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Minnesota Historical Society — Agency Profile

https://www.mnhs.org/

AT A GLANCE

- The Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) preserves and provides access to Minnesota's past
- MNHS averages more than 1 million in-person customers each year including visitors to historic sites, museums, and the History Center - Gale Family Library; visitation is recovering from lower levels in COVID years, most recently approximately 929,000
- MNHS hosts 4,300,000 visits each year to its award-winning website
- MNHS preserves more than 1,000,000 items in the collection:
  - 343,601 photographs
  - 503,755 publications
  - 6,848 works of art
  - 249,569 objects
  - 51,824 cubic feet of manuscripts
  - 2,767 recorded oral histories
  - 65,000 cubic feet in State Archives, plus 100 terabytes of born-digital records
  - 10.1 million pages of digitized Minnesota newspapers

PURPOSE

Created in 1849 by the Minnesota Territorial Legislature, the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) serves as the repository of state archival, documentary, photographic, archaeological, and museum collections, and as a center for research on Minnesota history. MNHS also preserves and operates the statutorily-defined historic sites network, consisting of 26 sites throughout the state. As an educational organization, MNHS uses collections and sites to engage, inform, and inspire the people of Minnesota. These efforts, as well as MNHS's partnerships in heritage preservation, support the MNHS mission:

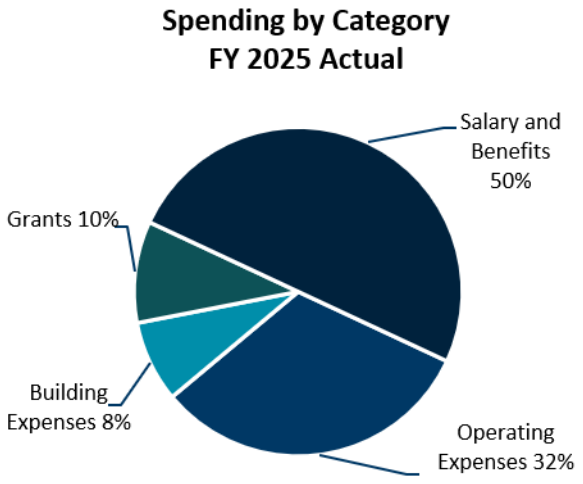
> We serve all people of Minnesota by creating meaningful engagement with history to cultivate curiosity and foster a more inclusive, empathetic, and informed society.

By sharing the stories of our state's past, MNHS's goal is to create community for all Minnesotans, whether new arrivals or those whose families have been in Minnesota for generations. MNHS supports the goal of having a well-informed citizenry that understands how people and events of the past have shaped the Minnesota of today.

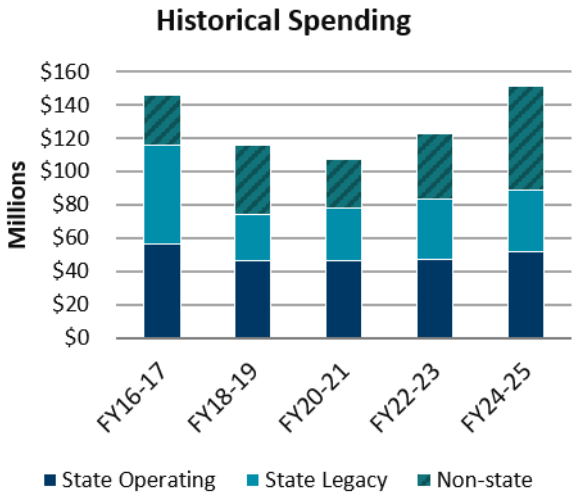
BUDGET

Approximately two-thirds of MNHS's funding comes from the State of Minnesota. MNHS delivers functions designated by law, such as preserving historic landmarks and resources, managing critical records and collections, and operating cultural destinations important to tourism. State support also includes capital funding to preserve historic buildings and construct new ones, as well as Legacy Amendment (Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund [ACHF]) support for new statewide history programs, including grants for local history organizations.

MNHS supplements state appropriations through private fundraising and earned revenue. Gifts from donors and members support everything from general operations and school field trips to important acquisitions, conservation work, and community outreach. Endowment funds give MNHS strength for today and tomorrow. Earned revenue from admission fees, rental events, museum stores, publication sales, and many other activities also provide a base of funding while keeping history accessible to all Minnesotans and at family-friendly prices.



Source: MNHS Audited Financial Statements



Note: "Other Funds - Non State" includes admissions, fees, retail sales, memberships, and other donations. These funds do not pass through the state treasury.
Sources: Consolidated Fund Statement and MNHS Audited Financial Statements

STRATEGIES

- Collect and preserve Minnesota's cultural heritage for today's and future Minnesotans.
- Maintain and operate a statutorily-defined network of historic sites and museums across the state to reach Minnesotans and visitors in order to share history where it happened.
- Provide resources and training for teachers, and support and inspire students through participation in programs like National History Day and the Northern Lights MN Studies textbook.
- Engage with diverse communities throughout Minnesota and reflect the diversity of Minnesotans in MNHS collections, programs, staffing, and governance.
- Provide leadership to the Minnesota history community by engaging in partnerships and assisting with technical assistance and grants.
- Serve as a customer-oriented and accessible repository of state archival, documentary, photographic, archaeological, and museum collections, with a special focus on providing access to digital materials.

The MNHS Mission, Vision and Values can be found at: https://www.mnhs.org/about/mission.

Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 138 provides guidance for administration of Minnesota's history and historical organizations (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=138&view=chapter).

Program: Historic Programs and Operations

https://www.mnhs.org/

AT A GLANCE

- Average of 1,000,000 in-person visitors to 26 sites and museums statewide in pre-pandemic years; 929,000 in the most recent year
- 4.3 million annual visits to our website, of which over 3.1 million are unique visitors
- Over 1,000,000 items in the collections are cared for and preserved for today's and future Minnesotans
- Provide service to average of 30,000 persons at History Center Library via in-person visits, telephone inquiries, classes, social media, and e-mail requests
- The Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund provided nearly $7 million through 185 grants awarded to local history organizations across Minnesota in the most recent fiscal year

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

The Historic Programs and Operations program area is the main vehicle for MNHS's efforts to preserve history and deliver history programs to the people of Minnesota.

We serve the State of Minnesota and all Minnesotans, educators, schoolchildren, families, and life-long learners with a variety of services and products, including, but not limited to:

- State Archives – MNHS is statutorily responsible for working with state and local units of government to evaluate the historical importance of all of Minnesota's governmental records and arrange for their permanent preservation or disposal. This activity has experienced constant growth, and we continue to examine how best to handle records that are increasingly more complex and varied in their form and media format.
- Processing and conservation of materials selected for inclusion in MNHS' collections are organized, catalogued, and treated to ensure their long-term stability and usability.
- Maintenance and repair of statutorily-defined historic sites including 152 buildings, many of which are more than 100 years old, 1,500 acres of land, and 23 miles of interpretive trails.
- *Northern Lights*, Minnesota's state social studies textbook, including an interactive digital edition, serves 57,000 students, or 80% of Minnesota's 6th graders.
- National History Day in Minnesota builds in-depth research and critical analysis skills as students research a topic related to an annual theme. Participants share their scholarship in one of five presentation categories and can enter their work into a series of competitive events. This program serves more than 17,000 students each year.
- Statewide teacher professional development programs served more than 700 participants during the most recent school year. Goals of the program include assisting teachers in meeting state academic standards, providing opportunities for teachers to deepen content knowledge, promoting the use of primary sources and multiple perspectives, and sharing MNHS' education resources.
- Historic sites, museum exhibits, and interpretive programs serve citizens statewide.

Further information about educational programs can be found at mnhs.org/education including how MNHS programs help fulfill requirements of state-mandated academic standards for social studies.

MNHS also serves the life-long learning needs of seniors, family historians, and scholars through innovative public programs, the Gale Family Library at the Minnesota History Center, and on-line resources.

SERVICES PROVIDED

The Minnesota Historical Society preserves, and provides access to, evidence of Minnesota's past. This work is carried out for many different audiences, using a variety of methods. History happens in the following areas:

- Exhibits and Educational Programs (students and life-long learners)
- Education Outreach (History Day, youth history programs and educator training)
- Historic Sites and Museums (26 sites statewide)
- Heritage Preservation / Field Services & Grants
- Archaeology
- MNHS Press publishing
- Collections Management and Conservation
- Reference / Library
- State Archives
- Institutional Support (including Finance, Human Resources (volunteers and interns), Inclusion & Community Engagement, Facilities, Marketing Communications, Development and Information Technology)

A full listing of MNHS functions and departments can be found at https://www.mnhs.org.

RESULTS

Part A: Performance Data

Measure	Measure type	Measure data source	Historical trend	Most recent data
Student Visits	*Quantity*	Attendance records	*FY24: 147,357*	*FY25: 184,854*
Visitors to History Center and statewide historic sites	Quantity	Attendance records	FY24: 886,095	FY25: 897,384

Part B: Evidence of Effectiveness

No evidence-based practices were identified.

Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 138 provides guidance for administration of Minnesota's history and historical organizations (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=138&view=chapter).

Program: Fiscal Agent / Pass-through Appropriations

https://www.mnhs.org/

AT A GLANCE

- Fiscal agent / Pass-through appropriations for various cultural organizations are processed by the Minnesota Historical Society at the request of the Minnesota Legislature. Descriptions of project activities are provided by recipient organizations.

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

At the request of the Minnesota Legislature, the Minnesota Historical Society handles funds for legislatively designated appropriations to a number of cultural organizations. These appropriations are not part of the MNHS operating budget.

SERVICES PROVIDED

MNHS disburses funds, as requested by the Legislature, to the following organizations:

Global Minnesota

Global Minnesota (formerly Minnesota International Center) connects individuals, organizations, and communities to the world. Through unique programs, Global Minnesota informs with relevant and timely information on international issues, foreign policy, and cultural topics and provides space and opportunities for Minnesotans to engage and discuss. A nonpartisan, nonprofit organization for 75 years, Global Minnesota delivers programs that allow audiences to participate in international settings and for Minnesota to extend its influence around the globe, including 60 statewide foreign policy discussion groups, more than 30 global-themed public forums, and visits from nearly 400 international professionals through the U.S. Department of State.

Minnesota Air Guard Museum

The Minnesota Air Guard Museum serves as a community resource for the preservation of Minnesota's rich aviation history, especially its military history. The Museum offers activities and education for all ages. The private, nonprofit Minnesota Air National Guard Historical Foundation has the funding responsibility for the museum. The museum is located on the Minnesota Air National Guard Base at the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport. Currently 21 aircraft are displayed in an air park next to the museum.

The principal sources of financial support for the museum are: 1) the $16,000 state biennial grant; 2) membership dues from approximately 500 members, and donations from museum visitors, tour groups, and organizations that hold events at the museum; and 3) private gifts and other grants.

US Hockey Hall of Fame

The United States Hockey Hall of Fame Museum is America's hockey showcase. Since 1973, the Hall has honored and recognized outstanding coaches, players, builders, and administrators who have contributed to the success and promotion of American Hockey. Visitors to the United States Hockey Hall of Fame Museum can experience the thrilling game action and inspiring achievements via physical displays, exhibits, video, theater, and memorabilia.

Eveleth, Minnesota has been designated "The Capital of American Hockey," and is known as the home of the United States Hockey Hall of Fame Museum because of its rich hockey traditions. Furthermore, the Iron Range and Minnesota in general have had significant impact on US Hockey.

Minnesota Agricultural Interpretive Center (MAIC) also known as Farmamerica

The governor and Minnesota state legislature commissioned the Minnesota Agricultural Interpretive Center (MAIC) in 1978 to preserve and promote the rich rural agricultural heritage of the state and its people. MAIC is a not-for-profit educational institution administered by a 15-member volunteer board of directors. The vision of the MAIC is to be the destination and primary resource where people and organizations can experience and learn about the history and the future of Minnesota Agriculture. The mission of the Minnesota Agricultural Interpretive Center is to create opportunities for children and adults to learn about Minnesota's agricultural and environmental systems and how these systems provide food, fiber, and energy for the people of Minnesota and the world. MAIC maintains a 360-acre interpretive site and facilities located four miles west of Waseca.

At MAIC, the story of agriculture is being told through guided tours, hands-on learning experiences, festivals, and exhibitions. Visitors travel on a one-mile timeline road and become involved in activities as they move through the Prairie Interpretive Center, the pond/marsh, and to the settlement farm of the 1850s. The handicapped accessible walkway continues past the one-room schoolhouse, the country church, the 1920/1930s depression-era family dairy farm, the feed mill, and the blacksmith shop and town hall. New signage is underway to inform visitors about issues of the modern era. Visitors can also stop at the Agri-Hall Museum and the 1970s farmstead. In its 40-year history, MAIC has hosted hundreds of thousands of visitors. It is not uncommon to host 20,000 people each year through the school and group tours programs, outreach activities, and festivals throughout the year.

Minnesota Military Museum

The Minnesota Military Museum, located at Camp Ripley, is the primary outreach effort of the Military Historical Society of Minnesota Inc., a 501(c)(3) educational organization with a mission to "be Minnesota's premier educational resource on military history and conflict resolution through exhibits and outreach efforts." The museum assists the Minnesota Historical Society as a resource to history organizations across the state and averages 15,000 visitors a year including 65 school and group tours.

The Museum is supported by the largest military-themed library in the state, a 500 cubic foot archival collection, and over 100,000 artifacts representing all branches of the military from Minnesota's early years to the present. State support is essential as the museum receives no operational funding from the federal government, the military, or local governments. The organization raises roughly 70 percent of its operating revenue, primarily from museum store sales, small grants, and contributions from individuals, organizations, and businesses.

RESULTS

Part A: Performance Data

The Minnesota Historical Society is responsible for disbursing funds to these five organizations and collecting an annual report from each of the organizations, describing how funds were spent. MNHS does not receive an administrative fee for administering these funds, since, at this level of funding and with this number of organizations, minimal staffing is required.

Measure	Measure type	Measure data source	Historical trend	Most recent data
Number of pass-through organizations	*Quantity*	Agency records	*FY 24-25: 5*	*FY26-27: 5*

Part B: Evidence of Effectiveness

This program narrative is for operational funds that cannot be studied using a randomized control trial or quasi-experimental design study.

Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 138 provides guidance for administration of Minnesota's history and historical organizations (https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=138&view=chapter).