

ROAD SCHOLARS SPEAKERS BUREAU

Application Guidelines

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AHA's MISSION

The Alabama Humanities Alliance exists to provide context, build empathy, and make our state a more vibrant place to live. All through the humanities.



ABOUT US

Founded in 1974, the Alabama Humanities Alliance (AHA) serves as the primary source of grants for public humanities programming in Alabama. As a nonprofit and nonpartisan statewide organization, we're passionate about using the humanities to make Alabama better. AHA supports programs that encourage impactful storytelling, lifelong learning, and civic engagement. We believe the humanities can bring Alabamians together and help us better connect with the communities we call home.

ABOUT THE HUMANITIES

The humanities are a set of disciplines related to human culture and the study of how people understand, and document, the human experience. The humanities emphasize analysis, interpretation, and dialogue to provide context to the stories and ideas that help us better understand ourselves, our neighbors, and the world around us. Exploring humanities subjects — such as history, storytelling, cultures, traditions, and more — encourages critical thinking and gives us the opportunity to relate to others.

ABOUT THE ROAD SCHOLARS SPEAKERS BUREAU

For nearly four decades, AHA's Road Scholars Speakers Bureau has helped libraries, churches, historical societies, cultural organizations, and other groups bring scholar-storytellers to their communities. Our current roster of Road Scholars features historians, poets, authors, artists, and many other experts who deliver fascinating, humanities-rich presentations on a wide variety of subjects.

To view AHA's current roster of Road Scholars and their presentation topics, visit alabamahumanities.org/program/road-scholars.

AHA STAFF CONTACT

AHA staff are available to provide guidance and technical support. Comments and suggestions are based solely on prior experience and do not guarantee funding.

Applicants may contact AHA's director of partnerships and outcomes, Laura Anderson, at landerson@alabamahumanities.org or by calling 205.558.3992. Additional information is available online at alabamahumanities.org/grants.



WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO HOST A ROAD SCHOLAR?

The Alabama Humanities Alliance offers speakers to all Alabama-based nonprofits, including 501(c)(3) organizations, institutions of higher education, and state and local government agencies. All applicants must have an EIN and must be in good standing with AHA.

Applicants often include the following types of host organizations:

- Cultural centers
- Libraries and archives
- Museums and historic sites
- Historical societies and community groups
- Senior citizen centers
- Colleges and universities
- Churches and religious groups
- Municipalities and local governments

AHA *does not* provide speakers to individuals, for-profits, federal agencies, or out-of-state organizations. AHA considers organizations as “in-state” if they are registered in Alabama, have a physical presence in state, or regularly serve an Alabama audience.

WHAT AHA OFFERS

AHA maintains a roster of more than 35 scholars and 100-plus different humanities presentations to choose from. AHA awards grants to eligible organizations to host a Road Scholar presentation, providing funding to cover:

- The Road Scholar’s honorarium
- The Road Scholar’s travel costs (see rates in “Budget Requirements”)
- A portion of the host organization’s advertising costs

Common presentation topics include:

- History and genealogy
- Art and music history
- Culture and folklore
- Literature and film studies
- U.S. military history
- Sports and more



APPLICATION PROCESS

DEADLINES:

- The **first** (1st) of each month.
AHA will announce award decisions by the end of each month.

HOW TO APPLY:

- Before applying, applicants must contact their chosen scholar to confirm their availability and willingness to deliver a presentation.
- To apply for a Road Scholar talk, you must first create an account through our [Online Grants Portal](#). AHA's application process is entirely digital.
- After creating an account, the full application is available to preview through the online portal. Applicants may contact AHA for sample copies of grant agreements and final reports not visible within the portal.
- Turn in your completed Road Scholar application by the first of each month for consideration that month.
- Contact AHA's Laura Anderson with any application questions:
landerson@alabamahumanities.org

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

- **Organizations may only request one speaker per application form.**
Additional speakers may be requested through separate applications.
- **AHA will only provide a maximum of four speakers to a single organization per calendar year** (based on presentation dates). AHA will consider an organization's past award activity as an example of the organization's capacity to administer successful presentations.
- **Talks must be scheduled at least 45 days after the application deadline.**



APPLICATION SELECTION

AHA strives to fund as many presentations as possible, but the selection process is competitive.

Priority funding will be given to organizations that demonstrate:

- Capacity to administer the presentation successfully
- A clear need/interest in the chosen presentation for their audience
- Effort to keep program costs low

Additionally, AHA aims to provide a rich array of presentations across the humanities disciplines *and* across the state. Priority funding may be given to presentations that expand the reach of AHA's program through geographic location, audience served, presentation topics, and/or scholars selected.

BUDGET REQUIREMENTS

Grant period: Grant periods will begin on the first of the month after the application deadline and will end 10 days after the presentation date. All presentation activities and costs, including advertising costs, must be incurred within the grant period.

Scholar honorarium: AHA will provide \$250 to each host organization to provide as honorarium to their speaker per presentation. Organizations may not pay their speakers less than the \$250 provided unless the speaker waives the honorarium at their own discretion.

Scholar mileage: AHA will provide funding to each host organization to reimburse the speaker for their mileage at the IRS's standard mileage rate (\$.70/mile in 2025) — from their base location to the presentation location and back. Organizations may *not* reimburse their speakers less than the standard mileage rate unless the speaker waives the reimbursement at their own discretion.



Host advertising costs: AHA will provide each host organization with up to \$100 to advertise and promote the speaker's presentation. All advertising costs must be spent prior to the event and to promote the presentation itself. Organizations may choose to waive advertising costs.

Waived costs: If any of the above costs are waived by the speaker or host organization, funding may not be requested from AHA to cover said costs. If costs are waived after an award has been made, the unused funding must be returned to AHA.

Unused funding: Any awarded funding not expended by the host organization for the approved costs listed above must be returned to AHA.

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Acknowledgement: Host organizations must reference support from AHA before each presentation and on all advertising materials. AHA will provide logos and "About AHA" language to be used. When technology allows, host organizations should play a promotional video provided by AHA before each presentation.

Final Report: Host organizations must submit a Final Report to AHA designed to capture a brief narrative, financial information, audience data, and feedback about the scholar's presentation. We would also appreciate any photos you can share from your Road Scholar's presentation. Reports will be due 30 days after the grant period ends.

