



# CALL FOR SPEAKERS

**Indiana Humanities** is establishing a speakers bureau investigating topics related to **urban, suburban, and/or rural history, dynamics and changes**. We're seeking proposals for talks and presentations from scholars and experts in the humanities and humanistic social sciences. Applications will be accepted through **January 25, 2019**.

## **Why are we creating a speakers bureau?**

Indiana Humanities is embarking on a new thematic initiative, launching late first quarter 2019, looking at how we relate to each other across urban, suburban and rural lines. We wish to uncover the current state of relations and the longer history of how Hoosiers and Americans have thought about urban, suburban and rural differences. We also hope to spark conversations about how the futures of urban, rural and suburban Hoosiers are linked, and what might be preventing us from working together.

Several significant anniversaries and commemorations that tie to our theme, as well as the next presidential election, fall during 2019-2020. These include the Indianapolis bicentennial; the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Unigov; the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the administration of the nation's first black mayor, Gary's Richard Hatcher; the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of legislation that led to the major wave of rural consolidation in Indiana in the late 1960s; and the centennial of the 1920 census, which was the first to show that a majority of Americans lived in cities and towns. We also anticipate that, as with 2016, the next presidential election may play out along urban-rural divides. We are not alone in asking these questions. For instance, a 2017 Washington Post/Kaiser Family Foundation poll of rural Americans, found that 7 out of 10 rural residents said their values differ from those of city-dwellers. The conclusion drawn from the near-constant polling, media commentary, and academic analysis of the past two years is that America is a nation culturally divided by geography.

We believe the humanities can help individuals and communities make sense of the real and perceived differences between urban, suburban and rural Hoosiers. They can provide context and lenses for analysis, as well as create space for critical inquiry, open-ended consideration and reflection. For that reason, as part of our next thematic initiative, we're sponsoring a speakers bureau of engaging and thoughtful talks about how we relate to each other across geographic, social and cultural boundaries.

## **What types of talks are we looking for?**

We welcome proposals for talks by scholars working across the humanities and humanistic social sciences. Each talk should be about 45 minutes long plus time from questions or discussion with the audience (about an hour total). Presentations can be geared toward adult, teen, or youth audiences. And we're open to proposals that take the standard scholar talk and flip it on its head, i.e., creative writing or performance workshops, text-centered conversations, or whatever else you can imagine. As long as your proposal aligns to our goals to connect humanities experts to communities to help them make sense of the urban/suburban/rural divide, we're open to it.

Speakers bureau members will be invited into communities throughout the state – by libraries, schools, museums, civic organizations and more – to deliver engaging talks on themes related to one or more of the following questions:

- What do the terms urban, rural and suburban even mean? Are they useful? Limited? Self-fulfilling?
- How can the humanities help Hoosiers frame and understand the real and perceived differences across urban, suburban, and rural lines?

- How has the urban/suburban/rural divide been expressed in art, literature, film and culture over time, and how do these representations shape how we understand this divide in the present?
- To what extent is there a divide and to what extent is the divide a matter of perception? What are the historical roots of a real divide...or, conversely, the perception of one?
- What's the particular history of how Hoosiers have related to each other across lines of urban/suburban/rural difference? How have these tensions or differences played out politically, socially, culturally, economically or environmentally?
- To what extent is the 1920 Census, which was the first to show that a majority of Americans lived in cities or towns, an inflection point for the perception of an urban/rural divide?
- How has Indiana responded to larger national and transnational movements (civil rights, Great Migration, industrialization, urbanization, immigration, etc.) that have shaped urban, suburban and rural communities? In other words, help us put Indiana in context.
- Who are the key individuals and/or what are the historic moments that have had significant bearing on the development of Indiana's rural, urban or suburban communities? For instance, how did people like Richard Hatcher or Richard Lugar significantly re-envision the future of cities? How did a combination of federal and local policy, as well as individual actors, implement redlining or other policies that shaped urban and suburban landscapes? What's the long history of school consolidation and how has it affected rural and urban communities?
- What are the factors that lead some communities to embrace change and others to resist it? What lessons can we draw from the past or from across Indiana and the U.S. today?
- How can the humanities help Hoosiers frame and understand the complex challenges facing communities, i.e., outmigration, changing job markets, the opioid crisis, talent attraction and retention and quality of life?

### Who are we looking for?

The ideal scholar-facilitator:

- Shares Indiana Humanities' vision for open-ended, non-partisan and thoughtful discussion of real and perceived differences across urban, suburban and rural boundaries.
- Is enthusiastic about sharing the insights of the humanities with ordinary Hoosiers.
- Is passionate about Indiana and its future—and sees how the humanities can make a difference in our state.
- Is not afraid to tackle difficult topics and help communities ask hard questions.
- Is open to learning new techniques and best practices for giving talks and leading public humanities programs.
- Has advanced training, such as an M.A. or Ph.D., in a humanities or humanistic social science field, including but not limited to literature, history, cultural studies, philosophy, media studies, art history or religious studies.
- Responds to email communication in a timely manner.

### What makes a great talk?

- **A compelling idea:** Great talks are interesting and are usually built around one focused idea. However they start—with a question, with a bold claim or with the posing of a problem—they should leave the audience with that indelible buzzy, refreshed feeling of encountering a new idea.
- **Dynamic, easy speaking style:** Some speakers are funny, some are serious, but all great speakers share a few things in common: they're able to adjust their tone and formality depending on the audience, they avoid arcane jargon and confusing syntax, and they have the charisma to hold the attention of a crowd. Great talks are more than just a paper read out loud.

- **Deep expertise:** The speaker knows his or her stuff! Usually this is demonstrated by advanced study such as an M.A. or Ph.D. in a related humanities field such as literature, history, philosophy, history of science, art or theater history, etc.
- **Unexpected connections:** The speaker makes the case for how his or her specific topic is a lens for thinking about the larger historical context, a broader philosophical question, a contemporary debate or phenomenon, etc.
- **Relevance:** The speaker has spent time thinking about how to make his or her talk relevant to non-specialist, general public audiences, often by creating a hook that connects to people's everyday lives.

### **How does the speakers bureau work?**

Speakers receive a standard honorarium of \$400 per talk, plus mileage and travel reimbursement. Talks will be listed on the Indiana Humanities webpage and in a speakers bureau catalog used by Indiana Humanities grantees to plan programs related to this theme. While anyone can contact a speaker to plan a program, most organizations will contact a speaker to find a mutually agreeable day and time, then apply to Indiana Humanities for funding to cover the speaker's honorarium.

### **To apply:**

By Friday, January 25, apply by visiting <https://bit.ly/2qlufFm>.

If selected in the first round, Indiana Humanities will arrange an in-person or Skype interview with you to be completed before February 8. During this interview, you will be asked to give a short preview of your proposed talk. You will be notified by February 15 if selected to be part of the speakers bureau. Speaking engagements will begin June 1 and continue through the end of 2019, with the option of continuing in 2020.

### **Questions? Ideas?**

Contact Megan Telligman at [mtelligman@indianahumanities.org](mailto:mtelligman@indianahumanities.org) or at 317.616.9409.

### **About Indiana Humanities**

Indiana Humanities connects people, opens minds and enriches lives by creating and facilitating programs that encourage Hoosiers to think, read and talk. Learn more at [www.IndianaHumanities.org](http://www.IndianaHumanities.org).

