



# STATE HUMANITIES COUNCILS

TRANSFORM LIVES . CONNECT COMMUNITIES . ENRICH THE NATION

## WHO WE ARE

Since the late 1960s, State Humanities Councils have been enriching the human spirit by promoting history, literature, philosophy, and ethics in hundreds of communities across America. The Councils are the neighborhood faces of the humanities.

State Humanities Councils help communities understand their past, analyze their present, get through difficult times, and visualize better futures. Councils provide those vital moments for Americans to appreciate the values, ideas, and experiences that sometimes are lost in the daily grind or crisis of the moment.

The 56 Councils are 501(c)(3) independent, nonprofit organizations organized pursuant to the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1964, run by small staffs, and governed by local volunteer boards drawn from academia and the public. They support grassroots humanities programs and public community-based activities in each State and U.S. Territory.

Partially funded by the Federal Government through the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Councils also benefit from funding from private donations, foundations, corporations, and state governments.

## WHAT THE COUNCILS DO

Each Council produces its own workshops, programs, and events that explore those aspects of the humanities most appropriate to local or state needs and interests. The net result is a celebration and enhancement of the best in American and world culture.

Native American storytelling, teacher enrichment seminars, adult literacy courses, discussion forums, festivals to celebrate diverse heritages, civic engagement projects – all have grown from State Humanities Councils and local partners.

“A nation that does not know why it exists, or what it stands for, cannot long be expected to flourish,” said Bruce Cole, the Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

And former NEH chair Bill Ferris has noted, the humanities “deepen our understanding of the nation and of the people who journeyed here from throughout the world, forging their diverse histories into a distinctive American culture.”

The Councils currently focus on such activities as:

- Opportunities to build community through civic conversations, including dynamic speakers, exhibits, films, books, dramatic presentations, or other formats that provide a historical or cultural context for looking at basic human questions.
- Expanded reading and literacy programs that bring community members together to discuss books and ideas with their neighbors and that create lifelong readers, among both native and new English speakers.
- Local historical, literary, and cultural programs that inform, inspire, and unify.

## WHAT THE FEDERATION DOES

The Federation of State Humanities Councils, founded in 1977, is the membership association of the State and Territory Councils.

Through its program of research, conferences, collaborative projects, and communication to members, legislators and others on issues of public interest, the Federation provides support and leadership for the State Humanities Councils and strives to create greater awareness of the humanities in public and private life.

## WHAT WE NEED

Unmet needs in the states exceed \$150 million.

The Federal/State partnership line of the National Endowment for the Humanities budget should be funded at \$75-100 million to support core public programming and other community needs.

**The Federation of State Humanities Councils**  
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‘An advanced civilization must not limit its efforts to science and technology alone, but must give full value and support to the other great branches of scholarly and cultural activity in order to achieve a better understanding of the past, a better analysis of the present and a better view of the future’

— The National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1964