

Framework for Strategic Plan, 2015-19
Growing from Good to Great

1. Demonstrate the importance of humanities in everyday life

Humanities Montana has the unique mission of infusing Montana communities with public humanities programs of high quality. These programs show the value of humanistic studies such as literature, history, Native American Studies, philosophy, and more. They encourage Montanans to learn and reflect together.

- a) Build Speakers Bureau and Speakers in the Schools into elite programs by focusing on high-quality programs with diverse topics and diversified funding base.
- b) Determine viability and appeal of Montana Center for the Book programs, Letters About Literature and Montana Authors Project.
- c) Determine viability and impact of Governor's Humanities Awards.
- d) Discontinue sponsorship of Montana Festival of the Book.
- e) Continue to improve evaluation of programs to enable Humanities Montana to demonstrate value to constituents, funders, and government agencies.
- f) Expand Humanities Montana's resource base by increasing funding through private, foundation, and governmental support and building partnerships with humanities and other organizations.
- g) Add staff strategically to assure Humanities Montana can deliver high-quality programs and provide staff assistance to nonprofit organizations and individuals throughout the state.
- h) Review number of board members and the ideal make-up of members to determine optimal board for advancing the organization's goals.
- i) Strategically shape board committees and advisory groups to diversify and expand sources of funding and other resources to build a strong base of operations.

2. Bring Montanans together to promote community vitality

As a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization with a 42-year commitment to public affairs programs, Humanities Montana is uniquely positioned to promote community vitality through hosting and funding civil and civic gatherings.

- a) Build Hometown Humanities into a signature program by dedicating more resources, including funds and staff time, and planning for ongoing engagement with each host community after the Hometown Humanities year has ended.
- b) Rebrand and expand funding for Reflect: Community Readings and Conversations to assure widest possible use for this vital program built on the civic reflection model.
- c) Offer reading and discussion programs of high quality on an occasional basis, such as . "Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys" and "Standing Together Montana," a veterans' initiative.
- d) Promote Opportunity Grants as an accessible means to support home-grown initiatives.

3. Montana Matters!: Exploring where we have been, where we are, and where we are going

Humanities Montana is ideally situated to encourage Montanans to share and learn more about their past, present, and future. In addition to the programs listed above, we can provide direct support through grants and special offerings—as well as staff guidance—for a wide range of initiatives exploring our state's story.

- a) Organize occasional special events to commemorate key anniversaries (e.g., Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, Montana at 150) or to respond to current crises (e.g., September 11).
- b) Maintain grants as at least one-third of the organization's annual budget, including both direct and indirect costs.
- c) Assign primary review of all grants other than Opportunity Grants to a committee of the board to assure consistency of grant review and to free time for board members to focus on building Humanities Montana's reputation and resources.
- d) Simplify grant review calendar to enable equitable distribution of grant funds across the fiscal year.
- e) Continue Opportunity, Regular, Major, 3-Year Sustaining, Film & Digital, and Fellowship grants.
- f) Discontinue the Book Publication grant category.

HUMANITIES MONTANA OPERATIONAL PLAN 2015-2019

Program Goal: PROVIDE FOCUSED, HIGH-QUALITY PROGRAMS THAT SERVE ALL MONTANANS.

Strategy	Task	Benchmark/Short Term Goals	Status	Responsible
Improve Speakers Bureau and Speakers in the Schools programs	Look at all programs critically, review data to determine what's most popular and what's most necessary	Analyze SB & SIS use data. Begin having conversations with inactive speakers and speakers who have had relatively weak reviews. Long term goal to cut roster of speakers by at least half	Complete by 6/30/2015	Associate Director for Programs (ADP), Program Assistant (PA), Program Committee
		Create map of # of programs in # of categories		
		Emphasize conversation model		
		Differentiate between SIS and SB		
	Work with Program Committee to discuss criteria for programs. Require video? Begin to craft call for new programs. Create list of topics WE WANT then find experts	Increase attendance at SB & SIS programs by staff & board	Begin 07/01/2015	ADP, Program Committee
	Provide consistent SB & SIS funding over course of fiscal year	Monitor peak/low usage times in terms of application submission and program dates	Now	ADP, PA
		Consider changes in application process requirements to ensure more even distribution of programs	FY 16	
		Find new sources of SB and SIS support	Ongoing	
	Improve marketing materials and processes for speakers and sponsors	Hold workshop with speakers to go through SB and SIS application process to explain rules/expectations and marketing	FY 16	ADP, PA
		Work with speakers and sponsors to create posters, ads, and social media posts for programs	FY 15-16	ADP, PA
Engage in online and in-person promotion of programs		Ongoing	Entire staff and board	
Identify, create and promote programming for adults 18-60	Analyze evaluation data to identify who existing programs currently reach	Share with board	spring 2015	ADP, PA
	Hold conversations with people in the target group to find out what kind of humanities programming they would attend	Launch pilot discussion programs (possibly using Civically Engaged Reader or other anthologies) to discuss contemporary issues	FY 15	ADP, PA
	Create content within existing programs that will appeal to a younger demographic	Increase contemporary issues and culture topics in Speakers Bureau	FY 16	ADP, PA
	Promote HM programming to new and younger organizations/venues	Reach out to nonprofit organizations not in our usual library/museum mix	FY 16	ADP, PA

Strategy	Task	Benchmark/Short Term Goals	Status	Responsible
	Rethink and refine promotional materials	Provide SB promotional materials including video/radio/Facebook & Twitter appropriate	FY 16+	PA
	Launch Standing Together programs in 3 communities	Identify potential discussion leaders and contact veterans' organizations in their areas	FY 15	ADP, PA
Strengthen Hometown Humanities	Create template for programming that can be personalized for each community but which gives stability and predictability for staff	Create strong roster of off the shelf kick-off + wrap up event programs	FY 15-17	ADP, PA, e-Communications Director (eD)
		Depending on distance create time line for community visits		
	Improve marketing both within community and statewide	Design website dedicated to HH. Create posters for each community		
	Improve evaluation process	Do extensive pre- and post- program surveys		
		Create followup process		
	Assure ongoing partnership with HH communities	Create listserv and Facebook sites and plan for direct visits with HH communities following host year		
Monitor number of grants and programs provided to HH communities following host year		FY 16 forward	ADP, PA, eD	
Clarify position of Montana Center for the Book within HM programs	Review purpose and marketing of	Catalog our current book programs	FY 15	ADP, PA
	Revitalize literary program offerings	Expand MAP. Hold new contest for five more books on Facebook?		
		Coordinate book group events in conjunction with unveiling of new MAP entries		
		Revisit book festival support (both in Missoula and other locations) and rethink how to market these partnerships		
	Develop new programs that align with mission of CFB.	Explore new programming options and install selected programs		
Allocate staff time to focus on programming strategies	Discontinue producing Montana Festival of the Book.	HM staff member sits on advisory board. Staff takes time to discuss ongoing festivals in Great Falls/Bozeman/Billings	FY 15-16	ED, ADP, PA
		Consult directors of regional book festivals on steps forward	Ongoing	ED and programming staff as needed
	Determine most effective format for Governor's Humanities Awards	Following 2015 GHA, analyze programming, marketing, and development success of event, then determine steps forward	FY 15-17	ED, ADP, PA, Program Committee
Commemorate key historical anniversaries	Organize occasional conferences or community gatherings		Ongoing	ED, ADP, PA, Program Committee

Strategy	Task	Benchmark/Short Term Goals	Status	Responsible
Grants Goal: REFINE GRANT-MAKING PROCESSES TO SERVE MONTANANS AS EFFECTIVELY AS POSSIBLE.				
Assign all grant review except for Opportunity Grants to Grants Committee to free up board to focus on strategy and promoting and supporting Humanities Montana's programs and grants	Revise board grant review processes	Propose and approve changes to bylaws to reflect new grant-review processes	FY 15	ED (revising bylaws) and board (approving changes)
		Announce and introduce new system.	FY 16	ED, ADP, board
Enable equitable distribution of funds throughout fiscal year	Simplify calendar for grant applications	Change to following grant-review calendar: Regular and major grants December, April, and August 20; Film and Digital August 20; Fellowships December 20; Three-Year Sustaining December 20	FY16	ED and staff
	Allocate approximately ¼ of grant funds to each of the three deadlines and opportunity grants		FY 16	ED and staff
Establish grant categories that serve HM's strategic goals	Discontinue Book Publication grant category	Announce and enact	FY 16	ED and staff
Make sure grant processes are accessible to all Montanans	Monitor usability of forms, guidelines, and reporting requirements	Reintroduce grant workshops--explore possibility of digital approach	Ongoing	Entire staff and board
	Increase outreach across the state and educate organizations about grant opportunities.	Present at professional conferences and during all outreach trips	Ongoing	Entire staff and board
Monitor quality of programs funded through HM grants	Refine grant evaluation results and processes	Make review of evaluations a regular part of staff meetings	Ongoing	ADP, ED, PA
	Visit with select number of grantees by phone and in person	Review grant final reports, determine successful and less successful projects, and contact grantees	FY 16+	ADP, PA

Strategy	Task	Benchmark/Short Term Goals	Status	Responsible	
Development Goal: EXPAND HUMANITIES MONTANA'S FOUNDATION OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO SUSTAIN AND INCREASE OUR SERVICE TO MONTANANS.					
Increase private giving by implementing a fundraising campaign with multiple vehicles	Require all directors to give, in addition to their time and talent, donations at a level at which they're comfortable		Ongoing		
	Conduct Annual Fund campaign	Use release of Annual Report (May) and annual chair's letter (December) to build the annual fund	May, December each year.	ED, PA, board	
	Solicit major gifts	Actively seek gifts \$1,000 and above from current and potential donors	Ongoing	ED and board	
	Build Humanities Montana's endowment through planned and major gifts	Conduct an annual appeal for planned gifts to build the endowment		Annual	ED, PA, board
		Cultivate major gifts		Ongoing	ED, board
		Research and decide on applying for an NEH Challenge Grant to build endowment		FY 16-18	ED, board
	Explore new fundraising opportunities to enable widening base of support	Review fundraising strategies of other state humanities councils and regional nonprofits to determine best practices		FY 16-19	ED, staff, board
		Institute experimental campaigns as time, staff, and opportunity allow		FY 16-19	ED, staff, board
	Conduct friend-raising activities to cultivate future donors	Offer Readers' Retreat to explore possibility of attracting new givers		Summer, 2015	ED, PA
		Organize special events for board alumni to encourage active engagement with HM		FY 17 +	All staff
Apply strategically for grants to underwrite key programs, especially Speakers Bureau, Speakers in the Schools, and Hometown Humanities	Research and cultivate promising foundations.		FY 15	ADP, PA, ED	
	Create priority list of foundations for application.		FY 15-16	ADP, PA, ED	
	Apply to select foundations		FY 16-18	ADP, PA, ED	
	Steward foundations that provide support		Ongoing	All staff and board	
Increase state funding for Humanities Montana's programs.	Renew partnerships with Montana State Parks and Indian Education for All to fund Speakers Bureau and		FY 15+	ED, with assistance from staff	
	Seek new partnerships with state agencies with common programming goals.	Survey state agencies with public humanities programming goals	FY 15-16	ED, with assistance from staff	
		Contact program officers to explore prospects for partnership	FY 16	ED, with assistance from staff	
		Cultivate memoranda of understanding with select agencies	FY 17-19	ED	
	Apply annually to participate in State Employees' Giving Campaign and Montana Shares		Annually	ED	

Strategy	Task	Benchmark/Short Term Goals	Status	Responsible
Prepare board alumni, and dedicated friends of Humanities Montana to advocate for the organization	Define key tasks for board, board alumni, and friends	Create promotional plan, compose scripts, and assign tasks to individuals	Ongoing	ED, Development Committee
	Monitor effectiveness of outreach efforts	Debrief advocates on results of outreach work as part of board meetings	Ongoing	ED, Development Committee
	Revise outreach tactics as needed	Using results of annual review of outreach efforts, revise the plan, scripts, and tasks for individuals	Ongoing	ED, with staff assistance and Development Committee
	Conduct an annual training of Development Committee and all directors to assist with fundraising. This training should include a "menu" of board activities (e.g., identifying donors, crafting messages, introducing staff to potential partners, etc.)	Build this activity into the fall meeting each year, including inviting gifted, energetic development professionals to provide inspiration and concrete guidance	Annually	ED, staff, Development Committee

Strategy	Task	Benchmark/Short Term Goals	Status	Responsible
Administration Goal: POSITION HUMANITIES MONTANA STAFF AND BOARD TO DELIVER ON THE ORGANIZATION'S COMMITMENTS TO MONTANANS.				
Add staff members and clarify roles of current staff to assure implementation of strategic goals	Review staffing needs within one year of this plan's approval to determine positions needed to assure strategic goals are met	Create list of desired staff positions.	FY 15-16	ED
		Compose job descriptions for each position, defining responsibilities and status (contract basis, full-time, part-time)		
		Develop hiring schedule (ideal), subject to revision as budget and office space allow		
	Clarify roles and responsibilities of Executive Director, Associate Director for Programs, Program Assistant, and Office Manager to enable achievement of strategic objectives	Revise position descriptions to assure current staff fulfill strategic objectives	FY 15-18	ED, in consultation with staff
	Monitor position descriptions on an annual basis to assure continuing effectiveness			
	Revise Board Handbook to reflect redefined roles			
Set number of directors at 16 to ensure board efficiency and engagement	Per board bylaws, reduce number to 16 following CY 15 as board members rotate off	Replace only 1 of 4 directors leaving the board following CY 15.	CY 16 Board and ED	
	Review effectiveness of this change	Evaluate efficiency and engagement before adding additional directors in subsequent years	CY 17 forward. Board and staff	
Identify key partnerships and cultivate mutually beneficial relationships between Humanities Montana and those partners	Define and build HM's relationships with colleges and universities in the state, especially tribal colleges	Review history of partnership with campuses, with particular emphasis on funding for projects proposed	FY 15-16	
		Plan focused outreach to campuses	FY 17	
	Identify nontraditional partners and develop meaningful relationships with them	With board assistance, list promising partners	FY 15	ED
		Conduct targeted outreach to top potential partners	FY 16+	All staff (depending on linkages with potential partners)
	Reinforce existing partnerships with cultural organizations such as libraries and museums	Define partnerships for next five years	FY 16	All staff (depending on linkages)
		Develop targeted messages for partners	FY 16	
		Schedule visits in conjunction with outreach trips and professional meetings (e.g., Montana Library Association)	Ongoing	
Identify and recruit directors	Recruit public directors who have fundraising, Native American, eastern Montana, and politically diverse backgrounds	Ask key contacts to approach recommended individuals about applying to board	FY 15 +	ED, with board
		Cultivate and follow up with potential applicants		
		Develop exit interview protocol		
	Use exit interviews with "retiring" directors to determine quality of their experience while serving on the board	Board Chair meets with each director individually	Ongoing	Board Chair, ED
		Consult with board alumni on consistent basis via electronic and in-person means		Board Chair, ED
Utilize board alumni to recruit effective directors	Inform alumni of impact of their recruitment of new directors	Ongoing	ED	