



# CThumanities

cultivating curiosity, knowledge, and understanding

## ANNUAL REPORT

**JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025**







# OUR IMPACT THIS YEAR



**92 grants  
awarded**

**\$1.33M in  
grant funding**



**81 organizations  
received grants**

**113 America 250 | CT  
affiliate organizations**



**911,135 visitors to  
digital humanities  
websites**

**169 municipalities  
and 5 Tribes served**



**15 new articles on  
ConnecticutHistory.org &  
14 Teach It activities created**

**2,917 children's  
books distributed  
through Book  
Voyagers**



Grantees, clockwise from top left: (1) Participants at Elizabeth Park Conservancy's 'Poetry in the Park 2024' - Photo by Algis Kaupas  
(2) Mystic Museum of Art's 'Printmaking and the Unconventional Pathways of African American Artists' lecture  
(3) Visitors to the 'The CT State Manchester Common Read Gallery Show'  
(4) Long Wharf Theatre presents 'Civic Scores; Who has the Pen to Shift the Housing Crisis'

# WHERE WE GO FROM HERE....

Dear Friends,

As we reflect on the past year at CT Humanities, we want to extend thanks to our staff and board, and all of you—our community of donors and advocates. Your support has made the success we have achieved possible. At a time when our sector faces complex challenges, we are optimistic that we can find solutions and build a better future together.

We all continue to adjust to a fiscal reality that includes reduced government investment in the cultural sector, both from the state as it comes down from its pandemic-era high and the Federal government after cuts to the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, among others.

During this time, CTH has developed a new strategic framework that guides our decision-making in this new reality and allows us the flexibility to innovate and respond to future changes. At the center of our new mission are three areas that continue to be organizational priorities: capacity-building to strengthen and sustain our cultural organizations, grantmaking to support exhibits and programs in our communities, and advocacy for meaningful, equitable, and reliable funding investment in the sector.

In a new partnership with the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, CTH grants staff have conducted listening sessions and built relationships with organizations in the greater Hartford area to design a new capacity-building program for cohorts of small- and medium-sized cultural organizations. This program will serve as a pilot for future capacity-building efforts in other communities around the state.

As we continue to prioritize our granting program, CTH awarded more than \$1.3 million in grants to over 75 organizations, supporting museums, libraries, historical societies, cultural nonprofits, and educational institutions in every corner of the state. These grants helped fund public programs, exhibitions, oral history projects, community conversations, and digital initiatives that deepen our understanding of Connecticut's past and present.

This legislative session was one of the busiest in recent memory with CTH and its grantees participating in six hearings, a press conference about federal funding cuts, and co-hosting Arts, Culture, and Tourism Day at the Capitol. On May 7, CTH and its partners—Connecticut Arts Alliance, Connecticut Tourism Coalition, and Arts, Culture, and Tourism Caucus—brought together dozens of organizations to advocate on behalf of the cultural sector. Organizations shared both stories of their resilience and highlighted the creative and collaborative approaches they take in their programming. Through these efforts, CTH saw the first increase in its line item since 2009, providing us with additional support when we most need it.

We are proud of what we've accomplished this year and look ahead with optimism and resolve. Our hope is that you share our vision for a connected and sustainable cultural sector and will help us work in that direction.

Together, we will continue to ensure that every Connecticut resident has access to the transformative power of the humanities.



**Jason R. Mancini, Ph.D.**  
Executive Director  
CT Humanities



**Frank Mitchell, Ph.D.**  
FY25 Chair, Board of Directors  
CT Humanities

*Photo by Lotta Studio*



# PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE



*Speakers at the 2025 Arts, Culture, and Tourism Day at the State Capitol, sponsored by the Arts, Culture, and Tourism Caucus*

## STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Since our last strategic planning process in 2020, CT Humanities has evolved and grown. We have envisioned a more connected and engaged humanities ecosystem, pursued increased state funding, developed relationships with many new organizations, and expanded our work in the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) arena.

During this time of expanded state investment, CTH's budget swelled from \$2.6M to \$24M. While we're back to earth with a \$4M budget, the past five years have changed us. We have accomplished a great deal and we are a different organization now.

We continue to recognize gaps and opportunities for a statewide focused organization such as ours. We remain aware to not duplicate the efforts of our partners and grantees; rather, we support their work and invest our time, effort, and knowledge in cultivating and sharing relationships, promoting and connecting project outcomes, and securing resources and partners that contribute to a vibrant humanities/cultural ecosystem.

And, with that, we are better positioned to do the work of the humanities through our own programs and initiatives.

Our strategic framework is designed to

1. activate and apply staff knowledge and expertise;
2. be responsive to our constituents' aspirations and needs, and;
3. align with Connecticut's biennial budget process.

The framework identifies three goals that are central to who we are, what we do, and why we matter as a humanities council. A fourth goal reflects our operating framework and guides how we work.

As we went through the planning process, we were cognizant of federal policies that could adversely impact or disrupt funding to museums, libraries, and a constellation of arts, humanities, and educational organizations. On April 2, 2025, Trump administration threats to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) became real. Four of CTH's NEH grants were terminated, effective immediately. The Mellon Foundation has provided stabilization funding to the nation's 56 humanities councils through the Federation of State Humanities Councils.

With these extreme changes and challenges, CTH's future is in jeopardy. The next two to four years will present existential challenges. To that end, how prepared and resilient will we be? How vulnerable will we be? The same must be asked of the communities and organizations with whom we engage, interact,

and serve. Our innovative capacity, adaptability, and resourcefulness will be principal determinants of our future. This framework is our proposed roadmap.

## CTH STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK, 2025-27

**Mission:** To cultivate, invest in, and advocate for the cultural sector in Connecticut through funding, programs, and collaboration.

**Vision:** A connected, sustainable cultural community in Connecticut that benefits and reflects all people.

### Our Commitments and Values:

In addition to our Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access Commitment and Indigenous Values Statement, the following values inform CTH decisions and priorities:

- **Collaboration:** CTH recognizes that its work should facilitate and contribute to a community of collaboration. We work most effectively when we identify and support the common needs and goals of the state's cultural community.
- **Accountability:** We believe that accountability and transparency across our organization is paramount in the work we do on behalf of Connecticut residents. Throughout our finance and audit processes, peer reviewed grants, committee and consensus-based governance, we are accountable to our funders, donors, partners, grantees, and Connecticut residents.

- **Innovation:** Innovation and creativity allow us to adapt and react to the changing landscape around us. This facilitates opportunities to pivot to solve problems and quickly meet urgent needs for the cultural sector.

Our adherence to these values will continue to push us to be a trusted leader that can steward resources to benefit Connecticut residents.

### Our Goals:

- **Our Value:** Use our knowledge and relationships to cultivate and improve the quality of life in Connecticut.
- **Our Community:** Foster relationships and provide services and resources that strengthen and connect cultural organizations.
- **Our Commitment:** Ensure that our programming, funding and projects are available to all.
- **Our Operations:** Build organizational resilience, adaptability and opportunity, and develop effective, efficient and accountable workflows.

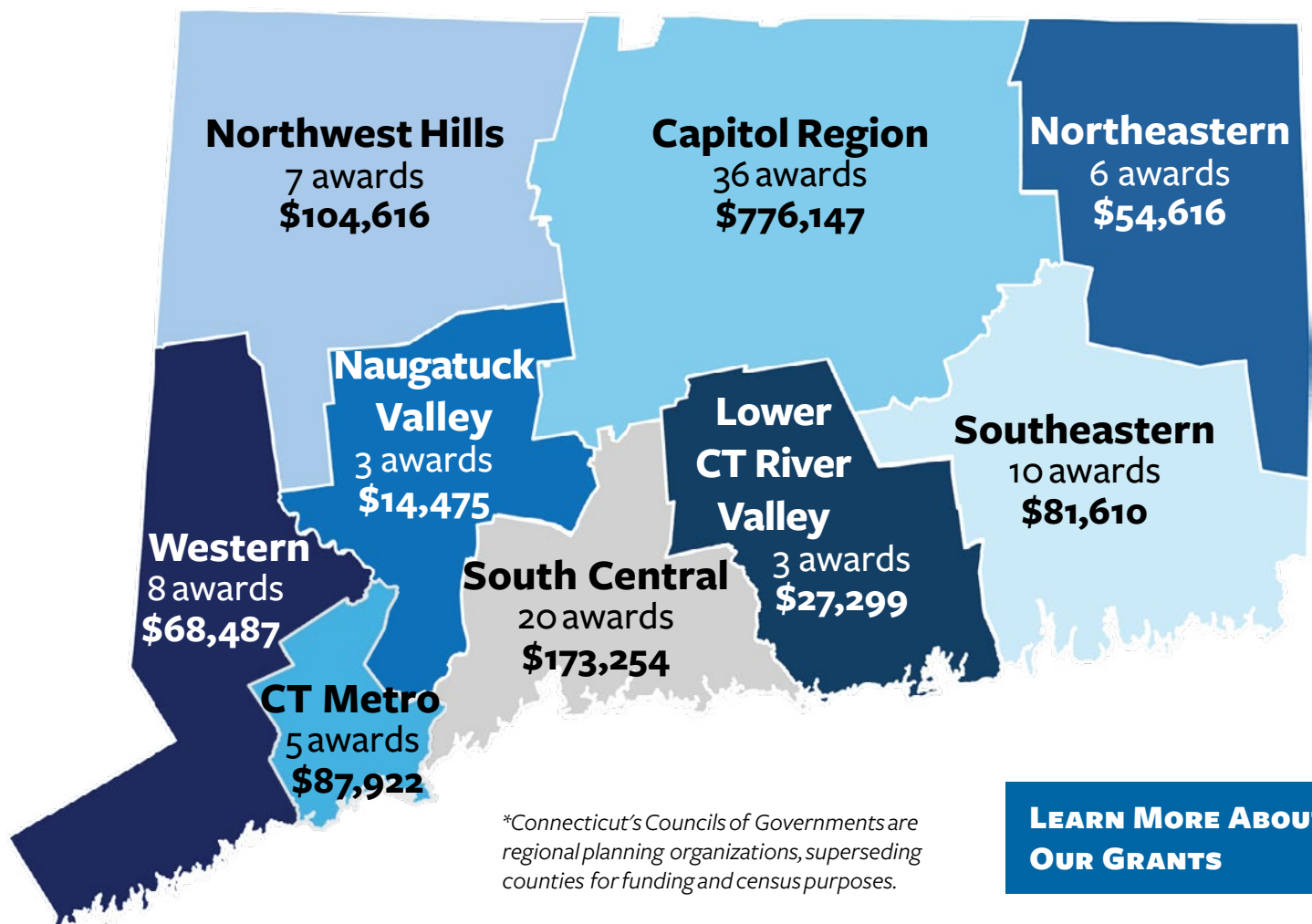


**LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR  
STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**



CT Humanities staff and board work through the strategic plan together at the Afro-Caribbean Cultural Center in Waterbury





**LEARN MORE ABOUT  
OUR GRANTS**

## CT HUMANITIES GRANTS

CT Humanities grants support strong humanities projects and the cultural organizations that offer them with a robust offering of competitive grant lines.

### Grant projects in FY25 ranged from:

- **Kulturally LIT for DiasporaCon 2026: Hip Hop & Graphic Novels**, celebrating the intersections of Hip Hop and graphic novels within the African Diaspora.
- **Quinnipiac University** for **Dancing in the Shadow of the Giant**, their first Intertribal Powwow led by the Indigenous Student Union who people brought together to honor Native American cultures and identities.
- **Portland Historical Society** for **Voices of Portland**, an oral history series focused on the stories of Black Americans living and working in Portland, CT.



*Students from Bridgeport's Blackham School participate in a voting interactive in Building an American Voice at the Fairfield Museum & History Center*

In fiscal  
year 2024-25,  
CT Humanities  
provided:

**92** for **\$1.3M** to **81**  
**awards** **in funding** **organizations**

# DIGITAL HUMANITIES: EXPANDING ACCESS

CT Humanities aggregates digital resources for people to access, contribute to, and critically examine our shared stories and experiences. We accomplish this through connecting and curating trusted educational content and resources, developing and facilitating innovative programs and projects, and partnering to support and advance our shared digital initiatives.

## **CONNECTICUTHISTORY.ORG**

Nearly 1 million people each year access stories on people, traditions, innovations, and events that make up our state's rich history. This year we expanded our content by publishing and updating 35 articles with topics connected to the America 250 | CT themes, political history, and LGBTQIA+ history. We openly licensed ConnecticutHistory.org and all of its content, increasing access to our educational resources.

## **TEACHITCT.ORG**

Teach It provides activities and resources to help educators incorporate Connecticut's history into their curriculum. Activities include lesson plans, accessible primary sources, and connections to state heritage sites and institutions. This year we added fourteen new resources, with a particular focus on America 250 | CT themes and diverse community stories.

## **CTH WORKING GROUPS**

CTH's working groups bring together professionals in the cultural sector to strengthen collaboration, increase access to shared knowledge, and advance shared initiatives across all aspects of the humanities. These 7 groups, composed of 90 people, encompass a broad range of topics and projects: open culture, oral history, cultural data, digital humanities, digital systems, publishing, and archaeology.

## **OPEN CULTURE**

CTH champions the Open Culture movement, which promotes the free and open sharing and access to Connecticut's cultural and historical resources. Collaborating with Creative Commons, an international non-profit, we have provided training to professionals in the cultural sector with the goal of increasing access to our state's unique heritage collections.



*CTH Staff member Mike Kemezis discusses 250th-related education initiatives with Steve Armstrong, Allison Norrie, Jennifer Vienneau, and Matt Warshaeur*



*Connecticut's Mike Kemezis and Dr. Fiona Vernal participate in a panel discussion about oral history at the 2024 National Humanities Conference*



**Learning from the "Life of William Grimes, the Runaway Slave"**

**GRADE LEVELS : 8**

**About Activity**

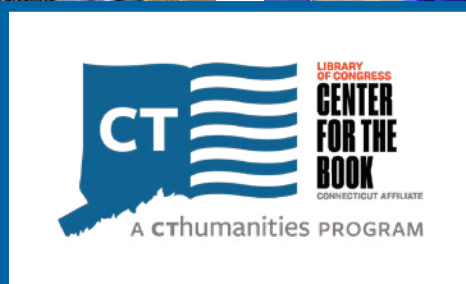
Understand Connecticut's role in the system of slavery through the life and autobiography of William Grimes, who was born into slavery in 1784 and escaped in 1814. Students engage with Grimes's narrative and analyze letters related to his struggle to purchase his freedom.

**NEW!**





CT author Cindy Rodriguez at the 2024 National Book Festival (NBF)



CT author Ned Blackhawk and Kymberlee Powe of the Connecticut State Library at the 2024 NBF

## CHAMPIONING CONNECTICUT LITERATURE

Connecticut Center for the Book is the state affiliate of the National Center for the Book. It promotes books, reading, and literature to elevate our state's unique and rich literary heritage.

### NATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL

In August 2024, two titles were selected to represent Connecticut for the Library of Congress' Roadmap to Reading project and feature at the 2024 National Book Festival held in Washington, D.C.

- Adult title: ***The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of U.S. History*** by Ned Blackhawk of New Haven

- Youth title: ***Three Pockets Full: A Story of Love, Family, and Tradition*** by Cindy L. Rodriguez of Plainville

Both authors graciously joined us at the CT Booth to greet festival goers, sign books, and share in the excitement!

### BOOK VOYAGERS

This past year, over 5,500 adults and children participated in 125 Book Voyagers sessions. Approximately 3,000 books were distributed. Of the thirty-one partner towns, 74% are Community Investment Fund municipalities – enabling us to reach Connecticut's most under-resourced communities.

Program highlights include bilingual (Spanish) performances by Master Storyteller Leeny Del Seamonds; "Sign & Sing" series introducing youngsters to sign language through music and repetition; and celebrations of "Take Your Child to the Library Day."

### OTHER PROJECTS

In partnership with Wesleyan University, CFTB piloted a journalism internship program to provide students with real-world job experience. By creating relationships with Connecticut-based businesses we invest in the next generation of media professionals and encourage participants to pursue careers in media within the state.

*Book Voyagers: Judy Stoughton leads "Connect, Create & Celebrate Community" with students at Metacomet Elementary School in Bloomfield*





# AMERICA 250

## CONNECTICUT

With less than a year until July 4, 2026, CT Humanities continues to use America's 250th as an opportunity to bring together communities to celebrate and reflect on our nation's history. We are excited about our work with local committees and affiliates, and made strong progress in building a network of municipalities and organizations around the state that are developing plans aligned to the commission's themes. We continue to work with state partners to help bring the commission's vision to life. This past fiscal year we made progress towards initiatives that will be completed in 2026, including a statewide exhibition, tourism trail, and laying the groundwork for fundraising events on behalf of municipalities and affiliate organizations.

Key achievements in FY25 include:

- Hosted a conference in March with keynote addresses by Michael J. Hattem and Akeia de Barros Gomes and 17 sessions organized around the four themes of Connecticut's commemoration
- Launched a 250<sup>th</sup> events calendar, with over 70 submissions statewide
- Engaged 118 municipalities to begin 250<sup>th</sup> planning
- Launched an affiliate program and created a network of 120 diverse organizations, including historical societies, museums, civics groups, town committees, local media outlets, and marketing firms
- Developed educational resources for grades 3-12
- Hosted professional workshops focused on bringing the themes of the commission into programming around the state

Plans for FY26:

- Develop a statewide exhibition in cooperation with key partners
- Launch a CT 250-branded website, including 250th events and a tourism trail, in partnership with CT Visit and the state Office of Marketing
- Continue to build relationships with local committees and affiliates
- Plan events for July 4, 2026 in collaboration with the City of Hartford and Hartford Bonanza



*Exhibitor Bevin Bells at the 2025 America 250 | CT Conference: Shaping a Commemoration Rooted in Belonging*



**LEARN MORE ABOUT  
THE COMMISSION AT  
[CT250.ORG](https://CT250.ORG)**

# Thank you!

CT Humanities gratefully acknowledges the support from both individuals and organizations that help us further the advancement of the humanities.

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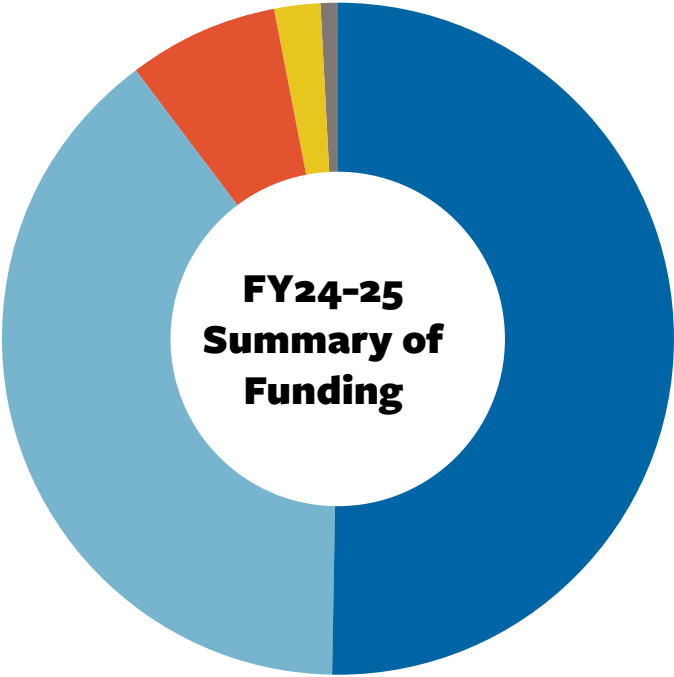


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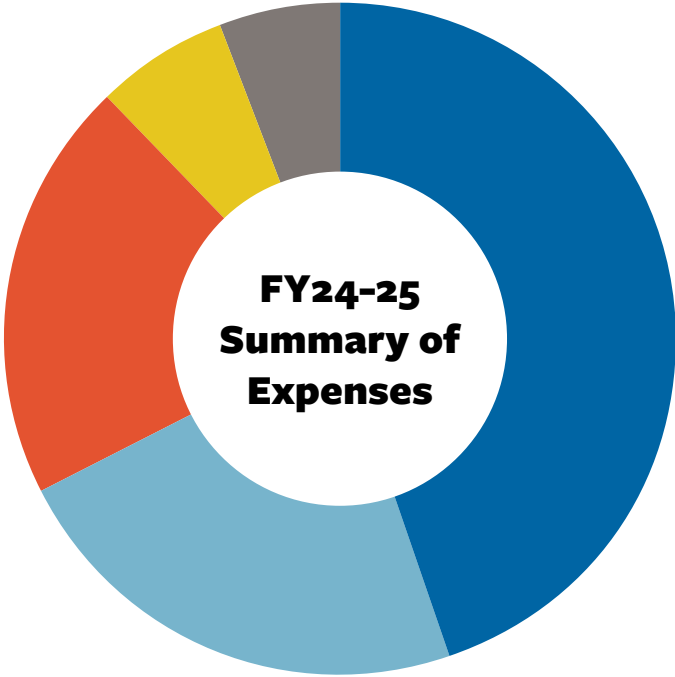
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# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW: JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025



- National Endowment for the Humanities
- State Appropriation
- Foundations & Corporations
- Private Donations
- Deferred Funds Carried Over



- Granting
- Public Programs
- General Administration
- Development & Advocacy
- America 250 | CT

## FUNDING

National Endowment for the Humanities	\$	1,868,594
State of Connecticut	\$	1,454,093
Foundations & Corporations	\$	266,673
Earned Income & Annual Fund Gifts	\$	82,581
Deferred Funds Carried Over	\$	29,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>3,701,441</b>

## EXPENDITURES

Granting	\$	1,561,678
Public Programs	\$	793,376
General Administration	\$	698,276
Development & Advocacy	\$	226,298
America 250   CT	\$	198,293
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>3,477,921</b>

## WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR MAJOR FUNDERS



Dalio Philanthropies



SFEEA

The Scripps Family Fund for Education and the Arts



CTH board and staff tour the Wide Awakes at the Connecticut Museum of Culture & History

Front cover images, clockwise from top left:

- (1) Book Voyagers: Families participate in StoryFaces by Agostino Arts where stories come to life on volunteers' faces
- (2) Grantee: 2025 Kid Governor Keudy Martinez with his cabinet and dignitaries at the Kid Governor Inauguration
- (3) America 250 | CT: Hartford and Vermont delegates commemorate the beginning of the Fort Ticonderoga Campaign
- (4) CTH Board Member Merve Emre speaks at the 2024 National Humanities Conference

# cthumanities

cultivating curiosity, knowledge, and understanding

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**Our Mission:** To cultivate, invest in, and advocate for the cultural sector in Connecticut through funding, programs, and collaboration.

**Our Vision:** A connected, sustainable cultural community in Connecticut that benefits and reflects all people.

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