

Humanities Public Programs with NEH on the Road Exhibitions



Why host public programs?

Hosting this exhibition isn't complete without strong public humanities programs. *NEH on the Road* is made possible through the National Endowment for the Humanities, a federal agency that promotes lifelong learning. As such, we anticipate that every host will flesh out the exhibition with programs that will build on the ideas in the exhibition and add new dimensions to it.

What are *humanities* public programs?

Humanities programs use the academic disciplines of the humanities (such as history, literature, philosophy, art history, or others) to create greater awareness of the historical, cultural, or social context of the exhibition topics and to provide new, more inclusive ways of looking at the subject so that audiences can gain additional insights into familiar topics. In general, the humanities are the stories, analytical approaches, ideas, and writings that help us make sense of our lives and enhance our ability to think creatively and critically about our world.

What program resources are available for this exhibition?

In order to do this successfully, it is normally best to rely on a humanities scholar or other equivalent expert to help provide a bigger picture. There are many possible formats (including lectures, panel exchanges, demonstrations, film and reading discussions and more), and we encourage you to think creatively about what might work best with your audiences. One important component of nearly any humanities program is an opportunity for active exchange between the general public and a humanities scholar or topical expert. Open discussion and an active engagement in questions and ideas invest audiences in your topic, enable diverse viewpoints to be expressed, and lead to further inquiry. Through the humanities, we hope that the programs will help people to reflect on our heritage and diverse traditions and make meaningful connections to our contemporary lives.

With this exhibition, you'll receive a comprehensive Programming Guide with a broad range of suggestions on how to expand your project with educational programs, public events, student activities and supplemental local materials. The guide includes speaker suggestions, film and reading resources, web links to relevant topics, ideas for gathering ancillary collections, and exhibit-related lesson plans for your teachers. The guide also provides extensive background information for your docents. In addition, you'll receive a ready-made family activity guide to enhance visitors' experiences with the exhibition, enabling your audiences to use the exhibit as an opportunity to discover and critique--to use the humanities.

What's the next step?

Early planning is the best way to ensure that your humanities programs will be first rate. Once your exhibition is confirmed, review your Programming Guide and be sure to contact your state humanities council for suggestions about programs or scholars who have a track record in public programming in your state. (Contact information for all the state councils is available on the NEH website, www.neh.gov.) You can also get in touch with nearby colleges for scholar and speaker recommendations. Involve community experts in your planning and remember to include diverse vantage points and public discussion at each of your events. Help is also available by talking to the folks at ExhibitsUSA who have helped organize the exhibition. Finally, be sure to share your humanities programs with ExhibitsUSA. We're looking forward to this exhibition experience being a well-rounded one, with plenty of fun and stimulating humanities public programs.



ExhibitsUSA/NEH on the Road
Art McSweeney, Project Manager
2018 Baltimore Avenue
Kansas City, MO 64108
816-421-1388

