



Inquiring Idaho Program Overview

Thank you for your interest in becoming a speaker in the Council’s Inquiring Idaho program. Below is more information about the program and the Idaho Humanities Council.

What is the Idaho Humanities Council?

The Idaho Humanities Council (IHC) is a non-profit organization established in 1973 serving as the state-based partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). We are one of 56 state humanities councils funded in part by the federal government through NEH's Federal/State Partnership Office.

The IHC is dedicated to serving Idaho citizens by promoting greater public awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the humanities. The Council accomplishes its mission by awarding grants to organizations statewide, and by working with organizations as partners to develop local humanities projects and programs, and by sponsoring its own Council-conducted programs, such as summer institutes in the humanities for K-12 teachers, library reading/discussion programs in small communities, traveling exhibitions from the Smithsonian Institution, a Humanities Speakers Bureau, Distinguished Humanities Lectures, and other projects and programs limited only by the imagination.

What are the Humanities?

The IHC and the NEH define “the humanities” to include history, literature, philosophy, jurisprudence, cultural anthropology, comparative religion, art history and criticism, music history and other interpretive disciplines that through study yield wisdom.

It is through the study of these disciplines that we gain knowledge and understanding—in a word, wisdom. In the founding legislation for the NEH in 1965, Congress stressed that “Democracy demands wisdom and vision in its citizens.” The humanities are a vehicle to understanding the human experience—the diverse history, traditions, and cultures of the world. It is only through this quest for understanding that we cultivate the wisdom and vision that democracy demands.

Who is eligible to apply to be a speaker?

Speakers in Inquiring Idaho are specialists in their subject area, usually scholars who hold an advanced degree (M.A. or higher) in the humanities, tribal elders, or people who demonstrate sufficient proficiency in their topic. Affiliation with a college or university is customary but not

necessary. The Council recognizes that scholarship and knowledge gathering are defined differently in various cultures and respects such diversity of training and preparation as consistent with our understanding of the humanities as fields and methods of inquiry. Scholars need not be employed, may be retired or may be on temporary leave from a professional position. Applicants must be genuinely interested in addressing public audiences and be available during their entire tenure with the program.

We encourage applications from people from diverse backgrounds, minorities and ethnicities. If you have questions about eligibility, please contact the Council at (208) 345-5346.

If you have participated in our speakers program before, it will still be necessary for you to re-apply and inclusion is not be guaranteed. The IHC is currently not looking for Chautauqua style (dramatic character depictions) or performance presentations.

What are the expectations in being in Inquiring Idaho?

- Expertise and passion in the subject matter on which they wish to offer presentations;
- Public speaking or teaching experience;
- An engaging presence and the ability to facilitate discussion among audiences of diverse cultural and economic backgrounds;
- A talent for finding interesting perspectives on subjects both obscure and familiar;
- Interest in visiting communities throughout Idaho and interacting with a wide range of people;
- Know ways to encourage dialogue and conversation among their program audiences;
- In general, we're looking for topics that pique our curiosity, surprise our intellects, and offer the potential to fuel inquiry and conversation about ideas and works that shape our culture.

What should I keep in mind when preparing a talk for the Inquiring Idaho program?

Regardless of the subject area, you will be talking to a general audience, not to scholars or graduate students. Therefore, lectures should assume little, if any, prior knowledge of the subject on the part of the audience. In all cases, presentations should be grounded in the humanities.

The Council cannot support presentations which advocate specific political, social or public policy stances. Lectures may, of course, examine different political, historical or philosophical perspectives of an issue, but the speaker should be an unbiased presenter. The presentation should be rooted firmly in the humanities (not social or public policy), and it should be a balanced consideration of the issues to be addressed.

Lectures must promote understanding of our cultural heritage, interpret our own experience, foster critical thinking, encourage reasonable public discourse, strengthen our sense of

community and thus empower Idaho's people with a vision for the future. They cannot be primarily instructional or how-to presentations.

Finally, we will not fund presentations used as fund-raising vehicles.

If I am accepted into the program, how long will the term be?

Speakers must commit to a two-year tenure upon being accepted to the program. At the end of his or her tenure, each speaker will be invited to re-apply to the program.

What is the length of a typical presentation, who manages the logistics, and what are my requirements?

- A typical presentation lasts about an hour depending on the presentation style – lecture, conversational, or interactive. There should always be time for discussion with audience members.
- Speakers are not allowed to diverge from or change their approved presentations;
- The presenters work with the host organization on required presentation needs – a screen or lecturn, for example.
- Speakers provide their own mode of transportation (travel costs are reimbursed by IHC).
- IHC asks that speakers are available for in-person presentations year-round.
- Speakers complete the necessary follow up paperwork.

Who can apply for a speaker?

Inquiring Idaho is designed primarily for organizations that involve adults interested in lifelong learning. Speakers are available to talk to seniors, historical organizations, service groups, public library audiences, religious organizations, professional organizations, or any non-profit community groups.

Do I have to speak to every organization that requests my presentation?

No. Organizations requesting presentations are always reminded that programs are scheduled at the speakers' convenience. The Council understands that speakers' schedules and the distances to some activities will sometimes limit participation. You certainly are not required to accept every request for your presentation. We only ask that you make yourself as available as possible.

How do organizations find out about my presentation?

All accepted presentations will be described on the Council's Inquiring Idaho page on the Council's website. The website will provide brief biographical and contact information for each speaker, followed by descriptions of their presentations. Information regarding Inquiring Idaho is sent to Idaho's libraries, historical societies, museum, in addition to other educational,

community and cultural groups. Speakers are welcome, of course, to promote their own presentations as well.

How is the program administered?

Organizations will apply for speakers by reading IHC's website and general guidelines are provided for all accepted speakers.

Organizations requesting speakers are instructed to contact the speaker first to arrange an agreeable lecture time, date, and location, and then submit an application to the Council at least six weeks before the lecture date. The hosting organization's project coordinator works directly with the speaker to plan the activity. **It is advisable for speakers to contact the Council at least two weeks before the lecture date to ensure the organization has submitted the proper application and received approval.**

How am I paid? How much am I paid?

Speakers receive honoraria and paid expenses directly from the Council. Payment is always made promptly after receiving a speaker evaluation form and matching contributions form from the hosting organization. Hosts are instructed to return the speaker evaluation form and matching contributions form to IHC within two weeks of the approved presentation. If you have not received payment from the IHC within four weeks of your presentation, please contact our office at 208-345-5346.

The per-lecture honorarium for speakers is \$250 to \$350 depending on distance traveled.

Who decides who will be in the Inquiring Idaho program?

A committee of Council staff and members of the Board of Directors review and make decisions on applications. Applicants will be notified within six (6) weeks of Council receipt of application.

In reviewing applications, the committee will consider not only the applicant's background and expertise; it will also take into account the Council's desire to present a varied roster of speakers and subjects to organizations throughout Idaho.

During each application process, applicants will be interviewed via ZOOM and asked to present a brief presentation.

If you have additional questions regarding the Inquiring Idaho program, please contact Debra Schlechte at debra@idahohumanities.org