another. [See the linked document and guidelines here](#). Facilitators are paid a stipend of \$50 for peer observations.

MHC staff will offer the opportunity for a group debrief with MHC staff and other facilitators or a 1:1 debrief. We hope to provide opportunities for reciprocal feedback: facilitators to MHC staff and MHC staff to facilitators so that we all may continue to learn and grow.

If MHC staff have a concern about a facilitator's work or a problem in a particular group, MHC staff commit to communicate about the concern clearly and promptly.

MHC staff welcome communication and feedback from facilitators of all kinds.

Professional Development

MHC asks our facilitators to attend at least 1 of the facilitator professional development offerings (in addition to the facilitator orientation) we plan for the calendar year. These offerings include trainings, skill shares, facilitator Discussion Project or a facilitator Cohort. If a stipend would make these offerings more available to you, we have a budget to offer attendance stipends to a

limited number of facilitators. If you would like to access a stipend for attendance, email Jan. The stipends will be offered on a first come, first serve basis. If there are other mitigating factors that make participating in one of the yearly offerings a challenge, communicate with Jan.

We recognize that there are a lot of other relevant facilitation workshops around and we encourage you to take advantage of them. However, we still ask you to attend one MHC-organized facilitator professional development offering every year because in addition to the information shared, we hope the offering also provides an important opportunity to connect with us as an organization and other MHC facilitators.

Training & Skill Shares

Each calendar year, MHC will offer 4 centralized professional development opportunities: generally, two trainings and two skill shares for MHC facilitators. Trainings are usually planned and initiated with an outside contractor/organization/individual who has skills/knowledge to share with MHC facilitators (a recent example includes the workshop with Wabanaki REACH). Skill shares are usually planned and facilitated by MHC staff and focus on practice and skills sharing among MHC facilitators (a recent example includes the Structure & Freedom in Online Discussions skill share offered in January 2021).

MHC will strive to offer trainings and skill shares in both online and in-person formats (post-pandemic) to create the greatest accessibility for the majority of our facilitators. Generally, the skill shares will be offered in winter and fall. The trainings will be offered in spring and summer.

Facilitator Discussion Project

Two times per year, MHC offers a Discussion Project for facilitators. This offering is a multi-session reading and discussion group convened by staff and open to about 15 MHC facilitators per season. The Discussion Project will invite facilitators to take turns practicing innovative facilitation modes, new ideas, facilitating challenging conversations, while reading the current MHC featured books.

Cohorts

Starting in 2022, MHC will offer the opportunity for MHC facilitators to connect in cohorts. These cohorts will be organized by region or by another shared experience. MHC facilitators are invited to join as many or as few cohorts as you would like to join (I.e. you could join your geographic cohort as well as your shared experience cohort).

The cohorts will be facilitated by MHC staff who will convene the cohort either online or in-person as determined by the members. The intention is for the cohort to be a professional facilitation learning community to build supportive peer relationships among MHC facilitators. A

cohort may opt to host their own Discussion Project with a MHC featured book or to host a discussion about an article, topic of interest, or to problem solve together. A cohort may decide to attend a training or learn a new facilitation practice together.

We ask facilitators to periodically conduct [peer observations](#) with each other. As part of the peer observation process, we ask facilitators to send MHC staff a debrief email. Peer observations come with a \$50 stipend. We will strive to make these peer observation pairs happen within a cohort (I.e. two members of the same cohort teamed up to visit each other's groups).