



Sharing *stories*. Sparking *conversations*. Inspiring *ideas*.

**House Bill 33**  
**Interested Party Testimony**  
**May 16, 2023**  
**Ohio Senate Finance Committee**  
**Rebecca Brown Asmo, Executive Director, Ohio Humanities**

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Finance Committee: thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding Ohio House Bill 33.

My name is Rebecca Asmo, and I am the Executive Director of Ohio Humanities. Ohio Humanities is a statewide organization that hosts programs and awards grants to support storytellers statewide, from museums to local historical societies to documentary filmmakers. As the state-based nonprofit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, we leverage federal funding to support local communities in telling the stories of our shared human experience.

With the full support of the Ohio History Connection, we are requesting \$325,000 per fiscal year in GRF in the FY24-25 budget under the foregoing appropriation item 360508, State Historical Grants, to be allocated to the Ohio Humanities Council to increase the capacity of Ohio's underserved humanities and cultural organizations. 100% of this funding will go directly to support cultural and humanities organizations that serve the public throughout Ohio. Support from Ohio Humanities will provide a bridge that allows our partners to retain and grow staff to serve their audiences while planning for the future.

We have relationships with hundreds of cultural organizations, including local historical societies, museums, libraries, non-profits, and monuments. With 50 years of experience granting funds to humanities organizations, we provide the technical and in-kind support necessary for smaller organizations to achieve success in accessing funding and program implementation.

In 2021 and 2022, Ohio Humanities awarded \$3,155,134 in grants—the most in our organization's history—reaching 171 organizations in 55 counties and 1 in 10 Ohioans. Our grant funds also support programs that serve all 88 counties in Ohio with in-person and digital programming. \$1M of this funding was distributed to humanities organizations across the state thanks to a new partnership with the Ohio Legislature through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

I have included a list of recent grant highlights from the past two years at the end of my testimony.

Our partners serve as community hubs, provide educational opportunities for Ohioans of all ages, and connect Ohioans in ways that help them better understand each other and more thoughtfully



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# OHIO HUMANITIES

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engage with the world around them. They help us envision an Ohio where people's unique stories are heard, the past is linked to the present, and a better future is realized together.

Over the last two years, \$40M in general revenue funding and \$70M in state recovery funding was allocated to Ohio's thriving arts and entertainment sector. While these funds provided much-needed funding to arts organizations, other cultural organizations are unable to access these funds, including many of Ohio's local and regional historical societies, small museums, memorials, monuments, organizations that do not host performances, and other cultural assets.

Ohio Humanities is the only grantmaking organization in the state that solely funds humanities organizations and projects. Of the more than 1,300 museums and local historical societies that operate in Ohio, more than 500 were unable to access COVID-19 recovery funding to adequately support the losses that they faced during the pandemic and the operational pivots necessary to sustain operations in the future. Out of the 118 recovery grants we awarded in 2021, only 17 organizations also received state-allocated arts recovery funding. Ohio is among the top-rated states in the nation when it comes to state government support of the arts, yet we are one of only 15 states that does not allocate grant funding to support the humanities.

Thank you for the opportunity to express Ohio Humanities' request to amend this legislation to better support Ohio's public humanities organizations and for your leadership across the state. We look forward to continuing to share our successes with you in the months to come.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



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## 2021-2022 Grant Highlights

### Recovery Grants:

- \$43,000 - Armstrong Air and Space Museum | Auglaize County, Wapakoneta
- \$43,000 - National Aviation Hall of Fame | Montgomery County, Dayton
- \$43,000 - Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center | Sandusky County, Fremont
- \$43,000 - Clark County Historical Society | Clark County, Springfield
- \$43,000 - National Aviation Hall of Fame | Montgomery County, Dayton
- \$25,000 - Dover Historical Society and Reeves Museum | Tuscarawas County, Dover
- \$20,000 - Champaign Aviation Museum | Champaign County, Urbana
- \$19,000 - Children's Historical Publishing | Montgomery County, Dayton
- \$16,000 - Darke County Historical Society and Garst Museum | Darke County, Greenville
- \$16,000 - John P. Parker Historical Society | Brown County, Ripley
- \$13,859 - Unionville Tavern Preservation Society
- \$12,000 - Akron Children's Museum | Summit County, Akron
- \$10,000 - Lake County Historical Society

### Program Grants:

- \$25,000 - Chagrin Documentary Film Festival | Fevered Dreams Productions | Cuyahoga County, Chagrin Falls
- \$20,000 - In Their Footsteps: Cleveland's African American Civil Rights Trail | Cleveland Restoration Society | Cuyahoga County, Cleveland
- \$20,000 - Let Ohio Women Vote | ThinkTV Network | Montgomery County, Dayton
- \$19,940 - Tell Me Your Story: Cincinnati Holocaust Survivors | Holocaust and Humanity Center | Hamilton County, Cincinnati
- \$19,425 - Finding Invisible Ground: Immersive Storytelling Historic Markers in Athens County | Athens County Historical Society | Athens County, Athens
- \$19,410 - 10,000 Acres | Denison University | Licking County, Granville
- \$7,500 - Hotel Berry Audio Storytelling Project | Athens Middle School and Ohio University Office of Research and Graduate Studies | Athens County, Athens
- \$7,500 - The River Speaks | Little Miami Watershed Network and Greene County Community Foundation | Greene County, Xenia
- \$7,500 - Marion Voices in the Schools: Folklife + Cultural Heritage K-12 Residency | Marion Voices Folklife and Oral History | Marion County, Caledonia
- \$7,487 - Women and Work | Youngstown Historical Center of Industry and Labor | Mahoning County, Youngstown
- \$6,935 - Women in the Early Space Program: Mercury 13 Exhibit Reinterpretation | International Women's Air and Space Museum | Cuyahoga County, Cleveland
- \$2,000 - John Glenn Centennial Heritage Trail | Zanesville-Muskingum County Convention & Visitors Center | Muskingum County, Zanesville

