

2022



INDIANA AUTHORS AWARDS

**COMMUNICATIONS AND
EVENT TOOLKIT**

**SPEAKER
PROGRAM**

&

**WRITING
WORKSHOPS**



SPEAKER PROGRAM AND WRITING WORKSHOPS PREPARATION AND OVERVIEW

Congratulations on being awarded the opportunity to host an Indiana Authors Awards Speaker Program or Writing Workshop 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 author/writing event in your community.

The toolkit includes:

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

If you have questions as you use this toolkit to plan your event, contact Bronwen Carlisle at bcarlisle@indianahumanities.org or 317.616.9103.

Thank you for partnering with us on this program. We're confident that your program will be a big hit in your community!

SPEAKER PROGRAM AND WRITING WORKSHOPS

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 2022 cycle of Indiana Authors Awards programming, we are allowing for both virtual and in-person events, given the COVID-19 pandemic.

That said, all events should be planned in conjunction with the author awarded to your site. Some authors in the bureau have agreed to participate in virtual events only, so please be sure to check this information in the author biography documents. In the case that your author agrees to an in-person event, you must abide by whatever precautions/restrictions they prefer for that setting. While these may vary from author to author, we also wanted to include recommendations from Indiana Humanities and the Indiana Authors Awards.

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. We have also included the information we have given to the authors, so you know what they have heard from us in regards to planning programs during the pandemic.

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 the 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 immuno-compromised to attend.
- Do not offer shared food or drinks as refreshments; if you offer refreshments, offer individually packaged drinks and snacks.

For speakers or workshop leaders:

- Please determine under what conditions you personally feel comfortable for delivering public programs during COVID-19. These conditions may include whether:
 - Host organization staff and attendees are required to wear masks
 - Attendance is capped
 - Attendees are spaced six feet apart
 - Host organization provides hand sanitizer or PPE
 - Events take place indoors or outdoors (if possible)
- We strongly encourage that these conditions be spelled out in writing in an agreement letter between the host organization and the speaker.
- We will state to program hosts that we expect them to follow state and local guidelines and restrictions on gathering in-person as well as to follow any additional restrictions or protective measures that you ask for.
- Indiana Humanities will back you up on whatever guidelines/conditions you set. We encourage you to let us know what terms you are setting with program hosts.
- We support your decision to decline an invitation if your conditions cannot be met by the host organization; please let us know if/when that happens.
- If hosts do not comply with your clearly stated expectations, we can rescind the speaking/workshop engagement award. If you arrive to an event and find that the host has not implemented the conditions you previously outlined, you may politely leave the event and Indiana Humanities will still cover your speaker honorarium.

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 author, take questions, etc. The tech person will monitor the virtual chat, troubleshoot technological issues, etc.
- Have a “dress rehearsal” with the author 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 author events and workshops. If you need more assistance, please feel free to reach out to Bronwen Carlisle at bcarlisle@indianahumanities.org.

SPEAKER PROGRAM AND WRITING WORKSHOPS

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 www.indianaauthorsawards.org/programs/speaker-program/).
- Consider creating a customized hashtag for the event (e.g., #FurunessTalkIPL).
- 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
 - Nearby libraries
 - Senior centers
 - Creative writing groups
 - 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/writer is ready and has everything he or she needs.

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 Indiana Authors Awards Speaker Program/Writing Workshop event
 - A list of other events coming up at your organization

SPEAKER PROGRAM AND WRITING WORKSHOPS COMMUNICATIONS OVERVIEW

EXPLAINING THE INDIANA AUTHORS AWARDS SPEAKER PROGRAM AND WRITING WORKSHOPS

What is the Indiana Authors Awards Speaker Program?

Indiana Humanities awarded up to 30 nonprofit organizations (libraries, schools, museums, etc.) the opportunity to host an honoree of the Eugene & Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Awards.

This program is made possible with the support of Glick Philanthropies.

What is the Writing Workshop Program?

Indiana Humanities awarded up to 10 nonprofit organizations (libraries, schools, museums, etc.) the opportunity to host a writing workshop given by an expert Indiana author.

This program is made possible with the support of Glick Philanthropies.

What are the Indiana Authors Awards?

The Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Awards celebrate the best books by Indiana authors written in eight different categories and published during the previous two years. Winners receive a \$5,000 prize, a physical award featuring Indiana limestone and the opportunity to make a \$500 gift to an Indiana public library. Winning and shortlisted books were selected by panels of judges, including former winners, writers, educators, scholars, local bookstore owners and librarians.

Can you tell me about the authors involved?

Our 2022 speakers for the Indiana Authors Awards Speaker Program are Lindsey Alexander, John David Anderson, Gabrielle Balkan, Axton-Betz-Hamilton, Robert Blaemire, Maurice Broaddus, Debra Kang Dean, Helen Frost, Bryan Furuness, Eugene Gloria, Katie Hesterman, Michael Homoya, Robin Lee Lovelace, Nancy Kriplen, Michael Martone, Chantel Massey, Kevin McKelvey, Sandra Mitchell, Melissa Stephenson, James Still, Annie Sullivan, Bill Sullivan, Larry Sweazy, Shari Wagner and Chris White. Biographies are available at www.indianaauthorsawards.org/programs/speaker-program/.

The authors that are part of the Writing Workshop Program may or may not have won an Indiana Authors Award, but are skilled, experienced writers and teachers representing a diverse set of genres. They have proposed workshops that will make the most of the time they spend with your audience.

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 and @INAuthorsAwards), Facebook (/INHumanities and /INAuthorsAwards) and Instagram (@INHumanities and @INAuthorsAwards). You can also learn more on our websites, www.indianahumanities.org and www.indianaauthorsawards.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.indianaauthorsawards.org/programs/speaker-program/).
- 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 author 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 writer 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 Speaker Program events: create an event-specific hashtag. We have seen our partners succeed with this before. For example, you could use something like #FurunessTalkIPL. 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.
- For Writing Workshop events: Encourage participants to share a bit about their experience on social media. You could recommend that they share a bit about what they wrote, or a few lines from a poem or other creative work produced during the session. Post prompts from the writing workshop on social media. Maybe your followers will engage with the exercise virtually.
- Interact with us. Tag @INHumanities and @INAAuthorsAwards, 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.).
- For Writing Workshop events: Is there interest in hosting an ongoing writing group at your library or organization? Consider reserving a room for folks to come back together to share what they have continued to work on.

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.

SPEAKER PROGRAM AND WRITING WORKSHOPS

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.

Speaker Program:

- Join us for an exciting conversation with Bryan Furuness on March 10. RSVP: [link here]
- Hear from author Maurice Broaddus at our Indiana Authors Awards Speaker Program: [link here]
- Author of “The Life List of Adrian Mandrick” will be in Fort Wayne on March 12. Don’t miss out: [link here]
- Setting up for our author event tonight. Don’t miss out! [link to photo]

Writing Workshops:

- Have a great idea for a novel or short story? Stop by [location] on [date] to get inspired to put pen to paper.
- Scared of poetry? Don’t be! Join us for a fun poetry workshop with [writer] on [date].

Always remember to link to your RSVP page or website for followers to read more information. Also, check to see if your author has a social media handle—it would be great to tag them. 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 author’s works to increase interest in the program. See a sample below:

- Join us to hear Chris White, author of “The Life List of Adrian Mandrick,” on March 10 from 6-7:30 p.m. White will discuss her award-winning novel about a pill-popping anesthesiologist and avid birder, who embarks on a quest to find the extremely rare Ivory-billed Woodpecker only to become stranded in the thick swamplands of Florida’s panhandle. This event is made possible with the support of Indiana Humanities and Glick Philanthropies. [link here]

AFTER THE EVENT

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

These tips/sample posts are just to get you thinking. If you have questions or need more specific ideas, contact Bronwen Carlisle, Indiana Humanities programs and special projects manager, at bcarlisle@indianahumanities.org.

SPEAKER PROGRAM AND WRITING WORKSHOPS COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS

To help you promote your event, we have provided materials for download at www.indianaauthorsawards.org/programs/speaker-program/.

These materials include:

- A press release template (which you will be able to customize to your organization, event and author)
- Social media graphics

SPEAKER PROGRAM AND WRITING WORKSHOPS 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 and contact information
 - How they heard about the eventThis is a great way to collect information and follow up after the event.
- For Speaker Program events: create a seating plan that allows for an organized flow and direct access to the presentation.
- For Writing Workshop events: provide nametags for the workshop.
- 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 and writing utensils
- 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/author 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.