



\$350,000 in New Grants for Public Humanities Projects Expanding Our Understanding of History and Culture

**11 wide-ranging projects showcase partnerships among
scholars, nonprofits, and citizens across the US and beyond**

MAY 25, 2022. The public humanities reveal and remake our world. When communities come together to reflect on history, philosophy, and culture, they not only enrich their own lives – they can also change the way we all tell stories, understand the past, and engage with our own humanity.

The [Whiting Public Engagement Program](#) (WPEP) is a distinctive national grant founded to champion the public humanities in all forms, and to highlight the roles scholars play in collaborative work to deploy the humanities for the public good. Since it began in 2016, the WPEP has given \$2.7 million to launch and expand projects in the US and beyond. Winners are selected through a highly competitive process beginning with nomination by a university or humanities nonprofit and proceeding through two further stages of peer review by expert public humanists.

Today we proudly announce new grants to eleven public-humanities collaborations. **Six \$50,000 [Fellowships](#)** will support:

- **A documentary series** on the history and housing of migrant workers in Oregon
- **Public conversations and a zine** on food culture and solidarities in New Orleans
- **An after-school “philosophy and science” club** for middle-schoolers in Ohio
- **An exhibit and school curriculum** on Chicago’s Indigenous past and present
- **Teacher workshops** on migration, agriculture, and civil rights in rural California
- **A digital portal for educators** with rich content for teaching Texas history

Five \$10,000 [Seed Grants](#) will support:

- **Arpillera urbana textiles** mapping the disappeared town of Pilpilco, Chile
- **Workshops and walking tours** for teachers in Bexar County, Texas
- **A website, exhibit, and K-12 resources** sharing stories of Black life in Arkansas
- **Training for Idaho educators** on incorporating knowledge of Indigenous tribes
- **An online exhibit and lesson plans** on the history of Shakespeare in Nashville

Full descriptions of the new [Fellows](#) and [Seed Grantees](#) and their projects are included below. For more information about the program and past winners, visit the [Whiting website](#). Inquiries and questions can be directed to Daniel Reid at publicengagement@whiting.org.

The **Whiting Foundation** provides targeted support for writers, scholars, and the stewards of humanity's shared cultural heritage. In addition to the Public Engagement Program, Whiting's grants include the [Whiting Award](#) for emerging writers, [Creative Nonfiction Grant](#) for works in progress, [Literary Magazine Prize](#), and a portfolio of global grants to [preserve and disseminate endangered cultural heritage](#).

The Six 2022-23 Fellows



Casa y Comunidad: Latinx Housing in Oregon

John Arroyo (University of Oregon; Planning, Public Policy, and Management)

John Arroyo and the *Casa y Comunidad* team will create a series of short documentary films on the history and housing of migrant Latinx workers in Oregon—a rapidly growing population in the Pacific Northwest – in close collaboration with the workers themselves. Drawing on *testimonios* (oral histories) of multiple generations of families as well as the work of historians, policymakers, and other experts, the project will trace how new waves of both documented and undocumented migration has affected the area's culture and economy, including a growing housing shortage with dire consequences for the workers and the region. Specific segments of the series will highlight topics ranging from wildfire recovery to inter-generational housing to land use challenges.

Each episode will center on one family or individual, incorporating on-site filming to capture their personal housing history along with interviews with other experts to provide regional and historical context. The project website will add bilingual supplementary learning aids including photographs, historical documents, planning records, and news articles expanding on the themes addressed in the videos. Partners include state and local agencies, school districts, and ethnic-serving community-based organizations.

The judges were impressed by the deeply collaborative nature of the project; the robust plan to share the series with housing policymakers, thus injecting history into public discussions about the present; and the strength of the collaboration with the Oregon Department of Education, an enthusiastic partner that will introduce the series to 9-12th grade teachers as they begin to comply with a new state-wide ethnic studies requirement. *Casa y Comunidad* also coordinates with a new initiative Arroyo is leading at the University of Oregon: the Pacific Northwest Just Futures Institute for Racial and Climate Justice, funded in 2021 by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Project Neutral Grounds: At the Intersection of People, Street Food, and the Hustle

Sarah Fouts (University of Maryland, Baltimore County; American Studies)

Sarah Fouts and the *Project Neutral Grounds* team will collaborate with street-food vendors in New Orleans on a multipronged initiative dedicated to the complex history of food culture. The project entails public events featuring facilitated conversations among historians and vendors (not to mention opportunities to sample the latter's wares, from tacos to Soul Food); a zine illustrating historic and contemporary stories about street food; and a digital and physical archive hosted by the Southern Food and Beverage Museum highlighting photos and oral histories. Through food, this project will intersect with histories of the city's blending of cultures, of migration, and of how culture is re-formed in the wake of disasters like Katrina.

Project Neutral Grounds is a holistic project, creating something to attend, something to provoke discussion, and something tangible participants can take with them. Ultimately, the goals are to bolster the ongoing work of organizations like Project Hustle, which unites Black and Brown street vendors toward more cooperative work and cultural spaces with shared resources, to give street-food vendors a platform to showcase their experiences in the city, and to disseminate to a broad public these histories that have shaped New Orleans over the last two decades and longer.

The judges were compelled by the team's commitment to working collaboratively alongside community partners every step of the way. They also found the plan to give street-food vendors pamphlets to distribute to their customers to be an engaging and innovative way to introduce this history to audiences who may not seek out the humanities in more traditional forums. And as the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina approaches in 2025, the judges were heartened by the roadmap this project lays out to empower New Orleans residents to discuss complicated histories through a shared love of good food.

Bringing Philosophy to Science Fairs

Melissa Jacquart (University of Cincinnati; Philosophy)

Melissa Jacquart and the *Bringing Philosophy to Science Fairs* team will pilot an after-school Philosophy & Science Fair Club for 7th and 8th-grade students in Cincinnati. Jacquart will partner with the University of Cincinnati's Center for Public Engagement

with Science and the Greater Cincinnati STEM Collaborative to create lesson plans designed to introduce students to the philosophical and other humanistic aspects of science by identifying a theme, such as space exploration or climate change, and then deploying philosophical methods of inquiry to deeply investigate it. For example, students may consider how scientists' intellectual context and worldviews impact the scientific method and process of discovery, or the role trust plays in the public's understanding of scientific findings. Over the course of fifteen weeks, students will develop individual projects related to the shared theme and informed by philosophical discussion. The club will culminate with each student entering their project in the Southwest Ohio Science and Engineering Expo Science Fair, one of the nation's largest student science fairs.

The judges were drawn to the way this project bridges the humanities and the sciences and saw great potential to spark dialogue across fields too often understood as polar opposites. They saw this project as one that teaches children cross-disciplinary inquiry skills that are indispensable to civic literacy and described it as representing an important avenue for demonstrating the ways that the humanities are essential. Without the humanities, they observed, we can't fully understand why science matters. The judges were also impressed by the thoughtful plans to expand the project after the Fellowship year by translating lesson plans into an easily reproducible model and hosting a series of events to teach fellow philosophers from a variety of backgrounds how to lead Philosophy & Science Fair Clubs in the future. Given the robust networks of advocates and practitioners of Philosophy in the Schools, this innovative project seems poised to find enthusiastic adopters.

Indigenous Chicago

Meredith L. McCoy (Carleton College; American Studies)

Among the many scholarly and popular investigations of the history of Chicago, no comprehensive effort has ever offered a longitudinal representation of Chicago as an Indigenous space from before colonization to the present. *Indigenous Chicago* – a collaboration among Carleton College, the Newberry Library, the Chicago American Indian Community Collaborative, and other members of the Chicago Native community – will investigate this long history and create an exhibit, curricular and digital mapping materials, and an oral history project.

The current phase of the work builds on a multi-year process through which members of the Chicago Indigenous community identified and expressed a need to expand the public's understanding of Chicago's long Indigenous history, from pre-colonization to the present. The fellowship will support Meredith L. McCoy and the curriculum subcommittee in the creation of the curricular materials, to be developed and refined in close collaboration with Chicago educators.

The judges recognized that this initiative addresses a major gap in Illinois state education and saw McCoy as an exemplary co-leader of the curricular aspects of this ambitious, multifaceted project. Her impressive scholarship combined with her

background as a public-school teacher will help facilitate the success of the project's carefully articulated plan to coordinate among an exceptional range of experts. Ultimately, they felt that this range and the involvement of strong institutional partners would ensure the project will have both significant reach and lasting staying power.

Mapping Common Ground: Agriculture, Labor, and Migration in Rural California

Oliver A. Rosales (Bakersfield College; History)

Oliver A. Rosales and the *Mapping Common Ground* team will work with cultural heritage organizations and historic landmark sites in the San Joaquin Valley on classroom resources and a series of virtual and in-person events to teach teachers about history in rural California and train them to lead digital storymapping projects with their students. The San Joaquin Valley has a long history of segregation, but since 1900, the majority of residents – regardless of race – have had a shared agricultural background. And while rich in history, the region suffers from a lack of archives and resources that could help put its past into perspective.

This project will help uncover and contextualize rural California's histories of migration, agriculture, and civil rights by first bringing together a cohort of educators to visit landmark sites and attend seminars with history experts. Rosales and collaborators will also lead workshops on how to use storymapping technology, training teachers to involve students in the creation of digital projects that will embed them in the process of researching and preserving history. This phase of the project will culminate in the publication of freely accessible teaching modules associated with each historic landmark, which will help teachers meet California's new high-school ethnic studies requirement with depth and nuance.

The judges were impressed by the way this project uses common ground – a connection to agriculture in the past and present – as an entry point to teach more complicated history in an area still marked by racial division. They also praised the participation of a range of experts, which will give breadth and heft to the seminars and resulting teaching modules. They cited the project's creative blend of traditional and digital teaching methods as another strength and especially appreciated that students are encouraged to understand family objects as historical artifacts and situate them in a wider regional history.

The Texas History for Teachers Project

Andrew J. Torget (University of North Texas; History)

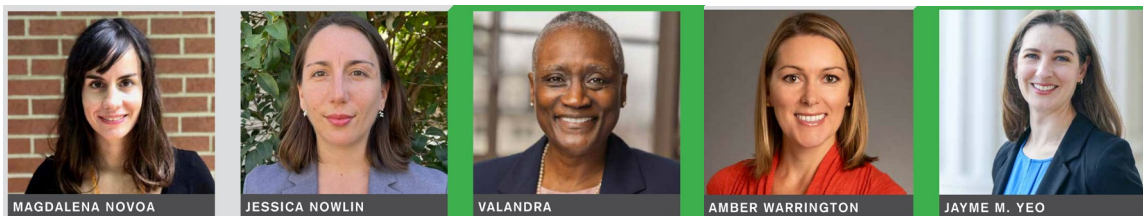
Through the Texas History for Teachers (TX4T) project, Andrew J. Torget, Humanities Texas, the University of North Texas Libraries, and a team of master teachers will provide 4th- and 7th-grade social studies educators access to a website featuring authoritative, evidence-based historical content and best-practices pedagogical resources for teaching Texas history. The state of Texas requires public school teachers to cover Texas history in both 4th- and 7th-grade while addressing a sprawling array of

skill and content standards. This project will meet a pressing need for a comprehensive set of thematically connected, historically accurate lesson plans tied to primary sources, and it will serve as a national model for integrating best-practice instruction into social studies curriculum.

The work will build on The Portal to Texas History, a free online archive of primary sources which teachers often discover when searching for classroom content, curating its massive quantity of historical documents into a more targeted suite of pedagogical resources and building a teacher-facing website to serve as a central hub for accessing this content, organized into 15 chronological “units” that correspond to historical eras identified in the Texas state standards.

The judges were impressed by Dr. Torget’s credentials: as a nationally recognized expert in Texas history with deep pedagogical experience, he struck them as an ideal lead for this important project. They also praised the institutional partners’ strong track record working with teachers, their comprehensive outreach plan, and their attention to digital sustainability in the design of the website, which will help ensure these resources will be available to teachers for many years to come.

The Five 2022-23 Seed Grantees



Stitching Memories as Counter-maps: Reconstructing History with *Arpillera Urbana*
Magdalena Novoa (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; Urban and Regional Planning) will work with Pilpilco en el Corazón and Mesa Ciudadana de Lota, two Chilean grassroots organizations, to create an *arpillera urbana* reconstructing the disappeared town of Pilpilco. *Arpillera urbana* is a textile craft and method of visual storytelling that women used during the Pinochet dictatorship to denounce relatives’ disappearances. In 1976, Pilpilco, a coal-mining town in southern Chile, was erased from official maps and its residents displaced. Novoa will assist former residents with documenting the history of the town, and the resulting *arpillera urbana* will be exhibited during the El Pilpilcano Festival, when hundreds of former residents return to commemorate the town’s disappearance.

The Seed of Texas Teacher Workshops and Walking Tours

Jessica Nowlin (The University of Texas at San Antonio; Philosophy and Classics) will organize workshops and walking tours for 4th- and 7th- grade social studies teachers in Bexar County, Texas, to familiarize them with rich historical materials available via [The Seed of Texas](#) project. The Seed of Texas, a collaboration between the University of Texas

at San Antonio, Bexar County's Heritage and Parks Department, and local historians, makes primary source documents related to the region, especially historic maps, available to the public. These workshops and walking tours will be a new part of the ongoing work to build enthusiasm for and deep knowledge of local history.

Indigenous Voices: Building Understanding in Idaho Classrooms

Amber Warrington (Boise State University; English) will partner with the Boise State Writing Project and Indigenous writers, historians, and educators on a week-long professional development workshop to help K-12 English and social studies teachers in Idaho incorporate knowledge of Indigenous tribes into curricula. Teachers will explore the tribes' histories, cultures, and literature through study and readings, facilitated visits to important local sites, pedagogical exercises, and peer conversation. The workshop will culminate in participants' presentations of newly created lesson plans to their colleagues. Afterward, beyond the effects in graduates' own classrooms, they will become ambassadors and mentors for other teachers.

African American Oral Histories and Placemaking in Washington & Pulaski Counties

Valandra (University of Arkansas; African and African American Studies and Social Work) – working in partnership with long-term Black residents of Washington and Pulaski Counties, the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), the Washington County Community Remembrance Project, Mosaic Templars Cultural Center, Fayetteville Public Library, Arkansas Soul, Visionairi Enterprises, and the Arkansas Peace and Justice Memorial Movement – will collect, digitize, illustrate, and disseminate histories of Black life in the two regions that include EJI memorial markers honoring victims of racial terror lynching. These narratives of placemaking will trace migration patterns, cultural interchange, and experiences of both racial struggle and resilience. In addition to creating a website to host these stories, the project team will design an exhibition and educational materials to disseminate them more widely.

Nashville's Shakespeare

Jayme M. Yeo (Belmont University; English) will build an online exhibit and archive documenting the history of Shakespeare in Nashville and use it as the basis of a project to prompt students and residents to discover how Shakespeare's work has intersected with local history. Building on a grant from the Folger Shakespeare Library that supported an early version of the project, Yeo will revise the online exhibit, convene high-school teachers and theater professionals to design lesson plans based on the archive. Yeo will also build an interactive lobby kiosk to engage theatergoers in local Shakespeare history before and after performances presented by the Nashville Shakespeare Festival.