



# RHODE ISLAND HUMANITIES

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

# ENTERING *the* NEXT 50 YEARS

## A New Strategic Plan *By and For All Rhode Islanders*

The plan's title, "By and For All Rhode Islanders," is taken from our mission statement and inspires our vision of amplifying many voices to investigate historical and contemporary issues, while celebrating multifaceted perspectives and approaches. It is driven by our values of relevance, collaboration, and community.

In recent years, Rhode Island Humanities built an organizational foundation of grantmaking, partnerships, and initiatives that empowered us to innovate, increase our impact, and expand our network. In 2020, with the uncertainty wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic and a societal sense of renewed urgency for racial justice, we developed an interim strategic plan to look deeply at our organizational culture, practices, and structure. Our new strategic plan incorporates what we have learned during this transformational time. To fulfill our mission to seed, support, and strengthen humanities by and for all Rhode Islanders, RI Humanities will invest in methods that reach diverse audiences and communities through inclusive and accessible means, while working to overcome inequities and barriers to better resource historically underserved communities.

Our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan prioritizes four goals that will guide our actions over the next three years.

**DEVELOP** our operations and organization to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

**STRENGTHEN** Rhode Island's cultural sector and civic health through grantmaking and humanities initiatives.

**IMPLEMENT** engagement that prioritizes community perspectives, connects the humanities to societal challenges, inspires the public, and networks constituencies.

**DEVELOP** an equitable and inclusive culture of giving to express and advance RI Humanities' goals, vision, and values.

► [rihumanities.org/about/history](https://rihumanities.org/about/history)

*When we  
recognize the  
humanities as  
by and for everyone,  
our communities are  
healthier and our  
democracy is stronger.*



2023-26  
STRATEGIC  
PLAN







## RI Civic Health Index Wins National Award

At the 2023 National Humanities Conference in Indianapolis, the Federation of State Humanities Councils presented the 2023 Schwartz Prize for outstanding work in the public humanities to RI Humanities for the 2022 *RI Civic Health Index*. Produced by RI Humanities in in partnership with the National Conference on Citizenship and the RI Department of State, this first-ever report serves as an essential tool for building shared understanding and catalyzing action to improve civic health, including through the humanities.

► [rihumanities.org/  
ri-civic-health-index](https://rihumanities.org/ri-civic-health-index)



“Receiving the Schwartz Prize underscores—at a time when it matters deeply—that humanities are essential to civic health and how we understand our world from varied perspectives.

ELIZABETH FRANCIS, *Executive Director*



## Making Waves, Navigating Currents of Change

The National Humanities Conference will be held in Providence this November. This national conference is organized by the Federation of State Humanities Councils and the National Humanities Alliance, with support from RI Humanities, and draws hundreds of attendees from across the country—providing a unique opportunity to highlight the dynamic public humanities ecosystem in the Ocean State. The connection between water and human communities, behavior, and decisions over millennia inspires the conference’s theme of *Making Waves, Navigating Currents of Change*.



► [rihumanities.org/  
national-humanities-conference](https://rihumanities.org/national-humanities-conference)

# GRANTMAKING

In FY23, we awarded 41 grants in support of public history, cultural heritage, civic education, and community engagement. At the core of our mission, grantmaking ensures vibrant humanities organizations and practitioners across the state have financial support, access to best practices in public humanities, and connections to Rhode Island's vibrant cultural sector.

## PUBLIC PROJECT GRANTS

### MAJOR GRANT AWARDS

ANARCHESTRA FOUNDATION, \$5,245 to *Exploding Sound: Lecture and Workshop Series*

CULTURAL SOCIETY, \$5,000 to *Preliminary Research for Museum of Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders (AAPI) History & Culture*

DESIGNxRI, \$12,000 to *DESIGNxREDEFINE (DXRE)*

FIRSTWORKS, \$12,000 to *FirstWorks "Hacking the Classics"*

GENERATION CITIZEN, \$11,637.50 to *Rhode Island Civic Learning Week*

LITARTS RI, \$8,736 to *"Regenerating and Sustaining" with RI Creatives of Color*

MANTON AVENUE PROJECT, \$12,000 to *Imagining a Healthier Democracy: Devising Workshops Using Legislative and Image Theatre*

NEWPORTFILM, \$12,000 to *Community Impact Screenings*

OASIS INTERNATIONAL, \$10,300 to *Oasis Spring Break Youth Program*

OPERATION STAND DOWN RHODE ISLAND, \$12,000 to *Providence Clemente Veterans Initiative*

RHODE ISLAND LATINO ARTS, \$12,000 to *Las Abuelas Cuentan | Our Elders As Storytellers*

### MINI GRANT AWARDS

ALL SAINTS' MEMORIAL CHURCH, \$2,000 to *The Wisdom of the African American Spirituals Tradition*

BROWN UNIVERSITY, \$1,996 to *Reimagining New England Histories: Teacher Professional Development*

THE EMPOWERMENT FACTORY, \$2,000 to *Creative Squad After-School Programming for Underserved Elementary Youth*

FRIENDS OF LINDEN PLACE, \$1,514 to *Joseph Banigan, Samuel Pomeroy Colt, and the United States Rubber Company*

FRIENDS OF THE POKANOKET TRIBE, \$2,000 to *Pokanoket Heritage Day Support*

GEAR PRODUCTIONS, \$2,000 to *We Go Way, Way Back*

HOPE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, \$2,000 to *The Scituate Story Project*

KINGSTON CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, \$2,000 to *Witness Stones Project: Kingston, Rhode Island*

NEWPORT ART MUSEUM, \$2,000 to *¡Qué Vivan los Muertos! A Day of the Dead Celebration*

NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, \$2,000 to *French in Newport Living History Weekend*

NORMAN BIRD SANCTUARY, \$1,600 to *Arts & Humanities Residency at Norman Bird Sanctuary*

PRESERVE RHODE ISLAND, \$2,000 to *Jane's Walk Providence 2023*

PROVIDENCE ART CLUB, \$2,000 to *Building Bannister Panel Discussion*

PROVIDENCE COLLEGE, \$1,869 to *Rhode Island and the Politics of Slavery: The 1836 Debate Over the Gag Rule*

QUEER.ARCHIVE.WORK, \$2,000 to *Queer/Trans Zinefest (QTZ) 2023*

RHODE ISLAND BLACK FILM FESTIVAL, \$2,000 to *6th Annual Rhode Island Black Film Festival: Black Culture in Film*

RHODE ISLAND CENTER FOR THE BOOK, \$2,000 to *Rhody Radio*

SOUTH COUNTY MUSEUM, \$1,975 to *Summer Speaker Series*

WARREN PRESERVATION SOCIETY, \$2,000 to *Bristol County Enslaved History Project*

## DOCUMENTARY FILM & MEDIA GRANTS

### MAJOR GRANT AWARDS

ARMENIAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF RHODE ISLAND, \$5,000 to *Armenian Chronicles: A Living History*

CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT DOCUMENTARY, \$4,999 to *Rum, Slavery, and the American Revolution*

COMMUNITY LIBRARIES OF PROVIDENCE, \$4,961 to *Quikuchá*



DOCUMENTARY EDUCATIONAL  
RESOURCES, \$5,000 to *“Call Us  
Fishermen,” A Documentary Film on  
Women in Commercial Fishing in  
Southeast New England*

MINI GRANT AWARDS

TIKKUN OLAM PRODUCTIONS,  
\$2,000 to *Breakin’ Away*

INDIVIDUAL  
RESEARCHERS

MINI GRANT AWARDS

MARTHA KOCH, \$2,000  
to *Deep Mapping Providence’s Artist-Run  
Collectives and Land-Use Regulations*

MATTHEW LAWRENCE, \$2,000 to  
*Scandalous Conduct / Senate Inquiry*

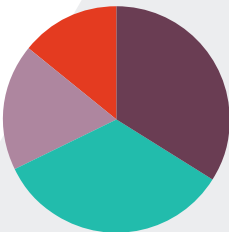
JESSICA PEARSON, \$1,915 to  
*The Radical Space Where Dance and  
African American Identity Grew to its  
Fullest Potential*

SOPHIA RICHTER, \$2,000  
to *Rhode Island Fisheries Oral  
History Project*

MICHAEL SIMPSON, \$2,000  
to *On This Day Rhode Island*

BEN SISTO, \$2,000  
to *Reinsulator*

▶ [rihumanities.org/grants/  
recent-grants](https://rihumanities.org/grants/recent-grants)



FY23 Expenses

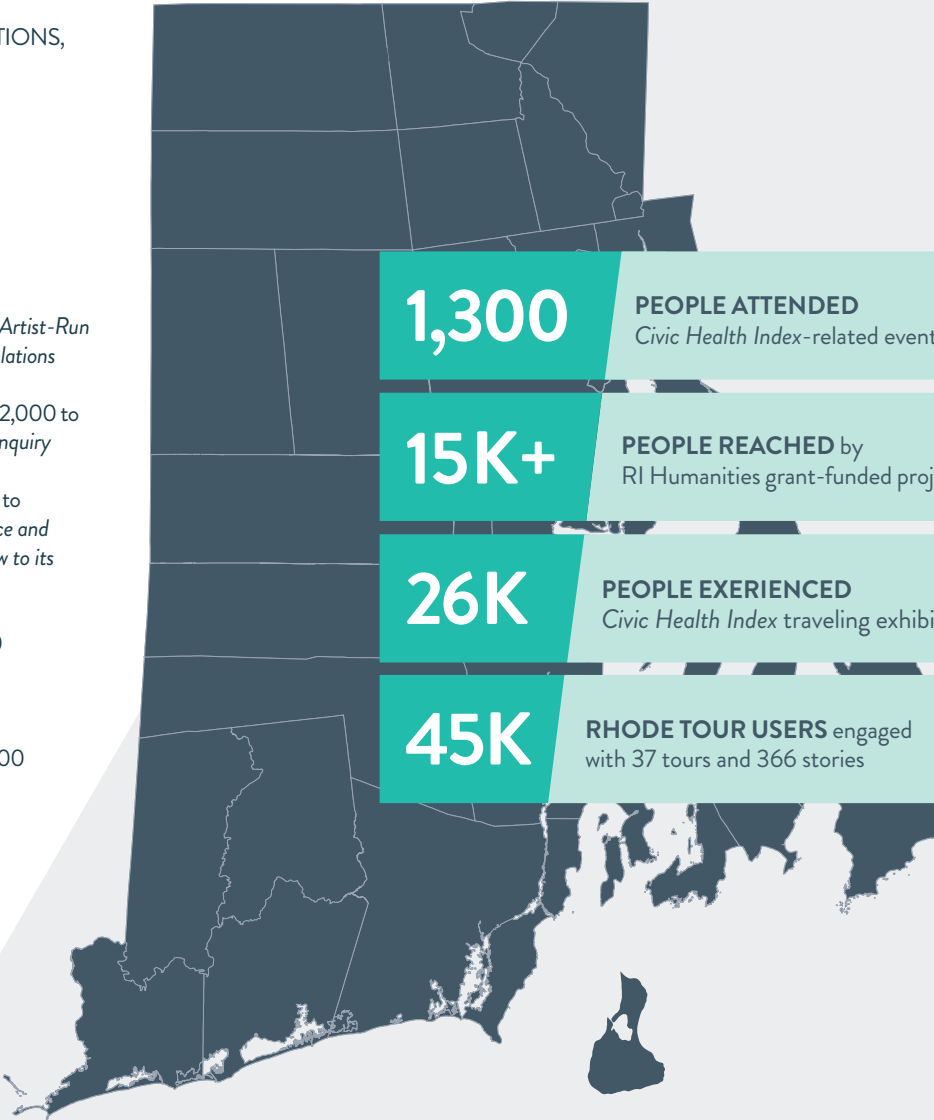
- 34% Humanities Initiatives
- 34% Grantmaking
- 18% Organizational Support
- 14% Fundraising

FY23 Revenue

- 83.5% National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH): General Support, ARPA Relief Funding, and National History Day Funding
- 16.5% Gifts, Sponsorships, Grants from foundations and other funders

2023 By the Numbers

As we build on the impact of recovery grantmaking and invest in the future, RI Humanities put 68% of our annual spending directly towards grants and humanities initiatives in 2023. Diverse sources of public and private funding ensure our ability to adapt, respond, and collaborate to reach more people, provide resources, and enhance the cultural ecosystem statewide.



# PHILANTHROPY THAT SUPPORTS COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS & PROMOTES CIVIC HEALTH

*We are grateful for the generous support of our donors, funders,  
and sponsors. Thank you for making this work possible.*

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### **Anonymous**

*Anonymous (4)*

### **Joan & Richard Abrams**

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*in honor of  
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*& Lisa Smolski*

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& Audrey Clifton*

*Linda & Steven Cohen*

### **Melanie & Stephen Coon**

*Trudy Coxé &*

*James Gaffney*

*Jaffa & David Davies*

*in honor of 50th  
anniversary year*

*Carol DeBoer-Langworthy*

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*Humanities and Cultural*  
*Heritage, and the*  
*Pembroke Center for*  
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## GRANTS

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**Rhode Island Foundation**  
**National Endowment for**  
**the Humanities**  
**Rhode Island Foundation**

## INDIVIDUALS under \$100

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 Anonymous in honor  
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 of Marjory O'Toole,  
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## Gifts of \$1,000 & over

The Rhode Island Humanities  
2023 Annual Campaign  
began on November 1, 2022  
and concluded on October  
31, 2023. If you find any  
errors or omissions, we  
apologize and ask that you  
please notify us at: [sophia@rihumanities.org](mailto:sophia@rihumanities.org)

## IMAGES & CREDITS

*Our thanks to Harley Avery,  
Steve Kroodsmma, Cat Laine,  
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grantees who have contributed  
photographs.*

[rihumanities.org](http://rihumanities.org)



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(Sept 2022–April 2023)*

Cat Laine  
*Events & Communications  
Specialist (April–Oct 2023)*





# 50 FEST



**In October,** Rhode Island Humanities celebrated our 50th anniversary in a rare and exciting display of culture, history, and visions of civic life.

Over 220 people attended a mini film festival; explored an exhibition of vivid posters for public projects that shaped and inspired communities; created connections during *Leavings*, the communal activity; and expressed hopes and dreams in the *Future50* portrait studio.

This event was free and open to the public and hosted at the WaterFire Arts Center in Providence. Special thanks to the community members who joined us, and to our sponsors, partners, and vendors for making this celebration such a success!

“50Fest celebrated the best in all of us!”

TIFFINI BOWERS, board member

“50Fest was a who’s who of Rhode Island—it was a great experience!”

DAVID LIDDLE, attendee



**EXPLORE**  
a recap of  
the day on  
our website!

► [rihumanities.org/  
50-fest](http://rihumanities.org/50-fest)