



Connecticut Humanities Council

2008/2009 Program Profile

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This Year at the Council

Fiscal year 2008-2009 marks a watershed in the thirty-five-year programming history of the Connecticut Humanities Council with a series of major new initiatives dominating our agenda:

- A top-to-bottom reorganization of our heritage granting programs to help the state's history museums and historical societies remain central components of our cultural life in a time of rapid change and challenge.
- The development of the *Encyclopedia of Connecticut History Online* (ECHO) to make the stories, personalities and significant documents of our past accessible to all at the click of a mouse.
- A dramatic expansion of our “reading for meaning” programs to introduce children to the pleasure of reading in three of Connecticut's most disadvantaged cities.
- A \$2 million development campaign aimed at national foundations, federal agencies, Connecticut philanthropies and individual donors to support these new initiatives.
- A newly renovated, 8,000-square-foot office building near downtown Middletown to house our seventeen staff members and 28,000-book library.

We see 2008-2009 as a year filled with extraordinary opportunities to make the humanities an even more vibrant part of Connecticut's cultural life.



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Who We Are

A state-based affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Connecticut Humanities Council was created thirty-five years ago as a public, non profit 501(c)(3) foundation with an 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 \$2.395 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 \$4.2 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 CHC has a staff of seventeen and maintains offices in Middletown. For more information on the Humanities 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 Council's mission has always been a broad and imposing one:

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

The Council's achievements over the years flow from a decision two decades ago to focus its available resources carefully and do a few things well and in depth. Consequently, the CHC 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.



Connecticut Heritage Revitalization Initiative

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.

For many years, the bulk of this agenda was served by the Council's Cultural Heritage Development Fund (CHDF), a granting program established in 1995 with funding from the Connecticut General Assembly. Over the next decade, the fund distributed more than \$10 million to heritage organizations throughout the state for projects bringing Connecticut's rich heritage to the public.

In 2006, the Council initiated an intensive two-year planning process to re-assess, re-focus and re-finance our heritage programs to more effectively serve Connecticut's heritage museums and historical societies and better meet the expectations, interests and tastes of twenty-first century audiences. The outcome is the *Connecticut Heritage Revitalization Initiative*, a comprehensive set of new programs to revitalize our heritage institutions and rekindle public interest in our state's rich and distinguished history.

■ PROGRAMS FOR HERITAGE MUSEUMS AND HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

Connecticut Heritage Revitalization Fund

2008-2009 Budget: \$962,628

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, 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

2008-2009 Budget: \$237,917

The *Heritage Resource Center and Field Services Program* is an online information resource through which the Humanities Council can organize and distribute 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 annual statewide museum conferences, regional workshops on current trends and best practices for museum staff, and regional seminars. It is a service provider as well, sending out CHC-contracted circuit riders to address individual institutional needs, particularly in the area of technology, and a services coordinator through the provision of consultant rosters. 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 Connecticut Council for the Social Studies.

2008-2009 Budget: \$456,816

When launched in 2010, ECHO will be a comprehensive Internet-based resource on Connecticut history that will integrate more than 700 scholar-written articles and essays with thousands of digitized images collected from the state's major archival repositories and more than 200 streaming videos drawn from the Council's seventeen-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.

2008-2009 Budget: \$47,538

This project will result in the creation of an ever-expanding array of lesson units for 8th and 11th grade U.S. History teachers that illuminate important themes in U.S. history from a Connecticut perspective. The units will be 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 will be the inclusion of a blog for teachers to post comments on teaching techniques, classroom successes, best practices and other feedback and conversation that will make the curriculum units more effective.

■ COLLABORATIVE HERITAGE PROGRAMS

Connecticut History Online

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

2008-2009 Budget: \$109,052

This partnership between the CHC and a longstanding consortium of the state's major archival repositories will expand *Connecticut History Online*, a Web-based resource for documents, images and other primary source materials on Connecticut history. The partnership will integrate thousands of CHO's digital objects with content in the Council's *Encyclopedia of Connecticut History Online*. The partners will also identify, prioritize and digitize other important collections of historical materials in the state.

Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants

In collaboration with the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation.

2008-2009 Budget: \$100,000 (CHC 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.

Greater Hartford Heritage Advancement Program

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

2008-2009 Budget: \$200,000 (total contributions of all partners)

This joint granting program provides matching grants to help heritage organizations address professional staffing needs previously identified through a formal strategic planning process. Funded positions typically include curatorial services, organizational management, fund-raising/public relations and education.

Community Foundation Collaborations

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

2008-2009 Budget: \$53,835.68

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.



Everyone Reads! Initiative

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.

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

■ READING PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Family Read

2008-2009 Budget: \$273,331

Family Read is a CHC-created adaptation of the core family reading techniques found in the nationally respected *Motherread/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. In recognition of its effectiveness, the Hartford School System has formally incorporated *Family Read* and other CHC family reading programs into its strategic plan as a means to involve parents more actively in their children's education.

Book Voyagers in Libraries

2008-2009 Budget: \$151,039

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, CHC-employed *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

2008-2009 Budget: \$155,584

Book Voyagers After School brings the CHC'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

In Development

Projected 2009/2010 Budget: \$342,553

The goal of *Connecticut's Urban Reading Initiative* is to incorporate CHC-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 will also create partnerships with other state-wide organizations sponsoring "reading for meaning" programs for children in each target city. By working together, the partners will be 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

2008-2009 Budget: \$132,053

Based on a lending library of more than 10,000 volumes, this longstanding CHC-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 CHC 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.

Humanities Seminars in the Professions

2008-2009 Budget: \$20,730

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

Gateway to the Humanities

In collaboration with Trinity College.

2008-2009 Budget: \$37,262

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



Our Budget

Fiscal Year 2008/2009 July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009

Projected Revenues

State of Connecticut	\$2,395,000
National Endowment for the Humanities	
2008/2009 Allocations	638,290
2007/2008 Deferred Funds	150,539
Additional Federal Funding	440,258
Corporate/Foundation Grants and Private Gifts	354,371
Total	\$3,978,458

Projected Expenditures

Heritage Granting Programs	\$1,296,502
CHC-conducted Heritage Programs	985,876
CHC-conducted Reading Programs	800,484
General Administration	447,494
Development and Publicity	448,102
Total	\$3,978,458



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 provide critical support for the major new initiatives in both heritage and reading that dominate our work in 2008-2009. The Council's 3-year plan calls for raising an additional \$6 million in funding for the *Encyclopedia of Connecticut's History Online* and *Connecticut's Urban Reading Initiative* through an aggressive development campaign aimed at federal agencies, foundations and funding sources across Connecticut.

Friends of the Connecticut Humanities Council

Gifts received through the end of the Council's most recent fiscal year (June 30, 2008)

\$1,000 or more

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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:



MetLife
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SAGE
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Additional funding for Family Read provided by:

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