Tips for Writing Elected Officials

Elected officials **depend** on their constituents to inform them that taxpayer dollars are put to good use. You can reinforce the value of funding for humanities projects by writing your elected officials. Write in your own words and use personal stationery or letterhead and logo. Your letter should be personalized, specific, and concise.

If you have trouble getting started, you're welcome to use and adapt the **letter templates** that the Humanities Council provides on pages 10-11 of this guide.

Letter-Writing Tips

- Spell your elected official's name correctly and know to what legislative body s/he belongs. Due to snail-mail security issues, it is best that letters to federal officials go to their **state** offices rather than DC addresses.

- Snail-mailed letters to **all** elected officials should be addressed to "The Honorable [*full name, North Carolina Senate or North Carolina House of Representatives or Governor of North Carolina*]. The salutations inside the letter **differ**.

  ~ Salutation to senators: "Dear Senator [*last name*]."
  ~ Salutation to representatives: "Dear Mr./Ms. [*last name*] or "Dear Representative [*last name*]."
  ~ Salutation to governors: "Dear Governor [*last name*]."

- Your first paragraph – better yet, first sentence – should inform your elected official that the program you attended was made possible by funding from the North Carolina General Assembly, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the North Carolina Humanities Council. Then describe specifically how you and your community benefited from the funding.

- End with a **call to action**:

  ~ Example 1: "Please join [*your organization*] for [*your event*] to see first-hand the North Carolina Humanities Council's efforts to make the humanities a cornerstone of public life."

  ~ Example 2: "Please continue to support the North Carolina Humanities Council and its efforts to enrich and transform the lives of all people in our state."

  ~ Example 3: "Please continue to support the North Carolina Humanities Council and its efforts to ensure the vitality of our state's cultures and communities."

- Keep your letter brief – one page or less. If you must go beyond one page, use enclosures (but no more than one or two).

- Use white space or bolding to direct the eye or emphasize points.

- Urge those who benefit from your program to thank elected officials. Direct them to http://www.nchumanities.org/Advocacy.html for a letter template created to thank elected officials from a participant/attendee perspective.