

Connecticut Humanities Council

2009/2010 Program Profile



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Museum Consultant

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Who We Are

A state-based affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Connecticut Humanities Council was established in 1974 as a public, non profit 501(c)(3) 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 budget rests on an annual \$2.26 million annual appropriation from the Connecticut General Assembly, major support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, granting and programming partnerships with community foundations and statewide cultural agencies, and contributions from corporations, foundations and private donors. It is now the third largest humanities council in the nation with an operating budget of \$3.59 million.

The Council is governed by twenty-five 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 Connecticut Humanities Council has a staff of eighteen and maintains offices in Middletown, Connecticut. For more information on the Council and our work, please visit www.ctculture.org or call (860) 685-2260. We look forward to hearing from you!



What We Do

The Connecticut Humanities Council’s mission has always been a broad and ambitious 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 carefully and do a few things well and in depth. Consequently, the Council 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 narrowly concentrate our available resources to have a true statewide impact in bringing these two core humanities disciplines to the public. And, in both, our emphasis is on strengthening organizational capacity and ensuring long-range stability rather than simply funding individual projects.



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 reading 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.

Heritage Programs

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 Connecticut-based organization, we are particularly committed to increasing public awareness of the state’s truly remarkable history and assisting the state’s many museums, heritage organizations and historical societies in bringing the essential stories of our past to the public.

PROGRAMS FOR HERITAGE MUSEUMS AND HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

Connecticut Heritage Revitalization Fund

2009-2010 Budget: \$918,185

The *Connecticut Heritage Revitalization Fund* (CHRF) is designed to strengthen the institutional structures and programming capacities of Connecticut’s heritage organizations in a time of unprecedented challenge.

The 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. The CHRF encourages institutions to reexamine their connections with their audiences, their internal operations and 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 a foundation for organizational stability and sustainable growth.

Heritage Resource Center and Field Services Program

2009-2010 Budget: \$196,020

The *Heritage Resource Center and Field Services Program* is an online information resource through which the Humanities Council organizes and distributes relevant research, current thinking and best practices in the museum field, as well as white papers on best practices emerging from Connecticut’s museum community itself.

The Center functions both as a virtual and physical space to distribute authoritative information (books, materials, reports and our own insights) reflecting current best practices in the field in a wide array of core museum activities. It also serves

as a convener that organizes, promotes and facilitates information exchange across the field as a whole and among particular communities of interest through workshops on current trends and best practices for museum staff. And perhaps most importantly, it serves as a powerful vehicle for actual institutional change by encouraging the adoption of cutting-edge museum practices, which the CHC can then financially support through its *Connecticut Heritage Revitalization Fund*.

HERITAGE PROGRAMS FOR THE PUBLIC

Encyclopedia of Connecticut History Online (ECHO)

In collaboration with the Office of the State Historian, Connecticut History Online and the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies

2009-2010 Budget: \$387,106

When launched in 2012, ECHO will be a comprehensive Internet-based resource on Connecticut history that will integrate more than 1400 scholar-written articles and essays with thousands of digitized images collected from the state's major archival repositories and streaming video drawn from the Council's seven-teen-program *Connecticut Experience* series on Connecticut Public Television. The site will also include thematic linkages to the state's heritage organizations and their varied resources, a constantly updated heritage calendar of events and exhibits, and a steadily increasing number of "Connecticut resources based" curriculum units for use in U.S. history classrooms across the state.

Connecticut History Resources for the Classroom

In collaboration with the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies

2009-2010 Budget: \$59,115

This project will result in the creation of an ever-expanding array of lesson units for U.S. History and Social Studies teachers that illuminate important themes in U.S. history from a Connecticut perspective. The units are written by a team of Connecticut social studies teachers, reviewed by staff at the NEAG School of Education at the University of Connecticut, piloted in selected classrooms and made available statewide through the Council's *Encyclopedia of Connecticut History Online*. An essential element of the project is a planned blog for teachers to post comments on teaching techniques, classroom successes, best practices and other feedback and conversation to make the curriculum units more effective.

COLLABORATIVE HERITAGE PROGRAMS

Connecticut History Online

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

2009-2010 Budget: \$67,635

This partnership between the Council and a longstanding consortium of the state's major archival repositories expands the holdings of *Connecticut History Online (CHO)*, a Web-based resource for documents, images and other primary source materials on Connecticut history. The partnership is integrating thousands of CHO's digital objects with content in the Council's *Encyclopedia of Connecticut History Online*. The partners are also identifying, prioritizing and digitizing other important collections of historical materials in the state.

Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants

In collaboration with the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

2009-2010 Budget: \$100,000 (Connecticut Humanities Council contribution)

This granting program supports efforts that help communities develop historic preservation initiatives in conjunction with 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 and co-funded 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

2009-2010 Budget: \$42,750

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.

Reading Programs

Literature and reading have long been mainstays of the Council’s work. Our focus is not on the technical aspects of literacy but those that emphasize books as a gateway to lifelong learning. Since 1998, the Council has annually offered more than 100 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 and build a continuum of age-appropriate reading experiences from infancy well into retirement.

READING PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Family Read

2009-2010 Budget: \$168,623

Family Read is a Council-created adaptation of the core family reading techniques found in the nationally respected *Motheread/Fatheread* program. Based on 110 award-winning children’s books in both English and Spanish, the program features a ten-session “learn by doing” reading and discussion curriculum in which participants themselves use the book discussion process to develop family reading techniques such as how to read dramatically, recognize themes and discuss narratives. In the hands of a skilled facilitator, *Family Read* provides parents with powerful strategies for turning reading with their children into a true “reading for meaning” experience.

Book Voyagers in Libraries

2009-2010 Budget: \$114,190

Book Voyagers in Libraries is a curriculum-based, facilitator-led reading and discussion series conducted for 8- to 12-year-olds in libraries. The program rests on exemplary works of children’s literature chosen by university-based children’s literature scholars and vetted by librarians and children’s reading specialists.

The program menu for *Book Voyagers* consists of twenty culturally diverse, theme-based, four- to eight-session book discussion programs, ranging from classic works in children’s literature to recent award-winning titles that encourage children to “stretch” a bit beyond their comfort zone of reading. In the diversity of their content and their authors, they speak directly to children’s experiences and lives.

Book Voyagers incorporates a variety of reading strategies, including silent and independent reading, family reading at home, reading aloud with partners and group discussion of issues raised by the readings, all facilitated by a trained, Council-funded *Book Voyagers* discussion leader. Children draw conclusions from books read, and interpret, present and discuss their ideas within the discussion circles. Our trained discussion leaders draw out participants’ personal observations and help them make inferences, understand symbolism, context and setting, and connect with the author’s deeper message, all fundamental aspects of the humanities.

Book Voyagers After School

2009-2010 Budget: \$119,408

Book Voyagers After School brings the Council's *Book Voyagers in Libraries* program to the after school programs of urban elementary and middle schools in cities such as Hartford, where students are especially challenged in passing the state's mastery tests in reading comprehension and writing. The program runs with an expanded eight-week curriculum to increase its impact on reading readiness and includes "family night" story-telling sessions to increase parental involvement in *Book Voyagers* schools.

Connecticut's Urban Reading Initiative

2009-2010 Budget: \$133,333

The goal of *Connecticut's Urban Reading Initiative* is to incorporate Council-administered family reading and book discussion components into the ongoing programming agendas of urban libraries, after school programs, Boys and Girls Clubs, family resource centers, child and family service agencies, learning centers, young parents programs, agencies serving the families of incarcerated parents and other community organizations that have children as a primary constituency. Over the next three years, the Council expects to involve at least 10,000 low-income, primarily minority children and families in "enriched reading" programming.

The initiative is also establishing partnerships with other state-wide organizations sponsoring "reading for meaning" programs for children in each target city. By working together, the partners are able to identify possibilities for jointly conducted programming in areas of common focus, create cross-marketing possibilities that expand awareness of the full range of reading options available to parents, develop information sharing networks, pursue collaborative fund-raising initiatives and plan other initiatives designed to increase our mutual effectiveness and impact.

LITERATURE PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS

Literature for a Lifetime

2009-2010 Budget: \$125,250

Based on a lending library of more than 10,000 volumes, this longstanding Council-developed initiative enables Connecticut's public libraries to host substantive reading and discussion seminars for adults in the community, led by literature and history scholars. The Council covers up to 75% of the program's cost and supplies books, materials and publicity guides to help local librarians offer these popular programs to the public. Host libraries may select from a catalog of more than fifty theme-based seminar series focusing on important issues in Connecticut and American history and in great works of literature.



Our Budget

Fiscal Year 2009/2010 July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

Projected Revenues

State of Connecticut	\$2,256,250
National Endowment for the Humanities	
Federal/State Partnership Allocation	674,648
We the People Initiative	104,690
Program-Specific Grants	133,333
U.S. Department of Education	238,000
Corporate/Foundation Grants and Private Gifts	154,500
Earned Income	25,022
Total	\$3,586,443

Projected Expenditures

Heritage Granting Programs	\$1,286,435
Council-conducted Heritage Programs	709,876
Council-conducted Reading Programs	686,278
General Administration	485,431
Development and Publicity	318,983
Total	\$3,487,003



Our Funding

While the humanities council receives major funding from the State of Connecticut and National Endowment for the Humanities for many of our programs, corporations, foundations and private individuals also provide critical support for specific initiatives in both heritage and reading.

Friends of the Connecticut Humanities Council

Gifts received through the end of the Council's most recent fiscal year (June 30, 2009)

\$1,000 or more

Bruce Fraser
Sandy and Howard Fromson
Eunice S. Groark
George J. Willauer

\$500 to \$999

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Drs. Booker and Elena DeVaughn
Barbara Donahue
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Ronald and Hildegard Jones
Robert and Jeralea Levine
Jacqueline and Philip Miller
Thomas R. Shachtman
Ann Y. Smith
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\$100 to \$249

In honor of Anne Farrow
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Jeffrey Andersen
and Maureen McCabe
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Phillip and Ellen Blumberg
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John and Elizabeth Spaulding
Bruce M. and Sondra Astor Stave
Milton and Harriet Stern
Shepard and Marlene Stone
John P. Valengavich
Judith Wawro

\$50 to \$99

In memory of Pamela S. Baldwin (2)
In memory of Eva Loffredo
Claudia Beardslee
Jonathan J. Beauchamp
Barbara Currier Bell

Diane and Christopher Berube
Anne W. Borg
Mark Borton and Francine Cornaglia
Bill and Madlyn Bynum
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The Ivoryton Studio
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Frank M. Turner
Barbara Wareck
Susan B. and William K. Wasch
David O. White
Marilyn Wilson

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In honor of Marlene Palmquist
S. Ardis Abbott
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Pat and Ernie Anderson
Marilyn Ballard
Margaret Woodhouse Becker
Patricia L. Berberich
Michael Biagioli
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and Sally Tomiko
Bernice Ullmann
Marie Ruth Wall
Katherine H. Willson

Corporate and Foundation Funding Partners

Major funding for the Connecticut Humanities Council is provided by:



STATE OF
CONNECTICUT



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
HUMANITIES

Additional funding for Book Voyagers provided by:



ENSWORTH
CHARITABLE
TRUST



FRANK LOOMIS
PALMER FUND

SAGE
FOUNDATION

J. WALTON BISSELL
FOUNDATION



PITNEY BOWES EMPLOYEE
INVOLVEMENT FUND



THE COURANT/FOX 61
CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY CAMPAIGN,
A FUND OF THE
McCORMICK FOUNDATION

Additional funding for Family Read provided by:

PITNEY BOWES EMPLOYEE
INVOLVEMENT FUND



SAGE FOUNDATION

Additional funding for Urban Reading Initiative provided by:

WILLIAM CASPAR GRAUSTEIN MEMORIAL FUND

Additional funding for Heritage Programs provided by:



FUND FOR THE
IMPROVEMENT
OF EDUCATION



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