

**General Operating Grant
Final Report
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for the
Legislative Reference Library**



Minnesota
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Center

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**MINNESOTA HUMANITIES CENTER
REPORT TO THE MN STATE LEGISLATURE
JULY 1, 2023- JUNE 30, 2024**

MHC Programs and Activities

Education: MHC's Education Team has made significant strides in FY24 in the areas of culture change, thought leadership, diversifying Minnesota's teacher force, curriculum expansion, and elevating youth voices. During the 2023-24 school year, MHC partnered with numerous school districts across the state including Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS), ISD 917, and SPPS. We partnered with MPS to bring local histories alive in the classroom through immersive learning and social studies curriculum development. As a part of the Reimagine Education grant, on-demand PD and ready-made lessons were created to support teaching ethnic studies in Minneapolis Schools as a follow up to place-based learning experiences which launched in Dec 2023. These materials were created by scholars and MPS educators with input from MPS parent groups and educators.

In partnership with ISD 917, MHC hosted a workshop with Dr. Keith Mayes on Teachability Factors in General and Special Education. 23 district teams from across MN examined the historical context of special education in the United States and its impact on education today. MHC is also working with ISD 917 on a culture change initiative to assess and support evaluation of their district's core values.

In FY24 we prioritized Native American Education for all students in Minnesota. We administered "Teaching American Indian Content to All" professional development sessions for teachers in Wayzata Public Schools. We expanded Indigenous education training for Minnesota educators, collaborating with the Minnesota Department of Education to host the first in-person Tribal Relations training for Minnesota educators, a professional development opportunity centered around MHC's American Indian resources. We hosted the Metro Indian Education Curriculum Leaders meetings, and, in partnership with the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, we hosted the Educator Academy event on February 21. The professional development workshop was designed to introduce K-12 educators to a variety of ways to teach Native American topics in classroom settings. We also collaborated with the Minnesota Department of Education in Mille Lacs to host 100+ educators from across the state for, "Fundamentals for American Indian Education in MN," in the first ever Tribal Sovereignty Institute. The focus of the July 23- 24 training was on sovereignty, American Indian Education, and instructional resources and practices. Additionally, MHC hosted the National Indian Education Association's Indigenous Empowerment and Resilience program on July 25. The NIEA training offered a "unique, participatory history lesson that fosters truth, understanding, respect, and reconciliation among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples." We understand that this was the first time that NIEA has hosted this training in Minnesota.

We continued to support innovative and culturally responsive trainings for educators, in partnership with teachers and students who gave us feedback at every step of the process. The increased requests for story circles using the MHC approach prompted a need for additional skilled circle facilitators. An invite was extended to several skilled community facilitators to learn the MHC approach along with them bringing their own style and cultural learning. Throughout FY24, we trained a cohort of 12 school leaders and educators in Story Circle facilitation. In September, we supported 25 Minnesota educators to learn in Birmingham, AL about the Civil Rights Movement and its impact on our country today. This program received rave reviews, and supported the teachers of Minnesota in developing culturally responsive, grounded teaching practices. Led by our commitment to elevate youth voices, we also continued to partner with youth-centered organizations like the Minnesota Youth Council to develop opportunities for students to use their voices to impact change in education.

Immersive Experiences: In FY24, the long-term viability of Learning from Place Bdote program was strengthened by hosting more than 20+ private and public experiences for the second year. We also secured additional scholars to host Learning from Place Bdote, launched a new Virtual Beyond Bdote workshop with the Native Governance Center, and created new evaluation and private tour intake processes. Additionally, we continue to build a suitable foundation for Learning from Place Hmong St. Paul/Hmong Town and Learning from Place Cedar Riverside with two public tours, four private tours, and four K-12 experiences for middle and high school social studies teachers.

We partnered with Lajune Thomas Lange International Leadership Institute to pilot an African American Heritage Tour for Minnesota educators. The pilot was well received, and we hope to create an immersive experience for educators similar to the Learning from Place: Bdote experience.

We also hosted Feeding Our Souls: The Essence of Black Joy, Feeding Our Souls: The Essence of Latine Joy, and Feeding Our Souls: The Essence of Asian Joy at MHC Event Center. The Essence of Asian Joy was a private event hosting more than 30 White House Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander commissioners. The evening featured stories and cuisine from beloved Cambodian restaurant Cheng Heng and James Beard nominated chefs Ann Kim and Chef Diane as well as comments from state public officials.

Our team successfully produced “Kumbayah! The Juneteenth Story” play with one public performance at the University of Minnesota’s Northrop Auditorium. We secured 20+ community partners to serve as community ambassadors, resulting in an audience of 900 guests. MHC Board member, Kirstie Lazenberry moderated a post-play discussion with various members of the St. Paul Chamber. We also held two performances for 500 summer Freedom school students at Capri Theater in Minneapolis.

We co-produced and co-wrote a film with OMG Digital Media, “Juneteenth Reckoning with Slavery: MN African American History.” The film won multiple film festival awards and was included in the Twin Cities International Film Festival. We solicited input from Minnesota teachers in creating educational materials for the film that can be used in K-12 classrooms. The film was shown to Minneapolis teachers as part of an internal professional development day.

Public Programming: In FY24, MHC remains committed to strengthening partnerships with historically marginalized and underrepresented communities across Minnesota. This year, MHC’s work with Veterans has evolved under a new name, “Many Fronts: Veterans and Community Voices,” reflecting an expanded mission to include those impacted by war and conflict. Events in this series include poetry readings for October’s Veterans’ Voices Month, the *Objects of War* Story Circle, and an evening with New York Times–bestselling author and former Marine Corps special operations team leader Elliot Ackerman.

MHC continues to collaborate with creatives, scholars, and organizations statewide to foster conversations and meaningful connections. Through public events and programming, MHC elevates storytellers and writers to facilitate authentic, impactful dialogues, amplifying voices and experiences often left unheard. For example, in FY24, MHC partnered with the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans to support the Cambodian American Partnership in developing and hosting its inaugural Cambodian Heritage Day at the Minnesota History Center, attracting over 800 attendees. MHC also commemorated Juneteenth – with a series of educational programs, including a brunch with Bakari Sellers for 230 participants, co-producing *Juneteenth Reckoning with Slavery: MN African American History* film, and staging *Kumbayah the Juneteenth Story* at Northrop for nearly 1,000 students and families – to engage audiences statewide of this importance of this holiday. On June 26, Anishinaabe writers Gerald Vizenor, Gordon Henry Jr., and Kimberly Blaeser lead an evening focused on Anishinaabe dream songs

and haiku. On June 28, Kimberly Blaeser, Minnesota Poet Laureate Gwen Nell Westerman, and Minneapolis Poet Laureate Heid E. Erdrich hosted a reading with In–Na–Po fellows and visiting writers.

Civic Renewal

As the official state council affiliated with the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Minnesota Humanities Center takes seriously its obligation to advance NEH's democracy-building work: that is, to provide the public with humanities tools and experiences that equip them to conceive of our shared past, present, and future in ways that respect diverse thinking and emphasize collaboration across differences.

During the period under review, we launched a new statewide program called *Sketches of Minnesota*. A collaboration with the improv-comedy troupe Danger Boat Productions, Sketches uses laughter and comedy to celebrate Minnesota communities, promote dialogue, bridge divides, and help neighbors find ways to work constructively across differences. Working with local community partners as performance hosts, each event began with a meal and a dinner-table conversation facilitated by MHC's Civic Renewal Team, focused on participants' answers to four questions; what makes your town great; what do you think people get wrong about it; what local divisions concern you; and what future do you imagine? After listening in on these conversations, the Danger Boat improv troupe brought the stories to life on stage, through unscripted improv comedy theater. Between its launch in May and the end of the period under review, Sketches traveled around the state, launching a tour that ultimately included St. Paul, Winona, Duluth, Waite Park, Emily, Little Falls, Morris, Austin, and International Falls.

While Sketches was being piloted across the state, we continued our innovative work in higher education through our Third Way Civics (3WC) initiative. As was the case last year, this effort to infuse civic purpose and skills-building into undergraduate's everyday classroom learning continued to expand during the 2023-2024 academic year, include pilot courses in colleges and universities across Minnesota (including Minnesota North College, MSU-Mankato, the University of St. Thomas, and Winona State University), as well as in Florida, Indiana, and Missouri. We also hosted our second annual 3WC Faculty Development and Institutional Sustainability workshop in July 2023. During the workshop, 3WC instructors received rigorous training, and support in creating their syllabi while administrators analyzed and brainstormed potential strategies for firmly implanting and expanding 3WC at their institutions.

A third major initiative accounting for a large share of our Civic Renewal work was our long-running *We Are Water Minnesota* traveling exhibit. This program is a partnership with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, and receives additional support from multiple state agencies, the Minnesota History Center, and the University of Minnesota. *We Are Water Minnesota* works with local communities to promote scientific, historical, and cultural understanding of water in ways that increase mutual understanding across differences and equip communities to imagine and achieve better water futures together. During the period under review, *We Are Water MN* was hosted by community partners in Minneapolis, Roseau, Stillwater, Duluth, Holdingford, and North Branch.

The balance of our Civic Renewal work was devoted to supporting hosts of another long-running traveling exhibit, *Why Treaties Matter*, which conveys the history and importance of tribal self-governance in Minnesota; aiding our partners at the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council in organizing and hosting the fourth annual Dakota and Ojibwe Language Revitalization Conference; developing and offering a two-day "democracy deep dive" for the University of Minnesota's visiting cohort of Mandela Washington Fellows; and sponsoring various efforts to depolarize the public discourse over the state and federal elections systems.

Event Center: MHC operates a full-service Event Center from its building that offers flexible meetings spaces, which accommodate groups of five to 150, has onsite catering, and 15 overnight guest rooms. MHC hosts many educational and community events that complement our programmatic work, reinforcing MHC as a place where people convene, strengthen connections, and participate in meaningful dialogues. MHC's presence strengthens Saint Paul, the state's capitol city, as one the only retreat centers in the city and provides a space for groups working to improve Minnesota's quality of life, and to design and shape the future.

The Event Center also provides spaces for MHC's own programs and acts as an additional source of rental income. Between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024, the Event Center hosted 265 meetings and events, serving over 9,600 people associated with nonprofit organizations, foundations, state agencies, colleges, universities, and other educational institutions. We have a tiered pricing structure, so we are able to offer partnership discounts for our humanities-based, government, and nonprofit clients. Through this structure we are able to remain accessible to these groups, while still staying competitive in our standard pricing. MHC continues to see a strong tie to our mission-related clients (*organizations that hold their events with us because they support our mission or our mission aligns with theirs*), clearly indicating the need for a place to convene and connect.

Grants: The Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC) administers and manages grant funds based on state required policies and by offering resources, advice, and guidance to support projects using Legacy funding. Legacy funding was created to ensure clean water, preserve opportunities for Minnesotans to enjoy nature, parks, and trails, and to appreciate arts and culture that exists within the State. Three-eighths of one percent of sales tax revenue is dedicated to Clean Water, Land, and Legacy; 19.75% is dedicated to the Arts & Cultural Heritage projects. The Legislature appropriated approximately \$15,000,000 to the MHC during the Legislative biennium that started July 1, 2023. As a comparison, the amount of funding MHC received to make grants this biennium exceeds the total amount of funding MHC has been given for grantmaking since the passage of the Legacy Amendment in 2008. Our grant administration has tripled since the 2021-2023 biennium, where MHC administered \$5 million in grant funding.

From July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, MHC successfully announced and administered 131 grants, totaling \$12,885,000, for the following grant opportunities:

- Cultural Heritage Grants (91 grants total) – must also preserve and honor the cultural heritage of MN, provide education and student outreach on cultural diversity, expand development of culturally diverse humanities programming, empower communities in building identity and culture, or amplify the arts, culture, and heritage in MN.
- Emergency Response Grants (4 grants total) – must assist the community in responding to a crisis or major event brought about by violence, strife, intolerance, or hatred.
- Capacity Building Grants (17 grants total)– must assist cultural organizations with grant writing, fundraising, and capacity building.
- Children's Museum Grants (13 grants total)– MHC administers a Direct Appropriations grant to the Saint Paul Children's Museum. MHC also received competitive grant dollars for museums to support youth education, develop new exhibits, provide outreach to underserved and diverse communities, and support programming that celebrates cultural diversity.
- Civics Grants (7 grants total) – provide education for youth on law, democracy, government, and/or debate, and support civics education programs.
- Direct Appropriations - (2 grant total) to HUNGER SOLUTIONS or (HEHAW) and the St. Paul Children's Museum.

MHC received a historic number of applications (more than 600) requesting nearly \$57,710,140.87 in funding. MHC's Grants team also provided support and assistance to applicants along the way, including:

- 128 individual meetings with interested applicants to discuss their project or application,
- 7 informational sessions (263 applicants),
- Review of 86 draft applications to provide feedback prior to an application submission, and
- Responses to hundreds of inquiries.

Finally, the Legislature provided MHC with additional Year 2 funding totaling \$1,590,000. Beginning July 1, 2024, this funding increased our direct appropriations grants and will provide funding in three new areas: Festivals and Events, Cultural Study materials, and Arts and Music education, throughout Minnesota.

Minnesota Humanities Center Enabling Legislation

Subdivision 1. Establishment.

The Minnesota Humanities Center, a nonprofit organization, was established to advance the study of the humanities and enhance the work of schools, colleges, and cultural organizations throughout the state.

Subd. 2. Reports.

The Minnesota Humanities Center shall report to the legislature by September 1 of each year on the use of state funds appropriated to the commission. The report shall include an itemized account of the programs and projects supported and the source of money for each. The report shall show actual expenditures for the fiscal year ending the preceding June 30 and proposed expenditures for the fiscal year beginning the preceding July 1.

Subd. 3. Humanities center.

- a) The Minnesota Humanities Center may establish a humanities center to ensure balance in public education and in the cultural life of the state, and to improve humanities education through the establishment of two institutes: the Minnesota Institute for Lifelong Learning and the Minnesota Institute for the Advancement of Teaching.
- b) The humanities center may transport people and resources to small towns, rural communities, and urban settings to provide grants, technical assistance, and high-quality educational and cultural programs to schools and community organizations throughout Minnesota.
- c) The Minnesota Institute for the Advancement of Teaching may conduct seminars and other activities for the recognition of the teaching profession and the advancement of teaching in Minnesota.

	State FY22	State FY23	State FY24		
	FY22 Actual	FY23 Actual	FY24 Budget		Total For Biennium (FY 21- 23) Expenses for Funding Period
<u>Revenue</u>					
Grant Income State	\$ 750,000.00				
		\$ -	\$ 470,000.00		\$ 750,000.00
<u>Expenses</u>					
Salaries	\$ 285,866.37	\$ 281,700.00	\$ 353,064.00		\$ 567,566.37
Payroll Related Taxes Federal					\$ -
Mn Unemployment Taxes					\$ -
401K Benefits Employee					\$ -
Employee Benefits Insurance	\$ 56,026.63	\$ 56,300.00	\$ 70,562.67		\$ 112,326.63
Contract Service	\$ 33,107.00	\$ 37,000.00	\$ 46,373.33		\$ 70,107.00
<u>Recognition Activities</u>					\$ -
Miscellaneous					\$ -
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 375,000.00	\$ 375,000.00	\$ 470,000.00		\$ 750,000.00