

Indiana Humanities Action Grants—2023

The following projects received an Indiana Humanities Action Grant in calendar year 2023. For more information about the projects and to discuss ideas for your own programs, contact Indiana Humanities' grants team at grants@indianahumanities.org or 317.638.1500.

Let's Talk Black Pioneers: North Carolina Roots to Indiana Shoots

Roberts Chapel Church and Burial Association, Noblesville

Congressional District: 5

Awarded: \$3,000

Roberts Settlement hosted a panel of history scholars for a wide-ranging discussion about Free People of Color (FPOC) who came to Indiana during the early pioneer period (1820-1849) and established communities like Roberts Settlement in Hamilton County and other places in the state. Topics included the Virginia and North Carolina beginnings, migration, settlement in Indiana, and the legacy and footprints left by the descendants of these early pioneers. This program was part of the 2023 Hamilton County bicentennial celebrations.

Humanities Fest 2023: Bridges

Calumet College St. Joseph, Whiting

Congressional District: 1

Awarded: \$3,000

Calumet College of St. Joseph (CCSJ) planned and hosted "Humanities Fest 2023: Bridges," 2023's entry in an annual series of festivals, begun in 2011, that has promoted the relevance of the humanities to the lives of CCSJ's students and community members. At a moment when the politics and popular culture of the United States seem more divided than ever, CCSJ's annual Humanities Fest explored how the metaphor of the bridge illuminates what brings us together but also what keeps us apart. The 2023 festival featured fifteen events over four days in March, with eight presentations, including a keynote by a prominent scholar and sessions hosted by faculty, that were open to the public and broadcast via livestream.

The Thrill of Victory: America's History Revealed through Baseball

Friends of the Frankfort Public Library, Frankfort

Congressional District: 4

Awarded: \$3,000

The Friends of the Frankfort Public Library hosted "The Thrill of Victory: America's History Revealed through Baseball," a series of programs celebrating the heritage and traditions of our national pastime. Activities included author talks (exploring the history of the Indianapolis Indians minor-league team and the biography of Lou Gehrig); a presentation of baseball artifacts in the Indiana State Museum; and an exhibition featuring collections from the National Archives, the Indiana Historical Society and the Indiana State Museum.

Nikki Returns: Poetry and Conversation with Nikki Giovanni

Trustees of Indiana University/IU Kokomo, Kokomo

Congressional District: 5

Awarded: \$3,000

Indiana University Kokomo (IUK) welcomed author, poet and seven-time NAACP Image Award winner Nikki Giovanni to campus for a conversation and book signing. Giovanni read from her literary works, discussed her lifetime achievements and challenges, and provided inspiration in a free public presentation followed by a question-and-answer session. During her time on campus, Giovanni also presented a masterclass for IUK students, other invited local students and IUK's English and Language Studies faculty.

1876 Centennial Quilt Project

Quilters Hall of Fame, Marion
Congressional District: 5
Awarded: \$3,000

The Quilters Hall of Fame offered educational programming around what is known as the E. M. C. quilt, a uniquely constructed quilt that an unknown person created in the 1870s in honor of the United States centennial. The Hall of Fame displayed the quilt along with contemporary versions made from a pattern developed by master quilter Anne Dawson. Dawson curated the exhibition and presented a talk about the E.M.C. quilt's background, legacy and impact on today's quilters, while Grant County historian Bill Munn added historical context.

Walkable USA: Full Version

Center for Independent Documentary, Boston
Congressional District: 1 (where programming takes place)
Awarded: \$3,000

In 2020, the Center for Independent Documentary used a Historic Preservation Education Grant to produce *Walkable USA*, a short documentary about the efforts to reinvigorate historic downtown Hammond, Indiana, through walkable urban design and historic preservation. This follow-up Action Grant allowed the Center to expand the content into a 56-minute version that it screened at public events in Hammond as well as broadcast on Lakeshore Public Media.

Hidden: 42nd Annual Greater Lafayette Holocaust Remembrance Conference

Greater Lafayette Holocaust Remembrance Committee, Lafayette
Congressional District: 4
Awarded: \$3,000

The Greater Lafayette Holocaust Remembrance Committee hosted its annual Greater Lafayette Holocaust Remembrance Conference in April 2023. Grant funds supported two events: a Zoom presentation and live Q&A with Dr. Rebekah Klein-Pejšová and Holocaust survivor Dr. Ilana Blum, and an opening reception at the West Lafayette Public Library for a photography exhibition called *Stars without a Heaven: Children in the Holocaust*. The exhibition, produced by Yad Vashem, Israel's official memorial to the Holocaust, was on display for six weeks and then toured on loan.

Getting from Here to There Teacher Workshop

Indiana's Historic Pathways, New Albany
Congressional District: 9
Awarded: \$1,278

Indiana's Historic Pathways, a National Scenic Byway focused on Indiana history, held the ninth installment of a teacher workshop called "Getting from Here to There." The workshop introduced elements of southern Indiana history centered on the Buffalo Trace, a historical path carved by bison and used by Native Americans and early settlers. Attendees learned about history topics through scholarly lectures, lesson plans and a teacher panel about innovative classroom learning ideas.

iEngage Indiana Civics Institute: A Civics Institute: A Civics Summer Camp for Rising 5th- to 9th-Grade Youth

Trustees of Indiana University/Indiana University Purdue University Columbus, Columbus
Congressional District: 6
Awarded: \$3,000

Indiana University Purdue University Columbus hosted iEngage Indiana, a free five-day civics day camp that provided youth with an opportunity to learn how to make a difference in their school, neighborhood and community. iEngage focused on developing young people's civic and political competence and strengthening their community and political engagement through inquiry-based civics projects in which they researched and acted upon local community issue.

Dunes Lit Fest

Valparaiso University, Valparaiso
Congressional District: 1
Awarded: \$3,000

Valparaiso University, in partnership with the Porter County Public Library, hosted the Dunes Lit Fest, a regional festival that celebrated reading, writing, authors and readers, as well as the power of books, ideas and imagination. The festival promoted and celebrated literature through visits by well-known and local authors/illustrators and brought awareness to literacy resources in the community.

Fiber Revival 2023

Friends of Beck's Mill, Salem
Congressional District: 9
Awarded: \$3,000

The Friends of Beck's Mill hosted its second-annual Fiber Revival community event to educate the public on historical fiber arts and traditions and broaden the understanding of both historical and contemporary textile production in the region. The program highlighted and bolstered community knowledge of the Beck's Mill historical site, its rare 1830s machinery and its cultural significance. The Indiana University Center for Rural Engagement served as a partner, and scholars from the IU Eskenazi School of Art, Architecture + Design's fiber arts program supported the project.

Celebration of the 90th Anniversary of the CCC at Spring Mill State Park

Friends of Spring Mill State Park, Bedford
Congressional District: 9
Awarded: \$2,161

The Friends of Spring Mill State Park held a weekend-long celebration of the 90th anniversary of the Civilian Conservation Corps at Spring Mill State Park. Programming included a dinner keynote presentation on the CCC's work and the lasting impact of its projects at the park, guided hikes, a guided kayak tour, historical reenactors and a flag-raising ceremony.

Granfalloon Film Series: The Human and the Machine

Trustees of Indiana University/Indiana University Arts and Humanities Council, Bloomington
Congressional District: 9
Awarded: \$2,525

As part of its annual Granfalloon festival celebrating Kurt Vonnegut's life and literature, Indiana University's Arts and Humanities Council hosted a film series exploring and expanding upon the themes of artificial intelligence, technology and the rise of the digital age in modern society. The series featured seven films and included discussions and performances addressing unprecedented technology in the modern age.

MWW23 50th Conference: "Writing Issues" Day

Midwest Writers Workshop, Muncie
Congressional District: 5
Awarded: \$1,500

The Midwest Writers Workshop held its 50th-anniversary annual conference in Muncie in July 2023, bringing together writers from across the Midwest to meet authors, share ideas and engage in dialogue about the importance of writing in the humanities. Grant funds will supported a new feature at the conference: a free "Writing Issues" day of special events, including two panel conversations, intended to help the MWW grow its audience and facilitate community conversations about the importance of literature and storytelling.

One World, One Plate

Morrisson-Reeves Library, Richmond
Congressional District: 6
Awarded: \$2,670

The Morrison-Reeves Library used grant funds to sponsor its One World, One Plate event, a program designed to showcase and uplift the diverse and vibrant cultures in the greater Richmond community. Activities included storytelling, dance, food, displays and more.

Out and About: The Gay History of Evansville

WNIN Tri-State Public Media, Evansville
Congressional District: 8
Awarded: \$3,000

WNIN Tri-State Public Media developed and broadcast a two-hour documentary exploring the history of the LGBTQIA+ community in Evansville. WNIN debuted the documentary at a public screening/Q&A session and made it available online for on-demand streaming.

Juneteenth Celebration of Liberation

Baptist Student Foundation at Purdue, West Lafayette
Congressional District: 4
Awarded: \$2,378

The Baptist Student Foundation used grant funds to host its Juneteenth program celebrating African American culture. Activities included oral storytelling, drum playing, sculpting, hair styling and painting. Demonstrations and public conversations provided history and context around these traditions.

Bilingual Storytime

Goshen Public Library, Goshen
Congressional District: 2
Awarded: \$1,013

The Goshen Public Library hosted bilingual storytime sessions at a community park. Librarians read books in both English and Spanish to children ranging from toddlers up to second graders, working with them to increase vocabulary in both languages and asking questions to help them develop skills in comprehension and contextualization. The library provided free copies of the books to participating families, offered library card registration and made available additional library services during the programs.

Spirit & Place Festival Public Conversation Featuring Michael Twitty

Trustees of Indiana University/Spirit & Place, Indianapolis
Congressional District: 7
Awarded: \$2,970

Spirit & Place used grant funds to support the closing public conversation at its 2023 annual festival. The conversation featured culinary historian and author Michael Twitty, whose book *Kosher Soul* wrestles with not only who makes food but how food makes people. As a Jewish convert, Twitty sees African-Jewish cooking as a “dialogue of diaspora” offering insights into sustenance for the soul. In a new format for the conversation, the audience listened to Twitty speak in a moderated podcast hosted by Tanorria Askew and Candace Boyd of *Black Girls Eating*. Following the podcast recording, the audience members interacted with one another and the speakers during a book signing and reception.

Coastal Change Video

Unity Foundation of La Porte County, Michigan City
Congressional District: 2
Awarded: \$2,700

The Unity Foundation collaborated with the Michigan City Historical Society and the production company See You Outside to create a short video that tells an empathetic history of Hoosiers living on Lake Michigan's changing coastline. Following a public premiere, the producers made the video available online.

IPB News Engaging Students through Media Literacy

Indiana Public Broadcasting Stations, Indianapolis
Congressional District: 7
Awarded: \$3,000

Indiana Public Broadcasting News collaborated with the social studies department at Indianapolis's Ben Davis High School to design and develop toolkits and hands-on activities (including discussions with working journalists) that teach important critical-thinking and media-literacy skills. After the Ben Davis pilot program, IPB News hopes to replicate the program at other schools throughout Indiana.

Breaking the News

Monroe County History Center, Bloomington
Congressional District: 9
Awarded: \$3,000

The Monroe County Historical Society designed and implemented a program series to complement its exhibit *Breaking the News: The Past and Uncertain Future of Local Print Journalism*. Activities included panel discussions with local news experts, a lecture by a newspaper historian contextualizing local history, and printmaking demonstrations.

The Art of the Adze

Swope Art Museum, Terre Haute
Congressional District: 8
Awarded: \$2,950

The Swope Art Museum hosted a series of workshops and talks by celebrated Indiana bowl carvers and folklore scholars exploring the process of making wood bowls (using a tool known as an adze), contextualizing the history of the craft and examining the vernacular aesthetics that have emerged around this rustic art form.

Open Books, Open Minds: Disability Justice Book Club

ArtMix, Indianapolis
Congressional District: 7
Awarded: \$3,000

ArtMix piloted a Disability Justice Book Club in Indianapolis to center the voices of disability self-advocates and to expand ArtMix's community engagement for the 2023–2024 school year. ArtMix staff and facilitators provided free workshops highlighting nonfiction books by authors with disabilities or about activists with disabilities. The book club featured four separate sections (targeted to children, young adults, adults and educators) to ensure that people of all ages and abilities could participate. Facilitators led discussions about the book topics, themes and disability cultures.

Calumet Revisited Forums

Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative, Whiting
Congressional District: 1
Awarded: \$2,025

The Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative presented its annual “Calumet Revisited” series, a monthly discussion program that featured guest speakers who shed light on the region’s rich cultural and environmental history. Talks explored the area’s Native American heritage, the history of the Underground Railroad in the region, the civil rights movement within the local steel mills and more.

Geek Con 2023

Evansville Museum of Arts, History and Science, Evansville
Congressional District: 8
Awarded: \$3,000

The Evansville Museum’s Geek Con is an annual convention-style event that celebrates the art, history and science of Geek, comic and pop culture. Grant funds supported programming at the 2023 Geek Con, including panel presentations with regional authors and creators, guided activities, vendors, cosplay contests, food trucks, children’s activity stations and more. The Evansville Vanderburgh Public Library partnered with the museum on the event, sharing its resources relating to Geek, comic and pop culture.

Indianapolis Black Documentary Film Festival: Adding Color to the Silver Screen

Indianapolis Art Center, Indianapolis
Congressional District: 7
Awarded: \$3,000

The Indianapolis Art Center joined with other Indianapolis organizations to host the 2023 Indianapolis Black Documentary Film Festival. The festival showcased films that provided insights into the lives of African Americans as well the Black Diaspora. The annual festival seeks to create a forum at which filmmakers, storytellers, producers and members of the community can gather to experience and appreciate films that focus on Black history and contemporary issues in an effort to inspire and stimulate imagination. Grant funds supported the opening-night screening of *Olympic Pride, American Prejudice* and a conversation with its writer and director, Deborah Riley Draper.

***Fire!* Podcast**

Belt Media Collaborative, Pittsburgh
Congressional District: N/A
Awarded: \$3,000

Belt Media Collaborative used grant funds to produce *Fire!*, a public-humanities podcast about industrial fires and American life. Over the course of six episodes, producer Ryan Schnurr drew on research and interviews with scholars, journalists and community members to explore the stories and histories surrounding a series of major blazes in the 20th and 21st centuries, from Standard Oil’s Whiting Refinery fire in 1955, to the Cuyahoga River fire in 1969, to the East Palestine train derailment and fire in 2023. The project used a mix of creative and scholarly tools to explore the ways industrial fires illuminate the complex cultural, political, economic and environmental relations in legacy industrial communities of the Midwest.

King: A Life with Jonathan Eig, Part of the Ann Katz Festival of Books

Jewish Community Center of Indianapolis, Indianapolis
Congressional District: 7
Awarded: \$3,000

Indianapolis’s Jewish Community Center hosted a program featuring renowned biographer Jonathan Eig discussing his new biography of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., *King: A Life*, as part of the annual Ann Katz Festival of Books and Arts. The program featured a conversation between Eig and Dr. Erica Buchanan-Rivera and covered Black history, social justice and the lesser-known aspects of King’s life.

Banned Books Week 2023

Kurt Vonnegut Museum and Library, Indianapolis
Congressional District: 7
Awarded: \$3,000

The Kurt Vonnegut Museum and Library hosted its annual Banned Books Week, which raises awareness of issues of censorship through American history and literature. Attendees learned how individuals such as Vonnegut used or use the power of literature to further social justice and ways in which they themselves may enact social change in the artistic capacity to which they are personally drawn. Programming included panel discussions, film screenings and live artistic performances from local and national artists and advocates.

Returning to the Homeland: Miami Tribe of Oklahoma at the Feast of the Hunters' Moon

Tippecanoe County Historical Association, Lafayette
Congressional District: 4
Awarded: \$2,940

The Tippecanoe County Historical Association hosted its 56th-annual Feast of the Hunters' Moon, which explores the area's rich history and heritage through immersive programming that portrays life in the years from 1717 to 1791. Grant funds supported the presence and participation of the federally recognized Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, whose homelands were once centered in the region. The Miami shared history from their perspective and provided visitors with insights into Miami culture and traditions.

The Rise and Deconstruction of Reconstruction: A One-Act Play

Trustees of Indiana University/Frederick Douglass Papers, Indianapolis
Congressional District: 7
Awarded: \$3,000

As part of a two-day academic symposium to celebrate the Frederick Douglass Papers' 50th anniversary, the Frederick Douglass Papers staged a performance of *The Rise and Deconstruction of Reconstruction: A One-Act Play* by the IUPUI Africana Repertory Theater. The play, presented as an opportunity to engage the public in the celebration, shed light on the highs of Reconstruction and dissected the factors that led to its demise. Audience members learned about the complex landscape of the U.S. Reconstruction era and how it impacts racial equity today.

George R. Mather Sunday Lecture Series 2023—2024

Allen County–Fort Wayne Historical Society, Fort Wayne
Congressional District: 3
Awarded: \$3,000

The Allen County–Fort Wayne Historical Society hosted its annual George R. Mather Sunday Lecture Series, a program that provides eight free monthly lectures or presentations to the public from scholars and experts on historical, cultural and educational topics, often with a local lens. The historical society remains open to the public, free of charge, during these hours each month.

Sonnie Cibull

Evansville African American Museum, Evansville
Congressional District: 8
Awarded: \$3,000

The Evansville African American Museum partnered with Temple Adath B'nai Israel to create an exhibit and host a public program that honored and educated about local Jewish antiracism activist Sonnie Cibull. The exhibit and programming included the history of her parents' department store in the predominantly Black neighborhood of Baptisttown in Evansville, the impact the family's support and allyship had on the Black community and her lifetime of antiracist activism in the city.

The Big Picture

Irvington Historical Society, Indianapolis

Congressional District: 7

Awarded: \$1,450

The Irvington Historical Society created and hosted a community-focused exhibit featuring historical panoramic photographs, many related to the local Irvington area, accompanied by related tangible artifacts. Exhibit captions asked questions prompting thought and discussion about the images and items. Joan Hostetler of the Indiana Album spoke on historic photography, how photographs are used to preserve and educate about history and the processes by which these photos are taken and produced. The exhibit extended to the lobby of the Irvington branch of the Indianapolis Public Library.

Indy Toxic Heritage: Pollution, Place and Power

Trustees of Indiana University, Indianapolis

Congressional District: 7

Awarded: \$3,000

Indiana University Indianapolis's museum studies faculty partnered with Indy Parks and Recreation, the Kheprw Institute and community scholars to create and facilitate a public humanities project that told stories of Indianapolis's history of environmental harm and legacy of community activism. The project featured a traveling exhibit that visited three Indianapolis-area parks and a digital humanities campaign, including a StoryMap collection exploring Indianapolis's toxic heritage. The exhibit was accompanied by a series of public conversations to deepen critical thinking about environmental injustice citywide and work toward more just futures.

What Happened to Indiana Avenue? A Story Untold

Indiana Landmarks, Indianapolis

Congressional District: 9

Awarded: \$2,900

Indiana Landmarks hosted a public panel discussion about the history of Indiana Avenue, particularly decisions and events that led to the demise of the area as a Black cultural and business center in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s and the Black activism that challenged its redevelopment. A'Lelia Bundles moderated, and panelists included former government and nonprofit leaders from the era. The panel discussion was recorded and shared publicly.

The Human Side of Artificial Intelligence

The Starbase, Fishers

Congressional District: 5

Awarded: \$3,000

The Starbase hosts an annual *Star Trek* convention in Indianapolis, exploring the intersection of science and the humanities. At the 2023 gathering, grant funds supported sessions that explored legal and ethical issues around artificial intelligence. Scholars and experts discussed topics such as "AI in Fact and Fiction," "AI and the Nature of Truth" and "The Ethics of Machine Learning." The conversations were recorded and released as a podcast available for free public listening. Organizers also developed corresponding curriculum for use in educational settings.

The Hidden Sun

Brick Street Poetry, Zionsville

Congressional District: 7

Awarded: \$3,000

Brick Street Poetry used grant funds to support public poetry programming related to the April 8, 2024, solar eclipse in Greencastle, Martinsville, Vincennes, Zionsville and other Indiana towns and cities. Poets performed works inspired by the once-in-a-lifetime event and engaged in discussion about the creative process and humans' relationship with the eclipse. Funds also assisted with the creation of banners featuring poems and eclipse-related imagery for display in the communities.