



State Humanities Councils: Serving Those Who Serve

Visit statehumanities.org to learn more about the veteran experience in your state.

MISSOURI HUMANITIES COUNCIL

Proud to Be: Writings by American Warriors, Vol 6 Release

Micah Usher

Support for Veterans Through the Humanities

Services members come from all fifty states, five territories, and the District of Columbia, and when those men and women return to civilian life, each of them has a state humanities council eager to engage them, their families, and their communities. Veterans are deserving of our gratitude for their years of service and personal sacrifice, and those same qualities allow them to be strong and involved members of a community. That is why state humanities councils across the country have developed programming, public events, publications, and other resources tailored to veterans in their states.



State Humanities Councils are eager to engage veterans, their families, and their communities.

For many veterans, reintegration can be a profound and jarring event. The weather is different, the people are different, driving down the street is different, and tasks that once felt routine may now feel clumsy. It takes time to become re-acclimated to the habits of life before deployment, and state councils are there to help. Councils around the country have created programs that directly address service members' journeys home, like **Colorado Humanities'** *Denver Veterans Writing Workshop* and the *Still Coming Home* anthology, which give veterans a space to write about their experiences of war and later participate in a series of public readings and community conversations. **Illinois Humanities** similarly offers *Talking Service: A Veterans Discussion Group*, which meets regularly around the state and offers veterans a chance to engage with literature and each other.



Case in Point

California Humanities' *War Comes Home* initiative completed 856 programs and events for nearly two million Californians, with the goals of strengthening connections between veterans and their communities and increasing awareness and understanding of the impacts of the last 17 years of war.



HUMANITIES TEXAS
David Kennedy and
WWII Veterans



CALIFORNIA HUMANITIES
War Ink
Johann Wolf

For many state councils, a veteran's homecoming launches a lifetime of opportunities for engagement and enrichment through the humanities. Indeed, state councils work with veterans throughout their post-military lives, providing significant material support to education initiatives. Consider **Ohio Humanities'** work with Wright State University's Veteran and Military Center, which taught student veterans to record oral histories from other veterans and then produce those stories for radio. The **Missouri Humanities Council** has for years provided veterans with free, college-level writing workshops that empower them and their families to develop writing skills and share their stories with the community. The best of these, along with poetry, fiction, essays, interviews, and photography from other veterans across America, are published each year in the *Proud to Be: Writing by American Warriors* anthology, which celebrates the experiences of soldiers, illuminates military life for those who have not served, and preserves those perspectives for future generations.



<1%
U.S. population
in active
duty military
service

<8%
U.S. population
with any
military
service

The state councils understand that a crucial part of supporting veterans is strengthening their connections with civilians. Less than one percent of the U.S. population is active duty



Literature and Medicine
strengthens relationships
between civilians and veterans
across the country.

military, and less than eight percent have served in any capacity, which means most Americans have little understanding of military service. To bridge that gap, councils like the **Minnesota Humanities Center** have created programs such as the *Veterans' Voices Awards* to identify and honor current and former members of the military who have made extraordinary contributions to their communities. Likewise, programs like *The Telling Project* have partnered with the **Florida Humanities Council** to give veterans and their families a venue to directly communicate with their communities through scripted performances based on their own experiences.

These programs have improved relations and understanding between civilians and veterans across the country. Such understanding is especially important at healthcare facilities. Veterans Affairs hospitals rely on thousands of civilians to care for their patients, and thanks to programs like *Literature & Medicine*, a reading and discussion group created by the **Maine Humanities Council** that has expanded to many other states, those civilians are able to gain a better understanding of their work, colleagues, and the veterans for whom they care.