LIFT EVERY VOICE: Why African American Poetry Matters Programming and Site Support Guide

Lift Every Voice is a national public humanities initiative that engages participants in a multifaceted exploration of African American poetry, the perspectives it offers on American history and the struggle for racial justice, and the universality of its imaginative response to the personal experiences of Black Americans over three centuries.

Lift Every Voice Programming and Site Support Guide

This guide is also available at the project website: http://africanamericanpoetry.org/

CONTENTS

General

Programming

Resources

Promotional Materials

Reporting

17. Preliminary Report
18. Final Report Form

GENERAL

1

Contact Information

General questions   Email: lifteveryvoice@loa.org

Programming Logistics   Mary Sutton, Public Humanities Fellow, Library of America,
                                    Email: msutton@loa.org

Project Resources   Brian McCarthy, Project Coordinator, Library of America,
                                    Email: bmccarthy@loa.org

Project Themes   Max Rudin, Project Director, Library of America,
                                    Email: mrudin@loa.org

Outreach and Audience Development: Jeff Tompkins, Online Content Manager, Library of America,
                                    Email: jtompkins@loa.org

2

Project Overview

African American poetry is all around us—echoed in hip-hop and R&B, in movies and on television, recited in houses of worship and at presidential inaugurations, in classrooms and on social media. African American poets received two of the past four National Book Awards and Poet Laureateships, one facet of a creative explosion that shows no sign of slowing. How does this renaissance build on the work of earlier generations? How does it relate to the experiences of African Americans today? What can African American poetry tell us about American history and national identity?

Lift Every Voice: Why African American Poetry Matters is a yearlong national public humanities initiative that addresses these questions by engaging participants in a multifaceted exploration of African American poetry, the perspectives it offers on American history and the struggle for racial justice, and the universality of its imaginative response to the personal experiences of Black Americans over three centuries. The initiative features:

- Signature events in New York, Atlanta, Chicago, Kansas City, and Los Angeles

- Regional programming in 49 public libraries nationwide

- Companion website featuring video readings and commentary, programming support, and much more

The initiative is made possible with generous support from The National Endowment for the Humanities, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and Emerson Collective.

The centerpiece of Lift Every Voice is the Library of America anthology *African American Poetry: 250 Years of Struggle & Song,* an unprecedented collection featuring nearly 250 poets from the colonial period to the present. The volume has been edited by the project's principal humanities advisor Kevin Young, Director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Other Lift Every Voice humanities advisors include:

- Elizabeth Alexander, Director, Creativity and Free Expression, Ford Foundation, New York, NY Wun Tsun Tam Mellon Professor in the Humanities, Columbia University, New York, NY

- Joanne M. Braxton, Frances L. & Edwin L. Cummings Professor of English and Humanities, The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia

- Brent Hayes Edwards, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University, New York, NY

- Joanne V. Gabbin, Professor of English, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia

- Terrence Hayes, Professor of English, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

- Claudia Rankine, Frederick Iseman Professor of Poetry, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut

- Evie Shockley, Associate Professor of English, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey

- Natasha Trethewey, Board of Trustees Professor of English, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois

- Walton M. Muyumba, Associate Professor of English, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

3

Project Components

As a participant in **Lift Every Voice** you will receive:

- A **$1200 grant** to support free public programming. Grants may be used for: stipends for a local poet and/or scholar; travel expenses; honoraria; actors/performers fees; publicity and advertising; refreshments; or other costs associated with programming.

- A copy of *African American Poetry: 250 Years of Struggle and Song*, a hardcover anthology edited Kevin Young to be published by Library of America in October 2020.

- The *Lift Every Voice Reader* (PDF), available for free download at the project website (below).

- **www.africanamericanpoetry.org**: project site featuring multimedia resources for public programming and individual discovery, including video readings and commentary by scholars, poets, actors, musicians, and others; a free downloadable reader of key poems, with commentary and questions for discussion; a calendar of events; and links to other resources.

- An **online site support notebook**, with tools for planning and publicizing programs.

- An **orientation webinar** for site coordinators and scholars/facilitators covering interpretive materials, public relations, and logistics.

- A **best-practices webinar** designed to assist sites in addressing special issues involved in presenting programming dealing with race.

- **Programming support** throughout the grant period.

4

Project Guidelines

As a participant in **Lift Every Voice** you are expected to:

- Develop and produce a minimum of two public programs addressing the project's Guiding Questions, at least one of which must be a discussion/reading group moderated by a scholar of African American literature.

- Offer these programs free of charge and open to the public online or, if in person, in a wheelchair-accessible venue, following all relevant CDC, state, and local guidelines for public gatherings.

- Undertake community outreach to ensure that a diverse audience is served by project programming.

- Appoint one staff member as the project coordinator. The coordinator is required to participate in an orientation webinar that includes a workshop in best practices for project programming.

Provide required final report, including copies of photos or recordings of programming, at specified deadlines.

PROGRAMMING

5

Humanities Themes:

"For more than 250 years," writes poet and scholar Kevin Young, "African Americans have written and recited and published poetry about beauty and injustice, music and muses, Africa and America, freedoms and foodways, Harlem and history, funk and opera, boredom and longing, jazz and joy." Across a turbulent history, from such vital centers as Harlem, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and the Bay Area, Black poets created a rich and multifaceted tradition that has been both a reckoning with American realities and an imaginative response to them. **Lift Every Voice** encourages participants to reflect upon several humanities themes that emerge from a close examination of this tradition:

- **The Freedom Struggle**
  African American poets have added their voices—and often their bodies—to the struggle for freedom and racial justice. Poet Kevin Young observes that "for African Americans, the very act of composing poetry proved a form of protest." What forms and voices does black protest poetry take on?

- **Black Identities**
  African American poets have asserted their blackness—with joy, with defiance, occasionally with bitterness at the pressure to downplay Black identity or hide it behind a protective mask. How do the voices and personas in African American poetry express the richness, depth, and variety of African American identity?

- **Black Experience in History and Memory**
  The Black past has been both a subject and a muse for African American poets, who have lamented the foundational trauma of slavery and subsequent violence as they've celebrated the achievements of the Civil Rights movement, the election of the first Black president, and above all the legacy of endurance, resistance, and grace of a culture that is central to American identity. How do African American poets make use of history?

- **Black Language and Music**
  Black poetry has deep kinships with performance: music, Black preaching, and "code switching" between forms of language and speech. Do Black poetry's links to music (spirituals, blues, jazz, hip-hop), to African cultures, and vernacular language have analogies in other American traditions?

- **Family and Community**
  Ties of family and community are a perennial subject for poetry. How have they been manifested in the African American poetic tradition? In what ways have African American poets depicted Black communities and their rituals? What is universal in these poems, and what is expressive of the uniqueness of the African American experience?

The project supports moderated discussions in communities across the nation to explore these and other issues as revealed in African American poetry. It offers a sampling of poems ranging from the colonial period to the present to reveal the power of poetry as a means of self-assertion, of preserving and challenging history, and of giving voice to creative genius.

The project's **Guiding Questions** highlight the relevance of the issues involved:

- What forms and voices does Black poetry take on?
- How has Black poetry contributed to struggles for equality and justice and to the resistance to racism in all its manifestations, including systemic forms?
- What makes an African American poem African American?
- How does Black poetry enrich and complicate our understanding of American ideals of freedom and self-determination?
- How do the voices and personas in African American poetry express the richness, depth, and variety of African American identity?
- How do African American poets make use of Black history and experience, including its heroes and its martyrs?

The project themes and guiding questions are explored in greater detail in the **Lift Every Voice Reader**, which may be downloaded here: www.africanamericanpoetry.org/reader.

6

Suggested Programming Formats

All participating institutions must present a minimum of **two programs** under the grant, at least one of which must be a discussion/reading group moderated by a scholar of African American literature designed to draw out and explore the project's Humanities Themes (above). The program will focus on poems drawn from the **Lift Every Voice Reader**, which is available on the project website as a free downloadable PDF. Because audience members cannot be expected to have read the poems in advance, provision should be made for their presentation as part of the program, either as live readings or by viewing of video-recordings of readings available at the project website. For information on how to find poets and poetry scholars in your area, see Tips for Finding a Poet/Scholar Moderator.

Other programs under the grant might include:

- Poetry readings combined with panel discussions.

- Adult and young adult reading groups based on the Lift Every Voice Reader.

- A lecture by a local poetry scholar.

- A poetry workshop led by a local writing instructor.

- A poetry slam in which local poets share their own work and the poems from the tradition that inspire them.

- An exhibition of material—photographs, rare or signed editions, memorabilia—that reflect the local community's historic engagement with the tradition.

- Staged readings of project poems by local poets, actors, or other public figures, combined with screenings of project video performances.

- A musical performance that highlights the cross-influences in Black poetry and music

Listed below are suggested topics and questions that can be used to promote discussion throughout your library's humanities-oriented public programs. They may also be used as prompts for panel discussions, suggestions for scholar-led programs, or topics for lectures.

Humanities programs may include discussions, readings, lectures, and seminars. Sites are encouraged to seek for the broadest, most inclusive audiences for programming. You'll also find tips for contacting humanities scholars later in this document.

Programming Suggestions

- Facilitate a panel discussion featuring local poets, scholars from a local college or university, and community leaders engaged in social justice actions
- Arrange for your library to host a lecture featuring a scholar of African American literature
- Conduct a writing workshop with project poems as points of departure
- Contact your local community college's English or African American Studies department and invite them to present a lecture or workshop regarding their particular expertise in African American poetry
- Host a series of public poetry readings, inviting poets to share their own work and read their favorite poems from the tradition
- Invite community actors to read poems
- Hold performances that highlight the links between Black poetry and popular musical forms
- Collaborate with a historical society in your community on programs that trace how African American poetry has served as a record of the struggle for social justice in our country
- Plan programs with a particular relevance to your community. Who are some of the Black poets who have hailed from your area? What were the most prominent concerns for these poets? How was their art shaped by their experience and their community?
- Hold book discussions focusing on the biographies and autobiographies of well-known historical poets. For information about creating **Lift Every Voice** discussion groups please consult the "Tips for Organizing Discussion Groups" below.
- Sponsor a "One Poem, One Community" program focusing on a particular theme of the program with three separate poems for adults, young adults, and children. For recommendations, please consult the "Suggested Readings" list below.

Best Practices for Discussing Race in Your Community

Lift Every Voice aims to foster conversations about poetry that connect to issues of racial identity and social justice. We offer the following guides to best practices in facilitating sensitive and inclusive programs.

For more information: https://nationalguild.org/files/resources/public/amas-article-1.pdf
https://www.racialequityinstitute.com/bibliography
http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary
https://www.racialequitytools.org/fundamentals/core-concepts

Involving Humanities Scholars in Programs for the Public

What is a humanities scholar?

Someone who has an advanced degree in a discipline of the humanities is generally considered a scholar. Scholars can provide context for a project and identify relevant humanities themes and ideas.

The importance of working with scholars

The National Endowment for the Humanities funds projects grounded in sound humanities research. Humanities advisors will strengthen the intellectual substance of a program. Humanities scholars can bring local perspectives and help shape themes for discussion.

When to contact humanities advisors

Include humanities scholars as early as possible in the planning process. Early involvement of scholars will strengthen the quality and depth of the scholarship that is at the heart of your program.

Engaging public audiences

Be mindful of your audience. Scholars should work with the programming team to ensure the scholarship is made accessible and appealing for public audiences. Academic lectures are often less engaging for public audiences than panel discussions. Be sure to build into your program opportunities for audience members to ask questions and share their own experiences.

Identifying scholars for a public programming event

- Start by contacting a nearby college or university academic department. Members of the institution's faculty may be able to suggest scholars on campus or at other universities. If you

are affiliated with a college or university, email faculty members with a description of the proposed project and seek assistance from resident scholars. If you are not affiliated with a college or university, many institutions maintain an online directory of faculty, which may even include a professor's area of research and teaching expertise.

- Send a request for information to the editors of H-Net, the humanities online discussion network for humanities scholars: https://networks.h-net.org/.
- You can also peruse booklists, libraries, and web resources to see who has published on topics related to your project.
- Call your State Humanities Council, which regularly works with scholars in your area. A directory of State Humanities Councils is available in this Programming Guide.

Logistics

Be sure to confirm, in writing, the dates the scholar will be needed. Provide logistical information, such as directions, contact information, and parking instructions. It is also helpful to provide, in advance, a rundown of the entire event, including set-up and rehearsal.

9

Tips for Organizing Lift Every Voice Discussion Groups

Discussion groups are an important aspect of humanities-oriented public programming. They encourage active participation in **Lift Every Voice** among library patrons and allow them to develop their own ideas and conclusions about the subject. Listed below are a series of suggestions meant to help host libraries develop their own **Lift Every Voice** discussion groups. For discussion book recommendations please consult the online **Lift Every Voice** reader and the "Suggested Readings" listed below.

The Size of Your Group

Discussion groups may range in size from fifteen to fifty participants. Typically, however, a registered group of about thirty people, with about twenty people attending any given session, is the optimal size for a dynamic flow of discussion.

It is important to also keep in mind that the size of your reading groups will depend on the level of participation among members of the group. If most of the people participate actively, it may be beneficial to organize smaller discussion groups, so every person has an opportunity to speak. If, however, most people choose to listen rather than speak, it may be beneficial to create a larger discussion group. While you should try not to scare away shy patrons, it is equally important to make clear that although they are not required to participate in discussion, it is preferable that they do so.

The size of your reading groups will also depend on the size limitations of the venue. It is important to ensure that everyone who chooses to speak will be heard, so aim to create discussion groups of a reasonable size for your location.

Who Should Lead Your Group

The choice of the group leader will have a major impact on the type of discussion your groups will have, so it is important to consider your choice wisely. You may choose to ask a librarian or a local poet to lead discussion groups, but it is important that they do not dominate the discussion or turn the discussion into a lecture. A good discussion leader draws comments from participants by using key points at key moments of intervention, not by lecturing. When seeking a discussion leader among scholars, this should be made clear. Alternatively, you may choose to have a rotating group leader, in which a group member is asked to prepare questions for discussion for each book or section of a book to be discussed.

The leader should come prepared with a list of between six and twenty questions for each discussion. These questions can be drawn from the **Lift Every Voice** reader. For general discussion topic ideas you may consult the "Programming Topics and Questions" above.

Where and When Should Sessions Be Held

If planning in-person programming, host libraries may choose to hold sessions either during the day or in the evening, depending on the target audience. Daytime sessions usually attract retired patrons, since retirement allows them the time to follow this schedule. Evening sessions, on the other hand, generally attract a broader range of participants. Libraries may also choose to hold both daytime and evening sessions to ensure that all community members can participate if they choose.

Depending on space availability, discussions should be held in a quiet room or area where participants can easily speak to each other. If possible, have participants face each other around a round table or sit in a circle so they will not have to crane their necks to hear or respond to other members of the discussion group.

All relevant safety precautions should be followed in compliance with CDC guidelines.

Virtual programming offers somewhat greater latitude in terms of scheduling. If programming is online resources that would have been directed to physical site support should be redirected to outreach to ensure the largest possible audience.

Allowing the Use of Outside Criticism

Many book discussion groups have members who enjoy reading other books that provide criticism or alternative points of view, which has the advantage of providing information about the work that might not be available simply by reading the text. These outside readings can be valuable, but they may also interfere with the reader's personal interpretation of the book by introducing an "expert" reading that can intimidate or influence a reader's own personal analysis.

A possible compromise when group members disagree about whether to use criticism in discussing the book is to allow the reading of alternative perspectives or criticisms at the end of the session, as a review or re-cap, or as a sounding board to any conclusions reached. One thing to remember about the use of outside criticism, letters, and biography is that discussion participants should feel perfectly free to disagree with the critic's or the original author's opinions and conclusions.

Making Programming Accessible for All Audiences

The Americans with Disabilities Act: http://www.ada.gov

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (PL 101-336), effective since July 1992, guarantees that people with disabilities shall have equal access to employment, public services and accommodations, transportation, and telecommunication services. As public service providers, sites must make reasonable efforts to give disabled people the same access to information, programs, and resources enjoyed by those who are not disabled.

Welcoming and inclusive events are achievable with advance outreach, clear communication, detailed follow-through, and most of all recognition that access improves the event for everyone. A diverse audience increases opportunity for meaningful exchange.

Promoting the Event

Promotion materials should invite prospective attendees to contact staff to request specific accommodations. It may take three or four days to schedule an interpreter, so ask patrons to make their requests at least one week prior to the event.

Developing Accessible Programming

To welcome all audiences and be mindful of individual needs, you'll want to consider the following:

- Are the parking lots, entrances, signage, restrooms, and meeting spaces accessible for all visitors and presenters?
- Is the seating arranged in order to accommodate wheelchairs and interpretation?
- Is public transportation an option?
- Will you need to hire sign language and/or oral interpreters? Will you need additional lighting for the interpretation? Will any members of your audience need amplification?
- As much as possible, share advance information with your interpreting team.
- If handouts will be distributed, can you offer large print or Braille versions if requested in advance?
- For audience Q&A sessions, remember that interpreters need microphones, too.
- For group discussions, it is important that all participants are able to see each other.
- Are staff and volunteers aware of accessibility features at the venue?

Resources

For additional information about developing, promoting, and implementing inclusive arts and humanities programming, visit: http://www.arts.gov/resources/Accessibility/pubs/index.html.

Resources for working with sign language interpreters

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf: http://www.rid.org Gallaudet University

RESOURCES

11

Humanities Resources by State

The humanities councils located in all U.S. states and jurisdictions support local humanities programs and events. Listed below is the contact information for state councils

ALABAMA

Alabama Humanities Foundation 1100 Ireland Way, Suite 202 Birmingham, AL 35205-7001 205-558-3980 /205-558-3981 (fax) http://www.alabamahumanities.org

ALASKA

Alaska Humanities Forum
161 East 1st Avenue, Door 15 Anchorage, AK 99501 907-272-5341 / 907-272-3979 (fax)
http://www.akhf.org

ARIZONA

Arizona Humanities
The Ellis-Shackelford House
1242 North Central Avenue Phoenix, AZ 85004
602-257-0335 / 60- 257-0392 (fax) http://www.azhumanities.org

ARKANSAS

Arkansas Humanities Council
407 President Clinton Avenue, #201 Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 320-5761 / (501) 537-4550 (fax) http://arkhums.org

CALIFORNIA

California Humanities
538 9th Street, Suite 210
Oakland, CA 94607
415-391-1474 / 510-808-7533 (fax) http://calhum.org

COLORADO

Colorado Humanities
7935 East Prentice Avenue, Suite 450 Greenwood Village, CO 80111 303-894-7951 / 303-864-9361 (fax)
http://coloradohumanities.org

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut Humanities
37 Broad Street
Middletown, CT 06457 860-685-2260 / 860-685-7597 (fax) http://cthumanities.org

DELAWARE

Delaware Humanities Forum
100 West 10th Street, Suite 509 Wilmington, DE 19801 302-657-0650 / 302-657-0655 (fax)
http://dehumanities.org

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Humanities Council Washington, DC 925 U Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202- 387-8391 / 202-387-8149 (fax) http://www.wdchumanities.org

FLORIDA

Florida Humanities Council
599 2nd Street S
St. Petersburg, FL 33701-5005
727- 873-2000 / 727-873-2014 (fax) http://www.flahum.org

GEORGIA

Georgia Humanities Council
50 Hurt Plaza, SE, Suite 595 Atlanta, GA 30303-2915 404-523-6220 / 404-523-5702 (fax)
http://georgiahumanities.org

GUAM

Guam Humanities Council
Reflection Center
222 Chalan Santo Papa, Suite 106 Hagatna, GU 96910
671-472-4460 / 671-646-2243 (fax) http://www.guamhumanitiescouncil.org

HAWAII

Hawaii Council for the Humanities 3599 Waialae Avenue, Room 25 Honolulu, HI 96816
808-732-5402 / 808- 732-5432 (fax) http://www.hihumanities.org

IDAHO

Idaho Humanities Council
217 West State Street
Boise, ID 83702
208-345-5346 / 208-345-5347 (fax) http://www.idahohumanities

ILLINOIS

Illinois Humanities
17 North State Street, Suite 1400 Chicago, IL 60602-3296 312-422-5580 / 312-422-5588 (fax)
https://www.ilhumanities.org/

INDIANA

Indiana Humanities
1500 North Delaware Street Indianapolis, IN 46202
317- 638-1500 / 317-634-9503 (fax) http://www.indianahumanities.org

IOWA

Humanities Iowa
100 Library, Room 4039
Iowa City, IA 52242-1420 319-335-4153 / 319-335-4154 (fax) http://humanitiesiowa.org

KANSAS

Kansas Humanities Council
112 SW Sixth Avenue, Suite 210 Topeka, KS 66603
785-357-0359 / 785-357-1723 (fax) http://www.kansashumanities.org

KENTUCKY

Kentucky Humanities Council
206 East Maxwell Street Lexington, KY 40508 859-257-5932 / 859-257-5933 (fax) kyhumanities.org

LOUISIANA

Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities 938 Lafayette Street, Suite 300
New Orleans, LA 70113
504-523-4352 / 504-529-2358 (fax) http://www.leh.org

MAINE

Maine Humanities Council
674 Brighton Avenue
Portland, ME 04102-1012 207-773-5051 / 207-773-2416 (fax) http://mainehumanities.org

MARYLAND

Maryland Humanities Council
108 West Centre Street
Baltimore, MD 21201-4565 410-685-0095 / 410-685-0795 (fax) http://mdhc.org

MASSACHUSETTS

Mass Humanities
66 Bridge Street
Northampton, MA 01060 413-584-8440 / 413-584-8454 (fax) http://www.masshumanities.org

MICHIGAN

Michigan Humanities Council
119 Pere Marquette Drive, Suite 3B Lansing, MI 48912-1270 517-372-7770 / 517-372-0027 (fax)
http://www.michiganhumanities.org

MINNESOTA

Minnesota Humanities Center
987 East Ivy Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55106
651-774-0105 / 651-774-0205 (fax) http://www.minnesotahumanities.org

MISSISSIPPI

Mississippi Humanities Council 3825 Ridgewood Road, Room 311 Jackson, MS 39211
601-432-6752 / 601-432-6750 (fax) http://www.mshumanities.org

MISSOURI

Missouri Humanities Council
543 Hanley Industrial Court, Suite 201 St. Louis, MO 63144
314-781-9660 / 314-781-9681 (fax) http://mohumanities.org

MONTANA

Humanities Montana
311 Brantly
Missoula, MT
406-243-6022 info@humanitiesmontana.org http://www.humanitiesmontana.org

NEBRASKA

Humanities Nebraska
215 Centennial Mall South Lincoln, NE 68508
402-474-2131 / 402-474-4852 (fax) http://humanitiesnebraska.org

NEVADA

Nevada Humanities
1670-200 North Virginia Street P.O. Box 8029
Reno, NV 89507-8029 775-784-6587 / 775-784-6527 (fax) http://www.nevadahumanities.org

NEW HAMPSHIRE

New Hampshire Humanities
117 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301
603-224-4071 / 603-224-4072 (fax) http://www.nhhumanities.org

NEW JERSEY

New Jersey Council for the Humanities 28 West State Street, 6th Floor Trenton, NJ 08608
609-695-4838 / 609-695-4929 (fax) http://www.njch.org

NEW MEXICO

New Mexico Humanities Council 4115 Silver Avenue, SE Albuquerque, NM 87108 505-633-7370 / 505-633-7377 (fax) www.nmhum.org

NEW YORK

New York Council for the Humanities 150 Broadway, Suite 1700
New York, NY 10038
212-233-1131 / 212-233-4607 (fax) www.nyhumanities.org

NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina Humanities Council 320 East 9th Street, Suite 414 Charlotte, NC 28202
704-687-1520 / 704-687-1525 (fax) www.nchumanities.org

NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota Humanities Council
418 East Broadway, Suite 8, P.O. Box 2191 Bismarck, ND 58502
701-255-3360 / 701-223-8724 (fax) http://ndhumanities.org

OHIO

Ohio Humanities Council
471 E. Broad Street, Suite 1620 Columbus, OH 43215-3857 614-461-7802 / 614-461-4651 (fax)
http://ohiohumanities.org

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma Humanities Council Festival Plaza
428 West California, Suite 270 Oklahoma City, OK 73102 405-235-0280 / 405-235-0289 (fax)
http://www.okhumanities.org

OREGON

Oregon Humanities
921 SW Washington Street, #150 Portland, OR 97205
503-241-0543 / 503-241-0024 (fax) http://www.oregonhumanties.org

PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania Humanities Council 325 Chestnut Street, Suite 715 Philadelphia, PA 19106 215-925-1005 /
215-925-3054 (fax) http://www.pahumanities.org

PUERTO RICO

Fundación Puertorriqueña de las Humanidades 109 San Jose Street, 3rd floor, Box 9023920 San Juan, PR
00902-3920
787-721-2087 / 787-721-2684 (fax) http://www.fphpr.org

RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island Council for the Humanities 131 Washington Street, Suite 210 Providence, RI 02903
401-273-2250 / 401-454-4872 (fax) http://www.rihumanities.org

SOUTH CAROLINA

Humanities Council South Carolina
2711 Middleburg Drive, Suite 203, P.O. Box 5287
Columbia, SC 29254

SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota Humanities Council 1215 Trail Ridge Road, Suite A Brookings, SD 57006 605-688-6113 /
605-688-4531 (fax) http://www.sdhumanities.org

TENNESSEE

Humanities Tennessee
306 Gay Street, Suite 306 Nashville, TN 37201
615-770-0006 / 615-770-0007 (fax) http://www.humanitiestennessee.org

TEXAS

Humanities Texas
1410 Rio Grande Street
Austin, TX 78701
512-440-1991 / 512-440-0115 (fax) http://www.humanitiestexas.org

UTAH

Utah Humanities Council
202 West 300 North
Salt Lake City, UT 84103
801.359.9670 / 801.531.7869

http://www.utahhumanities.org

VERMONT

Vermont Humanities Council
11 Loomis Street
Montpelier, VT 05602 802-262-2626 / 802-262-2620 (fax) http://www.vermonthumanities.org

VIRGINIA

Virginia Foundation for the Humanities Public Policy
145 Ednam Drive
Charlottesville, VA 22903-4629 434-924-3296 / 434-296-4714 (fax) http://www.virginiahumanities.org

WASHINGTON

Humanities Washington
1015 8th Ave. N., Suite B
Seattle, WA 98109
206-682-1770 / 206-682-4158 (fax) http://www.humanities.org

WEST VIRGINIA

West Virginia Humanities Council 1310 Kanawha Boulevard East Charleston, WV 25301 304-346-8500 / 304-346-8504 (fax) http://www.wvhumanities.org

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin Humanities Council
3801 Regent Street
Madison, WI 53705
608-262-0706 / 608-263-7970 (fax) http://www.wisconsinhumanities.org

WYOMING

Wyoming Humanities Council

http://thinkwy.org/

12

Using the Lift Every Voice Website: africanamericanpoetry.org

The website that accompanies this project is located at http://africanamericanpoetry.org. There you will find

- **The Lift Every Voice Programming and Site Support Guide:** A complete PDF of this site support notebook as well as other resources to aid you in your programming efforts.
- **The programming reader**: A PDF featuring fifteen poems from the anthology organized according to the initiative's five humanities themes, five thematic essays written by scholars in African American Studies, and biographical information about each featured poet.
- A historical timeline, featuring archival images, that illustrates the relationship between the African American poetic tradition and key historical events.
- Biographical information about each of the fifteen poets featured in the reader, including textual sources and links to poems featured in the anthology.
- A **Themes** page, explaining and exploring the project's five key humanities themes.
- A media library (**Watch & Listen**) featuring professionally-produced readings and commentaries from Kevin Young, Elizabeth Alexander, Phylicia Rashad, and Mahershala Ali, and audio and video links from The Poetry Foundation, 92nd Street Y (92Y), and the Furious Flower Project.
- Calendar of upcoming events

13

Related Web Resources from Lift Every Voice Partners

- Audio and video links to readings from The Poetry Foundation, The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 92nd Street Y (92Y), and the Furious Flower Project organized according to our project themes.
- Upcoming links to the Cave Canem Oral History Project. Cave Canem Fellows featured in the anthology narrate their memories of studying at Cave Canem.

PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

14

Lift Every Voice Crediting Language

NOTE: All promotional and media materials must include the following credit line:

This program is part of **Lift Every Voice: Why African American Poetry Matters**, a national public humanities initiative of Library of America presented in partnership with The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture with generous support from The National Endowment for the Humanities, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and Emerson Collective.

For logos please visit: http://africanamericanpoetry.org/press.php

15

Promotion and Social Media Suggestions

To draw the audience you seek and create awareness about **Lift Every Voice** events, we encourage institutions to plan and implement a promotional campaign.

The following guidelines are intended to help you launch a successful campaign.

Getting Started

To meet media and other deadlines, you will need to start promoting your institution's programming at least two months in advance.

First, determine your target audience, goals for audience size, and best communication methods for this program. Involving your fellow staff members in program planning can be a great way to foster new ideas and additional support. Try holding a staff brainstorming session.

Additionally, share your program plans with the director, board, friends, and other institutional support groups and solicit their ideas and cooperation.

Defining Your Target Audience

Promotional materials such as flyers, press releases, and advertisements are excellent vehicles for reaching a multigenerational and diverse audience. However, many other groups in your community will be interested in the **Lift Every Voice** programming you host. These groups can provide support through passing the information on to members of their organization who may be interested in attending or

providing financial and other support. Examples include historical societies, museums, and arts and humanities councils.

Developing an Audience Profile
When creating a profile of an audience you seek to reach with **Lift Every Voice** publicity, please consider the following:

- Where do they work?
- What newspapers do they read?
- What radio programs do they listen to?
- What other community activities do they participate in?
- What social, religious, professional, and civic organizations do they belong to?
- What educational institutions do they or their children attend?
- What special arrangements do they require? Is a particular time of day best for programs? Do they need child care? Signing or assistive listening devices for audience members who are deaf or hard of hearing?

Choosing Your Communication Methods

Once you've determined "who" you would like to invite to your program, focus on "how" to let them know about the event. Communication methods fall into these categories:

Public Relations/Publicity

Contacting the media and using the web to publicize your event are keys to getting your message out to a mass audience. Here are a few methods you can use to contact your local media and promote your event through the web:

Press and Media

- Send a press release announcing the event to your local newspapers, radio stations, and television stations at least two to four weeks before the event. To identify these contacts, search online for the emails of reporters and news desks that would be interested in the program. There are also services such as PRWeb that allow your institution to distribute press releases online for a fee.
- If possible, address press releases to a specific reporter. If that information is not available, address press releases to News Desk for larger publications or Editor for smaller publications. If these publications have a calendar of events, send a press release to the contact for this section. Quite often, publications will run an article about an upcoming event and include information about it in a community calendar section.
- A week before the event, follow up the press release with phone calls to specific reporters and media outlets you would like to feature your press release and event. Sending a personal email to the reporters will increase likelihood of a response. In your email, attach the press release, paste a version of the press release within the body of the email, and introduce yourself and why you think the story may be of interest to them. When pitching media stories, it is important to focus on how your story can help them and be of interest to their audience.

- If you find that media professionals are interested in attending the event or in receiving more information, prepare a press kit. The kit should contain one copy of the press release and media alert, photos and biographies of your speakers and other key participants, and copies of all promotional materials.
- Television and radio stations are required to use a percentage of their airtime for non-profit and public announcements. Your local stations may be willing to air a free public service announcement (PSA) about your program or event.

Websites

- If your institution's website does not have a Coming Events section, talk to your webmaster about creating one. The web is an avenue to provide details to patrons and community members who may have heard about the event but need details about the date, time, location, topics discussed, etc. If you post information about **Lift Every Voice** programming on your institution's website, be sure to include the web address on all promotional materials.
- Include links on your website to your partners' websites.
- The web can also be useful for getting the word out about your event through other organizations' websites. Your city, community centers, local media outlets, and chamber of commerce may post information about community events on their websites. Many major cities also have web-based entertainment and event guides, like citysearch.com, which provide information about events in several cities.

Social Media

Social media is a cost-effective way to spread the word about your institution's event. Using different social media outlets helps create a positive perception and provides the opportunity for you to showcase the work of your organization. In essence, social media helps facilitate word-of-mouth marketing to increase attendance at your event. Below are general guidelines on how to engage your community via social media.

- Focus on the goals. With every piece of content that you share through a social media outlet, remember that the ultimate goal is to attract new followers—and energize existing followers—to attend your programming events.
- Create and curate content. Your social media strategy should include content about your event and, if possible, connect your program to current events. Share interesting articles, stories, and pictures that relate to the theme of your event.
- Tailor your message. Appeal to your organization's existing audience. Let them know that their contributions support the institution that is now hosting great community programming. There is a great opportunity to increase the positive feelings people have about your organization through social media. Also tailor your message to each network because each one has its own type of audience. Facebook users are not the same as Twitter users, and both are different from Instagram users.
- Increase Facebook engagement. By increasing Facebook "likes" on your posts, you are exposing your event to a wider audience who may not have known about your organization. These "likes" appear in feeds and therefore allow your institution to have a larger reach. This translates to positive engagement and perception for your institution and demonstrates to your audience the value of your institution.

- Increase retweets on Twitter. If you have a Twitter account, provide content that is worth sharing. Ask yourself: Would someone find this interesting and would they want to share it? Twitter ads are not as effective as having another organization or person retweet your tweet.
- Leverage YouTube. YouTube can be effective in letting people know what it is like to attend your event. You can record an event, place it on your YouTube channel, and then promote it through social media outlets. This lets your community get a taste of what occurs during your institution's events.
- Don't be afraid to repeat. Share a post or a piece of content more than once, especially one that is important or proves to be popular. Reposting a piece of content a few times (with about 6–12 hours between each repetition) ensures that almost all of your followers will see it.
- Continue the conversation. Be sure to communicate with your followers on social media. Responding to questions on the content that you post is one of many ways to stay engaged with your followers.
- Timing is important. Try to post content on social media during peak sharing hours to ensure you reach the largest audience possible. Suggested times for posting to each outlet:

    § Facebook – 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. § Twitter – 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
    § Google+ – 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

- Try to reach new audiences. The aim is for your website to be a daily destination for your audience. Social media can assist in helping drive traffic to your website and is an avenue to increase your website's exposure.

Direct Marketing

Once you identify community organizations and other groups as your target audience, you can use direct marketing to contact these groups and individual members of these groups.

- o When contacting community and other organizations, use a personalized letter or phone call. You can also use a copy of your program flyer as an informal letter, if needed, adding a personal note.
- o In addition to contacting organizations, you may want to target individuals in your community. If you keep a list of patrons' email addresses, sending a mass email message about the upcoming event can be an effective and inexpensive way to get the word out to a number of people. If email addresses are not available, you may want to consider creating a postcard to mail to institution patrons, community members, or others. You may send an email message about the program to community group leaders to post to their electronic discussion groups or forward on to their own address lists.

Personal Contact

Personal contact is one of the most effective tools for communicating with key individuals and groups.

- Create a list of influential individuals in your community—the mayor, city council members, business leaders—who may be interested in your event. Send a letter and program flyer about the program and ask to meet with them for further discussion. If a meeting is not possible,

mention in your letter that you will call them within a week to follow up. Even if these individuals do not participate in the series, letting them know about the program could help the institution in other ways.

- When contacting community groups, ask to speak for five to ten minutes at one of their upcoming meetings or events. At the meeting, outline your overall programming plan and present convincing reasons why the series may be of interest to them. If speaking at a meeting is not possible, ask the group leaders to pass out flyers or mention the program to their members and staff.

Advertising

Often the most expensive promotional methods, advertising can also be one of the most effective vehicles to promote your program.

- o Promotional flyers and posters should be simple and include the basic title or theme for the program, an identifying graphic, times, place, speakers' names and brief biographical information, acknowledgment of funders and program partners, and if applicable, your institution's web address and other contact information.
- o Paid advertising in local newspapers and on local radio or television stations is an effective but costly method. Before considering paid advertising, approach your local newspapers and radio and television stations regarding free public service announcements.

Putting It All Together

After reviewing this list, spend time thinking about which of these methods will work best for your program, your community, and your institution. Consider your budget and time. Consider your planning team—is this effort a one-person production or committee based? Consider past successes and failures by looking at which communication methods you have used to promote past events. You may want to combine successful methods you've used before with new ideas. Also, keep in mind your goal for the size and type of audience you wish to attract.

16

Publicity Images and Guidelines for Use

- JPEGs of the Lift Every Voice logo and both one-dimensional and 3-D jacket images are available at www.africanamericanpoetry.org
- Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture: https://images.app.goo.gl/B8sVDycoGihbAaGh9
- National Endowment for the Humanities: https://www.neh.gov/brand-materials
- Andrew W. Mellon Foundation: https://images.app.goo.gl/wzKw2b4BRfBPPU1J9
- Emerson Collective: https://images.app.goo.gl/pF3NeLDNJuiuC94t5

REPORTING

17

Preliminary Report (Recommended)

Sites are strongly encouraged to share a preliminary report describing program dates and details 60 days prior to the start of scheduled programs. This should be directed to lifteveryvoice@loa.org.

18

Final Report (Required)

LIFT EVERY VOICE FINAL REPORT FORM

This report must be returned to the address below within 30 days of the closing of programming. Reporting is a requirement for all projects organized by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Failure to make a timely final report may affect your library's opportunities to take part in future projects. Please use extra paper if necessary.

1. INSTITUTION NAME:
_____

2. CITY/STATE: _____

3. PROGRAM DATES AND PROGRAM ATTENDANCE
Dates: _____
Total # program attendees: _____
Total # library visitors during programs: _____
Source of statistics: _____

4. PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Please summarize your programming efforts in a few sentences, characterizing your audience and scope of programming. Mention how you presented the required humanities program.

Individual program descriptions and budget (include Title, Format, and Presenter for all programs (Add additional pages if necessary.)

a)_____
_____
_____

Total attendance _____
Adults _____ YA _____ Children _____ School Groups _____
Approximate cost: _____

b)_____
_____
_____

Total attendance _____
Adults _____ YA _____ Children _____ School Groups _____
Approximate cost: _____

c)_____
_____
_____

Total attendance _____
Adults _____ YA _____ Children _____ School Groups _____
Approximate cost: _____

d)_____
_____
_____

Total attendance _____
Adults _____ YA _____ Children _____ School Groups _____
Approximate cost: _____

Total number of programs _____ Total program attendance _____

5. FUNDING (include sources and actual/in-kind support amounts for all programs, exhibition invitations, printing, events, etc.):

Source: _____ Source:
_____ Source:
_____

6. PUBLICITY

Amount: _____ Amount: _____ Amount:
_____ Total: _____

If your library is an academic library, describe how you tried to attract public audiences from outside your customary user group, and indicate whether or not you were successful. Public libraries please describe the results of your publicity strategies for the exhibit.

PUBLICITY SAMPLES: Please attach three copies of all library-produced publicity pieces, including posters and flyers, all newspaper articles, and other materials such as bibliographies, bookmarks, invitations, etc.; copies of your Lift Every Voice website pages; and captioned photographs taken at programs if you have them.

7. OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS

Please provide the name and contact information for a school in your community with which the library works on public programs.

8. COMMENTS ABOUT THE PROGRAMMING

Please identify source of comments (e.g., librarian, program participant, presenter, or partner organization). Comments are valuable in reports to funders about programs, and we appreciate your gathering them. (Add additional pages if necessary.)

_____ E-mail: _____

Return this form and attachments within 30 days of the closing of the exhibition or program to

lifteveryvoice@loa.org

Or by mail to

Library of America
Attn: Mary Sutton
14 East 60th Street
New York, NY 10022

If you have any questions, please e-mail lifteveryvoice@loa.org.

NOTE: We will send an email acknowledgement of receipt of final reports to the person submitting the report. If you do not receive this email within 10 days of mailing your report, please contact msutton@loa.org.