



SPRING 2020 NEWS
& 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



**A message from Executive Director
Brian Boyles &
Chair of the Board of Directors
Tom Putnam**



At Mass Humanities, we benefit from a unique vantage point: our commitment to serving every corner of Massachusetts. Ideas reach us from around the Commonwealth, generated by residents forging new ways to serve their communities.

This year's annual report (which you read on page 8) reflects the vibrancy of the humanities in our small towns and diverse cities. In 2019, this work felt urgent, necessary, and impactful.

Our partnerships ranged from grants to grassroots organizations to partnerships with world renowned universities. Launching start-ups or reinventing major museums, our grantees used the prism of the humanities to envision solutions. In a time wrenched by divisions, they chose to gather and read Frederick Douglass together in record numbers. Neighbors organized to demand that their stories be heard, through oral histories, exhibitions, and free public events. Well-established institutions embraced this movement, opening their doors to redefine our concepts of culture and place. Rattled by a raucous present, people turned to history for answers and direction. They turned to each other for conversation and collaboration.

Mass Humanities grants serve as catalysts for these collaborations, creating the bedrock for inclusion not just on gallery walls and stages, but on sidewalks and town halls. This year we received a record number of requests for funding. Through the generosity of our supporters and increased funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and Mass Cultural Council, we awarded more than \$520,000 in grants, an all-time high.

Encouraged by our talented staff, this year's grantees developed projects that included a teacher workshops on

the Holocaust, new documentary films, and discussions that ranged from environmental issues in the Berkshires to activism in Roxbury. We helped to launch a festival in Turner Falls, preserve Kerouac's papers in Lowell, and rethink the history of the Plymouth.

Every day we're reminded of the transformative power of the humanities when we hear from the faculty and students of the Clemente Course. Twice a week they meet, forging bonds with Plato, Jane Addams, and James Baldwin, but most of all, with each other. Through their dedication, they join the illustrious tradition of humanists in Massachusetts who've reshaped their surroundings for the better.

And as the year came to a close, we honored the 2019 Governor's Awards recipients, including author and ethicist Danielle Allen, who reminded us why we believe in the mission of Mass Humanities: "No one ever regrets accepting the invitation to bring the best of our human capacities to making meaning of common human trials." Thank you for sharing in this meaningful work. We hope to see you in your corner of Massachusetts in 2020.



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MAKING MEANING OUT OF THE MEANINGLESS



JUDITH FOSTER

Dorchester Clemente Course Student Judith Foster Tells Her Story

I spent the first nine years of my life on my mother's land along the beautiful Rio Magno in the district of Linstead, Jamaica. We grew all kinds of fruit and vegetables: peas, pineapples, sugarcane, bananas; you name it. I am so grateful to have experienced that idyllic childhood. It was like Eden.

My mother migrated to the U.S. in 1969, and eventually each of us five children followed. When I arrived in Dorchester in February 1975, I remember asking her what all this dirty stuff was all over the street. It was snow. It was terribly cold. I remember crying all the time.

I had done very well at school in Jamaica. There, participation in class was both mandatory and praised. Not so in Boston. I attended the now-closed Lucy Stone Elementary School and the Champlain Middle School.

Then I was bused to East Boston High. I remember angry people throwing things at the bus as it went by. In each of these schools, students were allowed to do pretty much whatever they wanted, including abusing the teachers. I remember one teacher advising me not to speak up in class.

I was often the target of bullying, and one such incident was bad enough to cause me to drop out just a couple of months before graduation. I managed to get my GED at Roxbury Community College a year later, and I went on to graduate from Hickox Secretarial School, in 1986. In the mid-eighties I had two sons and a daughter. I was in a physically and emotionally abusive relationship with their father.

We moved to Florida in 1987 and I worked at a few different jobs while attending school to become a medical assistant. I didn't graduate. In 1992, I fell four stories out of an apartment building. I spent four months in a hospital with many broken bones, and the doctors told my mother that

they did not expect me to live, and if I did live, I would not be able to walk. I proved them wrong on both counts, but I suffer to this day from chronic debilitating pain and memory problems that have gotten worse over time. I haven't been able to work for the past few years because of it. I am grateful that my mother, who is now 84, was able to step in and help raise my kids.

After the incident, I moved back to Boston and eventually was able to start a career in political campaigning, beginning with Mayor Thomas Menino's campaign in 1999. I worked on campaigns for Shannon O'Brien and Jill Stein for Massachusetts Governor, and President Obama and Senator John Kerry when they each ran for president. The proudest time of my career was working with the late Boston Councilman Chuck Turner at the Boston Redevelopment Authority and with the Boston Workers Alliance to reform the Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) system, which Governor Patrick signed into law in 2010. Among other things, the new law makes sure CORI reports are kept confidential and helps to protect the rights of the subject. Before that time, it was virtually impossible to get a job in Massachusetts if you had a criminal record of any kind.

In 1988, my son Paul was born. Like his siblings, Paul was a true blessing for me. He graduated from high school in 2006, and I promised him that if he went to college and got a bachelor's degree, I would as well. He enrolled at Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina, majoring in computer science engineering with a minor in marketing.

February is a difficult month for me. Three months before he was due to graduate, on February 22, 2013, Paul was shot and murdered for no good reason outside a nightclub in Charlotte. It is still an unsolved case. The police told me Paul had been seen having a verbal altercation with an unidentified man inside the club. That's all I know.

I can't remember anything else that happened in 2013. In 2014, I found the strength to act and started trying to think of ways to get justice for Paul in some form, as I was not able to file for any legal damages. I made videos and had a press conference about his case in North Carolina. I convinced the university to award Paul his degree posthumously.

Around that time, woman pastor told me, "whatever good God is doing for you, you should go out and do for others." My mother encouraged me to make a retreat,

and take some time for myself. So, I visited my childhood home in Jamaica for three months. I went to the rivers and beaches, enjoyed the fresh fruits and vegetables, and felt rejuvenated.

There I found the inspiration to establish the HERO Nurturing Center, a nonprofit organization dedicated to Paul. HERO stands for Healing Empathy Redemption Oasis. We built the Hope Garden, which my neighbors and I now use to grow our own fruits and vegetables right in the middle of Dorchester. We had lots of help from hard-working volunteers, my local state Representative Liz Miranda, and organizations like the Farmer Collaborative, Speak for the Trees, Farmers Food Forest Coalition, and American Forest. A video about the project in which I am featured can be found on YouTube (search "Community ReLeaf - Making Boston Vibrant").

With the encouragement of my friend, community activist Kevin Peterson, in July 2018, I attended the Reading Frederick Douglass event on the Boston Common. It's an amazing event that I want to organize here in Dorchester this year. There I met Rose Sackey-Milligan, a Mass Humanities program officer who is now retired, and she told me about the Clemente Course in the Humanities.

A light went on in my head. I thought, "This is how I can honor my promise to Paul and get my degree." I am currently enrolled in the program. It is incredibly convenient, with classes right at Codman Square Health Center two evenings a week, and the professors are incredible. It's also a way to get to know neighbors who have similar interests. Over the years, I've taken courses on and off at RCC, and I have earned about 36 credits. The six I receive through the Clemente Course will take me further along, and I plan to enroll again and work toward my bachelor's degree in art history.

Why art history? Because it takes me back to my childhood. In my house and neighborhood growing up, we had musical instruments of all kinds - banjos, slide whistles, drums - all carved out of the trees that surrounded us. I want to explore and reveal for others that art, history, and culture. I'll be using the skills, network, and confidence I'm finding in the Clemente Course to do for others the good that God is doing for me.

A light went on in my head. I thought, "This is how I can honor my promise to Paul and get my degree."



DONATE TO CLEMENTE

your gift funds students: masshumanities.org/support



BEING ASKED TO DANCE



WILLIE WILSON JR.

Since 2009, Mass Humanities has supported annual shared public readings of Frederick Douglass's 1852 speech known as "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July," on or around Independence Day, in towns across Massachusetts. Members of the public take turns reading sections of the speech in order, usually from a podium in a town common or public square, to the end. The events take about an hour, but the conversations they spark often continue long after. Participants comment on how relevant these words are today and feel the same urgency to act as Douglass called for 168 years ago. The message is about inclusion: who ought to be included among "all men" described in the Declaration of Independence, what does it mean for us all when those who ought to be included are not, and how do we go about ensuring that inclusion?

Professor of African and African-American history, principal, and public school teacher, Willie Wilson Jr., along with former president of the association, Lynn Smith, have been instrumental in presenting the Reading Frederick Douglass Together program in Brockton since 2012. Working with their colleagues at the Frederick Douglass Neighborhood Association, they bring people together annually at the site where once stood the Liberty Tree, where Douglass orated when he visited Brockton, and where the Association has established Frederick Douglass Neighborhood Park. Mass Humanities Director of Grants Katherine Stevens caught up with Willie on Valentine's Day, which is the day we celebrate as Douglass's birthday. (His actual date of birth is unknown.)

VIDEO STILL PHOTO CREDIT, BOTH PAGES: AMANDA KOWALSKI

Katherine Stevens: You say you first read about Frederick Douglass as a fifth-grader, and that Douglass was that age when he first learned to read. The book that changed his life was the *Columbian Orator*, a guide to public speaking. Is it important for you that young people participate in the readings?

Willie Wilson, Jr.: Yes, it's amazing when you consider books were not easy to come by, especially for a slave. Douglass started reading at what we would consider a late age these days, and he ended up being extremely well read. The kids who come to our events are often reluctant to read. Many of the words in the speech are hard for them, and public speaking is not easy for anybody. But if you can get one or two to do it, they all get the courage and end up taking turns at the podium. It's wonderful to see.

KS: Among the Douglass events around the state, the one in Brockton is known for the number of languages included among the readers. This is a speech not only for people of all ages, but also for people of different backgrounds, and actually for people around the world. How many languages are represented at your readings?

WW: Our goal is to add a language every year. We are up to twelve, including Mandarin Chinese, Greek, Spanish, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, Italian, and French.

KS: How does that work? What's it like to hear?



WILLIE AT A READING FREDERICK DOUGLASS TOGETHER EVENT

WW: Mass Humanities provides a version of the speech in English with numbered paragraphs, which we make available to everyone. Often, a speaker of another language will take a paragraph that is important to them and translate it at home before the event. They spend time closely reading and analyzing the words as they translate, which shows you how important they are for them. Everyone at the event has a copy in English so they can read it while hearing it spoken in the other languages. It makes for a fascinating experience for the listener. One fellow has been reading a paragraph in Mandarin Chinese every year. Last year, he couldn't make the event, so he took the time to record himself reading and asked Lynn to play it when his turn came. The audience was especially rapt while it played.

KS: Are there more languages in the community to add? Is the audience growing?

WW: Brockton is a diverse city of many including immigrants, and I'm certain there are more languages that can be represented from the community. A recent poetry event here boasted eighteen, so we have a ways to go. The audience is growing, in large part by word of mouth. One example is a real estate agent who has been reading her paragraph in Greek at the event for a couple of years. Last year her son and husband attended and it was heartwarming to see that. I think the simplicity, truth, and low-stakes personal challenge of the program all make it compelling for those who seek affirmation as being part of "all men (and women) created equal." People of all walks of life and political persuasions are invited to ponder about this great American, Frederick Douglass. I believe his speech challenges individuals to be better citizens wherever they may be.

KS: Yes, especially the end of the speech. It opens up to the whole world, just like Brockton.

WW: A colleague recently quoted Verna Myers, a noted diver-

sity advocate who states, "diversity is being asked to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance." The dance we are asking people to do goes beyond reading this speech at this event. We are pointing out the frustration we share that, 168 years later, the issues Douglass presented have been inadequately addressed. We are challenging them to ask themselves, "What can I do to make Brockton a better place?" And we want them to use the frustration as a catalyst, and act individually in whatever ways they think would be most helpful.

The Fourth of July is a time for celebration, but at the heart of it, the Declaration of Independence is an extremely serious matter, and Douglass asks us to contemplate that.

KS: Is Brockton a better place after holding these events?

WW: In some small way I would like to think so. Brockton is wonderful city but it is constantly belittled and criticized. When we come together each year for the reading, I like to think of it as citizens agreeing that Brockton is a good city but we have some work to do to make it better. In his speech Frederick Douglass states "The accepted time with God and his cause is the ever-living now. We have to do with the past only as we can make it useful to the present and to the future. Now is the time, the important time." Slavery is no longer legal, but institutional racism does exist here in Brockton and elsewhere. What can we do individually and collectively to eradicate it? It is the legacy of slavery that corrodes our institutions and prevents enjoyment of the full benefits of liberty for all of us—including, believe it or not, the perpetrators as well.

KS: I'm looking forward to attending this year.

WW: We'll see you there.

In his speech Frederick Douglass states "The accepted time with God and his cause is the ever-living now. We have to do with the past only as we can make it useful to the present and to the future."



GRANTS PROGRAM

CLEMENTE COURSE IN THE HUMANITIES



RADICAL INTERCONNECTEDNESS FESTIVAL
Turners Falls

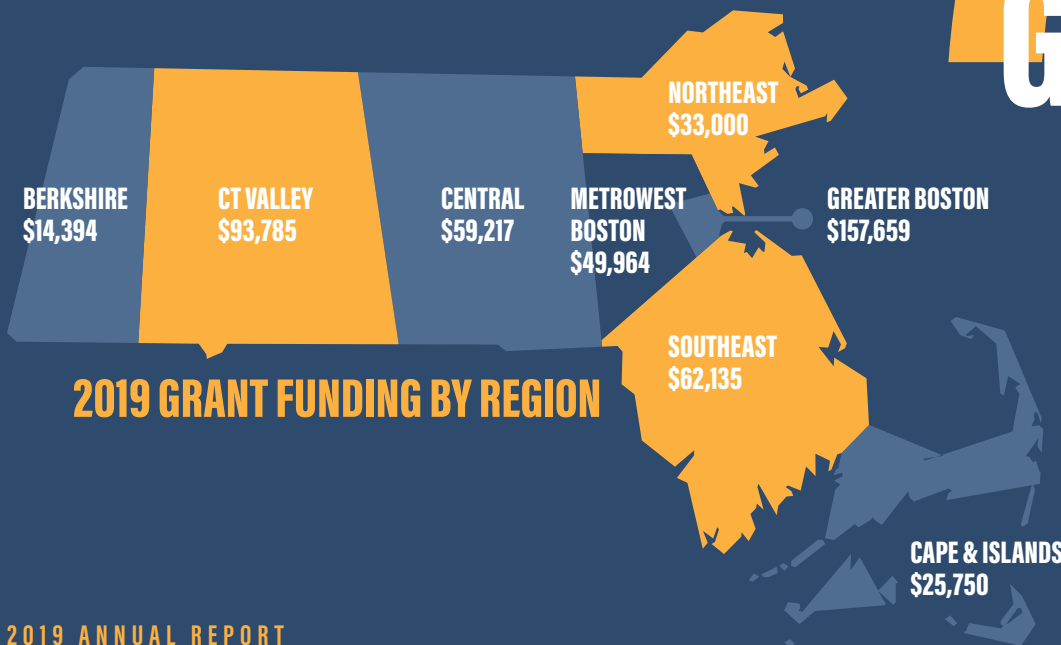


2019 CLEMENTE GRADUATION
Worcester

A COMMONWEALTH OF IDEAS.

Our grants strengthen the presence of the humanities in public life. In every corner of Massachusetts, we help people celebrate their stories, reflect on issues in their neighborhoods, and imagine the future for themselves and their families.

78 GRANTS

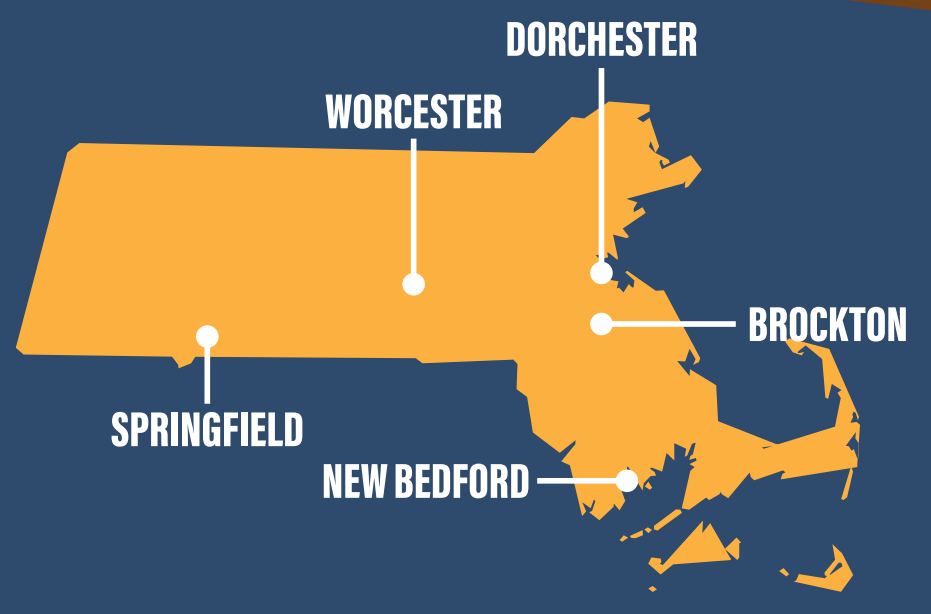


Mass Humanities made 78 grants totaling \$522,283 in 2019, directly reaching 43 towns and cities across the Commonwealth. We funded oral histories, museum exhibits, community discussions, workshops, documentary films and more.

48 NEW GRADUATES

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION.

The Clemente Course in the Humanities is a free, yearlong, college-level introduction to the humanities for low-income adults that takes place at human service agencies. Highly qualified faculty members provide students the opportunity to learn, reflect, and gain the insights and skills unique to the humanities.



READING
FREDERICK DOUGLASS
TOGETHER



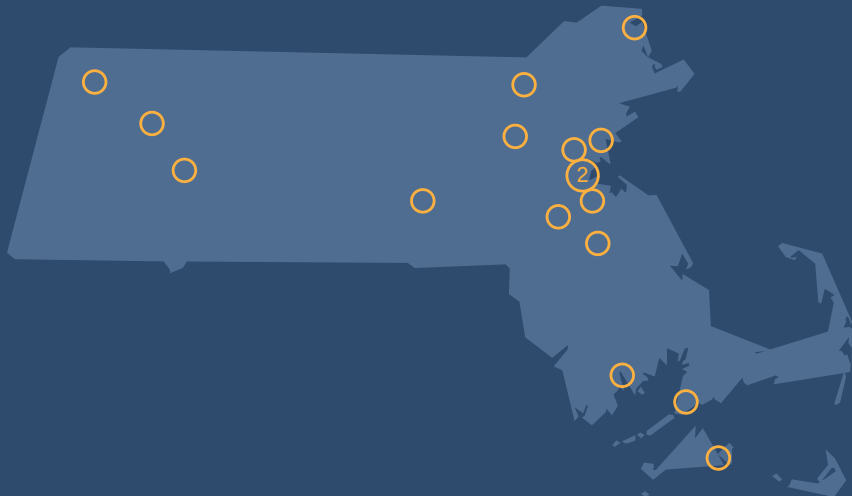
READING FREDERICK DOUGLASS TOGETHER
Springfield

17

PUBLIC EVENTS

BRINGING US TOGETHER.

Each year Mass Humanities supports public readings of Frederick Douglass's speech, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" in communities across the state both large and small. The speech challenges us to think about our nation's history, opening up discourse between community members about race, citizenship, and our responsibilities to our past and to each other.



CHAMPIONING
THE CAUSE



Photo: Amanda Kowalski

On October 26, following a successful forum at the Edward M. Kennedy Institute on the changing role of historians in American society, Danielle Allen of Cambridge, Lee Blake of New Bedford, Nancy Donahue of Lowell, and Jeffrey Musman of Nahant were recognized with the 2019 Massachusetts Governor's Awards in the Humanities. The annual benefit dinner celebrates those whose public actions, grounded in an appreciation of the humanities, have enhanced civic life in the Commonwealth.

\$399,150
GIVEN TO MASS HUMANITIES

Thanks to you - our amazing donors and volunteers - we raised just under \$400,000 from 343 individuals and organizations, including \$159k to honor the Governor's Awards recipients.

THE MASS HUMANITIES GIVING CIRCLE.

Individuals and families who support Mass Humanities through annual contributions of \$1,000 or more receive insider news, discounts, and invitations to special events. Details can be found at masshumanities.org.

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\$50,000+
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\$25,000+
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Eva Moseley
Cullen Murphy
Meredith M.
Neuman
Philip and Joan
Nyman, in honor of
Nancy Donahue
J. Mark and Vi Patek
Family Fund, in
honor of Jeffrey
Musman
Ava Penman
William and Nancy
Penney, in honor of
Ronald B. Hertel
Anne Perkins
Rosemary and
William Pisano, in
honor of Ronald B.
Hertel
Michael Potaski
Pratt Family
Charitable Fund
Christine Proffitt
Amy Richter
R E. Roach, in
honor of Nancy
Donahue
Louise Dube
Ellen Rothman
Cynthia Samoiloff,
in honor of Nancy
Donahue
Dea Savitzky
Owen Sholes
Libbie Shufro, in
honor of Jeffrey
Musman
Ellen M. Smith
Ruth L. Smith
Mary Susan Steele
Patricia Suhrcke
Marion Taylor
William Toner
Alden T. Vaughan
Ellen Vaut
Faith D. White
UP TO \$99
Anonymous
Michael Ansara
Barbara Armistead
Nancy Atwood

James Bakalar
Hosea Baskin
Melissa Baughman
Eugene Beresin
Anne Borg
Lucy R. Boyle
Tim Brainerd
Robert Briere
Julia Brotherton
Faith Burkley
Darrell Byers
Justyna M. Carlson
Eunice Charles
Russ Clift
Bruce S. Cohen
Tania Coiner
Martha Cole
Pat Costello
Carolyn Cushing
Karen Davis
Kenza Dekar
Jane K. Dewey
Barbara Driscoll de
Alvarado
Louise Dube
Carlyne & Richard
Durnan
H. Eckstein
C.E. Flanagan
Charitable Fund
Anne M. Forbes
John Fraser
Alda Freitas
Robert French
Daniel Glosband
Allison M. Godoff
Nancy Goldstein,
in honor of Jeffrey
Musman
Susan Haff
Grace Healey
Ann H.
Himmelberger
Janet Hively
Susan Hunt
Judith Hurley
Rebecca Ikehara
Joyce L. Johnson
Laurie Kahn

Suliman Kamara
Leslie Lawrence
Avi Lev
Edward Lund
Douglas Maitland
Lynne M. McKenney
Lydick
Jody McPhillips
Theresa Melo, in
memory of Sue Ann
Vancho
Keene Metzger
Nancy Moorehead
Warren Mumford
Grace G. Newcomer
Kathleen B. Nutter
David Ostrander
John M. Payne
Sarah Peskin
Linda Pivacek, in
honor of Jeffrey
Musman
Florence Preisler
L.D. Rackard
Jonathan Ralton
Kathy Richman
Anne Rogers
Wendyl Ross
Jess Shapiro
Mindy Sieber
Alison Specter
Mitchell Steiner
Tina Strunk
Aimee Taberner
David Thoreen
Raymon Turner
Sushil Vachani
Ron Van Cleef
Elizabeth Ventura
Mark Wagner
Evie Weinstein-
Park
Susan Zeiger
Hava Zejnullahu
Brita Zitin
Penelope Zulu

2019 FINANCIALS

MASSACHUSETTS FOUNDATION FOR THE HUMANITIES, INC.
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION OCTOBER 31, 2019

ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash	1,393,192
Certificates of deposit	523,546
Grants receivable	233,031
Prepaid expenses	17,408
Pledges receivable	32,650

Total Current Assets **\$2,199,827**

Capital Assets

Leasehold improvements	32,032
Equipment	11,430
Computer equipment and software	15,210

Less – accumulated depreciation (52,589)

Total Capital Assets **6,083**

Other Assets

Investments	2,114,920
Due to operating fund	—

Total Other Assets **\$2,114,920**

TOTAL ASSETS **\$4,320,830**

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities

Regrants payable	215,015
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	78,837

Total Current Liabilities & Total Liabilities **\$293,852**

Net Assets

Without donor restrictions	1,200,910
Board designated endowment funds	118,860

Total without donor restrictions 1,319,770

With donor restrictions

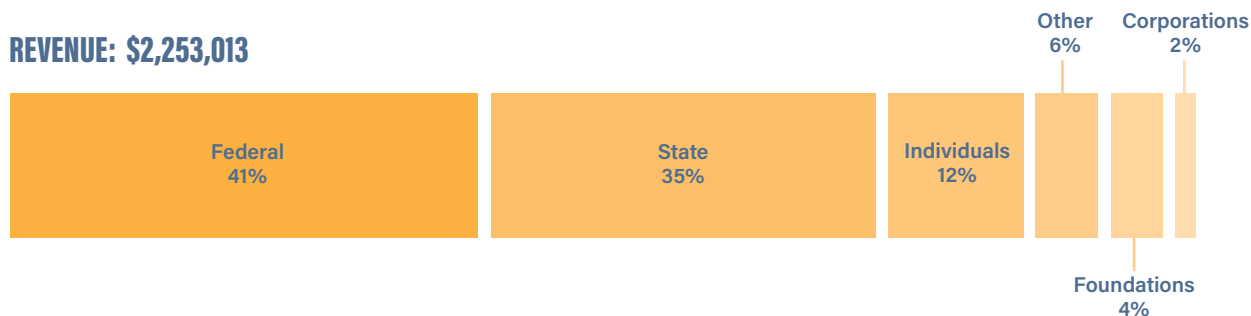
Purpose or time restricted	942,425
In perpetuity	1,764,783

Total Net Assets **\$4,026,978**

TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS **\$4,320,830**

CHANGES IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS

REVENUE: \$2,253,013



EXPENSES: \$2,032,300

