



North Carolina  
**humanities** | 50 *Years*

**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
2022-2027



Welcome!

I am pleased to present the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan for North Carolina Humanities.

In the pages ahead you will find the passion and excitement that North Carolina Humanities holds for our vibrant, collective future.

This Strategic Plan sets forth four main objectives that will guide North Carolina Humanities through 2027 and ensure that the programs, grants, and operations of the organization meet our mission of connecting North Carolinians with cultural experiences that spur dialogue, deepen human connections, and inspire community. Throughout the next five years, we will assess the impact of our collective work, creating space for growth and development, and investigate future opportunities to respond to our ever-changing landscape.

We are deeply grateful to the many members of our community and organizations around the state who make our work possible. This Strategic Plan was developed using the direct contributions of many; we thank those community stakeholders whose wisdom and perspectives informed the strategies detailed in this plan. We are especially grateful to the North Carolina Humanities Board of Trustees, whose leadership and vision guided the organization through the creation of this plan for a deeper and larger organizational impact across North Carolina.

Because the humanities are essential to a flourishing society, North Carolina Humanities will focus on the following objectives from 2022-2027:

- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Resource Development
- Governance
- Grant and Program Impact

As the leading nonprofit organization charged with advancing public access to and support for the humanities across the state, North Carolina Humanities is uniquely positioned to connect both people and organizations together through the humanities. We hope you will join us in fostering a North Carolina equipped with empathy, understanding, and respect.

Sherry Paula Watkins, *Executive Director*



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# OUR MISSION

To connect North Carolinians with cultural experiences that spur dialogue, deepen human connections, and inspire community.

# OUR VISION

A North Carolina enriched by the humanities and equipped with empathy, understanding, and respect.

# OUR VALUES

- **Curiosity:** We believe that a strong desire to always learn more, know more, and question more is important for growth and lifelong happiness.
- **Diversity of ideas:** We believe that a diversity of ideas and perspectives is essential to a thriving society. We are all different, and we each bring something unique to the table.
- **Empowerment:** We believe that the humanities can empower change. We empower communities and people to have meaningful conversations and experiences that lead to a greater understanding of our differences and similarities.
- **Inclusion:** We believe that each person is worthy of equitable access to opportunities and resources.
- **Knowledge:** We believe that knowledge builds community. When we learn together, we become better neighbors and help North Carolina continue to be a great place for all.
- **Respect:** We believe everyone is important and worthy of politeness and dignity.

The humanities are a set of disciplines which help us understand what it means to be **human** by exploring:

- › **OUR PAST** – history & archaeology
- › **OUR CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS** - anthropology, literature, linguistics, languages, art history, theory, and criticism
- › **OUR VALUES** - ethics, philosophy, comparative religion, law



**“Democracy  
demands  
wisdom and  
vision...”**

- National Foundation on the Arts  
and Humanities Act of 1965

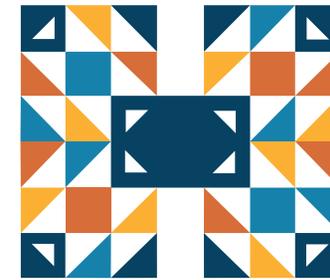
North Carolina Humanities marks its 50th anniversary in 2022.

Created in 1972 by congressional mandate, North Carolina Humanities is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities and one of 50+ such organizations nationally. For 50 years, North Carolina Humanities has continually developed offerings to meet the needs of North Carolina communities, both urban and rural, mountain and coastal.

North Carolina Humanities creates and facilitates humanities programs that help North Carolinians make sense of themselves, their neighbors, and their communities by considering new perspectives and thinking critically about the past, the present, and the future.

In our work we bring subject matter experts and community members together to learn about and discuss topics that are important to both our nation and North Carolina. The resulting conversations expand our understanding, respect, and empathy for each other's stories and experiences, which we believe enriches the lives of North Carolinians.

North Carolina Humanities could not do our work without the support of so many. We thank those who have helped North Carolina Humanities throughout the last 50 years – our founding committee members, our previous and current staff, our board alumni, and current trustees alongside our grantees, community scholars, program partners, and so many others who care deeply about North Carolina.



## North Carolina humanities

50 Years



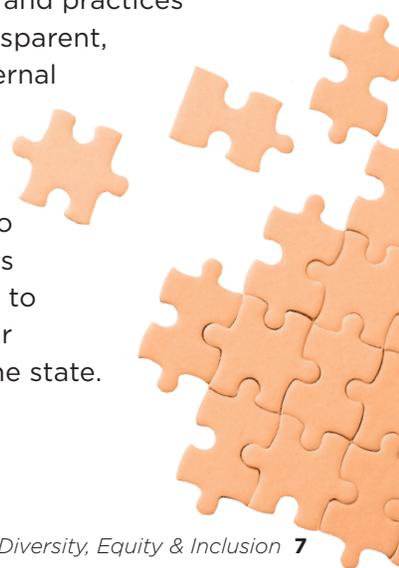


# OBJECTIVE 1

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

*Honor the humanity of every North Carolinian through a demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in every facet of North Carolina Humanities' vision, values, and practice.*

Inherent to our mission, vision, and values is an abiding respect for and celebration of the diversity of people, ideas, and experiences that make North Carolina so unique. That sentiment begins within as we demonstrate a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in every facet of our service. A comprehensive DEI Learning Plan, resources, training, a planned retreat for staff and board, and deliberate conversations at every level will launch this effort. We will audit our internal processes to ensure our policies and practices remain equitable, transparent, and inclusive. This internal work will build the foundation for our external work, as we apply what we learn to our granting processes and our programming to ultimately broaden our engagement across the state.



# OBJECTIVE 2

## GOVERNANCE



*Strengthen the Board of Trustees' impact upon organizational vision, mission, and the Strategic Plan.*

Recognizing that meaningful impact demands equipped and informed leadership, North Carolina Humanities ensures its Board of Trustees operates effectively with the resources necessary for success.

Our trustees possess knowledge and experience that support North Carolina Humanities' mission in a myriad of ways. Engaging trustees with unique perspectives and expertise provides North Carolina Humanities with the tools to thrive and authentically represent the statewide constituency we serve.

Operationally, our governance toolbox - including our Bylaws, this Strategic Plan, and our Committee Charters - will be strengthened through the application of new performance metrics and timely reviews. Our evaluation practices and reports will be refined to ensure that we allocate our resources responsibly to align with our priorities. Outside the boardroom, opportunities for trustees to connect with each other and communities across the state will continue to be vital.



# OBJECTIVE 3

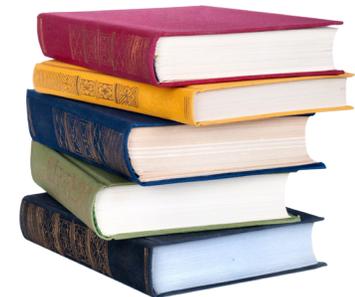
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## RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

### *Increase private funding in support of North Carolina Humanities' priorities.*

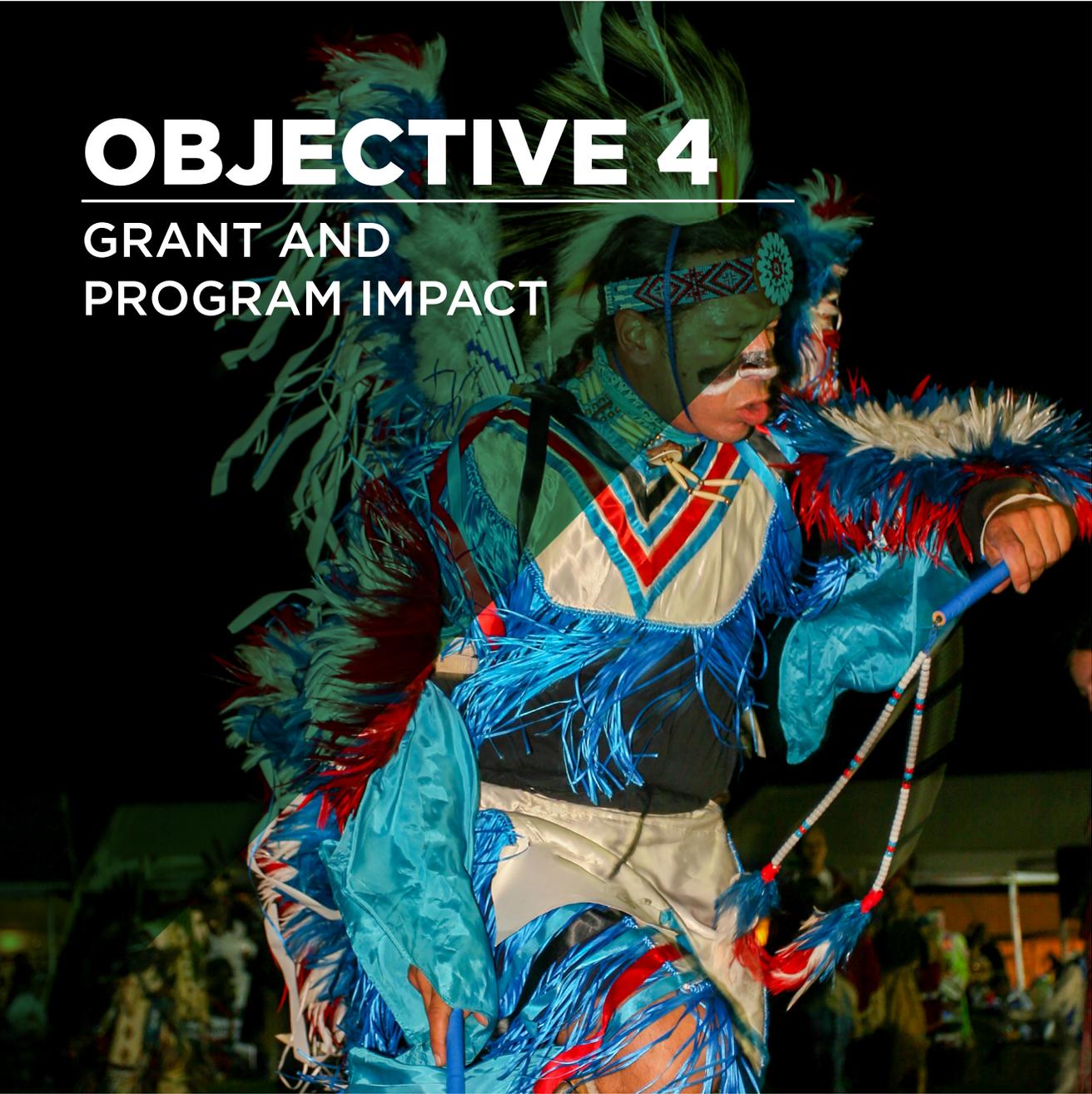
North Carolina Humanities is supported in part by the generosity of individuals across North Carolina and beyond. We thank those who engage with and support our work.

Over the next five years we will continue to diversify revenue streams in support of both short- and long-term financial stability. Key to this effort is our commitment to communicating our mission and deep impact in North Carolina. Using our website, social media, email newsletters, and other communication channels, we will emphasize our partners, grantees, and program participants to demonstrate our mission in action. North Carolina Humanities will also conduct a full review of our resource development practices and expand our annual development opportunities for new and committed stakeholders. Acknowledging our statewide mission, we will explore new ways, virtual and in-person, of engaging with our stakeholders and partners to increase our funding and support opportunities.



# OBJECTIVE 4

## GRANT AND PROGRAM IMPACT



*Evaluate North Carolina Humanities' programs and granting process against the organization's vision and explore new approaches to accomplish our mission.*

North Carolina Humanities exists to serve North Carolina through meaningful engagement with the disciplines we call the humanities. If we are successful, our partners and participants leave that experience with a better understanding of themselves, each other, and our shared humanity. To succeed, every program, grant, and event must align with our mission, vision, and values.



We will examine, and when necessary restructure, our programs and grants to incorporate updated language, guidelines, and expectations that reflect our desired impact and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Enlisting staff, trustees, and voices from communities across our state, North Carolina Humanities will explore and introduce new opportunities that broaden community engagement and elevate multicultural humanities. Ensuring our grants and programs are accessible to all means that every North Carolinian - regardless of age or ability, geography or gender, resource or race - is a welcomed, cherished contributor and participant in our organization.







*www.nchumanities.org*  
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