



2025

On The Cover

Our friends at Commonwealth Murals created this beautiful mural at our fall event honoring Ken Casey. Over 100 musicians, artists, residents, historians, and supporters of Mass Humanities had a chance to leave their mark on the canvas and shape the vision for our emblem.



- 04** Expand Massachusetts Stories
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- 16** Supporters
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Friend,

Thank you for reading our annual report for 2025. This was a pivotal year in the organization's history, and we're proud to share the stories and impact made possible through your support.

Since 1974, Mass Humanities has served the commonwealth through grants, programs, and partnerships that create opportunities for the people of Massachusetts to build a more equitable society. The tools and wisdom of the humanities were never more in demand than 2025, as communities sought ways to respond to new and long-running challenges. Our team saw increases in applications for funding, engaged with innovative organizations in every region, and continued efforts to reach more people. We are grateful for the hard work and ingenuity of our staff and our board members.

In April 2025, we were one of many institutions that experienced the sudden termination of federal funding. In our case, the loss of our grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities erased 35% of our annual revenue. Despite the ensuing reductions of staff and programs, we counted ourselves fortunate: Our donors and our partners helped us stabilize our operations as we scaled back our budget and plans. In the face of this historic disruption, we exceeded previous records for fundraising while recommitting to the values that make Mass Humanities unique and necessary.

The energy and resolve of our grantee partners inspired us. The Reading Frederick Douglass Together program reached new heights, with 71 events held throughout 2025. Our Clemente Course in the Humanities celebrated graduations and saw students move on to new educational and career opportunities. Through our partnership with the Smithsonian, six small towns welcomed the Museum on Main Street "Voices and Votes" exhibition, convening conversations about the past, present and future

of democracy in our nation. In preparation for the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 2026, we provided grants to 34 organizations leading "Promises of the Revolution" projects to engage more residents in the meaningful work of exploring the roots and ongoing legacy of the nation's founding values: equality, freedom from tyranny, and a people's right to free assembly. An additional 12 organizations were supported by "Story Forward" grants to continue to contribute to their communities' sense of self-worth, belonging, and empowerment.

All told, 127 organizations received direct funding from Mass Humanities. We thank each of these partners for the care and creativity they dedicate to their neighbors.

In 2025, we found strength through our ongoing relationships with the Barr Foundation and Mass Cultural Council, as well as major support from the Mellon Foundation. We honored the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and Ken Casey of the Dropkick Murphys with 2025 Storyteller of the Year awards, a new initiative that brought people together to celebrate and reflect on the diverse traditions of Massachusetts. We were pleased to welcome Governor Maura Healey to our annual event in September, and we thank our legislative champions for their faith in the humanities.

As we head into 2026, we know that change is inevitable. Yet like so many people who've been part of the journey that began more than a half century ago, we believe that the humanities will light our way.

Thank you for standing by us. As you read this report, please know that your support and your ideas are crucial to sustaining our mission. We look forward to seeing you in the months to come.

With gratitude,



Brian Boyles
Executive Director



Aaron Vega
Board Chair



“All Hands on Deck: A Climate Story Summit,” June 2025.

Expand Massachusetts Stories

We champion the storytellers

Expand Massachusetts Stories (EMS) continues to lay the foundation for telling diverse, inclusive stories about the many communities that make up Massachusetts. Despite losing NEH funding early in the year, we recommitted ourselves to fully funding another year of innovative oral histories, documentary films, museum exhibitions, and community programs.

Through EMS, we champion the storytellers of the commonwealth. We're proud to inspire residents to ask questions, learn about other cultures, and form connections in their communities and beyond.

IMPACT

\$800K

In awards

46

Organizations supported

48%

First-time grantees

87%

Projects led by people of color

“It guides us and it builds from the wisdom of our elders. It is crucial and important to **future generations doing the right thing.**”

David Weeden, representing the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, a 2025 Massachusetts Storyteller of the Year.

List of Expand Mass Stories grantees in 2025

Berkshires

Sheffield Historical Society
Stockbridge Library Association

Cape and Islands

Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe
Nutahkeemun Artist Collective
Old Indian Meeting House Authority

Central

Don Claude

Connecticut River Valley

The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art
Historic Deerfield
Michelle Falcón Fontánez, filmmaker
Nueva Esperanza
Historic Northampton
Valley Arts Mentors

Greater Boston

Cambridge Women's Center
Castle of Our Skins
Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association of New England

Community Art Center
Gabrielle Ewing, filmmaker
New Beginnings Reentry Services
Silence Dogood Project
Society of King's Chapel
Somerville Museum
Queer History Boston
Concord Museum/Concord Antiquarian Society
Company One
Essex Art Center
Jewish Women's Archive
WordPowered

Metro-West

Framingham History Center
Golden Ball Tavern Museum
Natick Historical Society

Northeast

ActiveVista Media
Angkor Dance Troupe
Aquinnah Cultural Center
Debra Farrar-Parkman, filmmaker
Doris Prouty Foundation

Essex National Heritage Commission
The Greater Malden Asian American Community Coalition
Latinx Community Center for Empowerment
Town of Marblehead
Merrimack Valley Young Men's Christian Association
Newburyport Preservation Trust
Ohketeau Cultural Center

Southeast

Belsali Photo and Video
Casa dos Acores da Nova Inglaterra
New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center
Society of the First African Families of English America

Reading Frederick Douglass Together

Bridging past & present

The humanities offer a bridge to connect the past with the present—and nowhere is that link more visible than Reading Frederick Douglass Together. Year after year, communities gather on town commons, in churches, at schools, and along Main Street to reflect on Frederick Douglass' words. The orator's famous speech, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" introduces listeners to timely insights about racial injustice, democracy, and freedom.

"Parents told us their kids were quoting Douglass at the dinner table."

413 Elite Foundation, Springfield

Readings in 2025

North Shore Juneteenth Association **Lynn**
 Simmons University **Boston**
 University of Massachusetts Amherst **Amherst**
 Sheffield Historical Society **Sheffield**
 Greenfield Community Television **Greenfield**
 Pan African Historical Museum (PAHMUSA) **Springfield**
 Medway Marches Incorporated **Medway**
 Community Coalition for Change **Brockton**
 Jamaica Plain Historical Society **Jamaica Plain**
 Indian Orchard Citizens Council **Springfield**
 Bristol Black Collective **Fall River**
 Castle of Our Skins **Roxbury**
 The Men of Honor Youth Mentorship Program **Springfield**
 Together Hyde Park/ The Forum for Racial Equity **Boston**
 Wellfleet Preservation Hall **Wellfleet**
 Lawrence Library **Pepperell**
 Bomba de Aqui **Springfield**
 Natick Historical Society **Natick**
 Holbrook Public Library **Holbrook**
 Shalupe Community Alliance **Dorchester**
 African American Association of Brockton **Brockton**
 Bristol Community College Foundation **Fall River**
 Unitarian Universalist Society of Grafton and Upton **Grafton**
 South Congregational Church **Amherst**
 National Black Doll Museum **Mansfield**
 Historic Northampton **Northampton**
 NAACP Worcester **Worcester**
 Darrell Lee Jenkins Jr. Resource Center **Springfield**
 Historic Beverly **Beverly**
 City of Salem **Salem**
 Plainfield Reads **Plainfield**
 Lowell Community Charter Public School **Lowell**
 Rotary Club of Westborough **Westborough**
 Brookline for the Culture **Brookline**
 Somerville Museum **Somerville**
 Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services **Springfield**
 Clearer Vision Foundation **Springfield**

Center for Peace through Culture **Housatonic**
 Afrimerican Culture Initiative **Hyde Park**
 Wakullah Street Community Garden **Boston**
 Porter-Phelps-Huntington Foundation **Hadley**
 Cape Ann Museum **Gloucester**
 Historic Newton **Newton**
 413 Elite Foundation **Springfield**
 Old Parish Preservation Volunteers **Norwood**
 Maverick Landing Community Services **Boston**
 Town of Swampscott & S.U.R.E. Diversity **Swampscott**
 The Black Response **Cambridge**
 St. Stephens Youth Programs **Boston**
 New Beginnings Reentry Services **Boston**
 Historical Society of Old Newbury **Newburyport**
 YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts **New Bedford**
 The Globe Lane Initiative/#DouglassWeek **Washington**
 Egleston Square Neighborhood Association & Robert G. Lawson Park Friends Group **Jamaica Plain**
 Suffolk University **Boston**
 Sharon Historical Society **Sharon**
 Friends of the 1836 Meeting House **North Andover**
 Solidarity Arts & Education Decolonial initiatives (SAEDI) Collective **Auburn**
 Frederick Douglass Neighborhood Association **Brockton**
 Wheaton College **Norton**
 TurnPark Art Space **West Stockbridge**
 Old Sturbridge **Sturbridge**
 Cambridge Community Television **Cambridge**
 HERO Nurturing Center **Dorchester**
 Boston Women's Heritage Trail **Boston**
 Royall House and Slave Quarters **Medford**
 Andover Baptist Church **Andover**
 Wayland Museum & Historical Society **Wayland**
 Greater Holyoke Council for Human Understanding **Holyoke**
 Mass Humanities, Community Change, and Museum of African American History - Boston | Nantucket **Boston**

IMPACT

71

Readings

48

Cities

8K

Attendees

\$130K

Grants awarded

Douglass Week, October 2025.



Museum On Main Street

Sparking conversation in rural communities

Through our partnership with the Smithsonian Institution, we welcomed “Voices and Votes: Democracy in America” to the commonwealth in 2025, offering Massachusetts residents the rare opportunity to experience a Smithsonian exhibit from the comfort of their neighborhoods.

The exhibit struck a deep chord with communities from Ashby to Holbrook, inviting people to learn about, question, and reflect on

the evolution of democracy in the United States. From community discussions about ranked-choice voting, to public forums about hot button issues like cleaning up the Housatonic River, our host sites succeeded in sparking interest in democracy on the eve of the nation’s Semiquincentennial in 2026.



“Voices and Votes” opening in Lee, June 2025.

HOST SITES

- Mohawk Trail Regional School **Buckland**
- Town of Lee **Lee**
- Ashby Free Public Library **Ashby**
- Douglas Historical Society **Douglas**
- Holbrook Public Library **Holbrook**
- Nye Museum **East Sandwich**

“This exhibit confirms **why I came to this country** and became a U.S. citizen—thank you!”

Visitor survey response from the Town of Lee

IMPACT

38

Free community programs

1,428

Visitors (town of Lee)

Clemente Course in the Humanities

Fostering lifelong learning

The Clemente Course in the Humanities continues to make an indelible impact in the lives of Massachusetts residents. Clemente students draw upon their lived experiences while engaging deeply with history, literature, and art.

We're proud to partner with Bard College and local universities and nonprofits to make humanities education more accessible to people historically and systemically excluded from conventional postsecondary education. Clemente students can earn up to 6 free college credits over the course of their studies.

IMPACT

76

Clemente students

46

Clemente graduates

“The archival challenge is to make decisions that build upon past priorities, reflect what is important in the present, and **anticipate the questions of those who will come after us.**”

Amy G. Richter (1968-2025), Historian & Worcester Clemente Professor

Community Partners

- Brockton Public Library **Brockton**
- Codman Square Health Center **Dorchester (Boston)**
- The Care Center **Holyoke**
- PACE, Inc. **New Bedford**
- Martin Luther King Jr. Family Services **Springfield**

Worcester Clemente Class of 2025.





“Arts and culture are the heartbeat of humanity—preserving our stories, strengthening our communities, and **giving voice to histories that shape who we are** and who we are becoming.”

Brendalize Cepeda
Bomba de Aquí,
Holyoke RFDI grantee

Doing democracy in the face of adversity

In early April 2025, the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) terminated funding to the National Endowment for the Humanities. Consequently, Mass Humanities lost 35% of its annual operating budget. Despite these setbacks, we charted a course forward, drawing on the resourcefulness of our board and staff, donors, and the arts and culture sector here in Massachusetts. On April 29, the Mellon Foundation awarded \$15 million in emergency funding to the Federation of State Humanities Councils. Mass Humanities is deeply grateful for this historic show of

support. In addition to receiving \$250,000 of that gift, we raised another \$50,000 through a challenge grant thanks to the generosity of our supporters.

We delivered on our commitment to bring the humanities to the people of Massachusetts, too. With the support of Mass Cultural Council, the Barr Foundation, and our donors, we launched the “Promises of the Revolution” grants initiative to fund 34 projects about the legacy of the American Revolution.



Massachusetts Storyteller Of The Year

A new way to honor humanities heroes

From 2014-2024, the Governor's Awards in the Humanities honored exceptional individuals in the commonwealth who made a tremendous impact on civic life through their work. The award celebrated their diverse commitments to education, civil and human rights, community development, philanthropy, and more. In 2025, we launched the Massachusetts Storyteller of the Year Award to honor artists and changemakers who deepen our understanding of Massachusetts, its communities, and the power of the humanities to shape a more just future.

MASHPEE WAMPANOAG TRIBE

The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe was honored with the inaugural Massachusetts Storyteller of the Year Award on June 11 in New Bedford. We gathered with local residents, elected officials, and members of the Tribe at the New Bedford Whaling Museum to celebrate the storytelling legacy of the Tribe, specifically its long history of land stewardship.

KEN CASEY OF DROPKICK MURPHYS

Ken Casey, frontman of the punk band Dropkick Murphys, was honored with the second Massachusetts Storyteller of the Year Award on September 25. At a standing-room only event held at Artists for Humanity in South Boston, Casey shared insights into his career writing songs that push back against authority and highlight the challenging circumstances of the working class. Governor Maura Healey joined us for the event, officially naming September 25 "Dropkick Murphys Day" in Massachusetts.

"In the Archives with Ken Casey", September.



"When the people in power are trying to take away our rights, are trying to take away everything that generations have worked for and fought for, **we need to be 10 times louder than them.** We can't stay silent."

Ken Casey, a 2025
Massachusetts Storyteller of the Year

OUR DONORS

\$50,000+	Federation Of State Humanities Councils	\$250,000
	Roberto and Elizabeth Goizueta	75,000
	Barr Foundation	520,000
	Lia and William Poorvu	50,000
\$25,000-49,999	Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation	\$25,000
	F. Roscoe and Vila B. Webber Charitable Trusts	25,000
	It Kicks! Foundation	37,500
\$10,000-24,999	Greater Worcester Community Foundation	\$17,500
	Al & Sally Griggs	12,650
	Anonymous	10,000
	Marcia Butzel	16,534
	Howard and Fredericka Stevenson	10,000
	Vineyard Wind	10,000
	"Michealle Larkins Florian O. Bartlett Trust (BofA)"	10,000
	Stephen Rosenfeld and Margot Botsford	12,648
	Laura Roberts and Edward Belowe	12,500
	Ronald and Colleen Hertel	10,000
	George I. Alden Trust	15,000
\$5,000-9,999	Jeffrey Musman and Lynne Spencer	\$7,500
	The Beveridge Family Foundation, Inc.	5,000
	Kristin McGurn	6,150
	Mr. John Burgess & Dr. Nancy Adams	5,000
	James and Laura Burke	5,150
\$1,000-4,999	Perry Wu and Grace Kao	\$1,030
	Susan and Stephen Paine	2,000
	Stephen and Darcy Immerman	4,635
	Red Sox Foundation	2,500
	Claddagh Fund	2,000
	Jeremy Sampson	3,530
	John Regan	3,000
	Vacovec, Mayotte and Singer LLP	2,575
	Massachusetts AFL CIO	1,000
	John Carroll and Fran Lipson	1,000
	David Bryant and Ellen Berkman	1,030
	Gail T. Randall	2,000
	Allen Fletcher and Dolly Vasquez	1,000
	Seyfarth Shaw LLP	3,500
	Lawrence Hott	2,500
	Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts	2,500
	John Dacey and Marie Lopinto Dacey	2,000
	Michael Pappone and Diane Savitzky	4,000
	Denis Luzuriaga	1,000
	Wendy Shattuck and Samuel Plimpton	1,500
	Susan and Drew Leff	1,058
	Victor Woolridge	2,500
	Dianne F. Doherty	1,000
	Scott Casper	3,300
	Debbie Hall	1,000
\$500-999	Michael Potaski	\$500
	Robert Farrant	500
	Jill and Scott Sullivan	515
	Heli Meltsner	500
	Steve Barrett	500
	Cecily and Alan Morse	500
	Willis Wang	500

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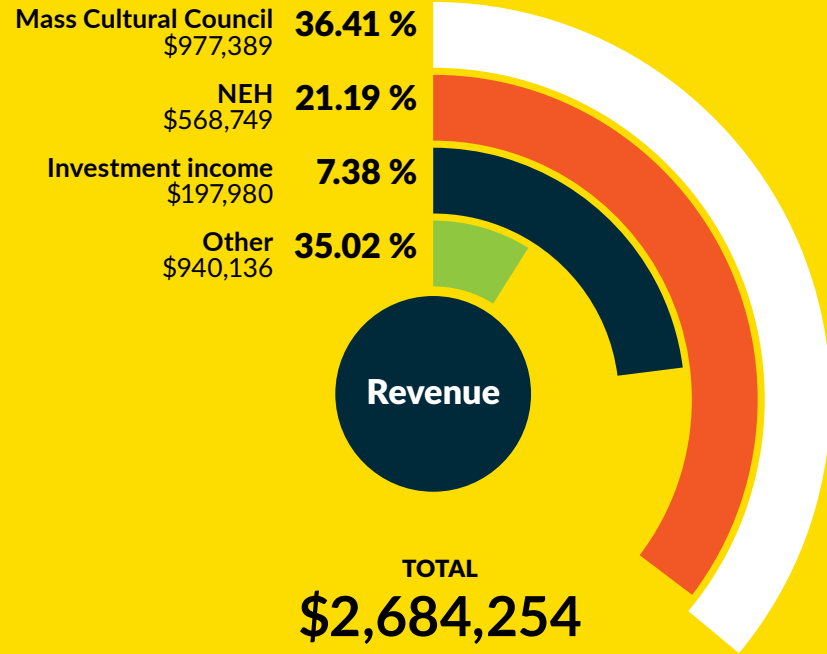
Raeshma Razvi

Program Officer

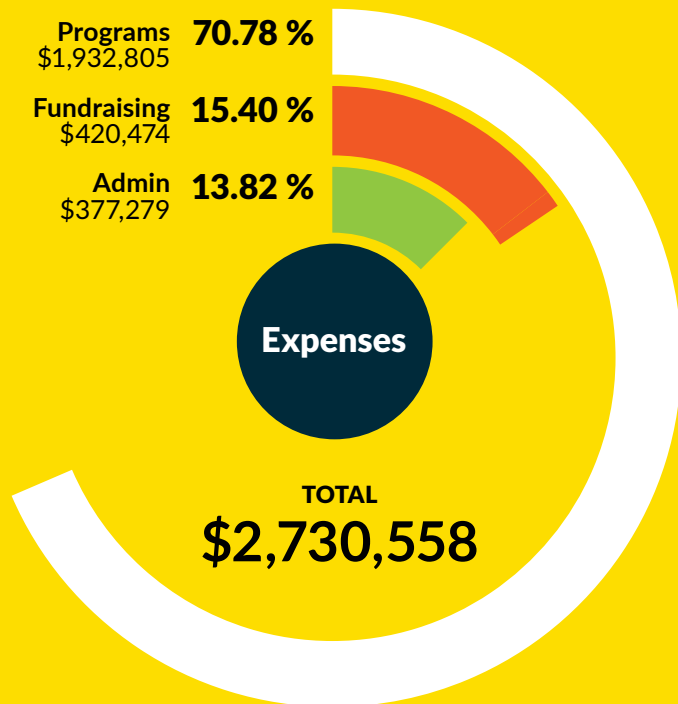
Katherine Stevens

Director of Grants and Programs

FINANCIAL INFORMATION



FY25 Revenue & Expenses



Mass Humanities board members with Governor Maura Healey and Dropkick Murphys frontman Ken Casey (center left).





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