ACTION LEADS TO IMPACT

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

READ THE REPORT
A look back on a year of opportunity and results

The humanities center is about people. All people. That includes all societies, all cultures, and all communities.

At the Minnesota Humanities Center, we focus on creating a just society through community engagement, education, and innovation within our state borders and beyond. We are committed to improving educational engagement by recognizing and appreciating the depth and richness of expression and excellence within all communities.

On the following pages, you’ll see a snapshot of our 2021 fiscal year—the dollars spent, the actions taken, and the results realized.
LETTER FROM THE CEO

As we move into our fifth decade of our existence, the Minnesota Humanities Council (MHC) remains a spry organization that continues to adapt, evolve, and grow.

This past year, we significantly expanded the number of our partners and expanded the scope of several of our collaborations. Our efforts resulted in the creation of many innovative and more diverse programs.

We made substantial progress in securing funding to make much needed repairs to our historic home. We broke ground this year and hope to complete all of the interior and exterior renovations next year.

The Minnesota Legislature also entrusted MHC with additional funds to make more Cultural Legacy grants than in any other point in time in our history. We were honored to help increase shared understanding in society by amplifying the stories of Minnesota racial and ethnically diverse and indigenous communities.

While we had several accomplishments to celebrate this past year, we were not completely immune to the impact of the COVID pandemic. We postponed our 50th anniversary celebration to the spring of 2022.

As we look toward next year, MHC sees the need to step into its vision and mission with more urgency to bridge divides and spark positive change that brings all of us together.

Let us therefore hope for an end to the pandemic and an opportunity to return to the work of community building by getting together to celebrate MHC’s first 50 years.

Warmest wishes,

Kevin M. Lindsey
Chief Executive Officer

"Thank you all for really walking the talk on making grant applications as smooth and inclusive as possible! You’re doing excellent work to be responsive, proactive, and communicative with folks and working hard to meet needs."

— ANONYMOUS, 2019–2021 CULTURAL HERITAGE GRANT APPLICANT
2021 Highlights

We took a lot of action in 2021, sparking change and making a significant impact with the communities we serve. Facilitating difficult conversations and amplifying the voices and stories of our marginalized community members, we were first responders to vital issues Minnesotans are facing. Here is an at-a-glance look at our top achievements:

Received top honors for our How Can We Breathe program

Our four-part series, How Can We Breathe (HCWB)—our response to the Minneapolis protests following the murder of Mr. George Floyd—was recognized during the National Humanities Conference with the Federation of State Humanities Councils’ top award, the Schwartz Prize, for our HCWB program.

Celebrated for our collaboration in remembering the lynchings in Duluth

The Understanding Our Duluth Lynchings: Racial Violence in America and the Road to Justice and Reconciliation event, in partnership with the Collaborative Legal Community Coalition (CLCC), had a significant impact throughout the state and region. We brought a board coalition together—the legal community, educators, and the general public—to examine and commemorate the 1920 lynchings in Duluth with thought leaders such as Dr. Harris, Jerry Blackwell, and Bryan Stevenson. The program was awarded Minnesota Lawyers’ Diversity and Inclusion Award.

Introduced civic education for undergrads

MHC spearheaded a multistate effort to foster civic capacity and address the nation’s deepening civic crisis at a point of major social leverage: the college undergraduate experience. We call it Third Way Civics, and it’s a one-semester course now available at colleges and universities nationwide.
2021 Highlights

Collaborated on a series of books about inspirational American Indian leaders

Together with the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, we published three biographies of inspirational American Indian leaders written for third to fifth graders. The series was nationally recognized by the American Library Association. On a related note, Professor Gwen Westerman of University Minnesota–Mankato State University, who collaborated on the American Indian book series, was named Minnesota’s newest Poet Laureate—the first indigenous person to serve as Minnesota’s Poet Laureate!

Connected with communities and classrooms across the state

Our Chief Executive Officer Kevin Lindsey joined former Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Alan Page and Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis President Neel Kashkari on a statewide tour talking about Race in Education. Launching the tour in Duluth, Kevin also visited three local elementary school classrooms to read to them from our recently published, award-winning American Indian Lives series. He read from the book, “Peggy Flanagan: Oigimaa Kwe, Lieutenant Governor,” and talked with students about government, sports, and family.

Increased grant funding and reach

During the 2019–21 state biennium, we received funding from the Minnesota Legislature appropriated through the Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund (Legacy) to provide grants for humanities and cultural projects taking place across the state. Additionally, MHC administered federal grants in Minnesota through the American Rescue Program (ARP-COVID Relief grants).
We could not do what we do if it weren’t for these generous individuals, government agencies, foundations, and businesses. Thank you for helping bring free and low-cost public humanities programs and exhibits to communities statewide from Nov. 1, 2020, to Oct. 31, 2021.

Atticloud
African American Registry
Aitkin High School
Allies: media/art
AMPERS
Arts & Mentoring Project
Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard
AVEX
Battle Creek Middle School
Black Family Blueprint
Braver Angels
Brimhall Elementary School
CAAL
Capitol View Center
Carleton College
Cedar Creek Community School
Central High School
Central Park Elementary School
Children’s Theatre Company
Circle of Healing
City of Rochester
Climate Generation: A Will Steger Legacy
Coalition of Asian American Leaders
College of St. Benedict/ St. John’s University
Community School of Excellence
Como Park Senior High School
Concordia University
Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans
Creation in Common
Crossroads Elementary Science and Montessori School
Crosswinds Arts and Science Middle School
Dakota Wicohan
Detroit Lakes Middle School
Duluth Head Start
Duluth Public Schools (ISD 709)
East Union Elementary School
Eastside Freedom Library
Edgerton Elementary School
El Colegio High School
Elk River Area School District (ISD 728)
Emmet D. Williams Elementary School
Equity Alliance MN
Farmington Area Public Schools (ISD 192)
Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis
Folwell Performing Arts Magnet School
Free Black Dirt
Friedell Middle School
Goodhue County Historical Society
Great River School
Gustavus Adolphus College
Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (HMML)
Hmong College Prep Academy
Hmong Cultural Center
Hmong Museum
Horizon Middle School
Hubert H. Humphrey Job Corps Center
In Black Ink
Intermediate School District 917
Kettering Foundation
KMOJ
Library of Congress
Lincoln Elementary School
Lincoln Park Middle School
Listen Up Youth Radio
Loft Literary Center
Looking Glass Books
Love and Struggle
Lower Phalen Creek Project
Macalester College
Mahtomedi High School
Mahtomedi Middle School
Mangum Literacy Festival
McKinley Area Learning Center
Meinders Community Library
Metropolitan State University
Minneapolis College
Minneapolis Public Schools
Minnesota Council on Disabilities
Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)
Minnesota Department of Health
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR)
Minnesota Discovery Center
Minnesota Historical Society
Minnesota Indian Affairs Council
Minnesota Opera
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Minnesota Writers of English (MnWE)
MPR
National Endowment for the Humanities
Native Governance Center
New Arab American Theater Works
Normandale Community College
North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District
Northrup Auditorium
Oak Hill Montessori School
Oldenburg Arts and Cultural Community
OMG Media Solutions
Open Windows
Osseo Area Schools (ISD 279)
Owatonna Public Schools (ISD 761)
Palmer Lake Elementary School
Park Center Senior High School
People’s Movement Center
Pequot Lakes Schools (ISD 186)
Perpich Center for Arts Education (District 1000)
Phumulani
Public Art Saint Paul
Public Events
Reviving the Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment
Richfield Public Schools (ISD 280)
Richfield STEM Elementary
Rise
Roseville Area Schools (ISD 623)
Royalton Elementary
Saint Paul Almanac
Saint Paul Public Schools (ISD 625)
Salk Middle School
Speaking Out
St. Catherine University
St. Cloud State University
St. Croix River Education District
St. Francis High School
St. Louis Park Community Education
St. Mary’s University of Minnesota–Twin Cities Campus
Staples-Motley School District (ISD 2170)
State of Minnesota Office of the Governor
Strive Publishing
Sweet Potato Comfort Pie
The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library
The Great Northern Festival
Twin Cities Public Television (TPT)
Transforming Generation
TRUE Tuesdays
University of Minnesota
University of Minnesota Extension (UMN)
University of Minnesota’s Institute for Advanced Study
University of St. Thomas
Urban Homeworks
VandenBerge Middle School
Warrior Writers MN
Washington Technology Magnet School
Wayzata Public Schools (ISD 284)
Webster Elementary School
Westminster Town Hall
White Bear Lake Area Schools (ISD 624)
Wilson Elementary School
Wise Ink
WithInsight, LLC
Zimmerman High School
Donors

Support from the following individuals, government agencies, foundations, and businesses helped bring free and low-cost programs, exhibits, and workshops to communities statewide from Nov. 1, 2020, to Oct. 31, 2021. Gifts of all sizes are treasured by us. Thank you for your ongoing support!

$20,000+
- The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
- Minneapolis Foundation

$5,000–$19,999
- Archie D. and Bertha H. Walker Foundation
- Hardenbergh Foundation

$1,000–$4,999
- Mary and Keith Bednarowski
- Casey and Keith DeMarais
- Felhaber, Larson, Fenlon and Vogt PA
- Patrick and Patricia Henry
- Charles and Emily Kelley
- Bryan and Theresa Ljung
- Patricia Ploetz
- Kennon and Cornelia Rothchild
- Kim Schaufenbuel
- Trygve Throntveit
- U.S. Bank

$500–$999
- Harriet and Bruce Bart
- Hildy Bowbeer
- Columbus Jewish Foundation
- David and Aimee Dayhoff
- Ali Elhassan
- Rebecca Evan
- Maureen Harms
- Aby John
- Lynne Leaf
- Ann and Michael Mayers
- Meryll and Christopher Page
- Mary J. Surma
- Kristin White

$100–$499
- Gretchen and David Anderson
- Bremer Bank
- Carol Buesgens
- Keith Burke
- Kendra Caduff
- Ben Cady
- Mary Curran
- Joyce Ecker
- Carl Fordahl
- Eliza Gordon
- Susan and Bert Gross
- Phillip Handy
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- Joshua Ney
- Trudy Ohnsorg
- Susannah Ottaway
- Anita Patel
- Rebecca Lynn Petersen
- James and Susan Peterson
- Marie-Jean Proulx
- Yvonne RB-Banks
- John Sear
- Robert Tapp
- Paul and Karen Thissen
- Mary Thompson
- Diane and Jeff Tran
- UBS Financial Services
- Winifred West
- Anne and Rob Wight

Up to $99
- Gary Agren
- AmazonSmile Foundation
- Anonymous
- Mary Burns-Klinger
- Jen Caruso
- Marilyn Chiat
- Aaron Christofferson
- Rose Chu
- Rebecca Fillinger
- Amy and Dawn Gabriel
- Taylor Groenke
- Melissa Hermes
- Maxine and Kieran Hughes
- Carla-Elaine Johnson
- Caroline Julstrom
- Annie Kuthart
- Lajune Lange
- Patricia Mittner
- Jane and Gordon
- Lynn Moore
- Ellen Morehouse
- Jessica O’Brien
- Martha Prentice
- Jen Sayler
- Paul and Maggie Scanlon
- Eric Smith
- Wendi Storhoff
- Helen Sullinger
- Britt Udesen
- Pramila Vasudevan
- Ellen Zacharias

20,000 individuals served
28,151 total attendance
136 events held in 2021
72 unique humanities scholars
94 grants awarded
40 partner organizations
Curious

We are only going to learn from each other. We are only going to gain from each other. We are only going to be able to work together, if we have the humility to learn about each other, to be interested in lives other than our own. And we can only accomplish this learning of who we are, as MHC proposes, if we are curious, willing to connect with wide-embracing compassion. For many of us, each day in America, a stranger walks into our village, or we are a stranger walking into someone else’s village. But at the same time, the stranger looks at us differently than we look at ourselves. And so, we must question our own identity in ways we have not before. This can be a terrifying proposition, but it doesn’t have to be.

– DAVID MURA, WRITER

Connected

When we are thinking about community-based regional food systems, food is something that we all have in common. It is the one piece that connects all of us because food is something that we all need every day, no matter what our economic status is or what the color of our skin is. Everybody needs food to survive. To be happy, indigenous communities in the past worked hard as a collective to make sure that they had enough food for their entire community. It was hard work to think about utilizing all this food as it grows throughout the season. I think that is something we can be doing today—working directly with all of our community members to have a purpose of creating a lot of food for our community. The benefits of what that would look like, utilizing both permacultural designs and our landscapes, and placing food forests and food parks everywhere.

– SEAN SHERMAN, THE SIOUX CHEF

Compassionate

In the Buddhist tradition, which is really a philosophical tradition, compassion is not just a feeling, and it is not just empathy. It is truly the active desire to alleviate the suffering of others. And it is important to remember that it is also not charity. It is also not missionary work because you have to start with yourself. If you do not understand yourself, you are going to harm others through your lack of understanding. And so, you have to work on your own suffering as well as work to help others and serve others. So, as a poet, writer, writing instructor, activist, and collaborator, usually my medium is language, and language itself is our tool as writers.

– SUN YUNG SHIN
MHC@50 Donors

We are grateful for the generosity of those whose support made action and impact possible throughout the year. Through the 50th and Many Voices, Once State campaigns, we successfully completed critical infrastructure projects, propelling our mission forward.

Over the last 50 years, MHC has developed an innovative, community-focused model that amplifies narratives and empowers our diverse community. We now have the opportunity to ensure that our physical space continues to serve as a touchpoint of the creative and impactful humanities work throughout the state and helps move us forward for the next 50 years.

– KEVIN LINDSEY, CEO
Strategic Priorities

MHC developed a strategic framework for 2020–2023.

LIFE-LONG LEARNING: Enhance humanities instruction, increase achievement in education, and broaden access to humanities learning.

STATEWIDE ACCESSIBILITY: Collaborate with individuals, creatives, scholars, and organizations to increase humanities programming to all corners of Minnesota.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: Deepen, broaden, and increase our capacity and collaborations that facilitate civic engagement and allow for the sharing of human experiences, particularly with traditionally marginalized and underrepresented communities.

HUMANITIES SUPPORT: Administer humanities grants, gifts, and appropriations to support individuals, creatives, scholars, and organizations to broaden humanities access and learning. We will be a leader in championing, sharing, and supporting humanities work.

EVENT CENTER GROWTH: Gain recognition as a premier regional resource to host events that bring people together to collectively find solutions and increase human connection.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH: Demonstrate a commitment to a healthy workplace culture, innovative programming, and excellence in financial management and governance. We will be an example of a strong, inclusive, and diverse organization.

Programs

Our programs help us take action. Action that leads to increasing understanding and sparking change to make an impact.

Professional Development

• K–12
• College

Public Programs

• Immersive Experiences
• Civics and Culture
• Exhibits
• Poetry and Literature

Grantmaking/Capacity-Building

Books & Media

• Books
• Videos

Scan code to learn more about each program.
Leadership

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“Appreciated the streamlined, easy form, especially the process that included an LOI stage, which made our initial investment in the application that much easier and gave us the opportunity to get some great feedback from Humanities Center folks.”

– ANONYMOUS
2019–2021 CULTURAL HERITAGE GRANT APPLICANT