

2025



WISCONSIN
HUMANITIES

Nov. 1 2024 – Oct. 31 2025

IMPACT Report



PICTURED: WH Grantee:
Día de Muertos
Celebration, Driftless
Region, WI. Organized by
Driftless Curiosity and the
Mexican Folk Art Collective
photo credit: M. Mestiza

Wisconsin Humanities

wisconsinhumanities.org

A YEAR OF

Resilience

When federal funding was canceled overnight in early 2025, **Wisconsin Humanities** adapted to sustain connection, preserve core programs, and chart a path forward for communities across the state.

Wisconsin Humanities strengthens communities across all 72 counties by supporting public humanities programs, funding local cultural and civic initiatives, and creating platforms for authentic storytelling that connect Wisconsinites. Through this work, we build social bonds between diverse populations, develop local leadership, and foster meaningful dialogue across geographic, cultural, and political differences.



PICTURED: John Harmon,
Winneconne, WI.
Wisconsin's Gentle Poet of Jazz
Love Wisconsin

A growing body of research recognizes social connection as a key social determinant of health, directly impacting individual well-being and the strength of communities. **Wisconsin Humanities** plays a critical role in this ecosystem by creating spaces where people can share stories, engage across differences, and build a shared sense of place.

On April 3, 2025, DOGE and the National Endowment for the Humanities terminated our general operating support grant, which had sustained public humanities work in Wisconsin for more than 50 years. The loss of this funding put not only our organization, but communities across the state, at risk of losing access to programs that foster connection, understanding, and civic participation.

SO WE TOOK *Action.*

At a time when communities across Wisconsin are experiencing increasing isolation and division, **connection and belonging** are not optional, **THEY ARE ESSENTIAL.**

STABILIZED operations immediately, reducing staff, transitioning out of our office, and preserving archives and core infrastructure.

PAUSED key programs, including *all* Grants, Love WI story production and Community Powered training, while assessing a sustainable path forward.

MAINTAINED statewide connection, through Human Powered podcast and communications to ensure communities remained engaged.

LAUNCHED the Next Chapter Campaign, leveraging 250k emergency funding from the Federation of State Humanities Councils with support from the Mellon Foundation.

LISTENED & PLANNED for the future, by convening statewide listening sessions and developing a forward-looking plan to relaunch core programs in 2026.

Pictured: Erica Turner, Cedarburg, WI
Bridging Racial Divides
Love Wisconsin



WHY *the humanities matter*

The humanities are not luxuries — they are the stories, histories, and cultural traditions that knit Wisconsin together.

The humanities help people **understand** their own communities and identities, **connect** with others across differences, make sense of current issues using history and context, and feel a stronger sense of **belonging**.

The humanities enable us to **share** history, culture, and lived experiences in ways that are accessible, relevant, and engaging.

Wisconsin Humanities supports this work at the local level, ensuring that communities of all sizes have access to the tools, resources, and funding needed to engage in meaningful civic and cultural life.

Examples

- Community storytelling projects
- Local history exhibits & walking tours
- Public conversations about current issues
- Oral history projects
- Cultural events, performances, & festivals
- Programs that help people understand different perspectives & experiences

Pictured: WH Grantee: *Architectural Dig at Crossroads at Big Creek Sturgeon Bay, WI*
Photo credit: Corey Batson



“History and language and cultural traditions are not luxuries – they are what make us human.”

Jenifer Cole, Board Chair



PICTURED: Arno & Pardeep, Milwaukee, WI. *Waging Peace Through Brotherhood, Love WI*

Despite extreme financial pressure, **Wisconsin Humanities** continued to deliver programs, award grants, and amplify stories across Wisconsin in 2025.



BY THE NUMBERS

7

Community **Listening Sessions**

72

Counties impacted by WH's work

\$50k

Grants distributed to 14 grantees.*

19

Episodes of **Human Powered**

***76% less than FY24 due to federal funding cuts in April 2025.**

OUR IMPACT

GRANTMAKING ACROSS WISCONSIN

Wisconsin Humanities funded **14 projects** focused on storytelling, cultural heritage, & civic dialogue before federal funding was paused in April 2025. That's 50% less than in FY24.

- **Major Grants:** Projects in hip-hop history, Hmong cultural collaboration, youth civic engagement, & public dialogue
- **Opportunity Grants:** Projects spanning Indigenous arts, rural literature, oral history, youth programs, & community festivals

COMMUNITY POWERED

Community Powered trains local leaders to design humanities-based projects rooted in their communities.

- **16 WH fellows** participated from communities across the state
- The program was **recognized nationally** with the *Schwartz Prize*
- Launched **Tribal Health Initiative** with support of the Wisconsin Partnership Program
- **Community Powered** was **paused** following funding cuts in April 2025



PICTURED: WH Grantee *Living WITH the Northwoods* Documentary Project. Warehouse Community Arts Center, Eagle River, WI.

in action

LOVE WISCONSIN & HUMAN POWERED

Love Wisconsin

A digital storytelling platform with **300+** stories and **100,000+** followers, amplifying voices across the state.

Human Powered Podcast

19 episodes exploring community, identity, and resilience. "Humanity Unlocked" season focused on incarceration, education, & healing.



PICTURED: Will Green
Madison WI

*I turned my pain into passion
& started mentoring,* Love WI

LISTENING SESSIONS

Seven statewide sessions brought together educators, artists, civic leaders, and residents to shape the future of **Wisconsin Humanities**.

- Held in multiple places including Superior, Milwaukee, & Green Bay
- Supported by **48 donors** contributing \$10,000+
- Informing program direction for 2026 and beyond



PICTURED: Community
Listening Session,
Milwaukee WI

Wisconsin Humanities

wisconsinhumanities.org



Our work happens **with** community & **for** community.



FINANCIALS

Nov 1 2024 - Oct 31 2025

REVENUE

Government	\$987,634
Contributions	\$411,549
Investment income	\$12,891
Total	\$1,412,074

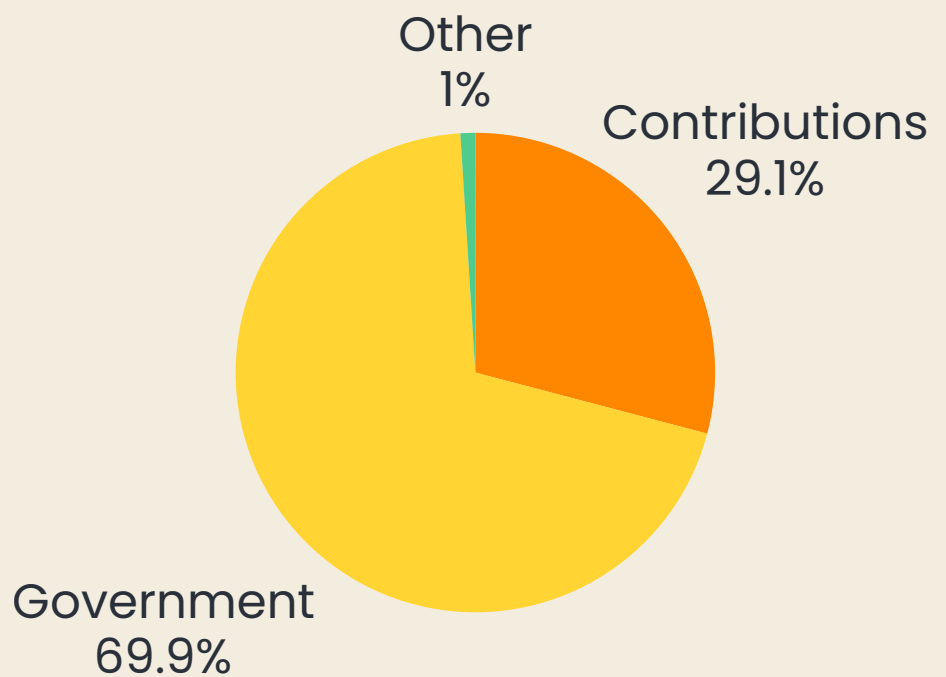
EXPENSES

Program Services	\$579,009
Program Operations	\$336,600
Fundraising	\$127,552
Total	\$1,043,161



PICTURED: Edith Leoso, Odanah, WI
I am descended from people who embraced the breath of life. Love WI

Revenue SUMMARY





PICTURED: [Grantee Hmong Autism Neurodiverse Disability Support \(HANDS\) Dance Program](#). Green Bay, WI.

Did you know?

You can click on any photo in this impact report to learn more about the stories and people behind each project.



**WISCONSIN
HUMANITIES**

wisconsinhumanities.org