



CALIFORNIA
HUMANITIES
50TH ANNIVERSARY

THE HUMANITIES ENDURE

Honoring 50 Years of Connection
Across California

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PRESIDENT & CEO MESSAGE



2025 marked the 50th anniversary of California Humanities! It was also a year of deep reflection on our future, as funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities was unexpectedly and immediately terminated by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) on April 2, 2025. 2025 was a year that tested and affirmed the value of the humanities in California. While we looked forward to our 50th Anniversary program in early February, exploring "How the Humanities Can Revolutionize Artificial Intelligence," by April, we were confronted with a more existential question about the meaning and purpose of the humanities.

All our grantmaking programs, which have served thousands of nonprofit organizations across the state, were paused, yet our board remained committed to the humanities, especially to commitments already made to humanities projects. Given our funding constraints, we honored all multi-year grants by making full payments. We funded critical programs and supported communities across every region of the state. California Humanities continued to invest in storytelling, dialogue, and cultural connections statewide.

An organization-wide restructuring launched in 2024 proved prescient, so the board was already prepared to evolve the business model in 2025 and to adapt its strategic framework to leverage narrative change to address systemic issues and work toward a multicultural, multiracial democracy in which everyone feels a sense of belonging. In 2025, we faced significant challenges that created significant uncertainty, but by celebrating fifty years of public humanities leadership, we laid the groundwork for the future. In 2026, we will be launching a reframed program strategy, What We Share: Culture. Community. California—Connection. We invite you to support the humanities to keep California connected by building our Cultures.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Noguchi".



RICK NOGUCHI, PRESIDENT AND CEO

2025 AT A GLANCE

GRANTMAKING

\$1,030,612

Total invested in active grant commitments statewide

\$30,000

Humanities for All – Quick Grants

\$395,000

California Documentary Project
– \$350,000 in Production grants
– \$45,000 in Research & Development grants

\$605,612

Paid to fulfill obligations for 93 active multiyear grants



IMPACT

All projects with final reports due in 2025 paid and closed.

Dozens of organizations are supported across California, including those noted below and more.

- Los Angeles
- Bay Area
- Central Valley
- Central Coast
- Inland Empire
- Sacramento
- San Diego



FUNDING

\$2,317,572.41

The National Endowment for the Humanities

\$200,000

The Federation of State Humanities Councils, with support from the Mellon Foundation

\$108,000

Community of Individual Donors, which included \$50,000 in matching funds

\$100,000

11th Hour Project to support Reclaiming Our Stories

\$75,000

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation for general operating support

\$50,000

Match from the Federation of State Humanities Councils with support from the Mellon Foundation

\$50,000

Weingart Foundation to support Reclaiming Our Stories

\$35,000

James B. McClatchy Foundation for general operating support and sponsoring the 50th Anniversary

\$25,000

from the Federation of State Humanities Councils to support Reclaiming Our Stories



MILESTONE

50th Anniversary Celebration

February 28, 2025

- The City Club of San Francisco



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

California Documentary Project (CDP) – 2025 Cohort

In 2025, California Humanities awarded **\$395,000** to support **10 documentary film and audio projects** that explore urgent California stories.

- **Funding Breakdown**
 - \$350,000 in Production grants
 - \$45,000 in Research & Development grants
- **Selected Projects**
 - *Amargosa: Underground River*
 - *Burocracy*
 - *Bury Me Standing*
 - *The Day the Curtains Came Down*
 - *The Invisible Valley*
 - *We're Still Here*
 - *You Should Never Blink*
 - *Access Point*
 - *Lee-na-kul-dutai*
 - *Transcendent*

Since 2003, CDP has invested over **\$8.5 million** in nonfiction media documenting California's people, histories, and cultures, reaching audiences through public media, festivals, libraries, classrooms, and community spaces.

Public Grants: Humanities for Quick Grants

- In 2025, California Humanities awarded **\$30,000** in Humanities for All Quick Grants supporting:
 - *Exhibitions*
 - *Workshops and civic dialogues*
 - *Storytelling programs*
 - *Community-based humanities events*
- **Focus Areas Included**
 - Indigenous histories and leadership
 - Immigrant and marginalized community storytelling
 - Local and regional history
 - Civil rights and community resilience
 - Youth arts and cultural healing
 - Environmental justice narratives

These grants supported work across **urban, rural, and regional communities throughout California.**

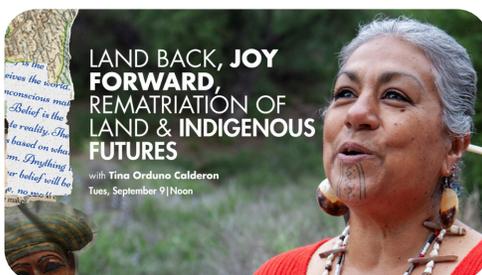
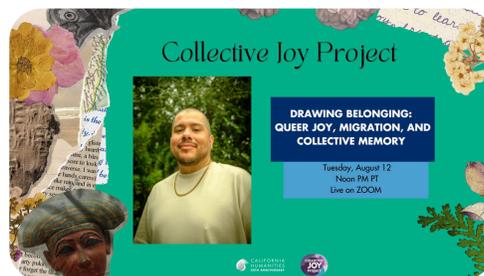
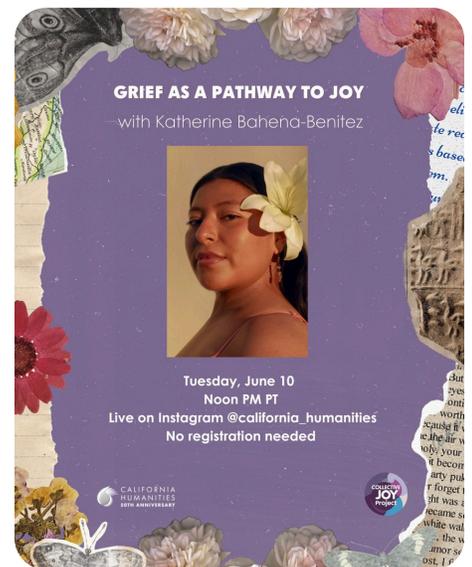
CONT. PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

3 Collective Joy Project

In 2025, the Collective Joy Project served as a highly visible and accessible platform for public humanities engagement.

- Featured live conversations and community gatherings
- Centered joy, ritual, memory, creativity, and cultural resilience
- Lifted artists, culture bearers, and community leaders
- Reached hundreds of participants across Zoom, Instagram, and YouTube

By framing joy as a collective practice, the project invited Californians to reflect, connect, and share imagination.



STRENGTHENING OUR BASE: PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT

In 2025, philanthropic partners and individual donors played a critical role in sustaining California Humanities' statewide work. Emergency funding from the Federation of State Humanities Councils, with support from the Mellon Foundation, enabled us to secure additional emergency funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the James B. McClatchy Foundation.

Our donor community rose to meet the **\$50,000** challenge match from the Federation of State Humanities Councils with support from the Mellon Foundation, ensuring continuity during a year of significant uncertainty. By the end of 2025, our donor community collectively gave **\$108,000** to support the Humanities in California, increasing their giving by **69%** from the previous year, and reinforcing confidence in the mission and long-term future of California Humanities.

The 11th Hour Project and the Weingart Foundation awarded support to California Humanities' new initiative, *Reclaiming Our Stories*, a six-part podcast series that will center California Native voices to explore history, culture, and contemporary life across the state. Collectively, their support for this new project builds on the national initiative to explore the 250th through community-driven cultural programs and helps us amplify indigenous stories and perspectives from across California.

...OUR DONOR COMMUNITY
COLLECTIVELY GAVE **\$108,000**
TO SUPPORT THE HUMANITIES
IN CALIFORNIA, INCREASING
THEIR GIVING BY **69%**

- BY THE END OF 2025



50 YEARS OF CALIFORNIA HUMANITIES

February 28, 2025 | City Club of San Francisco

California Humanities marked its 50th anniversary with a public celebration honoring five decades of statewide impact and looking ahead to the future.

Special Guests

- Rob Bonta, Attorney General of California
- Tani Cantil-Sakauye, Spirit of the Humanities Award honoree
- Damon Horowitz, Philosopher and Technology Entrepreneur
- Michele Elam, William Robertson Coe Professor of Humanities at Stanford
- Rachael Myrow, Senior Editor, Silicon Valley News Desk at KQED (Moderator)

How the Humanities Can Revolutionize Artificial Intelligence

A featured conversation explored the role of the humanities in shaping ethical, human-centered approaches to artificial intelligence.

COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

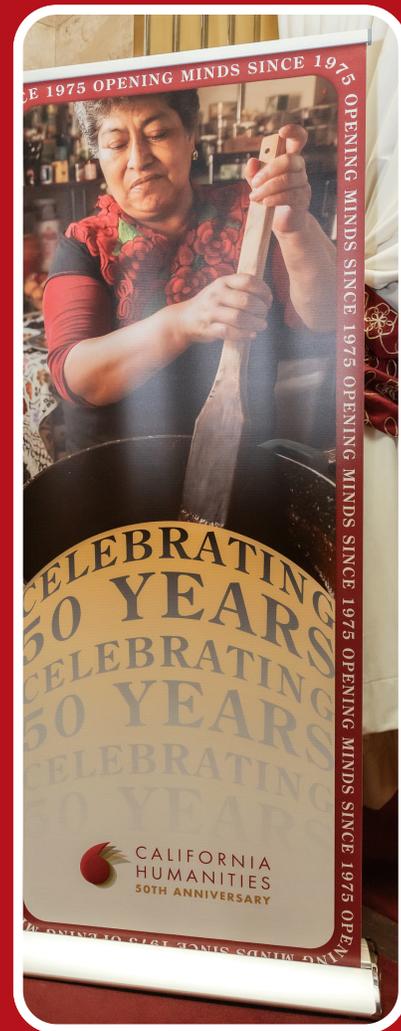
- Fritz Friedman
- Penelope Wong
- Thomas K. Arnold
- Wenda Fong
- Abe Peck
- Gil Robertson

SPONSORS

- Meta
- UC San Diego
- James B. McClatchy Foundation



50TH ANNIVERSARY HIGHLIGHTS



Top left to right: Board Chair, Neha Balram; Board Vice Chair, Daryle Williams; and Immediate Past Board Chair, Rachel Hatch; Panelist Rachael Myrow; Celebrate 50 Years Banner
Middle: President & CEO Rick Noguchi, Board Member Penelope Wong, Producer Wenda Fong, and Board Member Fritz Friedman; Rick Noguchi and Attorney General Rob Bonta
Bottom left to right: Some California Humanities Board Members; Artwork by Diego Rivera, Allegory of California at The City Club of San Francisco (1931)

OUR SUPPORTERS

Namrata Abhyankar
Rosie Abriam and Steve Lee
Anonymous (6)
Thomas K. Arnold
Mark Axelrod
Neha Balram
Pravin and Nutan Balram
Cora Barnes
Patricia B. Berkowitz
Sophia Booth Magnone
Marc Butsumyo
Jerry Cahill and Kathy King
Tani Cantil-Sakauye
Genevieve Carpio
Dr. Constance M. Carroll
Ron and Judy Chan
Kanchan Charan
Andres Chavez
Milton Chen and Ruth Cox
Sandra and Chris Chong*
Jennifer Chu
Amy Cohen
Kenya Davis-Hayes
Thelma De Castro
Steven DeBry
Displaced Films
Arthur Dong
Margaret Shelleda
Bruce Sievers and Cynthia Perry
Dan and Charlene Simmons
Jon Sleeper
Michelle Sorgen
Peter Stansky
Jennifer Steele
K. Tanaka
John Taylor
John and Sarah Kobara Family Foundation

Elisa Kutza
Rafael Lemus
Ralph Lewin*
Daniel and Marcia Lewis
Karen Mack
Jane Manley and Ricardo Cordova
Leslie Masunaga
Mina Matlon
Julia Meltzer
Anne Merrill
Tyrus Miller
Sharon Mizota and Oliver Wang
Shonda Moore
Dawn Mori
Kerry Newkirk
Rick Noguchi
PayPal Giving Fund*
Abe and Suzanne Peck
Christopher H. Peters (Puhlik-
lah/Karuk)
Oliver Pollak
James Quay
Bidhan Chandra Roy, Ph.D.
Lee and Judy Salter
Diane Sanchez
Deborah Sanchez (Chumash,
O'odham, and Raramuri)
Fred Tejada*
The Mary C Henry and Rajpal
Sandhu Foundation
The Swift River Fund
Alan A Thomas*
Feylyn V.
Tony Valenzuela
Barbara Vangsness

Howard B. Dratch
Electronic Arts
Jane J Emery
David G. Engle
Karen English
Priscilla Enriquez
Carmen Estrada
Shiva Farivar
Robert Feyer and Marsha Cohen
Justin Fichelson
Joan Forman
Fritz Friedman
Evonne Gallardo
Marika Garcia
Nilofar Gardezi
GenRyu Arts
Gliding Eagle
Google
Julie Ha
Arthur Hansen
Rachel and Aaron Hatch
Jo Hernandez
Marge Howard-Jones
Cooper Jackson
Chris Komai*
Annette Johnson
Christina Johnson
Jeremy Kagan
Deborah Kaufman
David Kessler
KLA Foundation
Kathy Vita
Vanessa Whang†
Daryle Williams

INSTITUTIONAL DONORS

The National Endowment for the Humanities

The Federation for State Humanities Councils, with support from the Mellon Foundation

11th Hour Project

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

Weingart Foundation

James B. McClatchy Foundation



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