

Create a unified “Sponsored By the Humanities” branding campaign.

Audience for this recommendation:

U.S. humanities funding agencies--NEH, private foundations, professional associations, humanities councils.

WE1S’s study of the media shows that U.S. public discourse about humanities funding is complicated (see [KF-7-1](#)). Sometimes the U.S. media writes about funding arts programs as if they are humanities programs and vice versa. Sometimes state humanities councils fund the arts, and sometimes arts councils fund the humanities. These crossovers are newsworthy,¹ but they can also muddle public understanding of the humanities. The humanities blur into the arts, or are misidentified as the arts.

Media coverage of funding for the humanities is important. But, as we suggest in our [KF-7-1](#), we wonder if confusion in the media about the nature of the humanities and how they are funded inadvertently reduces public identification with and support for the humanities.

How can U.S. funding agencies--from the level of the federal government, major foundations, or national professional associations through state humanities councils and local initiatives--clarify the goals and funding sources of humanities events, activities, projects, and programs to more clearly show the impact of humanities funding in society?

Try this:

→ **Develop a unified branding campaign that visibly identifies funded humanities**

¹ E.g., an [article](#) with the headline, “MFA Gets \$575,000 Matching NEH Grant.”

events, activities, or projects in the U.S. as “Sponsored by the Humanities.”

For instance, a public event at a local historical society branded *Sponsored by the Humanities* could link the humanities for the public to the value of local history and heritage. There is a recent precedent in the U.K. for such a unified rebranding campaign related to the humanities: the [SHAPE](#) (Social Sciences, Humanities, and the Arts for People and the Economy”) initiative.

→ **Design public communications materials that use the slogan *Sponsored by the Humanities*.** Funding agencies for the humanities and state and local humanities initiatives might jointly commission designs (logos, templates, graphics, social media campaigns) or sponsor a national design contest for students. The resulting branding designs could then be incorporated in all digital and print materials that advertise or communicate about the humanities.

→ **Disseminate humanities branding to journalists.** Professional “science writers” cover STEM fields in journalism, but there are no equivalent “humanities writers.” In press releases, press kits, interviews, and other engagements with journalists, humanities agencies and the initiatives they sponsor can instead use humanities branding materials to help sharpen media coverage of the humanities. (See the National Alliance for the Humanities’ good ideas on [“Pitching the Media.”](#))

Resources

- * WE1S Bibliography: [Humanities Funding](#) |
- * [Public Humanities](#) | [Value of Humanities](#)