

Speakers Bureau Application Notes

The following notes are based on a conference call with prospective applicants in 2018 and have been updated for the 2020 Application.

We will host a webinar for applicants on Monday, March 16, 2020 from 10AM -11AM. Learn more [on our website](#).

- Presentation Requirements
 - Has to be based in the humanities, explore humanities questions. The humanities – including history, literature, philosophy, ethics, law, and other fields of inquiry – are the ideas, questions and disciplines that help us document and interpret the world around us. They provide a framework for examining how we think, what we value, and what it means to be human.
 - Storytelling is key!
 - We do have presentations that delve into the arts (poetry) or the sciences (water rights), but they *also* involve fundamental humanities questions.
 - Has to deepen people’s understanding of topics presented and broaden the audience’s perspective on issues
 - Has to be relevant to communities around Washington State
 - Prioritize audience participation and interaction – formats beyond lecture encouraged (workshop, performance, etc.)
- Presentation topics
 - Examples of successful presentations:
 - Mayumi Tsutakawa speaks on Japanese-American internment using her own family’s history. Very powerful, very popular and well-received
 - Jeb Wyman talks about how the humanities help soldiers/veterans after war. Again, very powerful
 - Harriet Baskas gives a popular talk on ancient food (titled “The Ancient Fruitcake”) – odd topic but her passion and connection to local history makes it exciting
 - David Berger talks about razor clamming – history, environment, tradition – great example of a specific topic that really resonates with WA
 - Topics that hosts are interested in:
 - Local history (that encompasses the whole state, not just Western Washington or Eastern Washington)
 - delving into current social issues/social justice topics (for example white privilege)
 - Inter-disciplinary presentations (humanities-arts, humanities-sciences)
 - Consider topics that will engage young audiences too
 - Look through current roster for brainstorming
 - Passion and joy for the subject is key – this is what all our speakers have in common. They can translate their passion to others and leave them excited about the subject and eager to learn more
- Speaker Requirements

- Demonstrated scholarship or expertise in the topic you apply with
- Prior experience with public audiences
- Evidence that you can work with diverse audiences (cultural, geographic diversity, as well as knowledge on topic)
 - You have to be open to different points of views, and know how to handle them.
 - You might be asked to present at a senior home in Seattle, a library in Wenatchee or Yakima, or at a museum in Moses Lake, or a college in the Tri-Cities. Explain how you'll be able to work with these different communities.
- Don't have to give entire presentation history, but give us the highlights that show your presentation experience
- Willingness to travel the state – most fun requirement!
- Application process
 - **You can only apply with 1 presentation topic and you can only submit 1 application.** Please choose one topic you are most passionate about and most experienced in to submit as an application.
 - Summarize your experience so that someone who has never met you understands your expertise, your experience working with public audiences, and your passion for this particular topic.
 - Review committee of community members (current hosts, scholars, previous speakers, etc). look over the applications and make decisions. Auditions are reserved for those we are confident could serve on the roster.
- Travel process/commitment
 - Make yourself available for 5 presentations per year
 - The schedule is flexible, and you determine the date/time of your presentations in coordination with hosts
 - How scheduling works: Host organizations contact Hannah at Humanities Washington for speakers' contact information. We send it to them with details about the application process. They contact the speaker directly to find a good date/time. They apply for funding the quarter before the event. Speakers and hosts receive decisions via email.
 - Number of presentations vary dramatically, 3-25 presentations annually
 - Depends on topic popularity, speaker promoting their talk, luck with topic
 - \$300 per presentation
 - All travel costs reimbursed – typically by host organization
 - Federal mileage rate, lodging, food all covered for reasonable travel expenses
 - We offer stipends to communities that are far away and cannot afford travel expenses
 - Speakers Bureau programming reaches every county of Washington State. In 2019, over 400 presentations were held.
- Questions
 - Any copyright issues with using photos/videos in presentation?
 - Properly cite and not a problem.

- Average audience attendance?
 - Average last year was 42 people. Typically 30-40 people. Hosts promote their own events and we ask that they get 30 people to come (although some towns are too small for this to happen). Ranges from 6 people to 700 people last year!
 - You can always ask the host how many people they expect at an event.
- Number of speakers we are looking for
 - The roster of speakers is generally 35-40 people. We get over 100 applications typically.
- Can you have multiple partners and do a series of events somewhere?
 - Yes! We encourage it. Some of our hosts try to string together multiple events with the same speaker to maximize everyone's time and the travel costs. Doesn't always happen (sometimes just 1 event far away), but it is certainly encouraged.
- How does speaker turn-over work?
 - Speakers are allowed to serve for 2 consecutive terms (4 years total). They have to re-apply with a new topic and are treated similarly to all other applicants. After serving for 4 years, speakers have to sit out for at least one term (2 years).
- Can you bring along published books?
 - Yes, we have speakers that sell their own books at these events.
- Can you explain the exclusive contract?
 - Humanities Washington requires an exclusive contract for the 2-year term on the presentation you are giving. We have speakers who give lots of other presentations on different topics. If you have a presentation that is on the same topic but markedly different (for example, your Humanities Washington presentation is an hour, but you also present a workshop for 8 hours on the same topic), then that is fine as well.
 - The contract only extends through the WA State borders. You could give the presentation in other states/locations
- I'm not available for some of the orientation/audition dates. What should I do?
 - Please note your availability in your application so that we can work with your schedule. Being unavailable doesn't disqualify you from participating.
 - Apologies that the orientation is not yet scheduled.
- I'm having trouble with the log-in system. What should I do?
 - Can always contact Hannah with questions and she can set up the log-in for you if needed. There is a step-by-step document on the Humanities Washington page ("Become a Speaker" page – link at the bottom).
- What are some qualities that would be negative for a speaker/presentation?
 - Openness to other viewpoints is key. You may encounter people with views that are fundamentally different from yours or even disrespectful people (fortunately we have few hecklers, but they do happen sometimes). Being able to work calmly and respectfully with those individuals creates a powerful experience for all participants. Keep in mind that Humanities Washington is a nonpartisan organization.

- Thank you for your time!