

MAINE HUMANITIES COUNCIL

131th Maine Legislature

Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

February 13, 2023

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs: My name is Samaa Abdurraqib - I am the Executive Director of the **Maine Humanities Council**. I am speaking in support of the Council's initiative which the Governor has included in her supplemental budget request.

The Maine Humanities Council is an independent statewide nonprofit that supports life-long learning and civic engagement. We are the State of Maine affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of Congress Center for the Book. We provide educational programs throughout the state addressing a range of needs, including literacy, promotion of reading, teacher enrichment, community history, increased civic engagement, and cultural tourism. Our constituents include low-literacy adults, public school teachers, Veterans, domestic violence agencies, Department of Corrections facilities, health care workers, library patrons, and all Mainers from all walks of life. Maine Humanities provided both direct programs and grant funding for community cultural activities.

All funding received from the State of Maine is distributed as grants to community organizations throughout the State. These grants offer an avenue for community-based cultural organizations to mount public programs on a wide range of local history and other cultural topics. **100% of state funding to the Maine Humanities Council is distributed to communities through matching grants.** The Council does not retain any of the funds to cover overhead, personnel, or administrative costs. Grants are awarded through a competitive review conducted by members of the Council's statewide volunteer Board of Directors. Any organization that receives grant funds from Maine Humanities is required to match it at least one to one, meaning that, in effect, the impact of these State funds is doubled.

Between 2021 and 2022, we received grant requests totaling over \$400,000. Through the funds allocated to Maine Humanities during that same period, we were able to award grants to 59 organizations, totaling just over \$158,000. The grants we award are relatively small – between \$1,000 and \$7,500 – but we know firsthand how impactful these grants are for both the organizations we fund and the various Maine communities they serve.

This year, as a result of our outreach efforts, we are poised to receive, for us, a record number of grant applications. We recently closed our first cycle of grant applications – applications were due January 31st – we took in a total of 61 applications for this cycle; 19 more applications than we received for this same grant cycle last year. I expect our remaining grant cycles will see a similar increase this year. Because of the increase to our allocation that was voted on and approved last fiscal year, we are excited to be able to provide grant funds to even more organizations and communities across Maine.

I have included a sample list of recent Maine Humanities grantees. I invite you to look through it to get a sense of the kinds of community-based organizations and projects that benefit from this funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak; I will happily answer any questions you may have. Thank you very much.

Samaa Abdurraqib, Ph.D.
Executive Director



Grants Program

2022

Grant Awards
Sorted by Town

Augusta	Literacy Volunteers of Kennebec	\$2000
Proj. Dir.: Virginia Marriner	Augusta Community Permanent StoryWalk	21-22-MIN-11
A community effort to advance the concepts of family literacy, encouraging parents to read to their children and be involved and interested in their education, at the same time encouraging outdoor, healthy activity.		
Bangor	Maine Multicultural Center	\$1000
Proj. Dir.: Bill Phillips	Maine Multicultural Community Forum	21-22-MIN-09
The Maine Multicultural Community Forum is a series of presentations on various aspects of cultural diversity with the purpose of fostering intercultural harmony. Forum presentations are held monthly over zoom from September to June. Each presentation is ninety minutes long and includes some form of interactivity with those in attendance.		
Boothbay Harbor	Snowlion Repertory Company	\$1000
Proj. Dir.: Al D'Andrea	My Witch: Margaret Hamilton's Stories of Maine, Hollywood and Beyond!	21-22-MAC-05
Snowlion Repertory Company will present the world premiere production of the new one-woman show "My Witch: Margaret Hamilton's Stories of Maine, Hollywood, and Beyond," running at Meetinghouse Arts. The matinee performance on Halloween will be followed by a talk-back with the audience, the playwright, director, and actress playing Margaret Hamilton, moderated by Snowlion Rep's Producing Director Margit Ahlin.		
Bucksport	Buck Memorial Library	\$2000
Proj. Dir.: Lisa Ladd	BIPOC @ BML	21-22-MIN-01
Creating a more Diverse Library Collection that can be highlighted on Special Days/Months and incorporated into our Storytimes and other Programs.		
Damariscotta	The Peace Gallery	\$933
Proj. Dir.: Olivia DeLisle	Empty Hand, Empty Brush	21-22-AH-05
Korean-born artist Kichung Lizée will engage up to 8 veterans in a 4-week healing arts course. The last class will feature a roundtable discussion of the series.		

Dover Foxcroft Proj. Dir.: Patrick Myers	Center Theatre for the Performing Arts Bounty Screening and Discussion	\$1450 21-22-MIN-02
We want to screen the new film <i>Bounty</i> at the Center Theatre and invite the filmmakers and speakers to lead an audience discussion.		
Dresden Proj. Dir.: Ian Reid	The Maine Review Environs	\$1600 21-22-MIN-03
A home for brief poetry and prose about the graceful, brutal, life-sustaining planet we call home, considering the importance of place, experiences of belonging (or not), wildernesses discovered or lost, flora and fauna encounters, and anthropogenic climate change, which threatens it all.		
Eastport Proj. Dir.: Mark Macey	Eastport Arts Center Dialogue Mural	\$1000 21-22-MAC-02
Eastport Arts Center will collaborate with Ellen Nicholas, a local Passamaquoddy artist and educator, to install an original mural in their recently remodeled lobby. The mural will incorporate responses from a community questionnaire that addresses what the arts mean to responders. The aggregated responses will provide inspiration for Nicholas' work.		
Falmouth Proj. Dir.: Tarlan Ahmadov	Azerbaijan Society of Maine Building Resilience and Community Belonging Through Our Diverse Culture and Traditions	\$7500 21-22-07
The Azerbaijan Society of Maine will host programs for a diverse group of immigrants that were deeply impacted by the pandemic. An immersive program on Ethno-Jazz music, led by a professional musician, will explore the genre's influence on both American and global culture. Funds will also be used to host a series of storytelling and cultural events focused on traditional folklore, music, literature and food for intergenerational groups who share the same language and culture.		
Farmington Proj. Dir.: Robert Hayes	ArtsFarmington Performance for Students and General Public in Farmington of Shakespeare's "As You Like It" By Theater at Monmouth	\$1791 21-22-MIN-13
On October 21 Theater at Monmouth will perform Shakespeare's "As You Like It" twice during school hours for high school and middle school students, and in the evening for the general public. Theater at Monmouth will provide a thorough Teacher Resource Guide to help introduce students to the play, and some of that information will be used in the printed program for the evening show. A 15 minute question and answer session will follow each performance.		
Fort Kent Proj. Dir.: Patrick Lacroix	University of Maine at Fort Kent Voices of the Borderland: The Social Impact of International Travel Restrictions in Northern Maine	\$2314 21-22-02
This oral history project aims to chronicle the profound effects of border restrictions due to the pandemic on the communities of the Upper St. John River valley, a transnational region consisting of western New Brunswick and the far northern reaches of Maine. This 18-month prohibition on cross-border travel fractured a region that scholars often represent as a borderland. A concluding conference will share the findings of the project with the communities involved.		

Freeport	Arts & Cultural Alliance of Freeport	\$2000
Proj. Dir.: Dana Legawiec	David Thomas Exhibition "Finding Parkinson's"	21-22-MIN-05
FINDING PARKINSONS: DOING BATTLE WITH MY BRAIN is an art exhibition, documentary screening, and panel discussion focused on the work of Boston-based artist C. David Thomas, who contracted Parkinson's Disease from exposure to Agent Orange while stationed in Vietnam. An exhibition of 25 digital prints will be installed at the Meetinghouse Arts Gallery, along with a reception, a screening of the documentary The Last Ghost of War, panel discussions with the artist.		
Kennebunk	Brick Store Museum	\$1000
Proj. Dir.: Cynthia Walker	Museum-School Learning Partnership	21-22-MIN-04
Local elementary schools host traveling exhibit cases from the Museum, and students receive activity booklet that can be traded in (when completed) for Museum admission and a prize (children's history book).		
Lewiston	Maine Public	\$7000
Proj. Dir.: Scott Marchildon	Connecting Communities	21-22-01
Maine Public News Connect, our multi-language programming, is geared to getting critical information, news, and cultural information out to Maine's immigrant populations. We engage Maine's diverse immigrant communities in the four most common languages understood in Maine other than English - French, Somali, Portuguese, and Spanish - by supplying translation of weekly news stories that impact their communities.		
Lewiston	Maine Community Integration	\$4400
Proj. Dir.: Fowsia Musse	Hadal Zone (Talk Zone) Podcast	21-22-09
The Hadal Zone podcast will use the power of traditional music and spoken word to foster conversations and critical thinking about hidden structures such as like patriarchy, the role of elders, and the role of religious leaders within Somali American culture. We want to encourage discussion of the most pressing issues facing our community, including mental health concerns and the opioid pandemic.		
Lewiston	Maine Museum of Innovation, Learning and Labor	\$2000
Proj. Dir.: Traci Gere	Researching, Collecting, and Sharing Black Immigrant Oral Histories	21-22-MIN-07
This project will collect the oral histories of immigrants to the Lewiston-Auburn area from African countries and present these oral histories, along with background research, in an upcoming immigration exhibit at Museum L-A.		
Mount Desert	Mount Desert Island Historical Society	\$6000
Proj. Dir.: Raney Bench	We Change Them	21-22-05
Local artist Jennifer Steen Booher will produce two sets of six large-scale exhibit panels that depicts ecological shifts due to human-caused climate change. Five public programs will use these artworks built off of ecological data sets as a starting point for discussions about the importance of historic documents to understanding issues like climate change.		

Newcastle Proj. Dir.: Heather D'Ippolito	Lincoln Academy Lincoln Academy's The Talon Student Newspaper	\$5000 21-22-DJIC-01
The Lincoln Academy Talon student newspaper launched in the fall of 2021. Each week, students voluntarily meet during school hours as a journalism club. Working with Lincoln Academy's Director of Communications, a Lincoln Academy English teacher, and the deputy editor of the Lincoln County News, they produce a monthly printed paper that covers school news, sports, opinion, games and puzzles. The student newspaper group prints and distributes 500 issues of the newspaper across the school campus and downtown Newcastle and Damariscotta.		
Old Town Proj. Dir.: Alexandra Hinrichs	Leonard Middle School LMS Big Read	\$1000 21-22-MAC-04
400 students in grades 5-8 and their teachers will all read the same book and engage in a series of workshops, discussions, presentations, and other activities over multiple months to explore the text in many different ways. This project will encourage students to become stronger nonfiction readers, critical thinkers, and thoughtful citizens.		
Old Town Proj. Dir.: Alexandra Hinrichs	Leonard Middle School LMS Big Read 2022	\$1000 21-22-AH-02
The LMS Big Read centers conversations around a single book, engaging over 400 students, their teachers, and their families in a series of workshops, discussions, guest speakers, and community-building activities to create more thoughtful citizens		
Portland Proj. Dir.: Annika Earley	SPEEDWELL Projects Documenting LGBTQ+ Artists and Activists	\$1000 21-22-MAC-01
This 20-minute documentary will focus on Maine-based LGBTQ+ artists, highlighting the cultural contributions of LGBTQ+ artists and shed light on human rights issues that the LGBTQ+ community faces. Accompanied by a 6-month exhibition at SPEEDWELL, it will play during open gallery hours.		
Portland Proj. Dir.: Casey Oakes	Portland Ovations Classical Pre-Performance Lecture Series	\$1000 21-22-MAC-03
Portland Ovations will engage George Lopez, Bowdoin College's first Artist in Residence, as a guest curator. Using his expertise and connections in both the arts and education community, Lopez is crafting a pre-performance lecture series that highlights the emotional and historical context of the program and engages audiences with dynamic speakers.		
Portland Proj. Dir.: Wendy Chapkis	University of Southern Maine Libraries Digital LGBTQ+ History Trail	\$7000 21-22-03
This project will reclaim and disseminate Maine queer history and culture through the creation of a digital heritage trail featuring five or more locations in Portland, Maine. The trail will be accessible via an app, for mobile download, and will incorporate audio and film material from oral history interviews, photographs, and other artifacts found in University of Southern Maine's (USM) Special Collections.		

Portland	Dawnland Voices 2.0 Advisory Council	\$7500
Proj. Dir.: Mihku Paul	Dawnland Voices 2.0	21-22-04
Dawnland Voices 2.0 will create a new website that will be an online platform for Indigenous literature from northern New England with a focus on new work published once annually. Writer profiles and contact information will be included, to facilitate access and connection between Indigenous writers and editors, scholars, publishers. Goals also include new media, an annual writing contest, mentorship opportunities for new Indigenous writers, and a literary event that includes a spoken word performance and supportive writing workshops.		
Portland	Side x Side	\$3500
Proj. Dir.: Beth Wilbur van Mierlo	Sustenance	21-22-06
This multigenerational endeavor, which includes an exhibition, immersive content engagement with elementary students, and a performance and community conversation will provide a space for artists and the general public to reflect and contemplate a basic human condition, sustenance. The breadth of the concept includes publicly interrogating questions of mental health, economics, hunger, the environment and community.		
Portland	The Black in Maine Podcast	\$5000
Proj. Dir.: Samuel James	The Black in Maine Podcast	21-22-DJIC-02
This project is an exclusively Black-voiced journalistic podcast covering historical anti-Black institutional racism in Maine and its contemporary effects. Through research and interviews with Black historians and Black elected officials the podcast will primarily cover four events: Malaga Island, the Place Names Battle, the KKK's involvement in the 1923 changes to Portland's charter and the 2021-2022 charter commission's attempts to reverse those changes.		
Portland	Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance	\$1000
Proj. Dir.: Taryn Bowe	Maine Lit Fest Bilingual, Multicultural Story Hour and Book Giveaway	21-22-AH-01
Bilingual, Multicultural Story Hour at the Maine Lit Fest will welcome immigrant and migrant families, showcase Latinx children's books, include book giveaways, and invite audience members to deepen their understanding of Latin cultures.		
Portland	SPEEDWELL Projects	\$1000
Proj. Dir.: Annika Earley	Art of Transformation	21-22-AH-03
A film and discussion series featuring artists whose work fosters social change or explores identity, visibility, or connection. Community-based art workshop(s) with Maine artists focused on social change efforts identified by the participants.		
Portland	Side x Side	\$1000
Proj. Dir.: Beth Wilbur van Mierlo	SUSTENANCE	21-22-AH-04
SUSTENANCE will be an art exhibit/performance/discussion at the Portland Public Library, May/June 2023, showcasing work from Maine artists, including food/performance artist Flor Cron, and Portland students working with Arts Integrator, SidexSide.		

Portland	Portland Public Library	\$2000
Proj. Dir.: Zoe Alexis Scott	SUSTENANCE: A Multi-Cultural Art Exhibit on Food Sourcing and Sustenance in Maine Communities	21-22-MIN-15
SUSTENANCE is an art exhibit/performance/discussion at the Portland Public Library, May & June, 2023. Showcasing Maine artists in collaboration with students from SideXSide the exhibit will bring attention to food insecurity and inspire multigenerational public conversation around sustenance across cultures.		
Portland	Portland Ovations	\$2000
Proj. Dir.: Casey Oakes	The Last Girl	21-22-MIN-16
Portland Ovations requests support for the premiere full-length staged reading of Dianne 'dee' Clarke's play The Last Girl and integral post-performance conversation led by Clarke's legacy organization Survivors Speak USA. Deeply rooted in the humanities, the power of theater has been a channel for empathy and social discourse for centuries. The Last Girl -- from script to stage to community dialogue --embodies all of this and more.		
Rockland	Halcyon Music	\$2000
Proj. Dir.: Sophie Davis	Wonderful World: A Musical Retelling of Blueberries for Sal	21-22-MIN-14
This project combines music and story to celebrate two of Maine's most beloved children's book authors and illustrators: Ashley Bryan and Robert McCloskey. In partnership with the Waldoboro Public Library, Halcyon will curate live performances and educational programming that combines song, string quartet music, narration, and projection of illustrations from McCloskey's, "Blueberries for Sal" and Ashley Bryan's "Wonderful World," and "Let it Shine."		
Rockport	Maine Media Workshop & College	\$2000
Proj. Dir.: Amy Morley	Convening Lecture Series	21-22-MIN-08
Critical Dialogue on the History and Future of Media Arts with Columbia University Scholar Daniel Dawson, professor of African Art and the Diaspora		
Saco	Saco School Distict	\$2000
Proj. Dir.: Deanna Contrino	Welcoming Library for the Saco School District	21-22-MIN-10
Our school district will be welcoming 100 families from Angola and the Central Democratic of Congo this fall. Our district needs many different kinds of resources so our new families feel included and supported by the community. My hope is to obtain funding to purchase a Welcoming Library from I'm Your Neighbor Books, at a cost of \$2500, and to allow each school within the district to borrow the WL for a period of time during the school year.		
South Portland	South Portland Public Library	\$2200
Proj. Dir.: Lisa Marie Joyce	Maine Bicentennial 2.0	21-22-10
As a part of their renewed Bicentennial celebration programming, South Portland Public Library will present Maine history and the humanities in new and more historically accurate ways, through a series of speaker presentations.		

South Portland	Art at Work	\$2000
Proj. Dir.: Marty Pottenger	Ferry Village, USA	21-22-MIN-06
A humanities-placemaking project with over 100 participants of all ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, classes, and perspectives. Participants' knowledge of Ferry Village, founded by settlers in the 1600's, is transformed via historical and personal stories and photographs, as their connections deepen.		

Sullivan	Frenchman Bay Library	\$2000
Proj. Dir.: Candy Eaton	Exploring Native Culture through Books, Stories and Song	21-22-MIN-12
Frenchman Bay Library is located in the heart of the Wabanaki, "People of the Dawnland", which include the four Maine tribes of Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Penobscot and Passamaquoddy. There is so much history of our region, our community, and our neighborhoods that is not taught in school. This project will increase access to this information through a variety of networks, programs and literature.		