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## Open Access to Expertise with Humanities Washington's Speakers Bureau

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# Open Access to Expertise with Humanities Washington's Speakers Bureau

Asia Lara & Stone Addington

Humanities Washington

March 25th, 2022

# What is Humanities Washington?

- Established in 1973
- The Washington State affiliate for the National Endowment for the Humanities
- Our mission: We aim to open minds and bridge divides by creating spaces to explore different perspectives

# Programs

1. Prime Time Family Reading
2. Speakers Bureau
3. Think & Drink
4. Washington State Poet Laureate
5. Center for Washington Cultural Traditions
6. Grants
7. Public Humanities Fellows





# Let's Talk Access

Alongside the proliferation of available information are a few epistemic pitfalls:

- Motivated reasoning / bias
- Widespread distribution of
  - Conspiracy theories
  - Pseudoscience
  - Misinformation and propaganda
- Lone wolves with a “degree from Google University”
- Communities that function as echo chambers and engines of error



# Types of Access

## **Mere Access:**

- Information is available; no walls stand in one's way
- Increased danger of epistemic pitfalls

## **Robust Access:**

- Information is available
- One has the guidance to contextualize, understand, and reflect on the information

For robust access, a guide with content expertise **and** pedagogical expertise is needed

# Robust Access

- Access to experts provide a way around and out of epistemic pitfalls.
  - Experts with content and pedagogical expertise help to undermine the “degree from Google University,” pop epistemic bubbles, and interrupt echo chambers.
- It is easy to argue online. It is difficult to argue with an expert.
- A teacher/guide takes the individual’s flourishing seriously; raw information and online arguments do not.



# Robust Access

## **Content Expertise:**

- Depth of knowledge
- Breadth of knowledge
- Comfort with dialectic

## **Pedagogical Expertise:**

- Translation
- Facilitation
- Engagement

# Speakers Bureau and Robust Access

- Humanities Washington's Speakers Bureau aims to provide robust access with over 30 experts on topics ranging from the history of hip-hop in the PNW to contextualizing rage in American politics.
- Speakers are readily available to travel across the state or for online events.
- Presentations are offered at little to no cost for qualifying not-for-profit organizations.

# Speakers Bureau and Robust Access

## **Content Expertise:**

- Depth of knowledge
- Breadth of knowledge
- Comfort with dialectic

## **Pedagogical Expertise:**

- Teaching vs. Persuading
- Translation
- Facilitation

## **Speakers are specifically evaluated for these qualities via:**

- A detailed written application
- A rigorous audition and revision process
- A three-part evaluation after each event (speaker, audience, and host)





# What is Speakers Bureau?

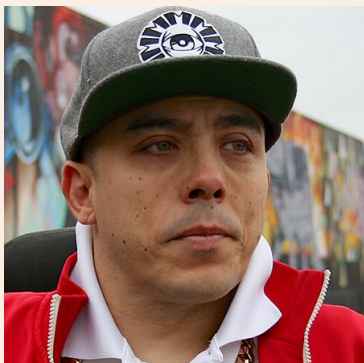
- Our longest-running and most popular program
- Provides free public humanities presentations statewide, with an emphasis on serving rural and underrepresented areas
- Comprised of a roster of 30+ unique and relevant talks that rotates on a biannual basis
- Last year, over 200 Speakers Bureau events took place in every congressional district, with over 7,000 total attendees!



# Program Goals

- Present context so that folks can make informed decisions on challenges facing our communities
- Increase opportunities for audiences to connect with experts and others with varied points of view
- Grow and diversify audiences of hosting organizations
- Increase collaboration between community organizations

# Examples of Current Talks



**King Khazm**

Hip-Hop & It Don't  
Stop



**Deepti Agrawal**

The Ancient Art of  
Madhubani Painting



**Chelsey Richardson**

Writing as Self-Love



**William Woodward**

Will the 2020s Roar  
like the 1920s?

# How Do I Host a Talk?

**Step 1:** Select the talk(s) you're interested in and review our host guidelines via our website.

**Step 2:** Send your request to [speakers@humanities.org](mailto:speakers@humanities.org).

**Step 3:** Schedule with the speaker.

**Step 4:** Submit your application!

# Host Guidelines

## Host responsibilities include:

- Organizing the event
- Assisting the speaker day of
- Disperse our survey to attendees for feedback
- Submit a short evaluation following the event

**Note:** Specific guidelines vary depending on whether the event is online or in-person. Resources are available for both formats.

# Funding

- Fees per event: \$300 honorarium; any travel costs for in-person events
- Any Washington State not-for-profit organization may be eligible to receive funding for these costs.
  - Libraries are some of our most popular hosts (and certainly qualify for funding!)



# Speakers Bureau In Action

“Searching for and vetting speakers is time-consuming and challenging for staff to do with existing resources. Humanities Washington’s Speakers Bureau provides access to a variety of high-quality speakers on a wide range of topics...The Speakers Bureau program made it simple and straightforward to connect with an expert and skilled speaker on a high-priority topic for my organization.”

KCLS Foundation, 7/28/21

# Thank You!

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# Questions?

Pain points? Your needs? Your Programming?