



# 2024-26 Strategic Plan

# OVERVIEW

Founded in 1977, the Federation is the national membership organization for the state and jurisdictional humanities councils. Rooted in the distinctive places and people they serve, the councils are independent nonprofit organizations that conduct and fund public humanities programs, engaging millions of people in community and civic life. The councils are funded in part by the federal government through the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

The humanities, including history, ethics, literature, philosophy—and the reflection and connection they invite—make communities stronger. As the legislation that created the NEH in 1965 states, “democracy demands wisdom and vision in its citizens.” Today, cultivating wisdom and vision calls for centering the diversity of peoples’ identities, experiences, and needs.

The Federation serves the councils in every state and jurisdiction by fostering connections and deepening their networks, providing resources and capacity-sharing opportunities, acting as a liaison with the NEH, and advocating to Congress for federal funding.

## Mission

The Federation advocates for increased investment in and engagement with the national network of humanities councils. We support, connect, and amplify the work and voices of our members, demonstrating councils’ value for communities and their collective impact on civic health and cultural vibrancy.

## Values

In support of our history, mission, and vision, the Federation seeks to embody and promote:

## Accountability

We take responsibility for our journey of becoming an equitable organization and commit to taking action for positive change in all aspects of our work with members and external stakeholders.

## VISION

We envision a fully-resourced, inclusive, and thriving humanities council network that builds capacity for people and communities throughout the country to understand one another and navigate together towards a just future.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

**Eva Caldera**  
Federation Board  
Chair

**Paxton Williams**  
Former Federation  
Board Chair

## Inclusion

We expand access, remove barriers to participation, and intentionally invite participation from historically marginalized people and all communities.

## Service

We serve members by providing valuable resources, guidance, information, expertise, convenings, and advocacy that reflects their diverse interests, needs, and concerns.

## Transparency

We invite shared decision-making and collaboration through openness and clarity with our stakeholders.

## Understanding

We participate in active listening, purposeful interactions, and reflective practices.

# THE PLAN

The following plan outlines the strategic focus areas that will guide the Federation's work in 2024-26 as well as long-term goals that will move us forward. These strategic focus areas are how we will realize our mission, vision, and values.

### 1. Congressional Advocacy

### 2. Partnership with NEH

### 3. Membership Council Resource

### 4. Centering Equity

## STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Adam Davis**  
Executive Director  
Oregon Humanities

**Carrie deGuzman**  
Director of  
Communications &  
Development  
Federation Staff

**Jodi Graham**  
Executive Director  
Utah Humanities

**Christopher Kaufman  
Ilstrup**  
Executive Director  
Vermont Humanities

**Terri Jett**  
Federation Board  
Vice Chair

**Jason Mancini**  
Executive Director  
Connecticut Humanities

**Susan McCarthy**  
Former Federation  
Board Chair

**Julie Mulvihill**  
Executive Director  
Humanities Kansas

**Leo Pangelinan**  
Executive Director  
Northern Marianas  
Islands Humanities

**John Phillip Santos**  
Federation Board  
Member

**Phoebe Stein**  
President  
Federation Staff

**Theresa Worden**  
Senior Manager, Data &  
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**Kara Hendren**  
Events &  
Communications  
Associate

**Joy Hickey**  
Director of Finance &  
Operations

**Edward Moreno**  
Events Manager

**Phoebe Stein**  
President

**Theresa Worden**  
Senior Manager, Data &  
Evaluation

## Strategic Focus #1: Congressional Advocacy

The Federation is the sole organization that advocates for federal funding for the collective state and jurisdictional humanities councils. We partner with member councils and work with our legislative counsel, humanities and arts advocates, and legislators to request and receive the federal resources needed to continue and expand council work.

## Strategic Focus #2: Partnership with NEH

The Federation will deepen and strengthen councils' partnership with NEH through regular communication and consultation and will work towards a future shaped by flexibility and recognition of council leadership.



Photo Credit: Harley Avery. NEH Chair Shelly C. Lowe with 2023 Equitable Access Grantees



## Strategic Focus #3: Member Council Resource

As the collective voice and national advocate for the councils, the Federation actively engages in national efforts to broaden public access to the humanities, raises awareness of the essential role of humanities councils, and fosters connections among councils, learning spaces, and affinity groups. The Federation must elevate and grow ongoing partnerships, set strategic legislative priorities, and build productive, accessible convenings.

## Strategic Focus #4: Centering Equity

As a staff and board of dynamic humanities supporters and advocates, we aim to lead with an equity lens comprising diverse perspectives, inclusive practices, and accessible frameworks for our collective success. We aim to align mission, vision, and values with Federation policies, procedures, and power-sharing organization-wide. We see this work as a collaboration with our staff, board, Racial Equity Committee, and affinity groups.



Photo Credit: Southern Festival of Books 2022 Tennessee Humanities