Interested in applying for a grant for your organization but a little unsure about how to write a proposal that will impress the judges?

Then you might consider attending the free grant proposal workshop on April 4 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Vineland Historical Society, 108 S. 7th St. The N.J. Council for the Humanities (NJCH), sponsoring agency for the workshop, offers grants ranging from $500 to $20,000 for “projects that connect communities and humanities scholars in meaningful ways,” according to Senior Program Officer Robert Apgar.

A recent example of how an NJCH grant benefited the immediate area was the Cumberland County Cultural & Historical Commission’s “West Jersey Time Traveler Project,” which creates audio podcasts of 15 historical sites throughout the region. Two are pictured here, the Garton Road Shul in Bridgeton and the Old Stone Schoolhouse in Greenwich.

Note the signage in front of each building with the words “Hear Here” prominently displayed. Then notice the digital symbol, otherwise known as a QR code. All a visitor to the site has to do is point his or her smart phone equipped with the free code reader at the sign, and an almost-instant podcast will load. Tapping the “play” button will bring the listener to a three to five-minute broadcast about salient features of the site.

“Many of our incredible historic landmarks are only open a few times a year,” said Matthew Pisarski, the Commission’s principal planner. “Until now, if a visitor showed up hoping to experience the site, the best he or she could do is peer inside the windows. These interactive podcasts make it possible to have a rich experience 365 days a year, even if the building is closed.”

The project earned the Commission a “Leadership in History Award of Merit” from the American Association for State and Local History.

NJCH awards major grants of up to $20,000 twice a year and mini grants of up to $3,000 four times a year. For projects beginning on or after Aug. 1, 2014, the draft deadline for "Leadership in History Award of Merit” from the American Association for State and Local History.

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Historical Society marks 150th year

The Vineland Historical and Antiquarian Society is showing its age but is proud of it—150 years old this year, established in 1864 just three years after Vineland was founded by Charles K. Landis.

Officials point out with some pride that it is New Jersey’s oldest local historical society. To mark the occasion, several events are planned, including a photography contest, presentations on black history and women’s history, a historic trolley tour of Vineland, all capped off with a semi-formal anniversary gala in December at Eastlynn Country Club.

Three local residents will be honored at the gala: Arjorie Ingraham of Vineland, longtime member who has collected regional memorabilia for many years, including Vineland postcards; Kevin Kirchner, also of Vineland, who has re-created the tourist attraction of the 1930s, the “Palace of Depression”; and Vincent Farinaccio of Millville, author and musician who writes the “Vintage Vineland” column for The Grapevine.

Since its beginning in 1864, the society’s mission has been to document the lives of individuals and events that have shaped the community. Collections include books, photographs, artifacts and other records of daily life and significant events.

The Society, at 108 S. 7th St., is open Tuesday through Saturday from 1 to 4 p.m. Assistance with library and research facilities is available by appointment by calling at least one week in advance at 856-691-1111 or emailing VinelandHistory@gmail.com.

Grants available for humanities projects

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major grants is April 1 and the application deadline May 1. For mini grants, the draft deadline is April 15 and the application deadline May 15 for projects on or after Aug. 1, 2014; for projects on or after Nov. 1, 2014, the draft deadline is July 15 and the application deadline Aug. 15.

Detailed information about requirements for grant proposals is available at the web site, njch.org/programs/grants, but in general the judges are looking for projects that:

- Present fresh and original ideas;
- Foster public discourse;
- Promote cross-cultural understanding; and
- Exhibit contemporary relevance.

The New Jersey Council for the Humanities is a nonprofit organization that was established in 1972 as a state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

According to its official statement, “the Council serves the people of New Jersey by developing, supporting and promoting projects that explore and interpret the human experience, foster cross-cultural understanding and engage people in dialogue about matters of individual choice and public responsibility.”