

Talking Points: State Humanities Councils

- The 56 state humanities councils play a key role in communities throughout the nation, fostering the understanding of history and culture, promoting literacy and employability, and boosting local economies. They help us learn about our communities and share our stories and experiences.
- Local economies benefit from council programs that (a) provide students, teachers and citizens at large with access to learning opportunities and skill development, (b) contribute to quality of life in communities, and (c) spur economic activity through festivals, events and cultural tourism.
- State humanities councils are 501(c)3 nonprofits organized in each state. They are run by local boards composed of community, business and policy leaders, who are responsible for determining the programming in their individual states.
- Councils reach over 5,300 communities – rural, suburban, and urban – in nearly every Congressional district each year. Councils extend their reach by partnering with over 9,200 organizations each year, including museums and libraries, K-12 schools and universities, senior centers and Veterans hospitals, churches and social service agencies, corporations and local businesses, chambers of commerce and state tourism offices, and radio and television stations. These extensive partnerships enabled councils to serve over 44 million people through in-person events and almost 120 million people through virtual events in 2015.
- Council programs reach students, teachers, veterans, seniors, youth, underrepresented groups, adults working towards literacy, citizens seeking to enhance their understanding of history and local culture, those navigating medical issues, and the place-bound.
- State councils receive core funding from the NEH through the Federal/State Partnership account. This core funding for the councils has been essential in enabling us to deliver outstanding programs in communities throughout the nation, tailored to local and regional interest and reaching geographical areas and groups that would otherwise not have access to such programs.
- The FY 2016 funding for the NEH was \$148 million, with \$43 million for the Federal/State Partnership, which distributes funding to the state humanities councils. For FY 2017, the House recommended \$46 million for the Federal/State Partnership and the Senate \$43.5 million. However, FY '17 budgets are all under a continuing resolution which expires April 28, 2017. That means that SDHC has received funding at the FY '16 level, but we do not know what Congress will appropriate for the remainder of our funding through October, 2017.