

Speakers Orientation: Welcome to the Council

Table of Contents

1. About the Council (pgs. 2-3)
 - Mission
 - Board of Directors
 - Staff
 - Contact Information
 - Programs
2. *Speakers in the Humanities* (pg. 4)
 - *About Speakers in the Humanities*
3. Speaker Expectations (pg. 5)
 - Your Role in the Council
 - Know Your Audience
 - Contact with the Program Coordinator
 - Event Preparation
4. Speaker Administration (pgs. 6-7)
 - Honoraria and Travel Reimbursements
 - Travel Plans
 - Tax Information
 - Program Evaluation
 - Canceling or Rescheduling Events
 - Time and Format of Lectures
 - Lecture Renewal
 - Speakers Catalog
5. Scheduling a *Speakers* event for Host Organizations (pgs. 8-9)
 - A Step-by-Step Guide
 - Who Can Apply
 - Additional Requirements
 - Host Organization Responsibilities:
 - Application Approval
6. *Speakers in the Schools* (pg. 10-11)
 - *About Speakers in the Schools*
 - *Schools* Differences
 - *Schools* Logistics
7. Conclusion (pg. 12)
 - Resources

About the New York Council for the Humanities

Mission

The New York Council for the Humanities is dedicated to helping all New Yorkers lead vibrant intellectual lives by strengthening traditions of cultural literacy, critical inquiry, and civic engagement. Funded by federal, state, and private sources, the Council is a private 501(c)3 founded in 1975 by a distinguished group of scholars, citizens, and public representatives to be the voice of the public humanities in New York State.

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James Taylor, *Director of Finance and Administration*

Tracy Varites, *Program Associate*

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding the *Speakers* programs, please contact Tracy Varites:

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Programs

The Council partners with more than 4,000 non-profit organizations, such as, museums, libraries, historical societies, and schools to reach over one million New Yorkers per year with cultural events and programs. With an annual budget of \$2.6 million, the Council brings these quality humanities experiences to the public for less than \$2 a head. As a grant-maker and direct programmer, the Council's impact runs broad and deep across New York State.

- *Community and Classroom Conversations*: A facilitated discussion of a short reading that encourages participants to reflect on the issues raised by the reading and discuss how they impact our lives and communities.
- *Grants Program*: Supports public programs (exhibitions, lecture series, historical walking tours, etc.) at tax-exempt organizations (museums, libraries, community centers, etc.) across New York State, helping them bring the insights and methods of the humanities to a general audience.
- *Literature and Medicine: The Humanities at the Heart of Healthcare*: A reading and discussion program for health-care workers and doctors. In partnership with the Veterans Administration (VA).
- *Meaning of Service*: A reading and discussion program offered to AmeriCorps workers to give them the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of civic engagement in light of their own experience.
- *Reading and Discussion Grants*: Intended to support text-based facilitated discussion programs that engage community members in meaningful conversation around humanities-based texts. Applicant organizations must have previously hosted the RBTL program.
- *Reading Between The Lines*: Facilitated reading and discussion series for adults that uses books to spark conversation about important humanities topics and issues.
- *Speakers in the Humanities*: An extensive lecture bureau that provides speakers to organizations across the state for free public programs exploring subjects such as history, philosophy, and culture.
- *Speakers in the Schools*: Stimulating lectures tailored to a high-school audience and state educational standards that enhance curriculum and provide professional development for teachers.
- *State Humanities Month*: Statewide showcase of New York's cultural and historical riches conceived and organized by the Council. Across the state, organizations will host public programs that explore a range of fascinating humanities topics and engage with the issues and ideas that shape our lives and the lives of our neighbors, past, present, and future.
- *Together—Book Talk for Kids and Parents*: Facilitated reading and discussion programs at local libraries for children aged 9 through 11 and their caregivers.

Speakers in the Humanities

About Speakers in the Humanities

The *Speakers in the Humanities* lecture bureau invites New Yorkers from all regions of the state to gain cultural enrichment by attending lectures on compelling and timely humanities topics. Free and open to the public, these lectures promote widespread access to life-long learning for New Yorkers of all ages.

Launched in 1983, the *Speakers in the Humanities* program brings the best in humanities scholarship to thousands of people at hundreds of cultural organizations in virtually every corner of New York. Any not-for-profit organization in New York State is eligible to use the program.

The program encourages individuals to reflect on and draw inspiration from our cultural variety, the ideas of our great thinkers, the pivotal events of our history, and the imaginative creations of our great writers.

The *Speakers in the Humanities* program boasts an offering of over 250 lectures from 130 scholars. Last year, the Council funded 350 *Speakers in the Humanities* events, reaching nearly 18,000 citizens in 46 counties. The number of *Speakers* events offered annually has grown by almost 90% since the advent of state funding in 2006. During this same time, statewide attendance has almost doubled.

Speaker Expectations

Your Role in the Council

As a Speaker in the *Speakers in the Humanities* program, you serve as a spokesperson for the Council; you have the opportunity to add dimension to educational and cultural programming at organizations statewide. Please make yourself aware of the various programs we offer, our mission statement, and how New Yorkers can become involved with the Council by participating, advocating, and donating. Remember to credit the Council for support and funding for the *Speakers* event at the beginning and conclusion of your lecture.

Know Your Audience!

Accustom yourself with your audience and understand their expectations of attending a *Speakers* lecture. Know what the audience's prior knowledge of a particular topic is and what the expected audience composition will be. When possible, adapt your lecture to an interest of the organization, or relate it to local/regional connections.

Remember you will be talking to a general audience (or to high school students), not to scholars or graduate students. Lectures should be firmly rooted in the humanities and issues should be addressed from a balanced perspective.

Speak to the audience in an engaging, personable, and approachable manner. Encourage audience participation, leaving plenty of time for Q&A following your lecture. Visual supplements such as PowerPoint, film, music, and/or handouts help to maintain audience attention.

Contact with the Program Coordinator

It is important to maintain clear contact with the Program Coordinator from the time they approach you to present a lecture, to receiving approval from the Council, up until the actual event date. They may rely on you for more specific information regarding lecture subject, request materials for their own publicity needs, or wish to better acquaint you with their expected audience.

Event Preparation

Clear communication prior to the event date will assure for a smooth lecture appearance. Make sure to have reliable phone numbers and/or email of the point contact person. Arrive early to allow enough time for equipment set up; allow time for travel arrangements, and any last minute event logistics.

Speaker Administration

Honoraria and Travel Reimbursements

The Council currently offers scholars an honorarium of \$300 for each *Speakers in the Humanities* and *Speakers in the Schools* event. In order to receive payment for your lecture, you must complete and submit the [online evaluation](#) and reimbursement form following your event. If you do not submit an evaluation and reimbursement form, the Council will be unable to issue your check.

You can receive up to \$300 reimbursement for travel expenses, including mileage, train/plane/bus tickets, car service, subway fares, and when necessary, lodging and meals. Be sure to include receipts for all travel expenses with your reimbursement request, as travel reimbursement cannot be authorized without receipts (except in the case of car mileage, where the honor system is applied). Car mileage is reimbursed according to the IRS Standard Mileage Rate, which is adjusted on yearly basis, January 1st (www.irs.gov).

The Council issues checks on the 15th and the last day of each month. Applications are typically processed as quickly as possible, but please allow approximately *six (6) weeks* from the date of submission for your reimbursement request to be processed, and your check to be cut and mailed to you.

Travel Plans

The Council recognizes that New York State covers a large area, and some requests may be prohibited by travel distance and/or time involved. Please include travel arrangements and the allotted travel reimbursement budget as factors in your decision to accept or reject a request for your lecture. We ask that you please use moderately priced services and accommodations. This will help us extend the program budget, and provide a greater total number of engagements over the course of the year. In some cases, it might also be necessary to ask that the sponsoring organization cover some travel costs, or provide overnight lodging. Please note, travel budgets may be increased, on a case-by-case basis, when the Council is notified ahead of your scheduled lecture date to reach remote or underserved organizations.

Tax Information

For tax purposes, you will be considered as an independent contractor. You are responsible for any applicable taxes. You are not considered an employee of the Council, nor will you be eligible for Unemployment through the Council.

Program Evaluation

Included on the Speaker Admin webpage is the link to the online Speaker Evaluation form: http://www.nyhumanities.org/speakers/adult_audiences/speaker_info.php. The evaluation contains several questions pertaining to your experiences with the host organization and Program Coordinator. Reimbursements will not be distributed without Speaker feedback; please answer the questions fully and be as honest as possible. Sometimes low audience turnout can be due to factors beyond any person's control, such as inclement weather. Please indicate if you feel this

is the case with any event. This feedback will help us evaluate future applications from the same sponsoring organization.

Canceling or Rescheduling Events

If you need to cancel a lecture, it is your responsibility to notify both the host organization and the Council, as soon as possible. Please indicate if there are plans to reschedule the lecture. Try to give as much notice as possible if you must cancel or reschedule.

Time and Format of Lectures

Lectures should generally not exceed one hour, and be followed by a Q&A period (about 90 minutes total). Speakers are limited to presenting ten (10) *Speakers in the Humanities* events and an additional ten (10) *Speakers in the Schools* events in a calendar year.

Lecture Renewal

At the end of your lecture(s) tenure, you will be notified to renew your lecture(s) by completing the “Current Lecture Renewal” application. Note that not all lectures are guaranteed for renewal with the *Speakers* program, and the Council has the right to determine the length of new lecture tenure. Renewal will be based on frequency of events booked, program coordinator evaluations, and overall program diversity.

Speakers Catalog

All *Speakers* lectures are searchable through the Council’s online catalog. Lectures can be browsed by key word or topic areas. The lecture page contains an image, lecture description, Speakers biography and contact information, other available lectures, and upcoming lecture presentations. All upcoming *Speakers in the Humanities* events are also featured in our online calendar of events.

Scheduling a *Speakers* Event for Host Organizations

A Step-by-Step Guide

1. Select a Lecture

- Organizations select a lecture from browsing or searching the online Speakers directory.
- Organizations can search by keyword, or browse according to topics in American History, by Subject Area, or by Heritage/Identity Group.

2. Set a Date and Time

- The host then contacts the Speaker with their provided contact information to establish a mutually agreed upon date and time for the event.

3. Submit Application

- After a date and time have been arranged, then the coordinator completes and submits the online application along with the proper processing fee.
- The Council will send approval or denial of the application within three (3) weeks of receiving the application.

4. Plan and Promote

- Plan and promote the event through press and publicity efforts.
- Organizations are emailed a toolkit to assist with publicizing the event. They receive: *Speakers* flyer template, press release template, NYCH logo, *Speakers in the Humanities* logo, and a tips sheet on how to host a *Speakers* event.

Who Can Apply

Any not-for-profit organization in New York State is eligible to apply for a *Speakers in the Humanities* event. The Council is especially interested in supporting those organizations that reach underserved audiences and regions.

Additional Requirements

- Events must be **FREE** and open to the general public; cannot be a members-only event
- Applications must be submitted eight (8) weeks in advance of the proposed lecture date
- Proper processing fee and proof of non-profit status required
- Must commit to gathering an audience of at least 40 people (20 in rural areas)

Organizations are eligible to host up to four (4) *Speakers* programs per calendar year.

Application processing fees per calendar year:

- 1st application - \$35
- 2nd application - \$50
- 3rd application - \$75
- 4th application - \$75

Organizations can submit payment via PayPal while completing the online application form, or mail in a check separately, once the application is submitted.

Host Organization Responsibilities

- Providing space for the presentation and discussion period
- Furnishing any equipment agreed upon in advance with the Speaker, such as microphones, laptops, projectors, etc.
- Publicizing the event within the community, crediting Council funding in all publicity, in order to provide an audience of at least 40 (20 in rural areas)
- Assisting the Speaker with local travel arrangements
- Providing a spoken introduction of the presenter to the audience, crediting Council support and funding
- Returning the [Program Coordinator Evaluation](#) within three (3) weeks of the presentation
 - The host provides us with information about their experience with the Speaker, as well as their thoughts on the success of the event

Application Approval

Once an application has been accepted or rejected, an email notification will be sent to both the Program Coordinator and the Speaker. Please do **NOT** deliver a program without a letter of approval in hand; the Council will never approve funding for a lecture without notifying you. If you have not received approval of an event, it means that the Council has NOT received a request for your lecture, and funding has NOT been granted. The Council will not be able to reimburse speakers for lectures that have not been expressly approved in advance.

Speakers in the Schools

About *Speakers in the Schools*

Launched in September of 2007, *Speakers in the Schools* brings the state's top scholars directly into the classroom to enhance curriculum and inspire curiosity and critical thinking among our youth, helping them develop into thoughtful, civically engaged citizens. The program engages school communities with the humanities in new ways. It is a *free* resource for high schools statewide and has been used in a variety of formats such as in the classroom, assembly, after school meetings, or for teachers' professional development.

- Brings students and teachers into direct, meaningful dialogue contact with the state's best scholars.
- Interactions enhance curricular goals, inspire teenagers to explore new ideas and challenge received wisdom, and broaden the expertise of our educators.
- Free, content-rich, curriculum enhancement; provide knowledge and inspiration for teachers.
- Invaluable resource for the future; offer renewed energies and resources.

The Council sponsored 35 *Speakers in the Schools* events in the program's first year (2007-08), reaching 2,500 students and teachers statewide. In just three years, the program has tripled in size, reaching over 17,500 students and teachers. This academic year (2009-10) alone, the Council funded over 100 events, reaching 8,400 in school communities.

Schools Differences

It is worth noting a few distinctions between the *Speakers in the Schools* program from *Speakers in the Humanities*. Taking these differences into account will facilitate your ability as a Speaker to adapt your lecture into a presentation suitable for a high school audience. These differences include the following:

- **Site/equipment:** High schools may have fewer resources (such as microphones, projection equipment, computers, etc.) than host organizations who are more accustomed to hosting lectures.
- **Audience:** Speakers must cater to a younger audience, typically ranging from ages 14 to 18. Many *Speakers in the Schools* lectures will meet during the school day; the audience will attend by obligation.
 - *Schools* lectures are also used for teachers' professional development. Your lecture should be adapted to the needs of the teachers in the audience and how they can better relay your information to their students in the classroom.
- **Time frame:** While the public lecture format of the *Speakers in the Humanities* program allows for a flexible program time, the speaker will be forced to account for the rigidity of scheduling when converting their lecture to the *Speakers in the Schools* format. This may require shortening lectures.

Some suggestions for adapting your lecture to high school communities:

- Visual media: Essential to capturing the attention of a high school audience. Visual representations such as PowerPoint presentations, pictures, relevant film clips, etc., will help to maintain focus.
- Discussion/participation: High school students tend to respond better to discussion-based learning than lectures. The speakers should account for this distinction, and attempt to incorporate their audience as much as possible into their presentations. Any room for audience participation will keep students focused and engaged.
- Handouts/outlines: Providing a handout, outline, or some form of in-lecture activity sheet will also keep students focused.

Schools Logistics

The logistics of *Speakers in the Schools* are run similarly to *Speakers in the Humanities*, with a few exceptions:

School requirements for hosting a lecture:

- FREE to apply, no application fee required
- Applications should be received five (5) weeks prior to proposed event date
- Open to public or private high schools; general public audience not required

Other differences:

- Can be used in various formats such as in the classroom, in an assembly, for teachers' professional development, or school celebrations
- All *Schools* lectures meet New York State Learning Standards

Speakers can receive only one (1) honorarium per day for *Speakers in the Schools* bookings. Please use your discretion when making arrangements with the host school regarding your lecture time length and format. As a Speaker, you are expected to present for about 90-minutes, including time for Q&A. To make the most of your *Speakers in the Schools* event, encourage the coordinator to combine as many classes as possible to best utilize your time. For example, present to two 40 minutes class sessions, or speak to an assembly. It is your responsibility to establish clear guidelines with the coordinator regarding the terms of your speaking engagement, such as length of lecture and format (classroom, assembly, etc.). Prior to the event, be sure you and the coordinator both understand the parameters of the program.

Conclusion

We hope your experience with the program is enjoyable and rewarding. Thank you once again for making a valuable contribution to the cultural life of New York State by remaining a Speaker in the Humanities! Please do not hesitate to be contact with any questions or concerns.

Important Resources

New York Council for the Humanities: www.nyhumanities.org

Speakers in the Humanities: http://www.nyhumanities.org/speakers/adult_audiences/

- Speaker Administration and Reimbursement:
http://www.nyhumanities.org/speakers/adult_audiences/speaker_info.php
- Host Organization Application: http://www.nyhumanities.org/speakers/host_org_app.php

Speakers in the Schools: <http://www.nyhumanities.org/speakers/schools/>

- Schools Administration and Reimbursement:
http://www.nyhumanities.org/speakers/schools/speaker_info.php
- Host School Application: <http://www.nyhumanities.org/speakers/schools/application.php>

Calendar of Events: <http://www.nyhumanities.org/events/>

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