

Rhode Island Council for the Humanities

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RHODE ISLAND
COUNCIL *for* the HUMANITIES

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Rhode Island Culture is Key Fellowship

The Rhode Island Council for the Humanities seeks applicants for a part-time fellowship to research and document the connections between cultural participation and civic health in Rhode Island. The Rhode Island Culture is Key Fellow will facilitate the production of a published index and pilot projects that connect cultural participation to social and civic outcomes. The fellow will work closely with an advisory committee and Council staff to identify and collect data related to cultural participation and civic health. The fellow will also engage scholars and community members in a variety of ways, including the facilitation of pilot projects. The fellow should have strong research and writing skills, interest in the intersection of civics with arts and culture, and a background in a related field, such as public policy, grantmaking, or evaluation. This fellowship is a great opportunity for a humanist who possesses a strong interest in civics, public policy, community engagement, and publicly-oriented humanities and arts.

The fellowship is part of a larger initiative, “Culture is Key: Strengthening Rhode Island’s Civic Health through Cultural Participation,” supported by the Rhode Island Foundation, the Federation of State Humanities Councils, and the Mellon Foundation.

WHY THIS OPPORTUNITY

The breadth and depth of Rhode Island’s historical, cultural, and artistic landscape is one of the state’s greatest assets and significant for the United States. At the same time, the state is a microcosm of the ills affecting civic life across the nation. Public trust 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. Publications like Robert Putnam’s *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, the *Stanford Social Innovation Review* series “Civil Society for the 21st Century,” and the Tisch College of Civic Life’s “The Republic is (Still) at Risk — and Civics is Part of the Solution” all address the need to rebuild America’s civic life and structures.

We need to rebuild America’s civic life and structures and develop methods that are deeply connected to what is actually happening in our communities. There is a growing body of research that identifies cultural participation as a key factor in rebuilding civic life, because it encourages communities to come together to learn about our shared histories and diverse experiences, and to envision a better future. The Humanities Council

seeks to build on this research to take action in Rhode Island. Americans for the Arts' *Animating Democracy* program, including its "Continuum of Impact," provides a technical framework focused on understanding the impact of arts and culture programs on social and civic outcomes. Works like Georgia Humanities' *How Journalists and the Public Shape our Democracy* point to ideas and practices rooted in media/digital literacy that cultural practitioners and journalists can implement to enhance their civically-focused work.

GOALS

- Identify key indicators at the intersection of cultural participation and civic health in Rhode Island.
- Identify and map the related mission, values, and programmatic goals of cultural institutions that enhance civic health.
- Identify and interpret the impact of financial investments in cultural participation on civic health.
- Pilot models with humanities partners that intentionally cultivate civic health outcomes.

OUTPUTS AND DELIVERABLES

- Organize and lead bi-monthly advisory committee meetings.
- Solicit, include, and activate the expertise and perspective of participating scholars, journalists, institutes, etc.
- Lead 4-5 learning sessions for pilot projects and participating journalists.
- Supervise and support of the implementation and evaluation of pilot projects.
- Identify, review, and compile relevant data to cultural participation and civic health.
- Support the development of Rhode Island Cultural Participation and Civic Health Index.

EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

Applicants for the fellowship should be knowledgeable about public humanities, arts, and culture; possess strong research and critical thinking skills; and be a strong writer and speaker. The Fellow will undertake research from primary and secondary source documents as well as host learning sessions for individuals and groups. The Fellow will also be responsible for exploring, collecting, itemizing, and interpreting the various institutional and programmatic indicators for cultural participation and civic health in Rhode Island. Connections to cultural communities in Rhode Island as well as experience with public engagement would be helpful. A bachelor's degree is required, and the successful applicant will have demonstrated experience in undertaking substantial independent research and writing projects.

COMPENSATION

The Fellow will receive a stipend of \$18,000 over 9 months and will have access to funds for travel and convenings. The Fellow may also be able to work with a project intern.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications should include:

- cover letter detailing your interest, experience, and qualifications;
- resume or CV;
- professional writing sample(s)

Please send applications via email with the subject line “Rhode Island Culture is Key Fellow Application” to Scott Raker, Operations Officer, Rhode Island Council for the Humanities: *scott@rihumanities.org*.

If you have questions about this opportunity, please contact Logan Hinderliter, Associate Director, Grants and Partnerships, Rhode Island Council for the Humanities: *Logan@rihumanities.org*.

Deadline Extended: Friday, April 3, 2020 by 5:00pm EST

ABOUT THE RHODE ISLAND COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES

The Rhode Island Council for the Humanities seeds, supports, and strengthens public history, cultural heritage, civic education, and community engagement by and for all Rhode Islanders. For 47 years, we have cultivated diverse expressions of the public humanities through vital and innovative public programs, research, and media projects that have reached millions of people in Rhode Island and beyond. We are a catalyst for engagement with our state’s remarkable history and culture and believe in the power of the humanities community to inspire and improve Rhode Island. The Council was founded in 1973 as an independent state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). A private nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, the Council is supported by federal and private funds. The Council is committed to diversity and cultural equity.