



F I L M S

DISCUSSION TOOLKIT



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WELCOME

In 1834, Waapinaakikaapwa related the Miami people's origin story to Jacob P. Dunn: "Mihtami Myaamiaki nipinkonci saakaciweeciki / At first the Miamis came out of the water..."

Hoosiers, too, are the people who came out of the water. The earliest pre-historic settlements we know of were sited near rivers, including mounds near the Ohio River in Vanderburgh and Warrick Counties and along the White River in Madison County. White settlers also followed rivers, first down the Ohio, then up the Wabash and the White, and along the St. Joseph and Maumee and others. In the 1830s, around the time the Miami origin story was recorded, we decided to build our own rivers—an ambitious canal-building craze that wound up bankrupting the state. One hundred years ago, some of the first conservationists in the nation sought to protect the shores along Lake Michigan, while fifty years ago, in Muncie, the visionary John M. Craddock embarked on an effort to restore the White River in Delaware County, now considered the state's longest-running and most successful water clean-up project. And today, water is the life force that underlays Indiana's agricultural bounty, while ports along Lake Michigan and the Ohio River connect us to the wider world.

We are indeed people who come out of water.

There's every reason to believe that Indiana's future is as tied to water as our past has been. So it makes sense that we learn about our waterways and reflect on the ways we use them. That's why Indiana Humanities has recently focused its award-winning Next Indiana Campfires program on the White River watershed and the larger question of how Hoosiers relate to water and to one another across watersheds. We've hiked and paddled the river and its feeder creeks, learning about the efforts to restore and conserve one of our state's most significant waterways and considering how it connects urban, suburban and rural Hoosiers.

To explore these connections further—and to document a particularly exciting moment for Indiana waterways—we also funded the creation of three short films about the White River. We selected three local storytellers and asked them to tell us surprising stories about central Indiana's most important river.

We believe these films are a great jumping-off point for discussion—how nature shapes our sense of place, how we connect to one another across the watershed and what our hopes for the future of the White River, and all of Indiana's natural resources, are.

That's where this discussion toolkit—and you—come in! In these pages you'll find (almost) everything you need to host a screening and discussion in your neighborhood, school, library or community organization:

- An overview of the films and directions for how to view them online
- Discussion questions
- Tips on finding a facilitator and leading meaningful conversations
- Tips on hosting a comfortable discussion
- Instructions for tax-exempt organizations to receive a \$150 stipend—our thank-you for helping Indiana Humanities spark thoughtful discussions about the White River.

On our website you'll find additional resources to help you promote your event, like a press release template, logos and more. Everything is designed to make it easy for you to host a screening and discussion of one or more of the films.



Leah Nahmias

Director of Programs and Community Engagement

QUESTIONS? NEED TO BOUNCE AROUND IDEAS?

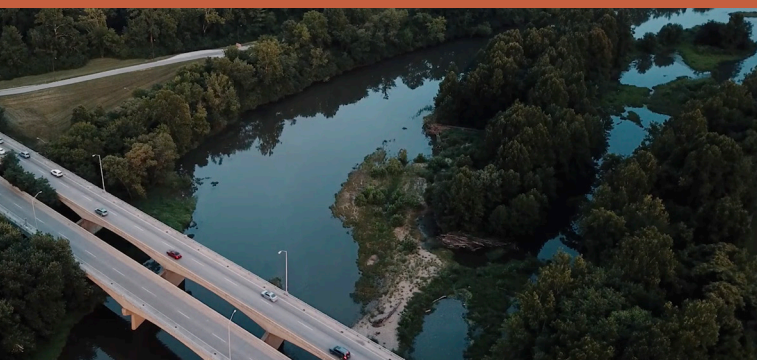
Call or email Leah Nahmias, director of programs and community engagement (317-616-9804 / lnahmias@indianahumanities.org).

THE FILMS

Though each distinct, all three films tell stories of “people who come out of the water” today. You’ll meet volunteers, artists, activists, farmers, engineers, developers, city officials, hikers and parents. You’ll paddle downstream with Friends of the White River, tunnel under the city with Dig Indy and soar overhead with the great blue herons of our region.

Pick one or more of the films to watch with your group. General discussion questions are provided on the following pages.

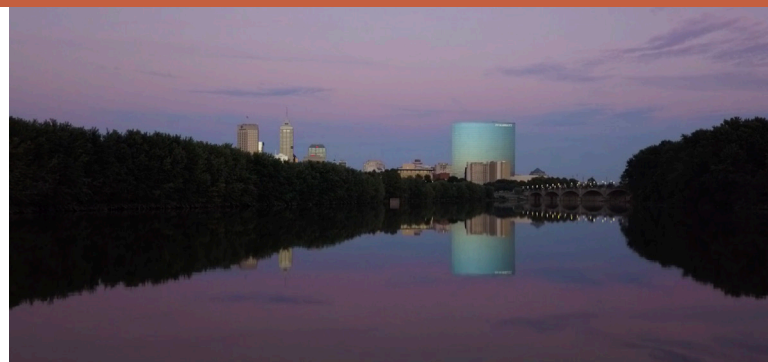
Braided with the Current from Katelyn Calhoun and Hannah Hodges



Braided with the Current looks at some of the historical uses of the river, then spends time with young people who live on the river and/or who study its environmental conditions. Through the characters in the film, we learn about some of the factors impacting the White River’s health. In addition to stops in Indianapolis and Hamilton County, we spend a significant amount of time with people who live and work on clean-up efforts in the Muncie area.

Onward Ever: The Becoming of Indiana’s White River from Brandon Walsh

Onward Ever: The Becoming of Indiana’s White River focuses on nine people in Indianapolis who, in some way, work on the White River. Each shares why he or she is inspired by the river and what he or she hopes for its future. The film features particularly stunning photography and views of the river and the city.



White River: Perspectives from Hannah Lindgren



White River: Perspectives focuses on three people who offer unique insights into the value of the White River. Among the three films, this one spends the most time considering the effects of agriculture on the White River and the steps that people can take to practice water-friendly farming. This film features scenes in Broad Ripple and Noblesville as well as farmland in Hendricks County.

The background of the page is a collage featuring a map of a region with streets like Michigan Rd, 56th St, 38th St, 46th St, and 29th St. Overlaid on the map are several green brochures with the text 'Experience Nature' and 'Get Outdoors'. Numerous colorful pushpins (red, yellow, green, blue) are pinned to the map and brochures. A white rectangular box with a light green border is centered on the page, containing text about watching films.

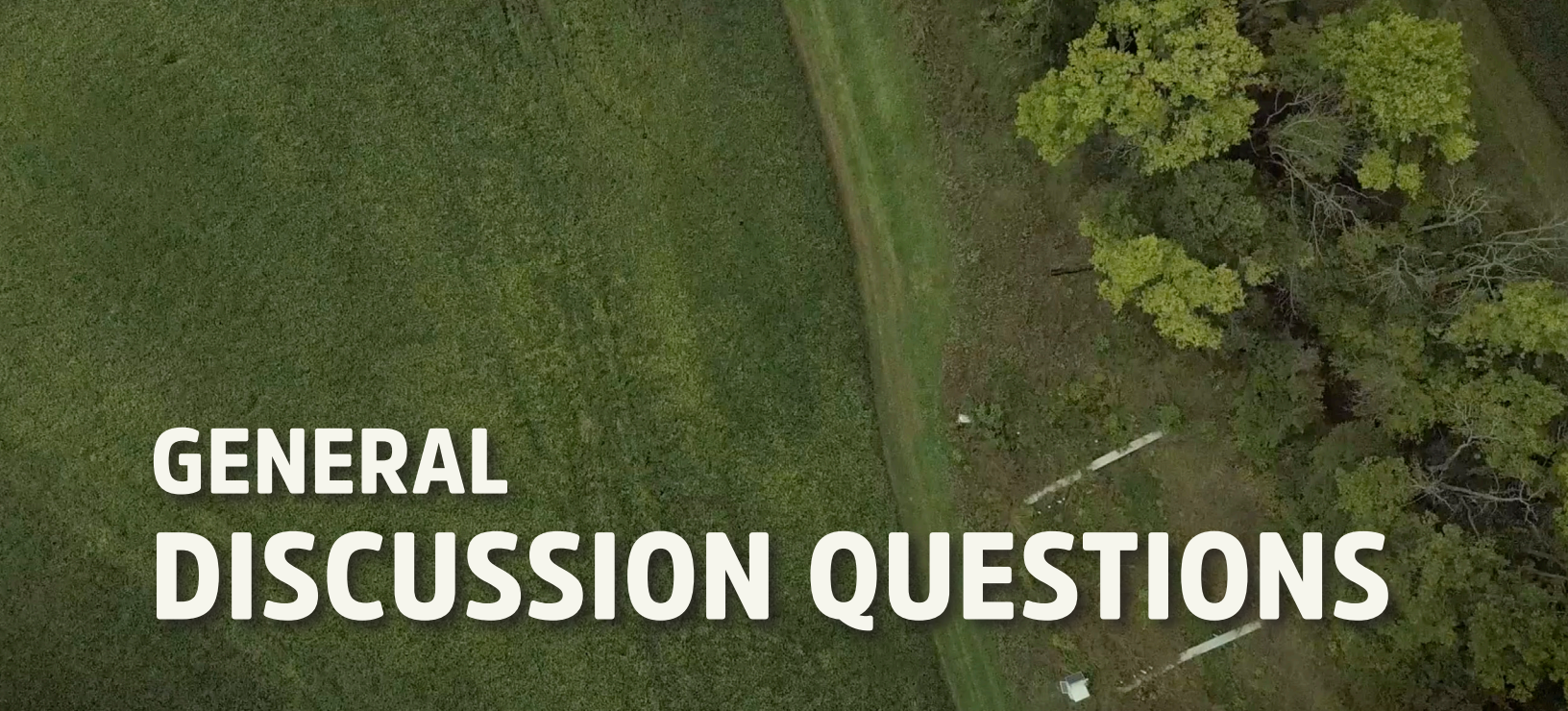
WATCHING THE FILMS

The films are hosted online and can be streamed from our website.

Links to all three films can be found at www.IndianaHumanities.org/Films.

Please do everything you can to project the films, rather than asking people to huddle around a laptop. How best to project the films depends on the set-up at your site. Be sure to check image and sound quality, as well as internet speed, to ensure the film displays properly.

We are not able to provide DVDs of the films.



GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

There are more questions below than you can expect to cover in a 90-minute program. Pick and choose the questions that make the most sense for your community.

INTRODUCTION QUESTIONS

Introduction questions allow people to introduce themselves and get them thinking about the theme of the discussion right away. The goal here is to keep it short and keep folks moving—one or two-word answers are best. Here are two potential options:

Tell us a body of water that's significant to you—where you feel most at home or that shaped your life in some way. You don't need to share why; just state your name and the name of the body of water. For example, "Leah—Muddy Fork of Sand Creek in Decatur County."

Share your name and one word that springs to mind when you think of the White River.

PRE-VIEWING QUESTIONS

These questions help viewers focus on what's important while they watch. Good pre-viewing questions are related to the larger theme of the discussion and help gather information that will be useful later in the conversation. You can circle back to these questions during discussion or just let people draw on what they saw as they participate in the discussion. If you want to use more than one pre-viewing question, split the group and assign the subgroups different questions.

As you watch, see if you can gather any instances of changes taking place on or around the White River.

As you watch, find examples of people taking actions to improve the White River.

GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Intersperse these with questions specific to the film you watched.

Has the White River and/or its watershed played a role in your life? If so, how? If not, why do you think that is?

Are there views of the river or of your community that you saw in the film that surprised you? What were they, and what was surprising about them?

Which of the people depicted in the film do you most closely identify with? Why?

What is your hope for the future of the White River?

What kinds of actions or decisions about the White River will need to be taken or made to achieve the future you hope for? Who's responsible for making sure they happen?

After seeing the film(s) and having this discussion, what questions about the White River do you still have, and how will you get the answers you need?

What story about or issue related to the White River would you like to see presented in a film, and why?

CLOSING QUESTIONS

Good closing questions get people to think beyond the room. They also leave people wanting to say more! One technique is to ask a “forced answer” question—go around the room and ask a yes or no question, without letting people explain why. Different models of closing questions are provided below.

Share something you plan to do differently or to do for the first time after watching the film(s) and having this discussion.

Who's one person with whom you'd like to share the film, and why?

In one word, yes or no, are Hoosiers doing enough to make the White River healthy and accessible?



Braided with the Current

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The film starts with a quote from Scott Russell Sanders: “Chances are, your own life and the history of your place are braided with the current of a river.” What river is “braided” into your life and community—and how?
2. Does it surprise you to see the Miller family and their friends swimming in the White River? Why or why not?
3. A major theme of this film is the idea that the perspective of the White River doesn’t match the reality of it. Have you seen this to be the case? What’s the general perspective people have about the White River, and how do you think that impacts its health?
4. Neal Bennett, an environmental scientist, compares Indiana’s streams and rivers to the Rocky Mountains or the ocean. What point do you think he’s trying to make with this comparison? Does it surprise you? Do you agree?
5. Jason Donati, in his work as an environmental educator, says the goal is make the White River “our front yard.” What do you think he means? How, if at all, would this change in mindset have a positive impact on the river?
6. Later Jason says, “Don’t sit and complain about an issue. Actually, do something about it.” Have you ever taken action on an issue that you care deeply about? What motivated you? Have you persuaded others to get involved, and if so, how did you convince them?
7. Jason points out that his efforts to clean up the White River are motivated by both a relationship to the earth and to people. If you feel inspired to care for nature, which relationship drives you? Do you think the environmental movement talks enough about the “people” side of the equation?



Onward Ever: The Becoming of Indiana's White River

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The first line of the film is, “The narrative...has been, ‘It’s bad, it’s dirty, don’t touch it.’” Why do you think the filmmaker draws our attention that the “narrative” about the river right away?
2. Another early voice in the film says, historically, the White River has been “simply a utility.” What does he mean? Do you agree?
3. Another early voice in the film says, historically, the White River has been “simply a utility.” What does he mean? Do you agree?
4. Tim Maloney from the Hoosier Environmental Council says, “Rivers are reflections of what happens on the land.” What does he mean? What’s “happened on the land” to affect the water quality and quality of life in the White River watershed?
5. Do you agree with illustrator Penelope Dullaghan that spending time in nature can lead to things like growing more confident or becoming more thoughtful and calmer? Why or why not?
6. Dale Enochs has created several sculptures inspired by the White River, including ones at the Indianapolis airport and one at the statehouse. Do you think the White River is a good symbol for Indianapolis and Indiana? Why or why not?
7. Jaimarsin Lewis, who volunteers with Indianapolis’s MLK Center, helps clean up the trash along the White River. Have you ever volunteered on a clean-up project? What motivates you? How important is it to get more people involved in clean-ups and nature restoration efforts?
8. Dave Forsell from Keep Indianapolis Beautiful says, “Beauty is something most people need.” Do you agree? Is the White River a source of beauty for central Indiana? If not, what would it take to make it so?
9. Linda Broadfoot of Indy Parks says people are “desperate” for the tranquil experiences one can have on or near water. What kinds of experiences would you like to have on and near the White River? How would it change your life to have access to these experiences?
10. There’s more than one future for the White River imagined by characters in the film. What are some of the different options outlined, and which one is most compelling to you?



White River: Perspectives

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The film starts by highlighting people who don't know much about the White River. Do you identify with any of them? If so, why?
2. Geoff, one of the main characters in the film (0:45-3:50), likes to spend solitary time on the river. Do you enjoy spending time in nature, and if so, do you prefer to be by yourself or with others? Why?
3. Geoff says spending time on water isn't a part of Indiana's culture. Do you agree, and if so, why do you think that is?
4. Geoff's dream is to canoe the entire length of the White River because he thinks it would give him a new perspective on Indiana. What do you think you'd learn about your city, county or state if you traveled it by water?
5. Mike, a farmer (3:52-6:39), gives several reasons for why he practices farming that conserves water and keeps harmful runoff from entering the watershed. What are his reasons, both stated and implied? What are some of the practices?
6. Mike says he prefers to lead by example rather than be told how to farm, as he implements water-friendly practices. What do you think—which strategy will work best for Hoosiers?
7. Mark, an engineer working on the Dig Indy project (6:40-8:42) connects his love of the outdoors with his work on solving the combined sewage overflow problem in Indianapolis and other cities. In your professional life or through your volunteer commitments, do you participate in any efforts to improve the White River or the Hoosier environment generally? If so, how?



FINDING A FACILITATOR

Many kinds of people have what it takes to be a great facilitator.

The most important qualities to look for are someone who is a great listener and someone who makes others feel comfortable talking about big ideas.

Skilled facilitators come from all walks of life and can be any age.

Consider asking community leaders, librarians, teachers, humanities scholars or pastoral figures. For Next Indiana Campfire Film Discussions, it may be helpful to have someone who is familiar with the history and/or ecology of the White River—though be careful! Too much expertise can seem intimidating and make others feel like they don't have much to contribute. Remember, the goal is to get others talking, not listen to a lecture.

Facilitators should understand your goals for the discussion and commit to using the guidelines in this discussion guide. Although we recommend using the questions presented here, they may want to add some of their own.

You may pay your facilitator an honorarium, or you can ask if they'll donate their time for free. How much you want to pay your facilitator is up to you.

FACILITATION TIPS

Film combines images and words and music—all of which contribute to the meaning of what's being presented. That can be overwhelming, so think about how to get viewers to focus on what's important for the discussion. You may want to let the group watch the film twice or add a pre-viewing question (examples are provided in this guide).

Ask open-ended questions that can be answered in a variety of ways.

Try to avoid questions that require a lot of background information. In other words, ask questions grounded in the film or people's everyday lives. If your questions require a lot of background knowledge, they will exclude some people and make them feel unwelcome.

Set ground rules at the start. Some important ones: All perspectives are valued and it's important to hear from everyone in the room. It's okay to disagree respectfully. Be wary of easy consensus—it's possible not all points of view have been considered.

Avoid sharing what you think, even when people ask! Your role is to lead the conversation, not contribute opinions. Always turn the discussion back to what participants think.



Consider asking a pre-viewing question that gets participants to focus on information that will be important for the discussion. For instance, you may ask one half of the group to listen for perceptions (accurate or not) that people have had about the river and the other half of the group to gather examples of actions people are taking to improve the health of the White River.

Use specific moments or quotes from the film to ground discussion. Encourage participants to take notes as they watch. Ask folks to make connections between what they heard and saw to their own communities and lives.

Keep introductions brief so you can devote your time to real conversation. For instance, you might simply have everyone state his or her first name and share the name of a body of water (river, creek, ocean, pond) that has been an important part of his or her life.

Scan the room for verbal and nonverbal cues: Are people feeling comfortable? Is there a shy person who appears to want to talk but just needs to be asked? Moderate your tone and body language to invite new participants into the discussion.

As you draw to a close, get people thinking “beyond the room.” That means asking questions that ask them to apply what they’ve learned or heard in their community. For instance, who’s someone they think should watch the film? What’s something they’d like to do (Paddle? Learn more about farming practices that conserve water? Volunteer on a clean-up? Contact a legislator?) after watching the film?



HOSTING TIPS

Think about a time you participated in a great conversation. What did it feel like? What were people doing during the conversation? Probably it looked

- **People could easily see and hear everyone participating in the discussion.**
You were probably sitting in some sort of circle.
- **There wasn't a lot of background noise or distraction.**
Everyone was focused on the conversation and on each other.
- **People were nodding along in agreement and laughing occasionally.**
It was okay to disagree because people were respectful and open to hearing other points of view. Sometimes people even agreed to disagree.
- **Though you may have been talking about a serious topic, the vibe felt casual and comfortable.**
No one was creating a hierarchy of experts and non-experts, of "insiders" and "outsiders." Everyone felt like equals in the conversation.
- **You had a drink or snack in hand.**
Great conversations often happen over a shared meal!
- **You left with that buzzy, refreshed feeling of encountering a new idea.**



MORE HOSTING TIPS



As you plan your discussion, think about ways to make the group feel comfortable so that everyone gets to have that kind of conversation! Below are a few tips:

1

Set up the room so that folks are seated in a circle. If you're anticipating a big group (more than 20), consider having multiple facilitators so you can have people at tables in groups of 6-10. Whatever you do, avoid "classroom style" seating because that automatically sets up a hierarchy and makes it hard for people to participate equally.

2

When people arrive, thank them for coming and ask them to make a nametag. Encourage everyone to use first names and sit next to someone they don't know.

3

An hour is usually too short for a great conversation, and people will start to get restless and/or bored after 2 hours. We recommend 90 minutes as the perfect length for a discussion.

4

Consider using the honorarium to cover child care at your organization so that parents with little kids can attend. If you do this, be sure to tell people in your promotion.

5

Use your honorarium to buy food and snacks for the group. No one does their best thinking on an empty stomach! Plus, food and drinks help people feel welcome. *Note: You cannot purchase alcohol with your stipend.*

6

Make sure there aren't a lot of distractions, especially background noise. People who are hard of hearing will have trouble following along in an echo-y space or a place with music or other conversations happening nearby.

7

Ask everyone to silence their cell phones and put them away for the duration of the conversation.

8

Let folks know that the goal is to have a great conversation and to consider multiple points of view. It's okay if the conversation raises more questions than answers!

9

The organizer or timekeeper should sit opposite from the facilitator so they can easily make contact and give subtle time signals as needed.



LEARN MORE

We encourage you to learn more about the White River and the changes affecting its future. Though not an exhaustive list, here's a place to get started.

DIG INDY TUNNEL SYSTEM

The Dig Indy project is a 28-mile-long network of 18-foot-diameter deep-rock tunnels being built 250 feet below Indianapolis. When completed, the tunnels should reduce combined sewer flow into area waterways by 97 percent, in compliance with a Consent Decree of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

<https://www.citizensenergygroup.com/Our-Company/Our-Projects/Dig-Indy>

FRIENDS OF THE WHITE RIVER

Since 1985, FOWR has advocated for a clean and accessible White River, as well as organized float and paddling trips. Its website includes paddling maps showing put-in and take-out points, estimated trip lengths and conditions on the White River. FOWR's White River Guide app helps you explore opportunities to get on the water!

<http://friendsofwhiteriver.org>

INDIANA ASSOCIATION OF SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

The association is a good place to learn more about water-friendly agriculture, find support to implement these practices and discover who in your area is using them.

<http://wordpress.iaswcd.org>

The HOOSIER ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

HEC is an environmental advocacy organization, tracking bills and policies at the state and local level that affect Indiana's natural resources, including rivers and lakes. It also provides education and technical assistance.

<https://www.hecweb.org>

WHITE RIVER ALLIANCE

The White River Alliance improves and protects water resources throughout central Indiana. It's an excellent place to learn about current conditions in the watershed; the Clear Choices Clean Water pledge is a set of steps you can take to better protect the White River.

<https://thewhiteriveralliance.org>

WHITE RIVER VISION PLAN

The City of Indianapolis and Hamilton County Tourism, Inc., in partnership with Visit Indy's philanthropic arm, Tourism Tomorrow, are developing a comprehensive regional, community-driven plan to enhance 58 miles of the White River in Marion and Hamilton Counties. Visit the Plan's website or follow on social media to learn about community input meetings and other ways to get involved.

<https://thewhiteriveralliance.org>



APPLYING FOR A STIPEND

Anyone can download the discussion guide; tax-exempt organizations such as libraries, schools, community centers and museums are eligible to receive a stipend of \$150 if they host a public screening and discussion in 2019 or 2020. (In lieu of a stipend, teachers or other school-based personnel will receive a \$150 Amazon gift card to use for books and supplies for their classrooms.)

HERE'S HOW TO QUALIFY

- Choose a date, time and place to hold a public screening and discussion of one or more of the White River films. Your event should last at least 90 minutes. Events must take place in 2019 or 2020.
- Identify a facilitator to lead the discussion. You will be asked to identify the facilitator in your application.
- Complete the [online application form](#) at least four weeks BEFORE your event takes place. In your application, tell us when and where the discussion will take place, who will facilitate it, and what your goals for the community discussion are. You will receive notification within a week of applying to host; awarded sites will receive an agreement letter from Indiana Humanities.
- Sign and return the agreement letter from Indiana Humanities. Signed agreement letters must be received BEFORE your event takes place.
- Spread the word! Use the press release template and logos provided by Indiana Humanities to get the word out to your local media. Post flyers, share on social media and use word-of-mouth to make sure everyone knows about your screening and discussion.
- Host your event. Take a few pictures and keep careful track of attendance. Feel free to live-tweet the conversation and tag [@INHumanities](#). To qualify for the stipend, you should have at least six people at your event.
- Complete the final report form on the Indiana Humanities website, telling us how your discussion went, how many people came and what you talked about. Try to submit your final report within six weeks of your event.
- Indiana Humanities will send the \$150 stipend upon submission of your final report. Please allow up to four weeks for checks to arrive. See below for allowable and nonallowable uses. (Teachers will receive a \$150 gift card to use for books or supplies for their classroom.)

WHAT CAN I BUY WITH MY STIPEND?

YES

Room and/or A/V rental
Facilitator honorarium
Snacks and nonalcoholic drinks
Printing
Marketing or advertising, including paid social media posts
Child-care costs
Host organization overhead/staff time

NO

Alcohol*
Political advocacy
Cash prizes or awards

**You are welcome to serve alcohol that has been purchased or donated separately if your audience is 21 years or older.*

CONNECT

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

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IndianaHumanities.org/Films