Public Investment in Humanities Research, Education, and Public Understanding is Breathtakingly Small

- Government funding for the humanities has fallen sharply since the 1980s, with a current budget for the National Endowment for the Humanities of only $145 million.4
- Federal spending for programs that focus specifically on humanities activities fell from $855 million in 2008 to $594 million in 2014.5
- And, in 2011, humanities research received only 0.48% of the amount dedicated to science and engineering research and development in higher education.6

Humanities Education is Suffering

- No more than a third of American undergraduates major in the arts and humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences combined—no more than 1% in English language and literature, 1% in foreign languages, 1% in math and statistics, less than 1% in philosophy and religious studies.6
- Under 30% of 12th grade students are proficient in writing, history and civics.3
- Similarly, fewer than 30% of public high school students take history courses with a teacher certified in the subject area and with a degree in the field.3

The Humanities Enrich Our Lives and Communities in Myriad Ways, But There are Signs of Slippage

- Studies point to a correlation between the number of humanities courses taken in college and the likelihood of civic engagement.2
- Sixty-eight percent of U.S. adults attended an arts event (theater, museum, or musical performance) in 2010.7

In 2012:

- 54% of Americans reported reading a book, a decline from 61% in 1992.
- 24% had visited a historic site in the previous year, a decline from 35% in 1982.
- 21% visited a museum or art gallery in 2012, versus 27% in 1992.7

"The humanities are the foundation of the values, freedoms, and civility of society. Excellence in the scholarship and teaching of these disciplines is critically important in an era when rapid advances in the physical sciences and information technology are profoundly altering life and presenting new moral questions and dilemmas."

— John G. Medlin, Jr., Chairman, Wachovia Corporation; trustee, National Humanities Center (1990–99)
THE NATIONAL HUMANITIES CENTER

For forty years, the National Humanities Center (NHC) has encouraged excellence in scholarship and teaching while constantly affirming the vital importance of the humanities in American life.

Its influence can most readily be seen in the influential work of NHC Fellows as well as in the classrooms of thousands of teachers at every level across the United States.

Research Support

The Center continuously sparks humanistic scholarship by providing 40 Fellows a year with optimal conditions for free and creative inquiry. Since 1978, the Center has awarded fellowships to over 1,400 scholars (1,240 from U.S. institutions, 214 from overseas) working in 45 humanistic fields. Collectively, NHC Fellows have:

- Produced nearly 1,600 books as well as countless essays, articles, and other works.
- Won or been finalists for the National Book Award, the National Book Critics Circle Award, the MacArthur Fellowship, the Pulitzer Prize, the Bancroft Prize, and many others.
- Ninety-nine former Fellows have been made members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, many have become presidents of major learned societies in the United States and other nations, and many more are recognized as leading scholars in their fields.

Public Engagement

The Center acts as a forum for increasing public understanding and appreciation for the humanities.

- Through its ongoing “Humanities Moments” project, the Center is encouraging people from all walks of life to reflect on the humanities influence in all of our lives and to share their experiences with others.
- Since 1983, when it first welcomed high school history and literature students to participate in seminars led by scholars, the National Humanities Center has been distinctive for its commitment to linking scholarship to improved teaching.

- Millions of visitors each year make use of the Center’s free online resources, which contain hundreds of historical documents, literary texts, works of art and teaching tools.
- Since 1996, NHC summer institutes have attracted more than 1,000 teachers and college instructors from across the United States for in-depth, onsite training at the Center.
- In 2008, the Center launched its award-winning digital lessons and webinar series—30 workshops per year on a wide variety of topics in history, literature, and culture—which allow participants to directly interact with scholars and other teachers while gaining subject knowledge and tools for use in the classroom.

Education Programs

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“...technology alone is not enough—it’s technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities, that yields us the results that make our heart sing.”

— Steve Jobs, founder, Apple Inc.