



**How Can We Model the Behavior We Seek to Inspire?  
State Humanities Councils and the Contexts in Which They Work**

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*“How can we model the behavior we seek to inspire? Do our boards, staff and volunteers reflect the diversity of the communities we serve? How can we be more inclusive?” —theme of the November 2013 Federation of State Humanities Council conference in Birmingham, Alabama.*

In the January 2013 newsletter, Federal/State Partnership announced that each issue of the newsletter through October would address issues raised by the theme of the November 2013 Federation of State Humanities Councils conference in Birmingham, Alabama. At issue here was an effort to raise awareness of the diversity of the people councils could serve so as to hold a mirror that could reflect how their own organizational diversity of programming and staffing does serve.

The primary source for these surveys is the contextual section of councils’ self-assessment reports, complemented as needed with census and other data. All 56 state and jurisdictional humanities councils provide examples. The brief descriptions of the contexts in which councils work were approved and, in many cases, updated and edited by the council executive.

Topics: The first four sections deal primarily with demographics, with the last four focusing more on cultural, educational, and organizational issues. An appendix reflects data from the Federation of State Humanities Council’s 2013 income survey.

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## Migration and Immigration

The four largest states—California, Texas, New York, and Florida—experience the largest number of people moving to them from other states. California,<sup>1</sup> Texas, and Florida each welcomed more than half a million Americans on the move in 2011, as estimated by the Census Bureau.<sup>2</sup> Under 300,000 moved to New York from other states that year. Florida, with almost 3%, had the highest state-to-state migration of the four; California's was a little over 1%.

More Americans stay put than move and all four of these states had significant population stability. In all four, 99% of the population had been in the state in the prior year and 82% to 87% lived in the same house. There were differences, though. In Florida only 83% were still in the same house, whereas in New York, 88% were. Current U.S. migration patterns include shifting generational distribution as well as people moving within states, often from the country to the city.

The 2010 census indicates that 40 million people, 13% of the U.S. population, are foreign born. Most come from Latin America and the Caribbean (53%), followed by Asia (28%). As you will see from the examples of the councils in Florida, Kansas, California, New Hampshire, Guam, and Puerto Rico, many of the states and jurisdictions are home to immigrants from many countries and language groups. Puerto Ricans play a key role by moving into the continental U.S. More Samoans live in Hawaii and in the western states than in American Samoa.

A challenge for councils is how to keep pace with the changing populations they are designed to serve. How do they listen to, learn from, and engage with the people who make up the diverse demographics of their constituents? what kinds of people are in these diverse constituencies? how can a constituency be transformed into an audience? how far can or should a desire to be inclusive go? could a council actually be bottom up rather than top down?

- **Florida:** In a brief span of seven decades, Florida has grown from the smallest state in the South to the fourth-largest state in America. At some point in 2013, its population will grow to more than 20 million, likely replacing New York as the third largest state. A century ago, Florida was a frontier state, its 500,000 residents largely African American and WASP. Not including its one million “snowbirds,” it is now one of the most ethnically, racially, and religiously diverse states—so diverse, in fact, that one could ask whether it is the southernmost state or the northernmost province of the Caribbean. The Latinization of Florida has been well underway for decades, leaving almost no county untouched. Asians, however, primarily from India, China, Korea, and the Philippines, now comprise Florida's fastest growing immigrant group.
- **Kansas:** Kansas has a population of 2.8 million, ranking it 33rd in the nation, with no significant future growth projected. Nearly 50% of the population lives in 10 communities, all located in the eastern half of Kansas. The other half of the population is spread out, primarily in small towns. This shift in residence to eastern Kansas can be seen by comparing the locations of the state's population between the 1890 and the 2010 census reports.<sup>3</sup> Many of the counties experiencing the largest decline in population are also experiencing an aging population. Kansas ranks 12th among states with the highest proportion of elderly people

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<sup>1</sup> See also, however, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/15/upshot/the-california-exodus.html?ref=us>.

<sup>2</sup> For more census data about state-to-state migration, see <http://www.census.gov/hhes/migration/data/acs/state-to-state.html>.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.kshs.org/teachers/read\\_kansas/pdfs/m39\\_card01.pdf](http://www.kshs.org/teachers/read_kansas/pdfs/m39_card01.pdf).

(13%). In response, there have been several recent efforts to attract more young people to stay in or move to rural Kansas. The government is also providing economic incentives for rural growth.

- **California:** The Public Policy Institute of California<sup>4</sup> predicts that the state's population will grow from 37.3 million in 2010 to 47.7 million in 2040. Annual growth rates in California are expected to fluctuate between 0.9% and 0.8% until 2035. In 2011, 27% of California's population was foreign-born, twice the U.S. percentage. Although immigration to California has slowed, the state has more immigrants than any other state. Most immigrants in California come from Latin America, but recent arrivals are primarily from Asia. California also has sizeable populations of immigrants from dozens of countries; Mexico (4.3 million), the Philippines (812,000), and China (760,700) are the leading countries of origin. More than half (53%) of those arriving in the state between 2007 and 2011 were born in Asia; only 31% came from Latin America.
- **New Hampshire:** Although only 6% of New Hampshire's population is non-white, it is not exactly "homegrown." Only 56% were born there and the face of the state is changing. Recent immigrants and refugees are moving into New Hampshire's cities from such countries as Kosovo, Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, Iraq, Cambodia, Vietnam, China, Pakistan, and India. The largest immigrant group is made up of refugees from Bhutan. Throughout America's history, waves of immigration have prompted waves of resentment, fear, and anger. That remains true in New Hampshire. Homes of refugees have been vandalized by graffiti and the mayor of Manchester called for a halt to refugee resettlement. Communities, however, have developed support systems for immigrants through the collaboration of local institutions. The state legislature has defeated a dozen different anti-immigrant bills in the past few years.
- **Guam:** Throughout post-World War II development, Cold War politics, and the more recent conflicts in Vietnam and the Persian Gulf, Guam has been and remains a focal point for the movement of military personnel, technology, and supplies. The long-anticipated military build-up has not taken place, leaving Guam with the collateral damage of half-built buildings and unused stocks of major commodities. Indigenous Chamorros remain the largest ethnic group, about 47% of the total 2010 population of 159,358. The Filipino population is estimated at 25%. Approximately 23,000 residents are military (14%). Guam's population has grown rapidly over the last two decades with increased migration from the United States, Asia, and Pacific islands. It has a burgeoning tourist industry and has evolved into a multi-ethnic, urban society. Although most residents of Guam are bilingual, English is the common language.
- **Puerto Rico:** The size of Puerto Rico's population has been, and continues to be, a variable of great importance. Puerto Rico experienced continuous population growth during the past century, particularly during the second half. The population in 2010 was 3.7 million. The population density of Puerto Rico is 1,088 per square mile. The city of San Juan is the most densely populated, with almost 14,000 people living in each square mile. Puerto Rico is also noted for its out-migration. According to a 2009 survey by the Pew Hispanic Center,<sup>5</sup> the "Hispanic population of Puerto Rican origin in the 50 states and D.C. increased from 3.4 million in 2000 to 4.6 million in 2010. It now surpasses Puerto Rico's population. Nearly a third of Hispanics of Puerto Rican origin in the 50 states and D.C. were born in Puerto Rico."

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ppic.org>.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2011/06/13/a-demographic-portrait-of-puerto-ricans/>.

## The Urban / Rural Divide

One of the issues that councils have to take into consideration in planning and implementing their programming and activities is the divide separating city from countryside. Fifty-five of the state and jurisdictional humanities councils deal with urban/rural divides. For some councils bridging these divides is not only culturally difficult but can also involve transportation and financial challenges. The Humanities Council of Washington, DC, is the only exception because it is wholly urban, serving the city of Washington. That is not to say, however, that the neighborhoods of the District of Columbia are not divided from each other by rivers, parks, race, economic well-being, and a host of other divisive factors. Here are six examples of the varying kinds of urban/rural contexts with which councils work.

- In “habitation,” **Illinois** is metropolitan. In “land,” it is agricultural. According to the last census, 80% reside on 20% of the land. Only 13% do not live in a city. Almost 76% live in or around one city—Chicago. Chicago has the fifth highest foreign-born population in the U.S., counting 21.7% of its residents as foreign born.
- **Montana** is the fourth largest state with 145,552 square miles and a population of 1,005,141. While Native Americans often live in rural places on seven reservations, Montana has one of the lowest U.S. percentages of foreign-born citizens and African Americans. Montanans tend to love their land but disagree about the appropriate means for inhabiting the place.
- In 41 of **Kentucky**’s counties the poverty and unemployment rates can be as high as 45% and 58%, respectively. In contrast, the urban areas of Lexington, Louisville, the Northern Kentucky area (Golden Triangle), Owensboro, Bowling Green, and the “Interstate-plus-university communities” have younger, growing populations, higher incomes/rates of employment, and higher educational attainment levels.
- **Utah**’s population is concentrated in a few small cities, surprisingly making it the 6th most urbanized state. Nearly 80% live in a 20-mile wide and 80-mile long corridor that runs north and south of Salt Lake City. The topography of Utah’s 85,000 square miles makes travel between regions difficult—a hundred miles as the crow flies can require a day’s drive. It is an oasis civilization.
- **Vermont**’s population is the most rural of any state in the country. Sixty-two per cent of its population lives in towns of fewer than 2,500 people, which is the federal government’s long-standing definition of “rural.” Only eight communities have a population over 10,000, and only one—Burlington—has a population greater than 20,000. Vermont’s population is one of the oldest, whitest, and smallest in the union.
- Over 60% of **Georgia**’s population lives in the cities of Atlanta, Augusta, Macon, Columbus, Albany, Savannah, and Valdosta. The rural population is not well served by schools and other basic human services. In contrast, Atlanta is home to 20 colleges and universities, museums, the world’s largest aquarium, and a zoo. Sixty-five languages are spoken in its public schools.

## Indigenous Peoples

The mission of the 56 state and jurisdictional humanities councils is to provide “adequate”—the term used in the founding legislation—public humanities programming for the populations they serve. This includes efforts to serve as many of the various resident groups as is feasible. Many states have sizeable Native American communities; all are home to native people. Outreach is achieved in numerous ways. Some provide programming that explores native history and culture as well as programming developed specifically for native communities that addresses their interests and concerns. Some councils have people of native origin on their staffs and boards. Native representatives serve as project directors and as humanities experts to advise projects with council support. For three of the four Pacific Island councils (in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and American Samoa), indigenous cultures are key to everyday life. The work of the Hawai’i Council for the Humanities is very much influenced throughout by native Hawai’ian history and culture.

Even though native peoples now make up a relatively small proportion of the overall American population, there are parts of the country where their presence helps create a distinctive cultural character. This essay looks at the census data for the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders and at the Native American and Native Alaskan population group. Please note that the census statistically combines the “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Island” populations and the “Native American and Native Alaskan” populations.

As can be seen from these census data, there is significant growth and movement taking place among the Pacific Island population group and the Native American and Native Alaskan group. The states with significant communities of these populations can be found throughout the United States, with growth especially in the South.

The 2010 census reported that, while the population of the United States grew by 9.7 percent between 2000 and 2010, the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Island population group had a population increase that was more than three times faster than the total U.S. population, growing by 35 percent from 399,000 to 540,000 people. It was the most likely group to report belonging to multiple races. Nearly three-fourths of the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population lived in the West. The South, however, experienced the fastest growth of this population group (up by 66 percent) and it was in the Northeast that this group reported most frequently that it belonged to multiple races. Fifty-two percent lives in Hawaii and California.

The Native American and Native Alaskan population group grew more than three times faster than the U.S. population as a whole, growing by 18 percent between 2000 and 2010. Nearly half of this group reported belonging to multiple races. In the 2010 Census, 41 percent of the American Indian and Alaska Native alone-or-in-combination population lived in the West. The South had the second-largest proportion followed by the Midwest and the Northeast. The proportion of this group living in the West declined while it increased in the South, even if by only three percent. Nonetheless, this population grew 36 percent in the South and 35 percent in the Northeast. In the 2000 census, the ten states with the largest Native American and Native Alaskan populations are California, Oklahoma, Arizona, Texas, New York, New Mexico, Washington, North Carolina, Florida, and Michigan. The 2010 census analysis states that, “Alaska and South Dakota replaced Michigan and Florida among the states with the ten largest American Indian and Alaska Native alone [i.e., not multiple-race] populations.” The counties having the highest concentration of Native Americans and Native Alaskans are in Oklahoma, “the upper Midwest, the four corners area of the Southwest where Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah meet, and in Alaska.”

With the exception of the [Virgin Islands Humanities Council](#), the councils listed below have indigenous populations with which they work. The [Amerika Samoa Humanities Council](#) and the [Northern Marianas Humanities Council](#) serve predominantly indigenous populations. The program emphases of the [Minnesota Humanities Center](#), the [Alaska Humanities Forum](#), and the [Oklahoma Humanities Council](#) are shaped by the native populations they serve. The [New Mexico Humanities Council](#) and the [North Carolina Humanities Council](#) operate in states with growing native populations. Although the indigenous population of the Virgin Islands no longer exists as it does elsewhere in the country, it shares many of the characteristics of the other islands states and territories, especially with regard to the preservation of long-standing cultural characteristics in the face of outside influences.

- **Mni'sota** is a Dakota word that can be translated as a place where the water reflects the sky. The use of this word to name the state signifies the deep historical, cultural and economic significance of water to communities in this region. In 2008 an amendment to the State Constitution dedicated three-eighths of one percent of a new state sales tax to preserving the unique physical and cultural character of the state. About 48% of this new revenue source is dedicated to the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund and the [Minnesota Humanities Center](#) is one of the cultural organizations that has been given a leadership role in designing and creating a new state cultural landscape. About five percent of Minnesota is occupied by 11 Ojibwe and Dakota reservations, including sites of the state's four largest bodies of water. The Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, a consortium of tribal governments, is an important programming partner of the Minnesota Humanities Center.
- With its thirty-eight federally recognized tribes, **Oklahoma** offers many opportunities for the [Oklahoma Humanities Council](#) to assist with cultural programming. The Clemente Course was an early partnership with the Kiowa, Chickasaw, and Cherokee tribes that focused on teaching native traditions alongside the classics. The council has given special awards to the administrator of the Euchee language preservation program and a Kiowa elder for her work in the public humanities. In 2007, the Council gave its highest award to the former Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, Wilma Mankiller. Among the many recent grants to tribes, the council has funded a documentary entitled, "Lost Nation: the Ioway"; a museum exhibit at Comanche Nation College on early Indian schools; the Native Humanities Forum at the Chickasaw Nation; and cultural programs at the Cherokee Heritage Center.
- Alaskan Whites / Caucasians make up 68 percent of the **Alaska's** population whereas 15 percent is American Indian and Alaska natives. At the same time, the state is experiencing increasing urbanization and ethnic diversification. In 2008, the Anchorage School District, Alaska's largest, became minority-majority. The [Alaska Humanities Forum's](#) Rose Urban Rural Exchange, pairing urban and rural schools and communities, was established in 1999 and is successful in bridging cultures and understanding between urban centers and traditional Alaska Native villages. Similarly, the Take Wing Alaska project assists rural Alaska Native students adapt to urban and post-secondary cultures while maintaining their traditional culture and values. The [Creating Cultural Competence in Rural Early Career Teachers \(C3\) Project](#) provides a cross-cultural immersion for new teachers moving up to Alaska's rural villages for teaching positions.
- The population of **American Samoa** remains ethnically Samoan at 89 percent. Other ethnic groups on the islands are Niuean, Tongan, Tokelauan, Filipino, Korean, Chinese, Japanese, Caucasian/White, Fijian, and Indians. More than 20,000 people in American Samoa are neither a citizen nor a national of the United States. The trend of foreign-born increased from less than 20 percent in 1960 to over 40 percent in the recent census, with the majority coming from neighboring independent Samoa. There is growing diversity in

ethnicity, culture, and language as well as weakening value given to the Samoan language and culture among the younger generation. American Samoa is bilingual and has an additional ancient oratorical *matai* language in which chiefs, pastors, and others are conversant. While there is concern that English and Samoan may not be well-spoken or well-written, virtually everyone can communicate at some level in both languages.

- Although the American Indian population of **North Carolina** is only 1.5 percent, that amount has grown by almost 50 percent between the last two censuses. Currently, North Carolina has the largest Native American population east of the Mississippi River. There are eight state-recognized tribes in North Carolina: the Cherokee, Coharie, Haliwa-Saponi, Lumbee, Meherrin, Occaneechi Bands of the Saponi, Sappony, and the Waccamaw Siouan Indian Tribes. In addition, North Carolina has one of the fastest-growing immigrant populations in the country. Race relations seem to have worsened as the state's population has gotten more diverse. Although there are increasing numbers of Asians across the state and the American Indian population has risen in total numbers, the dominant racial groups are White, African American, and Latino. North Carolina has one of the fastest-growing Latino populations in the country.
- Although tiny by mainland standards, the population of the **Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands** is ethnically diverse. In addition to indigenous Chamorros and Carolinians who, combined, account for roughly 35 percent of the population, the CNMI is also home to sizable Filipino and Chinese communities and smaller numbers of Korean, Japanese, and islanders from other parts of Micronesia. Euro- and African-Americans combined account for under 2 percent of the population. The population has changed dramatically over the past three decades. Indigenous residents were the majority in 1980; they were a minority only ten years later and have maintained minority status over the past 20 years. The CNMI Constitution establishes three official languages: Chamorro, Carolinian, and English. In practice, however, English has become the dominant language and there are fears that the local languages are in danger of being lost.
- Columbus landed on St. Croix in 1493 and the indigenous population of Carib, Arawak, and Taino Indians disappeared from what is now known as the **U.S. Virgin Islands** during the subsequent European colonization. With the slave trade, which began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the population became dominated by people of African descent and remains so today. Nonetheless, the population of the Islands is diverse. Because of the distance between the two major islands, St. Thomas and St. Croix, bridging the internal cultures is an everyday activity: St. Thomas is the commercial center and St. Croix, the cultural center. One could walk from one end of St. Thomas to the other and hear the languages and dialects of every Caribbean locale, plus those of many foreign areas. Economically, the Virgin Islands is dependent on tourism, especially the year-round cruise ships that visit St. Thomas, and its rum industry.
- The New Mexico Humanities Council operates in an environment of poverty and richness, beauty and endangered resources, history and pride, family and heritage. Over 66 percent of **New Mexico's** population is urban, with most living in the Albuquerque metropolitan area. It is the most diverse state in the continental U.S. and its population has grown by 13 percent, with American Indians accounting for 9 percent and Hispanics for 46 percent. The American Indian population continues to grow, gaining 20,000 during the decade. During that same period of time, non-Hispanic Whites became a minority in New Mexico. Now only four out of ten New Mexicans are non-Hispanic Whites. Oil and gas production, tourism, and federal

government spending are important components of New Mexico's economy. The state ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in the number of people living below the poverty level and 49<sup>th</sup> in child well-being.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation *Kids Count Databook* (<http://www.aecf.org/m/databook/aecf-2014kidscountdatabook-embargoed-2014.pdf>).



## Race, Age, and Gender

State humanities councils, along with most nonprofits and other organizations, contend with issues of race, age, and gender. In the case of councils, these challenges can be seen prominently with regard to their audiences, staffs, boards, and executives. The focus here is on demographics and the impact they might have on how councils choose which audiences to serve by means of their programs.

Faced with the task of serving the population of a state or jurisdiction, councils are sometimes hard-pressed to define their audiences. An admirable but impossible goal, some councils aim to reach all the people of its state or jurisdiction. Others are concerned to reach the underserved while some operate according to the no longer active policy that NEH established for councils when they were founded: to address the humanities needs of out-of-school adults. With so many definitions available, however, identifying the out-of-school adult can also be difficult.

The reality is that the majority of councils have been most successful reaching audiences of educated, economically stable older White women. In contrast, the Idaho Humanities Council has recently attracted many men with its “Making Sense of the American Civil War” reading and discussion series. Reaching men, at least those of ages commensurate with councils’ women audiences, will be important for the future: the 2010 census revealed that the longevity of men aged 60-74 has increased significantly.

Young people—children, tweens, and teenagers—seem to prove easier to reach than young adults. The “Think and Drink” programs of councils in Oregon, Washington, and Maine as well as the Humanities Council of Washington, DC’s “Humanitini” have, however, succeeded with young adults. In general, though, unless those in their 20s and 30s have low reading skills, they are quite likely to be the demographic least served by state humanities councils. This is especially true for parents.

Programming directed for and about various racial and ethnic groups is carried out by most councils. A number of councils carry out bilingual, Spanish, and multilingual programs, especially family reading and discussion programs. Even in a state like Maine, with the most homogeneous White population in the country, the Maine Humanities Council has effectively reached immigrant populations. Other New England councils, such as the New Hampshire Humanities Council, have done so as well. The Kentucky Humanities Council’s Prime Time program has the capacity to conduct it in several languages. Some councils have staff members with knowledge of two or more languages.

The United States as a whole<sup>7</sup> is 63 percent White, 17 percent Hispanic, 12 percent Black, and 8 percent “other.”<sup>8</sup> Hawaii is the state with the smallest White population (17 percent), while Maine has the largest White population (95 percent). Hawaii is 70 percent “Other” to Louisiana’s 2 percent. The District of Columbia has the highest Black population (49 percent) and the Black populations of Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and New Mexico are too small to be statistically significant. New Mexico, on the other hand, has the largest Hispanic population in the country and West Virginia’s is too statistically small to be significant. The interactive maps on the [Kaiser](#)

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<sup>7</sup> The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, Population Distribution by Race/Ethnicity, <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/distribution-by-raceethnicity/>.

<sup>8</sup> “Other” includes Asian-Americans, Pacific Islanders, American Indians, Aleutians, Eskimos and persons of “Two or More Races” ( <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/distribution-by-raceethnicity/>).

Family Foundation site offer a dramatic graphic view of ethnic and racial population distributions across the states.

The United States overall has become older with more than half the population older than the median age of 37.2. This is due not only to the aging of the post-World War II baby boom generation (born 1946-1964) but also to “stable birth rates and improving mortality.” In the four census regions, the region with the oldest median age is the Northeast (39.2), followed by the Midwest (37.7), the South (37.0), and the West (35.6).

Although the largest age sector of the population is the 18-44 cohort (36.5 percent), it grew the least between the 2000 and the 2010 censuses—only .6 percent. In contrast, the 45-64 cohort grew by 31.5 percent and the number of those over 65 “grew at a faster rate (15.1 percent) than the population under age 45.” The state with the youngest median age is Utah where nearly one-thirds of the population (31.5%) is under the age of 18 and 71.2% is aged 44 or less. The oldest is the state of Maine which has a median age of 42.7. In Maine, 63.4 percent of the population is between 18 and 64.<sup>9</sup>

Another shift that has taken place between the last two censuses is the increasing longevity of men. While women generally outlive men, males aged 60-74 “increased by 35.2 percent while their female counterparts increased by 29.2 percent.”<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, with the exception of the states of Alaska, Hawaii, and nine other western states, the country at large is predominantly female, although, in most cases, only slightly. Of those western states, one has heard say that, from a woman’s perspective, “while the odds are good, the goods are odd.” The census does not document this interpretation. The average male to female ratio in the United States is 96.7 men to every 100 women.

According to a study released by the Williams Institute, “The percentage of adults in the United States who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) ranges from 1.7% in North Dakota to 5.1% in Hawaii and 10% in the District of Columbia.”<sup>11</sup> By 51%, the majority of same-sex couples in 2011 were female; in 2005, the majority were male.<sup>12</sup> The Williams Institute website has extensive research about the LGBT communities in the United States, including demographic density by state and locality.<sup>13</sup> This landscape is shifting dramatically since Supreme Court overturned the Defense of Marriage Act in 2013 and the subsequent overturning of many state laws banning same-sex marriage. Few councils to date have programmed for this demographic, but that may be changing.

This section includes specific demographic information that nine state humanities councils encounter. They have been somewhat randomly selected but represent most parts of the country. Of some interest is the fact that three adjoining states have been included: Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The fact that they are neighbors makes for interesting comparisons.

The summaries of the states are organized from the youngest median age of this group, the District of Columbia, to the oldest, West Virginia. The other states are Arizona, Alabama, Iowa, and Oregon. The gender ratio, the number of men per each 100 women is included for each.

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<sup>9</sup> The information in this paragraph and that above comes from *Age and Sex Composition: 2010*, U.S. Census Bureau, May 2010, page 2 (<http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-03.pdf>).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, page 4.

<sup>11</sup> <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/research/census-lgbt-demographics-studies/gallup-lgbt-pop-feb-2013/>.

<sup>12</sup> <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/research/census-lgbt-demographics-studies/ss-and-ds-couples-in-ac-2005-2011/>.

<sup>13</sup> <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/>.

- The **District of Columbia** (median age 33.8, gender ratio 89.5) continues to lose families and have smaller households; it now holds the national record for one-person households (48 percent). Its Black population has fallen to 49 percent, a milestone because Washington was the nation's first city to have an African-American majority. The White and Hispanic populations have increased. There has been rapid growth of the overall population, particularly of young professionals. Almost half (49 percent) of its population is ages 18-44. Its growth rate exceeded that of every state in the union.
- **Arizona** (median age 35.9, gender ratio 98.7) has an Hispanic population almost double (33 percent) that of the U.S. population (17 percent). It is in line to become one of ten majority-minority states by 2035. The state has also experienced a decline in population growth which may be attributed to the recession but also to legislation unfriendly to immigrants. It is unclear whether the laws caused undocumented immigrants to leave or caused them to refuse to be counted in the census, but the net result is that the state is losing federal funding because of the census count.
- Twenty-six percent of the population of **Alabama** (median age 37.9, gender ratio 94.3) is Black, the dominant minority. Migration of Hispanics from Mexico, Guatemala, and other parts of Latin America is growing rapidly. Other minority groups include growing Asian populations in the state's urban centers, and a small but vibrant Southeast Asian community centered on the fishing industry near Mobile. Twenty-four percent of Alabamians are under the age of 18, and 13 percent are over the age of 65.
- **Iowa**'s population continues to grow more slowly than the national average, and it lost a congressional seat following the 2010 census. City population increased whereas rural areas continued to lose; 66 of the 99 counties showed a decline in population. Iowa's population also continues to get older. The median age for Iowa in 2010 was 38.1 compared with 36.6 in 2000 and 34.0 in 1990. The gender ratio is 98.1. While the Hispanic population is only 6 percent, it has increased 83.7 percent since 2000.
- The average age of an **Oregonian** is 38.4. Its gender ratio is 98. Eighty percent of its population is White and over 90 percent was born in the United States, 45 percent in Oregon. Over 55 percent of Oregonians fall into the 18-64 age cohort. In the nation at large, 2.8 percent of the population walk to work, whereas in Oregon 3.9 percent do. Twenty-one percent of the population earns between \$50,000 and \$74,999. By 2025, Oregon's population is projected to have grown by 16.3 percent. The majority of the population lives in the Willamette Valley and in the Portland metropolitan area.
- **Delaware** (median age 38.8, gender ratio 93.9) is 65 percent White, 20 percent Black, 9 percent Hispanic, and 6 percent "Other."<sup>14</sup> More than half the population lives in New Castle County, home to the largest city, Wilmington. In the north, near Philadelphia, its ethnic breakdown is 61.6 percent White, 23.1 percent Black, and 8.7 percent Hispanic. Southern rural Suffolk County is 75.6 percent White, 12.4 percent Black, and 8.6 percent Hispanic. Delaware has only .6 percent under the national average of households with at least one under 18, but it has 2.2 percent more with people over 65.
- **New Jersey** is the most densely populated state, with 1,195.5 people per square mile (2010 census).<sup>15</sup> The median age is 39 and the gender ratio is 94.8. The projected estimate is that

<sup>14</sup> See note 8 for the definition of "Other."

<sup>15</sup> The District of Columbia, not a state, has a population density of 9,856.5 per square mile. It encompasses 61.05 square miles.

the population will reach 9,380,200 by 2028. The elderly will be the fastest growing age group, from 13.5 percent in 2010 to 17.3 percent in 2025. New Jersey is home to one of the most racially and ethnically diverse populations in the nation. Whites currently represent 58 percent of the population and the Hispanic 21 percent. The Black population is 13 percent.

- **Pennsylvania** (median age 40.1, gender ratio 95.1) has the fourth-highest proportion, 15 percent, of adults over sixty-five, as well as slower population growth than the rest of the nation. Philadelphia and Pittsburgh have proven attractive to young people, stopping some of the state's "brain drain," revitalizing center cities, and gaining youth from other states. Philadelphia is more diverse than the rest of the state. The overall population of Pennsylvania is 79 percent White, 11 percent Black, and 6 percent Hispanic. Philadelphia is a majority-minority city.
- The Census Bureau predicts a slight decline in the **West Virginia** population over the next quarter-century, and expects it to fall to 39th in relative population rank. Its median age is 41.3, one of the highest in the country. It is 94 percent White and only 3 percent Black. In contrast to the 20.3 percent in the country at large, only 2.3 percent of West Virginia's population speaks a language at home other than English. Nonetheless, the state has well-established ethnic traditions dating from large immigrations of a century ago, and there are deeply rooted Black communities in several locations.

## Education and Educational Opportunities

The state and jurisdictional humanities councils provide educational services—the humanities approach of seeking out evidence, looking at it from various angles, weighing it against other evidence, and discussing it with respect for differing points of view. Councils require that projects they fund incorporate the services of humanities professionals so as to provide balance. Initially founded on university campuses, some councils have acquired a certain amount of independence from academic establishments, both in terms of staff and board credentials and affiliations. Others remain located on academic campuses; benefit from academic services, healthcare, and pensions; or retain an academic bent on their boards. Some councils fund academic research; many support K-12 teacher professional development. All are at least in touch with their educational systems and institutions.

Regardless of the relationship between a council and its academic and educational institutional context, that context is an important part of the cultural toolkit with which councils work. The institutions of higher education, however, must be counterbalanced with the educational levels of the populace. Does a council program for those with baccalaureate or professional degrees, does it seek to mediate between the academic world and a less educated populace, does it serve the educationally underserved? does it do all three? What kind of voice do the educationally underserved have vis-à-vis the programs developed for them? Educationally, how do councils model the behavior they seek to inspire?

The Lumina Foundation did an analysis of educational achievement in the 50 states, based on the 2010 census. Looking at adults, aged 25-64, they found that the U.S. average is as follows: 8% had some attendance in grades 9-12 but had no diploma, 27% had a high school diploma, 22% had attended college but not graduated, 19% had a bachelor's degree, and 11% had a graduate or professional degree. Here is the educational context in which six councils work.

- **Wyoming** has one university and seven community colleges. A four-year Catholic college has recently opened and a tribal college hopes to gain accreditation. Ninety-two percent of the population has high school or GED degrees or more. This is higher than the national level, but the number of residents holding college degrees is lower than the national average. Due to earlier energy boom revenues, Wyoming is one of nine states that spends \$13,000 or more per student on K-12 education, higher than the national average. Because of recent strong economic health, the legislature has committed to Hathaway Scholarship funds for Wyoming high school students who attend the University of Wyoming, with current requirements including humanities courses.
- In **Texas**, education is often at the center of public debates over spending, the appropriate size of government, and the state's civic and economic health. The Texas public school system consists of 1,227 school districts and charters, 8,529 campuses, more than 320,000 teachers, and 4.9 million students. According to the Texas Education Agency, nearly one in three teachers leaves the profession within five years. Humanities Texas works with universities to hold rigorous teacher professional development institutes, placing special emphasis on recruiting early-career teachers from low-performing schools and districts.
- **Connecticut** remains a state of stark, often shocking contrasts. The gaps between the rich and poor and between the highly educated and the barely educated are wider than almost anywhere else in America. School humanities content is increasingly shallow and unappealing, and is getting weaker as the emphasis on STEM curriculum grows. Although home to many museums, libraries, historical societies, theaters and other cultural

institutions, school field trips have all but disappeared as budgets are slashed and test scores rule. Particularly in urban areas, basic literacy is the crisis of the day. Connecticut businesses cannot find qualified workers, though the unemployment rate hovers around 8.5%.

- Although **South Carolina** often ranks in the bottom ten states in educational attainment, it is incorrect to generalize that it neglects education or does not value it. It has 85 school districts and 79 public college campuses. For the first time, almost 80% of South Carolinians over 25 have a high school or GED diploma, and more than 20% have a college degree. The two-year technical college program is stellar, and many teachers have national certification. Twenty-six of the 46 counties are mainly rural, however, and it is there that education has difficulties. There, the 2011 poverty level was 20% or more than that of the state, the median household income was at least 10% lower, and unemployment was higher. Some of these counties graduate fewer than 50% of entering freshmen.
- **Louisiana** continues to be a victim of poverty and low educational levels, in part due to natural disasters and external factors, but also to persistent policies of low-taxes, tax rebates, de facto segregated schools and even school systems, and inadequate investment in communities and infrastructure. While Louisiana has enacted significant education reform in the last seven years at all education levels, the correlation between the state's poverty and its educational performance persists. Under the current administration, more than \$650 million was cut from appropriations to higher education and a law to permit vouchers for use in private and parochial schools is being implemented for the 2014-2015 school year. There are 23 colleges and universities.
- **North Dakota** had an 86% graduation rate for high school students in 2008-09. The breakdown by racial and ethnic groups was: White, 90%; Asian, 88%; Hispanic, 76%; African-American, 74%; and Native American, 62%. The high percentage of Native American students dropping out of high school is a serious problem. Twenty-eight percent of North Dakotans ages 21-74 have a bachelor's degree, compared with a national average of 28%. Currently more than 30% of high school graduates take a least one remedial class in college. In 2009 North Dakota had 291 accredited public elementary schools and 196 accredited public middle level and secondary schools. There are eleven colleges and universities in the North Dakota University System, four private colleges, and five tribal colleges. North Dakota continues to be the fastest growing state in the nation.

## Reading and Literacy

State humanities councils are filled with book people. They celebrate books and words and ideas and ways to talk about all of them. According to the 2013 compliance plans submitted annually to NEH by councils, all of the councils support reading and discussion programs, 52 carry out programs in libraries, and 40 support family and adult literacy programs. Eleven councils serve as their state's Center for the Book in affiliation with the Library of Congress. Councils not only program around books, a number also publish books, some of which are bilingual. The majority of the *Standing Together* programs that will be offered by state humanities councils in 2014 and 2015 will be reading and discussion programs.

Councils use books to broaden their audience reach. Virginia Foundation for the Humanities' Virginia Arts of the Book Center, for example, has held classes in book-binding. Humanities Tennessee has a book review website, Chapter 16. Humanities Washington's annual fundraiser, "Bedtime Stories," features critically acclaimed Northwest writers unveiling original short stories created specifically for the event. The Maine Humanities Council's "Winter Weekend," a retreat with discussions focused on one book—Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* in 2014—William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* next year—uses the net income from the fees it collects from older wealthier patrons to help fund its "New Books, New Readers" program. The Maine Humanities Council also founded the acclaimed "Literature & Medicine: Humanities at the Heart of Healthcare" reading and discussion program for healthcare providers that has state humanities council partners around the country, can be found in veterans' hospitals, and in Argentina. An adaptation of this program, designed for veterans themselves, is one of the five NEH *Standing Together* programs.

Discovering U.S. literacy rates is challenging and what exists is fundamentally flawed. The latest such data collection was done in 2003 by the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, in its National Assessment of Adult Literacy. The title of the piece indicates its lack of reliability: "State & County Estimates of Low Literacy." This analysis is of those over age 16 who lack basic prose reading skills and carries the caveat that these data also reflect "those who could not be tested due to language barriers." A result is that there appears to be higher levels of reading skills in smaller or more homogeneous states and counties than in those with diverse populations. For example, South Dakota ranks high whereas New York ranks low. The key thing is to see these data as suggestion of rather than as demonstration of reality. Nonetheless, they suggest that the U.S. literacy rate is approximately 86% for those age 16 and older. That is in the ballpark with UNESCO's assessment of global literacy, released in September 2012. Using adults age 15 and older, UNESCO rates global literacy (not including the English-speaking world and Western Europe) at 84%.

In the following council thumbnails, we will look at the contexts affecting reading and literacy in nine states.<sup>16</sup> Of these nine, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Maine have high literacy rates (93%); Washington (90%), Maryland (89%), and Tennessee (87%) fall above the national average; and both Nevada and Mississippi at 84% and New York with 78%, fall below the national average. These councils include hosts or supporters of book festivals, of "one book" programs, of literacy programs of various sorts, of a book-themed fundraiser, and of its state's poet laureate. All have reading and discussion programs. Here is the landscape in which they support books and literacy, as described in their self-assessment reports.

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<sup>16</sup> Here the decade-old U.S. data percentages are reversed from low to high—from those *lacking* basic prose reading skills to those *possessing* prose reading skills.

- Eighty-six percent of **South Dakota**'s overall population is identified as "White persons not Hispanic," indicating significant racial homogeneity. With less than 11 people per square mile, South Dakota nonetheless supports a subtle "global village." Its indigenous population includes members of the Lakota, Nakota, and Dakota tribes, and it is home to descendants of 19<sup>th</sup>-century northern Europeans and increasing numbers of Africans and Hispanics. Over one-fifth of the population holds a baccalaureate or higher degree, although only 30% of its American Indian young people graduate from high school. Rural libraries often serve wide stretches of countryside and only 48% of libraries across the state are open full time. Yet in the recent difficult economy, libraries have tended to increase rather than decrease their public service hours.
- The University of **Wisconsin** continues to believe in the Wisconsin Idea, that the boundaries of the classroom are the boundaries of the state. The recent merger of University of Wisconsin-Extension and the University's network of two-year liberal arts campuses has shaken up these institutions in ways that may increase the interest of some chancellors and scholars in doing more public humanities work. There are hundreds of programmatically active libraries, historical societies, museums, and local arts organizations, including in many small communities. Milwaukee presents challenges because of its size and other realities such as its infamously troubled school system, segregation, and poverty. Of the relatively small anticipated growth in the population in the next ten years, two-thirds is expected to be among minority communities.
- Cultural life in **Maine** is alive and well, if very unevenly distributed. That is not to say that both nonprofit and state-supported cultural organizations and institutions are not financially stressed, cutting hours and services, but there is a sense of the crucial nature of their offerings and an understanding that when everything else fails, it is to culture—the humanities—that one turns. This claim however, is qualified by a recognition that, given Maine's widely dispersed population, there are areas and populations that are desperately underserved. Maine's non-white population has increased from 3% to 5%, largely because of an influx of political refugees from Central Africa. These immigrants, who speak dozens of languages, have meant unprecedented challenges to the education and social service systems.
- The 13th most populous state, **Washington** is 72% White (not Hispanic) but its cities have an influx of Asian, Latin American, and Russian immigrants. Over 70 languages are spoken in Seattle public schools. The liberal arts and humanities are taught in all four-year colleges and universities and in many community colleges. Ninety percent of Washingtonians have high school degrees and 31% have college degrees. Eastern Washington is predominantly rural and agricultural, with a smaller and primarily White and Latino population; the far western Olympic Peninsula is also rural. The highly urbanized I-5 corridor is ethnically diverse and has the majority of the state's population. The biggest industries are aviation, technology, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries/maritime.
- Despite the fact that **Maryland** has a higher percentage of minority populations than the U.S. overall, its diversity is localized. Over 91% of Western Maryland is White. Central Maryland, including counties such as Prince George's, Baltimore, and Montgomery, are more evenly mixed, averaging 66% White. Prince George's county and Baltimore City, however, consist of a predominantly minority population with nearly 65% Black or African American residents. Maryland is the wealthiest state in the nation, yet 22% of the population of Baltimore City lives in poverty. It is also well-educated in terms of public education at all levels, including higher education. The Maryland State School System ranked first in the nation from 2009-2013. Despite changes in *Education Week's* ranking system in 2014, it



remains one of the top systems in the country. Nonetheless, in 2014 Maryland ranks only 12th out of the 50 states for child well-being.<sup>17</sup>

- The landscape of **Tennessee** is largely sprawl with urban clusters serving the functions cities used to serve. Communities of place, when they exist, are tenuous and fragile. The state is 79% White and 17% African American. Four percent of the population is now Hispanic. Tennessee does not have an income tax and though its sales taxes are among the highest in the nation, budget crises are routine and the state educational and cultural organizations continue to suffer. There are ten state-supported universities and thirteen community colleges, along with thirty-five private colleges and universities. There are no longer book editors in Tennessee newspapers and in 2010 the last independent bookstore in Nashville closed. In 2011, however, writer Ann Patchett opened an independent bookstore that continues to flourish.
- Seventy-three percent of **Nevada**'s population lives in the Las Vegas metropolitan area and 15% of the population lives in the state's other major metropolitan area, Reno. The remaining 12% of the population resides in the remaining 14 counties which make up the majority of the geographic area of the state. Nevada is simultaneously one of the most urban and one of the most rural states. Some of its counties are classified as "frontier" because they have less than six people living per square mile. According to recent census data, Nevada is 62% White and 27% Hispanic. The state's demographer, however, estimates that the number of Hispanics living in the state may be closer to one-third. The National Cowboy Poetry Gathering is produced by the Western Folklife Center and held annually in Elko.
- A state of contrasts, **Mississippi**'s contributions to American and world culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries are unparalleled, particularly in literature. Call to mind William Faulkner, Richard Wright, Eudora Welty, Tennessee Williams, Margaret Walker Alexander, Shelby Foote, Walker Percy. Think of Eli Evans, Willie Morris, Natasha Trethewey. Then be reminded that Mississippi is number one on far too many lists of other kinds: inadequate education for its children, the number of families and children at or below the poverty level, illnesses and diseases often related to poverty and lack of education, obesity on the one hand and food-challenged children and elders on the other, inadequate health care, low-level and non-readers, single-parent households, lack of infrastructure to meet the needs of its poorest citizens. It ranks 50<sup>th</sup> in child well-being.<sup>18</sup>
- Twenty-two percent of New Yorkers are foreign-born, almost 10% above the national average. **New York** has an overall population that is 58% non-Hispanic White, 18% African American, 18% Hispanic, and 8% Asian. It continues to be an immigration hub: in Queens, the most diverse county in the country, 138 languages are spoken. Beyond New York City, there is an increasing trend among immigrants from all over the world to settle immediately in suburbs and smaller towns and cities. Central New York, for example, has encouraged refugees to settle there from Eastern Africa and Serbia. The collective education level for New Yorkers (32% of citizens over age 24 hold at least a bachelor's degree) is 4% higher than the national average; Rochester once boasted the highest number of PhDs per capita in the nation.

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<sup>17</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation *Kids Count Databook* (<http://www.aecf.org/m/databook/aecf-2014kidscountdatabook-embargoed-2014.pdf>).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

## Partnerships and Collaborations

One of the ways councils expand their spheres of inclusion is through partnerships with public and private institutions and organizations. As David Tebaldi, executive director of Mass Humanities, notes, “A small organization with an ambitious statewide agenda needs friends.”

Councils around the country work with colleges and universities, school districts, and social service agencies. The Hawai‘i Council for the Humanities’ Motherread/Fatheread program is the only family education program of the Hawai‘i Paroling Authority and the Vermont Humanities Council’s “Connections” program brings reading and discussion to underserved adults, some of whom are incarcerated. The Kansas Humanities Council and the Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum have partnered to conduct 20 interviews with Boeing machinists, engineers, and office staff, as well as Wichita community members and city officials, on the eve of the plant’s departure from the “Air Capital of the World.” With its “Constitutionally Speaking” initiative, the New Hampshire Humanities Council is partnering with the New Hampshire Supreme Court Society, the University of New Hampshire School of Law, and the newly created New Hampshire Institute for Civic Education. One of the more unusual collaborations was that which Indiana Humanities had with the host committee for the 2012 Super Bowl. Its involvement achieved it mention in the *New York Times*.

WAMC-Northeast Public Radio produces a radio show, *Ideas Matter: Checking in with the Public Humanities* in collaboration with Mass Humanities, the New York Council for the Humanities, the Vermont Humanities Council, the New Hampshire Humanities Council, Connecticut Humanities, the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, and the New Jersey Council for the Humanities.

The Minnesota Humanities Center is part of a statewide consortium of agencies that includes the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, the Council on Black Minnesotans, the Chicano Latino Affairs Council, and the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans.

With all their partnerships and collaborations, state humanities councils demonstrate the vitality and significance of the humanities to people and organizations that might not otherwise recognize how embedded the humanities indeed are in their lives and communities. Through their partnerships, state humanities councils vastly broaden the reach of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The examples in this article are only that. They serve to illuminate the universe of creative ways councils bore deep inside their states and communities to leverage friends, funds, and influence for the humanities. That these partnerships exist shows the power of councils to convince people of the importance and day-to-day relevance of the humanities.

- **Mass Humanities** furthers its core mission, engaging new audiences for the humanities, through collaborations and partnerships. Since 1998, it has received its state funding through the Massachusetts Cultural Council. It has ongoing relationships with four of the six University of Massachusetts campuses. Other partners include the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, Boston College, the American Antiquarian Society, Harvard Law School, the Massachusetts Center for the Book, and the National Park Service. Programs that benefit from these collaborations include the Clemente Course, the annual Massachusetts History Conference, *Family Adventures in Reading, Literature & Medicine*, and *Reading Frederick Douglass*.
- The **Missouri Humanities Council** does “nothing without partners,” according to its former executive director Geoff Giglierano. With the State Historical Society, it sponsors the

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speakers bureau and History Day. It hosts summer teacher workshops with the Mark Twain Boyhood Home and Museum. MHC holds creative writing workshops for veterans, presented with the Jefferson Barracks VA medical facility and Warriors Arts Alliance, and it partners with Warriors Arts and Southeast Missouri State University Press in the annual veterans' writing competition and anthology, *Proud to Be*. It is a founding partner of the St. Louis Humanities Festival. MHC also partners with the arts council, state libraries, public broadcasting, and historic preservation.

- On its website, **Indiana Humanities** has a page devoted to its partners, listed by program. These partners include businesses, educational institutions, museums, community leadership groups, the Indiana State Library, the Farm Bureau, and the Indiana State Fair. It jointly sponsored the sell-out “Evening with Anthony Bourdain and Eric Ripert” with the Spirit and Place Festival. Two two-year initiatives, Food for Thought and The Spirit of Competition, have served as “big umbrellas” to engage a variety of organizations. The Spirit of Competition launched while Indianapolis was host to the Super Bowl and brought Indiana Humanities into the middle of those festivities. It has recently released *Humanities at the Crossroads*, an Indiana-based survey of the humanities connections within the state.
- *Partnerships and Collaboration* is one of the **Hawai‘i Council for the Humanities’** major strategic goals and it facilitates up to twenty such efforts annually through its dedicated partnerships program. Many of these programs reach statewide and several are becoming on-going projects. HCH’s public visibility has markedly increased because it is seen as being part of the programs rather than merely one of the funders. Partnerships have also greatly enhanced its networking capacity within the public humanities and educational communities. A long-standing major partnership is with the Hawai‘i Book and Music Festival where HCH hosts a pavilion. It also partners with the Hawai‘i International Film Festival and with Hawai‘i Public Broadcasting.
- The **Virginia Foundation for the Humanities** partners with all major state cultural entities including the Library of Virginia, the Virginia Historical Society, the eleven Virginia Indian tribes, the Virginia Association of Museums, the State Council of Higher Education, and public and private colleges and universities. It works with such state departments as Education, Historic Resources, Social Services, Natural Resources, the Office of the Governor, the General Assembly, the MLK, Jr. Memorial Commission, the Tourism Corporation, and the Commission for the Arts. Partners include all NPR and PBS stations and corporate media. A nonprofit, VFH is a University of Virginia center. Virginia Africana is one of several consortia VFH has initiated.
- The **Idaho Humanities Council** has mutually beneficial partnerships with several state agencies, the longest standing being with the Commission for Libraries for the “Let’s Talk About It” program. In return for IHC’s support of the statewide broadcast of *American Experience* and *American Masters* on Idaho Public Television, it receives underwriting credits before and after each program and free promotion of its sponsored public events. IPTV has made IHC a free promotional video. A collaboration with the Idaho Historical Society supports teacher workshops and a traveling exhibit program. IHC, the State Historical Society, and the Idaho Heritage Trust sponsor an annual award to a small museum for outstanding interpretation of local history.
- The **Arkansas Humanities Council**’s partnership with the Central Arkansas Library System provides it office space in the Arkansas Studies Institute, a community that includes the Butler Center Archives, the University of Arkansas at Little Rock archives and public history program, the Clinton School of Public Service, and the *Oxford American* literary

magazine. It manages the Education Minigrant program for the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, and administers both the Arkansas Heritage Grant and the Small Museum Grant programs for the Department of Arkansas Heritage. The Clinton Presidential Library is a welcome new partner, hosting teacher workshops and public events as well as participating in special grant initiatives.

## The Economy, Fundraising, and Philanthropy<sup>19</sup>

In August 2012, the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* launched the interactive website “[How America Gives](#).” This website provides the opportunity for one to discover the giving patterns in one’s own zip code, to compare giving levels in red states and blue states, and to see the impact of religion and faith on giving. It also spotlights giving in big cities and covers individual or household charitable giving. It was [updated](#) in 2014.

In the [summary](#) of its 2014 findings, the *Chronicle* notes that the wealthiest Americans, those making over \$200,000 household income per year, are the least generous while, “As the recession lifted, poor and middle class Americans dug deeper into their wallets to give to charity, even though they were earning less.”

The [Rhode Island Council for the Humanities](#)’ experience of fundraising is dramatically at odds with its state’s overall giving levels, as is that of [Humanities Nebraska](#). According to the 2013 income survey conducted by the [Federation of State Humanities Councils](#),<sup>20</sup> almost 10% of RICH’s revenue comes from individual donations and individual contributions make up 14% of HN’s revenues. The state of Rhode Island is ranked 47<sup>th</sup> in charitable giving and Nebraska is ranked 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Humanities Nebraska’s fundraising involves vision, stewardship, and storytelling.** According to the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*’s 2014 report, Nebraskans donate 3.3% of their

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<sup>19</sup> This section on the economy, fundraising, and philanthropy draws on information provided by the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*’s “How America Gives” website (<http://philanthropy.com/section/How-America-Gives/621/>). It has also benefitted from material written by Christopher Sommerich, executive director of Humanities Nebraska, and Elizabeth Francis, executive director of the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities. Thanks as well to Suzanne T. Allen and Claudia Herrold of Philanthropy Ohio for information about the economic and philanthropic situation in Ohio.

<sup>20</sup> According to the [Federation of State Humanities Councils’ 2013 income survey](#), seven councils derived more than 10% of their overall income from individual donations: Humanities Washington and the Maine Humanities Council (both 17%), Humanities Nebraska (14%), the New Hampshire Humanities Council and the Vermont Humanities Council (both 12%), Cal Humanities (11%), and Oregon Humanities (10%). For the 55 councils reporting for 2013, the overall percentage of income derived from individual donations is 5%. The Rhode Island Humanities Council received 9.6% of its income from individual donations.

Although this essay focuses on individual giving, it is interesting to note council revenues from other private sources in 2013. The average percentage of council income from corporations and foundations was 15%. The fourteen councils with the highest percentage of corporate and foundation revenues are those in Minnesota (57%); Indiana and Massachusetts (both 24%); Louisiana (23%); Illinois (22%); Washington (19%); Utah (18%); Alabama, Colorado, Vermont (all 15%); Rhode Island (13%); and Kentucky, Nebraska, Oklahoma (all 11%). Twenty-six percent of total council revenue came from all private sources, including earned income and endowments, with 39 councils raising at least 10% of their revenues from such sources. Those raising more than one-third from private sources were the councils in Minnesota (60%), Louisiana (54%), New Hampshire (52%), Nebraska (50%), Washington (41%), Colorado (36%), Massachusetts (35%), and Oklahoma (33%).

Seventy-four percent of total council income in 2013 came from public sources. Of this, however, 24% came from public sources *in addition* to the NEH General Operating Support Grants awarded by Federal/State Partnership. Twenty-seven councils derived at least 10% of their total revenues from such public sources, with the Alaska Humanities Forum leading the way with 80%.

discretionary income to charity. But Humanities Nebraska has emerged as a leader in state humanities council fundraising by building strong connections with individual donors, businesses, and private foundations that strongly support the concept of public access to the humanities. Through a unique model of two entities with volunteer boards—a Council and a Foundation—which essentially act as one unified body, Humanities Nebraska is served by a strong mix of humanities scholars, business leaders, community volunteers, and others who have engaged more than 3,000 active donors in supporting the council’s programming. State elected officials are strong supporters of Humanities Nebraska.

“We recognized many years ago that the real key to a stable, growing state humanities council program was to build private support,” stated Christopher Sommerich, Humanities Nebraska’s executive director. Chris took over as executive director after six years serving as the council’s development director and is a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE). “I don’t want to contemplate a world without the basic operating support the state councils receive from the NEH,” continued Chris. “That is essential. But realistically, to meet our goals more fully and to meet all of the needs in our states, we must broaden our support to include more private philanthropy.”

For the last ten years, the private sector has covered more than a quarter of Humanities Nebraska’s total budget—the second most significant source after NEH funding, and in 2013 that amount reached 50%. The council also benefits from a state appropriation. “Advocating for our federal and state support is not unlike raising private funds,” Chris stated. “Whether it is public taxpayer dollars or charitable donations, our responsibility is to provide the vision for what that support makes possible, to steward those resources smartly, and to tell the stories of what is happening thanks to that support. In a sense, we are our states’ storytellers, after all. When I hear what all of the state humanities councils are doing to enrich the lives of their citizens, and the enthusiasm that radiates from those councils in telling those stories, I wish that could be bottled and delivered to potential donors throughout their states. It is remarkable, and we all have a lot to be proud of. It’s simply a matter of getting the stories out.”

Over the past two decades, HN has increased its private donations from a low of \$99,000 in 1996 to a record high of \$408,000 in 2013. One recent example sums up Nebraska’s approach to philanthropy, and the results. “We recently experienced the loss of a donor who embodies the charitable spirit of Nebraskans,” Chris began. “She lived in a rural community, and started writing checks to us for \$30-\$50 more than a decade ago. Then we met her at a humanities program, and her checks went up to \$100. Then our Chautauqua program came to her town, and her donations bumped to \$250. We visited her on occasion (not asking for money), and the checks became \$500, then \$1,000, then \$2,000. This last summer, she passed away unexpectedly. I recently received a letter from her attorney informing us that she had remembered us in her estate plans, and we will be receiving nearly \$100,000. We were never aggressively asking her for gifts, and did not know she had included us in her charitable estate plans. We simply kept in touch and told the stories of what we were doing in her community and throughout the state. She made the choice what to do with that, and her generous spirit will enrich the lives of other Nebraskans for years to come.”

**The evolution of philanthropy in Rhode Island since the recession:** Years after the end of the recession, Rhode Island’s economy remains the weakest in New England, struggling with high unemployment and slow job growth. Funding for arts and culture contracted during the downturn; recognizing this, philanthropic giving and grantmaking have increasingly focused on collaboration and strategic initiatives to achieve greater impact. As Rhode Island emerges from the recession, albeit slowly, the need for solutions has inspired coordinated efforts to develop a shared vision of the state’s assets and to spur both business and community development. These include Rhode Island’s bold efforts in creative place making, which have transformed the city of

Providence, for example, as well as its heritage and historical organizations. Well known as the advocate for and supporter of public humanities projects through its grantmaking program, the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities is working with leaders in philanthropy, government, and economic development to investigate the state's distinct opportunities, to articulate the needs of and potential of public humanities, and to tell deeper, more diverse, and compelling narratives. In this sense, the Council's role as a funder is increasingly to catalyze innovation, thus increasing its ability to attract support and to build public-private partnerships.

**A glance at the economic contexts in which five councils work:** Charitable giving is part of an overall economy. Here is a look at five states' economies:

- **Rhode Island** was considered to be in recession before the Great Recession began in 2007. Historically, its dominant industries had included jewelry manufacturing, agriculture, and fishing, and while they still play a role in the state's economy, tourism and knowledge economy industries like biotechnology and design now play a larger role. The reliance on tourism and the emergent quality of the knowledge economy cause concern when considered against the backdrop of larger economic trends. In this climate, competition for corporate and foundation support is increasingly turning into collaborative and cross-sector approaches.
- Although **Nebraska's** economic base has broadened, agriculture and agri-business remain vital. Omaha's economy has diversified and grown, with five Fortune 500 companies headquartered there. Several large private employers have kept their headquarters in an increasingly revitalized downtown and riverfront area, with significant private investment in cultural and entertainment venues. Lincoln, home to state government and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, has been somewhat protected from abrupt economic downturns, and has experienced a building boom, including a new entertainment arena and a technology park. Nebraska's unemployment rate is around 4%, well below the national average.
- The economy in **Colorado** is the sixth best in the Beacon Hill Institute competitiveness survey and Forbes ranked it the 5th state for business in 2013 with a gross state product of \$274 billion and 5-year annual growth of 1 percent. The state added 58,500 jobs in the first eight months of 2013, a 2.5 percent increase over the same months in 2012. Jobs in oil and gas extraction in the northern gas fields increased over the past several years. With them, however, communities like Grand Junction and Greeley experienced an influx of temporary workers and their families in need of education and other services. State unemployment, at 7 percent, is just below the national average of 7.3 percent.
- **Michigan's** economy has been drastically affected as energy sources have been threatened, manufacturing technology has changed, a global economy has emerged, and competition has been heightened. Although its unemployment rate is high, it has declined in the last year from 9 percent in July 2013 to 7.7 percent a year later. Having once been highly ranked in per capita income, Michigan remains consistently below the national average. Foundations are playing an increasingly prominent role in support of communities, the arts, recreation, and other services. The Michigan Humanities Council has just been awarded a three-year, \$1.7 million grant from the Michigan-based W.K. Kellogg Foundation to launch a new statewide program to share local stories about race and cultural history. In 2011, the state tax credits for some charitable giving were eliminated with the result that some are giving less than in the past.
- In 2012 **Ohio** added jobs in the automotive and healthcare industries, in manufacturing, and in oil and natural gas. In many cases, however, this reflects rebuilding rather than growth. The automotive industry, for instance, long the economic lifeblood for much of Ohio, added 1,500 jobs last year. Even with this increase, there are nearly 32,800 fewer automotive jobs

than at the end of 2007. Healthcare was the largest growth sector and eastern Ohio's Utica shale rock has spurred investment and job growth. Although individual giving dropped from 2000-2010, 2010 marked a 7.5 percent increase over the previous year. Seventy-five percent of all charitable donations made in Ohio are given by individuals, 24 percent of whom have incomes of less than \$50,000.



**Appendix: Percentage of council income broken down by major revenue sources**  
 Additional calculations based on the Federation of State Humanities Councils' 2013 income survey

<b>Council</b>	<b>total income</b>	<b>% individual gifts</b>	<b>corporate &amp; foundationn</b>	<b>% total public sources</b>	<b>% non-NEH public sources</b>	<b>% total private sources</b>
Alabama Humanities Foundation	935,091	3.5386%	15.1167%	75.4735%	4.3072%	24.5265%
Alaska Humanities Forum	2,847,315	0.9147%	0.7604%	98.1021%	80.3209%	1.8979%
Amerika Samoa Humanities Council	346,574	0.0000%	0.0000%	99.9209%	13.1285%	0.0791%
Arizona Humanities Council	948,772	2.4149%	2.7922%	86.2352%	7.4849%	13.7648%
Arkansas Humanities Council	888,630	0.0000%	8.4400%	90.0746%	22.5066%	9.9254%
Cal Humanities	2,818,311	11.1834%	0.8871%	87.9190%	2.9031%	12.0810%
Colorado Humanities	1,209,065	3.9160%	15.4782%	64.4668%	11.0850%	35.5332%
Connecticut Humanities	2,805,604	0.8644%	0.0000%	97.4377%	74.6631%	2.5623%
Delaware Humanities Forum	599,843	3.2862%	0.0000%	94.8051%	6.7338%	5.1949%
Florida Humanities Council	2,041,825	3.6629%	6.1248%	78.8102%	24.4818%	21.1898%
Fundacion Puertorriquena de las Humanidades	669,380	0.0557%	0.0000%	99.8312%	1.9421%	0.1688%
Georgia Humanities Council	1,203,761	3.7728%	6.0372%	90.0284%	21.6644%	9.9716%
Guam Humanities Council	475,038	0.3667%	8.7361%	88.0517%	15.0653%	11.9483%
Hawai'i Council for the Humanities	681,738	3.3755%	5.5793%	90.7042%	2.1966%	9.2958%
Humanities Council of Washington, D.C.	1,028,463	5.1459%	5.4706%	89.3792%	37.1346%	10.6208%
Humanities Iowa	932,827	1.4056%	1.2004%	82.6538%	17.0457%	17.3462%
Humanities Montana	696,128	3.1017%	3.7349%	88.8263%	8.3380%	11.1737%
Humanities Nebraska	1,604,836	13.6926%	10.8918%	50.3557%	15.1160%	49.6443%
Humanities Tennessee	1,159,102	4.2147%	9.4713%	76.0406%	4.4862%	23.9594%
Humanities Texas	2,202,098	2.3632%	8.7417%	85.8313%	22.7056%	14.1687%
Humanities Washington	1,429,874	17.4219%	18.9898%	59.1737%	4.1514%	40.8263%
Idaho Humanities Council	745,478	6.5732%	5.2353%	72.9398%	0.0000%	27.0602%
Illinois Humanities Council	2,012,645	5.6004%	21.6888%	71.8736%	20.7190%	28.1264%
Indiana Humanities	1,061,550	1.7948%	23.9277%	69.1461%	0.0000%	30.8539%
Kansas Humanities Council	735,003	9.3147%	0.9189%	88.7991%	7.0294%	11.2009%
Kentucky Humanities Council	974,362	6.0806%	11.2595%	73.5133%	6.7353%	26.4867%
Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities	2,560,462	4.8890%	23.3731%	46.0382%	12.3679%	53.9618%
Maine Humanities Council	1,062,638	17.3612%	5.4432%	71.0708%	19.1641%	28.9292%
Maryland Humanities Council	1,097,673	6.9282%	9.3099%	80.9272%	16.9847%	19.0728%
Mass Humanities	1,883,504	7.4888%	24.3443%	65.1956%	25.7293%	34.8044%
Michigan Humanities Council	1,151,863	2.4874%	8.3342%	89.1029%	9.8452%	10.8971%
Minnesota Humanities Center	11,163,554	0.4802%	57.1592%	39.3251%	33.9677%	60.6749%
Mississippi Humanities Council	693,647	1.5362%	0.0000%	96.7319%	9.4800%	3.2681%
Missouri Humanities Council	1,863,761	2.3207%	3.0476%	94.3742%	56.3377%	5.6258%
Nevada Humanities	895,127	1.6424%	5.5794%	83.6823%	9.1875%	16.3177%
New Hampshire Humanities Council	1,130,137	12.3443%	8.0842%	48.3198%	0.0000%	51.6802%
New Jersey Council for the Humanities	905,636	0.5797%	2.8409%	93.5908%	1.2024%	6.4092%
New Mexico Humanities Council	640,254	1.3378%	0.0000%	94.8624%	8.3248%	5.1376%
New York Council for the Humanities	2,043,649	4.4123%	4.2082%	88.0455%	22.7886%	11.9545%
North Carolina Humanities Council	995,694	5.9350%	3.2138%	89.8127%	7.9342%	10.1873%
North Dakota Humanities Council	585,439	1.4119%	0.0000%	98.5375%	6.3725%	1.4625%
Northern Marianas Humanities Council	407,370	0.1537%	8.1778%	90.3920%	12.5807%	9.6080%
Ohio Humanities Council	1,140,861	2.1876%	0.0000%	87.7153%	1.7531%	12.2847%
Oklahoma Humanities Council	945,028	5.3542%	11.0763%	66.0785%	0.0000%	33.9215%
Oregon Humanities	1,017,875	9.9748%	8.5225%	78.1007%	17.0774%	21.8993%
Pennsylvania Humanities Council	1,078,745	2.9987%	0.0000%	95.2347%	0.0000%	4.7653%
Rhode Island Council for the Humanities	735,681	9.5730%	12.7902%	74.1218%	0.1903%	25.8782%
South Dakota Humanities Council	651,170	4.1912%	6.0126%	84.9901%	4.2232%	15.0099%
The Humanities Council South Carolina	889,313	7.9829%	3.4184%	84.4851%	5.4308%	15.5149%
Utah Humanities Council	1,166,662	7.0601%	17.5286%	70.9849%	19.5218%	29.0151%
Vermont Humanities Council	1,131,747	11.7850%	15.2851%	65.5084%	19.2586%	34.4916%
Virginia Foundation for the Humanities	4,030,592	7.1604%	5.4169%	69.4597%	50.1373%	30.5403%
West Virginia Humanities Council	1,321,080	6.3655%	3.6566%	82.4371%	38.7804%	17.5629%
Wisconsin Humanities Council	823,234	4.8919%	0.6681%	93.9393%	8.9768%	6.0607%
Wyoming Humanities Council	771,524	4.8172%	1.4658%	91.5308%	25.1551%	8.4692%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>77,837,233</b>	<b>4.6673%</b>	<b>14.8093%</b>	<b>74.2186%</b>	<b>23.5778%</b>	<b>25.7814%</b>