



## UNEARTHED SPEAKERS BUREAU

### OVERVIEW

Congratulations on being awarded the opportunity to host an Unearthed Speakers Bureau event. This toolkit is designed to help you put together the most successful event possible. From communications tips to event checklists, you'll find all of the tips and tricks needed to host an exciting event in your community.

The toolkit includes:

- COVID-19 Considerations & Virtual Event Tips
- Event Timeline
- Event Setup Tips
- Communications Overview
- Social Media Samples
- Communications Materials

If you have questions as you use this toolkit to plan your event, contact Megan Telligman at [mtelligman@indianahumanities.org](mailto:mtelligman@indianahumanities.org) / 317.616.9409.

Thank you for partnering with us on this program!

# COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS

Most of the guidelines for hosting an event in the later sections of this toolkit relate to the planning and implementation of in-person events. However, for the 2021 cycle of Unearthed programming, we are allowing for both virtual and in-person events, given the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the case that your speaker agrees to an in-person event, you must abide by whatever precautions/restrictions they prefer for that setting. While these may vary from speaker to speaker, we also wanted to include recommendations from Indiana Humanities.

## HOST + SPEAKER IN-PERSON EVENT GUIDELINES DURING COVID-19

Indiana Humanities takes seriously the health and safety of its staff, audiences and partners, including organizations who host our sponsored programs, speakers and other personnel who facilitate or lead our sponsored programs. In this spirit, we recommend the following to program hosts for in-person programming during COVID-19.

### For program hosts:

- Contact the speaker to determine what conditions they have for doing in-person events during COVID-19 (such as use of face masks, attendance caps, seating arrangements, etc.). Please abide by the speaker's preferences for the event, even if they are stricter than the guidelines you are currently following. Consider including these conditions in writing.
- We encourage host organization staff to wear face masks during the event.
- We encourage host organizations to require attendees to wear face masks during the event.
- We encourage host organizations to follow social distancing precautions, including seating attendees six feet apart and capping attendance.
- Where possible and as weather allows, consider hosting in-person events outdoors to reduce the spread of the virus.
- Before your event or on event information page, communicate your organization's public safety procedures, including what cleaning and social distancing measures are being taken to protect attendees, masking requirements, social distancing policies, etc.
- Clearly state in your messaging ahead of the event that people who are sick or who may be experiencing any of the COVID-19 symptoms should stay home.
- Consider offering a way for attendees to attend virtually, even if the primary event is held in-person. This allows people who may be especially vulnerable or immunocompromised to attend.
- Do not offer shared food or drinks as refreshments; if you offer refreshments, offer individually packaged drinks and snacks.

## TIPS FOR HOSTING VIRTUAL EVENTS

In the case that you plan a virtual event, there is a different set of considerations when it comes to planning in that format than there is in the in-person format. You'll want to consider the following:

- Pick the platform that works best for you. Some popular platforms include Zoom, Skype, Facebook Live, Google Meet, etc.
- Designate both a moderator and a tech person for the call. The moderator will introduce the speaker, take questions, etc. The tech person will monitor the virtual chat, troubleshoot technological issues, etc.
- Have a "dress rehearsal" with the speaker if they're willing. There is no need to go through the whole program, but log on prior to the event to ensure that microphones, cameras, and any other features you're planning to use are functioning properly.

- Give attendees some video call etiquette at the beginning of the event. Ask them to keep their microphones muted unless they are speaking. Demonstrate how to use the chat function.

For more help in this area, you can find a variety of resources online by searching for tips for virtual events. If you need more assistance, please feel free to reach out to Megan Telligman at [mtelligman@indianahumanities.org](mailto:mtelligman@indianahumanities.org).

# EVENT TIMELINE

## TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE EVENT

- Identify staff members and volunteers needed for the event.
- Hold a planning meeting to talk through and confirm the space, setup and timeline of the event.

## ONE MONTH BEFORE THE EVENT

- Submit the [online event calendar](#) to Indiana Humanities.
- If you plan to take RSVPs, use Eventbrite or provide an email address.
- Post the event on your own web calendar.
- Think through contacts at local media (newspapers, radio stations, TV stations, etc.) and send them your customized press release (find the customized template at <http://indianahumanities.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/EH-Speakers-Bureau-Template-Press-Release.docx>)
- Consider creating a customized hashtag for the event (e.g., #UnearthedIN).
- Begin promotion (local media, partner organizations, emails, social media, personal invitations, etc.).
  - Use the social media template and images to get you started.
  - Invite local VIPS to attend.
  - Invite partner organizations to promote.
  - Blast an announcement to your audience.
  - Put up flyers around your library and other venues that your audience frequents.
  - Invite organizations around your community including:
    - Local book groups
    - Environmental organizations or committees
    - Nearby libraries
    - Senior centers
    - Middle schools and high schools
- Promote, promote, promote! Get the word out through social media, newsletters and in-person communication.

## ONE WEEK BEFORE THE EVENT

- Confirm the room setup and catering (if you are utilizing any).
- Create directional signs if your event is taking place in a room that is hard to find.
- Confirm the arrival time, location and parking for your speaker and any VIPs.

## **HOURS PRIOR TO THE EVENT**

- Set up an event check-in station/registration table. Make sure you have a sign-in sheet soliciting each attendee's name, address, email address and perhaps how he or she heard about the event.
- Set up your room and double-check any multimedia or sound systems.
- Ensure that your speaker is ready and has everything they need.

## **DURING THE EVENT**

- Keep careful track of your attendance—you'll need to report this back to Indiana Humanities.
- Circulate around the room at the beginning of the event to make sure there are no issues to solve.
- Designate an individual to take photos and/or videos of the event.
- Designate an individual to post on social media with your customized event hashtag.

## **AFTER THE EVENT**

- Fill out the final report form within 30 days of the event. The report form asks for information including:
  - The number of attendees
  - A description of how the event went
  - Two or three pictures of the event (we suggest getting a picture of your audience, speaker, etc.)
  - Any links or clippings of local press coverage about the event
- Send a follow-up email to your attendees. Content could include:
  - A thank-you for attending the Unearthed Speakers Bureau event
  - A list of other events coming up at your organization

# EVENT SETUP TIPS

In order to create a functional event, it is important to consider your space and setup. Here are a few tips and tricks to ensure your event flows well.

- Place your check-in table by the entrance door or the entrance of your room. Make sure this table does not hinder anyone from entering your event.
- At the check-in table include a sign-in sheet asking attendees for:
  - Their name
  - Their mailing address
  - Their email address
  - How they heard about the event

This is a great way to collect information and follow up after the event.

- For Speakers Bureau events: create a seating plan that allows for an organized flow and direct access to the presentation.
- Let people know where the restrooms are, where they can hang their coats, etc. Make sure everyone feels welcome and willing to share in your space.
- Be sure to check with your presenter about any needs, including:
  - A podium
  - A microphone
  - A chair
  - Multimedia needs (projector, computer, music, speakers, etc.)
  - Whiteboard
  - Scrap paper
  - Pens, pencils, etc.
- Provide water for your presenter.
- Consider providing snacks for participants.
- Identify distinct roles for volunteers and staff prior to the event. Here are a few to think through:
  - Registration table attendant
  - Someone to support the speaker before, during and after the event
  - Greeter/person to direct folks to the event
  - Emcee to introduce the speaker/close the event
- If you're having food, be sure to put it in a spot that does not distract from the presentation/workshop.
- Have your own literature on hand; this a great place to promote future events that might be attractive to this audience.

# COMMUNICATIONS OVERVIEW

## EXPLAINING THE INDIANA HUMANITIES UNEARTHED SPEAKERS BUREAU

### What is the Indiana Humanities Unearthed Speakers Bureau?

Indiana Humanities has curated a speakers bureau of talks and workshops by Hoosier scholars and experts. From writing haiku inspired by our natural world to conversations about what it means for Hoosiers to be living on indigenous lands, the speakers provide a variety of points of entry to join the statewide conversation. Learn more by watching our video:

<https://vimeo.com/557643285>

Indiana Humanities will organize this program throughout the Unearthed theme. Any tax-exempt organization in Indiana can apply, including libraries, schools, community centers, local government organizations, and others.

### What is Unearthed?

Unearthed is a new multiyear thematic initiative from Indiana Humanities that encourages Hoosiers to discover and discuss their relationships with the natural world. Through engaging speakers, a statewide read, a tour of the Smithsonian's Water/Ways exhibit, Campfires treks, a film series, a podcast and more, Hoosiers will explore how we shape the environment and how the environment shapes us.

### Can you tell me about the speakers involved?

Our 2021 speakers for the Unearthed Speaker Program can be found in our catalog:

<http://indianahumanities.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Unearthed-Speakers-Bureau-Catalog-V6.pdf>

## EXPLAINING INDIANA HUMANITIES

### What is Indiana Humanities?

Indiana Humanities connects people, opens minds and enriches lives by creating and facilitating programs that encourage Hoosiers to think, read and talk.

### What do we do?

By developing programs, issuing grants, hosting events, connecting Hoosiers and providing platforms for discussion, Indiana Humanities supports, highlights and initiates programs that facilitate a culture of ideas and learning in Indiana.

### How can you connect with us?

You can follow us on Twitter (@INHumanities), Facebook (/INHumanities) and Instagram (@INHumanities). You can also learn more on our website, [www.indianahumanities.org](http://www.indianahumanities.org).

## PITCHING YOUR EVENT

### How do I pitch this to my local media?

Looking to get the word out to the media? We have a few recommendations.

- Send out a press release one month prior to your event (you can find a template at [www.indianahumanities.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/EH-Speakers-Bureau-Template-Press-Release.docx](http://www.indianahumanities.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/EH-Speakers-Bureau-Template-Press-Release.docx))
- Reach out and build relationships with local media contacts who you think would enjoy attending or covering the event.

- When speaking with the media, think of something that sets your event apart—WHY should they be interested? WHAT makes this event newsworthy? Is the speaker someone the community admires? Is this part of a bigger community-wide celebration or does it tie to another important community event?

## **BUILDING THE BUZZ**

### **How do I get people talking before the event?**

This event is designed to bring people together to engage with an expert in a creative, welcoming space. Here are a few ways to encourage buzz before your event.

- Post it on Eventbrite. This will allow you to have a designated one-stop shop for information, and it will provide you with a list of RSVPs and emails for follow-up afterward.
- Not creating an Eventbrite listing? Be sure to post the event on your own website in order to have a landing page with information.
- Distribute promotional materials to areas your audience traffics, hit up social media and use your communication tools (newsletters, emails, etc.) to encourage attendance.
- Use your community partners. Arm friends of your organization with sample tweets or Facebook posts. Give them flyers to distribute. Encourage them to interact with their audiences and widen your reach.
- Submit your event to community calendars, online message boards, newsletters and so on. Include links back to your site.
- If your organization has a blog, post an article about your event.

### **How do I encourage people to share their experience during the event?**

There are plenty of ways to encourage your attendees to share their experience at your event:

- For Speakers Bureau events: create an event-specific hashtag. We have seen our partners succeed with this before. For example, you could use something like #UnearthedIN. This is a great way to keep track of promotion, identify your event and track if anyone is talking about it online. Make your hashtag easy to find. Post it on flyers, posters and other promotional materials to keep people talking.
- Interact with us. Tag @INHumanities and we will be sure to retweet and favorite tweets about your event.

### **How do I keep people talking after the event?**

The key to keeping people discussing their experience is all about the follow-up.

- Send an e-blast. Using your Eventbrite list, thank your guests for attending and provide them a link to Flickr with pictures from the event or to other events your library is hosting in the future.
- Write a blog post. Send Indiana Humanities an article that highlights the success of your event, along with a few high-resolution images, and we'll feature it on our blog. This will give you some more leverage and reach after the date has passed.
- Connect with any VIPs/partners and send them a heartfelt gesture of thanks (an email, thank-you note, etc.).

## **TIPS AND TRICKS**

- Keep your promotions intriguing and positive—this is an event you want people to attend.
- When promoting the event via social media, it's helpful to use your customized social images and/or a link to more information and your RSVP site.
- Have someone take high-resolution photos so you can document and remember the event.



# SOCIAL MEDIA SAMPLES

## TWITTER

Twitter is a great way to spread the word about your event in short and sweet messages. Here are a few sample tweets. You should tailor your tweets to the topic, and tag organizations you think may be interested in the event.

Speaker Program:

- Join us for an exciting conversation with [speaker] on March 10. RSVP: [link here]
- Are you a nature lover? Hear from [speaker] at our Unearthed Speaker Program: [link here]
- Setting up for our speaker event tonight. Don't miss out! [link to photo]

Always remember to link to your RSVP page or website for followers to read more information. Also, check to see if your speaker has a social media handle—it would be great to tag him or her. We also encourage you to use your social media graphics when posting about the event.

## FACEBOOK

Facebook will allow you to elaborate a bit more on the event. Here you can post longer messages inviting the community to join you. You could even link to the speaker's works or videos to increase interest in the program.

## AFTER THE EVENT

Social media is a great way to thank your speaker, attendees and community partners.

These tips/sample posts are just to get you thinking. If you have questions or need more specific ideas, contact Megan Telligman, Indiana Humanities senior programs manager, at [mtelligman@indianahumanities.org](mailto:mtelligman@indianahumanities.org)

# COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS

To help you promote your event, we have provided materials for download at <https://indianahumanities.org/environmental-humanities-speakers-bureau/>.

These materials include:

- A press release template (which you will be able to customize to your organization, event and speaker)
- Author headshots
- Poster templates