



ISSUE 30 | WINTER 2022

RAPPORT

HUMANITIES NEBRASKA

HELPING NEBRASKANS EXPLORE WHAT CONNECTS US AND MAKES US HUMAN



NEBRASKA POETRY PEN PAL PROGRAM LAUNCHED

PG. 2



“DEAR STRANGER” WINTER WRITING PROMPT ANNOUNCED

PG 4



HUMANITIES NEBRASKA TO CELEBRATE 50TH YEAR IN 2023

PG 12



HUMANITIES NEBRASKA

RAPPORT

ISSUE 30 | WINTER 2022

UPCOMING EVENTS

DUE
JAN 02

MINI GRANT APPLICATIONS

January 2, March 1, May 1
(details on our website)

DUE
JAN 15

MEDIA/WEBSITE/DIGITAL GRANT APPLICATIONS

January 15 (details on our website)

JAN
21

WINTER BOARD MEETING

Online

DUE
FEB 15

DEAR STRANGER "CELEBRATION" LETTERS

Mail yours by February 15. See page 4.

DUE
MAR 1

MAJOR GRANT APPLICATIONS

March 1 (details on our website)

MARCH
2023

CAPITOL FORUM DAY

Lincoln (date to be determined)

APR
15

SPRING BOARD MEETING

Lincoln

OPENS
APR 15

"VOICES AND VOTES: DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA"

Howells Historical Society Museum

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NEBRASKA POETRY PEN PAL PROGRAM

LAUNCHED IN VALENTINE, GORDON, CHADRON

IN EARLY NOVEMBER, NEBRASKA STATE POET MATT MASON STARTED A NEW INTERACTIVE POETRY PROJECT, FUNDED BY A FELLOWSHIP FROM THE ACADEMY OF AMERICAN POETS, THE MELLON FOUNDATION AND HUMANITIES NEBRASKA.

After receiving one of 22 fellowships from the Academy of American Poets, Nebraska State Poet Matt Mason launched the statewide Nebraska Poetry Pen Pal Program.

Mason's vision is to tour schools, libraries, correctional facilities, and community centers in various parts of the state, bringing along other published poets to spur what he calls, "discussions through poetry that we hope will carry on beyond just the day's events."

His passion is infectious. "Poetry and the arts help us figure out ourselves and our world," he said. "In taking the time to write, we process, and we delve into who we are, how we see things, why we feel what we feel, why we react the way we do to certain sights or events and so much more."

He added, "There's a reason poetry has been around as long as human civilization has: it helps us to live better, more informed lives."

The plan for the Nebraska Poetry Pen Pal Program is to have Mason and two

other poets read poems about their lives and experiences, inviting teachers, students, and other writers to do the same. A discussion about poetry and writing follows. Ongoing communication between the poets and audience is encouraged, which Mason envisions to include trading poems.

"We'll be offering writing prompts and encouraging people to send us what they write so we can keep these discussions going afterward," he explained. "Discussion is becoming such a weirdly polarizing thing, lately, so my hope is that we can form connections across different parts of the state through poetry."

The tour began in early November in Valentine, Gordon, and Chadron. Mason brought copies of poetry anthologies "Watching the Perseids" and "Nebraska Poetry: A Sesquicentennial Anthology" to donate to each school and library hosting the tour, and brought along poets Joe from Long Island and Zedeka Poindexter.

"Zedeka has been part of the local writing and poetry slam community for decades and is one of the most engaging poets around," Mason said. "Joe recently moved to Nebraska and has jumped out as a captivating teaching artist and writer who brings the perspective of a transplant to what he writes about."

On November 7, day sessions at Valentine High School preceded a community-wide reading at Valentine Public Library.



Zedeka Poindexter performs one of her poems at the Gordon Theater. Nebraska State Poet Matt Mason and Joe from Long Island also did readings.

PHOTO BY SHANNON SMITH



"We had a warm reception at the school and the reading," Mason reported. "We really felt honored by how well Valentine treated us and how the students engaged us in really wonderful conversations."

November 8 brought the poets to another rewarding day in Gordon, beginning with classroom discussions and an all-school assembly at Gordon-Rushville High School.

That evening, the Gordon Theater hosted a poetry reading for the community. Afterwards, students expressed interest in having open mic events, so Mason offered insight and introduced them to the theater's owner, the first steps in making their dream a reality.

November 9 led the poets to Chadron State College's annual Scholastic Day for more interaction with students, teachers, and members of the community.

"There are few things I find more enjoyable than giving students and audiences a different way of seeing poetry and having them write and listen and ask questions and weigh in," Mason said.

After such an encouraging

start, he is working on two more legs of the tour for February and March 2023, and possibly more during autumn. He hopes to reach some of the far north and far south counties that he has yet to visit during his tenure as Nebraska State Poet.

"Between Keya Paha and Cedar counties?" he mused. "Franklin to Pawnee? Thomas to Wheeler?"

His hope is that Nebraskans will be open to the program, even if they've never really liked poetry before.

"If you're breathing, this is the right program for you," he emphasized. "I know, it is often seen as something 'other,' something above us or smarter than us rather than just what Homer and other poets from the ancient days were doing: they were recording the stories of their times to entertain listeners. That's what poetry comes from and that is the kind of poetry I love most."

He continued, "I want this to be about telling our stories through poetry, telling them with truth and beauty and with the intention being about understanding



Left: Matt Mason, Zedeka Poindexter, and Joe from Long Island stopped for a visit to Fort Falls while in Valentine. Right: Zedeka read her poems at the Valentine Public Library.

one another...Forget what you think you know about poetry and come out for a fun show."

There is no cost to bring the Nebraska Poetry Pen Pal Program to any given community, thanks to funding from the Academy of American Poets fellowship, the Mellon Foundation, and Humanities Nebraska. Interested communities need only contact Mason by email at mtmason@gmail.com to set up a day visit with a school, public library, correctional facility, or other group. Anyone who can assist with coordinating a three-day tour with other nearby towns or villages would be particularly helpful.

CHAUTAUQUA

July 21-22, 2023

Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer • Grand Island

Details coming soon!

**DUE
FEB 15**

WRITE TO A "DEAR STRANGER" ABOUT A MEANINGFUL PUBLIC CELEBRATION YOU REMEMBER MOST

Join other Nebraskans in HN's letter exchange, "Dear Stranger." Write a letter to an anonymous stranger, get their letter in return, and make a new connection.

Last year, participants were invited to write about significant weather events. This year's prompt is inspired by



A participant sent this photo during the Winter 2021/22 round of 'Dear Stranger.'

Humanities Nebraska's 50th anniversary in 2023:

Write about a national or local public event from the last 50 years — a

celebration, anniversary, or gathering that occurred between 1972 and 2022 — that was personally meaningful to you. Share how that experience

felt, why you hold on to it, and how it affected you.

To be matched with a "Dear Stranger" from another part of the state, write your letter or postcard, and send it with your completed participation form to HN by February 15. Participants under the age of 18 are matched with other minors and must have permission from a parent or guardian.

For a participation form and more information, go to the Programs section of HN's website and click on "Dear Stranger." If you wish to help sponsor this program, please email Heather Thomas: heather@humanitiesnebraska.org.



Submissions from the last round of "Dear Stranger"

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CANDICE MILLARD BRINGS HER “CLEAR AND STEADY EYE” TO LINCOLN

Bestselling author Candice Millard was the featured guest speaker in Lincoln on September 28 for the 27th Annual Governor’s Lecture in the Humanities. The program, “A Clear and Steady Eye: Storytelling and Our Shared History,” was a conversation between Candice Millard and William Padmore, *All Things Considered* host and reporter for Nebraska Public Media.

Presented by Humanities Nebraska with co-sponsors the E.N. Thompson Forum on World Issues and the University of Nebraska, the program kicked off the Thompson Forum’s 2022-23 series on “creativity to solve global challenges.”

Co-chaired by Humanities Nebraska board members Lynette Krieger of Hastings and Chris Zygielbaum of Lincoln, a benefit reception and dinner immediately prior to the lecture raised more than \$160,000 for HN’s statewide humanities programs. More than 300 humanities supporters gathered at the Embassy Suites to celebrate the humanities and honor Katherine L. Walter, who received the 2022 Sower Award in the Humanities.

At the Lied Center later that evening, the conversation between Millard and Padmore touched on all four of Millard’s *New York Times* best sellers. The author shared alternately fascinating, amusing, and sometimes nerve-racking accounts from travels and research related to her books “The River of Doubt,” “Destiny of the Republic,” “Hero of the Empire,” and “River of the Gods.” She also spoke about her research



Co-chair Chris Zygielbaum, Joep Cuppens, HN board member Valerie Cuppens, and Art Zygielbaum.



Mary Raimondo, HN board member Brenda Christensen, Governor Pete Ricketts, First Lady Susanne Shore, and Michael Morris.



Donna Lightbody, Sheri Martin, HN board member Judy Ekeler, Bob Martin, and Jack Ekeler.

and writing processes.

Millard described her early determination to land her dream job at National Geographic. “If there is one thing I learned working at National Geographic, it’s that anything is fascinating if you look hard enough,” she noted.

She went on to say, “My life is just one long education. My job is literally to learn, and that’s one of the best parts.”

After her white-knuckle description of a rocky boat ride in crocodile-infested waters, Padmore advised the audience, “If you’re doing research and it’s boring, you’re not doing it correctly.” He was met with

Co-chairs Lynette Krieger (left) and Chris Zygielbaum (center) with 2022 Sower Award recipient Kay Walter (right).

affirming laughter.

The audience enjoyed asking questions of Millard and having her sign books while mingling afterwards at Humanities After Hours in the Lied Center lobby.

Humanities Nebraska thanks all who sponsored, supported, and attended the 2022 Governor’s Lecture in the Humanities and those who help make HN’s statewide work possible.



William Padmore from Nebraska Public Media interviewed Candice Millard.

LISTEN AGAIN!
THURSDAY
DEC 15 - 7 PM CT
ON NEBRASKA
PUBLIC MEDIA
RADIO



Above: Lynda Carter, University of Nebraska President Ted Carter, Natalie Hahn, Kelli King and Megan Elliott Right: Patty Miller, Candice Millard and former HN board member Ellen Lierk.



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for supporting HN's mission to help Nebraskans explore what connects us and makes us human!



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To join the Patron's Circle, please contact Heather Thomas at heather@HumanitiesNebraska.org.

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To learn more, please visit givenebraska.org.



SAVE THE DATE: PATRON'S CIRCLE EVENT

Patron's Circle donors are invited to a special event in Lincoln on **Friday, April 14, 2023**, in gratitude for their annual support. A celebratory 50th anniversary evening is planned with details mailed to Patron's Circle donors early in 2023. For questions, please contact Heather Thomas: heather@humanitiesnebraska.org.

In April 2022, Patron's Circle donors and their guests were invited to a special program with Paxton Williams, chair of the board of the Federation of State Humanities Councils.



GRANT SPOTLIGHT: DOCUMENTARY EXPLORES LIFE AND LEGACY OF DR. SUSAN LA FLESCHÉ PICOTTE



"Dr. Susan La Flesche Picotte," a documentary funded by a Humanities Nebraska grant, explores the life and legacy of the first Native American to earn a medical degree. She was a member of the Omaha tribe.

The Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs created the documentary for noncommercial public showing on YouTube and encourages viewing for any organization wishing to celebrate or teach Native American history.

The documentary examines La Flesche's dedication to fighting for the greater good through interviews with experts, Native people, and direct descendants. Viewers also learn how a statue was raised in her honor for display on Centennial Mall in Lincoln.

"Her greatness is just going to be perpetuated now," said direct descendant Susan G. Picotte. "She's someone to look up to. And if she can do it, we can do it."

After earning a degree from Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute and graduating as valedictorian of Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania, La Flesche returned to the Omaha

and Winnebago Tribes as the sole physician for 1,244 patients across more than 450 square miles. Throughout her life, she also served as a lawyer, accountant, political and public health advocate, and founder of the first modern hospital in Thurston County, now a National Historic Landmark.

Students in eighth through twelfth grades can view the documentary for free through the Lied Center for Performing Arts' student matinee program. Students can register to watch the video online through the Lied Center website now through May 31, 2023.

RECENTLY AWARDED GRANTS



IMAGE: COURTESY OF COMPLETELY KIDS

Completely KIDS in Omaha received a grant to help fund a series of multicultural concerts and public discussions.

Angels Theatre Company, Lincoln, \$1,225 to help fund the Salon Reading Series. • **Arnold Area Historical Museum, \$2,000** in support of a new website. • **Asian Community and Cultural Center, Lincoln, \$1,900** to help fund a multimedia storytelling program for immigrant and refugee students. • **Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha, \$2,000** in support of the lecture series "Opulence: Performative Wealth and the Failed American Dream." • **Blixt Locally Grown (The Grumble Project), Lincoln, \$1,565** to help fund post-play discussions for "Not Too Far Distant." • **Completely KIDS, Omaha, \$2,814** to help fund a series of multicultural concerts and discussion events. • **The Durham Museum, Omaha, \$10,700** to support the distance education program "Museum Live!" • **Fontenelle Forest, Bellevue, \$7,750** to help fund the Fontenelle Trading Post exhibit and speaker series. • **History Nebraska, Lincoln, \$716** in support of an event highlighting two notable Nebraska businesswomen. • **Institute for Holocaust Education, Omaha, \$5,000** in support of the Anne Frank traveling exhibit and education program. • **Lincoln Orchestra Association, \$2,900** in support of the 2022-23 series of pre-concert chats. • **Nebraska Public Media, Lincoln, \$10,000** to help fund humanities content for Season 14 of "Nebraska Stories." • **Nebraska Thespians, Omaha, \$3,000** supporting an appearance by Shakespearean hip-hop artist Devon Glover. • **Nebraska Writers Collective, Omaha, \$7,500** to help fund the "All Writes Reserved" youth poetry festival. • **Omaha Community Playhouse, \$1,900** in support of a lecture presentation and Q&A on "Fences" • **Omaha Performing Arts, \$4,189** to help fund the arts and social justice series "Voices AMPLIFIED." • **Opera Omaha, \$2,000** to help fund a K-12 poetry workshop. • **Social Action Committee of Unitarian Church, Lincoln, \$2,000** to help fund an annual lecture series on political polarization. • **Stone Soup Productions, Washington, DC, \$12,500** in support of a Nebraska-based episode of "The People's Recorder." • **TEDxLincoln, \$2,000** to help video record the Nebraska Storytelling Festival. • **United by Culture Fund, Lexington, \$6,950** to help purchase 15 iPads for students in the Courageous Voices afterschool program. • **University of Nebraska at Kearney Board of Regents, \$2,000** in support of a biennial conference on world affairs. • **University of Nebraska-Lincoln Board of Regents, \$10,000** to support educational resources for "Nebraska Stories of Humanity."

23
GRANTS

\$102,609
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PRIME TIME FULFILLS LIBRARIAN'S GOAL OF WORKING WITH FAMILIES

Prime Time has made a huge impact on many people throughout Nebraska, including Rocio “Rossey” Casanova. She is a Youth and Family Services Librarian at the Lexington Public Library.

Rossey heard about Prime Time six years ago. She said she was astounded that there



was a program that taught parents how to introduce

their children to reading and how important it is to read together. Not only that, but the program was free and local.

She began to call other parents and tell them all about it. When Rossey and her son went to their first Prime Time, she was amazed at how well the educators were able to capture the attention of

the kids. When they asked questions, the children were excited to answer.

Rossey was already involved in Prime Time when she applied for the Youth and Family Services Library position. “I enjoy it a lot because I get to work with new families in the community, working families that are struggling with finding quality time with their families, and families with young children.”

“I ENJOY IT A LOT BECAUSE I GET TO WORK WITH WORKING FAMILIES THAT ARE STRUGGLING WITH FINDING QUALITY TIME WITH THEIR FAMILIES.”

—ROSSY CASANOVA, PRIME TIME TEAM MEMBER

This corresponds perfectly with the most rewarding part for Rossey in Prime Time: meeting new families. Her goal in the end is to interact with everyone, be able to meet their needs and find out their “desires for their future community.”



Rossey Casanova and Lexington Public Library director Jennifer Norton display two Prime Time summer reading kits, which they distributed last summer.

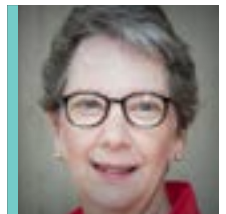
Being a part of this program has also helped Rossey and her family in their home life. They have started to incorporate reading into their daily routine. She says she understands how crazy life can get with other children, work, and everything else going on in a single day, but this is something that families need to start doing on a daily basis. Learning to read is so important for kids. Teaching and working with them can change their lives for the better. *Story by former HN intern Claire Lyons*

IN MEMORY

PAMELA HILTON SNOW | 1948-2022 On September 7, Nebraska lost a true arts and humanities champion. Pamela Hilton Snow served on both the Council and Foundation boards for Humanities Nebraska between 1996-2006, including as Council Chair in 1999-2000. She was a founding board member of the Nebraska Cultural Endowment from 1999-2006, and then served as its executive director from 2006-2014.

During her years living in Grand Island, Lincoln, and Ashland, Pam was a leader with many different nonprofit organizations, including the Stuhr Museum, Grand Island Community Foundation, Moonshell Arts Council, Cooper Foundation, Nebraska Book Festival, History Nebraska, Nebraska Arts Council, and the Museum of Nebraska Art. She was the recipient of Humanities Nebraska's Sower Award in the Humanities in 2018, which recognizes an individual for contributing to the public understanding of the humanities in Nebraska. Pam was also recognized for her leadership at the national level, serving on the board of the Federation of State Humanities Councils and as a site visitor for the National Endowment for the Humanities, where she helped NEH evaluate a number of state humanities councils.

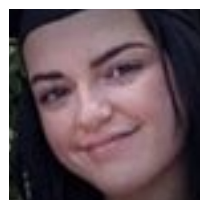
Pam personally lived a life full of the arts and humanities, including a passion for photography, a master's degree in creative writing, musical talents with piano and ukulele, and a love for roaming the state and far beyond. She inspired all of us at HN with her grace, poise, kindness, and determination to make the world a better place.



MEET HANNAH, LEANNE AND JERALDIN

Hannah Rentsch joined HN as development associate in November. Hannah is from Lake Ozark, Missouri, and graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she majored in biological sciences on the pre-health track.

What interested you about working at HN?



I admire the support HN provides not only to the community, but to other nonprofits to help as much as possible. I believe it is important to connect to the human experience and grow as individuals by learning from the experiences of others.

What's your favorite thing about Nebraska?

Strangers are eager to connect with you and learn about your life and experience and cheer you on without even knowing

you. That's truly beautiful.

LeAnne Bugay joined the HN staff as a social media and communications intern. The Bellevue native is a junior at UNL studying journalism, advertising, and public relations with a minor in education studies.



What interested you about working at HN?

I believe that the humanities are the bread and butter of life.

"IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONNECT TO THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE AND GROW AS INDIVIDUALS BY LEARNING FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF OTHERS."

— HANNAH RENTSCH

What's your go-to humanities hobby?

I'm a huge museum-goer! I love exploring art and history in interactive ways, and I hope to work in communications for a museum someday.

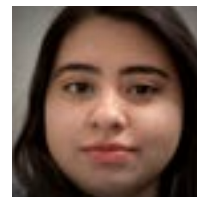
Humanities Nebraska recently hired **Jeraldin Zurita Meza** as the new program intern. Jeraldin grew up in Grand Island and is in her fourth year majoring in global studies at UNL.

What interested you about working at HN?

The values and goals that HN has are very similar to my own personal values, and the programs offered the opportunity for me to gain experience and skills that I could use practically in the future.

What's your go-to humanities hobby?

I love learning new languages and have studied Spanish, French, and Japanese! I am nowhere near fluent but can get by in very basic conversations and have a decent understanding. My current Duolingo go-to has been Arabic.



ONE BOOK ONE NEBRASKA 2023

During 2023, Nebraskans will read and discuss "The Mystery of Hunting's End," a mystery written by the late Nebraska author Mignon Eberhart. At the height of her career, Eberhart was America's most prolific and most celebrated female mystery writer, publishing 59 mystery novels and many short stories. According to Gertrude Stein, no one could create suspense nor capture a scene like Eberhart.

One Book One Nebraska is sponsored by Nebraska Center for the Book, Humanities Nebraska, and the Nebraska Library Commission. Resources for book clubs, libraries, etc., will soon be available. For more information, visit <http://onebook.nebraska.gov> or search "One Book One Nebraska" on Facebook.



The Nebraska Cultural Endowment Proudly Supports Humanities Nebraska

Learn more about how the Nebraska Cultural Endowment ensures an endless tradition of arts and humanities in our state, visit NebraskaCulture.org

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MAKE YOUR CONNECTION TODAY AND EVERY DAY

Looking for ways to connect through humanities? We have a variety of opportunities.

Join our Dear Stranger program. Write a letter — and receive letter — about a memorable celebration and why it's important to you (see details on page 4). Mail it to HN by February 15.

Attend one of our events, such as a Speakers Bureau program or a poetry program with Nebraska State Poet Matt Mason. See page 3.

Review our grant opportunities and apply for a mini-grant by January 2 or a media grant by January 15.

Sign up for HN's weekly e-blast so you can be up to date on programs in your community.

Make an end-of-year gift to help elevate the humanities and support Nebraska communities through history, literature, languages and cultural heritage. It's easy! Use the enclosed envelope or use our secure online donation system.



The University of Nebraska-Lincoln received an HN grant for its summer enrichment program, PAWS University.

Or, consider these special ways to give:

Gifts of Stock: A gift of appreciated securities, including stocks or bonds, is an easy way for you to support the humanities.

IRA/Qualified Charitable Donations: Making a charitable donation from your individual retirement account (IRA) is a wonderful way to give to HN. While some rules and guidelines apply, charitable IRA donations or qualified charitable donations (QCDs) can be a great way to support HN's mission while lowering your adjusted gross income.

More information about all giving options is available on our website. Select "Ways to Give" from the About Us menu.

Make your gift at HumanitiesNebraska.org/donate Thank you!

HN THANKS THESE LEGACY DONORS

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A 2016 Prime Time session with Joel Gajardo

PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY FOR HUMANITIES NEBRASKA'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2023!

**SINCE 1973, HN HAS HELPED PEOPLE EXPLORE WHAT CONNECTS US AND
MAKES US HUMAN THROUGH A WIDE VARIETY OF PROGRAMS AND GRANTS.**

At this time 50 years ago, citizens from across Nebraska were involved in discussions about forming a “state-based humanities program” that would bring humanities scholars together with the general public to explore important issues. The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) had been created as a federal agency just a few years prior, and it was quickly recognized that for public humanities programs to truly be available across the nation, the country needed humanities entities in every state and territory. The model would be independent nonprofit organizations that were affiliated with NEH and would receive NEH funding. Local planning groups got to work.

Here in Nebraska, the planning committee held public meetings in 17 communities across the state, which were attended by 750 people. Out of that process, what was originally known as the Nebraska Committee for the Humanities (and later became the Nebraska Humanities Council and now Humanities Nebraska) was born in 1973.

Throughout 2023, Humanities Nebraska will share stories of inspiring humanities moments in Nebraska over the past five decades, shine a light on why the humanities are now more important than ever for all of us, and offer new exciting opportunities to explore what connects us and makes us human.

To help celebrate this 50th anniversary in 2023 and to spark the next 50 years of humanities learning, programming, and exchange, Humanities Nebraska will offer \$1,000

grants to 50 Nebraska educators to support innovative humanities education during the 2023-24 school year. Grants will be available to all full-time educators and can be used for expenses including, but not limited to, tools and materials for humanities projects, professional development opportunities in the humanities, speaker fees, and field trips.

Any Nebraska organization that educates Pre-K through grade 12 students may apply, with a maximum of one application per organization. To ensure statewide distribution, awards will be balanced among the following regions: Lincoln, Omaha, Eastern Nebraska outside of Lincoln/Omaha, Central Nebraska and Western Nebraska. Priority will be given to underserved schools based on geography, economic conditions, ethnic background, and disability.

In addition to these Educator Grants, HN will announce a special call for grant applications for new and exciting humanities projects within its regular program granting.

Applications and additional information will be available at after January 1.

