

AZ Speaks Application Guidelines 2025-2026

Online Application Deadline – May 15th, 2025

About AZ Speaks

Arizona Humanities (AH) supports public programs in the humanities that promote understanding of the human experience. AZ Speaks is AH's longest running and most popular public program. AZ Speaks brings humanities programming to every corner of Arizona in collaboration with cultural and educational organizations, such as public libraries, museums, historical sites, historical and archaeological societies, parks, cities, tribal entities, K-12 schools, community colleges, community centers, and other non-profit entities at AH's discretion. Speakers travel statewide to give in-person humanities presentations or deliver virtual presentations. Presentations are designed to connect local experts to an inquiring public and foster lively discussions on cultural and historical topics. All presentations are free and open to the public.

AH Responsibilities

All AZ Speaks presentations are published in a catalog on AH's website, consisting of a brief speaker biography and a synopsis of their presentations. AH distributes information on AZ Speaks to hundreds of libraries, museums, schools and other educational, community, and cultural groups in the state. AH covers the costs of a \$250 speaker honorarium and travel, including lodging, mileage and meals (if applicable). For more information on reimbursement details, **please contact Programs Coordinator, Chris Elliott, celliott@azhumanities.org.**

Speaker Responsibilities

AZ Speaks programs are conducted primarily in person and occasionally virtually depending upon request, the availability of the speaker, and the capacity of venues. Speakers should be prepared to travel to locations across the state. Speakers must be able to use video conferencing platforms, such as Zoom, for virtual events. Speakers must acknowledge the Arizona Humanities in their presentation. Organizations must coordinate presentation schedules with the speaker directly. While speakers are not required to meet all requests for their presentations, they should make themselves as available as possible in terms of presentation dates and times. Speakers must be available for bookings from Nov. 1, 2025, to Oct. 31, 2026.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Eligibility

Eligible speakers are those individuals considered to be humanities scholars. A humanities scholar must have expertise in the field(s) related to the humanities content of their presentations. A humanities scholar, as defined by AH, is an individual who

- a) has at least a master's degree in a humanities discipline, or
- b) is a Native American elder, tribal or community elder, or traditional teacher, or
- c) is a recognized expert who has a verifiable record of teaching, research, or publications in a humanities discipline and/or is acknowledged as such by other scholars in the field.

Eligible speakers must live or work in Arizona. Eligible speakers must be genuinely interested in addressing public audiences and be available November 1, 2025, through October 31, 2026.

Presentation Proposals

Among other materials (listed below), applicants are required to submit presentation descriptions. Presentation descriptions should be no more than one 250 words and should be written for a public audience. Applicants

should provide necessary background information and definitions to the audience, who may not have prior knowledge of the subject. Strong proposals will describe presentations that create a relevant, compelling, and interactive experience for audiences across Arizona.

Presentations must be designed to last about one hour: 45 minutes for the presentation with at least 15 minutes of question-answer conversation with the audience, either integrated into the talk, and/or at the conclusion of the presentation.

AH considers all presentations based on humanities disciplines. Presentations focusing on themes and topics in the following fields of study are highly encouraged:

- Archaeology and anthropology
- Arizona and Arizona history
- Art, architecture, dance, and music history
- Culture, gender, and identity studies, such as Native American studies, Women’s studies, etc.
- Environmental humanities
- Film and media
- Immigration, border issues
- Innovation*
- Justice studies/jurisprudence
- Race, gender, and ethnicity
- Science, technology, and culture (as it relates to the humanities)
- Storytelling and folklore traditions
- Water resources, rights, management, etc.

AH will be hosting *Spark! Places of Innovation*, a traveling Smithsonian exhibition from June 2025 to March 2026. To celebrate innovation in Arizona, AH will give priority to topics that tell stories about innovation in Arizona and/or in rural America. Innovation and invention can be artistic, technical, social, cultural, and more, and can take place in the past, present and future.

AH encourages applicants to select topics that are specific rather than general. Creative presentations involving Arizona’s cultural diversity, environmental humanities, and topics related to the Southwest, are encouraged. In addition, presentations that include material artifacts, visual aids, demonstrations, and/or participatory activities (aside from the question-answer dialogue) are also encouraged, as are presentations that use the humanities to provide context for contemporary issues. Please keep in mind that presentations may be delivered virtually and plan accordingly.

Presentation Policies

AH cannot support presentations that advocate specific political, social, or public policy positions. Speakers can examine different political, historical, or philosophical perspectives on an issue, but speakers must be neutral and unbiased in their presentation of the facts and various perspectives.

Speakers cannot use AZ Speaks presentations as a platform for fundraising. Speakers may not promote their own business interests during their presentations or use the presentation to promote book sales. If speakers have authored books related to their presentation topic, they may mention publications at the end of the

presentation but are not permitted to sell books. However, speakers may ask the host site to facilitate the transactions of publications through the host site's gift shop or store.

Required Application Materials

The following materials are required for the [online application](#). **Paper applications will not be accepted.**

- **Contact Information**, including short biography and headshot. The bio and headshot may be used for publication in the online catalog.
- **Current Resume or Curriculum Vitae** that speaks to applicant competency as a humanities scholar:
 - Relevant volunteer and community experience that illustrates the applicant's ability to work with diverse public audiences and/or facilitate community conversations should be included.
 - Current employer information if applicable.
- **Five (5) Short Answer Questions** that speak to the impact of presentation topics and applicant's experience with public speaking:
 - *The mission of Arizona Humanities is to build a just and civil society by creating opportunities to explore our shared experiences through discussion, learning and reflection. How do you see your presentation(s) supporting our mission?*
 - *How will your presentation(s) impact the Arizona community?*
 - *Why do you believe the topic(s) presented are relevant and important to the humanities?*
 - *Please briefly describe your public speaking experience.*
 - *Describe your presentation style – how do you communicate your information and engage your audience? For example, do you have a PowerPoint, artifacts, music, dance, costume?*
- **Presentation Titles and Descriptions**
 - At least one but no more than two proposals per applicant. AH reserves the right to restrict the final number of topics chosen.
 - Applicants who are returning speakers must submit **new** topics not currently offered in the catalog, unless the topic has been in the current catalog for one year or less.
- **Two (1-page) Letters of Reference** are required **for new applicants only**.
 - Please include only peer references that can appropriately share their history and experiences of your work as a scholar, expert, teacher, or Tribal Elder.
- **Optional Supporting Materials:** These can include links to recorded presentations, digital images, and/or media clippings that relate to the applicant's experience as a public scholar.

Application Submission

Submit applications via the [online application](#). **Paper applications will not be accepted.**
[Click here for the online application.](#)

AZ Speaks Application Process Timeline

- Application Opens – April 1, 2025
- Application Informational Webinar – April 21, 2025, at 9:00am, [Register Here](#).
- Application Deadline – May 15, 2025
- Applicant Decision Notification – June 2025

AH receives many more proposals than can be accommodated as the application process is competitive. In reviewing applications, we consider not only an applicant's background and expertise, but also take into account variety in geography, discipline, topic, gender, and ethnicity. AH values inclusion, diversity, equity and access for speakers and program participants.

The review committee seeks speakers/presentations that best adhere to criteria below:

- Humanities Content - presentations that align with the Arizona Humanities mission
- Speaker Experience – speaker expertise and ability to speak knowledgeably about their topic
- Presentation Impact – overall impact and originality of presentation topic
- Speaker's Presentation Skills and Delivery – history of public speaking record and presentation style
- Audience – topics appeal to and are inclusive of the diverse audience in Arizona.

Please gather the required application materials and prepare your responses accordingly before beginning the online application. We advise you to save your responses in a Word doc and have all materials ready at the time of application. The application form must be completed in one sitting and cannot be saved or updated later.

Thank you!

For more information about the AZ Speaks program, please contact Chris Elliott | celliott@azhumanities.org | 602-257-0335.