

# ***History is Happening:***

The State of Humanities Organizations in Illinois During COVID-19



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# History is Happening: The State of Humanities Organizations in Illinois During COVID-19 | April 2023

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From 2020 to 2022, Illinois Humanities served as a critical safety net for humanities organizations in Illinois, providing just under \$2.4 million in urgently needed relief to over 350 organizations across the state. In the most essential way, the grants succeeded in providing relief and enabled organizations to “get back to business.” However, relief funding catalyzed an even bigger return on investment in the form of public goods: well-being, social cohesion, bridge building, and civic engagement — essential building blocks of an equitable recovery.

As our state works to rebound from COVID-19, Illinois is positioned to build a thriving cultural ecosystem that can strengthen the livability of the state for all residents, especially for some of the most vulnerable in our communities.

### Background

From 2020 to 2022, Illinois Humanities awarded \$2,352,500 in 490 relief and recovery grants to 359 unique organizations in 78 of our 102 counties and every congressional district. The grants addressed the ability of the cultural sector, in the most fundamental way, to stay viable. These grants, which consisted largely of federal funding, supported jobs for more than 1,000 people in Illinois over the three-year period. However, grantee partners lost \$24,320,570 in revenue due to COVID-19 — more than ten times the total grant dollars distributed — and 4,173,432 interactions with community members because of the pandemic, deeply impacting these organizations and their public-service missions.<sup>1</sup>

### The State of Humanities Organizations During COVID-19

*History Is Happening: The State of Humanities Organizations in Illinois During COVID-19* situates grantee partners within the socioeconomic well-being of Illinois overall. Report findings illuminate a stark picture: grantee partners who received emergency relief funding were already working to mitigate prevalent social, health, and economic stresses prior to the pandemic. Deeply embedded in communities that are changing demographically and which wrestle with inequitable access to fundamental resources like broadband, these organizations are working to preserve cultures, tell new stories, and bring us together in novel ways.



### Report findings show:

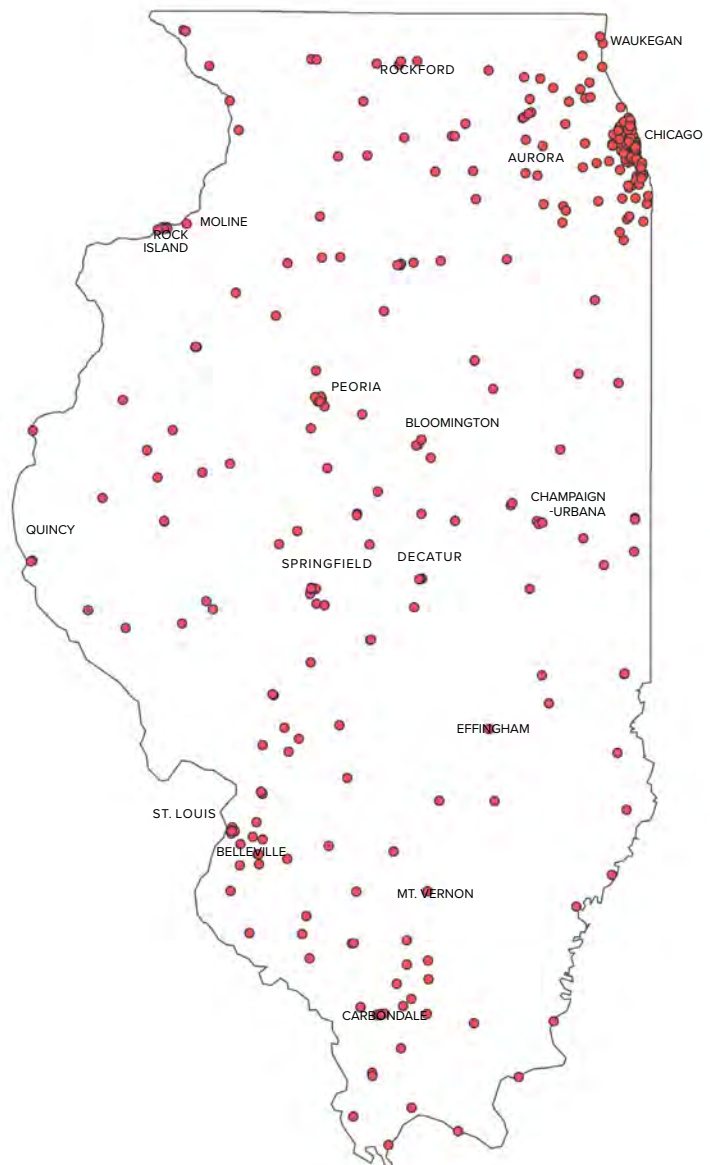
- Grantee partners serve significant numbers of low-income residents, communities of color, and rural and small towns.
- 60% of grantee partners serve communities that were under health and economic duress before the pandemic.
- Nearly half of grantee partners operate with annual budgets of less than \$100,000.
- Nearly a quarter of grantee partners provide programming in a zip code with more COVID cases than the statewide average.
- Two in three grantee partners operate in areas without sufficient access to broadband.
- Though more than 40% of grantee partners were founded in the past two decades, some have been operating for more than 100 years.

### Why Humanities Organizations Matter in Illinois

Behind every point on the map is a community of people whose lives have been positively impacted by public humanities organizations. Regardless of the mode of engagement, the outcomes were the same: Human interaction. Connection. Creativity. Encouragement. Being seen. Being known — and getting to know others, too.

Illinois' humanities organizations are on the cutting edge of what Americans believe about — and want from — home-town cultural organizations right now. Most Americans think arts and culture organizations can and should play a critical role in helping their communities by serving as an emotional outlet (83%), providing connection and learning (77%), and giving practical help (54%).<sup>2</sup>

**Figure 1: Illinois Humanities Grantee Partners**



*Across three years, Illinois Humanities distributed 490 grants to 359 unique organizations.*

*Source: Illinois Humanities data.*

They want organizations to undertake four actions to become more relevant and inclusive:

1. increase accessibility and new works,
2. embrace equity and inclusion,
3. foster community rootedness,
4. become places of belonging and welcoming.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, in addition to strengthening civic fabric, humanities organizations in Illinois generate revenue and help fuel our economy. Decades of economic data at the local, state, and national level show that the arts and culture sector is a major contributor to the economy.

The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the arts and cultural production contributed \$31.1 billion to Illinois' economy in 2021, representing 3.3% of the state's GDP and 196,769 jobs. This means that in 2021 the Illinois arts and cultural sector was larger than both the utilities industry and the agriculture and forestry industry combined.<sup>4</sup>

### What Comes Next?

When viewed in aggregate as a collective of organizations working in unique ways to strengthen social fabric and bridge divides, Illinois' public humanities organizations emerge as a relevant, precious, and critical ecosystem than may previously have been appreciated.

***Neglecting the positive impact of humanities organizations is a significant oversight for anyone concerned about equitable pandemic recovery, community livability, or economic vibrancy.***



Our rich humanities landscape deserves an ambitious vision. *History is Happening: The State of Humanities Organizations in Illinois During COVID-19* calls on partners, funders, and policymakers to invest in the following:

- Ensure sustainable, predictable funding for humanities organizations.
- Create and support humanities programs that enable residents to come together to share stories and experiences, and form new ways of being together.
- Support community- and capacity-building efforts that strengthen organizations' relationships with each other and the communities they serve.
- Ensure that humanities organizations are at the table when investments in economic development, energy, and infrastructure are being shaped.

By connecting across nonprofit, private, philanthropic, and government sectors, we can ensure that all of our state's residents benefit from the ways in which humanities organizations keep us creative, connected, and in community.

Together we can fortify our cultural infrastructure in ways that make Illinois more livable, just, and resilient.



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Refer to "Data and Methodology" on pages 43-58.

<sup>2</sup> Benoit-Bryan, Jennifer, Madeline Smith, and Peter Linnet, *Rethinking Relevance, Rebuilding Engagement* (Chicago, IL: Slover Linett Audience Research, LaPlaca Cohen, and Yancey Consulting, 2022), 5. <https://sloverlinett.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Rethinking-Relevance-Rebuilding-Engagement-CCTT-Wave-2-Survey-Full-Report.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>4</sup> "Illinois State Arts and Cultural Production in 2021," U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and the National Endowment for the Arts, accessed March 16, 2023. [https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa\\_research/creative-economy-state-profiles/](https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa_research/creative-economy-state-profiles/).

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## About Illinois Humanities

Illinois Humanities, the Illinois affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, is a statewide nonprofit organization that activates the humanities through free public programs, grants, and educational opportunities that foster reflection, spark conversation, build community, and strengthen civic engagement. We provide free, high-quality humanities experiences throughout Illinois, particularly for communities of color, individuals living on low incomes, counties and towns in rural areas, small arts and cultural organizations, and communities highly impacted by mass incarceration.

Learn more at [ILhumanities.org](https://ILhumanities.org) and on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#) @ILHumanities.



# History is Happening: The State of Humanities Organizations in Illinois During COVID-19 | April 2023

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APRIL 2023

# Letter from Executive Director Gabrielle H. Lyon

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Dear reader,

We created this report to offer a kind of “field guide” to the state of the humanities in Illinois at a critical and urgent moment. While we are proud of our work, this report is not intended to be a celebration of Illinois Humanities’ relief and recovery funding efforts.

Certainly, the relief and recovery funds that we awarded throughout the height of the pandemic — thanks to the federal CARES and ARP Acts — were amongst the most we’ve ever distributed in our nearly 50-year history.

These grants did help, and for some organizations (particularly smaller organizations with lesser access to relief resources) funding was a lifeline. But the reality is that despite almost \$2.4 million to more than 350 organizations over three years, this was not enough in the face of the profound need which these communities confronted during the pandemic.

The act of distributing relief funding provided us with a unique opportunity to explore and describe the geography of humanities organizations throughout our state.

We hope this report gives you a better understanding of where organizations are working, the unique ways they leverage the humanities in service to their communities, and, ultimately, why this work matters to ensuring Illinois becomes a just, equitable, and livable state for all its residents.

Sincerely,



**Gabrielle H. Lyon**  
**Executive Director**



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## INTRODUCTION

# History is Happening

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“[W]e are each other’s  
harvest:  
we are each other’s  
business:  
we are each other’s magnitude and bond.”

— Gwendolyn Brooks<sup>1</sup>



The primary goal of this report is to shed light on the humanities landscape in Illinois for people to better understand the diversity, depth, and impact of these community anchors. The chapters that follow address these questions:

- Where were federal COVID-19 relief and recovery dollars distributed?
- What does the landscape of community-based public humanities organizations in Illinois look like?
- How are organizations being affected by and responding to the impact of the pandemic on their communities?
- What observations or recommendations can be made based on lessons learned during the past three years?

We hope that the emerging picture of Illinois' public humanities landscape, including the contexts in which these organizations operate, will help grantee partners, funders, researchers, and policymakers more deeply understand why humanities matter and how we can work together to strengthen our state's cultural infrastructure.

## About This Report

This report is broken into six chapters:

- ***This introduction, "History is Happening,"*** sets the goals for this report and recalls the context in which Illinois Humanities' grantee partners undertook their work.
- ***Chapter 1, "What a National Conversation Can Tell Us,"*** by Executive Director Gabrielle H. Lyon provides a high-level overview of key findings and frames the work of grantee partners in terms of a national research context about the sector.
- ***Chapter 2, "Humanities Organizations Meet the Moments,"*** by Director of Grants Programs Mark Hallett focuses on some of the humanists and organizations introduced in Chapter 2 through a series of in-depth vignettes illustrating the scope of public humanities organizations.
- ***Chapter 3, "Humanities Across Illinois: Connecting, Healing, Energizing, Bridging,"*** by Karen Girolami Callam brings into focus the ways that organizations activated the humanities through specific program strategies which directly responded to the challenges of the pandemic.
- ***Chapter 4, "Stories the Numbers Tell,"*** by Executive Director Gabrielle H. Lyon and Special Projects Manager Martin Matsuyuki Krause dives deeper into our grantee partner data.
- ***The conclusion, "What We're Learning and What We Hope For,"*** offers recommendations for organizations, funders, policymakers, and researchers with a call to cross-sector partnership.
- A directory of all grantee organizations is included at the end of this report alongside a bibliography.
- Webpages provide an interactive map ([ILHumanities.org/COVID-19-Map](https://ILHumanities.org/COVID-19-Map)) and a downloadable directory ([ILHumanities.org/COVID-19-Directory](https://ILHumanities.org/COVID-19-Directory)) of grantee partners.

As an organization that takes an asset-based approach, we have crafted this report to center the work of Illinois Humanities grantee organizations, what their work looks like, and impact. And, because Illinois Humanities is committed to equity and understanding the role which we ourselves can and must play in addressing inequities, we have worked to understand grantee partners and their contexts in terms of the intersections of social, economic, and health factors.

As you read through this report, cast back to the pre-vaccine days of the pandemic. We were unsettled and scared, facing uncertainty every day. When lockdowns were lifted, many people were still extremely wary. Basic supplies — baby formula, to name just





one — were unavailable. We became hyperaware of our interdependencies.

Our local front-line workers (among the least well-paid and least well-protected by our economic and health systems) were celebrated with signs of appreciation decorated with markers and glitter. Protests in response to the murder of George Floyd ripped into the fabric of the pandemic and catalyzed a country-wide racial reckoning that continues to have ripple effects. As the days passed, remote schooling, masking, social distancing, and six-foot tape marks on sidewalks took on philosophical and moral dimensions. Every decision required deliberation.

***Should I mask  
to keep other  
people safe? Do  
I send my kids  
to school if my  
elderly parent  
is living with  
me? Do I go  
to a meeting  
in person?  
Do I travel?  
Do I hug?***

Time became slippery. We ran into people we had not seen for a long time but could not quite remember *how* long ago.

This past fall and winter, as we weighed the pros and cons of traveling and gathering, we found that our social circles had gotten smaller. And we continue to remember how much we miss loved ones who passed away over the past three years.

The work we describe in *History is Happening* took place during these times.

### **We Are Just Scratching the Surface...**

This report is not a comprehensive description of community-based humanities organizations operating in Illinois. The scope, scale, and impact of cultural organizations in our state are too vast to be

captured in one report. While showcasing grantee partners who received support through emergency funding helps us to visualize the cultural ecosystem in Illinois, we are only scratching the surface of this richly diverse landscape, the organizations that comprise it, and the people whose lives are made more livable because of it.

### **...But the Impact is Clear.**

Behind every point on the map is a community of people whose lives have been positively impacted by the 359 grantee organizations. These organizations preserve and uplift the histories and legacies of generations of residents. Some of the organizations enable engagement about experiences related to the pandemic, immigration, belonging, identity, or entrepreneurship. During the height of the pandemic, invitations to virtual book groups, outdoor classes, and performances created structure and offered a routine. Regardless of the mode of engagement, the outcomes were the same: Human interaction. Connection. Creativity. Encouragement. Being seen. Being known — and getting to know others, too.

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### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Gwendolyn Brooks, "Paul Robeson," in *The Essential Gwendolyn Brooks*, ed. Elizabeth Alexander (New York, NY: Library of America, 2015).





## CHAPTER 1

# What a National Conversation Can Tell Us About the State of the Humanities in Illinois

*By Gabrielle H. Lyon*

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During the height of the pandemic, from 2020 to 2022, communities throughout Illinois lost jobs, revenue, and human interactions against a backdrop of widespread trauma and social isolation. During that time, Illinois Humanities quickly went to work releasing the largest tranche of grant funding in our history: \$2,352,500 in 490 relief and recovery grants to 359 unique organizations located in 78 of our 102 counties and every congressional district.<sup>1</sup>

These grants, which consisted largely of federal funding, supported jobs for more than 1,000 people over the three-year period. However, grantee partners lost \$24,320,570 in revenue due to COVID-19 — more than ten times the total grant dollars distributed — and 4,173,432 audience interactions because of the pandemic, deeply impacting these organizations and their public-service missions.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the impact of COVID, grantee partners carry out their work against the broader social, economic, and geographic contexts of their communities. Among our grantee partners, 48% operate in rural areas, and nearly half of the 359 organizations have budgets under \$100,000.<sup>3</sup>

As of August 2022, nearly one in four grantee partners were providing programming in a zip code with more COVID

cases than the statewide average per zip code.<sup>4</sup> Many of these communities were in economic distress before the pandemic. Nearly one in four grantee partners operate in a zip code where more than a half of households fall below the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) threshold<sup>5</sup> — the minimum income level necessary for the survival of a household, adjusted for household size and composition for each county.<sup>6</sup> Stresses on families and economic pressures were only exacerbated during the period covered in this report.

Likewise, grantee partners and the communities they serve face systemic barriers. This report finds that two in three grantee partners operate in areas without sufficient access to broadband.<sup>7</sup> For organizations that are working to ensure programs and services are available and

accessible, lack of access to broadband adds a significant barrier to their ability to innovate and, in many cases, rebound.

***In the most fundamental way, grants succeeded in providing urgently needed relief and enabled organizations to “get back to business.”***

This funding catalyzed a return on investment, but because of the nature of the public goods these organizations provide to their communities — because of what these organizations do, who they serve, and



where they are located — it is challenging to capture this impact with economic metrics alone. These “public good” returns include well-being, social cohesion, bridge building, and civic engagement, and each holds powerfully relevant lessons. In this chapter, we draw on national research to illuminate the manifold impacts of the humanities and humanities organizations in the communities they serve and correlate what is happening in Illinois with what we are learning nationally.

These impacts — social cohesion, health and well-being, jobs — are essential to an equitable recovery. As our state works to rebound from COVID-19, Illinois is positioned to build a thriving cultural ecosystem that can strengthen the livability of the state for all residents, including the most vulnerable in our communities.



### **What Are the Humanities?**

*Traditional humanities encompass history, literature, philosophy, and art history. Illinois Humanities focuses on public humanities: programs and organizations that enable curiosity, questioning, and dialogue in communities throughout the state.*

### **Illinois' Public Humanities Organizations Are on the Cutting Edge of What Americans Want**

Illinois Humanities partners with and supports a robust ecosystem of organizations that includes museums, historical societies, literature organizations, humanities and civic education organizations, local media, libraries, and archives.

Across the country, the pandemic has engendered a deeper and more urgent appreciation of what humanities and cultural organizations uniquely and critically provide. National research from Slover Linett found that there has been a “sizeable jump in the importance of arts and cultural organizations to Americans” — in 2022, more than half (56%) of Americans said that they “view arts and culture

organizations as important to them,” compared to 37% pre-pandemic.<sup>8</sup>

***Why do people want to be part of the humanities? To have fun. To connect with others. To learn something new. To explore big questions. To contribute.***

These individual impulses have a collective impact: they strengthen our civic fabric.

Most Americans think “arts and culture organizations can play a critical role in helping their communities” by serving as an emotional outlet (83%), providing connection and learning (77%), and giving practical help (54%).<sup>9</sup> They want organizations to undertake four actions to become more relevant and inclusive: 1) increase accessibility and new works, 2) embrace equity and inclusion, 3) foster community rootedness, and 4) become places of belonging and welcoming.<sup>10</sup>

Illinois' public humanities organizations are on the cutting





edge of what Americans believe about — and want from — their hometown cultural organizations right now. The portraits featured in this report underscore people’s desire for opportunities that enable human connection, deepen existing relationships, and create opportunities for members of disparate groups to come together. Some humanities programs are



intentionally designed to bridge divides, some to help people feel welcome. And some programs are designed to bring people together repeatedly, over time.

### Increasing Accessibility and Inclusivity

One of the strengths of community-based public humanities organizations is their ability to understand

community needs. During the pandemic, this resulted in many efforts to increase accessibility and create new works. This responsiveness and innovation was reflected in the work of our grantee partners. For Jeanne Schultz Angel, associate vice president of Naper Settlement, it emerged as a focus on teachers’ needs during the pandemic. “The thing we did five years ago may not be what they need now,” she said. When The HUB Arts & Cultural Center in Rushville invited high school students to write and produce a storytelling performance piece, [“Losing Normal,”](#) about their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and how it affected their lives, they responded to the moment and activated the humanities to help heal trauma and build connections.

Representative polls demonstrate that people value the roles of arts and cultural institutions in their communities.<sup>11</sup> Harold McDougall, author of *Black Baltimore: A New Theory of Community*, places small group discussions at the center of efforts to bridge differences and build resiliency, because these are precisely the discussions “that build empathy.”





A recent survey of adults in 26 metropolitan areas found that adults who perceive their places of residence as having easy access to arts and cultural activities tend to be more satisfied with their communities, identified more with their community’s lifestyle and culture, and invested more of their time and resources into their communities than those whose communities were not perceived as having easy access.<sup>12</sup> Digging further

into the study, arts and cultural amenities are nationally ranked “as the fourth most difficult amenities to access — after affordable housing, public transit, and job opportunities,”<sup>13</sup> with African American adults, non-white Hispanic adults, and adults with lower household incomes reporting even greater difficulty in accessing arts amenities.<sup>14</sup>

Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) with

lower household incomes and education levels often self-report lower levels of engagement. “For many BIPOC groups, the ability to participate in arts and culture activities was limited by a lack of affordable transportation.”<sup>15</sup>

The drive to overcome barriers to access is reflected in hundreds of grant applications and the stories shared by grantee partners. For example, BIPOC and women leading the Urban Growers Collective on the West and South Side of Chicago shared their success in building community food security and sovereignty.

“As we faced funding shortages and layoffs,” says Maggie Catania, interim executive director,

***“we rethought how to meet our goals and how our region’s racialized, low-income communities can realize their economic visions.”***

COVID-19 laid bare the barriers presented by insufficient access to broadband — a challenge that impacts two in three of our grantee partners.<sup>16</sup> Antonio Ramirez’s *Chicagolandia: Oral Histories of Chicago’s Latinx Suburbs* documents the lives, work, and cultures of Latinx people in Elgin, Waukegan, Aurora, Joliet, and beyond. His experience brings into focus what it means to lack digital access: “COVID prevented our team from supporting storytellers...For communities with low tech literacy levels, or who lack access, this meant that too many stories were left unheard.”

## **Deepening Community Rootedness**

According to one of the most extensive and recent surveys of American participation with cultural organizations, Americans want cultural experiences and organizations to be deeply connected — deeply rooted — “to their communities and to the challenges those communities face.”<sup>17</sup> We see these strategies at work in abundance across grantee partners in Illinois.

The organizations that make up the constellation of public humanities in Illinois are stewards and tradition bearers



— preserving and shedding light on aspects of culture and catalyzing people to remember the past or imagine new futures. Ashanti Files of My True North Artistry, based in Urbana, described “Self-Care Saturday” as “a crucial component in regaining a sense of normalcy for the young people in this community who grieve at the loss of social interaction, are disheartened by the oppression in the world, and more importantly, are grasping for a resource to assist them to continue to fight their daily battles.” They used their Illinois Humanities project grant for a day-long event to teach girls of color the art of slam poetry using the 3 C’s: Connect, Create, and Commit. Examples of deepened connections abound among grantees: Residents of Chicago’s Austin neighborhood reclaimed a dormant parking garage for street-level photography; Latinx individuals in suburban Chicago shared oral histories; neighbors took a literary walk in Waukegan.

### **Creating Belonging and Well-Being**

Culture can be a tool for defining and redefining identity, particularly in new ways. Preserving, centering, and transmitting cultural heritage are important strategies for creating belonging and fostering well-being. Research

into the ways new immigrants engage with a broad variety and modes of arts experiences found that “While first generation immigrants often seek nostalgia through cultural participation, second- and third- generations often use arts participation as an outlet to experiment with mixing their native and host cultures, effectively forming a new ‘hybrid’ cultural identity.”<sup>18,19</sup>

The HUB Arts & Cultural Center in Rushville exhibited work by a local African artist to welcome new residents. Another grantee organization, Strategy for Access Foundation, worked to deepen participants’ understanding of identity and belonging.

“What sets us apart from other organizations serving the disabled is our awareness and support for intersecting identities,” Executive Director Vanessa Harris says. “Disability does not exist in isolation from other marginalized communities, and our videos honor racial and cultural differences.”

Humanities are a necessity for health and well-being. Public health research has found growing evidence that “arts engagement” — engaging with any form of arts and cultural activities — contributes to the promotion of health and well-being, prevention of

mental and physical illness, and management of existing health conditions.<sup>20,21</sup> Many of us experienced this firsthand when we turned to new creative pursuits and hobbies for relief and solace during the pandemic. Lynne Chambers, founder and executive director of Legacy Training, Inc. in Grand Chain, explains it this way: “We incorporated with the goal of alleviating poverty of the mind, body, and spirit.”

***In addition to these social goods, humanities organizations generate revenue and help fuel our economy.***

Contrary to general assumptions, humanities organizations are not cost centers in the state’s economy. The opposite is true: decades of economic data at the local, state, and national level show that the arts and culture sector is a major contributor to the economy. The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that the arts and cultural production sector contributed \$31.1 billion to Illinois’ economy in 2021, representing 3.3% of



Illinois' gross state product and 196,769 jobs. This means that in 2021 the Illinois arts and cultural sector was larger than both the utilities industry and the agriculture and forestry industry combined.<sup>22</sup>

## History is Happening

*History is Happening* is intended to “bookend” our first report, *On Wisdom and Vision*, published in March of 2021. In 2021, when Illinois Humanities first mapped grantee partners against demographic, geographic, and pandemic contexts, a startling picture emerged. The long-term economic duress of the communities organizations served, the disproportionate impact of COVID-19, and their lack of access to traditional funding prompted us to refine our grantmaking to be as community-responsive as the humanities organizations we work with.

Over subsequent grant cycles, we adjusted our approach to take these realities into consideration:

- We created separate grantmaking application portals for organizations based in Cook County and outside of Cook County so that organizations did not feel they were in direct competition with Chicago-based organizations.



- We adjusted the ceiling for budget size from \$2 million to \$1 million in order to specifically reach smaller arts and cultural organizations.
- We significantly increased general operation funding to better enable organizations to focus on advancing their missions rather than delivering on a specific project.
- We updated application questions to include demographics of leadership, staff, and the communities being served.
- We removed barriers to access by offering interview applications and providing one-on-one support to applicant organizations.

These choices shaped the data set we used in this report. Aggregating data from our grantee partners is helping to provide a fuller and more nuanced understanding of Illinois' humanities landscape and the critical role that these organizations play in the lives of the people in their communities.

This report is more of a watercolor than a photograph. Given the ways in which COVID-19 continues to blur the edges, this feels fitting. We are still “in it” and more time is required before we can understand what happened and what has changed.

The missions, staffing configurations, audience goals, budget size, and programming modes vary tremendously across our 359 grantee partners. But what they share is vast as well: feeling responsible to the communities they serve, innovating under duress, being willing to teach and learn in new ways, and reconsidering what it means to be a welcoming place.

As we cross the three-year anniversary of the pandemic, the timing of the release of this report is not lost on us. The amounts of federal funding, the methods by which it was distributed, whether it reached the people and organizations who most needed it, and how effectively it was used are being researched by entities ranging from the academic, governmental, and nonpartisan to the ideological and sensationalist. On May 11, 2023, President Biden will end both the national and public health emergency declarations that have undergirded nationwide responses to the pandemic and provided protective

bulwarks for housing, health, and education for the most vulnerable in our society.

We hope that this report will be of use to grantee partners to better understand their context. We hope funders will use this information to inform the ways they support — and, ideally, expand support to — potential grantee partners. And, for researchers, the private sector, and policymakers, we hope that this information ensures that humanities organizations are brought to the table to help make Illinois a more livable, just, and thriving state for all of its residents.

As we place the humanities in context locally, nationally, and historically, we can consider more fully all the ways they impact and shape us. As you read the grantee stories presented in the following chapters, we invite you to view their work within these contexts. Health and well-being, social inclusion, avenues for learning and communication, innovation, and connection — grantee partners worked to sustain *all* of these during a prolonged period of ongoing challenge and loss.

The humanities ask us to pay attention to the familiar things in our lives and to reconsider them: to reconsider our assumptions, what we know about our history, and

the stories we tell ourselves and others. As we consider the state of the humanities in Illinois in terms of local and national contexts, we are given the chance to reconsider the ways they impact and shape us. We can reconsider the role of our museums, libraries, arts and history centers, and our cultural organizations. As you read the grantee stories presented in this report, we invite you to consider their work within these contexts. Our grantee partners worked to sustain health and well-being, social inclusion, avenues for learning and communication, innovation, and connection during a prolonged period of ongoing challenge, trauma, and loss.

***When we consider the ways in which Illinois residents benefit from access to the humanities, it becomes increasingly hard to see the humanities as anything less than a necessity.***



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Refer to “Data and Methodology” on pages 43-58.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Stephanie Hoopes et al., *ALICE in Illinois: A Financial Hardship Study* (Chicago, IL: United Way of Illinois, 2020), 2. [https://unitedwayillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2020ALICEReport\\_IL\\_FL\\_NAL-7-30-20.pdf](https://unitedwayillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2020ALICEReport_IL_FL_NAL-7-30-20.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Refer to “Data and Methodology” on pages 43-58 and “Defining Sufficient Access to Broadband” on page 82.

<sup>8</sup> Jennifer Benoit-Bryan, Madeline Smith, and Peter Linnet, *Rethinking Relevance, Rebuilding Engagement* (Chicago, IL: Slover Linett Audience Research, LaPlaca Cohen, and Yancey Consulting, 2022), 5. <https://sloverlinett.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Rethinking-Relevance-Rebuilding-Engagement-CCTT-Wave-2-Survey-Full-Report.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 6, 35.

<sup>11</sup> Americans for the Arts, *Americans Speak Out About the Arts: An In-Depth Look at Perceptions and Attitudes About the Arts in America* (Washington, DC: Americans for the Arts and Ipsos, 2018), 4.

<sup>12</sup> Molly Scott et al., *Community Ties: Understanding What Attaches People to the Place Where They Live* (Miami, FL: Knight Foundation, 2020), 24-25. <https://knightfoundation.org/reports/community-ties-understanding-what-attaches-people-to-the-place-where-they-live/>.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 29-30.

<sup>15</sup> Jennifer Benoit-Bryan, Madeline Smith, and Peter Linnet, *Rethinking Relevance, Rebuilding Engagement* (Chicago, IL: Slover Linett Audience Research, LaPlaca Cohen, and Yancey Consulting, 2022), 7. <https://sloverlinett.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Rethinking-Relevance-Rebuilding-Engagement-CCTT-Wave-2-Survey-Full-Report.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> Refer to “Data and Methodology” on pages 43-58 and “Defining Sufficient Access to Broadband” on page 82.

<sup>17</sup> Jennifer Benoit-Bryan, Madeline Smith, and Peter Linnet, *Rethinking Relevance, Rebuilding Engagement* (Chicago, IL: Slover Linett Audience Research, LaPlaca Cohen, and Yancey Consulting, 2022), <https://sloverlinett.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Rethinking-Relevance-Rebuilding-Engagement-CCTT-Wave-2-Survey-Full-Report.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Gwendolyn Rugg, *The Outcomes of Arts Engagement for Individuals and Communities* (Chicago, IL: NORC at the University of Chicago, 2021), 69. <https://www.norc.umd.edu/PDFs/The%20Outcomes%20of%20Arts%20Engagement%20for%20Individuals%20and%20Communities/NORC%20Outcomes%20of%20Arts%20Engagement%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> Patricia Fernández-Kelly and Paul DiMaggio, *Art in the Lives of Immigrant Communities in the United States* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010).

<sup>20</sup> Daisy Fancourt and Saoirse Finn, *What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review* (Copenhagen: World Health Organization, Regional Office for Europe, 2019).

<sup>21</sup> Daisy Fancourt et al., “How leisure activities affect health: a narrative review and multi-level theoretical framework of mechanisms of action,” *Lancet Psychiatry* 8, no. 4 (April 2021): 329-339.

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis and the National Endowment for the Arts, “Illinois State Arts and Cultural Production in 2021,” Accessed March 16, 2023. [https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa\\_research/creative-economy-state-profiles/](https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa_research/creative-economy-state-profiles/).



## CHAPTER 2

# Humanities Organizations Meet the Moments

*By Mark Hallett*

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“Illinois, you keep swinging with your feet firmly rooted on earth. You keep us standing upright, standing with tenacity.”

— Tara Betts<sup>1</sup>



Alyson Thompson, director of the Marshall Public Library, had a hunch historic photos would be popular with library patrons. She knew a community historian in her East Central Illinois town, Eleanor Macke, whom she believed had a stash of great photos. One day, after she asked Macke if she would share photos, the community historian opened her purse and took out a little bag with ten USBs containing more than 3,000 photos of the town. “My heart skipped a beat,” said Thompson. “Gosh, what if she loses that bag!”

When the pandemic hit in March 2020, Thompson reached out to Macke again, asking if the library could access her collection. They asked if she would prepare photos with a brief snippet describing each. Macke and a group of friends went a step further and wrote short stories to accompany every image. The library posted one photo on [Facebook](#) every day for a year. “It was more popular than we could have ever imagined. People were stuck at home, looking for a mission, a purpose, [and] the library’s closed. People would stop me at the grocery store and tell me how much they loved learning about Marshall’s history,” says Thompson. The local paper started featuring the photos, and after the library secured support from the Illinois

Heartland Library System, they put the photos and oral histories online in a searchable format on the [Illinois Digital Archives](#) website. That series of historic photos now has more than 100,000 ‘likes.’ From a town of 8,000 people, one photo garnered more than 7,000 likes.

***“This site will forever preserve our little town’s local history,” says Thompson.***

Marshall Public Library was one of the 212 organizations that Illinois Humanities was able to help with general operating relief and recovery grants in late 2021 — funded primarily with federal dollars as part of the American Rescue Plan. The full list of organizations supported in that funding round includes 85 history organizations, 76 education organizations, 37 culture and heritage organizations, 26 media organizations, and more. Grants targeted public humanities organizations with budgets of less than \$1,000,000. The public humanities sector, as reflected in this statewide pool, is led by and serves racially diverse constituencies: 73% of the grantee partners have women

or non-binary leadership, 37% have BIPOC leadership, and 60% serve BIPOC communities. 20% of this cohort are Black-led organizations.<sup>2</sup>

In this chapter, we spotlight a handful of the organizations that received relief funding to illustrate what the humanities look like “in action” in Illinois.

Humanities organizations like Marshall Public Library stepped up in innovative ways to serve their communities, even when they themselves were struggling with the impacts of the pandemic:

- The **Bronzeville Historical Society** lost its space at the Illinois Institute of Technology but managed to continue weekly African American genealogy workshops and launched an oral history series on Black firefighters.
- **Minds Eye Radio**, located in Belleville, provides programming for people with visual disabilities. It lost significant earned revenue when venues stopped asking for help with audiovisuals during the pandemic. Nevertheless, it hired a quality control specialist who is partially sighted to ensure the station’s audio description program would be robustly accessible.

- The **American Indian Center** lost more than \$250,000, yet hosted its 67th annual Pow Wow virtually, created a music listening series, and held poetry readings and monthly film discussions. And, when they realized it was needed, the Center moved into food distribution to serve hundreds of meals.

Handing out personal protective equipment (PPE), supporting vaccine access and education, and catalyzing food drives are examples of the commitment, resourcefulness, and credibility of cultural groups within their communities. But at their core, what they do — perhaps better than anyone else — is enable inclusive, lifelong learning. They facilitate place-based community building, focus on capturing unfettered local history that otherwise might be irretrievably lost, and create remarkable and engaging storytelling. Importantly, they carry all of this out from *within* the communities in which they are based. This is the work through which they generate an outsized and ongoing impact.

A range of responses have helped smaller cultural organizations weather the past three years. Monthly town halls, archive crawls, and virtual conferences are just a few of the ways networks of humanities organizations have

worked together collectively to address the challenges and opportunities presented by the pandemic.

Place-based humanities organizations, like the ones described here, are fueled by a kind of boldness. When The HUB Arts & Cultural Center in Rushville features the work of a local African artist in an exhibit, when the Bronzeville Historical Society asks exhibitgoers to reimagine Aunt Jemima as a historical figure, or when Cicero Independiente decides to address the local anti-Black violence that arose during the unrest in the wake of the murder of George Floyd, what unfolds is not capricious. These are significant, carefully considered actions that illustrate the vital role of local, place-based work in addressing national anti-Black violence and unrest.

This humanities work of civic engagement and tackling big questions in real-time with diverse community members sparks change.

***“We envision a future where we can all participate in documenting our stories for the generations to come,”***

says Cicero Independiente Co-Founding Editor Irene Romulo. “A future where we can all participate in transformation and change.”

As Mónica Félix, executive director of the Chicago Cultural Alliance (CCA; a nonprofit incorporated in 2008 with 45 members and a mission of connecting, promoting, and supporting centers of cultural heritage for a more inclusive Chicago), says, “Empowering communities to share their unique traditions, expressions, languages, memories, and struggles benefits us all.”

### **One Thing Looks Certain: Uncertainty**

Throughout Illinois, public humanities organizations straddle a wide range of financial models and modes of public engagement. Nonetheless, there are overarching themes in how groups have been impacted by and responded to the pandemic: Has the pandemic and accompanying economic volatility and inflation damaged many organizations irreparably? Has the ‘great resignation’ hit this sector? And despite everything, how have groups adapted and grown as a result of this unique blend of challenge and opportunity?

Mónica Félix of the CCA puts it succinctly: “This is a time of transition.”



## Staffing Challenges and Opportunities

Even without the impact of a global pandemic, smaller community-based cultural organizations generally cannot compete with most progressive corporate workplaces when it comes to salaries or benefits, especially when high inflation is added to the equation. In addition, there are instances over the past three years where older leadership, including founders, have retired or passed on.

The resulting disruptions can have manifold repercussions: in a small organization, the person leaving may be the primary connection to a donor or the sole point person on an important collaboration. All of these variables were exacerbated during the pandemic.

But in some cases, there is a silver lining to staff departures: leaders of smaller organizations may get a chance to reconfigure staffing. And during the pandemic there has been an invigorative response in terms of volunteer support. “We’re seeing people come to board service from industry — people who might not have had time for that earlier — especially with the rekindled interest in DEI [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion],” says Félix.

## Unpredictable Revenue

“Smaller cultural groups are entering 2023 facing very different financial scenarios,” says Jeanne Schultz Angel, associate vice president at Naper Settlement, established in Naperville in 1969. “Financially, it seems some people are really suffering and feeling the effects of this economic situation, inflation, etc. And there are others that are flush,” says Schultz Angel, who is also board chair at the Illinois Association of Museums, which provides advocacy, promotes best practices, and fosters the exchange of ideas for the state’s museum community. “It’s a weird dichotomy for those who depend on fundraising. It’s hard to predict where you’ll be at the end of the year.”

More than a few Illinois Humanities grantee partners have been told that seemingly stalwart philanthropic funders have changed their guidelines. On top of that, there is the looming question of whether newfound pandemic-era supporters will continue for the long haul.

Numerous other factors stem from and then amplify this uncertainty: fiscal agents bow out, leaving groups scrambling for a substitute; building ownership changes hands or rent increases dramatically, threatening the existence

of organizations already contending with financial shortfalls.

Several smaller cultural organizations scored their first-ever large grants during the pandemic, though these cases are not the norm. As Schultz Angel reminds us, “Small museums are not puppies waiting to grow into big dogs. They’re little dogs. And if they were to disappear, you’d have a huge loss and an incredible void in culture across the state.”

## Embracing Access and Equity

But there are also potentially exciting changes afoot, says Schultz Angel. “I think we’re in a position in the museum industry where we haven’t been before. We’ve had ups and downs, an economic recession, and rode them out. We’ve seen waves, issues of pay equity arise, etc. But right now — it’s a different scenario altogether. What we’re questioning post-pandemic is, ‘Are we doing it right?’

Based on everything we know and what we’ve learned, should we be rethinking some of the museum basics?”

“Take field trips, for example,” continues Schultz Angel. “We’ve always done them, but we’re asking again what teachers need. The thing we did five years ago may

not be what they need now. We're asking how to rebuild our products and programs, everything. Just because we've always done it one way doesn't mean it'll work today."

Similarly, Félix sees significant shifts taking place in funding of the cultural world in Chicago. For example, the ways that funders are adjusting their guidelines to emphasize work around DEI or anti-racism has created a conundrum for some of Chicago's diverse cultural groups — but also an opportunity.

"Groups have to say that a program has an explicit DEI focus," says Félix. "The language of cultural organizations is more 'come to our dance festival or language program.' They are celebrating their culture, but they won't necessarily say 'We are doing this to further DEI.' So they're not receiving those funds."

In response, the CCA is developing a strategy to support cultural groups to lead potentially revenue-producing trainings that simultaneously help share the cultural richness of member organizations with audiences. These 'cultural immersion experiences' might happen at a corporate board retreat, for example." Félix says, "The prompt might be, 'What would you like people to know about your culture, neighborhood, community?'"

## Seven Spotlights

Early in the pandemic, Illinois Humanities began a monthly series on its website called "Spotlights" featuring local public humanities leaders. Over the following pages, we present spotlights of seven Illinois Humanities grantee partners who received general operating relief and recovery funding.

This set of seven organizations includes a Black LGBTQ+ film festival that has begun to produce its own work, a rural cultural center celebrating its growing immigrant population, a neighborhood arts-based project housed in a shipping container, a Native-led museum celebrating Indigenous medicine, and more.

Straddling the cities, suburbs, small towns, and rural areas of Illinois, these seven disparate organizations share something powerful: storytelling. And storytelling, particularly in a state as diverse and polarized as Illinois, is a powerful thing, especially when it is based on a commitment to authentic, truthful, and unfettered history. As Jody Kretzmann, co-founder of the Asset-Based Community Development Institute and co-author of one of the most widely used textbooks on community economic development, once commented, "Stories are a community's way of knowing."

## ***Black Alphabet*** ***// Adam McMath***

*Chicago, October 2021*

**Mission:** Black Alphabet's mission is to promote social equity awareness and education in all aspects of life for the Black LGBTQ+ community through the use of media and the arts.

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

### ***"Spotlighting issues of central importance to our community."***

It all began as a conversation among Chicago Black LGBTQ+/same-gender loving (SGL) artist friends about the lack of exposure to films that explore experiences related to their life experiences. Since its establishment in 2013, Black Alphabet (BA) has annually presented the Black Alphabet Film Festival (BAFF), featuring films, shorts, web series, and documentaries, accompanied by interactive sessions with filmmakers, directors, producers, actors, and community leaders. In addition to the festival, BA provides health and wellness events in partnership with the Chicago Department of Public Health, the AIDS Health Foundation Chicago chapter, and other local health clinics and advocacy groups. All of this is led by a small cohort of volunteers.

When the pandemic hit, BA had to cancel 11 revenue-producing events — in fact, total losses for the first year tallied more than \$33,000. Several long-time supporters reallocated resources to support workers on the





Photo: Adam McMath

front lines of the fight against COVID-19. In addition, BA had to incur \$4,000 in software and tech expenses as they pivoted to hosting virtual events.

However, despite these losses, BA was able to raise money from new funders. It also pivoted programmatically during the pandemic in creative ways. “In spite of the challenges,” says Executive Director Adam McMath, “Black Alphabet expanded our programming from offering film screenings to actually producing films by or featuring Black LGBTQ+/SGL filmmakers and characters, thereby spotlighting issues of central importance to our community.”

The first film, *Surviving Isolation: Being Black and LGBTQ+ During COVID-19*,

was produced in 2021. And Black Alphabet has plans to produce more.

Why does McMath, whose background is in filmmaking and nonprofit marketing, believe that the arts, culture, and the humanities are important? “I look at the arts/culture/humanities holistically,” says McMath. “They give us knowledge of our past and a glimpse at where we are going as a culture and society. Much of our history, particularly as African Americans, is passed down through storytelling and interpreted through other art forms, such as painting.”

Black Alphabet was one of 25 media-based grantee partners who received funding in 2021. While the bulk of these grantee partners are located in Chicago,

they also include a Cicero-based Spanish-language news weekly (*Cicero Independiente*), a Central Illinois radio station focused on serving people with visual disabilities (Minds Eye Radio), an Urbana-based community media center (Urbana Champaign Independent Media Center), and a regional online magazine that covers alternative arts and culture (*Sixty Inches from Center*). Each is fiercely committed to its community and to unique, independent, and relevant stories. BA is one of 95 (or nearly 40%) of 2021 grantee partners with BIPOC leadership.<sup>3</sup>

As expressed by McMath, “We are the only annual Black LGBTQ+ film festival in the country, which is in and of itself historic.”



Photo: Mónica Félix

## **Chicago Cultural Alliance //** **Mónica Félix**

*Chicago, July 2022*

**Mission:** The Chicago Cultural Alliance's mission is to connect, promote, and support centers of cultural heritage for a more inclusive Chicago.

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

### ***"Building an Integrated Civic Fabric"***

Founded in 2008, the Chicago Cultural Alliance (CCA) is an active consortium of more than 40 Chicago-area cultural heritage museums, centers, and historical societies. Collectively, they span 23 neighborhoods and 11 suburbs in the Chicago area and represent more than 30 different cultures from around the world. CCA envisions a

city where all communities have a voice, and cross-cultural dialogue and collaboration are an integral part of Chicago's civic fabric.

This last part is fundamental, says CCA Executive Director Mónica Félix. "In a city like Chicago, we see people from dozens of cultures and from all walks of life converging and interacting. The outcomes of those interactions can depend heavily on finding intersections between cultures and fostering enhanced cultural competence."

CAA was initially sparked when the Field Museum's Cultural Connections program linked 20 culturally-specific organizations to develop a framework for collaboration. Today the organization provides large-scale collaborative programming showcasing members' work and missions, shared services, professional development opportunities, and promotion of cultural events and exhibits across the city. It hosts the Activating Heritage Conference & Workshop series, a curriculum incubator, and the Journey Chicago flagship public program series which takes place every fall.

But in 2020 and the beginning of 2021, the Alliance canceled all public-facing events, including World Dumpling Fest, due to lack of funding, and postponed the Alliance's

largest revenue generator, the Annual MOSAIC Gala. And yet, like many others, CCA found a way to pivot. It created two new fundraisers to address the nearly \$80,000 loss: Taste from Home, a storytelling and recipe-sharing online event, and Cultural Connections, a podcast. CCA also initiated Journey Chicago to feature in-person events in various neighborhoods around the city, including Bronzeville, Uptown, and Humboldt Park. This reconfiguration is meant to stimulate travel across neighborhoods, increasing cross-cultural understanding and uplifting local economic business after the negative effects of the pandemic on community engagement.

"Chicago is something of a microcosm," Félix continues. "If we can create cross-cultural understanding and collaboration here, then perhaps this work can be a model for other cities as well."

The CCA is just one of several alliances and consortia to apply for and receive funding in 2021 (another is the Chicago Collections Consortium). Additionally, 14 Alliance members received funding through Illinois Humanities in 2021. The impact of these collectives can't be overstated; members share challenges and innovations, collaborate on programming, and much more.





Photo: Erin Eveland

## ***The HUB Arts and Cultural Center // Erin Eveland***

*Rushville, March 2022*

**Mission:** The HUB Arts & Cultural Center’s mission is to create and maintain a connection between the arts, rural culture, and our local communities through exhibitions and educational experiences.

[thehubart.com](http://thehubart.com)

### ***“Surviving In A ‘No-Man’s Land’ of Grants”***

Located in Rushville, Illinois, an hour east of Quincy, The HUB Arts & Cultural Center was founded in 2015 initially “as a pipe dream,” says Founder and Executive Director Erin Eveland.

A former art teacher who wanted to galvanize support for the arts in rural Schuyler County, Eveland has survived in what she describes as a “no-man’s land of grants,” and

despite launching The HUB with no nonprofit experience.

The HUB’s mainstay programs include Camp Wannamakeit, an arts camp for students in kindergarten through fourth grade; Community Band, a 30-member band for anyone 13 years old and up; and Farmer’s Market/Art on the Square, a program on Fridays in July that focuses on local produce, the history of the town square, and the plants grown in the square.

Over the span of the pandemic, The HUB gallery audiences have fallen from 700 annual visitors on average to below 300 in 2020, followed by a rise to 550 in 2021. Fundraising, likewise, has been unsteady: in 2020 it was down 86% due to the pandemic, followed by a slight uptick in 2021 and 2022.

The HUB provides provocative programming, such as the 2019 exhibit, Arts Kuba, which highlighted connections with Rushville’s growing African immigrant population. In response to the pandemic, The HUB invited area high school

students to write and produce a storytelling performance piece, **“Losing Normal,”** about their experiences during the pandemic and how it affected their lives.

The project, carried out in partnership with area teachers Becky Jones and Tonya Woods, led to powerful community performances.

“I’m not sure the long-term impact COVID-19 will have on our programs,” says Eveland. “The main thing the pandemic has taught me is that we can try to predict and plan, but ultimately we need to be flexible and adjust to the circumstances we are dealt.”

The HUB is one of 122 (out of 254 total) 2021 ARP grantees that self-identified as being located in rural communities. Illinois Humanities’ effort to support rural humanities represents an intentional response to statistics such as these: 91% of the most disadvantaged communities in the U.S. are rural, and while rural areas contain 20% of the U.S. population, only 7% from the top 1,200 major philanthropies goes to rural areas.<sup>4</sup>





Photo: Jonathan Kelley and Chelsea Ridley

## **Lawndale Pop-Up Spot // Jonathan Kelley**

*Chicago, November 2021*

**Mission:** The Lawndale Pop-Up Spot is an innovative initiative to connect history, culture, and nature — and to be a part of the great efforts taking place in North Lawndale. It is a place for community-oriented exhibitions, installations, and education.

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

### ***“Being in Community.”***

Imagine a gorgeous Sunday on North Lawndale’s historic

boulevard, the green area right at Central Park Avenue and Douglas Boulevard. There is music emanating from an outdoor stage next to Stone Temple Baptist Church, the delicious aroma of Haitian food, a display on neighborhood history, another on architectural design, a plant sale, and families everywhere. And in a garden across the median, a shipping container. This is where Lawndale Pop-Up Spot’s (LPUS) neighborhood museum is housed, and this array of activities involving more than a dozen partnering organizations is quintessential LPUS programming, part of a

series called Sundays on the Boulevard.

The Pop-Up Spot, the brainchild of then-University of Illinois Chicago Museum Studies graduate students Jonathan Kelley and Chelsea Ridley, was founded in 2019 shortly before the pandemic set in. “[The pandemic] gave us the feeling we were playing catch-up from the start,” says Kelley.

“Our main thing is to have exhibits — and all of our exhibits are collaborations with multiple stakeholders,” says Kelley. He explains the importance of ‘being in community,’ which in part



means working closely with the North Lawndale Community Coordinating Council. But the partnerships are many; when the building that LPUS was slated to work in was demolished, Kelley and Ridley came up with the idea of using a shipping container instead for the community museum. It was Lawndale resident and “community presence” Annamaria Leon who, within ten minutes, found a location for the container. “She is sort of our angel,” says Kelley.

Lawndale Pop-Up Spot’s early plans were derailed by the pandemic: they were planning

a first-ever fundraiser for March 2020. This, of course, was canceled. “Our fiscal sponsor and potential landlord was hit hard,” Kelley says. “But this forced us to think about outdoor programming, hence we did Lawndale: A Living History, and Sundays on the Boulevard, initially called Wellness Sundays.”

In addition to pivoting to outdoor programming, LPUS has been able to secure funding from new sources, such as The City of Chicago

Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) and the Steans Family Foundation.

How did Kelley end up so passionate about exhibitions in the first place? “I got interested in museums because they provided a creative and experiential form of learning and include sharing history, art, ideas, and perspectives,” says Kelley.

“I think it is nearly impossible to imagine life without these things, which is sort of the definition of essential.”







Photo: Lynne Chambers

## ***Legacy Training, Inc. // Lynne Chambers, Ammiel Russell, Kyonte Holder***

*Grand Chain, September 2022*

**Mission:** Legacy’s mission is to expand the arts and promote health in underserved communities.

[legacytraininginc.com](http://legacytraininginc.com)

### ***“The Humanities Are All About Building Genuine Community.”***

Legacy Training, Inc., founded in 2009 in Grand Chain, Illinois, represents the vision of a then husband-and-wife team. An artist and an attorney, it is perhaps no surprise that theirs was a rich, multi-disciplinary vision, straddling the humanities along with justice, liberation, and health.

As Lynne Chambers, founder and executive director, puts it,



Photo: Ammiel Russell

“We incorporated with the goal of alleviating poverty of the mind, body, and spirit.”

Legacy’s three leading programs are its Artist Collective on Race, Equity, and Unity, a series of performances and “healing conversations,” Communities of Color and the Police, a project designed to listen and report the voices of communities of color and police and their perceptions of one another; and Our Lives, Our Stories, a one-day African American Women’s Health Conference.

The pandemic hit Legacy hard. When fundraising seemed untenable, the board even considered dissolving the organization. It lost a staff member and had to cancel an annual cultural excursion which also served as a revenue generator. However, Legacy was able to pivot and hire a program coordinator. In turn, this new staff member helped lead the Healing Southern

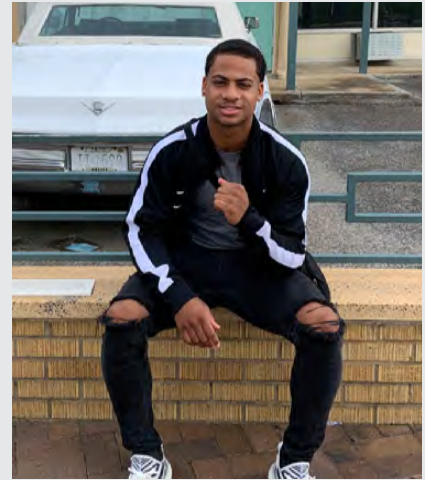


Photo: Kyonte Holder

Illinois Tour. In addition, by working with a grants consultant, Legacy was able to identify a new funder.

“One of my favorite quotes, which is attributed to Maya Angelou, is ‘When we know better, we do better,’” says Chambers. “I know in my life education has been my salvation. I had every odd against me to be a failure. Any success I’ve achieved has been due to learning, whether formal education or listening to my very wise mother. And that’s the power of the humanities — the human connections not just from books and the academy, but listening to one another. The humanities are all about that — building genuine community.”

One thing that Legacy represents is the growing diversity of rural America. As of 2020, 25% of rural residents are BIPOC, a quickly growing segment of the rural population.<sup>1</sup>



Photo: Kim Vigue

## ***Mitchell Museum of the American Indian // Kim Vigue***

*Evanston, May 2022*

**Mission:** The mission of the Mitchell Museum is to promote and share a deeper understanding of Indigenous people's histories, cultures, traditions, and contributions, both past and present.

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

***"The Arts Have Always Been an Integral Part of Every Aspect of Our Lives."***

For Native communities, says Mitchell Museum of the American Indian Executive Director Kim Vigue, "the arts have always been an integral part of every aspect of our lives and interwoven in our culture, spirituality, language, and traditional practices."

Vigue led a career in federal service in Washington, D.C.

before joining the Evanston-based museum. "For nearly 20 years, I worked with several federal agencies and organizations serving Native communities on public health and education issues, primarily in behavioral health." She ran her own public relations firm advising government agencies' and organizations' on cultural competency, outreach, and engagement with Native communities. Mitchell became a client, and Kim loved the mission and working with the staff and board. In October 2021 she was offered the position of Executive Director.

In 2020, Mitchell lost approximately 80% of anticipated revenue. The pandemic impacted Mitchell's school tours, which before the pandemic represented half the annual visitors to the museum and a significant portion of earned revenue. But Mitchell has also been able to add supporters, including the Evanston Arts Council, the Evanston Community Foundation, and the Landau Family Foundation.

During the pandemic, Mitchell also improved the quality of its virtual programming, hosting artist talks and virtually screening films such as *Mankiller*. It put its gift shop online. Additionally, Mitchell has grown its partnerships with local and national Native groups alike.

In collaboration with Northwestern University's ethnobotanist and anthropologist Dr. Eli Suzukovich, Mitchell planted an Indigenous Medicine Garden on its grounds last summer. In 2022, the Museum also cleared a major milestone when its staff and board became majority-Native for the first time in its 45-year history.

Reclaiming Native Truth's 2018 research report showed that when audiences were presented with facts about the systemic oppression of Native Americans, they were significantly more likely to support current Native issues.<sup>5</sup> Vigue continues, "By infusing these findings into our programming, we hope to better shine light on a more comprehensive Native American history and contemporary culture, as well as the diversity amongst Native peoples."

While the Chicagoland area has one of the country's largest urban Native populations and was the ancestral home to dozens of tribes, Illinois does not have any federally recognized tribes or reservations today.<sup>6</sup> Other Native-focused grantee partners from the 2021 pool include the American Indian Association of Illinois, the American Indian Center, and the Midwest SOARRING Foundation.



Photo: Vanessa Harris

## **Strategy for Access Foundation //** **Vanessa Harris**

*Chicago, November 2022*

**Mission:** The mission of Strategy for Access Foundation is to create an understanding that people with disabilities contribute to the global community in numerous ways and are assets to our society.

[fun4thedisabled.com/about](https://fun4thedisabled.com/about)

### ***“The Arts Help Keep Me Relaxed, Happy, Healthy, and Sane.”***

Vanessa Harris had retired from engineering and was getting her Ph.D. when she had an epiphany — in part a response to how expensive grad school was — she realized she wanted to try something different.

That is when Harris took a documentary class.

Her first documentary was on inclusive art. “I talked to the artist, and she said ‘You’re really good. You should do more.’ And that was more than 100 videos ago now!”

“The arts help keep me relaxed, happy, healthy, and sane,” Harris explains. “They allow me to use my right brain.... Everybody has to have some experience with the arts in order to help balance themselves out.”

Founded in 2019, the Strategy for Access Foundation (SAF), also known as Fun4theDisabled, makes videos for the disabled community and other media about disability justice. One video included an interview with Judy Heumann, who was featured in the documentary *Crip Camp* and was

instrumental in creating the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Another focused on the challenges that people who use a wheelchair face in purchasing a car. Another offered a series on children’s books.

During the pandemic, Harris realized that people with disabilities had information needs that were simply unmet. In 2022, SAF focused on creating videos in its problem-solving series as well as two videos commissioned by the Statewide Independent Living Council of Illinois; added 16 books to its popular children’s book series, including on disability advocacy, racial justice, and gender issues; and launched a Fitness with Friends video series.

“We believe that people with disabilities have just as much to offer if not more than able-bodied people,” says Harris.

“They should have just as much fun — if not more fun — and that’s why the Foundation also goes by the name Fun4theDisabled.”

“What sets us apart from other organizations serving the disabled is our awareness and support for intersecting identities,” Harris says. “Disability does not exist in isolation from other marginalized communities, and our videos honor racial and cultural differences.”



## Conclusion

What might the cultural sector look like if fully resourced at an appropriate level? There could certainly be information-sharing and partnering across diverse communities. By partnering with other sectors, such as technology and media as well as larger institutions such as university departments and downtown museums, the sector might receive the recognition that is clearly becoming warranted. In turn, they could be invited to the table when economic development, access to broadband, and other impactful issues are discussed.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Tara Betts, "Illinois Bicentennial Poem" (Chicago, IL: Candor Arts and Illinois Humanities, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Refer to "Data and Methodology" on pages 43-58; leadership statistics based on 236 of 254 grantee organizations in 2021 with Executive Directors.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Chris Carlson and Joelle Cook, *Rural America: Philanthropy's Misunderstood Opportunity for Impact* (Boston, MA: Foundation Strategy Group, 2021), 3. <https://www.fsg.org/resource/rural-america-opportunities-for-philanthropic-partnerships/>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Reclaiming Native Truth, *Research Findings: Compilation of All Research* (Reclaiming Native Truth, 2018), 28.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Hautzinger, "We're Still Here: Native Americans in Chicago," *WTTW*, November 8, 2018, <https://interactive.wttw.com/play-list/2018/11/08/native-americans-chicago>.





## CHAPTER 3

# Humanities Across Illinois: Connecting, Healing, Energizing, Bridging

*By Karen Girolami Callam*

“[B]y gathering to share our stories, we can heal, begin to cross a divide, and spark conversation among unlikely friends.”

— Art Racial Reconciliation Documentary Project, Southern Illinois<sup>1</sup>



The pandemic and the racial reckoning that unfolded during the summer of 2020 threw familiarity, expectations, and dreams far off balance. There is hardly a need to list the challenges borne by individuals, families, and communities during those pandemic months and years — we experienced it, each in our own way. And many organizations worked to “pivot” in response to community needs.

For our part, Illinois Humanities responded by establishing a “project grant” funding opportunity within our COVID-19 Emergency Relief and Recovery grantmaking which enabled non-traditional humanities organizations to leverage the humanities for special efforts to aid in community recovery and resilience. In Fall 2021, Illinois Humanities awarded the most grant dollars to the greatest number of organizations in its history:

***\$1,412,500  
to 254  
organizations  
in 72 counties.***

While the majority of emergency relief funding was distributed in the form of general operating support, 44 organizations received \$5,000 each for specific projects.

Each project proposed to mitigate pandemic impacts in their community. They did this in ways small and gentle; in ways large and loud.

The resulting group of grantees undertook a panoply of projects, all of which used the humanities to bring people together across a wide spectrum of contexts and modes: Western Illinois teens made short films, neighbors took a literary walk in Waukegan, Chicago’s Austin residents reclaimed a dormant parking garage for street-level photography, Latinx individuals in suburban Chicago shared oral histories. Organizations celebrated Black and Brown LGBTQ+ communities, considered how to transform their economy to include BIPOC and women, celebrated Juneteenth with music and video, and offered driving tours to highlight local Indigenous history.

Each of these projects deserves our full attention in its own right; each in its own way created a community anchor in the face of worry and grief; each provided opportunities for participants to breathe more deeply, gather information, express their humanity, and feel less alone. In this essay, we focus on a handful of projects to surface some of the ways non-traditional humanities organizations leveraged the

power of the public humanities to help people sing, talk, write, draw, taste, hear, and experience precious moments — together.

### **Projects Created Ways to Connect and Heal**

Clare is a young person who found a compassionate, welcoming space at The Stories We Tell, a two-day testimonial writing workshop organized by the Voices and Faces Project for survivors of gender-based violence and other human rights violations. A trauma-informed literary program that seeks to help survivors of injustice use personal narrative to create political change, “The Stories We Tell” has graduated over 1,200 writers, activists, and advocates. This grant-supported project was particularly relevant for BIPOC communities, the LGBTQ+ community, those impacted by economic injustice, and refugee and immigrant populations disproportionately affected by gender-based violence.

Project leaders say that the essays, opinion pieces, poetry, spoken word, fiction, and creative non-fiction developed during the program call the public to greater compassion and, importantly, social action. Perhaps the most critical impact is on individual participants themselves.



Clare remembers,

***“My time spent with the Voices and Faces community was the first time I truly believed I was not alone in my experience, and that my story could change the way the public sees and responds to gender-based violence. Taking part in this workshop changed my life.”***

Grantee organizations, some with precious few resources in hand, told powerful stories about the need for their projects. True North Artistry, located in Urbana, provides programming to deter drug use, offer mental health support, and provide a safe space for teens. Ashanti Files of My True North Artistry described the importance of the Self Care

Saturday project, a day-long event to teach girls of color the art of slam poetry using the 3 Cs: Connect, Create, and Commit. “This event... is a crucial component in regaining a sense of normalcy for the young people in this community who grieve at the loss of social interaction, are disheartened by the oppression in the world, and more importantly, are grasping for a resource to assist them to continue to fight their daily battles.”

In Belleville, southeast of St. Louis, the Center for Racial Harmony sponsored the Racial Harmony Peace Festival to address community building through music and gathering. This festival included food from local vendors, mentorship of local school groups in their artistic endeavors, and financial support to local artists.

### **Projects Energized Communities**

During the pandemic, life moved outside: restaurants burst onto sidewalks, families found safety at park picnic tables, and neighbors rediscovered front porches and block meetups. When festivals and other in-person festivities were emptied from calendars, many community institutions chose to innovate. When we were thwarted by life being postponed or canceled,

a gathering or performance in the company of others could renew our spirits and energize a sense of civic pride.

The Westside Story Walk project, a partnership of Front Porch Arts Center and Bethel New Life, reclaimed and celebrated street space in Austin on Chicago’s West Side. Funding supported a street-level photography activation of a parking structure vacant for 19 years. The installation included photos of elders, written stories, and storytelling, giving voice to their experiences. “We are by and for West Side residents,” the staff members of Front Porch explained. “We create spaces for artists and community residents to rewrite our public narratives, building public spaces for community artistic expression, and creating platforms for Westside artists and residents to build community and identity.”

Antonio Ramirez’s Chicagolandia: Oral Histories of Chicago’s Latinx Suburbs documents the lives, work, and culture of Latinx residents in Elgin, Waukegan, Aurora, Joliet, and beyond. Ramirez says, “Doing oral history work among marginalized communities is mostly about being physically present. When someone shares a difficult story, it’s critical for the oral historian to show empathy through verbal



affirmations or a warm gesture. COVID prevented our team from supporting storytellers in this way. For communities with low-tech literacy levels, or who lack access, this meant that too many stories were left unheard. This context prompted us to build a bilingual, user-friendly, multimedia website to make oral histories of Latinx suburbs accessible to a wide audience.”

Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods used project grant funding to organize Our Future: Youth Voices on Climate Justice and Healing in partnership with youth organizations serving students and families hit hardest by food insecurity, unemployment, and disproportionately higher

cases and deaths from COVID. The resulting multidisciplinary art and performance series featured perspectives of young people throughout Lake County. “Elevating youth voices makes our entire community stronger in the recovery process,” says Catherine Game, executive director.

***“We centered the voices of our youth to grow their leadership abilities to speak out about issues they care about.”***

Project grants helped organizations reduce isolation by creating humanistic opportunities to build bridges of understanding. In Roselle, Illinois, Medinah Middle School’s diverse student body was suffering. Unreliable broadband access reduced interactions with peers. Canceled extracurriculars caused emotional strain. The Building Empathy and Strengthening Connections Through Literature project countered this with small group book reading and discussion that helped students connect with one another.

With theaters closed and schools locked, the Illinois Writing Project and Northeastern Illinois University Foundation worked together to create the “Los Consejos” project. They worked with families and community members at Mariano Azuela Elementary School, a Chicago Public School with large Latinx and low-income student populations, to solicit stories during quarantine. These were then shared through student and family writing activities to promote students’ writing skills. Participants engaged with one another through language and tradition.

Groups already focused on youth, like Kuumba Lynx, used the project grant to develop new strategies for reaching

young people. They launched Read Aloud for artists of color from across Chicago. In themed weekly sessions, participants read, discussed, and made art exploring ideas about transformative justice, culture, and social change. “They examined in a collective, interactive, and public manner the societal conditions that make their communities and families so vulnerable to catastrophic public health and economic events such as the pandemic,” said Jaquanda Villegas, co-executive director. “Participants emerged with a better understanding of how their lives, art, and activism are part of larger social movements.”

### Projects Created Ways to Bridge Divides

After the murder of George Floyd renewed national attention on racial inequities,

organizations of all kinds sought meaningful ways to respond.

6018North, an experimental arts and culture group in Chicago’s Edgewater neighborhood, responded with RAISIN, an exhibition complemented by panel discussions, performances, and other events that invited participants to examine themes from the classic play, *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) by Lorraine Hansberry. The series shed light on struggles related to residential segregation within the U.S. and elsewhere in the world.

“During the pandemic, isolated neighbors weren’t able to stop neighborhood gentrification, which pushes out refugees and others that rely on Section 8 housing and Chicago Housing Authority managed apartments,” 6018North Founder and

Artistic Director Tricia Van Eck shared. “RAISIN brought people together to talk about what the changing nature of the neighborhood means for people living here, as well as discussing diversity, belonging, housing rights, and power.”

The Calumet Collaborative catalyzes innovative partnerships between Illinois and northwestern Indiana community, government, business, and nonprofit stakeholders to advance a thriving Calumet region through sustainable development. Their project grant supported Calumet Conversations: Historic Outsider Economies/ Just Economic Futures. These community convenings considered historical economic practices in the steel and shipping industries that exclude women and racial groups, and imagined transformed economies that benefit all people.

Peoria’s quarter-century-old choral Heritage Ensemble used a project grant to create a recording and documentary of Glenn Burleigh’s *Alpha Mass: A Kingdom Celebration*. Burleigh, an African American composer and classically trained pianist, combined classical music with spirituals, gospel, blues, and jazz, weaving myriad styles to create an inspirational piece designed to bring diverse races together. His strong personal





faith and his love of community are evident in the compositions. LaCollis Reed, the Ensemble's general manager, shared, "While the Ensemble performs music by African Americans, we perform with an emphasis and conviction that this is America's music."

Nearby, The Peoria Art Guild, founded nearly 150 years ago in 1878, was at sea with the onset of the pandemic, untethered from its usual programming and revenue sources. Their Understanding Arts and Culture Around the World project offered a series of programs to sustain artists and break through pandemic isolation for attendees. Programs emphasized diversity to help individuals understand the traditions and cultures of other countries and races while offering the history and traditions of the Peoria region.

The National Indo-American Museum is dedicated to preserving and sharing the diverse heritage, experiences, and contributions of America's nearly five million Indian Americans as an integral part of America's national narrative. It is the first institution of its kind in the country, dedicated to documenting, preserving, and sharing the full spectrum of linguistic, religious, socio-economic, and regional diversity of Indian Americans. COVID threatened the reach of

*E/merge: Art and Identity of the Indian Diaspora*, the first exhibition of Indian American art presented by an Indian American museum. But they proceeded, committed to bringing to fruition an exhibition dedicated to creating and enabling belonging. In an essay for the exhibition's catalog, Shaurya Kumar, chair of faculty and associate professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, wrote, "Works in the exhibition... [investigate] the notions of origins, narratives of dispersal, and cultural differences under the conditions of globalism. Where do we, as members of the Indian diaspora in the U.S. and elsewhere, locate ourselves in a time of globalization and mass migration?"

### **Grantees Point the Way Forward**

If our state is committed not only to equitable relief and recovery from this pandemic, but also to resilience from future challenges and more livable, just, and fruitful lives for all who reside here, then we must pay attention to these creative endeavors dreamt and realized by communities. Mark Hallett, Illinois Humanities' director of grants programs, believes these endeavors are not just useful for addressing the present — he believes that we need to ask how they can

cultivate a better future for us all:

***The picture that emerges...is of a diverse and dynamic sector, committed to sharing truthful and unfettered histories, creative storytelling, respectful and actively inclusive dialogues, and addressing inequities.***

It is clear that they inspire the joy that lifelong learning brings with it — but is it a stretch to imagine that they can also help address the next pandemic, economic slowdown, urban disinvestment, or rural depopulation? What about climate change? Doesn't the commitment by these groups to understanding shared humanity allow us to imagine solutions we wouldn't otherwise?

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### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> A Gift of Love Charity, Inc., Illinois Humanities 2021 Project Grant Application.

## CHAPTER 4

# Stories the Numbers Tell

*By Gabrielle H. Lyon and Martin Matsuyuki Krause*

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“The knowledge that we had some relief funds coming gave us the ability to move out of survival mode... We were able to focus on what our community needed and how we could best serve them.”

— Erin Eveland, Executive Director, The HUB Arts and Cultural Center<sup>1</sup>



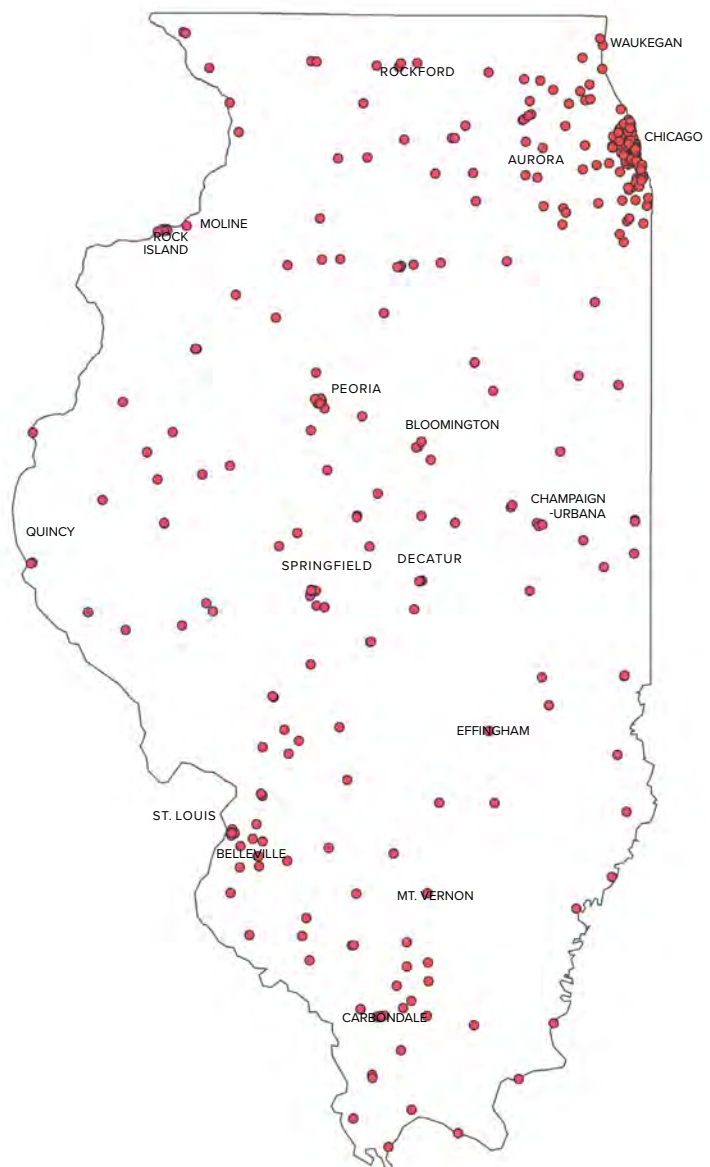
According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, the federal government provided about \$4.6 trillion to help the nation respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>2</sup> Among those funds were dollars made available to Illinois Humanities from the National Endowment for the Humanities through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act in 2020 and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act in 2021.

From 2020 to 2022, Illinois Humanities awarded \$2,352,500 in relief and recovery dollars through five grant cycles with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities and supplemental aid from state funds and private donors. Relief funds, in no uncertain terms, brought actual relief. By staying open and innovating, humanities organizations played critical roles in community members' lives, not only through timely and culturally responsive programming but also by stretching to meet the basic needs of their communities, including providing food and personal protective equipment (PPE).

Prior to the sheer volume of emergency grants distributed in response to COVID-19 — which dramatically increased the number of grantee partners Illinois Humanities was able to support — we would have been hard-pressed to describe the state's landscape of community-based public humanities organizations in an evidence-based, contextually-informed way. The urgency and volume of requests led us to a deeper understanding of organizations' needs and contexts. As we began collecting data on community needs and demographics of organizational leadership and populations served, we weighted our funding priorities to ensure that we reached organizations historically less likely to receive traditional funding due to systemic barriers, organizational size, or geographic location.

From 2020 through 2022, we significantly deepened our understanding of the roles played by humanities organizations throughout our state. The accounts that emerged amidst the social and

**Figure 1: Illinois Humanities Grantee Partners**



*Across three years, Illinois Humanities distributed 490 grants to 359 unique organizations.*

*Source: Illinois Humanities data.*

economic devastation of the pandemic threw into bold relief ways in which cultural and ethnic museums, literature and literacy organizations, history centers, community media organizations, libraries and archives, and artist and writer collectives were sustaining their communities.



**Figure 2: Grants by Location**

Location	Population (2020 est.)	Applica- -tions	Funded	Percent funded	Funds awarded	% Funds awarded	Funds per resident
Cook County	5,275,541	666	200	30.0%	\$1,033,000	43.9%	20¢
Outside Cook County	7,536,967	678	290	42.8%	\$1,319,500	56.1%	18¢
Total	12,812,508	1,344	490	36.5%	\$2,352,500	100%	18¢

Sources: US Census Bureau 2020, Illinois Humanities data.

Chapters 2 and 3 of this report paint a picture grounded in stories. In this chapter, we aggregate grantee data and contextualize it against social, demographic, economic, and health factors to bring additional detail and meaning to our understanding of why the humanities matter in Illinois.

## Summary of Impact

This chapter is intended to answer the following questions:

1. *Where* were relief and recovery dollars distributed?
2. *Who* are the grantees and how has COVID-19 impacted their ability to operate?
3. *What* are the contexts in which these organizations are operating?

From 2020 to 2022, Illinois Humanities awarded \$2,352,500 in 490 relief and recovery grants to 359 unique organizations in 78 of our 102 counties. The funding addressed the ability of the cultural sector, in the most fundamental way, to stay viable. While most grant dollars were for general operating support, we also included funding for project-based grants.

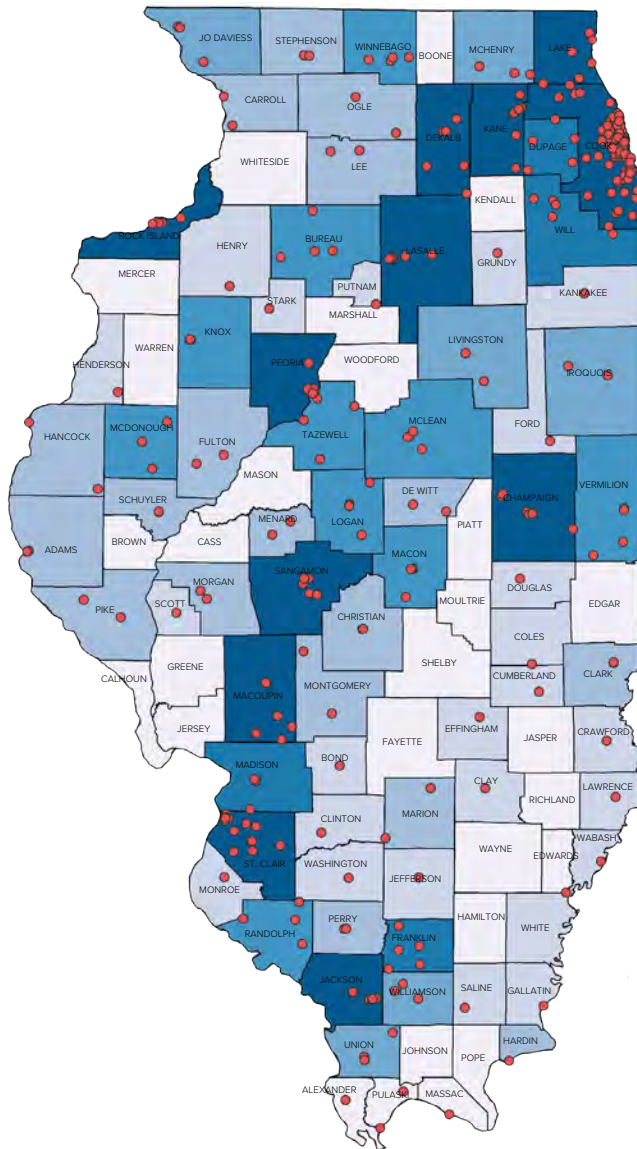
Over three years, grants supported 1,151 unique jobs. However, in the same period, grantee partners lost \$24,320,570 in revenue — more than ten times the total grant dollars distributed by Illinois Humanities.

In terms of mission impact, grantee partners lost 4,173,432 individual interactions due to the impacts of the pandemic. Our data shows the following:

- Grantee partners serve significant numbers of low-income residents, communities of color, and rural and small towns.
- 60% of grantee partners serve communities that were under health and economic duress before the beginning of the pandemic.
- Nearly half of grantee partners operate with annual budgets of less than \$100,000.
- Nearly a quarter of grantee partners provide programming in a zip code with more COVID cases than the statewide average per zip code.
- Two in three grantee partners operate in areas without sufficient access to broadband.
- Though more than 40% of grantee partners were founded in the past two decades, some have been operating for more than 100 years.

## Where Were Relief and Recovery Dollars Distributed?

**Figure 3: Grants by County**



**Number of grantee organizations per county**

0 1 to 2 3 to 4 5 to 9 10+

*Illinois Humanities distributed grants in 78 of 102 Illinois counties. 133 grantee partners (37%) are in Cook County, which is home to 41% of the state's population.*

*Sources: US Census Bureau 2018, Illinois Humanities data.*

Although the funding available was insufficient to meet the full need, Illinois Humanities was committed to ensuring relief dollars reached every corner of the state. Illinois Humanities distributed grants in 78 of 102 Illinois counties and reached every one of Illinois' 17 congressional districts. 133 grantee partners (37.0%) are in Cook County, home to 41.2% of the state's population.<sup>3</sup> Counties with the largest proportions of funds per resident tend to have fewer than 7,000 residents, including Alexander, Hardin, Putnam, Pulaski, Schuyler, Scott, and Stark Counties, all of which received at least \$1.37 per resident compared to \$0.20 per Cook County resident. This allotment is an example of the way in which Illinois Humanities intentionally weighted funding toward less populous areas.

## Who are the Grantee Partners?

### Operational Impact

The vast majority of grantee partners included in this report are deeply embedded in their communities: staff members and volunteers live nearby, and content for exhibits and programming is drawn directly from local histories and current events. Organizations' operational challenges impacted people's day-to-day lives. In terms of being able to deliver on their missions, grantee partners lost 4,173,432 individual interactions due to the impacts of the pandemic — a devastating blow in and of itself. Furthermore, because the pandemic affected organizations' ability to sell tickets, host events and fundraisers, sell advertisements, and receive sponsorships, grantee partners lost an estimated \$24,320,570 in revenue. This amount is more than ten times the total grant dollars distributed by Illinois Humanities. For some, the specter of not ever being able to reopen took a toll psychologically and continues to shadow current operations.

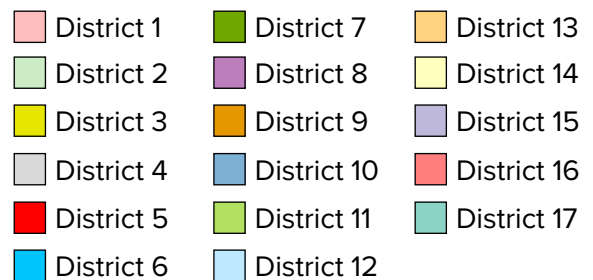
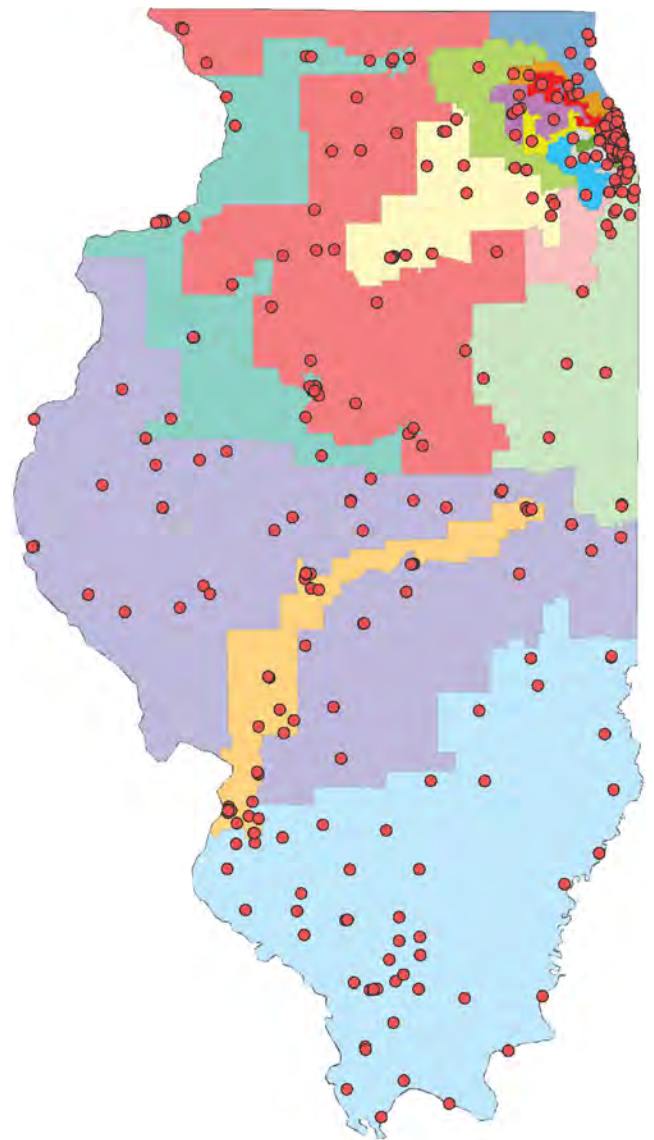
**Figure 4: Organizations by Congressional District**

District	Grantee organizations	Grant funds	% Grant funds
1st	16	\$121,000	5.1%
2nd	23	\$143,500	6.1%
3rd	11	\$72,500	3.1%
4th	12	\$92,500	3.9%
5th	22	\$167,000	7.1%
6th	5	\$27,500	1.2%
7th	41	\$345,500	14.7%
8th	7	\$27,500	1.2%
9th	19	\$136,000	5.8%
10th	6	\$58,500	2.5%
11th	4	\$23,500	1.0%
12th	49	\$272,000	11.6%
13th	40	\$250,000	10.6%
14th	17	\$112,500	4.8%
15th	36	\$203,500	8.7%
16th	21	\$126,000	5.4%
17th	30	\$173,500	7.4%
TOTAL	359	\$2,352,500	100%

*In each congressional district, an average of \$138,382 was distributed to an average of 21 grantee organizations. Each of Illinois' 17 congressional districts received tens of thousands of grant dollars from Illinois Humanities.*

*Sources: US Census Bureau 2018, Illinois Humanities data.*

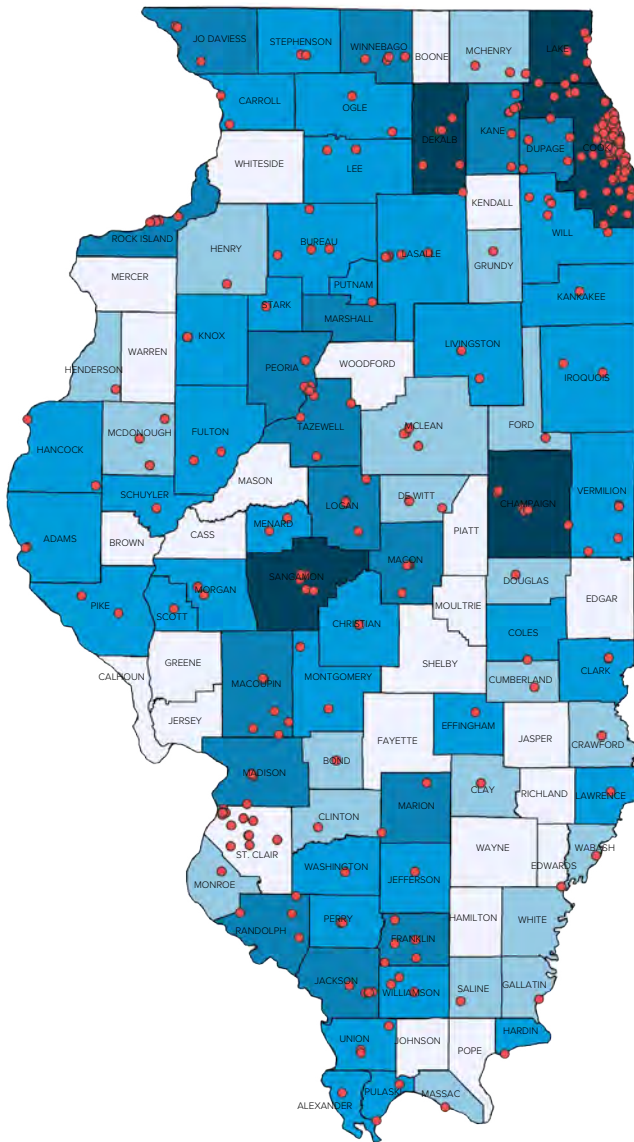
**Figure 5: Organizations by Congressional District**



*Source: Illinois Senate Redistricting Committee, Illinois Humanities data*



**Figure 6: Grant Dollars per County Resident**



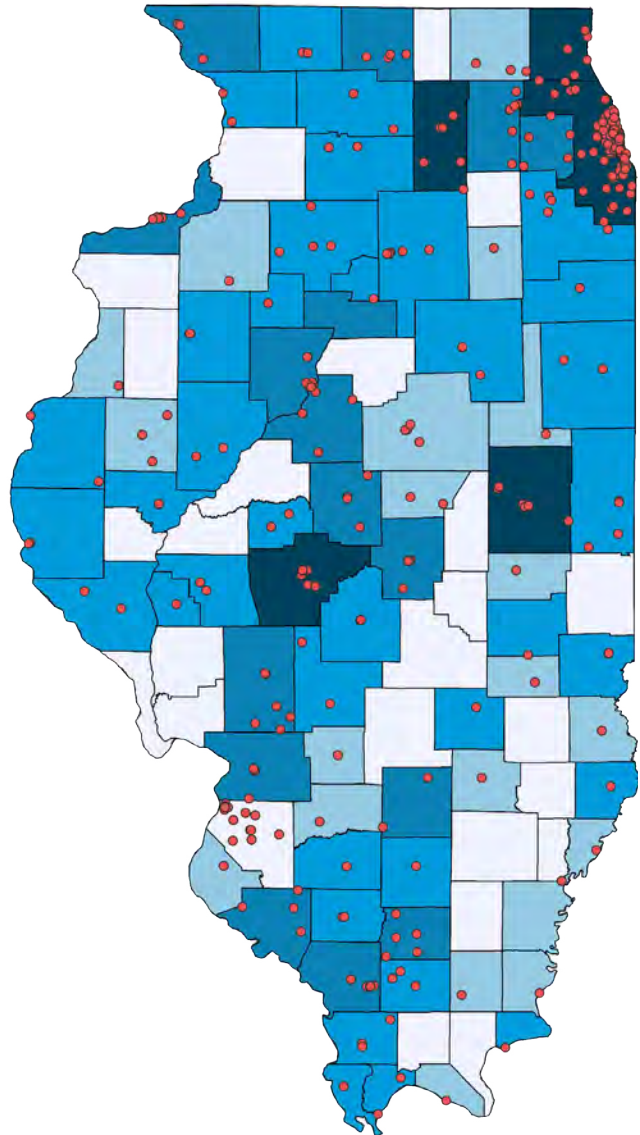
**Number of Organizations  
Grant dollars per county resident**



Counties with the largest proportions of funds per resident tend to have fewer than 7,000 residents — including Alexander, Hardin, Putnam, Pulaski, Schuyler, Scott, and Stark counties, all of which received at least \$1.37 per resident compared to \$0.20 per Cook County resident.

Sources: US Census Bureau 2018, Illinois Humanities data.

**Figure 7: Funds by County**



Illinois Humanities map sources:  
US Census Bureau 2018, Illinois Humanities data.

## Budget Size and Age

To be eligible for relief and recovery grants, an applicant had to be a nonprofit organization with a budget of no more than \$2,000,000 for the 2020 cycle, and no more than \$1,000,000 for the 2021 and 2022 cycles with a mission or project designed to make the humanities accessible. We adjusted the budget ceiling during the time period covered by this report to specifically reach smaller arts and cultural organizations. Even with these budget ceilings, almost half of grantee partners (46.0%; 165/359) have annual budgets under \$100,000, and nearly one in five grantee partners has an annual budget under \$25,000 (18.7%; 67/359). Organizations with budgets of this size operate with few, if any, paid staff, and depend on support from volunteers.

Many grantee organizations were founded in the past two decades (43.5%; 156/359), one in four was founded before 1970 (25.1%; 90/359), and almost one in ten was founded over a century ago (8.6%; 31/359). While organizational age can play a role in terms of digital fluency and access

and use of marketing and social media tools (or lack thereof), on the other hand, long-tenured organizations hold deep knowledge and are often stewards of cultural history.

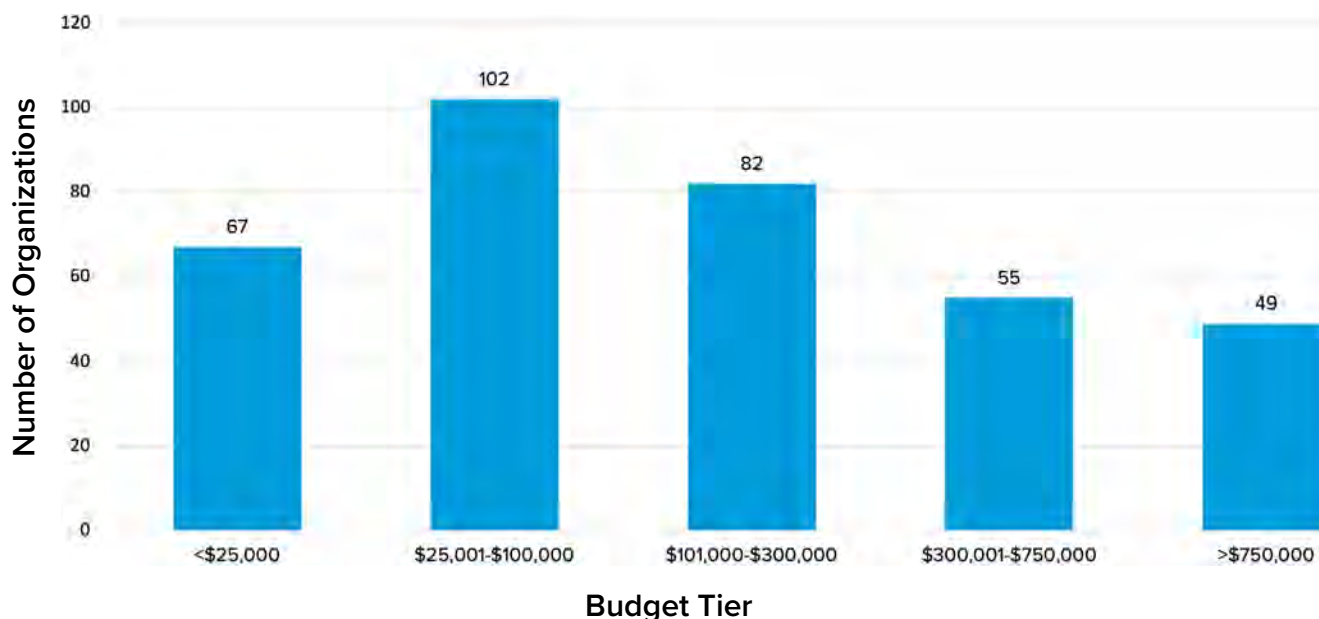
**Figure 8: COVID-19 Impacts**

Impact Type	Number of organizations
Lost revenue	323
Fear of losing space	25
Staff layoff	65
Risk of permanent closure	34
Use of savings or reserves	182

*Organizations were asked to select all of the ways in which COVID-19 has impacted their organizations.*

*Source: Illinois Humanities data*

**Figure 9: Organizations by Budget Size**



## Humanities in Action

History, culture and heritage, arts, and education organizations made up 83.3% of grantee partners (299/359). Within these broad categories, organizations spanned diverse disciplines: Folk Arts and Folklore, Art History, African American/ Black studies, Journalism, American Studies, Film Studies, and more. These public humanities organizations used a variety of media and programmatic modes to activate the humanities and strengthen community civic fabric. They produce oral histories, curate local archives, create virtual historic walking tours, produce documentary films, design digital curricula and teacher resources, and much, much more.

## Audiences Served

Of 2021 grantee partners, 59.1% prioritize serving low-income individuals (150/254) and the same percentage prioritize serving communities of color (150/254). The audience groups served by grantee partners take on added significance when considered in the context of the pandemic, which disproportionately impacted people of

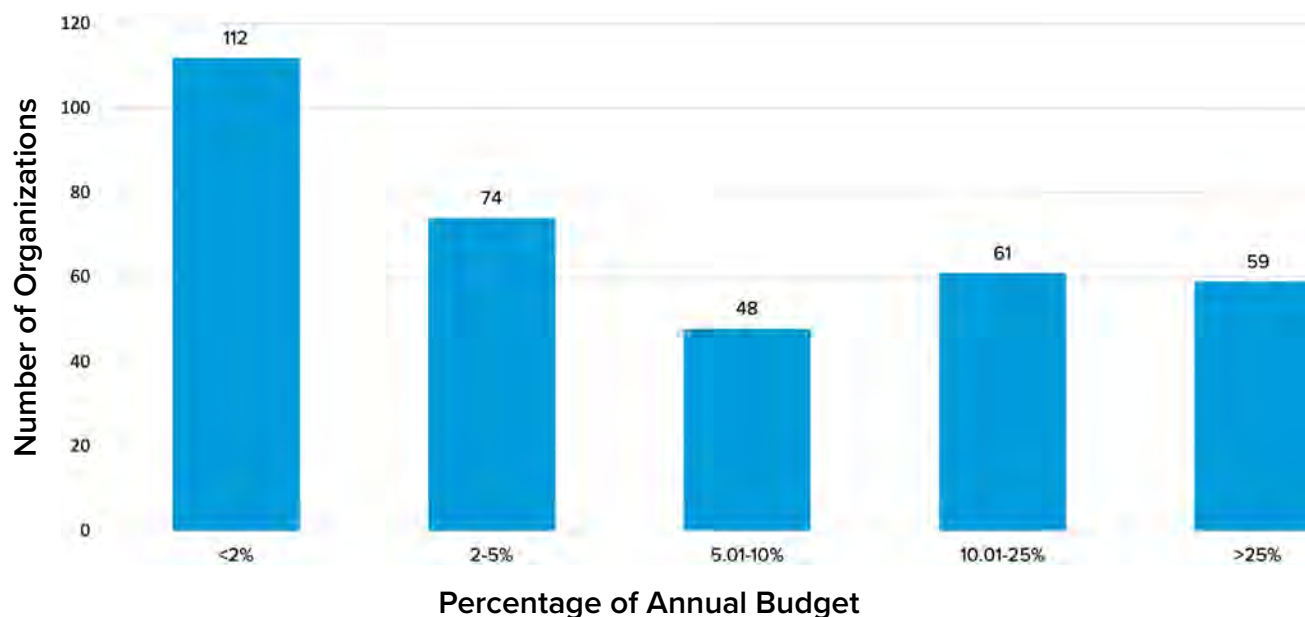
color, people with low incomes, and people without ready and regular access to healthy food or healthcare throughout Illinois.<sup>4,5</sup>

## Diversity

The racial and ethnic diversity of Illinois is increasing. From 2010 to 2018, the total number of white households in Illinois decreased and the number of BIPOC households increased (at a rate of 1% for Black households, 18% for Hispanic households, and 26% for Asian households).<sup>6</sup> Of Illinois' 63 rural counties, the vast majority are becoming more racially diverse.<sup>7</sup> Given changing diversity underway in Illinois, it is notable that 59.1% of 2021 grantee partners serve predominantly BIPOC communities.<sup>8</sup>

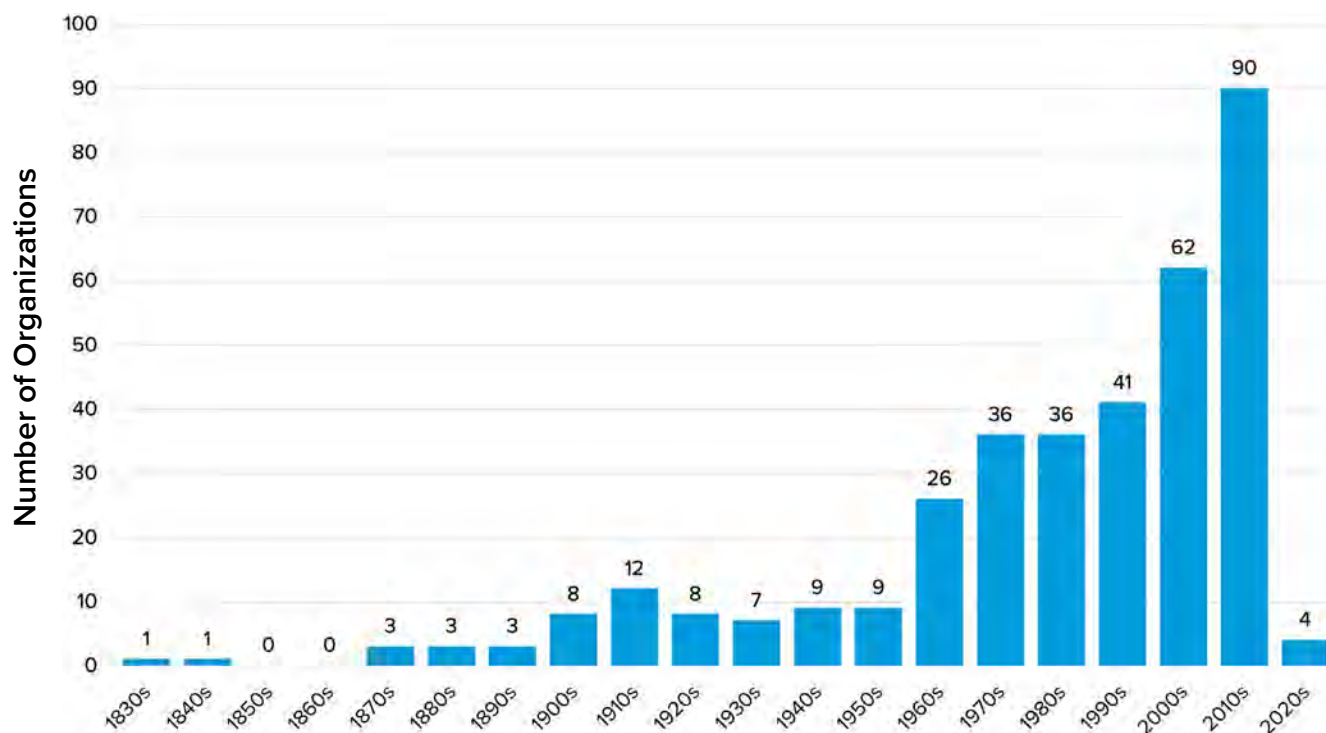
Lack of diversity in staff and leadership is an area of attention for nonprofit organizations, particularly for nonprofits that primarily serve communities of color.<sup>9,10</sup> In 2021, Illinois Humanities funded 254 organizations — 34.3% of these grantee organizations employed at least 50% BIPOC staff.

**Figure 10: Grant Dollars as a Percentage of Budget**

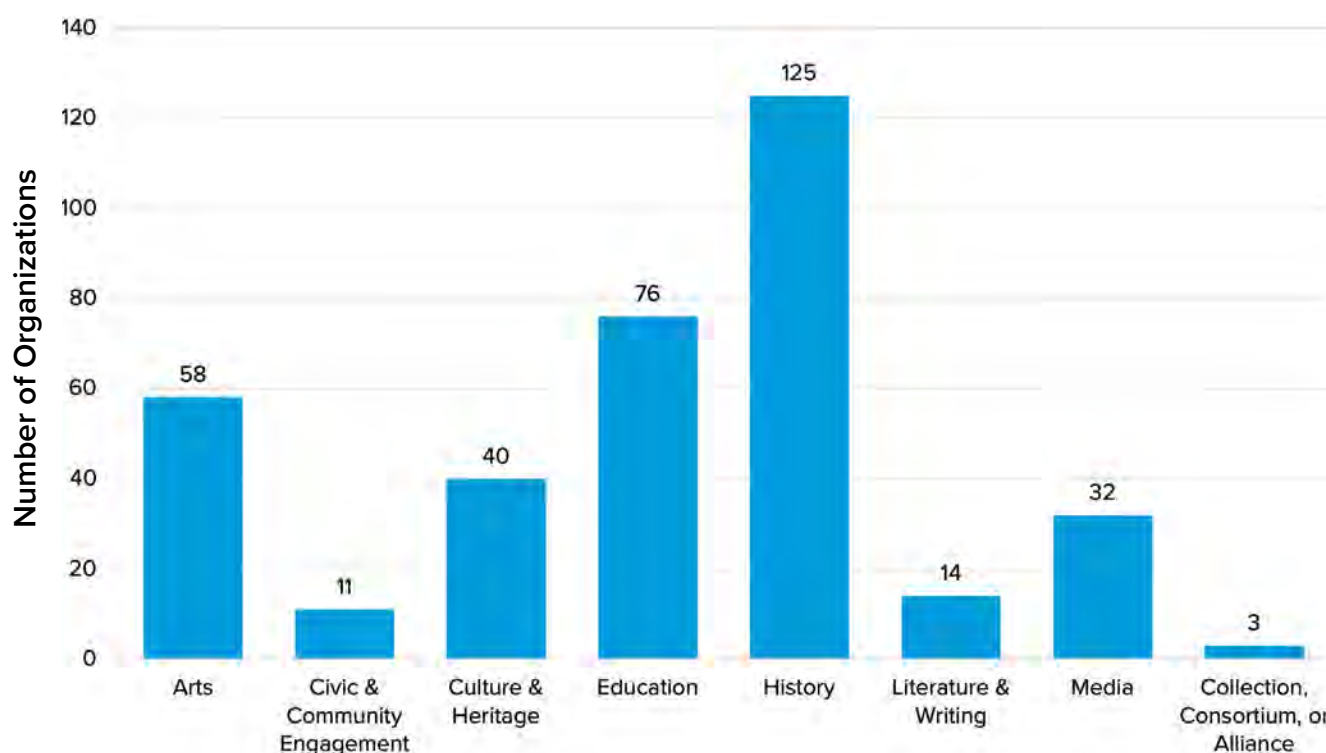




**Figure 11: Organizations by Decade Founded**



**Figure 12: Grantee Partners by Humanities Organization Type**



236 of these organizations have executive directors:

- 37.3% were led by BIPOC individuals
- 74.2% were led by women or people who identify as non-binary or gender queer, and
- 23.7% were led by BIPOC women.

### **What Are the Humanities?**

*The humanities are the examination of what it means to be human through the interpretation and discussion of all forms of thought, interest, and expression. The word “humanities” encompasses formal disciplines such as visual and performing arts, art history, literature, ethnic and gender studies, history, and philosophy. The public humanities harness the traditional humanities to embrace a mode of inquiry and conversation that aims to engage, support, and challenge the ideals, beliefs, tensions, and prejudices of our communities.*

## **What Are the Contexts in Which Grantee Partners Are Operating?**

### **Geography**

Of the funds distributed by Illinois Humanities in relief and recovery grants, 43% (\$1,012,500) was awarded to organizations operating in rural areas. Population density and rurality matter as we consider the critical impact of funding directed to humanities organizations serving small towns and rural communities. According to the USDA, of the 310 counties — 10% of all counties — with “high and persistent poverty,” 86% are rural.<sup>11</sup> According to the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, rural communities in Illinois “are losing population and falling behind urban communities with respect to wages, job growth,

**Figure 13: Top Ten Disciplines of 2021 Grantee Partners**

Category	Number of Organizations
Historical and Cultural	168
American Studies	39
African American or Black Studies	37
Media or Journalism	27
Folk Arts and Folklore	26
Interdisciplinary Studies	23
Communications	23
Art History and Criticism Studies	19
Ethnic Studies	15
Film or Cinema Studies	13

*Organizations were asked to select their top three disciplines from a list of 33 humanities disciplines.*

*Source: Illinois Humanities data.*

workforce development, and poverty.”<sup>12</sup> It is not uncommon to hear grantee partners share reflections that parallel those captured by the magazine *Dissent* in a 2019 special issue focused on rural America: “While some communities are growing and thriving, many rural people talk about interconnectedness challenges that add up to a feeling that their communities are being hollowed out.”<sup>13</sup>

Humanities organizations — as illustrated by the first-hand stories in Chapters 2 and 3 —

are particularly adept at bridging ideas, fostering belonging, and affirming identities. Grantee partners operating in and serving rural communities are of critical importance given the ways stereotypes about rural communities overlook the rich contributions, assets, and social, political, gender, racial and ethnic diversity that these communities bring to the whole state.

### Incidence of COVID-19

As of August 2022, one in four grantee partners (24.2%; 87/359) is in a zip code with more COVID cases than the statewide average per zip code.

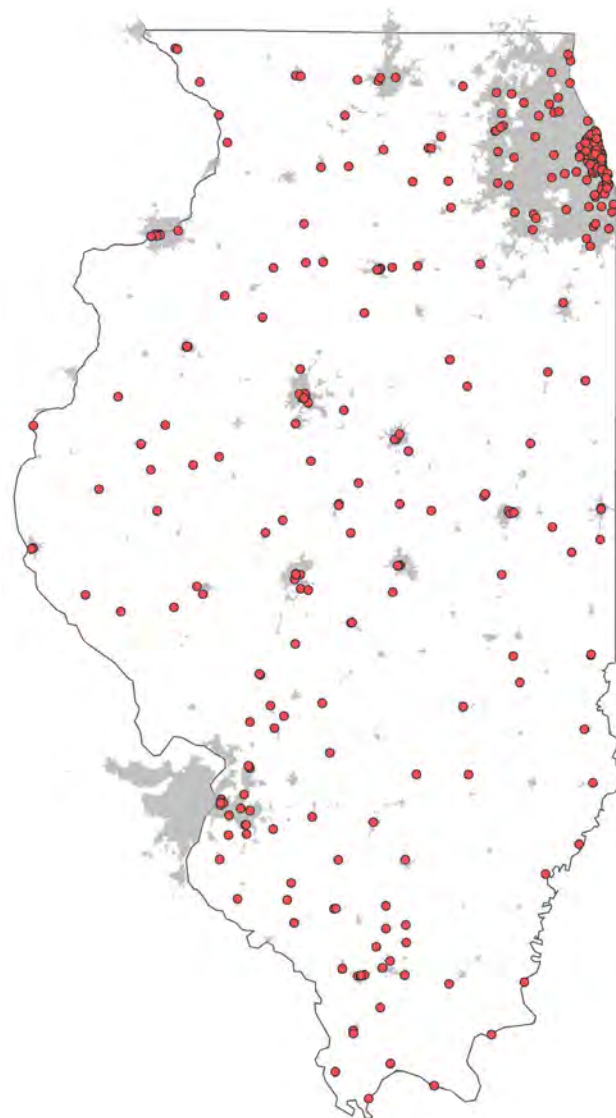
### Economic Well-Being

We chose to map our grantee partners against Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE). This composite indicator represents the number of families who are unable to afford the basics of housing, childcare, food, transportation, health care, and technology.<sup>14</sup>

ALICE households exist in every county in Illinois — urban, suburban, and rural — and include people of all ages genders, races, and ethnicities.<sup>15</sup> Of Illinois' households, 35% fall below the ALICE threshold.<sup>16</sup> Among grantee partners, nearly one in four operate in a zip code where over half of households cannot meet basic needs (23.3%; 84/359).

17.5% of grantee partners are libraries or library districts (63/359). Research has robustly documented the ways in which libraries often serve as vital anchors that bridge gaps in social services for communities experiencing economic duress.

**Figure 14: Organizations and Population Density**



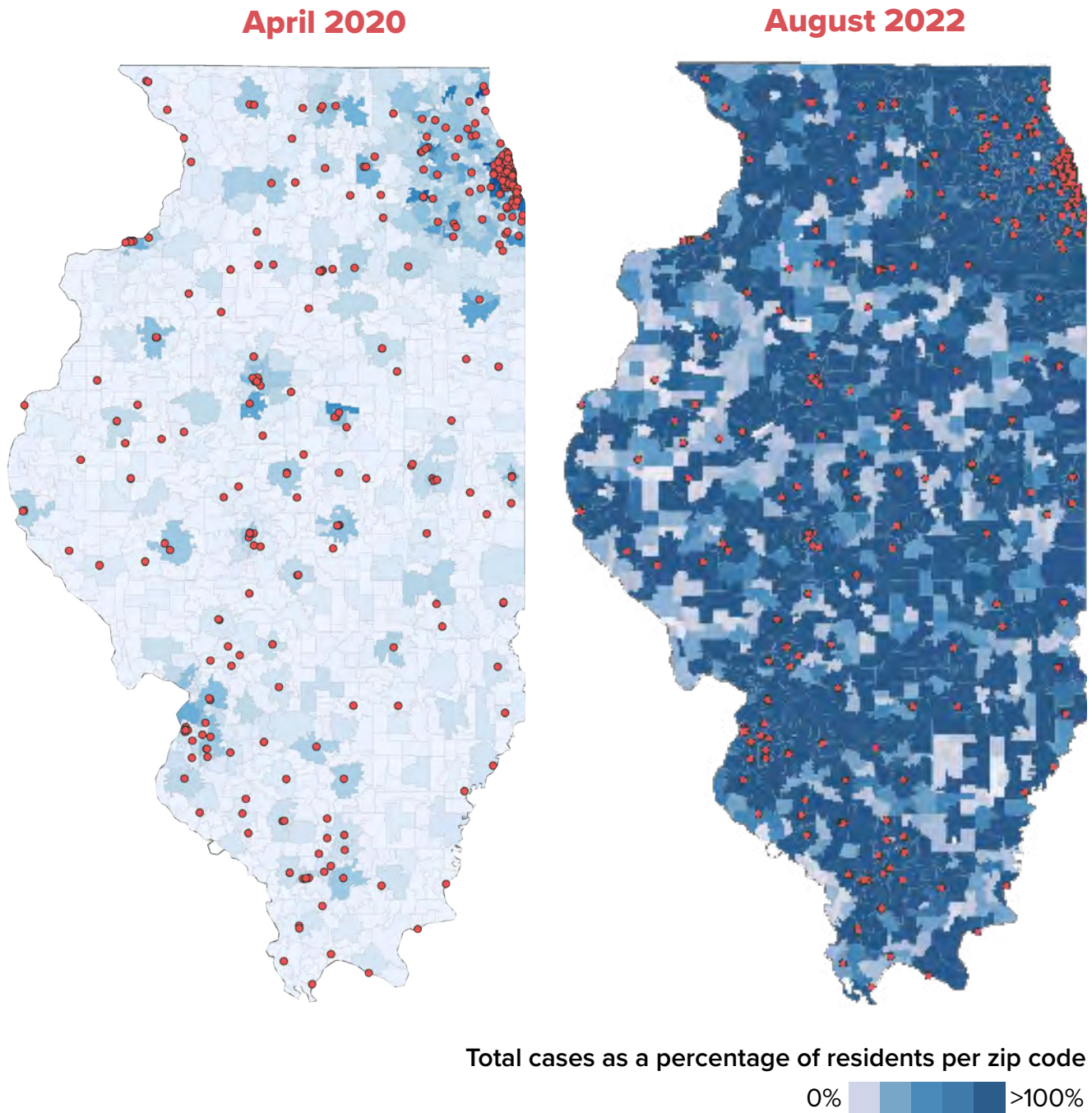
■ Urban areas defined by U.S. Census Bureau

*According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 88.5% of Illinoisans live in urban areas and 11.5% live in rural areas. 48.2% of grantee partners (173 out of 359) operate in rural areas.*

*Sources: US Census Bureau 2019, Illinois Humanities data.*



Figure 15: Organizations and COVID-19 Cases



*As of August 2022, one in four grantee partners (24.2%; 87 out of 359) is located in a zip code with more COVID cases than the statewide average per zip code.*

*Sources: IL Department of Public Health 2021, US Census Bureau 2018, Illinois Humanities data.*

According to United Way of Illinois, “Access to public libraries is especially important for ALICE families because libraries provide information on social services and job opportunities, free internet and computer access, and a range of free programs, community meetings, and even 3-D printers. After a natural disaster, libraries serve as second responders, providing electricity, internet access, charging stations, heat or air conditioning, and current information on recovery efforts. In lower-income communities, libraries provide safe and inclusive place for individuals and families.”<sup>17</sup>

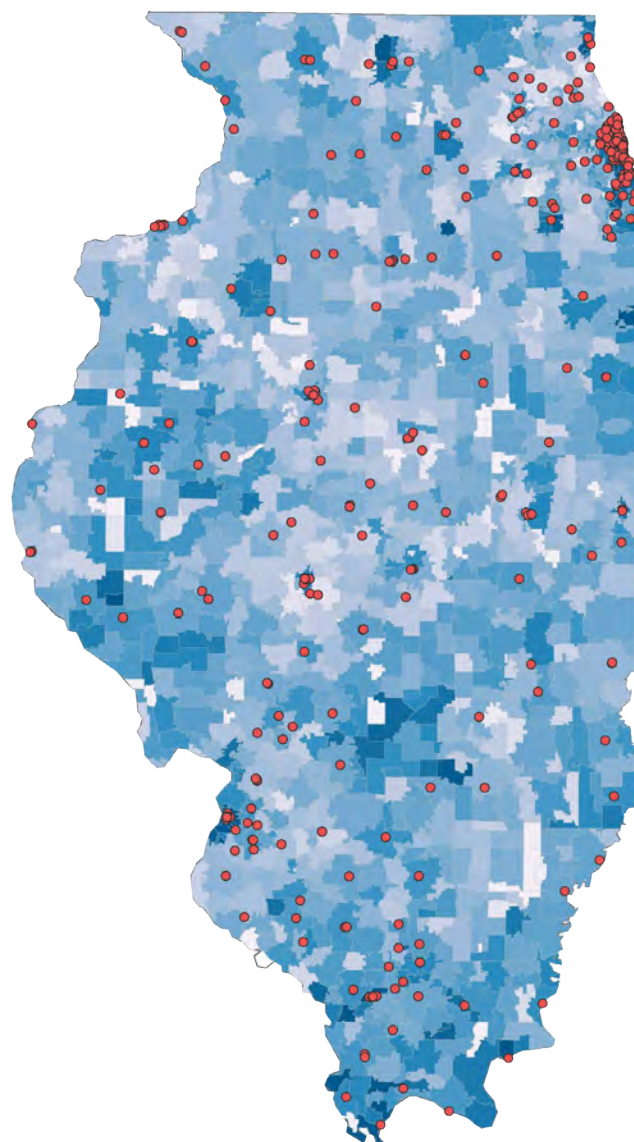
During the pandemic, Illinois’ humanities organizations took on parallel roles, helping to mitigate social isolation, support pandemic response efforts, provide access to information and, in turn, access to opportunities.

### Broadband Access

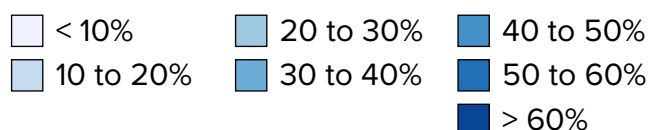
Significant evidence is emerging nationally that online participation became more demographically diverse than pre-COVID in-person attendance.<sup>18</sup> As organizations pivoted to reach audiences during the pandemic, digital resources and virtual programming have proven to be a gamechanger in terms of lowering barriers, reaching demographically diverse participants, and engaging new audiences.

The increase in accessibility, inclusivity, and diversity underscores why access to broadband matters for grantee partners. For organizations working to ensure programs and services are available and accessible, lack of sufficient access to broadband poses a significant additional barrier to their ability to innovate and, in some cases, rebound. Of equal significance, lack of broadband further disenfranchises people who may otherwise have to travel far from home to access the kinds of cultural experiences tied to life-long learning, social well-being, and civic engagement.

**Figure 16: Organizations and Community Poverty Levels**



**Percent of households below the ALICE poverty threshold (by ZIP code)**



*Nearly one in four grantee partners (23.4%; 84 out of 359) operates in zip codes where over 50% of households fall below the ALICE threshold. Over one in three grantee partners (37.0%; 133 out of 359) operate in zip codes where 35-50% of households fall below the ALICE threshold.*

*Sources: United Way 2020, US Census Bureau 2018, Illinois Humanities data.*

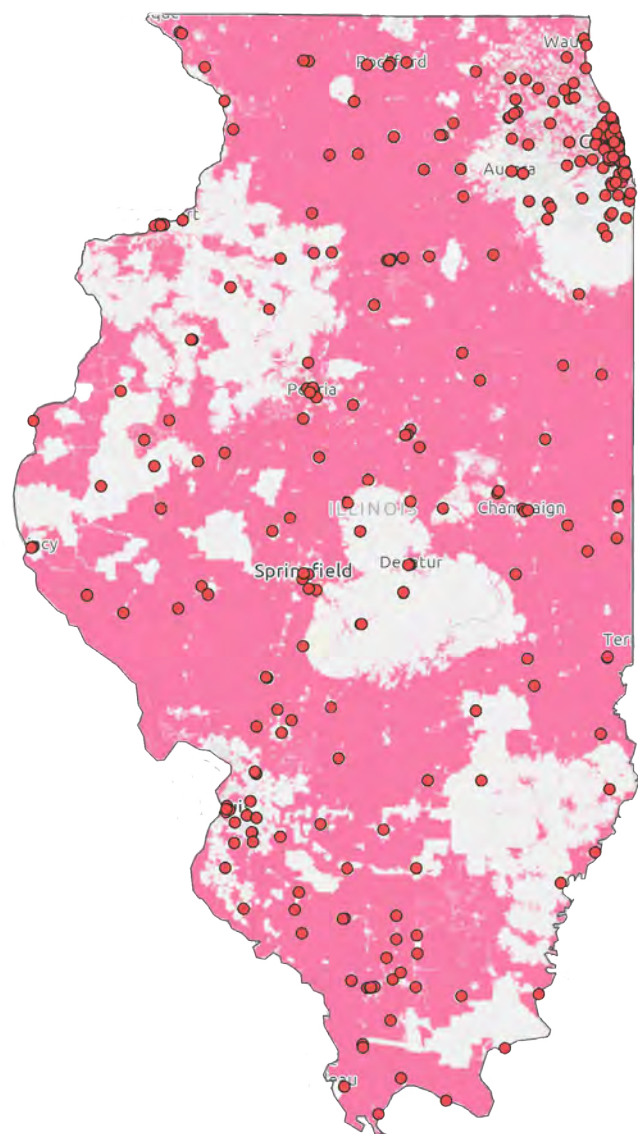
Two in three grantee partners (66.3%; 238/359) operate in areas without sufficient access to broadband.<sup>19</sup>

While broadband speeds vary widely by location, Illinois counties with the lowest internet access rates are in rural areas. Where 33% of households below the ALICE threshold do not have an internet subscription.<sup>20</sup>

According to Federal Communications Committee Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel,

***The 25/3 [minimum broadband speed] metric [25 Mbps Upload / 3 Mbps download] isn't just behind the times, it's a harmful one because it masks the extent to which low-income neighborhoods and rural communities are being left behind and left offline. That's why we need to raise the standard for minimum broadband speeds now...we want everyone everywhere to have a fair shot at 21st century success.***<sup>21</sup>

**Figure 17: Organizations and Insufficient Access to Broadband**



■ Unserved at 100 Mbps/20Mbps

Two in three grantee partners (66.3%; 238 out of 359) operate in areas without sufficient access to broadband (100 Mbps Upload / 20 Mbps Download, as defined in Vol. 86, No. 283 of the Federal Register).

Source: Illinois Humanities data, Illinois Bandwidth Lab.



Disadvantages quickly accumulate for communities without reliable access to broadband: they are unable to access online resources (such as time-sensitive announcements about funding opportunities), nor are they able to share the kinds of programs, experiences and information they need and deserve.

## ***Conclusion***

The 359 public humanities organizations included in this report are keeping communities creative and connected. Some have been doing so for over a century and others are just getting started.

The pandemic posed life-threatening challenges to both Illinoisans and the organizations serving them. By situating grantee partners within the socioeconomic well-being of Illinois overall, a stark picture emerges: grantee partners who received emergency relief funding were already working to mitigate the kinds of social, health, and economic stresses prevalent prior to the pandemic. Deeply embedded in communities that are changing demographically and which wrestle with inequitable access to fundamental resources (including broadband), these organizations are working to preserve cultures, tell new stories, and bring us together in new ways. When viewed in aggregate as a collective of organizations uniquely working to strengthen social fabric and bridge divides, our humanities organizations become more relevant, precious, and critical than may previously have been appreciated.



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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Gabrielle Lyon et al., *On Wisdom and Vision: Humanities Organizations in Illinois during COVID-19* (Chicago, IL: Illinois Humanities, 2021), 32.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, *COVID-19 Relief: Funding and Spending as of January 31, 2023 Snapshot* (Washington, DC: US Government Accountability Office, 2023). <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-23-106647.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> America Counts Staff, "Illinois Population Down 0.1% in 2020," US Census Bureau, Accessed March 16, 2023, <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/state-by-state/illinois-population-change-between-census-decade.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Claire Decoteau et al., *Deadly Disparities in the time of COVID-19: How Public Policy Fails Black and Latinx Chicagoans* (Chicago, IL: Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy (IRPP) at the University of Illinois at Chicago, 2021).

<sup>5</sup> Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, *The Impact of the First Year of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Recession on Families With Low Incomes* (Washington, DC: US Health and Human Services, 2021).

<sup>6</sup> Stephanie Hoopes et al., *ALICE in Illinois: A Financial Hardship Study*, (Chicago, IL: United Way of Illinois, 2020), 9. [https://unitedwayillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2020ALICEReport\\_IL\\_FINAL-7-30-20.pdf](https://unitedwayillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2020ALICEReport_IL_FINAL-7-30-20.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Amanda Perez Pintado, "Rural Illinois has lost population over the past decade. It's gained in diversity," *Investigate Midwest*, December 15, 2021, <https://investigatemitwest.org/2021/12/15/rural-illinois-has-lost-population-over-the-past-decade-its-gained-in-diversity/>.

<sup>8</sup> Although we had significantly fewer relief dollars available to disperse, these percentages increased in 2022. We updated and weighed our review rubric to target economically struggling geographies, and BIPOC-led and BIPOC-serving organizations. We began collecting this data in 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Atinuke Adediran, "Racial and ethnic diversity is lacking among nonprofit leaders – but there are ways to change that," *The Conversation*, January 13, 2022, <https://theconversation.com/racial-and-ethnic-diversity-is-lacking-among-nonprofit-leaders-but-there-are-ways-to-change-that-174490>.

<sup>10</sup> Frances Kunreuther and Sean Thomas-Breitfeld, *Race to Lead Revisited: Obstacles and Opportunities in Addressing the Nonprofit Racial Leadership Gap* (New York, NY: Building Movement Project, 2019). [buildingmovement.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/RTL\\_Revisited\\_National-Report\\_Final.pdf](https://buildingmovement.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/RTL_Revisited_National-Report_Final.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> "Rural counties with high and persistent poverty in 2019 were mostly located across the South," USDA Economic Research Service, Last updated August 11, 2021, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/chart-gallery/gallery/chart-detail?chartId=101781>.

<sup>12</sup> Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, *Demographic Challenges Confronting Rural Development in Illinois*. (Macomb, IL: Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs and Western Illinois University, 2019), vii. <https://www.ilga.gov/reports/ReportsSubmitted/539RSGAEmail1184RSGAAttachGRAC%20Annual%20Report%202019%20final.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Max Fraser and Garrett Dash Nelson, "Rural America Reimagined," *Dissent*, Fall 2019, 9.

<sup>14</sup> Stephanie Hoopes et al., *ALICE in Illinois: A Financial Hardship Study* (Chicago, IL: United Way of Illinois, 2020), 2. [https://unitedwayillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2020ALICEReport\\_IL\\_FINAL-7-30-20.pdf](https://unitedwayillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2020ALICEReport_IL_FINAL-7-30-20.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>18</sup> Jennifer Benoit-Bryan et al., *Centering the picture: The role of race & ethnicity in cultural engagement in the US* (Chicago, IL: Slover Linett Audience Research, 2020), 3-4. <https://sloverlinett.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Centering-the-Picture-full-report-CCTC-Wave-1-findings.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> Refer to "Defining Sufficient Access to Broadband" on page 82.

<sup>20</sup> Stephanie Hoopes et al., *ALICE in Illinois: A Financial Hardship Study* (Chicago, IL: United Way of Illinois, 2020), 27. [https://unitedwayillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2020ALICEReport\\_IL\\_FINAL-7-30-20.pdf](https://unitedwayillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2020ALICEReport_IL_FINAL-7-30-20.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> Federal Communications Commission, "Chairwoman Rosenworcel proposes to Increase Minimum Broadband Speeds and Set Gigabit Future Goal," July 15, 2022, <https://www.fcc.gov/document/chairwoman-rosenworcel-proposes-increase-minimum-broadband-speeds>.



## CONCLUSION

# What We're Learning and What We Hope for: The State of Humanities Organizations in Illinois During COVID-19

**"We are the hub. We are the heartbeat of our community."**

— Alyson Thompson, Director, Marshall Public Library





The 359 grantee organizations supported by COVID-19 emergency relief funding serve residents throughout the state. Throughout the pandemic, these humanities organizations provided precisely the kinds of activities national research tells us fosters belonging, mitigates social isolation, makes places more livable and, ultimately, strengthens the civic fabric the people in our state need to thrive.

We know the next few years are going to challenge the constellation of our grantee partners. As this report highlights, many of the nonprofit organizations described in this report were serving communities that were under social and economic duress *prior* to the arrival of COVID-19. In the wake of the pandemic, and growing attention to the impacts of racism, grantee partners are working in new ways to support their communities by telling overlooked and underrepresented stories, and addressing the systemic racism that continues to cast a shadow on our shared experiences. This is complex work in the best of times.

Funders and policy makers alike generally overlook and undervalue the role of culture and humanities in economic development investments.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, foundation giving in Illinois (including

grants from Illinois Humanities) is the smallest component of statewide revenue when compared to funding from the federal government or the state's own general revenue fund.<sup>2</sup> For organizations operating in small towns and rural communities, the urgency to access resources that ensure equitable recovery and sustained support is particularly acute. Illinois Humanities has found these organizations are the ones least likely to have access to traditional funding sources due to their size, capacity and/or geographic location.

Neglecting the positive impact of humanities organizations is a significant oversight for anyone concerned about equitable pandemic recovery, community livability, or economic vibrancy. We are far from alone in this work. The following suggestions are offered out of a desire to share what we're learning and in the spirit of collaboration.

### ***We look forward to partnering in the work ahead as best we can.***

National data is telling us that irrespective of race, ethnicity, or economic status, people want hometown cultural institutions to 1) increase accessibility and new works,

2) embrace equity and inclusion, 3) become places of belonging and welcome and 4) deepen community rootedness.<sup>3</sup>

## ***Suggestions***

### ***We encourage individual, corporate, and foundation funders to:***

- Support organizations' missions with general operating support and multiyear funding. This form of funding gives grant recipients the most flexibility and supports the resilience needed to plan ahead, weather unforeseen events, and respond to unforeseen opportunities.
- Consider eligibility requirements through equity lenses that include consideration for geography and population density.
- Invest in nonprofit leadership, volunteership, and governance practices that support transparency and innovation.
- Keep in mind that collaboration and networking can be additionally challenging for organizations remote from metro centers or which may not have access to reliable broadband.

- Incentivize partnerships and collaborations amongst and across cultural organizations and other sectors such as education, tourism, community development, health, and technology to enhance and amplify the impact of cultural activities and resources.
- Provide capacity for humanities organizations to adopt and use technology and digital platforms so they are equipped to provide access to — and preserve — cultural and archival resources and can improve the delivery of programs and services.
- Prioritize accessibility and inclusivity: Ensure programs are accessible and welcoming to diverse communities, especially groups that historically have been excluded such as people with disabilities, ethnic and racial minorities, low-income populations, and new and returning residents.
- Invest in preserving cultural heritage and collections of new works to ensure longevity and availability for future generations,
- Leverage governmental agencies to enhance access to cultural resources and archives and improve the delivery of cultural and community services.
- Disaggregate economic data to better assess the economic impact of humanities and cultural organizations.
- Provide opportunities to small towns and rural communities that do not require them to compete directly with cities and suburban areas.

*Furthermore, in light of the particular and unique ways in which public humanities programs build community, support belonging, bridge differences, and strengthen resilience, we encourage funders to support humanities organizations, initiatives, collections, and exhibits, that:*

- Connect communities with one another to share stories and experiences.
- Uplift new and overlooked stories: Reflect and shine a light on stories that have been historically overlooked, are forgotten, or are hard to access.

***We encourage policy makers and community stakeholders to:***

- Remember that the place-based programs humanities organizations create are intricately tied to, and enable, the livability and economic viability of a community.
- Foster partnerships and collaborations amongst and across cultural organizations and other sectors, such as education, tourism, and technology, to enhance and amplify the impact of places and programs relevant to arts, culture, and history.
- Remember that the digital divide still exists. Expand access to broadband internet; provide support for humanities organizations to adopt and use new technologies and digital platforms.

***We encourage researchers to undertake investigations that connect public humanities efforts to broader conversations about economic development, community-resilience and civic engagement to:***

- Develop and share case studies about Illinois' public humanities organizations. Research has documented innovative arts and cultural sector strategies that return both economic and community benefits.<sup>4</sup> Examples include paying residents to share their cultural heritage and traditions, creating businesses that are culturally relevant to the community, and performance and exhibit venues geared toward locals, including live-work spaces.

- Document and share data about the economic impact of humanities and cultural organizations.
- Enhance traditional economic measures of value in ways that take into consideration the public and community goods that humanities organizations uniquely provide.

## ***A Bigger Vision***

Cross-sector efforts can center the power of the humanities to draft a blueprint, build civic will, and aggregate investment. Together, we can fortify our cultural infrastructure in ways that make Illinois more livable, just, and resilient.

How? Firstly, by ensuring sustainable, predictable funding for humanities organizations. Secondly, by creating and supporting humanities programs that enable residents to come together to share stories, write new narratives, and form new ways of being together. Thirdly, by supporting community and capacity building efforts that strengthen organizations' relationships with each other and the communities they serve. And fourthly, by ensuring humanities organizations are at the table when investments in economic development, energy, and infrastructure are being shaped.

***Our rich humanities landscape deserves an ambitious vision. By connecting across nonprofit, private, philanthropic, and government sectors we can ensure that all Illinois residents benefit from the ways in which humanities organizations keep us creative, connected, and in community.***



### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> HeeKyung Sung, "Arts and Community Well-Being," in *Perspectives on Community Well-Being*, ed. Youngwha Kaa, Seung Jong Lee, and Rhonda Phillips, (New York, NY: Springer, 2019): 185-202. [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-15115-7\\_10](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-15115-7_10).

<sup>2</sup> Sarah Rice et al., *Giving in Illinois 2021* (Chicago, IL: Forefront and Candid, 2021), 8. [myforefront.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Giving-in-Illinois-2021-11.22.2021.pdf](https://myforefront.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Giving-in-Illinois-2021-11.22.2021.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Jennifer Benoit-Bryan, Madeline Smith, and Peter Linnet, *Rethinking Relevance, Rebuilding Engagement* (Chicago, IL: Slover Linett Audience Research, LaPlaca Cohen, and Yancey Consulting, 2022), 6, 35. <https://sloverlinett.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Rethinking-Relevance-Rebuilding-Engagement-CCTT-Wave-2-Survey-Full-Report.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Americans for the Arts, *Arts & Economic Prosperity: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts & Cultural Organizations & Their Audiences in the State of Illinois* (Washington, DC: Americans for the Arts, 2017). [https://wmm.71e.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/IL\\_StateOfIllinois\\_AEP5\\_CustomizedReport-1.pdf](https://wmm.71e.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/IL_StateOfIllinois_AEP5_CustomizedReport-1.pdf).

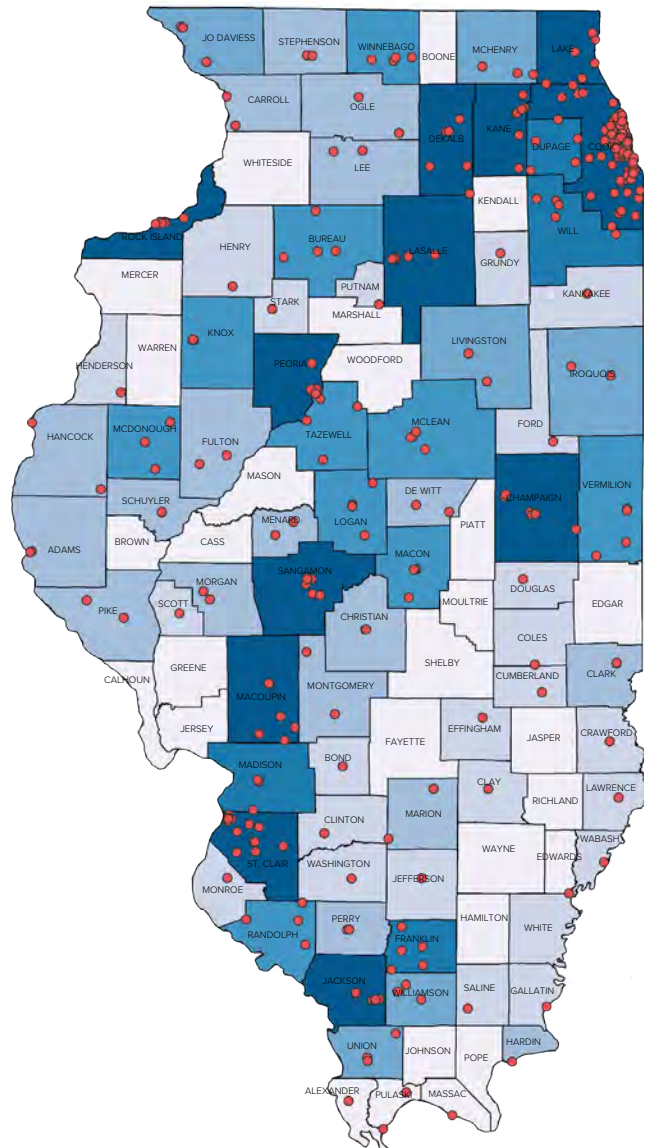


# Directory

Illinois Humanities awarded 490 relief and recovery grants to 359 unique organizations. The following directory is a snapshot of all the organizations, listing their location and website or email. Organizations are alphabetized by county. To download this directory, visit [ILHumanities.org/COVID-19-Directory](https://ILHumanities.org/COVID-19-Directory).



**Figure 3: Grants by County**



**Number of grantee organizations per county**

0 1 to 2 3 to 4 5 to 9 10+

*Illinois Humanities distributed grants in 78 of 102 Illinois counties. 133 grantee partners (37%) are in Cook County, which is home to 41% of the state's population.*

*Sources: US Census Bureau 2018, Illinois Humanities data.*

## **Adams**

### **Friends of the Dr. Richard Eells House**

PO Box 628  
Quincy, IL 62306  
[eellshousequincy.com](http://eellshousequincy.com)

### **Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County**

425 S 12th St  
Quincy, IL 62301  
[hsgac.org](http://hsgac.org)

## **Alexander**

### **Thebes Historical Society**

24995 Diswood Rd  
PO Box 53  
Thebes, IL 62990  
[thebescourthouse.com](http://thebescourthouse.com)

## **Bond**

### **American Farm Heritage**

1395 Museum Ave  
PO Box 606  
Greenville, IL 62246  
[americanfarmheritagemuseum.com](http://americanfarmheritagemuseum.com)

## **Bureau**

### **Bureau County Historical Society**

109 Park Ave W  
Princeton, IL 61356  
[bureaucountyhistoricalsociety.com](http://bureaucountyhistoricalsociety.com)

### **Neponset Historical Society**

113 Commercial St  
PO Box 105  
Neponset, IL 61345  
[facebook.com/NeponsetHistoricalSociety](https://facebook.com/NeponsetHistoricalSociety)

### **Raymond A. Sapp Memorial Library**

103 E Main St  
PO Box 23  
Wyanet, IL 61379  
[facebook.com/R.A.SappLibrary](https://facebook.com/R.A.SappLibrary)

### **Walnut Public Library District**

101 Heaton St  
PO Box 728  
Walnut, IL 61376  
[walnutpubliclibrary.org](http://walnutpubliclibrary.org)

## **Carroll**

### **Savanna Historical Society**

406 Main St  
PO Box 124  
Savanna, IL 61074  
[savannamuseum.org](http://savannamuseum.org)

### **Thomson Depot Museum**

PO Box 92  
Thomson, IL 61285  
[thomsondepotmuseum.webs.com](http://thomsondepotmuseum.webs.com)

## **Champaign**

### **Forest Preserve Friends Foundation / Museum of the Grand Prairie**

PO Box 1040  
Mahomet, IL 61853  
[ccfpd.org/illinois-forest-preserves/foundation](http://ccfpd.org/illinois-forest-preserves/foundation)

### **Homer Community Library**

500 E Second St  
Homer, IL 61849  
[homercommunitylibrary.com](http://homercommunitylibrary.com)

### **Museum of the Grand Prairie**

950 N Lombard St  
Mahomet, IL 61853  
[museumofthegrandprairie.org](http://museumofthegrandprairie.org)

### **My True North Artistry**

1310 N Broadway Ave  
Urbana, IL 61801  
[mytruenorthartistry.com](http://mytruenorthartistry.com)

### **Preservation and Conservation Association of Champaign County**

44 E Washington St  
Champaign, IL 61820  
[pacacc.org](http://pacacc.org)

### **Uniting Pride of Champaign County**

1001 S Wright St  
Champaign, IL 61820  
[unitingpride.org](http://unitingpride.org)

### **Urbana Champaign Independent Media Center**

202 S Broadway  
Urbana, IL 61801  
[ucimc.org](http://ucimc.org)

## **Christian**

### **Christian County Coal Mine Museum**

1324 E Park St  
Taylorville, IL 62568  
[facebook.com/profile.php?id=100067838400893](https://facebook.com/profile.php?id=100067838400893)

### **Christian County Historical Society**

325 Abe's Way  
PO Box 254  
Taylorville, IL 62568  
[christiancountyhistorical.com](http://christiancountyhistorical.com)

## **Clark**

### **Clark County Historical Society**

502 S 4th St  
PO Box 207  
Marshall, IL 62441  
[sites.google.com/site/cchsillinois/home](https://sites.google.com/site/cchsillinois/home)

**Marshall Public Library**

612 Archer Ave  
Marshall, IL 62441  
[marshalllibrary.com](http://marshalllibrary.com)

**Clay**

**Clay County  
Genealogical Society**  
PO Box 94  
Louisville, IL 62858  
[facebook.com/CCGSIL](https://facebook.com/CCGSIL)

**Clinton**

**Germantown Public  
Library District**  
403 Munster St  
PO Box 244  
Germantown, IL 62245  
[gtownlibrary.org](http://gtownlibrary.org)

**Coles**

**Lincoln Log Cabin Foundation**  
402 S Lincoln Highway Rd  
Lerna, IL 62440  
[lincolnlogcabin.org](http://lincolnlogcabin.org)

**Cook**

**6018North**  
6018 N Kenmore Ave  
Chicago, IL 60660  
[6018north.org](http://6018north.org)

**826CHI**  
1276 N Milwaukee Ave  
Chicago, IL 60622  
[826chi.org](http://826chi.org)

**About Face Theatre Collective**  
5252 N Broadway Ave  
FL 2  
Chicago, IL 60640  
[aboutfacetheatre.com](http://aboutfacetheatre.com)

**Al Raby Foundation**  
7230 S Indiana Ave  
Chicago, IL 60619  
[rabyfoundation.org](http://rabyfoundation.org)

**American Blues Theater**  
4809 N Ravenswood Ave  
Ste 221  
Chicago, IL 60640  
[americanbluestheater.com](http://americanbluestheater.com)

**American Indian Association  
of Illinois**  
1650 W Foster Ave  
Chicago, IL 60640  
[chicago-american-indian-edu.org](http://chicago-american-indian-edu.org)

**American Indian Center**  
3401 W Ainslie St  
Chicago, IL 60625  
[aicchicago.org](http://aicchicago.org)

**Back of the Yards  
Neighborhood Council**  
1823 W 47th St  
#2  
Chicago, IL 60609  
[bync.org](http://bync.org)

**Backbones**  
PO Box 7334  
Prospect Heights, IL 60070  
[backbonesonline.com](http://backbonesonline.com)

**Ballet Folklórico de Chicago**  
4352 N Keeler Ave  
Chicago, IL 60641  
[balletfolkloricodechicago.org](http://balletfolkloricodechicago.org)

**Balzekas Museum of  
Lithuanian Culture**  
6500 S Pulaski Rd  
Chicago, IL 60629  
[balzekasmuseum.org](http://balzekasmuseum.org)

**BECOME: Center for  
Community Engagement  
and Social Change**  
207 E Ohio St  
Chicago, IL 60611  
[becomecenter.org](http://becomecenter.org)

**Black Alphabet**  
4600 S Indiana Ave  
#1N  
Chicago, IL 60653  
[blackalphabet.org](http://blackalphabet.org)

**Black Lunch Table**  
6225 N Kenmore Ave  
#2N  
Chicago, IL 60660  
[blacklunchtable.com](http://blacklunchtable.com)

**BlackCapsule.Z Anthology**  
13832 S LaSalle St  
Riverdale, IL 60827  
[blackcapsulez.com](http://blackcapsulez.com)

**Borderless Magazine**  
3432 W Diversey Ave  
2nd FL, Ste 8  
Chicago, IL 60647  
[borderlessmag.org](http://borderlessmag.org)

**Bronzeville / Black Chicagoan  
Historical Society**  
3510 S Rhodes Ave  
Apt 2409  
Chicago, IL 60653  
[bronzevillehistoricalsociety.wordpress.com](http://bronzevillehistoricalsociety.wordpress.com)

**Buffalo Grove Park District /  
The Raupp Museum**  
901 Dunham Ln  
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089  
[bgmuseum.org](http://bgmuseum.org)

**Calumet City Public Library**  
660 Manistee Ave  
Calumet City, IL 60409  
[calumetcitypl.org](http://calumetcitypl.org)

**Calumet Collaborative**  
13300 S Baltimore  
Chicago, IL 60633  
[facebook.com/  
calumetcollaborative](https://facebook.com/calumetcollaborative)



**Changing Worlds**

329 W 18th St  
Ste 506  
Chicago, IL 60616  
[changingworlds.org](http://changingworlds.org)

**Charnley-Persky House  
Museum Foundation / Society  
of Architectural Historians**

1365 N Astor St  
Chicago, IL 60610  
[sah.org/about-sah/charnley-persky-house](http://sah.org/about-sah/charnley-persky-house)

**Chicago Blues Museum**

PO Box 804423  
Chicago, IL 60680  
[chicagobluesmuseum@att.net](mailto:chicagobluesmuseum@att.net)

**Chicago Collections  
Consortium**

2350 N Kenmore Ave  
Chicago, IL 60614  
[chicagocollections.org](http://chicagocollections.org)

**Chicago Cultural Alliance**

641 W Lake St  
Ste 200  
Chicago, IL 60661  
[chicagoculturalalliance.org](http://chicagoculturalalliance.org)

**Chicago for Chicagoans**

4954 N Spaulding Ave  
#2  
Chicago, IL 60625  
[chicagoforchicagoans.org](http://chicagoforchicagoans.org)

**Chicago Humanities Festival**

500 N Dearborn  
Ste 825  
Chicago, IL 60654  
[chicagohumanities.org](http://chicagohumanities.org)

**Chicago Independent  
Radio Project**

4045 N Rockwell St  
#300  
Chicago, IL 60618  
[chirpradio.org](http://chirpradio.org)

**Chicago Korean  
Dance Company**

1865 Polk Ave  
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008  
[chicagokoreandance.org](http://chicagokoreandance.org)

**Chicago Latino  
Theater Alliance**

180 N Michigan Ave  
Ste 305  
Chicago, IL 60601  
[clata.org](http://clata.org)

**Chicago National Brewseum**

1158 N Howe St  
Unit C  
Chicago, IL 60610  
[chicagobrewseum.org](http://chicagobrewseum.org)

**Chicago Palestine Film  
Festival**

1507 E 53rd St  
Ste 500  
Chicago, IL 60615  
[palestinefilmfest.com](http://palestinefilmfest.com)

**Chicago Poetry Center**

1448 E 52nd St  
#256  
Chicago, IL 60615  
[poetrycenter.org](http://poetrycenter.org)

**Chicago Public Art Group**

3314 S Morgan  
Unit 1  
Chicago, IL 60608  
[chicagopublicartgroup.org](http://chicagopublicartgroup.org)

**Chicago Public  
Library Foundation**

200 W Madison Ave  
FL 3  
Chicago, IL 60606  
[cplfoundation.org](http://cplfoundation.org)

**Chicago Review**

935 E 60th St  
Chicago, IL 60637  
[chicagoreview.org](http://chicagoreview.org)

**Chicago South Side  
Film Festival**

1805 W Monterey Ave  
#437454  
Chicago, IL 60643  
[southsidefilmfest.org](http://southsidefilmfest.org)

**Chicago Youth Shakespeare**

641 W Lake St  
Ste 200  
Chicago, IL 60661  
[chicagoyouthshakespeare.org](http://chicagoyouthshakespeare.org)

**Chinatown Museum  
Foundation**

238 W 23rd St  
Chicago, IL 60616  
[ccamuseum.org](http://ccamuseum.org)

**Cicero Independiente**

1937 S 50th Ave  
Cicero, IL 60804  
[ciceroindependiente.com](http://ciceroindependiente.com)

**CivicLab**

1643 N Larrabee St  
Unit I  
Chicago, IL 60614  
[civiclub.us](http://civiclub.us)

**Collaboraction Theatre  
Company**

PO Box 10085  
Chicago, IL 60610  
[collaboraction.org](http://collaboraction.org)

**ConTextos**

2240 S Michigan Ave  
Chicago, IL 60616  
[contextos.org](http://contextos.org)

**contratiempo**

3219 S Morgan St  
FL 1  
Chicago, IL 60608  
[contratiempo.org](http://contratiempo.org)

**Crossing Borders Music**

1330 W Albion Ave

Unit G

Chicago, IL 60626

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

**Daniel Ramos Puerto Rican****Festival Committee**

1650 W North Ave

Chicago, IL 60622

[marisa.prfestchicago@gmail.com](mailto:marisa.prfestchicago@gmail.com)

**Deeply Rooted Dance Theater**

17 N State St

FL 19

Chicago, IL 60602

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

**Definition Theatre Company**

4850 S Drexel

Chicago, IL 60615

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

**Design Museum of Chicago**

72 E Randolph St

Chicago, IL 60601

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

**El Griot & Areito Project**

7656 S Euclid Ave

Chicago, IL 60649

[instagram.com/](https://www.instagram.com/elgriotandareitoproject)

[elgriotandareitoproject](https://www.instagram.com/elgriotandareitoproject)

**eta Creative Arts Foundation**

7558 S South Chicago Ave

Chicago, IL 60619

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

**Fifth House Ensemble**

332 S Michigan Ave

Ste 121-F501

Chicago, IL 60604

[fifth-house.com](http://fifth-house.com)

**Firebrand Theatre**

7363 N Ashland Blvd

Apt 1

Chicago, IL 60626

[instagram.com/firebrand.theatre](https://www.instagram.com/firebrand.theatre)

**Flossmoor Public Library**

1000 Sterling Ave

Flossmoor, IL 60422

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

**Free Spirit Media**

3604 W Ogden Ave

Chicago, IL 60623

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

**Free Write Arts & Literacy**

1932 S Halsted St

#100

Chicago, IL 60608

[facebook.com/freewritechicago](https://facebook.com/freewritechicago)

**Front Porch Arts Center**

311 N Waller Ave

Chicago, IL 60644

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

**Full Spectrum Features**

1407 W Ohio

Chicago, IL 60642

[fullspectrumfeatures.com](http://fullspectrumfeatures.com)

**Glenwood-Lynwood Public Library District**

19901 Stoney Island Ave

Lynwood, IL 60411

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

**Glessner House**

1800 S Prairie Ave

Chicago, IL 60616

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

**Global Girls**

8151 S South Chicago Ave

The Global Studio

Chicago, IL 60617

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

**Guild Literary Complex**

4043 N Ravenswood Ave

Ste 222

Chicago, IL 60613

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

**Hairpin Arts Center / Logan****Square Chamber of Arts**

2810 N Milwaukee Ave

FL 2

Chicago, IL 60618

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

**Haitian American Museum of Chicago**

4654 N Racine Ave

Chicago, IL 60640

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

**Homewood Historical Society**

2035 W 183rd St

PO Box 1144

Homewood, IL 60430

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

**Honey Pot Performance**

5014 N Springfield

#1

Chicago, IL 60625

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

**Hyde Park Art Center**

5020 S Cornell Ave

Chicago, IL 60615

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

**Hypertext Magazine & Studio**

1821 W Melrose St

Chicago, IL 60657

[hypertextmag.com](http://hypertextmag.com)

**In My Brother's Shoes**

435 W Diversey Pkwy

Ste 2

Chicago, IL 60614

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

**InterAction Initiative**

1440 W Taylor St #88

Chicago, IL 60607

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

**International Children's  
Media Center**

625 N Kingsbury St  
Chicago, IL 60654  
[icmediacenter.org](http://icmediacenter.org)

**Intuit: The Center for Intuitive  
and Outsider Art**

756 N Milwaukee Ave  
Chicago, IL 60642  
[art.org](http://art.org)

**Kartemquin Educational Films**

1901 W Wellington Ave  
Chicago, IL 60657  
[kartemquin.com](http://kartemquin.com)

**Korean Cultural Center  
of Chicago**

9930 Capitol Dr  
Wheeling, IL 60090  
[kccoc.org](http://kccoc.org)

**Kuumba Lynx**

4501 N Clarendon Park  
Chicago, IL 60640  
[kuumbalynx.com](http://kuumbalynx.com)

**La Grange Area  
Historical Society**

444 S La Grange Rd  
La Grange, IL 60525  
[lagraangehistory.org](http://lagraangehistory.org)

**Lawndale Pop-Up Spot**

1408 S Central Park Ave  
Chicago, IL 60623  
[lawndalepopupspot.org](http://lawndalepopupspot.org)

**Lithuanian Archives Project**

5528 W Belmont Ave  
Chicago, IL 60641  
[lithuanianarchivesproject.org](http://lithuanianarchivesproject.org)

**Lorde, Rustin & Bates**

10420 S Halsted St  
Chicago, IL 60628  
[facebook.com/  
lorderustinbatesusa](https://facebook.com/lorderustinbatesusa)

**Mandala South Asian  
Performing Arts DBA  
Mandala Arts**

410 S Michigan Ave  
#528  
Chicago, IL 60605  
[mandalaarts.org](http://mandalaarts.org)

**Media Burn Archive**

935 W Chestnut St  
Ste 405  
Chicago, IL 60642  
[mediaburn.org](http://mediaburn.org)

**Mexican Folkloric Dance  
Company of Chicago**

3842 S Archer Ave  
Chicago, IL 60632  
[mexfoldanco.org](http://mexfoldanco.org)

**Mezcla Media Collective**

2602 W 16th St  
FL 4  
Chicago, IL 60608  
[mezclamediacollective.org](http://mezclamediacollective.org)

**Mitchell Museum of the  
American Indian**

3001 Central St  
Evanston, IL 60201  
[mitchellmuseum.org](http://mitchellmuseum.org)

**Musical Arts Institute**

9244 S Lafayette  
Chicago, IL 60620  
[musicalartsinstitute.org](http://musicalartsinstitute.org)

**Muslim American  
Leadership Alliance**

47 W Division St  
Ste 159  
Chicago, IL 60610  
[malanational.org](http://malanational.org)

**NAJWA Dance Corps**

1631 S Michigan Ave  
Unit #103  
Chicago, IL 60616  
[najwadancecorps.org](http://najwadancecorps.org)

**National APR Pullman  
Porter Museum**

10406 S Maryland Ave  
Chicago, IL 60628  
[aprpullmanportermuseum.org](http://aprpullmanportermuseum.org)

**National Cambodian  
Heritage Museum & Killing  
Fields Memorial**

2831 W Lawrence Ave  
Chicago, IL 60625  
[cambodianmuseum.org](http://cambodianmuseum.org)

**National Museum of  
Gospel Music**

3300 S Indiana Ave  
Chicago, IL 60616  
[nationalmuseumofgospelmusic.  
org/AOTL](http://nationalmuseumofgospelmusic.org/AOTL)

**National Public  
Housing Museum**

625 N Kingsbury St  
Chicago, IL 60654  
PO Box 804960  
Chicago, IL 60680  
[nphm.org](http://nphm.org)

**NON-OP / NON:op Open  
Opera Works**

2419 N Drake Ave  
FL 1  
Chicago, IL 60647  
[nonopera.org](http://nonopera.org)

**Northeastern Illinois  
University Foundation**

5500 N St Louis Ave  
Chicago, IL 60625  
[neiu.edu/alumni-and-giving](http://neiu.edu/alumni-and-giving)

**OPEN Center for the Arts**

2214 S Sacramento Ave  
Chicago, IL 60623  
[opencenterforthearts.org](http://opencenterforthearts.org)

**Orland Park History Museum**

14415 S Beacon Ave  
Orland Park, IL 60462  
[orlandpark.org](http://orlandpark.org)



**People's Center for Cultural and Contemporary Arts**

PO Box 891254  
Chicago, IL 60608  
[pcccart.org](http://pcccart.org)

**Pigment International**

5400 S Hyde Park Blvd  
B-14  
Chicago, IL 60615  
[pigmentintl.com](http://pigmentintl.com)

**Pilot Light**

1516 W Carroll Ave  
Ste 1  
Chicago, IL 60607  
[pilotlightchefs.org](http://pilotlightchefs.org)

**PlayMakers Laboratory Theatre**

4850 N Broadway St  
PO Box 408368  
Chicago, IL 60640  
[playmakerslab.org](http://playmakerslab.org)

**Public Media Institute**

3219 S Morgan St  
Chicago, IL 60608  
[publicmediainstitute.com](http://publicmediainstitute.com)

**Public Narrative**

1245 S Michigan Ave  
#121  
Chicago, IL 60605  
[publicnarrative.org](http://publicnarrative.org)

**Puerto Rican Arts Alliance**

3000 N Elbridge  
Chicago, IL 60618  
[praachicago.org](http://praachicago.org)

**Que4 Radio**

2643 W Chicago  
Chicago, IL 60622  
[que4.org](http://que4.org)

**Reading In Motion**

332 S Michigan Ave  
Ste #121-R13  
Chicago, IL 60604  
[readinginmotion.org](http://readinginmotion.org)

**Repertorio Latino Theater Company**

913 N Monticello Ave  
Chicago, IL 60651  
[facebook.com/repertoriolatino](https://facebook.com/repertoriolatino)

**Richton Park Public Library District**

22310 Latonia Ln  
Richton Park, IL 60471  
[richtonparklibrary.org](http://richtonparklibrary.org)

**Ridge Historical Society**

10621 S Seeley Ave  
Chicago, IL 60643  
[ridgehistory.org](http://ridgehistory.org)

**Robbins Historical Society and Museum**

13822 S Central Park Ave  
Robbins, IL 60472  
[robbinshistorymuseum.org](http://robbinshistorymuseum.org)

**Rohingya Culture Center**

2740 W Devon Ave  
Chicago, IL 60659  
[rccchicago.org](http://rccchicago.org)

**Segundo Ruiz Belvis Cultural Center**

4046 W Armitage Ave  
Chicago, IL 60639  
[srbcc.org](http://srbcc.org)

**Silent Theatre Company**

4154 N Tripp Ave  
#1  
Chicago, IL 60641  
[silenttheatre.com](http://silenttheatre.com)

**Silk Road Rising**

150 N Michigan Ave  
Ste 1970  
Chicago, IL 60601  
[silkroadrising.org](http://silkroadrising.org)

**Sixty Inches from Center**

436 E 47th St  
#308  
Chicago, IL 60653  
[sixtyinchesfromcenter.org](http://sixtyinchesfromcenter.org)

**Sophia's Choice / Asian Pop-Up Cinema**

47 W Division St  
PMB #185  
Chicago, IL 60610  
[asianpopupcinema.org](http://asianpopupcinema.org)

**South Side Community Art Center**

3831 S Michigan  
Chicago, IL 60653  
[sscartscenter.org](http://sscartscenter.org)

**South Side Weekly**

6100 S Blackstone Ave  
Chicago, IL 60637  
[southsideweekly.com](http://southsideweekly.com)

**Stickney-Forest View Public Library**

6800 W 43rd St  
Stickney, IL 60402  
[sfvpld.org](http://sfvpld.org)

**Still Point Theatre Collective**

4300 N Hermitage Ave  
Chicago, IL 60613  
[stillpointtheatrecollective.org](http://stillpointtheatrecollective.org)

**Storycatchers Theatre**

544 W Oak St  
#1005  
Chicago, IL 60610  
[storycatcherstheatre.org](http://storycatcherstheatre.org)

**Strategy for Access Foundation**

4800 S Chicago Beach Dr  
Ste 1707s  
Chicago, IL 60615  
[fun4thedisabled.com](http://fun4thedisabled.com)

**The Hoodoisie**

30 E Adams St  
Ste 209  
Chicago, IL 60603  
[facebook.com/thehoodoisie](https://facebook.com/thehoodoisie)

**The House Theatre of Chicago**  
PO Box 180150  
Chicago, IL 60618  
[facebook.com/thehousetheatre](https://facebook.com/thehousetheatre)

**The Paper Machete Group**  
**c/o JC Aevaliotis**  
1133 W Pratt Blvd Unit 2  
Chicago, IL 60626  
[thepapermachete.org](https://thepapermachete.org)

**The Rebuild Foundation**  
6918 S Dorchester  
Chicago, IL 60637  
[rebuild-foundation.org](https://rebuild-foundation.org)

**The Vegan Museum**  
2100 N Racine Ave  
Unit 3B  
Chicago, IL 60614  
[veganmuseum.org](https://veganmuseum.org)

**The Voices and Faces Project**  
47 W Polk St  
Ste 170  
Chicago, IL 60605  
[voicesandfaces.org](https://voicesandfaces.org)

**Third Coast International  
Audio Festival DBA  
Third Coast**  
PO Box 410726  
Chicago, IL 60641  
[thirdcoastfestival.org](https://thirdcoastfestival.org)

**True Star Media & Foundation**  
1130 S Wabash  
Ste 302  
Chicago, IL 60605  
[truestarfoundation.org](https://truestarfoundation.org)

**Ukrainian National Museum**  
2249 W Superior St  
Chicago, IL 60612  
[ukrainiannationalmuseum.org](https://ukrainiannationalmuseum.org)

**Visions Blu Institute**  
8826 S Dante  
Chicago, IL 60619  
[visionsblu.com](https://visionsblu.com)

**Westside Writing Project DBA  
Westside Media Project**  
5820 W Chicago Ave  
Chicago, IL 60651  
[westsideproject.org](https://westsideproject.org)

**Young Chicago Authors**  
1180 N Milwaukee Ave  
Ste 2  
Chicago, IL 60642  
[youngchicagoauthors.org](https://youngchicagoauthors.org)

**Youth Empowerment  
Performance Project**  
835 W Addison St  
Chicago, IL 60613  
[wesayyep.com](https://wesayyep.com)

**Crawford**  
**Crawford County  
Heritage Foundation**  
125 Court St  
PO Box 932  
Robinson, IL 62454  
[theheathmuseum.com](https://theheathmuseum.com)

**Cumberland**  
**Cumberland County Historical  
& Genealogical Society**  
213 W Cumberland  
PO Box 582  
Greenup, IL 62428  
[cumberlandcountyhistory.org](https://cumberlandcountyhistory.org)

**De Witt**  
**Vespasian Warner Public  
Library District**  
310 N Quincy St  
Clinton, IL 61727  
[vwarner.org](https://vwarner.org)

**Weldon Public Library District**  
505 Maple  
PO Box 248  
Weldon, IL 61882  
[weldon.lib.il.us](https://weldon.lib.il.us)

**DeKalb**  
**DeKalb County History Center**  
1730 N Main St  
Sycamore, IL 60178  
[dekalbcountyhistory.org](https://dekalbcountyhistory.org)

**Glidden Homestead and  
Historical Center**  
921 W Lincoln Hwy  
DeKalb, IL 60115  
[gliddenhomestead.org](https://gliddenhomestead.org)

**Hinckley Historical Society**  
145 E Lincoln Ave  
PO Box 486  
Hinckley, IL 60520  
[hinckleyhistoricalsociety.com](https://hinckleyhistoricalsociety.com)

**Preservation of  
Egyptian Theatre**  
135 N 2nd St  
DeKalb, IL 60115  
[egyptiantheatre.org](https://egyptiantheatre.org)

**Sandwich Public  
Library District**  
925 S Main St  
Sandwich, IL 60548  
[sandwichpld.org](https://sandwichpld.org)

**Shabbona-Lee-Rollo  
Historical Museum**  
119 W Cherokee St  
Shabbona, IL 60550  
[slrmuseum.com](https://slrmuseum.com)

**Douglas**  
**Korean War Educator  
Foundation**  
111 E Houghton St  
Tuscola, IL 61953  
[thekwe.org](https://thekwe.org)

**DuPage**  
**Clarendon Hills Public Library**  
7 N Prospect Ave  
Clarendon Hills, IL 60514  
[clarendonhillslibrary.org](https://clarendonhillslibrary.org)

**Medinah School District 11**

700 E Granville Ave  
Roselle, IL 60172  
[medinah11.org](http://medinah11.org)

**Mexican Cultural Center**

103 W Washington St  
West Chicago, IL 60185  
[mccdupage.org](http://mccdupage.org)

**MWAH! Performing Arts Troupe**

159 Cottage Hill Ave  
Apt 215  
Elmhurst, IL 60126  
[mwah.net](http://mwah.net)

**National Indo-American Museum**

815 S Main St  
Lombard, IL 60148  
[niam.org](http://niam.org)

**Effingham****Effingham Public Library**

200 N Third St  
Effingham, IL 62401  
[effinghamlibrary.org](http://effinghamlibrary.org)

**Ford****Ford County Historical Society**

Paxton, IL 60957  
[ilfchs@gmail.com](mailto:ilfchs@gmail.com)

**Franklin****Benton Public Library District**

502 S Main St  
Benton, IL 62812  
[bentonlibrary.com](http://bentonlibrary.com)

**Christopher Public Library**

202 E Market St  
Christopher, IL 62822  
[cityofchristopher.org/library](http://cityofchristopher.org/library)

**Frankfort Area Historical Society**

2000 E St Louis St  
West Frankfort, IL 62896  
[frankforthisitoricalsociety.org](http://frankforthisitoricalsociety.org)

**Royalton Public Library District**

305 S Dean St  
Royalton, IL 62983  
[royaltonlibrary2@gmail.com](mailto:royaltonlibrary2@gmail.com)

**Sesser Public Library**

303 W Franklin St  
Sesser, IL 62884  
[facebook.com/profile.php?id=100070627969478](https://facebook.com/profile.php?id=100070627969478)

**Fulton****Easley Pioneer Museum Foundation**

230 W Broadway  
PO Box 11  
Ipava, IL 61441  
[facebook.com/EasleyPioneerMuseum](https://facebook.com/EasleyPioneerMuseum)

**Lewistown Society for Historical Preservation**

PO Box 53  
Lewistown, IL 61542  
[lewistownillinois.org/wp/rasmussen-museum](http://lewistownillinois.org/wp/rasmussen-museum)

**Gallatin****Gallatin County Historical Society**

434 Main St  
Shawneetown, IL 62984  
[gallatincohistoricalsocietyil.vistaprintdigital.com](http://gallatincohistoricalsocietyil.vistaprintdigital.com)

**Grundy****Grundy County Historical Society**

510 W Illinois Ave  
Morris, IL 60450  
[grundycountyhs.org](http://grundycountyhs.org)

**Hancock****Greater West Central Public Library District**

202 Center St  
PO Box 235  
Augusta, IL 62311  
[greaterwestcentral.org](http://greaterwestcentral.org)

**Nauvoo Public Library**

1270 Mulholland St  
PO Box 276  
Nauvoo, IL 62354  
[nauvoopubliclibrary.com](http://nauvoopubliclibrary.com)

**Hardin****Hardin County Fluorspar Museum**

PO Box 755  
Rosiclare, IL 62982  
<https://bit.ly/AFMonFB>

**Rosiclare Memorial Public Library**

308 Main St  
PO Box 16  
Rosiclare, IL 62982

**Henderson****Henderson County Historical Society Museum**

310 E Main St  
Raritan, IL 61471  
[facebook.com/hendersoncountymuseum](https://facebook.com/hendersoncountymuseum)



## **Henry**

### **Bishop Hill Heritage Association**

103 N Bishop Hill St  
Bishop Hill, IL 61419  
[bishophillheritage.org](http://bishophillheritage.org)

## **Iroquois**

### **Danforth Historical Society**

303 Monroe St  
Danforth, IL 60930  
[facebook.com/  
danforthhistoricalsociety](https://facebook.com/danforthhistoricalsociety)

### **Iroquois County Historical Society**

103 W Cherry St  
Watseka, IL 60970  
[iroquoiscountyhistoricalsociety.  
com](http://iroquoiscountyhistoricalsociety.com)

### **Watseka Public Library**

201 S Fourth St  
Watseka, IL 60970  
[watsekapubliclibrary.org](http://watsekapubliclibrary.org)

## **Jackson**

### **A Gift of Love Charity**

2023 W Woodriver Dr  
Apt A  
Carbondale, IL 62901  
[facebook.com/  
AGiftOfLoveCharity](https://facebook.com/AGiftOfLoveCharity)

### **African American Museum of Southern Illinois**

1237 E Main St Unit 1046  
University Mall  
Carbondale, IL 62901  
[aamsi.org](http://aamsi.org)

### **Carbondale Community Arts**

304 W Walnut St  
Carbondale, IL 62901  
[carbondalearts.org](http://carbondalearts.org)

### **General John A. Logan Museum**

1613 Edith St  
Murphysboro, IL 62966  
[loganmuseum.org](http://loganmuseum.org)

### **Heterodyne Broadcasting / WDBX Radio**

224 N Washington St  
Carbondale, IL 62901  
[wdbx.org](http://wdbx.org)

### **Jackson County Historical Society**

1616 Edith St  
Murphysboro, IL 62966  
[jchsil.org](http://jchsil.org)

### **Y'all Rock Carbondale**

215 N Washington Ave  
Carbondale, IL 62901  
[yallrockcarbondale.com](http://yallrockcarbondale.com)

## **Jefferson**

### **Jefferson County Historical Society**

1411 N 27th St  
Mt. Vernon, IL 62864  
[historicjeffersoncountyil.com](http://historicjeffersoncountyil.com)

## **Jo Daviess**

### **Galena Center for the Arts**

971 A Gear St  
Galena, IL 61036  
[galenacenterforthearts.org](http://galenacenterforthearts.org)

### **Galena-Jo Daviess County Historical Society**

211 S Bench St  
Galena, IL 61036  
[galenahistory.org](http://galenahistory.org)

### **Hanover Township Library**

204 Jefferson St  
PO Box 475  
Hanover, IL 61041  
[hanover-lib.org](http://hanover-lib.org)

## **Kane**

### **Aurora Fire Station Preservation Corp DBA Aurora Regional Fire Museum**

53 N Broadway  
Aurora, IL 60505  
[auroraregionalfiremuseum.org](http://auroraregionalfiremuseum.org)

### **Aurora Historical Society**

PO Box 905  
Aurora, IL 60506  
[aurorahistory.net](http://aurorahistory.net)

### **Children's Theatre of Elgin**

1700 Spartan Dr  
Elgin, IL 60123  
[cteelgin.com](http://cteelgin.com)

### **Dundee Township Historical Society**

426 Highland Ave  
West Dundee, IL 60118  
[dundeetownshiphistorical.org](http://dundeetownshiphistorical.org)

### **Elgin Community College Departments of History and Political Science**

2066 Muirfield Cir  
Elgin, IL 60123  
[chicagolandiaorahistory.org/  
about](http://chicagolandiaorahistory.org/about)

### **Elgin History Museum**

360 Park St  
Elgin, IL 60120  
[elginhistory.org](http://elginhistory.org)

### **Hamilton Wings**

14 Crescent St  
Elgin, IL 60123  
[hamiltonwings.com](http://hamiltonwings.com)

### **St. Charles History Museum**

215 E Main St  
St. Charles, IL 60174  
[stcmuseum.org](http://stcmuseum.org)

## **Kankakee**

### **Bourbonnais Public Library**

250 W John Casey Rd  
Bourbonnais, IL 60914  
[bourbonnaislibrary.org](http://bourbonnaislibrary.org)

## **Knox**

### **Discovery Depot Children's Museum**

128 S Chambers St  
Galesburg, IL 61401  
[discoverydepot.org](http://discoverydepot.org)

### **Galesburg Civic Art Center**

114 E Main St  
Galesburg, IL 61401  
[galesburgarts.org](http://galesburgarts.org)

### **Galesburg Public Library**

40 E Simmons St  
Galesburg, IL 61401  
[galesburglibrary.org](http://galesburglibrary.org)

### **Ransom Memorial Library Historical Society**

246 E Main St  
Ste 101  
Galesburg, IL 61401  
[facebook.com/  
AltonaPublicLibrary](https://facebook.com/AltonaPublicLibrary)

## **Lake**

### **Adler Arts Center**

1700 N Milwaukee Ave  
Libertyville, IL 60048  
[adlercenter.org](http://adlercenter.org)

### **Barrington History Museum**

212 W Main St  
Barrington, IL 60010  
[barringtonhistorymuseum.com](http://barringtonhistorymuseum.com)

### **Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods**

21850 N Riverwoods Rd  
Riverwoods, IL 60015  
[brushwoodcenter.org](http://brushwoodcenter.org)

### **History Center Lake Forest Lake Bluff**

509 E Deerpath  
Lake Forest, IL 60045  
[lfbhistory.org](http://lfbhistory.org)

### **Ray Bradbury Experience Museum**

13 N Genesee St  
Waukegan, IL 60085  
[raybradburyexperiencemuse-  
um.org](http://raybradburyexperiencemuseum.org)

### **Waukegan Park District**

1324 Golf Rd  
Waukegan, IL 60087  
[waukeganparks.org](http://waukeganparks.org)

## **LaSalle**

### **Canal Corridor Association**

754 First St  
LaSalle, IL 61301  
[iandmcanal.org](http://iandmcanal.org)

### **Hegeler Carus Foundation**

1307 Seventh St  
La Salle, IL 61301  
[hegelercarus.org](http://hegelercarus.org)

### **LaSalle County Historical Society**

101 E Canal St  
PO Box 278  
Utica, IL 61373  
[lasallemuseum.org](http://lasallemuseum.org)

### **LaSalle Public Library**

305 Marquette St  
LaSalle, IL 61301  
[lasalle.lib.il.us](http://lasalle.lib.il.us)

### **The Museum of Westclox**

350 5th St  
Ste 265  
Peru, IL 61354  
[westcloxmuseum.com](http://westcloxmuseum.com)

### **Reddick Mansion Association**

100 W Lafayette St  
Ottawa, IL 61350  
[reddickmansion.org](http://reddickmansion.org)

## **Lawrence**

### **Lawrence County Historical Society**

619 12th St  
PO Box 425  
Lawrenceville, IL 62439  
[lawrencelore.org](http://lawrencelore.org)

## **Lee**

### **Lincoln Highway Interpretive Center**

136 N Elm St  
Franklin Grove, IL 61031  
[illinoislincolnhighwayassocia-  
tion.org](http://illinoislincolnhighwayassociation.org)

### **Ronald Reagan Boyhood Home**

810/816 S Hennepin Ave  
Dixon, IL 61021  
[reaganhome.org](http://reaganhome.org)

## **Livingston**

### **Fairbury Echoes Museum**

126 W Locust St  
Fairbury, IL 61739  
[fairburyechoes.org](http://fairburyechoes.org)

### **Greater Livingston County Arts Council**

209 W Madison St  
Pontiac, IL 61764  
[artsinpontiac.org](http://artsinpontiac.org)

## **Livingston**

### **Livingston County Historical Society**

115 W Howard St  
Pontiac, IL 61764  
[livchs.org](http://livchs.org)

## **Logan**

### **Atlanta Public Library and Museum**

100 NW Race St  
PO Box 568  
Atlanta, IL 61723  
[atlantapld.org](http://atlantapld.org)

### **Lincoln Heritage Museum**

1115 Nicholson Rd  
Mailing: 300 Keokuk St  
Lincoln, IL 62656  
[museum.lincolncollege.edu](http://museum.lincolncollege.edu)

### **Logan County Genealogical and Historical Society**

114 N Chicago St  
Lincoln, IL 62656  
[logancoil-genhist.org](http://logancoil-genhist.org);  
[sites.rootsweb.com/~illcgsh](http://sites.rootsweb.com/~illcgsh)

### **Mount Pulaski Township Historical Society Museum and Genealogy Center**

102-104 E Cooke St  
Mount Pulaski, IL 62548  
[mountpulaskitownshiphistoricalsociety.com](http://mountpulaskitownshiphistoricalsociety.com)

## **Macon**

### **African-American Cultural & Genealogical Society of Illinois**

235 W Eldorado St  
PO Box 25251  
Decatur, IL 62525  
[african-americancultural.org](http://african-americancultural.org)

### **James Millikin Homestead**

125 N Pine St  
Decatur, IL 62522  
[jamesmillikinhomestead.com](http://jamesmillikinhomestead.com)

### **Millikin University**

1184 W Main St  
Decatur, IL 62522  
[millikin.edu](http://millikin.edu)

## **South Macon Public Library**

451 W Glenn St  
PO Box 288  
Macon, IL 62544  
[southmacon.lib.il.us](http://southmacon.lib.il.us)

## **Macoupin**

### **Bunker Hill Public Library District**

220 E Warren St  
Bunker Hill, IL 62014  
[bunkerhilllibrary.org](http://bunkerhilllibrary.org)

### **Carlinville Public Library**

510 N Broad St  
PO Box 17  
Carlinville, IL 62626  
[carlinvillelibrary.org](http://carlinvillelibrary.org)

### **Illinois Coal Museum at Gillespie**

121 S Macoupin  
Gillespie, IL 62033  
[gillespiecoalmuseum.org](http://gillespiecoalmuseum.org)

### **Macoupin County Historical Society**

920 W Breckenridge St  
Carlinville, IL 62626  
[mchssociety.org](http://mchssociety.org)

### **Mount Olive Illinois Public Library**

100 N Plum St  
Mount Olive, IL 62069  
[mtolivepubliclibrary.com](http://mtolivepubliclibrary.com)

### **Staunton Public Library**

306 W Main  
Staunton, IL 62088  
[stauntonpubliclibrary.weebly.com](http://stauntonpubliclibrary.weebly.com)

## **Madison**

### **1820 Col. Benjamin Stephenson House**

409 S Buchanan  
PO Box 754  
Edwardsville, IL 62025  
[stephensonhouse.org](http://stephensonhouse.org)

### **Edwardsville Public Library**

112 S Kansas St  
Edwardsville, IL 62025  
[edwardsvillelibrary.org](http://edwardsvillelibrary.org)

### **Edwardsville Unity**

235 Adams St  
Edwardsville, IL 62025  
[edwardsvilleunity.com](http://edwardsvilleunity.com)

### **Madison County Historical Society**

801 N Main St  
Edwardsville, IL 62025  
[madcohistory.org](http://madcohistory.org)

### **Mississippi Valley Library District**

408 W Main St  
Collinsville, IL 62234  
[mvld.org](http://mvld.org)

## **Marion**

### **Centralia Area Historical Society**

240 S Locust St  
Centralia, IL 62801  
[facebook.com/CentraliaArea-HistoricalMuseum](http://facebook.com/CentraliaArea-HistoricalMuseum)

### **Kinmundy Public Library**

111 S Monroe St  
PO Box 85  
Kinmundy, IL 62854  
[facebook.com/KinmundyPublicLibrary](http://facebook.com/KinmundyPublicLibrary)



## **Massac**

**Metropolis Public Library**  
317 Metropolis St  
Metropolis, IL 62960  
[metropolispubliclibrary.com](http://metropolispubliclibrary.com)

## **McDonough**

**Bushnell Public Library**  
455 N Dean St  
Bushnell, IL 61422  
[plibrary@frontier.com](mailto:plibrary@frontier.com)

**Macomb Public Library**  
235 S Lafayette St  
Macomb, IL 61455  
[macomb.lib.il.us](http://macomb.lib.il.us)

**McDonough County  
Genealogical Society**  
210 S Lafayette  
PO Box 202  
Macomb, IL 61440  
[mcdcgs.com](http://mcdcgs.com)

**Western Illinois Museum**  
201 S Lafayette St  
Macomb, IL 61455  
[wimuseum.org](http://wimuseum.org)

## **McHenry**

**Fox River Grove  
Memorial Library**  
407 Lincoln Ave  
Fox River Grove, IL 60021  
[frgml.org](http://frgml.org)

**McHenry County Historical  
Society & Museum**  
6422 Main St  
PO Box 434  
Union, IL 60180  
[mchenrycountyhistory.org](http://mchenrycountyhistory.org)

**McHenry County Illinois  
Genealogical Society**  
PO Box 184  
Crystal Lake, IL 60156  
[mcigs.org](http://mcigs.org)

## **McLean**

**Coalescence Theatre**  
9511 Grandville Pl  
Bloomington, IL 61705  
[coalescencetheatre.org](http://coalescencetheatre.org)

**David Davis  
Mansion Foundation**  
1000 Monroe Dr  
Bloomington, IL 61701  
[daviddavismansion.org](http://daviddavismansion.org)

**McLean County Museum  
of History**  
200 N Main St  
Bloomington, IL 61701  
[mchistory.org](http://mchistory.org)

**Spoon River  
Poetry Association**  
206 Bird Ct  
Normal, IL 61761  
[srpr.org](http://srpr.org)

## **Menard**

**Historic Marbold  
Farmstead Association**  
21722 State Hwy 29  
PO Box 438  
Greenview, IL 62642  
[historic-marbold-farmstead.org](http://historic-marbold-farmstead.org)

**Petersburg Public Library**  
220 S 6th St  
Petersburg, IL 62675  
[petersburgpubliclibraryil.org](http://petersburgpubliclibraryil.org)

## **Monroe**

**Morrison Talbott Library**  
215 Park St  
Waterloo, IL 62298  
[waterloolibrary.org](http://waterloolibrary.org)

## **Montgomery**

**Farmersville-Waggoner Public  
Library District**  
210 S Cleveland St  
PO Box 12  
Farmersville, IL 62533  
[fwlibrary@royell.org](mailto:fwlibrary@royell.org)

**Imagine Hillsboro  
Theater Group**  
PO Box 234  
Hillsboro, IL 62049  
[imaginehillsboro.com](http://imaginehillsboro.com)

## **Morgan**

**Jacksonville Main Street**  
222 W State St  
PO Box 152  
Jacksonville, IL 62651  
[jacksonvillemainstreet.com](http://jacksonvillemainstreet.com)

**MCHS / Underground  
Railroad Committee**  
PO Box 116  
Jacksonville, IL 62651  
[woodlawnfarm.com](http://woodlawnfarm.com)

## **Ogle**

**Crossroads Blues Society**  
PO Box 840  
Byron, IL 61010  
[crossroadsbluessociety.com](http://crossroadsbluessociety.com)

**Flagg-Rochelle Public Library**  
619 Fourth Ave  
Rochelle, IL 61068  
[flaggrochellepubliclibrary.org](http://flaggrochellepubliclibrary.org)

## **Peoria**

**Artists Reenvisioning  
Tomorrow**  
919 NE Jefferson Ave  
Peoria, IL 61603  
[artincpeoria.org](http://artincpeoria.org)

**East Bluff Community Center**  
512 E Kansas St  
Peoria, IL 61603  
[eastbluffcommunitycenter.org](http://eastbluffcommunitycenter.org)

**Heritage Ensemble**  
101 MacArthur Hwy  
PO Box 9467  
Peoria, IL 61612  
[heritageensemble.com](http://heritageensemble.com)

**Peoria Historical Society**  
611 SW Washington St  
Peoria, IL 61602  
[peoriahistoricalsociety.com](http://peoriahistoricalsociety.com)

**The Corn Stock Theatre**  
1700 N Park Rd  
West Peoria, IL 61604  
[cornstocktheatre.com](http://cornstocktheatre.com)

**The Peoria Art Guild**  
203 Harrison St  
Peoria, IL 61602  
[peoriaartguild.org](http://peoriaartguild.org)

**Wheels O' Time Museum**  
1710 W Woodside Dr  
Dunlap, IL 61525  
[wheelsotime.org](http://wheelsotime.org)

### **Perry**

**Illinois Rural Heritage Museum**  
187 Fairground Rd  
PO Box 58  
Pinckneyville, IL 62274  
[illinoisruralheritagemuseum.org](http://illinoisruralheritagemuseum.org)

**Pinckneyville Public Library**  
312 S Walnut St  
Pinckneyville, IL 62274  
[pinckneyvillelibrary.com](http://pinckneyvillelibrary.com)

### **Pike**

**Abe Lincoln Project**  
215 N Monroe St  
PO Box 62  
Pittsfield, IL 62363  
[pikelincoln.com](http://pikelincoln.com)

**New Philadelphia Association**  
PO Box 54  
Barry, IL 62312  
[newphiladelphiail.org](http://newphiladelphiail.org)

### **Pulaski**

**Legacy Training, Inc.**  
14949 St Hwy 37  
PO Box 52  
Grand Chain, IL 62941  
[legacytraininginc.org](http://legacytraininginc.org)

**Mound City National Cemetery Preservation Commission**  
315 S Fourth St  
PO Box 45  
Mound City, IL 62963  
[moundcitynationalcemetery.org](http://moundcitynationalcemetery.org)

### **Putnam**

**Magnolia Township Preservation Association**  
110 N Peoria St  
PO Box 23  
Magnolia, IL 61336  
[magnoliatpa.org](http://magnoliatpa.org)

### **Randolph**

**Les Amis du Fort de Chartres**  
4074 IL Route 155  
PO Box 366  
Prairie du Rocher, IL 62277  
[fortdechartres.us](http://fortdechartres.us)

**Sparta Public Library**  
211 W Broadway  
Sparta, IL 62286  
[spartapubliclibrary.com](http://spartapubliclibrary.com)

**Steeleville Area Public Library District**  
625 S Sparta St  
Steeleville, IL 62288  
[steelevillelibrary.org](http://steelevillelibrary.org)

**Tilden Public Library**  
381 Butler St  
PO Box 118  
Tilden, IL 62292  
[frontier.com](http://frontier.com)

### **Rock Island**

**Ballet Quad Cities**  
613 17th St  
Rock Island, IL 61201  
[balletquadcities.com](http://balletquadcities.com)

**Colonel Davenport Historical Foundation**  
PO Box 4603  
Rock Island, IL 61204  
[davenporthouse.org](http://davenporthouse.org)

**Fresh Films**  
639 38th St  
Rock Island, IL 61201  
[freshfilms.org](http://freshfilms.org)

**Genesis Theatre Foundation**  
1120 40th St  
Rock Island, IL 61201  
[genesius.org](http://genesius.org)

**Hauberg Civic Center Foundation**  
1300 24th St  
Rock Island, IL 61201  
[haubergestate.org](http://haubergestate.org)

**Quad Cities Jazz Festival**  
719 17th St  
PO Box 166  
East Moline, IL 61244  
[facebook.com/polyjazzheritagefest](https://facebook.com/polyjazzheritagefest)

**The Midwest Writing Center c/o RIPL**  
401 19th St  
Rock Island, IL 61201  
[mwcqc.org](http://mwcqc.org)

## **Saline**

### **Carrier Mills-Stonefort Public Library District**

109 Oak St  
PO Box 338  
Carrier Mills, IL 62917  
[librarytechnology.org/library/17292](http://librarytechnology.org/library/17292)

## **Sangamon**

### **Garvey Tubman Cultural Arts and Research Center**

1319 S 13th St  
Springfield, IL 62703  
[garveytubman.org](http://garveytubman.org)

### **Hoogland Center for the Arts**

420 S Sixth St  
Springfield, IL 62701  
[hcfta.org](http://hcfta.org)

### **Illinois Route 66 Heritage Project**

1045 S 5th St  
Springfield, IL 62703  
[illinoisroute66.org](http://illinoisroute66.org)

### **Illinois State Genealogical Society**

PO Box 10195  
Springfield, IL 62756  
[ilgensoc.org](http://ilgensoc.org)

### **Illinois State Historical Society**

5255 Shepherd Rd  
Springfield, IL 62703  
[historyillinois.org](http://historyillinois.org)

### **Illinois State Museum Society**

502 S Spring St  
Springfield, IL 62706  
[illinoisstatemuseum.org](http://illinoisstatemuseum.org)

### **Looking for Lincoln**

PO Box 5398  
Springfield, IL 62705  
[lookingforlincoln.org](http://lookingforlincoln.org)

### **Rochester Public Library District**

1 Community Dr  
Rochester, IL 62563  
[rochesterlibrary.org](http://rochesterlibrary.org)

### **Route History Institute**

737 E Cook St  
Ste B  
Springfield, IL 62703  
[contact@routehistoryinstitute.org](mailto:contact@routehistoryinstitute.org)

### **Springfield & Central Illinois African American History Museum**

1440 Monument Ave  
PO Box 301  
Springfield, IL 62705  
[spiaahm.org](http://spiaahm.org)

### **Springfield Theatre Centre**

420 S 6th St  
Springfield, IL 62701  
[springfieldtheatrecentre.com](http://springfieldtheatrecentre.com)

## **Schuyler**

### **Schuyler Jail Museum**

200 S Congress St  
Rushville, IL 62681  
[thescaf.org](http://thescaf.org)

### **The HUB Arts and Cultural Center**

210 N Congress St  
Rushville, IL 62681  
[thehubart.com](http://thehubart.com)

## **Scott**

### **Old School Museum**

110 E Cherry  
Winchester, IL 62694  
[facebook.com/OldSchoolMuseumIL](https://facebook.com/OldSchoolMuseumIL)

## **St. Clair**

### **Belleville Public Library**

121 E Washington  
Belleville, IL 62220  
[bellevillepubliclibrary.org](http://bellevillepubliclibrary.org)

### **Caseyville Public Library District**

419 S Second St  
Caseyville, IL 62232  
[caseyvillelibrary.org](http://caseyvillelibrary.org)

### **Center for Racial Harmony**

PO Box 296  
Belleville, IL 62222  
[centerforracialharmony.org](http://centerforracialharmony.org)

### **East St. Louis Historical Society**

PO Box 641  
East St. Louis, IL 62202  
[facebook.com/people/East-St-Louis-Historical-Society/100069089851691](https://facebook.com/people/East-St-Louis-Historical-Society/100069089851691)

### **Fairview Heights Public Library**

10017 Bunkum Rd  
Fairview Heights, IL 62208  
[fhplibrary.org](http://fhplibrary.org)

### **House of Miles East St. Louis**

1701 Kansas Ave  
East St. Louis, IL 62205  
PO Box 243  
East St. Louis, IL 62202  
[houseofmilesestl.org](http://houseofmilesestl.org)

### **Jackie Joyner-Kersee Foundation**

101 Jackie Joyner-Kersee Circle  
East St. Louis, IL 62204  
[jjkfoundation.org](http://jjkfoundation.org)

### **Katherine Dunham Centers for Arts and Humanities**

1005 Pennsylvania Ave  
East St. Louis, IL 62201  
[kdcah.org](http://kdcah.org)



**Mascoutah Public Library**

3 W Church St  
Mascoutah, IL 62258  
[mascoutahlibrary.com](http://mascoutahlibrary.com)

**Metro East Literacy Project**

119 Famous St  
O Fallon, IL 62269  
[metroeastliteracyproject.org](http://metroeastliteracyproject.org)

**Millstadt Library**

115 W Laurel St  
Millstadt, IL 62260  
[millstadt-library.org](http://millstadt-library.org)

**MindsEye Radio**

9541 Church Circle Dr  
Belleville, IL 62223  
[mindseyeradio.org](http://mindseyeradio.org)

**St. Clair County  
Historical Society**

701 E Washington St  
Belleville, IL 62220  
[stcchs.org](http://stcchs.org)

**Uni-Pres Kindercottage**

564 Veronica Ave  
East St. Louis, IL 62205  
[unipreskindercottage.org](http://unipreskindercottage.org)

**Stark****Stark County Illinois  
Historical Society**

318 W Jefferson  
PO Box 524  
Toulon, IL 61483  
[starkcountyillinoishistoricals.godaddysites.com](http://starkcountyillinoishistoricals.godaddysites.com)

**Stephenson****Cedarville Area  
Historical Society**

450 2nd St  
Cederville, IL 61013  
Mailing: 1212 S Stewart Ave  
Freeport, IL 61032  
[cedarvilleareahistoricalsociety.org](http://cedarvilleareahistoricalsociety.org)

**Stephenson County  
Historical Society**

1440 S Carroll Ave  
Freeport, IL 61032  
[stephcohs.org](http://stephcohs.org)

**Tazewell****Deer Creek District Library**

205 E First Ave  
PO Box 347  
Deer Creek, IL 61733  
[deercreeklibrary.org](http://deercreeklibrary.org)

**Delavan Community  
Historical Society**

319 S Locust St  
PO Box 643  
Delavan, IL 61734  
[facebook.com/DelavanCommunityHistoricalSociety](http://facebook.com/DelavanCommunityHistoricalSociety)

**Eastlight Theatre**

201 Veterans Dr  
East Peoria, IL 61611  
[eastlighttheatre.com](http://eastlighttheatre.com)

**Tazewell County Genealogical  
& Historical Society**

719 N 11th St  
PO Box 312  
Pekin, IL 61555  
[tcghs.org](http://tcghs.org)

**Union****P.A.S.T. of Union County**

102 S Main  
PO Box 778  
Jonesboro, IL 62920  
[pastofunco@gmail.com](mailto:pastofunco@gmail.com)

**The Climate Economy  
Education**

1700 Robinson Hill Rd  
Makanda, IL 62958  
[theclimateeconomy.com](http://theclimateeconomy.com)

**Vermilion****Georgetown Illinois  
Public Library**

102 W West St  
Georgetown, IL 61846  
[facebook.com/georgetownILlibrary](http://facebook.com/georgetownILlibrary)

**Red Mask Players**

601 N Vermilion  
PO Box 814  
Danville, IL 61834  
[redmaskplayers.com](http://redmaskplayers.com)

**Sidell District Library**

101 E Market St  
PO Box 19  
Sidell, IL 61876  
[sidelldistrictlibrary.org](http://sidelldistrictlibrary.org)

**Vermilion Heritage Foundation**

158 N Vermilion St  
Danville, IL 61832  
[atthefischer.com](http://atthefischer.com)

**Wabash****Roots 'n' Que Festival**

801 W 9th St  
PO Box 305  
Mt Carmel, IL 62863  
[rootsnque.com](http://rootsnque.com)

**Washington****Washington County  
Historical Society**

326 S Kaskaskia St  
PO Box 9  
Nashville, IL 62263  
[facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057571655962](http://facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057571655962)

**White****Groff Memorial Public Library**

118 S Middle St  
Grayville, IL 62844  
[grofflibrary@gmail.com](mailto:grofflibrary@gmail.com)

## **Will**

### **Governors State University**

One University Parkway  
University Park, IL 60484  
[govst.edu](http://govst.edu)

### **Joliet Area Historical Museum**

204 N Ottawa St  
Joliet, IL 60432  
[jolietmuseum.org](http://jolietmuseum.org)

### **Lewis University**

One University Parkway  
Romeoville, IL 60446  
[luartsandideas.org](http://luartsandideas.org)

### **Midwest SOARRING Foundation**

133 W 13th St  
Lockport, IL 60441  
[midwestsoarring.org](http://midwestsoarring.org)

## **Plainfield Historical Society**

23836 W Main St  
Plainfield, IL 60544  
[plainfieldhistoricalsociety.il@gmail.com](mailto:plainfieldhistoricalsociety.il@gmail.com)

## **Williamson**

### **Anne West Lindsey District Library**

600 N Division St  
Carterville, IL 62918  
[awlindsey.com](http://awlindsey.com)

### **Herrin City Library**

120 N 13th St  
Herrin, IL 62948  
[herrincitylibrary.org](http://herrincitylibrary.org)

### **Williamson County Historical Society**

105 S Van Buren St  
Marion, IL 62959  
[wcihs.org](http://wcihs.org)

## **Winnebago**

### **Ethnic Heritage Museum / Heritage Museum Park**

1129 S Main St  
Rockford, IL 61101  
[ethnicheritagemuseum.org](http://ethnicheritagemuseum.org)

### **Midway Village Museum**

6799 Guilford Rd  
Rockford, IL 61107  
[midwayvillage.com](http://midwayvillage.com)

### **Rockford Art Museum**

711 N Main St  
Rockford, IL 61103  
[rockfordartmuseum.org](http://rockfordartmuseum.org)

### **Winnebago Community Historical Society**

PO Box 95  
Winnebago, IL 61088  
[wchs61088.org](http://wchs61088.org)



# Appendices

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## Data and Methodology

Data internal to Illinois Humanities were captured via grant applications and final reports.

Data from grant applications include the following:

- Organization name
- Year founded
- County
- Address
- Rural designation
- Annual budget
- Grant type
- Grant amount
- Humanities organization category
- Discipline
- Audience type
- Impacts of COVID (lost revenue, losing space, staff layoff, risk of permanent closure, use of savings/ reserves)
- Priority Groups (communities of color, communities highly impacted by mass incarceration, low-income individuals (defined as living at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines), rural communities)

- Executive Director race
- Executive Director gender
- Revenue Loss
- Audience Loss

Data from final reports include the following:

- Full-time jobs created
- Part-time jobs created
- Full-time jobs retained
- Part-time jobs retained

Data external to Illinois Humanities include the following:

- US Census (2020 American Community Survey): population; geographic boundaries for counties and zip codes
- United Way of Illinois: ALICE
- Illinois Department of Public Health: incidence of COVID-19 per zip code (August 2022)
- Illinois Bandwidth Lab: sufficient access to broadband (unserved areas at 100 Mbps Upload / 20 Mbps Download)
- Illinois Senate Redistricting Committee: congressional districts

Limitations of data internal to Illinois Humanities include the following:

- Partial Data: Illinois Humanities expanded its data capture between 2020 and 2021, including between cycles\* in 2020. As a result, the following data were collected for 2021 and 2022 grantee partners, but not 2020 grantee partners:
  - Priority groups
  - Percentage BIPOC staff
  - Executive Director gender
  - Executive Director race
  - Discipline
  - Audience Type
  - Year Founded (acquired via GuideStar for 2020 grantee partners)
  - Revenue Loss (\*not collected in the first cycle of 2020 for 24 grantee partners)
  - Audience Loss (\*not collected in the first cycle of 2020 for 24 grantee partners)
  - COVID-19 Impacts (\*not collected in the first cycle of 2020 for 24 grantee partners)



- Final Reports: Illinois Humanities grantee partners submit final reports approximately one year after receiving awards. Because organizations received 2022 'State of IL' grants in the fall of 2022 and this report was published in April of 2023, this report does not include data from 2022 grantee partners regarding jobs created and retained.
  - Rural Designation: 2020 grantee partners were designated rural via ArcGIS analysis based on the US Census' designation of urban areas. In an effort to recognize the varied experiences of rurality, Illinois Humanities asked 2021 and 2022 grantee partners to self-indicate whether they were in rural communities. These data sets were combined to render the urban/rural figures in this publication.
  - Humanities Organization Categories: After 2020, Illinois Humanities adjusted language and expanded its list of humanities organization categories. Due to the lesser number of categories in 2020, data from 2021 and 2022 were standardized to 2020 categories. The following list contains 2020 categories with the 2021/2022 categories assigned to them in parentheses: 'Culture and Heritage' ('Cultural and Ethnic organizations'), 'Education' ('Libraries and Archives,' 'Education,' 'Humanities Education'), 'History' ('History organizations,' 'Humanities Museums'), 'Literature and Writing' ('Literature organizations'), 'Media' ('Media, Journalism, and Documentary organizations'); 'Arts' and 'Civic and Community Engagement' were used across years; 'Consortium, Alliance, or Collective' was introduced in 2021. In 2020, applicants were asked to select primary and secondary categories. Only primary categories were used in this publication.
- Data Analysis Process
1. Illinois Humanities collected data in two capture phases: grant applications and final reports.
  2. The project team gathered additional contextual data from external sources listed above.
  3. Data was analyzed and visualized with Microsoft Excel. Maps were generated with ArcGIS and formatted with Adobe Creative Suite. Data tables were built with Adobe Creative Suite.
  4. Congressional districts were assigned via ArcGIS analysis.
  5. Phase 1 Cleaning: All internal data was cleaned in Microsoft Excel: numbers in open responses were isolated and standardized to integers (Percentage BIPOC Staff, Revenue Loss, Audience Loss), and nomenclature was standardized (Executive Director race according to US Census categories, Executive Director gender as woman, man, and non-binary).
  6. The following data sets for 2021 and 2022 grantee partners were then separately analyzed: priority groups, percentage BIPOC staff, executive director race, executive director gender, discipline, audience type, and humanities category.
  7. Phase 2 Cleaning: Data across 2020, 2021, and 2022 were made into one set and multiple rows for the same organization were collapsed into one, thus rendering a set of unique organizations across the three years. The following protocol was used to generate one row for multiyear grantee partners:
    - a. The most recent data were used for the following: name, year founded, county, address, rural designation, budget, category, discipline, audience type, Executive Director race, Executive Director gender, percentage BIPOC staff, full-time jobs created, part-time jobs created, full-time jobs retained, part-time jobs retained

- b. All data across years were included for the following: organizational impacts of COVID, priority groups, grant type, grant amount (summed across years)
- c. Solicitation language for revenue lost and audience lost changed between 2021 and 2022. 2020 and 2021 applicants were asked to estimate their total losses due to the pandemic, while 2022 applicants were asked to estimate their losses in the past year due to the pandemic. As such, for multi-year grantee partners who received awards in 2022, losses reported in their 2022 applications were summed with losses reported in either 2020 or 2021, prioritizing 2021 data for three-year grantee partners.

8. The following data sets for unique organizations were analyzed: year founded, county, rural designation, congressional district, budget, award, humanities category, impacts of COVID, full-time jobs created, part-time jobs created, full-time jobs retained, part-time jobs retained, revenue loss, audience loss, libraries or library districts.

9. Grantee partners were mapped against ALICE and COVID incidence, both by zip code, and against sufficient access to broadband, urban areas, and congressional districts all via ArcGIS.

### Defining “Sufficient Access to Broadband”

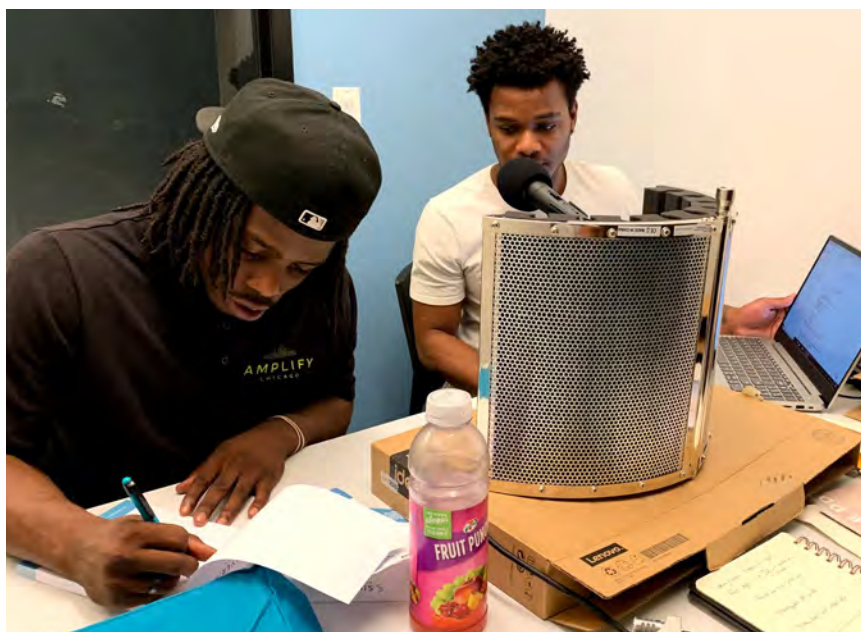
“Sufficient access to broadband” is defined as broadband speeds of 100Mbps download / 20 Mbps upload. According to § 1740.2 of the Federal Code of Regulations, sufficient access to broadband is “the minimum acceptable level of broadband, as set forth in the latest Federal Register notice announcing funding for the program.”<sup>1</sup> As stated in Volume 86, Number 283 of the Federal Register (2021) announcing funding

for the Rural eConnectivity Program, sufficient access to broadband is “defined as 100 megabits per second (Mbps) downstream [download] and 20 Mbps upstream [upload].”<sup>2</sup> Additionally, in a 2022 press release from the Federal Communications Commission announcing a Notice of Inquiry, FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel proposed “to increase the national broadband standard to 100 megabits per second for download and 20 megabits per second for upload.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Code of Federal Regulations. “7 CFR § 1740.2 - Definitions.” Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Federal Register Vol. 86, No. 283 (Oct. 25, 2021): 2.

<sup>3</sup> Federal Communications Commission. “Chairwoman Rosenworcel proposes to Increase Minimum Broadband Speeds and Set Gigabit Future Goal.” July 15, 2022. <https://www.fcc.gov/document/chairwoman-rosenworcel-proposes-increase-minimum-broadband-speeds>.



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# Bibliography

*A note on terms: This report draws on national and international research regarding the impacts of arts and culture organizations. Research that explicitly names “humanities organizations” is notably absent from the literature base. However, research into the ways in which “arts” and “culture” impact communities consistently includes humanities organizations such as heritage and history museums and sites as well as humanities activities such as creative placemaking and place-based interpretation, poetry and literature, dialogues and facilitated conversations, cultural and ethnic education, heritage museums, broadcasting, publishing, musical interpretation, post-performance “talk-backs,” etc.*

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