



## **What is the Maine Humanities Council?**

We're a statewide nonprofit that uses books, poetry, and big ideas to bring people together to discuss issues of importance. We're a program partner, grant-maker, and connector of people and communities. We're a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and home to Maine's Center for the Book through the Library of Congress.

## **What does the Maine Humanities Council do?**

**Our programs** are designed for all Maine people—we work with individuals and organizations across the state of Maine to connect people with books, communities with ideas, and strangers with one another as they seek to answer some of the same questions.

**Our grants** support and encourage a deeper understanding of ourselves and one another, building lasting connections and reaching broad and diverse public audiences.

## **Mission statement**

The Maine Humanities Council, a statewide non-profit organization, uses the humanities—literature, history, philosophy, and culture — as a tool for positive change in Maine communities. Our programs and grants encourage critical thinking and conversations across social, economic, and cultural boundaries.

## **How our work is funded**

Foundations, corporations, and individuals are essential supporters of the MHC. Less than one-third of our funding is provided by a base grant from the NEH. We also receive annual funding from the state of Maine, 100% of which is given out as grants to Maine nonprofits.

## Programming Priorities

We are especially keen to support projects serving those who are most deeply isolated from each other and the wider community, and those whose work has public impact.

- Organizations serving and led by members of communities traditionally under-resourced in the humanities.
- These groups include people of color, people who identify as LGBTQ+, people who live in rural areas, people with disabilities, people who identify as immigrants or refugees, and people whose first (or only) language is not English. *(Please note that this is not an exhaustive list.)*

## Program Examples

**The Big Question:** Invites Mainers to wrestle with a large philosophical question every year. In a setting suited to the year's task, with expert guides on hand, people get to spend longer than usual thinking, listening, moving, talking, and sharing a meal over one big, relevant question.

**Discussion Project:** Comprehensive support to individuals and organizations all over Maine who want to convene members of their community for rich discussions, grounded in texts, of things that matter to them.

**Grants:** Funding to non-profit organizations in Maine for humanities programs and projects – things like exhibits, films, conferences, initiatives – that have broad public outreach.

**Maine Speaks:** Support for individuals and organizations all over Maine who want to bring people in their community together to learn from and talk with a gifted speaker and event leader who will share their expertise and lived experience in engaging ways.

**Poetry Express:** Brings Maine poetry and poets to communities. The MHC partners with a local organization and a local poet. Maine State Library provides curated resources. Community members select Maine poems, learn to perform those poems in a workshop and host a community poetry reading and conversation event.

**Read ME:** A statewide summer reading program. Each year a well-known Maine author recommends two titles by lesser-known Maine authors while libraries and their patrons are invited to participate in a summer of reading and discussing the featured books. Offered in partnership with Maine State Library

**Readers Retreat:** An annual multi-day event that brings engaged readers together for a deep dive into one incredible book.