



Connecticut Humanities Council

2007/2008 Program Profile





Who We Are

The Connecticut Humanities Council is a state-based affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, incorporated in Connecticut in 1973 as a public foundation with an initial operating budget of \$350,000.

Over the ensuing three decades, the Council's funding base and program scope have broadened dramatically. Today, the Council's \$3.7 million budget rests on an annual \$2.5 million annual appropriation from the Connecticut General Assembly, major support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, collaborative granting and programming arrangements with community foundations and state-wide cultural agencies, and contributions from corporations, foundations and private donors.

The Council is governed by 25 board members, six of whom are appointed by the Governor and the remainder elected by the Council itself from nominations submitted from the general public. Members are drawn from across the state and represent the many key constituencies crucial to our work – museums, heritage organizations, universities, scholarly organizations, professional groups, schools, foundations and corporations. Council members serve up to three two-year terms and are required to be active members of at least one of the Council's standing committees, where the bulk of our decision-making takes place.

The CHC has a staff of 19 and maintains offices in a new, 7,200 square foot facility in Middletown. For more information on the Humanities Council and our work, please visit www.ctculture.org or call (860) 685-2260.



What We Do

The Council's federally mandated mission is a broad and imposing one:

“To provide opportunities for all the people of Connecticut to rediscover the joy of life-long learning, to see themselves in the full context of their history and heritage, and to explore the infinite variety of human thought and experience contained in the humanities that give shape and direction to our lives.”

The Council's achievements over the years flow from a decision two decades ago to focus its available resources on a narrow agenda and do a few things well and in depth. Consequently, the CHC purposefully organizes its work around the two most significant and publicly relevant humanities disciplines – history and literature. In both these program strands, we act both as grant-makers and as program initiators. Our choice has always been to utilize our core capacities and expertise to achieve meaningful impact rather than maintain a broad and diffuse programming agenda.



Why Our Programs Matter

The varied disciplines of the humanities all assist us in reflecting on our lives and answering fundamental questions about value, purpose and meaning. In a world that can seem increasingly superficial, we seek to help our fellow citizens see their own lives and the world around them in a more knowledgeable and thoughtful way and in doing so promote a society that values ideas, reflection, critical thinking, informed discussion and reasoned action. We believe that what makes us truly human is the capacity to think and reflect, to assess and to change and that nurturing those capacities is fundamental to our individual futures and that of our state.

These general ideals play themselves out in a more specific fashion in our granting programs and Council-conducted initiatives. Our granting programs strengthen the organizational capacities of the state's local heritage institutions, allow them to tell their stories in more sophisticated and effective ways and deepen the appreciation of citizens at the local level of the traditions, values and accomplishments that have shaped their communities and link them to their neighbors. Our various reading programs offer lifelong learning opportunities for adults by connecting them with the great books and great ideas of our literary heritage. Our family literacy initiatives open up the world of books to children, encourage reading as a family exercise, stimulate discussion of important issues in a family context, and promote lifelong library patronage. Our public policy programs bring a necessary sense of historical context and perspective to the discussion and resolution of contemporary public issues.



Heritage Programming

A bedrock assumption of the Council's work is that an appreciation of the past gives essential perspective and context to contemporary life. As a state-based organization, we are particularly committed to increasing public awareness of Connecticut's truly remarkable history and, through the various programs outlined in the following pages, assist the state's many museums, heritage organizations and historical societies to bring the essential stories of our past to the public.

Since 1995, and with support from the Connecticut General Assembly, the bulk of this agenda has been served by the Council's *Cultural Heritage Development Fund* (CHDF), which has distributed over \$10 million to heritage organizations large and small for projects bringing Connecticut's rich heritage to the public.

Much has changed in that period in the environment in which our state's heritage organizations operate. Nontraditional audiences have placed new demands on our heritage organizations. New media and new technologies are dramatically changing the way audiences expect to experience leisure and learning. And, at the same time that audience expectations and the institutional costs of meeting them are rising, participation and public support are declining.

In 2006-2007 the Council convened a broad cross section of museum and heritage institution leaders to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the challenges currently facing the state's heritage community and to re-think our granting programs and direct services to better reflect the needs of the heritage community.

The result is the *Connecticut Heritage Revitalization Initiative*, a 5-year project that includes:

- A new CHC granting initiative, *the Connecticut Heritage Revitalization Fund* (CHRF) that focuses on organizational capacity building and audience-focused public programming.
- New direct service programs for the museum field to strengthen the CHC's traditional concern for effective public programming by assisting Connecticut's heritage organizations to better understand and serve their audiences.
- Educational programs that take advantage of new ways to communicate through technology in order to more effectively convey the stories of Connecticut's rich history to school children and the general public.

■ HERITAGE GRANTING INITIATIVES

Connecticut Heritage Revitalization Fund

(new program for 2007/2008)

2007-2008 Budget: \$1,262,306

The *Connecticut Heritage Revitalization Fund* provides the state's heritage organizations with the capacity to step back from accustomed ways of fulfilling their mission and review "best thinking" and practices in the museum field, and from that perspective to reexamine their connections with their audiences, their internal operations, business plans and the effectiveness of their public programming. Our primary goal is to assist the heritage community in translating those reassessments into a revitalized programming agenda that will enlarge and engage their audiences, bring Connecticut's rich history to a broader public and create platforms for organizational stability and sustainable growth.

This program offers funding under two grant lines:

1. Organizational Effectiveness

This internally-focused granting initiative supports three major aspects of institutional reassessment: *Audience Assessment*, *Institutional Effectiveness* and *Financial Stabilization Planning*.

2. Community Impact

This externally-focused grant line supports three key components of effective organizational outreach and programming: *Innovative Public Programs and Strategic Activities*, *Communications Initiatives* and *Evaluation*.

Greater Hartford Heritage Advancement Program

In collaboration with the Greater Hartford Arts Council and the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

2007-2008 Budget: \$211,105 (total contributions of all partners)

This joint granting program conducted by the CHC and the Greater Hartford Arts Council, with additional funding from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, provides matching grants designed to help heritage organizations address professional staffing needs previously identified through a formal strategic planning process. Funded positions typically include curatorial services, organizational management, fundraising/public relations and education.

Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants

In collaboration with the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation.

2007-2008 Budget: \$572,210 (combined contributions of both partners)

This granting program supports efforts that help communities incorporate historic preservation initiatives into land use and redevelopment plans. Funded projects typically include historic structure reports, feasibility studies for reuse and historic building and district designations. The program is administered by the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation.

Community Foundation Collaborations

In collaboration with the Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut, Middlesex County Community Foundation and Tri-County Community Foundation.

2007-2008 Budget: \$54,994

The *Community Foundation Collaborations* program provides modest grants to Connecticut community foundations with limited operating budgets to incorporate support for heritage programming into their granting priorities. The Council maintains collaborations with the Middlesex County Community Foundation, Tri-County Community Foundation (northeast Connecticut) and the Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut.

■ COUNCIL-CONDUCTED HERITAGE INITIATIVES

Connecticut Heritage Resource Center

(new program for 2007/2008)

2007-2008 Budget: \$60,500

Hosted on the Humanities Council's Web site at www.ctculture.org, the resource center is a collection of the best current literature on museum practice, as well as "how to" manuals and models on: 1) conducting surveys (both audience surveys to determine interests and visitor surveys to measure program impact), 2) effective Website construction and maintenance, 3) marketing manuals including methods for new media, 4) completed audience impact and economic impact studies, 5) guides to the granting programs and application procedures of major heritage funding sources, both in Connecticut and nationally, and 6) other technical publications and materials on museum "best practices" that support the preparation of successful grant proposals.

Connecticut Heritage Field Services Program

(new program for 2007/2008)

2007-2008 Budget: \$67,700

This series of Council-conducted seminars and conferences connects museum management and board members with current strategic thinking and "best practices" in the field of audience studies, effective use of media, programming, development, marketing and organizational structure and leadership. Additional CHC-administered training seminars for museum line staff include effective interventions/interactions with the "new" visitor, customer service training, training on how to design programs and exhibits for enhanced visitor experiences, fundraising techniques, and use of technology and media.

Encyclopedia of Connecticut History Online

In collaboration with the Office of the State Historian, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences of the University of Connecticut and Connecticut History Online.

2007-2008 Budget: \$93,336

The *Encyclopedia of Connecticut History Online* (ECHO) is a "state of the art," comprehensive online resource on the state's heritage resources containing professionally researched and written essays and entries on significant themes, events, and personalities in Connecticut's past, town histories, bibliographic aids, an array of links to relevant museum resources and programs, curriculum guides and materials and other services, both as classroom aids for teachers and

students and as a central, immediately accessible “content resource” for all those interested in our past. Scheduled for completion in 2009, ECHO will feature content entries linked directly to relevant archival records, historical photographs and images and other primary materials from our past now on the Internet through *Connecticut History Online*, a long-standing digitization project that the CHC joined as a partner this year.

Connecticut History Online

(new program for 2007/2008)

In collaboration with the Connecticut State Library, Mystic Seaport, the Connecticut Historical Society and the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center of the University of Connecticut.

2007-2008 Budget: \$55,000

This year, the Humanities Council joins a longstanding consortium of organizations that are building *Connecticut History Online*, a Web-based resource for documents, images and other primary source materials on Connecticut history. Under the collaboration, program partners will digitize additional archival resources and link them to the Humanities Council’s *Encyclopedia of Connecticut History Online* (ECHO).

Connecticut History Resources for the Classroom

(new program for 2007/2008)

In collaboration with the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies.

2007-2008 Budget: \$55,000

A curriculum resources initiative to enhance the teaching of American history in Connecticut schools through online access to primary source materials, thematic essays, media products and other resources in Connecticut history that enable students to see the sweep of the American past in the stories of their own towns and family heritage.

The Story of Connecticut

(planning initiative)

In collaboration with Connecticut Public Television.

This seven-installment series of documentaries to be produced in collaboration with Connecticut Public Television will tell the story of Connecticut from its earliest beginnings to the present. Now in the planning stages, *The Story of Connecticut* will include related media materials for use in the classroom. It is the next phase of a 14-year collaboration with CPTV that has produced 17 installments of the Emmy Award-winning *Connecticut Experience* documentary series on Connecticut history.

Reading Initiatives

Literature and reading have long been mainstays of the Council's work, with a focus on programs that move beyond the technical aspects of literacy to emphasize books as a gateway to lifelong learning. Since 1998, the Council has offered highly successful theme-based book discussion programs for school-aged children and adults in public libraries throughout the state. That agenda was greatly expanded in 2003 as the Council sought to address the needs of economically-disadvantaged audiences while building a continuum of age-appropriate reading experiences from infancy well into retirement.

Having established a comprehensive set of reading programs to serve all ages over the past decade, the Humanities Council is now launching *Everyone Reads*, a 5-year, \$7.2 million initiative that integrates the CHC's current reading offerings to build interest and participation in "enriched reading" across the full range of age, educational and income groups in Connecticut. The program builds on the work of the state's many organizations that focus on basic reading skills by providing abundant and continuing opportunities for people of all ages to use literacy skills throughout their lives to open up the world of books, remain lifelong learners and become active participants in our cultural life.

As a first step, the Humanities Council will act as a convener to coordinate, expand and make more efficient and cost-effective the efforts of Connecticut's diverse range of traditional agencies and institutions committed to enriched reading in the general public. As an agenda of parallel importance, we will also expand our current efforts to embed enriched reading programs in the institutional structures of non-traditional reading organizations such as urban family resource centers, afterschool programs, Boys and Girls clubs, Even Start organizations and similar agencies serving disadvantaged populations by formally training staff there to become enriched reading leaders and advocates.

■ READING PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Motheread/Fatheread Connecticut

In collaboration with the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, Connecticut Community Foundation and the Community Foundation of Southeastern Connecticut.

2007-2008 Budget: \$371,689

Based on more than 30 multicultural children's books, *Motheread/Fatheread* is a national, award-winning English/Spanish family reading program that primarily serves lower income parents with limited reading skills and uses a humanities approach to immerse parents and toddlers in family reading experiences. The program is offered to parents through local social service and adult education agencies whose staff members have been certified to teach the *Motheread* curriculum through Council-conducted training institutes.

This year, the Council will focus on strengthening existing *Motheread* relationships with Even Start programs, family resource centers and other community organizations of proven effectiveness, as well as forging new relationships with organizations that emphasize parental involvement as a key to children's education and life development.

Book Voyagers in Libraries

2007-2008 Budget: \$154,979

This long-standing, statewide family reading program reaches elementary and middle school-age children and serves to build a lifelong habit of independent reading for pleasure and insight. Based in libraries, the program's curriculum spans award-winning classics old and new, from sessions exploring the *Harry Potter* series to *Power Talk* book discussion groups in which parents and children explore character-building themes such as courage and honesty. The Council covers up to 75% of each program's cost, provides the services of a skilled discussion leader and copies of books, discussion guides and promotional materials. *Book Voyagers* has been recognized by the Connecticut Library Consortium with the Faith Hektoen Award for contributions to library services for children.

Book Voyagers Afterschool

2007-2008 Budget: \$125,614

In 2004, the Humanities Council introduced its time-tested *Book Voyagers* discussion program for children into the afterschool programs of four Hartford elementary schools. The program was intended to both augment the rigorous

work taking place in the classroom to boost children’s reading skills and to give them an opportunity to experience the pleasure and joy of reading as an every-day activity. Working with the schools’ literacy facilitators, we aligned the program’s curriculum with reading strands of the Connecticut Mastery Test to ensure that it reinforces classroom learning and supports reading achievement.

With the endorsement of the Hartford Public School System Superintendent’s Office, the program will expand this year to ten schools. The Council has also expanded the program’s curriculum from four to eight weeks in order to increase its impact on reading readiness, and will offer “family night” storytelling sessions to increase parental involvement in *Book Voyagers* schools.

■ LITERATURE PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

Literature for a Lifetime

2007-2008 Budget: \$148,338

Based on a lending library of over 10,000 volumes, this longstanding, CHC-developed initiative enables Connecticut’s public libraries to host substantive reading and discussion sessions for adults in the community, led by literature and history scholars. The CHC covers up to 75% of the program’s cost and supplies books, materials and a skilled discussion leader to run each program. Host libraries may select from a menu of forty-eight compelling, theme-based seminars focusing on current bestsellers, important chapters in Connecticut and American history, and great works of literature. Last year, 41 libraries across the state conducted *Literature for a Lifetime* programs.

Reflections in Retirement (planning initiative)

2007-2008 Budget: \$13,798

Expanding program services to Connecticut’s over-60 population is a high priority for the CHC in 2007/2008. Over the year, the Council will be conducting in depth audience research to clarify the cultural interests and needs of specific sectors of this population to inform our decisions on appropriate programming to serve them.

Humanities Seminars in the Professions

2007-2008 Budget: \$21,079

Through this initiative, the Council sponsors humanities seminars led by university faculty for professionals in the fields of medicine, law and philanthropy. Participants read and discuss a variety of significant historical and literary works, which serve to illuminate and explore complex issues present in their professional and personal lives.

Gateway to the Humanities

In collaboration with Trinity College.

2007-2008 Budget: \$37,873

Gateway to the Humanities offers an intensive eight-month curriculum in the core disciplines of the humanities to economically disadvantaged adults. In many cases, students who complete the program find the inner direction and confidence to enter higher education or professional training for the first time. Courses are taught by Trinity faculty members and graduates receive 3 credit hours that are transferable to other colleges and universities. The Humanities Council funds instructor salaries, text books and classroom materials and a portion of the program's administrative overhead.

Public Policy Programs in Libraries

In collaboration with the World Affairs Council of Connecticut.

2007-2008 Budget: \$10,000

This collaborative pilot program offers literature-based discussions on international public policy issues in libraries. Through the program, the CHC funds public talks organized by the World Affairs Council of Connecticut and hosts book discussions at local libraries that explore related themes through literature.



Our Funding

Fiscal Year 2007/2008 **July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008**

Funding

State of Connecticut	\$2,527,500
National Endowment for the Humanities	\$972,571
Corporate & Foundation Grants	\$142,550
Individual Gifts & Donations	\$55,000
Earned Income	\$36,360
Total	\$3,733,981

Expenditures

Granting Programs	\$1,500,615
CHC-conducted Programs	\$1,339,377
General Administration	\$436,999
Development, Promotion and Advocacy	\$451,693
Other	\$5,297
Total	\$3,733,981



Our Fundraising

Support for the CHC's work from the foundation and corporate sectors has traditionally comprised approximately ten percent of our overall operating budget and supported specific program initiatives often at the regional level. That strategy has changed dramatically this year as the Council anticipates the substantial funding needs of its *Heritage Revitalization Initiative* and *Everyone Reads* program over the next three years. We project that the programs will require an additional \$6 million in outside funding through fiscal year 2010/2011 and are currently preparing major funding proposals for both programs that target national and state funding sources, as well as individual donors. This unprecedented level of support is essential to the programs' success and will play a much larger role in the CHC's operational budget in the coming years.

Friends of the Connecticut Humanities Council

Gifts received through the end of the Council's most recent fiscal year (June 30, 2007)

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