The Humanities Council has supported civic education through our grants and partnerships for decades. In 2020, the Council is launching Culture is Key, an initiative to understand, test, and evaluate the role of cultural participation on our state’s civic health. Culture is Key is supported by the Rhode Island Foundation, the Federation of State Humanities Councils, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

CULTURAL PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC HEALTH

There is an urgent need to improve civic health. Public trust of, and participation in, democratic and traditional civic institutions is low. Many factors contribute to disengagement, including political partisanship, increasing income disparity, and divisive media technologies. However, a growing body of research points to the role of cultural participation in rebuilding civic life, encouraging communities to come together to learn about our shared histories, diverse experiences, and to envision a better future. The Humanities Council will build on this research to take action in Rhode Island.

2020 ACTIVITIES

- Civic Health Fellow who, working with staff and an Advisory Committee of local experts, will identify, synthesize, and evaluate indicators, data, and metrics related to cultural participation and civic health in Rhode Island.
- Seed projects that will actively test and evaluate the impact of adapting cultural programs to be more aligned with civic and digital/media literacy outcomes.
- Publication of a report that analyzes the data collected, documents the impact of seed projects, and shares methods for aligning existing cultural experiences with social and civic outcomes.

"Culture is Key will demonstrate that investment in arts and culture is an investment in our democracy."

– Logan Hinderliter
Associate Director of Grants & Partnerships, Rhode Island Council for the Humanities