



## RHODE ISLAND HUMANITIES

The Hon. Alex Marszalkowski, Chair  
House Committee on Finance, Subcommittee  
on General Government  
State House  
Providence, RI 02903

March 4, 2026

Dear Chair Marszalkowski,

As the House Finance Committee subcommittee considers allocations for the forthcoming budget, we strongly urge you to continue support for the Department of State's budget to Rhode Island Humanities for the THRIVE General Operating Support Program. THRIVE provides much-needed assistance to Rhode Island's small but vital cultural heritage organizations and local preservation and historical societies. With over a half-century track record as a trusted grantmaker in the state, RI Humanities has stewarded this program from its inception.

THRIVE provides funding for small cultural heritage organizations and local historical and preservation societies that support and strengthen Rhode Island's many diverse, dynamic communities. Each organization receives \$5,000 in operating support funds. From 2024 - 2026, investments from the state have totaled \$300,000 supporting 57 organizations from 26 cities and towns. Over 50 jobs have been created or retained thanks to the THRIVE program and opportunities for more than 1,000 volunteers have been supported.

This program is a lifeline for small cultural heritage organizations and local historical and preservation societies as they enhance economic vitality and tourism, connect communities, cover core operations, enhance their collections, steward historic properties, increase accessibility, and provide engagement opportunities for residents, young people, and visitors that otherwise would not exist. These organizations carry out the programs and activate the historic sites that draw visitors to Rhode Island and contribute to Main Street economies.

Below are testimonials from several recent THRIVE grant recipients from across the state that document the specific impact of this funding on their organizations, programs, and communities.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Francis, PhD  
Executive Director

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## Testimonials from 2024 and 2025 THRIVE Grant Recipients

### ECONOMIC VITALITY AND TOURISM:

#### **Mixed Magic Theater & Cultural Events, Pawtucket**

“This grant helped us to demonstrate to the public and other funders of the arts that Mixed Magic is not only committed to producing high quality entertainment experiences, we are also dedicated to acknowledging the human experience and celebrating the diversity of ideas and images that keep it vital and vibrant.”

#### **RI Kung Fu & Lion Dance Club, Providence**

“The THRIVE grant facilitated our ability to collaborate with/for budget-limited entities by allowing us to perform for them without charging a fee. These included multiple social service agencies and non-profit organizations (ex. in Woonsocket, Pawtucket, Providence). This gave us opportunities to expose our traditional Chinese art to many [new audiences affording opportunities for]... engaging cross-cultural and cross-educational communication.”

### COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS:

#### **Foster Preservation Society, Foster**

“The grant allowed our organization to host/participate in more community-based events and functions than we would have absent the grant. [The grant]... helped to strengthen our bond with the community, generated significant interest in, and promoted the cause of historical preservation.”

### ACCESSIBILITY:

#### **East Providence Historical Society, East Providence**

“The THRIVE grant helped us... develop new exhibits and offer presentations to the community about the rich history and cultures of the many underrepresented groups in our area. Significant impacts from the THRIVE grant include our new ability to make our museum handicap accessible by expanding our museum exhibits to the handicap accessible Education Center, upgrading our software for membership and collections data, placing interpretative signs on the grounds and utilizing a wearable camera to allow for live streaming the contents of the museum from the Education Center.”

### ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

#### **Oasis International, Providence**

“Overall, the THRIVE funding was not just an investment in our infrastructure; it was an investment in the future of our programs and the youth we serve, allowing us to provide a richer and more impactful experience. Rhode Island Humanities has been an exceptional program that supports all the grassroots organizations, and we are privileged to be one of them.”

## CORE OPERATIONS:

### **Newport Pride, *Newport***

“The THRIVE grant was instrumental in sustaining and enhancing Newport Pride's core operations and programming during a critical period. Specifically, the \$5,000 grant provided essential general operating support, allowing us to maintain the Newport Pride Center as a vital community hub. The funding directly contributed to sustaining the Newport Pride Center, the continuation of core programs, [and developing] new partnerships and program[s].”

### **Rhode Island Latino Arts, *Central Falls***

“This \$5,000 grant arrived at a pivotal moment. It allowed us to cover essential expenses such as rent, utilities, and staffing, which meant our doors could remain open and our programs could continue. This support not only stabilized our operations, it ensured that community members still had access to cultural programming and the preservation of *Nuestras Raíces: Latino History*. For many, our gallery, events, and archives are a place of connection and belonging. By bridging an immediate financial gap, the grant made it possible for us to continue serving as a trusted resource and gathering place for Rhode Island’s Latino community.”

## COLLECTIONS CARE, PROPERTY STEWARDSHIP, AND PROGRAMS

### **South County Museum, *Narragansett***

“The grant helped South County Museum accomplish several key goals. First, it allowed us to enhance our educational programming by introducing new, engaging workshops which attracted a broader audience. In addition, the grant supported marketing efforts that increased our visibility in the community, drawing more visitors and raising awareness of the museum's offerings. This grant was crucial for South County Museum because it provided the financial support needed to achieve goals that were otherwise beyond our means.”