PUTTING HUMANITIES ON THE MAP

The Mississippi Humanities Council, an independent nonprofit organization, creates opportunities for Mississippians to learn about themselves and the larger world, and enriches communities through civil conversations about our history and culture.

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FY 2018 FUNDING SOURCES

- National Endowment for the Humanities: $769,070
- Mississippi Legislature: Oral History $45,748
- Mississippi Arts Commission: $3,930
- Federation of State Humanities Councils Grant: $29,000
- Art for Justice Fund: $25,000
- Kettering Foundation: $6,665
- Community Foundation for Mississippi: $2,300
- Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi: $2,000
- Miscellaneous Income: $19,828
- Private Donations: $21,555
- Interest income: $1,892

TOTAL REVENUE: $926,988

FY 2018 EXPENDITURES

- Program Services: 78%
- Administrative: 17%
- Fundraising: 5%

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The MHC awards grants to nonprofit organizations in support of programs across Mississippi that enhance our understanding of our unique cultural heritages, encourage thoughtful, civil conversations among our citizens, and interpret our human experience. Over the past two years, we have funded a diverse range of projects, including an exhibit about early native American life in southwestern Mississippi, living history cemetery tours in Meridian, a documentary about Civil Rights legend Fannie Lou Hamer, and a creative writing program called Civil Write: The World serving young women in the Mississippi Delta. The MHC also offers special grants to support oral history projects in partnership with the University of Southern Mississippi through the Mississippi Oral History Project. We are committed to being an accessible grantmaker, offering guidance and support to both our experienced partners and first-time grant writers.

Family Reading
Our family reading program makes books come alive for children and their parents.

Designed for lower-elementary age children, these programs include Prime Time Family Reading, which operates in partnership with the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, and the Spanish bilingual program Lectura. During the six-week programs, professional storytellers use award-winning children’s books to entertain families while discussion leaders engage them in thoughtful conversation about the meaning of the stories. Each week, families bring home copies of the next sessions’s books to read together. At the end of the series, families are given free books to encourage kids to continue reading as a family. We partner with schools, community centers, libraries, and churches across the state to provide our family reading programs to underserved areas and communities.

Museum on Main Street
We bring Smithsonian traveling exhibits to smaller communities across the state.

Since 2001, the MHC has brought eight different exhibits to 56 host sites across Mississippi. Past exhibits have explored such topics as the nature of work through American History, American music and foodways, and the role of sports in society. In 2018 and 2019, the Water Ways exhibit examined the economic, environmental, and cultural impact of water on American life. In 2020 and 2021, we will bring Crossroads: Change in Rural America to six different communities in Mississippi which complements the Smithsonian exhibit with our own exhibit that tells local stories and a series of public programs that explore various topics related to the theme. More than just a traveling exhibit program, Museum on Main Street continues conversations about issues important to our communities.

Ideas on Tap
This panel series fosters civil discussion about important contemporary issues.

Originally held in Jackson, Ideas on Tap has now expanded to eleven additional cities in Mississippi. Often held at an alternative venue, like a bar or restaurant, Ideas on Tap seeks to explore serious issues in a fun, informal environment. The conversations are often focused on difficult and controversial subjects and always include diverse viewpoints, but the goal of Ideas on Tap is to create a forum for the civil exchange of ideas. We have tackled such issues as the Mississippi state flag, Confederate monuments, public education policy, brain drain, journalism and democracy, criminal justice reform, and many others. The growing demand for Ideas on Tap shows there is a hunger in our state for civil dialogue across differences.

Humanities Awards
We celebrate outstanding teaching and work in the public humanities.

To recognize significant achievements in the public humanities, the MHC gives annual awards to scholars, educators, and institutions that have developed or sponsored outstanding programs that educate the public about Mississippi’s history and culture. In addition, the Council awards an honorary, discretionary recipient the “Crosby Non-Grant Award” named for the MHC’s founding director. The MHC also honours one exceptional humanities teacher at each of our state’s higher education institutions. Recipients of these award present public lectures related to their research and scholarship. The incredible diversity of their topics each year reflect the tremendous breadth of humanities education in our state.

Speakers Bureau
We connect humanities scholars with communities across the state.

The Speakers Bureau features our state’s finest historians, writers, and storytellers talking about a wide variety of subjects related to Mississippi and beyond. The MHC selects speakers based on their credentials and the quality of their programs and pays them an honorarium for presenting to nonprofit groups around the state. For no cost, organizations like public libraries, schools, and historical societies host lectures that draw crowds from their local communities. Whether you want to know more about the Delta Blues, culinary traditions, or Civil Rights (among hundreds of other topics), our speakers bring informative and thought provoking programs to even the remotest corners of Mississippi.

Prison Education
We support efforts to take the humanities inside prison walls.

The MHC supports two prison education programs, the Prison-to-College Pipeline and the Prison-Writes Initiative, offering multiple college-level humanities classes at several correctional facilities around the state. MHC-funded courses in prison have earned students credits at the University of Mississippi, Mississippi College, and Hinds Community College. We have made a commitment to helping these programs grow in Mississippi and to ensure the humanities remains central. While job training skills are crucial, so are self-reflection and critical thinking. The Council believes in the value of higher education in prison not only because it reduces recidivism, but also because it reminds us of the inherent humanity of all people.

Donors
GIFTS OF $1,000 & ABOVE
GIFTS OF $500 - $999
GIFTS OF $200 - $499
GIFTS OF $50 - $199

Visit the MHC’s website for complete donor listing.

MISSEISSIPPI HUMANITIES COUNCIL 2019

Dr. Robert W. Lee, Jr.
Executive Director

Dr. Teressa Simmons
Executive Director

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Dr. Melissa O’Hara
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Chief Communications Officer

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Chief Programs Officer

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Chief Development Officer
Mapping Our Programs Across Mississippi

Mississippi Humanities Council programs reached 79 counties across the state, through partnerships with 396 organizations.

Ideas on Tap

Hernando

In Hernando, we presented two different Ideas on Tap programs about public education. These were part of a yearlong series, supported by the Phi Kappa Foundation, that reached six communities around the state. True to the spirit of our Ideas on Tap programs, these public events offered ideologically diverse perspectives and fostered civil, thoughtful discussion about policy and education issues important to each community.

People, Politics and the Press

Jackson

As part of a national initiative of state humanities councils, with funding from the Mellon Foundation, we created the “People, Politics & the Press” journalism summit in Jackson in 2018, working with the Mississippi Press Association, Mississippi Public Broadcasting, and Mississippi Today. The event brought together national and local journalists for a day of panels and presentations highlighting the importance of journalism to our democracy.

Grants

Woodville

Through a grant to the Woodville Main Street Association, we supported the creation of the Wilkinson County Mound Exhibit. An opening event drew hundreds of attendees to downtown Woodville, who learned about the region’s archaeological significance as a Native American heritage site. Our grants support programs that educate Mississippians about the state’s rich history and can help small communities harness their cultural assets to foster heritage tourism.

Family Reading

Columbus

We are honored to present our Prime Time family reading program to families stationed at Columbus Air Force Base. This storyteller-led reading program entertains children while also engaging them in discussions around weekly themes like courage and fairness. Our Columbus AFB reading programs create opportunities for parents and children to learn together while also fostering a sense of community among families who sacrifice to help defend our nation.

Story of Us

Tupelo

With support from the Kettering Foundation, we partnered with the Tupelo Public School District on a remarkable humanities-based dialogue program to address race disparities in AP course enrollment. Parents, educators, and school administration shared personal testimonials, explored historical context, and discussed their common values about education. The participants continue to meet, working together to ensure more equitable opportunities in Tupelo schools.

Mississippi Encyclopedia Online

In 2018, we launched the Mississippi Encyclopedia Online, in partnership with the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi. With over 1,400 entries and ever growing, the encyclopedia has been visited by over 100,000 users in its first year. People in 174 countries, all 50 states, and 79 Mississippi counties have used the online encyclopedia as an authoritative source on our state’s history and culture.

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