

**Maine Humanities Council Strategic Plan  
2018 - 2020**

**GOAL 1 – Use the humanities to create opportunities for Mainers to learn, think, talk, listen, and share with each other.**

*(This goal represents the core work of the Council and a primary avenue for how we accomplish our mission. The MHC seeks out program partners and audiences, as well as program models, themes, and content that will advance our vision and mission. We use the humanities to enable and encourage thoughtful communication and meaningful connection across divides to advance the common good for all Mainers.)*

- A. Develop and offer relevant and responsive humanities programs and grants.
  - 1. Assess and adjust programming based on evaluation data, available funding, conversations with partners, and alignment with mission and vision.
    - a. Consistently evaluate and improve MHC program offerings.
    - b. Balance the exploration of new opportunities with the ongoing demands of existing programs and the necessity of working within organizational capacity.
  - 2. Employ the grants program as an avenue for advancing the Council's mission and vision.
    - a. Develop strategies for communicating the value and availability of MHC grants to a wider variety of audiences.
    - b. Focus on effective alignment of the grants program with the MHC's strategic goals and priorities, and in particular with our strategic goal on diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion.
    - c. Explore new and expanded sources for grant funding, including shifting internal resources and expanding external fundraising.
  
- B. Seek out new audiences, partners, and critical issues.
  - 1. Explore strategies to expand the reach and inclusiveness of MHC programs.
  - 2. Build on the Council's experience and expertise to develop programs in conjunction with new and existing partners.
  - 3. Continue to explore possible new program topics and themes.
    - a. Focus on relevance and responsiveness of topic, especially where the Council can bring together diverse voices and perspectives in conversation.
    - b. Explore the development of programs connected to specific local themes or geographic locations within the State of Maine.

**GOAL 2 - Promote the value of the humanities in Maine, and communicate with Mainers in a way that will inspire curiosity and connection, as well as increased participation and support for the MHC.**

*(More than just program marketing, our goal is to spread the word widely throughout the state about the distinct power of the humanities in general -- and the Council's mission and work in particular -- to improve the quality of life in Maine.)*

- A. Build organizational capacity for communications and public relations.
  - 1. Explore the possibility of hiring an outside consultant to help the Council assess current communications efforts and set future direction.
  - 2. Enlist Board, staff, facilitators, grantees, and partner organizations to increase public recognition of the Council's mission and work.
  - 3. Increase effectiveness of Council communications through staff development and training.
  
- B. Work with other organizations throughout the state to help promote the humanities as effective tools for positive change.
  - 1. Expand and deepen program partnerships to boost the Council's presence and raise the profile of the humanities throughout Maine.
  - 2. Cultivate strong, ongoing relationships with reporters and media outlets to improve coverage of MHC activities and establish the MHC as a reliable go-to resource.

**GOAL 3 - Develop the MHC's ability to support Maine's diversity and to live out our shared commitment to equity, accessibility, and inclusion in everything we do.**

*(We believe that the humanities can provide a powerful set of tools to help people connect and that effective use of these tools can lead to positive transformation in Maine communities. The MHC will make the ongoing commitment to develop the skills and understanding necessary to foster meaningful conversation and connection among all Mainers, and we will work to bridge racial, ethnic, religious, and other cultural divides.)*

- A. Create a Board/Staff task force with the mandate to explore and recommend strategies and actions to emphasize and increase diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion, including but not limited to:
  - a. Organizational structure and governance
  - b. Program - models, content, audiences
  - c. Partner organizations
  - d. Recruiting and retention - Board, staff, facilitators
  - e. Statewide geography

- B. Conduct training and development efforts to build relevant skills and understanding organization-wide, including Board, staff, and facilitators.
- C. Expand diversity within the Board, staff, and facilitators, based on criteria that are most relevant and meaningful to carrying out the work of the MHC.
- D. Develop the skills and experience necessary to make MHC a trusted and reliable partner in offering programs and promoting communication and connection across divides.

**GOAL 4 - Preserve and enhance the Maine Humanities Council's health and effectiveness as a statewide humanities organization.**

*(Relationships are key to the Council's success in advocacy, fundraising, and effectiveness in achieving the overall mission. We need to nurture our relationships with our friends and actively seek out new friends and allies. We will continue to advocate for the importance of our work and cultivate a network of organizations and individuals who can knowledgeably advocate on our behalf. We endeavor to create a funding structure that will build the MHC's organizational resilience.)*

- A. Sustain and expand our network of relationships.
  - 1. Government
    - a. Federal (NEH, other departments, Maine congressional delegation)
    - b. State (legislature, Governor's office, legislative committees, individual legislators, cultural agencies and related departments)
  - 2. Nonprofit Organizations
    - a. Partners
    - b. Grantees
    - c. Educational Institutions
    - d. Foundations
  - 3. Businesses
    - a. Corporations
    - b. Local businesses
    - c. Trade associations
  - 4. Individuals
    - a. Facilitators
    - b. Donors
    - c. Potential donors, facilitators, Board members, program participants, etc.
- B. Examine the MHC's fundraising model to assess the appropriateness of development goals, strategies, and activities.
  - 1. Evaluate the Council's needs and capacity for expanded development efforts.
  - 2. Explore the possibility of a capital campaign for the MHC.