

2008-2011 STRATEGIC PLAN

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SECTION 1: CORE ASSUMPTIONS

We recognize and execute from our core competencies and organizational niche:

- our statewide mission and service area.
- our role as a unique source of support for public humanities, with grants the common thread among all 56 NEH state and territorial councils.
- our intention to serve as a resource for the humanities in perpetuity, maintaining and growing the endowment through lifelong relationships with donors.
- our role as intermediary and connector, leading to council-originated programming that
 - pursues convening in communities, between sectors, and among organizations.
 - promotes national best practices in partnership with staff and volunteers of local cultural organizations.

We model listening, learning, and accountability.

- We engage in dialogue with communities and partners, recognizing that individuals and organizations best understand the assets, needs and solutions of their hometowns.
- We engage with other state and territorial humanities councils to promote best practices and evaluate our activities.
- We engage with stakeholders, encouraging accountability through transparency about our finances, planning, impact and learnings.

SECTION 2: KEY STRATEGIES

Serve Targeted Audiences through a Palette of Programs and Partners

<u>Audience</u>		<u>Program</u>		<u>Partner</u>
Rural Communities	↔	MoMS Exhibits	↔	Cultural Institutions
	↔	Community Conversations/IM		
	↔	Project Grants & Quick Grants	↔	Grassroots Groups Cultural Institutions
Low Literacy/Income	↔	Family Reading Programs	↔	Local Nonprofits
Washingtonians	↔	Project Grants & Quick Grants	↔	Cultural Institutions
	↔	Community Conversations/IM		

Pursue Partnering to Promote the Public Humanities

Achieve economies of scale, reach new audiences, and leverage partnering organizations' competencies through increased collaboration in areas with greater access to public humanities programs.

Recognize Washington's Large Size and Substantial Regional Differences

We will explore regional councils to encourage communities in assessing and addressing their own assets, capacity, needs and solutions. Develop 4 Regional Councils by 2010-2011.

- Increase involvement of volunteers in their communities.
- Some control over program/granting through regional restricted funds
- Explore matching formula as incentive for regional fundraising

Develop and Experiment with Cross-Program Focus

We will highlight overlap of core programs through developing initiatives and inquiries.

2008-2009

- "Key Ingredients" at 10 sites statewide for special two-year tour
- Partner with other organizations to bring related programming.
- Focus on 4-6 sites to seed & develop regional capacity.
- Special grant rounds with focus related to theme
 - IM speakers on food /farming history and heritage issues

2009-2010

- 2nd Cross-Program Focus—WA Centennial of Suffrage

Attach Programs to Key Funding Streams

Trending in fundraising and among other state councils is that both individual and organizational givers are increasingly restricting their contributions and expecting specific outcome reporting from their investments. Humanities Washington's funding structure is unusual in that we receive a large percentage of our budget in unrestricted NEH funds, which subsidizes much of our overhead and indirect expenses. By attaching programs to funding streams we believe we can increase contributed income by allowing donors greater choice and specificity as to how they wish their contributions used, and by conducting fundraising campaigns for specific programs and initiatives.

State Funding	→	Community Conversations/Inquiring Mind
Foundation	→	Family Reading Programs
NEH General	→	Grants
	→	General Administration
	→	MoMS Exhibits
NEH WTP	→	Grants (American History & Culture)
NEH Other	→	Challenge Grant for Poet Laureate Endowment
Event	→	Family Reading Programs
Bequest/Planned Gift	→	Endowment
Individuals	→	All of the above via unrestricted or restricted gifts

Communicate Our Impact and Increase Visibility

Continue to promote the humanities by communicating the impact of specific programs on individuals and communities through our newsletter, e-news, website, and mailings.

- Develop a marketing plan that integrates and utilizes the rapidly changing landscape of digital and electronic communications.

SECTION 3: GOALS & SUCCESS METRICS

CORE PROGRAMS

Sustain excellence in core programs: grants, exhibits, family reading, and community conversations. Implement evaluation activities appropriate to each program with the aim of communicating results to stakeholders.

GRANTS

Increase grantmaking to strengthen quality, innovation, and access in humanities programming statewide. Increased grantmaking is scaleable, and can be accomplished within the existing staff and volunteer structure. Current structure of Project Grants and Quick Grants reflects the diversity of needs and capacity among grantees.

- *Increase grants by 200% for 5-year period from 2006 (\$114K) to 2011(\$340K).*
- *From 1/3 to 1/2 of annual NEH state/federal partnership allocation by 2011*
- *Grow grantmaking by 10 % a year from 2007 to 2011. 2008=\$255,000; 2009=\$280,000; 2010=\$310,000; 2011 \$340,000.*

Improve access and streamline process

- *Begin offering on-line submissions by 2008.*
- *Raise grant proposal acceptance rate from 2:10 acceptance rate (nation's lowest in 2006) so that we both receive more qualified grants and fund a higher percentage.*

Increase regional involvement and participation

- *Fund projects in at least 2/3 of Washington's counties each year (26 of 39).*
- *Explore regional councils' ability to manage quick grants (2010-2011).*

Expand evaluation of the impact of grants in communities and on organizations and develop marketing strategies to communicate the difference made to stakeholders.

- *Utilize print newsletter, e-news blast, and website to profile grantees.*

EXHIBITS

Continue to partner with the Smithsonian to present Museum on Main Street (MoMS) exhibits annually, an unduplicated means of reaching small town audiences and building the capacity of rural cultural organizations.

- *Partner with at least one new site per year.*
- *Explore raising restricted funds for exhibits and related programming from both regional donors and corporate and foundation sources with a connection to each exhibit's theme.*

- *Develop by 2010 an evaluation process to determine impact of MoMS on growing the host organization's capacity and community impact.*
- *Develop and implement a system for collecting contact information of interested exhibit visitors by 2008 and explore the use of incentives.*
- *Partner with host organizations in communicating about MoMS exhibits and programs to congressional representatives and state legislators.*

Develop cross-program organizing theme based on current touring exhibit.

- *Experiment with a two-year touring schedule for Key Ingredients in 2008 and 2009 (as opposed to current one-year exhibit schedule). Assess leveraging impact of two-year time frame for recruiting Inquiring Mind speakers, developing community conversation-related programming on food-related themes, and awarding special targeted grant funds.*
- *Generate increased awareness for 2010 tour of Journey Stories through pre-publicizing theme in Courier and website and community outreach.*

FAMILY READING PROGRAMS

Family reading programs promote the love of books and discussion of their meaning, further developing habits of mind such as critical thinking and civil discourse. They represent a proven way for humanities councils to engage with low-income, limited English, and/or low-literacy communities. Goals for 2008-2011 center on customizing approaches and curriculum to targeted pilot communities with the goal of exploring and replicating similar partnerships around the state.

Develop Yakima Valley as an integrated hub for family reading programs through partnerships with local organizations serving families.

- *Grow % of families reached through partnerships with key organizations:*
 - **Washington State Migrant Council**→ 20% of families in 2008, 40% in 2009, >50% by 2010
 - **Circle of Success**→ MRFR available to 100% of families by 2008
 - **La Casa Hogar, Nuestra Casa**→ MRFR available to 100% of families by 2008
 - **Department of Early Learning**→ MRFR and Story Exploring available to all identified childcare providers and families enrolled at DEL-identified sites by 2009
 - **Yakima Valley Community College**→ MRFR a component of all parent-child coop preschool offerings through YVCC by 2009

Reach farm worker populations in 20 counties statewide through ongoing partnership with Migrant Council.

- *2008: 160 families enrolled in My USA classes in American history and civics; 2009: 320; 2010: 480*
- *2008: 480 families enrolled in MRFR bilingual family literacy classes; 2009: 960; 2010: 1440*

Reach underserved urban families through partnerships with Seattle School District, REWA, and Neighborhood House.

- *160 children, representing 5 schools, participating in Story Exploring by 2008; 10-15 schools using Story Exploring in the classroom by 2009*
- *Building from a base of 100 families served in 2007, add 100 families per year served by MRFR*

Continue to maintain a learning community for past trainees.

- *Host annual conference with continuing education training.*
- *Explore designated web space to facilitate virtual conversations and exchange.*

Develop and test program evaluation model in 2009, soliciting leadership and models from national Motherhead office.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Reinvigorate Inquiring Mind speakers program through increased marketing and underwriting for presenting institutions, as well as recruiting new speakers focused on cross-cutting themes.

- *Sponsor 150 community conversations for 2008 and 200 conversations for 2009.*
- *Attract at least 10 new presenting organizations each year that were inactive in the previous year in order to ensure we reach new audiences.*
- *Sponsor at least one community conversation annually in each of Washington's 39 counties by 2011 (>25 counties in 2008; >30 counties in 2009; >35 counties in 2010).*
- *Package state funding to provide support to both speakers and sponsoring institutions, as well as streamline administrative burdens.*
- *Continue to recruit new speakers based on themes: food history and culture for 2008-2009; women's suffrage and voices 2008-2010.*

Civic Reflection

Continue to explore how to promote these text-based discussions on the meaning of community, association, service and giving as part of community conversations.

- *Pilot offering civic reflection as an Inquiring Mind Program in 2008.*
- *Explore collaborating with regional library system(s) as key institutional partner for civic reflection series by 2009.*
- *Monitor best practices of other states in hosting community forums and dialogues.*

PROJECTS & PARTNERSHIPS

Projects and partnerships provide opportunity for the organization to respond opportunistically and to pilot new ways of achieving community impact. Partnering with other organizations to promote the public humanities allows us to achieve economies of scale, reach new audiences, and leverage partnering organizations' competencies.

Poet Laureate

Maintain partnership with Washington State Arts Commission and Washington Poets Association that resulted in the appointment by the legislature of the state's first Poet

Laureate in 2007. Act as lead partner in raising and then managing an operating endowment of \$300,000 to support Poet Laureate activities.

- Secure NEH challenge grant for \$75,000 in 2008.
- Raise \$300,000 by 2011.

Speakers Series in Seattle and/or Spokane

Explore strategic partnering in regions of the state with multiple humanities providers.

- Conduct a demonstration series, such as a “Wake Up to the Humanities” breakfast event by 2009, to further profile the public humanities and connect local scholars with new audiences.

Promote a Cultural Agenda for Washington State

Partner with other key cultural organizations, including heritage and preservation organizations, to develop shared messaging about the importance of the arts and humanities; advocate for cultural benchmarks.

- Initiate a “Convening of Conveners” caucus in Seattle to explore collaborations and partnerships among organizations engaged in dialogue and civic engagement by 2008.

Explore strategies to expand awareness of annual Humanities Washington Award.

- Convene an ad hoc committee to assess the impact and goals of the award in 2008, its 15th anniversary year

PEOPLE, INFRASTRUCTURE & FUNDING

PEOPLE

Attract and retain qualified, diverse and committed staff and volunteers in order to support the work of the organization.

- *Achieve staff turnover rate of <20% annually.*
- *Maintain representation of at least 50% of individuals living and/or working outside of Seattle on board and volunteer committees. 2 of the 3 board meetings annually will take place outside of Seattle.*
- *Increase the participation of non-board members on committees; develop system for tracking volunteer hours by 2009.*
- *Develop and evaluate strategies for staffing not based in Seattle office (part-time regional liaisons; circuit rider, etc) by 2009.*
- *Increase staff and board visibility throughout state, including King County.*
- *Develop a committee structure to foster engagement by interested past board members, Humanities Washington Award winners, potential board members and other key constituents by 2010.*

INFRASTRUCTURE

Maintain percentage ratio of administrative/fundraising expenses to total budget within nonprofit best practice range.

- Below 25% by 2009 (2006=39%; 2007 <30%; 2008 <28%; 2009 <25%)

Maintain and grow web presence with dynamic content in order to engage stakeholders.

- Experiment with podcast of Bedtime Stories author(s) by 2008.

FUNDING

Grow total revenues and diversify funding base to sustain organizational activities.

Federal Funding: Maintain strong track record of reporting and relationships, including annual visits with congressional delegations in DC and with staff in district.

- *Reduce % of total funds received from NEH federal-state partnership from 80% to <70% by 2011.*
- *Apply for other NEH funding streams including challenge grant for Poet Laureate endowment (2008) and public program funds.*

State Funding: Maintain relationships with legislators through communication about community impact and invitations to programs and events in their districts. Develop and maintain partner relationship with Secretary of State's office as host agency.

- *Receive renewed support in the 2009 biennial budget equal to or greater than the initial 2007 level appropriation of \$45,000 per year.*
- *Engage board members and other key supporters in annual legislative visits, beginning with a lobby day in Olympia preceding 2/08 board meeting.*
- *Develop contact strategy for consistently informing legislators of events in their district by 2008.*
- *Provide links to relevant programs of Secretary of State's office from website.*

Foundations: Continue to approach foundations for restricted support of family reading programs.

Individuals: Continue to grow annual support by individuals and promote bequests and planned giving as a way to extend donors' lifelong commitment to humanities.

- *Grow total number of individual donors by 10% a year.*
- *Renew previous year donors at a rate of >70%.*
- *Expand Bedtime Stories to Yakima by 2008 and one other community by 2009.*
- *Develop and implement strategies to collect names and contact information from program participants in community conversations and exhibits by 2008.*

SECTION 4: BEYOND 2011

Planning involves dreaming and visioning, and several items spoke to us from beyond the horizon of 2011. Our hope is to begin discussions and explorations of these key issues over the next four years in order to determine which should and should not be included and addressed in our next strategic plan.

Permanent Facility Purchase

Several state councils have recently purchased and moved into permanent homes, many with conference space and increased community visibility. Potential avenues to explore include donation of a historic property, NEH challenge grant, and location of headquarters office within state. (Should we remain in Seattle?)

Multi-State Humanities Council Programming

Several states are experimenting with shared programs (Chautauqua, Southern Media Fund). Are there collaborations in our Northwest region that make sense?

Assess Involvement/Opportunity with K-12

Many state councils sponsor summer institutes for humanities educators, or involve themselves by some means in K-12 promotion of the humanities.

Explore Stronger Partnerships with Libraries and Technology

Both the recent digitization initiatives of the NEH and Gates Foundation leadership in supporting technology initiatives with libraries nationwide suggest possibilities for using Washington State as a test site.

Assess Involvement/Opportunity with Universities and Scholars

Many state councils are housed on university campuses, creating synergies and subsidies.