

Surveying Virtual Programs

National Humanities Alliance
Cecily Hill, Director of Community Initiatives
chill@nhalliance.org

National Humanities Alliance

NHA is a nationwide coalition of organizations advocating for the humanities on campuses, in communities, and on Capitol Hill. Together, we promote the value of studying the humanities, make the case for the public value of the humanities, and cultivate support for federal funding for the humanities.

National Humanities Alliance

Initiatives

- Study the Humanities
- Humanities for All
- NEH for All
- Community Case Studies

Convenings

- Annual Meeting and Humanities Advocacy Day (Spring)
- National Humanities Conference (Fall)

NEH for All & Community Case Studies

- Document and communicate the impact of humanities work in communities with an emphasis on documenting *public good* and engaging policymakers.
- Use qualitative and quantitative methods—interviews and surveys.
- Partner with the full range of publicly-oriented humanities organizations: libraries, museums, historic sites, independent research organizations, colleges and universities, city commissions, etc.

Pandemic Shift to Virtual Programming

Required us to:

- Reconsider survey delivery methods
- Think about what kinds of questions should be asked about virtual programs and/or virtual products
- Consider whether or not elements of the surveys could be used as a part of the program experience—specifically by providing opportunities for reflection and connecting with program goals

Challenges

Overcoming low response rates

- Build time into the program for the survey
- Being more assertive about needs for the survey and sending reminders

Encouraging survey completion

- Writing engaging questions
- Grouping questions for efficiency
- Explaining need for survey results

Benefits

- Much easier to analyze data if it's all digital!
- Building time into the program for surveys really does increase both the response rate *and* the level of thoughtfulness people bring to the surveys.

New Survey Questions

- Where do you live?
- What is your relationship to this region?
- What motivated you to participate in this program? Which aspects of the program drew you here?
- Have you ever visited [this organization] in person?

New Survey Questions

- I appreciated the time to connect with others virtually. (Likert scale)
- Participating in this event enhanced my sense of connection to my community. (Likert scale)
- Participating in this program enhanced my sense of connection to X region. (Likert Scale)

New Survey Questions

As a result of this program, I feel motivated to:

- Learn more about my own cultural heritage
- Read books or watch documentaries about [topic area]
- Visit the [museum or cultural institution]
- Visit other cultural institutions
- Participate in other continuing education opportunities

Qualitative Questions

- Please share more about how you saw your own experiences and/or heritage reflected or informed by the topics explored in this program:
- How did the program shape and/or help develop your understanding of [program topic]?
- What aspects of the program did you particularly connect with? And why?
- What was the most valuable part of the program for you?
- What do you consider to be the most important thing you learned and why?

CODING AND MATCHING QUALITATIVE RESPONSES

Eighty-seven percent of respondents agreed they “have a better sense of the stories that are missing from our popular depictions of Appalachia after participating in this program”:

- I grew up in Appalachia, but both of these talks so far have presented information that was very new to me—much of it from within just a few miles of where I grew up and now live. For example, I was completely unaware of the tradition of Emancipation Saturday or the role that Greeneville, TN, played in this celebration until the August 8 discussion.
- Black history has been excluded from history & Appalachian identity & those voices need to be amplified if we want to truly honor our Appalachian heritage.
- It gave me a snapshot of what life at that time was like, the many people of differing skin color and position that worked together for a better future for individuals and the community (in defiance of the many who did not), and emphasized the incredible danger and hardship faced by all those who fought for change.

Using Survey Data

- Grant reports
- Grant applications
- Fundraising
- Social Media
- Blog posts
- Press outreach
- Advocacy

Johnny Cash Annual Heritage Festival



The National Endowment for the Humanities: Supporting a Historical Site and Cultural Festival in Dyess, Arkansas

At the height of the Great Depression, nearly 500 families lived in the Dyess Colony, which was created in 1934 to help destitute farmers get back on their feet. It is now famous as the childhood home of Johnny Cash, who moved to Dyess with his family in 1935 and whose music was influenced by his experience growing up in the colony.

Since 2014, Historic
Dyess Colony has
attracted
visitors
from every
state and
55 foreign
countries
to the 415-person town.

In partnership with the City of Dyess, Arkansas State University's A-State Heritage Sites program leveraged a National Endowment for the Humanities challenge grant to raise more than \$1.5 million to save the colony's historic buildings. One of them, the Federal Administration Building, now houses a museum that connects visitors with the history of the New Deal and the Depression. In addition, A-State Heritage Sites has meticulously restored the Cash homestead.

And in partnership with Rosanne Cash and John Carter Cash, A-State Heritage Sites has established the Johnny Cash Heritage Festival, a celebration of the region's cultural and musical heritage that doubles as the organization's largest fundraiser and outreach event. Held at the Historic Dyess Colony, the festival features performances by major artists alongside humanities programming, including documentary screenings, lectures, and panel discussions that illuminate the colony's history and culture.



- Outreach to major donors
- Outreach to state legislators regarding funding for the site

International Storytelling Center

 NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

 INTERNATIONAL STORYTELLING CENTER

 National Humanities Alliance

.....

FREEDOM STORIES

Unearthing the Black Heritage of Appalachia

From 2019-2021, the International Storytelling Center (ISC) hosted *Freedom Stories*, an initiative combining performance and scholarship in public discussions to illuminate the underappreciated and neglected narratives of African Americans in Appalachian history and culture. As part of its *NEH for All* initiative, the National Humanities Alliance partnered with ISC to assess these public discussions. Surveys were administered after each of the public events, and the following data shows a culmination of all responses.

.....

34% of respondents reported familial ties to Appalachia.	
25% of respondents live in Appalachia.	
19% of respondents grew up in Appalachia.	
54% of respondents had visited Appalachia but were not from the region.	
	80% agreed that "participating in this event enhanced [their] sense of connection to [their] community."
	81% agreed they "take pride in the fact that this program is being held in [their] community."
	87% agreed they "have a better sense of the stories that are missing from our popular depictions of Appalachia."
87% agreed the program "helped [them]	

- Advocacy for the NEH
- State tourism board
- Outreach to legislators
- Funding applications

Download Our Toolkit!

Toolkit

Documenting the Impact of Your Humanities Program: A Toolkit includes sections on constructing and administering surveys and interpreting and using data along with sample survey questions grouped by impact. It can help you begin to survey your humanities program or incorporate new questions into surveys you already have.

[DOWNLOAD TOOLKIT](#)

Sample Surveys

Originally developed and implemented in partnership with NEH-funded programs, our sample surveys can be easily edited and administered.

[DOWNLOAD SAMPLE SURVEYS](#)

Community digitization events

Conversations on race and place

Faculty workshops focused on local writers/heritage

Faculty workshops on oral history projects

Humanities festival at a historic site

Humanities summer bridge programs for college students

K-12 Educator workshops

Local history lecture series

Public programs for veterans

Veterans discussion groups

NHA Resources

- NHA: <https://www.nhalliance.org/>
- Impact Survey Toolkit:
https://www.nhalliance.org/impact_survey_toolkit
- NEH for All: <https://nehforall.org/>
- Study the Humanities: <https://www.studythehumanities.org/>
 - Podcast: <https://www.studythehumanities.org/podcast>
- Humanities for All: <https://humanitiesforall.org/>