NEW JERSEY COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES

COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH GUIDE

Thank you for this opportunity to share ideas and spread news about the good work of the NJ Council for the Humanities!

THE NEW JERSEY COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES

works in partnership to provide humanities programming to the residents of New Jersey. Your organization is hosting something, right? An interactive discussion, a panel and reception, a workshop, a festival, a presentation, a performance, a reading – public humanities programs can be delivered in a variety of ways. You've already done some of the hard work of creating a great program. Now you want to be sure to get people in the room for it! There's not just one way to reach potential audiences. But there are some general ideas and concepts that can be useful to follow.

We know that you've got a lot going on at your organization. We know that this humanities event that you're planning is just one of many things you've got on your plate.

NJCH wants to help you. We've developed this guide to provide some practical hints and tips for maximizing your efforts (strategic efforts!) to ensure that your humanities event is successful.

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QUICK TIP

Most of the information explored here focuses on events that include the public. Even if your project is in development (like Incubation Grant projects, for example), some of the information shared here will still be applicable. Your organization may benefit from keeping your audiences up-to-date on the status of your project. One of the best ways to get audiences to any event is to involve them in the planning and development of that event. Start early!

GETTING STARTED

So you're putting together a public humanities event. What's next?

Pick a date! Or at the very least, develop a general timeline. That might sound basic, but it's important to develop that timeline or choose dates as early as possible based on all the information you have (goal of event, audience needs, etc. – more on this in our next section). That way you're able to share the date(s) with your partners. Better yet, include your partners in the decision-making. And if you determine that the timeline is off or your partners have a conflict, it's early enough that it can be adjusted.

Worth mentioning: When it comes to planning, especially if it's a new effort, give yourself the cushion of time. You think you'll only need 4 weeks to secure space and confirm details. Give yourself 6 and build in some benchmarks to keep you on track.

The number of partners varies for each event or project, but every event host has at least one. That's right – NJCH. We are a partner that we hope you see as a resource too. And the more advanced notice that we get, the better. We want to make sure your event information is on our website. We want to share it on our social media platforms. We want to tell potential audiences about it when we're at other humanities events. We want to utilize our networks to help grow yours. But we can't do that without the information about your event.

While figuring out a tentative date for your event, consider the basics.

» Title/name:

» Date/time:

» Location:

» Summary:

Worth mentioning: Thinking in terms of who, what, where, when, why, and how could be useful here.

Have you hosted a similar event in the past? Are you modeling this event after one you saw somewhere else? Identifying details about other events that are inspiring yours can help you plan.

It is a good idea to build some flexibility into these details in the early stages, as they may impact your ability to appeal to and reach your audience.

Everything should be still be tentative until you spend some time thinking about your audience. So let's look at audience and scheduling considerations, knowing that the event is far from confirmed.

UNDERSTANDING AUDIENCE

You've got the date (maybe) and some details. Who cares?

It's going to be a great program. Whether it's an hour long community conversation about how food represents culture or a workshop that prompts critical thinking about how we process grief, your humanities event is going to be "standing room only" because EVERYONE wants to learn more about food. Or grief. So when you market the event, you should tell EVERYONE, right? Actually, it's not usually feasible to tell EVERYONE.

When asked about who's likely to attend the event, your first response might be "the general public." And this is true…to a point. You'll share through your various communications channels – website posts, flyers, social media, word-of-mouth – and it will be broadly received. But we also encourage you to consider if there are any audiences you could be targeting.

If you're thinking, "Audience research? I need to administer 500 surveys, connect with focus groups, and create a report…AHHHH, there is no funding or resources for that!" take a breath. The more you can investigate, the better, it's true. But you don't have to go full-scale scientific method to do thoughtful audience outreach. You know more that you realize about your current audiences, your potential audiences, your desired audiences, and your capacity to reach them.

TALKING ABOUT EVENT BASICS AND AUDIENCE POSSIBILITIES SEEMS A LITTLE ALL OVER THE PLACE, RIGHT? THAT'S OKAY. That closely mirrors the process. If you aren't considering all the aspects of your event at the same time, then you may be limiting your event. The event date, the audience, the event format, the ways you'll invite people – they aren't each determined separately, each in its own silo. It's more Venn diagram than pie chart. Much like using the humanities to tackle complex issues with nuance, you need to invest some time in considering the web of inter-related factors that come up when hosting an event.

QUICK TIP

Ask yourself about how you'd like someone to describe the personality of the event that you're considering planning. Identify a few words. Then, when creating elements of your event, revisit your personality words to see if they match up.

One way to look at audiences is through the lens of demographics and psychographics.

DEMOGRAPHICS

According the Cambridge Dictionary, demographics are defined as "the study of people and society in a particular area or particular group, typically used in marketing to decide which products to sell there and how to advertise those products successfully." Categories utilized to analyze characteristics of a population are age, gender, race, ethnicity, marital status, income, education, religion, geographic location, occupation, and others. Everything from government agencies to marketing efforts use demographics to better understand human populations.

PSYCHOGRAPHICS

On the other hand, psychographics are defined as "the study of customers in relation to their opinions, interests, and emotions." It's more about the study of lifestyle. Categories used to help understand audiences (or potential audiences) are aspirations, attitudes, beliefs, interests/hobbies, lifestyle, personality, values, and other traits.

It's worth noting that it can be really challenging to generalize about your current audience. There are probably multiple audiences to think about, in fact! It's not a perfect science, nor should it prompt you to conclude in absolutes. However, exploring the most common audience attributes can help you make some decisions and plan that outreach.

You've completed the brainstorming about who, based on past and current experience, is most likely to attend. Your organization has a mission and you may already be talking about who else you'd like to see served by that mission. A fun way to think about it - imagine that your event is like a very large dinner table. Who else would you like to see leaning forward, captivated by the conversation around the table?

Now who's coming to your event?

That's great. We just heard you say *"We know this event could attract members of the general public so we'll share this through our various communication channels. We also identified some target audience characteristics and will be trying a few new things to connect with that audience."*
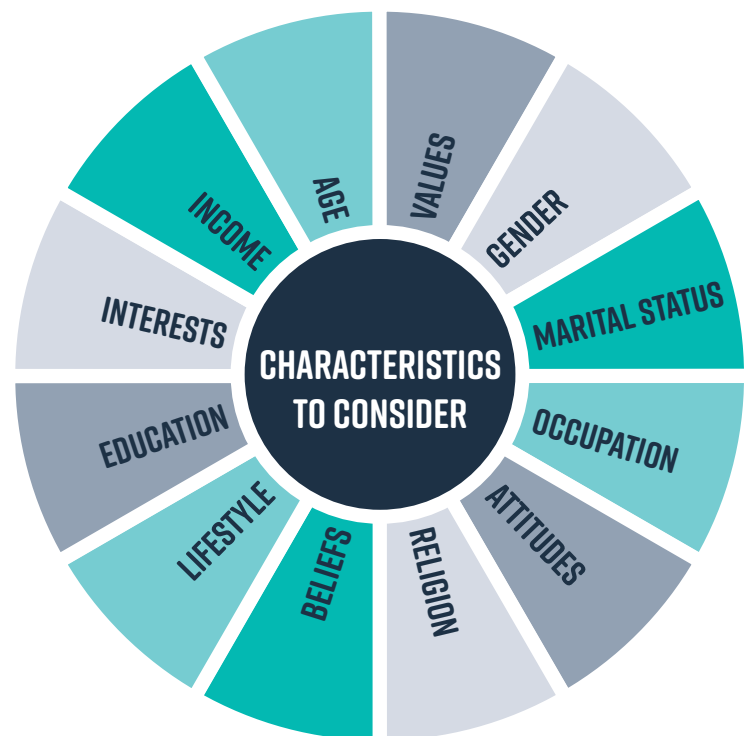
REMOVING BARRIERS

You're a host with tentative plans AND a guest list (or something close to it). What will make them write it on the calendar?

Let's talk barriers.

Think about what it takes to get someone to attend an event. You've been an audience member; let's start with you. How far in advance do you schedule? What level of exhaustion prohibits you from attending? Do you have to arrange childcare? Are you more likely to commit to an event during the week or on the weekend?

Your personal situation shouldn't be the sole factor in deciding what barriers others experience, but it's a good place to start. It can help you think about what questions you can consider for your target audience.

Now that you've thought through what barriers might prevent them from attending, let's see if you can remove any. Some helpful questions to ask:

- Are the event basics clear? The date, the length of program, location, special instructions? The more specific you can be, the better.

- Is the location convenient? Is there parking? Is it important to have access to public transportation? (Hint: if the target audience you are trying to reach does not by and large have access to a car, then that is a big factor to take into consideration.)

- Is your location easy to find and access? Having to pass through a gate or checkpoint of some sort is usually not the best way to make people feel welcome.

- Are you providing enough time (or too much) for people to get it on their calendars? Scheduling without enough time means you've missed the opportunity. Too much time means that there's a chance that the event could be forgotten.

- Is there another big event happening in your area at the same time? It's going to be hard to get people to your event if your whole town attends an annual festival on the same day.

QUICK TIP Checking local community calendars for conflict can help when choosing program dates. It's not possible to eliminate all competition, but it can help.

Once you've thought about barriers to remove, think about what you can offer that will seal the deal.

- If your event is for adults only, can you offer a corresponding activity for kids during the same time so your event can be an outing for the whole family?
- Would the offer of light refreshments be appealing, especially for events that take place right after work or near a mealtime?
- Can you offer wayfinding assistance if the venue is hard to find? This is particularly important for campuses and complexes where buildings are not always well-marked.

You get the idea. Let's be honest – you're never going to be able to accommodate everyone. But by considering the barriers, you can increase the likelihood that someone who is interested in your event can actually attend.

There is one group that will help you in all of your audience goals: the passionate superfans. Superfans are so committed to your organization or the event (or both), that they will work on clearing the barriers themselves. They will serve as your boosters, helping to get the information out about the event. Are there any ways you can motivate them to do this? Just one word of caution about superfans: if you know that they're already committed, avoid making decisions based on that group. If you're trying to expand to new audiences, you need to focus on their needs.

Worth mentioning: Superfans can be fantastic. Strategically selecting opportunities to acknowledge the support of a superfan can go a long way.

CONFIRMING THE DETAILS

Finalize the date and the details.

Now that you've done all the necessary planning about what's happening and who might attend, let everyone, including NJCH, know that the event is confirmed. Don't hesitate to use a smiley face. It makes everyone happy to confirm the event. ☺

DETERMINING OUTREACH EFFORTS

Event ✔

Audience ✔

Barriers considered (and maybe removed) ✔

Message...let's shape it.

So, how do you tell you tell your potential audience(s) about this _____ , _____ , and _____ event?

That's how, right? You open up a Microsoft Word doc, write the name of the event and the date and time at the top, and identify adjectives. You type words like "important, exciting, thought-provoking, fun, educational, and fresh," include a sentence or two describing the event, and, of course, you use exclamation points everywhere. Voila! You take that flyer and put it up in your library or at a local Starbucks. Here come the masses!

Well, that might be your starting point. In this section we'll explore some different ways to reach audiences that go beyond a flyer filled with text. Will every form of outreach guarantee that you quadruple and diversify your audience? No. But without a doubt, how you share information should be specific to your organization and audience(s).

OUTREACH CATEGORIES

There's no perfect approach when it comes to outreach. We've simply identified some best practices for you to consider. Your actual plan, as you develop it, will take it into account your resources, your audience, and your desired outcomes.

Print materials (and distribution)

You may have heard that print mail is dead. It's not. But it can be costly and time and consuming. Just like with any outreach option, it's best to evaluate the cost versus the benefit. If you have a group of loyal audience members and you have the means, a mailed piece could set your event apart. Flyers, postcards, brochures, rack cards – they may still be a staple in reaching your audience.

If it's time to get cracking on your printed piece, some of these questions may help you plan. Determining your distribution and thinking about your target audiences will help you choose format and what the printed piece should look like.

- Do I have the time and resources to create a printed piece that will reflect the quality of my organization and event?
- Do I have the skill to create a printed piece that will reflect the quality of my organization and event?
- Do I have avenues for distribution? Is there enough time to do that distribution?
- I've determined my target audience(s). Do the best strategies for reaching them include print materials?

QUICK TIP

Did you know that you can use a free version of Mail Chimp for your email marketing? Depending on your recipient list and email needs, this might be a useful resource.

Email

If you remember one thing about emailing, it should be this: craft a clear message. If you're sending out information about an invitation to your event, focus on that...and only that. Emails that include multiple different messages confuse the reader.

Include an interesting subject and pre-header on your email to encourage people to open it. An image can enhance your invite, but avoid using too many images. (Be sure to read "Picture Perfect" in the Special Topics section of this manual.) Include a call-to-action whenever possible.

Pay attention to your unsubscribe/"remove me from this list" rate. Analytics from your email marketing service can help you decide the best number of emails to send out per month, best time of day, best contacts, and best tone and style for your audience. If you are not using an email marketing service to send out mass emails, remedy that first.

A CALL-TO-ACTION IS A DIRECTIVE OR SUGGESTION TO DO SOMETHING.
Buy the ticket, register on the website, take the survey, etc.

Website

How often are you updating your website? If your answer is "it's been so long I don't remember the password," you probably rely more on social media and email marketing. However, it's still really important to keep your website up-to-date. People often visit websites to confirm details about events or share information. If someone visits your site and sees old information or can't find what they are looking for, it sends an undesirable message. Your website analytics – most often "Google Analytics" – can help you determine more about your users and how information could be positioned on your website. Including links to your website from social media, emails, partner organizations, and other strategically-selected sites can drive users to your website.

QUICK TIP
Data helps. Utilize data from Google Analytics, social media insights, and email marketing reports to better understand your audience. You'll better understand how your current audience interacts with your communications.

Social Media

Some believe that creating a social media account is the magic. Some of those same folks believe that you just post some stuff and THEN the magic happens. Bad news…just having an account or even posting some stuff doesn't automatically result in thousands of likes and shares, resulting in so many RSVPs that you've got a waitlist for your event.

One of the most common questions about social media is *how often should I post?* There is not a hard and fast rule about this. You should post as often as it suits your organization. At a minimum, you should consider posting at least 2-3 times per week. It's also helpful to consider what you want to share and let that shape what you put out there. Categories help some organizations design their content.

WHEN TALKING ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA CATEGORIES, YOU CAN HAVE SOME FUN WITH IT. Depending on the needs of your organization, you can play with fun facts about your organization, behind-the-scenes, partner spotlight, program information, or whatever furthers the social media goals and resonates with your digital fans and friends.

CHECK OUT THE LINK IN THE RESOURCES SECTION THAT PROVIDES AN UP-TO-DATE INFOGRAPHIC THAT COMPARES THE MOST COMMON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS.

QUICK TIP

Paid advertising on social media can be an inexpensive way to boost recognition of your event. Everyone is at the mercy of algorithm changes on social media. Keep in mind that most platform changes and updates occur to better the bottom line and generate revenue for shareholders.

Tips for Successful Social Media

CRAFT A SOCIAL MEDIA PLAN FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION	It should include your goals, guidelines, timeline, and posting categories. It doesn't have to be long and involved, but it will act as a guide so each post can be help to support mission awareness. • Think about what you'd like to accomplish and how you want to position your organization.
BE ATTENTIVE AND CONSISTENT, EVEN IF THAT MEANS USING JUST ONE SOCIAL PLATFORM	It's better to do one thing really well than four things at a just so-so level.
TEXT IS OKAY, AN IMAGE IS BETTER, ENGAGING TEXT WITH AN ASSOCIATED IMAGE IS BEST	Think about what will interest the user. A useful concept to keep in mind is to talk with them on social media, not at them. • It's important to pick an image that is able to be used (we're talking about attribution.)
DON'T OVERDO IT DON'T UNDERDO IT EITHER	How many times a day or a week should you post? • If you overdo it, you'll lose some followers. If they don't hear from you enough, you won't maintain your connection. • You will have to figure out what works for your organization AND your followers. • Experiment with your posts and pay attention to the results. Then plan based on what works for your organization.
FIGURING OUT WHAT WORKS	Consider how much human resource can be dedicated to this effort. Think about who is going to handle your posting. Determine what you're trying to achieve and plan with that in mind. • Post at a time when you get a lot of engagement. You're likely to see a bump for posting at 10:00 a.m. versus 10:00 p.m. You're always looking for ways to bump! • Test your link clinks by experimenting with different locations. Try out links in buttons, image captions, and other locations.
THOUGHTFULLY AND CONSISTENTLY USE HASHTAGS TO ENHANCE YOUR MESSAGE	A hashtag is a word or phrase that follows the symbol #. No spaces are used in the hashtag. They are used on Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. • OUR FAVORITE HASHTAGS ARE #NJCH AND #PUBLICHUMANITIES. • Hashtags can be useful to help users connect concepts and search for similar usage in the digital landscape. Think of hashtags as Jeopardy™ categories for the internet.
PAY ATTENTION TO THE BASICS	Spelling, grammar, high quality pictures – it all makes an impression. Whoever is posting should have a strong awareness of this.
BREVITY ROCKS	Enough said.
VIDEO IS THE WAY OF THE FUTURE	However, much like the number of platforms, be cautious. Only move forward if you can produce something that reflects the quality of your programming.
SHARE CONTENT THAT'S RELEVANT TO YOURS, ESPECIALLY POSTS OF OTHER PARTNERS	They'll be more inclined to share your content if you share theirs. Tag other orgs if appropriate and available. • It's best to think of your posts as conversations, not just statements that you send out into the abyss. • We love when you tag NJCH on your posts!

Media

The press release isn't dead. It can be a useful way to increase awareness for your event. Look at press releases from reputable organizations for guidance on general format and length. When it comes to releases, format is just as important as content and the recipient media outlet.

General guidelines on press/media releases

- A press release should cover one specific thing.
- Shoot for objective language, not subjective language. They want to know what it is, not why you think it's cool.
- Put the most important information at the top.
- Be direct. Again, brevity rocks.
- Use a boilerplate for all press releases.
  A boilerplate is paragraph or two that summarizes the identity and work of the organization. It remains the same for each press release.
- Be sure to identify <u>one person</u> to contact for follow-up questions. Include full and accurate contact information.
- Add the press release to your news or blog section of your website (if applicable).
- Send out the information to media outlets and other interested organizations. Keep track of who you send to. Personalized notes that accompany releases, whether in hard copy or electronic, are often the best received in comparison to bulk emails that go out to a collection of outlet email addresses.
- Did you know that NJCH sends out press releases about Incubation and Action Grant awards? Grantees can connect with us to coordinate these efforts.

QUICK
TIP
Which websites can I review to see other press releases? NJCH includes press releases on our website in our News section. Also, you can check out the NEH, IMLS, and New Jersey Department of State websites to review samples.

Word-of-Mouth

Word-of-mouth is often the most effective form of outreach. When you're planning, think about who will be your ambassadors. Who are the people that love this event and your organization (the superfans that we discussed earlier)? They are the people you want to think about when developing a word-of-mouth strategy.

Word-of-mouth can be used in tandem with the other outreach strategies. Social media, for example, is designed for fans to discuss the merits (or drawbacks) of information being presented by a person or organization trying to promote their activities. It can feed the word-of-mouth component, but it doesn't just happen. Word-of-mouth works best when you have a core group of ambassadors that are committed to spreading the word.

Three things that you can do to encourage word-of-mouth:

1. Start with a small group of ambassadors. Actually talk with this group and ask them to share event information in a way that suits them - digital, snail mail, word-of-mouth. Start with a group of 5 to 10 people and be transparent about what you want from them.

2. Be strategic about who you ask, when, and for what. You shouldn't expect the same level of endorsement or sharing all the time. It'll get old.

3. Nurture this and it'll develop into a genuine means of organization endorsement. Maybe even evangelistic. If you try to force it, people will see right through it and it'll fall flat. It takes time to develop ambassadors. They need to feel valued as those relationships develop.

You should think of your superfan ambassadors as team members. They want your events to succeed as much as you do so don't hesitate to use them! They can help you make sure this event runs smoothly, of course, but they are also great when de-briefing about an event afterward. Listen to their feedback and take it seriously. And don't hesitate to involve them in future planning when appropriate.

Other partner efforts

If you're looking for a new book recommendation in your own life, what do you do? You ask around. During planning, check in with your partner(s) about what their outreach strategies are and how they could influence how you proceed. Coordinating your planning will result in better outreach for all involved.

A best practice for developing strong partnerships is to have direct conversations as early as possible about expectations about the aesthetics of printed or digital materials. Use these early talks to discuss the possibility of co-sponsorship, collaborative messaging to specific constituencies, how information appears on printed or digital materials, evaluation process, etc. Early conversations about outreach and marketing efforts can ensure that you are getting the most bang for your buck. For example, why pay to have two flyers designed when both of your organizations can use the same one? And using a single hashtag can ensure that information on social media can all be gathered in one place – before, during, and after the event.

Worth mentioning: When you're planning that next event, sit down with your partners and go over the Messaging section of this guide together!

QUICK TIP

Getting your event listed on other calendars could increase exposure. Consider checking for a city or county cultural calendar.

Miscellaneous

What about nontraditional tools that may be at your disposal? For example, if you're a school district, you may have access to a district-wide call/text telephone system. Using that system could widen the reach to potential audiences. If your organization is hosting a fundraiser in advance of your event, you may want to create a dynamic display at the registration table about the event you're trying to promote to invite an already-connected audience. Neither of these examples falls squarely into any of the categories we've been talking about. They are examples of taking advantage of an opportunity as it presents itself. Keeping all staff in your organization informed as your event develops is a great way to identify opportunities to share information that might not otherwise have crossed your radar.

The common thread that runs throughout all these recommendations is that the best strategy is going to be what works for your organization. You know your organization and audience best. Taking the time to consider and plan will produce the desired results and will increase the likelihood of success.

SPECIAL TOPICS

Other things to consider:

Your event is not unique

Sorry to break it to you. Even if there are really special elements, it's still similar to other programs that have been done before. And that's okay. In fact, it's a good thing. Look to other events and programs with similar formats and/or subjects. Consider taking some cues based on other program outcomes. Use language choices that are familiar instead of trying to distinguish your event so much that people don't understand it. If possible, talk to people who planned a similar event to find out what worked and what didn't for them.

One clear message

You've come up with a plan to share your event. You've got the text for a Facebook event or for a flyer. You're sending it out to some of your organization's biggest fans. So you think to yourself, let me just pop in some information another program that's planned for next month. Or I'll just mention the annual fundraising campaign; it's just one little harmless blurb. It's tempting, right? Don't give in! Don't do it! Aside from organizational newsletters that are designed to talk about multiple events, you want to focus on one thing at a time.

Only indulge in temptations that are worth it – chocolate cake, paying for in-flight movie access for flights over 5 hours, and blazers that fit perfectly.

Word choice matters

Carefully consider your audience when choosing your words. Your language choices set the tone and the feel for what you're saying. You're not just writing for you; you're writing for other people. You know a lot more about your organization and your programming than your audience, so avoid making assumptions about what they know. You want them to act, so use active language and make clear what you want them to do.

Picture perfect

We live in an increasingly visual world. How you utilize visuals to pair with text can clarify your message and attract new audiences. Imagine this scenario: your neighbor couldn't make it to her event, so you are going to email her ONE picture that captures its essence.

Since the event hasn't really happened yet, what do you want that picture you would send her to look like? That's the kind of image you're looking for to publicize your event. You can turn to njhumanities.org for some inspiration. When we launched the site we challenged ourselves to find images that pique curiosity.

You can use many pictures you find online for free. It's important to remember, though, that they may require attribution. The onus is on you to properly attribute images.

Worth mentioning: If you take the time to imagine what the pictures of your event will look like at the end, you'll be more likely to seek out the best photo opportunities during the event. Capturing images can be tough, especially when it comes to public humanities events, as much of the "activity" happens internally (as participants consider new concepts and come to new conclusions). Your best chance at getting that perfect shot is to think about what you want ahead of time. Take lots of pictures at your event, even if you think they all look the same. In the digital age, you can simply delete unusable ones after.

Don't forget to get consent from your event attendees to use their image. We strongly recommend that you use a release, whether they are individual releases from each participant or blanket release posted at the event. This is particularly important for images of anyone under age 18.

Well-composed, high resolution images are going to help you showcase your event, provide images for future events hosted by your organization, and, when submitted to NJCH, help to illustrate the impact of your program.

QUICK TIP

Some sources for free, usable images are Google (using the advanced search settings), the Library of Congress digital archive, Wikimedia Commons, and Flickr. Attribution may be required, so examine carefully before using an image.

Being realistic

You probably have a history of similar events and/or programs at your organization. And it's likely that you've got a notion about who will attend. Being realistic about everything will help you in the planning, especially when it comes to expenses and set-up. It's important to keep the estimates and anticipated results in mind when crafting message and creating materials.

The space and set-up

You're anticipating a crowd of 20-30 in the room you'll be using for the event. What do you need? Before the day of the event, look at the space. Will the seating arrangements encourage attendees to engage with the program? Who will set-up? Do you need a microphone? Will signs to point out where the bathrooms are be helpful? Do you want people to take information about your programs on their way in or out? What will the natural light be like at the particular time of day for your event? Check out our hosting checklist in the resources section of njhumanities.org for a list of questions to consider.

We encourage you to think about your event with the same mindset you might have if you were hosting a fabulous cocktail party. Who is going to handle greeting? Who is facilitating introductions (check out our scripts for inspiration on njhumanities.org)? Should there be water, coffee, tea, snacks? Who's going to keep watch to monitor the event or address any hiccups? Who's going to take care of pictures? How will the wrap-up occur?

Being flexible

You thought that you'd provide X when people got there and you had to substitute Y. If it's minor, it's no big deal. If it's major, it may not be a dealbreaker, but you'll need a plan. Does it warrant a message ahead of time? Will participants even notice? Would it be better to cancel and reschedule? It's key to consider these questions as events details change (this happens often), but not expend too much energy on dealing with program changes that are of little to no consequence. Think about how you, if you were a participant, would feel about the change. Then, go from there.

QUICK TIP

Taking the time to debrief with the team after an event can be very valuable. Include this in your planning timeline to prioritize it.

To evaluate or not?

We don't want you to write and administer a survey just to do it. In fact, a survey might not even be the best way to gather information that can be used to evaluate the success of your program. You need to think first about what you want to know so the information you gather can be useful to you.

First: what do you want to know? People are asked to fill out surveys all the time, and professional evaluators report that we're on survey burnout these days. You should never ask people a question if you don't intend to use the information they are giving to you when they respond.

So what do you want to know most?

- If you want to know if people liked the program, maybe put two jars out, one with a thumbs up and one with a thumbs down. Give each person a marble or similar to put one of the jars. Keep in mind: people are likely to positively rate a program that they just attended regardless of their actual impressions. Finding out whether they liked it or not doesn't tell us much.

- Perhaps you want to gather contact information from attendees so you can tell them about future events. Can you create an RSVP option on the website to gather it in advance? Leave out a clipboard to capture addresses? Leave a fishbowl so people can drop business cards?

- Maybe you want to see what stuck with people at the end of the program. A survey might be a good option here. Keep it short, considering what the most important information you want to gather is. You don't want to end a terrific event with a lengthy questionnaire that irks your audience. Be transparent about what you want. And don't hesitate to use alternative ways to gather this information. Hang up a large piece of paper with the question at the top and a bunch of markers so people can write their responses. (This also works well with markers and Post-it notes.)

No matter how you choose to evaluate your event, we recommend that you consider evaluation during the planning phase. This will help you determine what you're looking for and how you can get it. Keep in mind, a big part of evaluation is using information about the past and present to better inform the future.

MEETING NJCH REQUIREMENTS

The plan is taking shape. Event details, audience, outreach strategies – you're good to go, yes? Almost. We want to be sure that we're doing all we can to support your efforts. Here's a list of things we require so we're able to support and promote your organization and meet our funding reporting requirements.

EVENT DETAILS

- Whether you're funded through a grant, PSP program, or a special initiative, you are required to provide information about the event to NJCH. As details emerge, as they change, or as they expand, please alert NJCH. We manage an events calendar, opportunities/events emails, and social media. Plus, we share information during conversations with other partners, who share with others. We require accurate information. It's not good when participants, especially new ones, arrive for an event only to find that it's been postponed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- Any programming sponsored by NJCH must have the NJCH logo on any print or digital promotional materials. The color or size ratio should not be altered (we believe in brand consistency). Logo files can be found in the Resources section at the bottom of our njhumanities.org homepage.
- The following language should be used on all materials: *This [publication, program, exhibition, film, website, etc.] was made possible by a grant from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, a state partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this [publication, program, exhibition, film, website, etc.] do not necessarily represent those of the NEH or NJCH.*
- Feel free to use the disclaimer text in small font and place it at the bottom of any materials, so as not to interrupt your message or aesthetic.
- It's important to verbally identify NJCH as a partner during your program. We provide a pre- and post-event script samples in the Resources section on our website.

QUICK TIP

Did you know that our website – njhumanities.org – is loaded with information designed to help you? Whether it's the FAQ in our Grants or Public Scholars Project pages or advocacy materials on our Resources page, it's there to support your public humanities efforts.

NJCH is always looking for opportunities for you to share your project with the community. As they arise, we'll let you know. Always feel free to check in and provide an informal project or event update.

SUBMITTING IMAGES TO NJCH

- We'd like you to share images of your public humanities event with us when possible.
- We know that public humanities events can be tough to document photographically, as much of the process is internal and it can be hard to capture the excitement of important discussions at work. NJCH requests that you try, *really try* to take pictures that capture the essence of the event. Even if it seems like it's just pictures of people sitting around and talking.
- An NJCH image/video usage release is located in the Resource section on njhumanities.org.

TELLING YOUR STORY… TO INFLUENCERS AND DECISION-MAKERS

- If you're inviting local influencers and decision-makers to your event, great. Keep up the good work!
- If you're torn because you have to make a choice between pre-event and post-event (we understand that time and resources may not allow for both), we encourage you to share your event success with mayors, administrators, state assemblymen and women, state senators, congressional delegates, including federal senators, and/or the governor's office.
- What should you share? Letters that may include quantitative and qualitative impact reports (the facts and the opinions – number of attendees, demographic run down of attendees AND testimonies about significance, content, etc.), pictures, and what the public humanities really bring to your organization can all be included.
- It doesn't have to be long. Keep it concise, accurate, and genuine. Our elected officials and leaders actually want to know what's going on.
- Template advocacy letters are available on the Resources page of njhumanities.org.

NJCH IS JUST A PHONE CALL AWAY

- We're here to help. Promise! If you want to talk something out, ask about best practices, or have us a review a draft, you are invited and encouraged to talk to us.

WRAPPING IT UP

Let's do this.

You're ready. Your public humanities event is going to be great. We're proud to partner with you, be a resource for your organization, and to spread the word about what you're doing.

After the event, you'll have a NJCH report to complete. We want you to be honest. What worked? What didn't work? What would you change if you had a do-over? What was really impactful? What could we have done better? What was the audience experience like? We'd rather have real, honest responses than glowing reports about everything being perfect. Your evaluation tools, if you implemented them, could be helpful. And we're always happy to be part of your post-event wrap up discussions. We are with you in constantly pushing ourselves to create better programs that reach more and more New Jerseyans. We appreciate your honest feedback and thoughtful evaluation.

We couldn't further our mission without you. Thank you for all you do to strengthen our cultural infrastructure through the power of the humanities in New Jersey.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

New Jersey Council for the Humanities website

www.njhumanities.org

Event Planning

https://blog.bizzabo.com/the-directory-of-event-planning-resources

Demographic Information

https://www.census.gov/

https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.nj.htm

Advertising on Social Media Tips

https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-advertising/

Advocacy - Elected Officials

http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/members/legsearch.asp

https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/NJ

Press Release Tips

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/zach-cutler/press-release-tips_b_2120630.html

Press Release Samples

https://www.neh.gov/news/press-releases

https://www.imls.gov/news-events/press-releases

https://nj.gov/state/press.shtml

Courses, Tools, and Resources for Digital Activities

https://www.digitallearn.org/

https://www.lynda.com/

Social Media Platform Comparison Infographic

https://www.leveragestl.com/social-media-infographic/