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HARRIET P. HENRY
CENTER FOR THE BOOK

September 1, 2009

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The Maine Humanities Council is a statewide organization that supports life-long learning, and is the state affiliate of both the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of Congress Center for the Book. It is a partner with Maine's state cultural agencies, and a member of the Maine Cultural Affairs Council. Through statewide educational programs, the Council addresses a range of needs, including literacy, promotion of reading, teacher enrichment, community history, and cultural tourism. Our constituents include low-literacy adults, early childhood educators, public and private school teachers, prisoners, health care workers, library patrons and members of the general public.

The Council's modest state appropriation of (approximately \$55,000) is an essential part of its budget, and is used to provide small grants to Maine's cultural organizations. We have maximum efficiency: 100% of state funds received are awarded as grants, with nothing removed for overhead or administration. From grants of \$500 to support speakers and small programs, up to \$5,000 for larger programming, we support public humanities projects statewide, including:

- Exhibits
- Lectures
- Programs in Schools
- Reading and discussion programs
- Oral history projects
- Community history research and art projects

Each organization that receives a grant matches the funds at least 1:1 through cash and in-kind support, and these matched funds are leveraged and help serve as match to release Federal funds. Therefore the allocation that we receive from state monies allows well over \$200,000 of cultural activities to occur. As many community organizations have had funding cutbacks, demand for these grants has grown, and even at their reduced level following several years of across the board reductions, the program remains a vital and effective one.

The state's role in this organization is a critical one - these funds allow us to help keep the state of Maine a culturally rich and inquisitive place, enriching the lives of our residents.