

Fairfield Museum & History Center

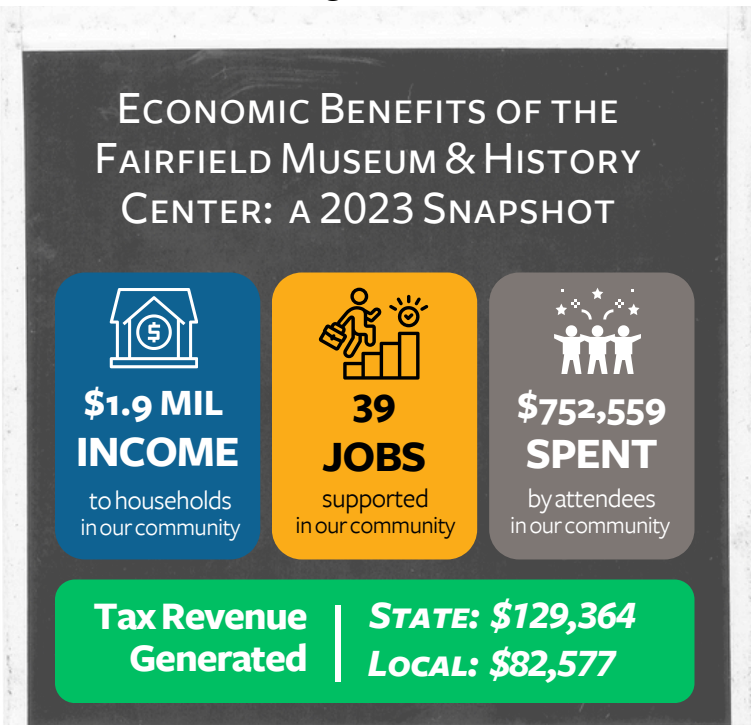
A Case Study on the Impact of CT Humanities' Investment



Since CT Humanities' founding 50 years ago, we have worked with cultural organizations and partners across the state to **share our rich history and culture, educate the public, and strengthen cultural tourism**. Connecticut's investment in the CT Humanities Fund has generated thousands of exhibits, programs, and events that have benefited millions of residents of and visitors to our state. This case study shows the **impact of long-term investment** in local organizations that have become our community anchors.

Established in 2007 by the 103-year-old Fairfield Historical Society, Fairfield Museum and History Center is a 13,000-square-foot campus with galleries, a research library, education classroom, and meeting hall overlooking Fairfield's Town Green.

CTH has provided 41 grants to Fairfield Museum & History Center totaling \$730,300



Their Challenges:

In 2006, the organization had limited staff and funding sources, and only 6,000 annual visitors.

Our Investment:

CT Humanities support and funding helped the Museum:

- Shift from a vision into a sustainable strategic plan
- Enhance education through a new early childhood center
- Create well researched, diverse exhibitions
- Expand their digital tools and research library
- Become a tourism driver by increasing annual visitors to 25,688 (as of 2023)

Investment from CT Humanities helped the Museum leverage additional funding from other sources, including the National Endowment for the Humanities, corporate funders, and donors

Source: 2023 Arts & Economic Prosperity 6: The Economic and Social Impact Study of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences in the State of Connecticut

CASE STUDY: FAIRFIELD MUSEUM & HISTORY CENTER

After more than a century of operation, the Fairfield Historical Society transitioned in 2007 to become the Fairfield Museum and History Center.

“It was a small historical society, and our board and staff had a vision to build it up to be a regional leader in arts and humanities,” said Michael Jehle, who started in 2006 as executive director. “But as institutions look to grow, they often lack the building blocks. That’s what CT Humanities gave us – they were an investor in our vision from the beginning.”

Jehle said reaching out to CT Humanities was “crucial.”

“CT Humanities support came in many ways,” Jehle said, “from supporting our new vision to funding a wide range of early projects.”

Construction of a new building began in 2007, and CT Humanities provided funding for strategic planning, audience assessments, and new, diverse exhibitions.

“As an executive director, it’s an unquantifiable value to have CT Humanities as an ally,” Jehle said.

According to Jehle, CT Humanities brings to bear new relationships and connections to experts in their field.

Importantly, having funding from CT Humanities leveraged other support, including grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

“Being able to have funding in hand from a very well-respected statewide organization is a seal of approval,” he said. “It’s the validation that allows us to go to other funders and get additional support.”

CT Humanities funding has played a crucial role in the Museum’s programming, Jehle said, allowing them to do the necessary research to make sure their exhibits reflect the diversity and the rich, complex history of the region – including “the hidden histories of Native Americans, African Americans, and so many other groups with stories that reflect who we are today.”

Overall, the Museum has received more than 41 grants totaling \$730,300 from CT Humanities that has supported expansion of the Fairfield Museum’s digital tools, research library, early childhood education center, as well as web resources that attract an international audience.



“**CT Humanities has always been more than just a granting agency. They are advocates and supporters and have been real partners with us every step of the way. They find ways to lift us all up collectively – a full investment in the health of the cultural sector.**”

– Michael Jehle, executive director, Fairfield Museum & History Center

The Museum’s budget has tripled in size since 2006, when 6,000 visitors passed through the doors annually, Jehle said; today, over 25,000 attendees visit the Fairfield Museum & History Center each year.

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