



New Let's Talk About It Scholar FAQs

Thank you for your interest in supporting public humanities as a scholar with the North Carolina Humanities Council. For more information, please read through these commonly asked questions.

1. What are the Humanities?

The humanities explores, interprets, and documents the human experience. The humanities represent ways of thinking about the meaning of our lives, and is presented through scholarly disciplines including literature, history, jurisprudence, philosophy, archaeology, comparative religion, ethics, linguistics, criticism and theory of the arts, and certain aspects of social sciences that employ a qualitative approach.

The humanities can also be distinguished from the arts. The practice of discussing and interpreting the arts is the humanities. The performance or teaching of an art is not.

2. What is the North Carolina Humanities Council?

The North Carolina Humanities Council is a statewide non-profit and affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Council serves as an advocate for lifelong learning and thoughtful dialogue about all aspects of human life. We facilitate the exploration and celebration of the many voices and stories of North Carolina's cultures and heritage. Through our programs we seek to cultivate informed and active citizenship as an outgrowth of new awareness of self and community.

3. What is the North Carolina Center for the Book?

In 2018, the Council became the home for the NC Center for the Book. The NC Center for the Book is an affiliate of the Library of Congress Center for the Book program.

4. What is the Let's Talk About It Program? Are there other programs like this?

The Let's Talk About It program is a reading and scholar facilitated discussion series that serve libraries. The objective of these program is to foster the exploration of new ideas and perspectives and discuss thematically curated humanities content to consider and share life experiences to build community.

The Council also has the Veterans Reading Group and Literature and medicine. These are reading and discussion programs specifically for veteran and health care professional audiences respectively.

4. How is the Let's Talk About It program administered?

The Council manages the host site application process. This process identifies community partners who facilitate delivery of the program in a particular community, curates content, and evaluates the program through surveys and final host site reports to ensure that it is meeting its impact goals of fostering the exploration of new ideas and perspectives in the community and creating opportunities for participants to consider and share life experiences.

Host Site Role: The host site has a key role in supporting the success of this program as these series are run through host sites in communities across the state. The host site is responsible for providing venue space,

promoting the event locally, arranging travel logistics, communicating with the scholars about event details, receiving and distributing grant funds, and completing reports.

Council-Host Site Partnership: To support the success of host site organizations and the impact of this program for participants, the Council offers one-on-one phone consultations with the Programs Coordinator for first time or new applicants. Prospective host sites interested in a phone consultation can [click here to schedule](#). The Council provides host sites with an overview of program eligibility and guidelines, its expectations, and intended impact on their community.

5. What does the host site application look like?

Prospective host sites learn how to apply through the Council's [NC Center for the Book page](#) on our website. To be eligible for consideration, prospective host sites must submit their application by the cycle application deadlines on our website. Below are the instructions provided to organizations interested in applying for funding to host a Let's Talk About It series:

1. Please review the [Project Director's Guide](#)
2. Please review the available themes in our [series choices](#) and select your first and second choice series.
3. Please review the instructions to complete your application in the Council's online application system. We have created a 5 min [video tutorial](#) and [these written instructions](#).
4. Complete the "Let's Talk About It" [online application](#) and submit it by the respective cycle deadline listed above.

6. What are the eligibility requirements to be a speaker?

- It is expected that applicants will reside or work in North Carolina.
- It is expected that applicants will have an advanced degree (M.A. or higher) or specialization in English Language and Literature, Film Studies, or related fields and have discussion facilitation experience.
- Affiliation with an institution of higher education is customary, but not necessary.
 - Applicants without an advanced degree, but whose career and personal history demonstrates training and preparation consistent with our understanding of the humanities disciplines and methodologies are also eligible to apply.
- Applicants need not be employed, and may be retired from a professional position.
- It is expected that applicants must be genuinely interested in addressing public audiences.
- It is expected that applicants must be able and willing to travel for this program. Scholars are expected to travel 1-1.5 hours to host libraries. Sessions are often scheduled in the evening.

7. How can I apply to the program? How are scholars chosen?

Each year, the Council calls for new scholar applicants. Interested applicants can use the Council's online application system. If you are interested in being added to the notification list for when this application becomes available, please email Program Coordinator, Melissa Giblin, at mgiblin@nchumanities.org.

Elements of an application that are taken into consideration in selecting new scholars include, but are not limited to, the applicant's academic background and expertise, and experience facilitating discussion.

8. What are the best practices when preparing to facilitate a discussion session?

Please keep in mind that you will be speaking with the general public, including senior citizens, rather than to scholars or college students. It is expected that the scholars help the participants consider new perspectives and ideas. It is

expected that scholars use methods to facilitate discussion which create opportunities for participants to consider and share experiences from their own life.

The Council requires that scholars refrain from advocating particular political, ideological, religious, or partisan points of view. A fair, balanced, and objective presentation of all reasonable points' of view needs to be made by the scholar.

Typically, a session lasts 1 ½ to 2 hours, during which the scholar is expected to give a brief introductory presentation on the context and themes of the work, and spend the remainder of the session facilitating participant discussion.

Both the scholar and the host organization are required to acknowledge the support/sponsorship of the North Carolina Humanities Council at the beginning of the event. Please consult the Council's [publicity guidelines](#) for more information.

9. How many presentations can I do? Do I have to speak to every organization?

Scholars are not limited to a specific number of sessions per year. All sessions are confirmed with the scholar based on their own schedules and convenience. During the scheduling process, efforts are made to minimize travel time for the scholar and costs for the library. Please note that returning a signed contract to the Council does not guarantee a participating scholar a minimum number of Let's Talk About It sessions.

10. If I am accepted into the program, for how long is my service period?

Currently, Let's Talk About It scholars commit to a one-year contract upon being accepted to the program. At the end of the contract, speakers will be invited to continue participation in the program. If a speaker no longer wishes to participate in the program, it is his or her responsibility to notify the Council in writing.

While there is no minimum number of sessions required per year, if a scholar does not facilitate any sessions for 2 years, the scholar will be determined inactive and retired from the program.

The Council does an annual call for new scholars. If an applicant is interested in applying to part of the cohort, please contact the Programs Coordinator, Melissa Giblin, to be added to the notification list.

11. How do organizations get in touch with me?

Once a series is approved, the project director has access to a Scholar Contact sheet with each current scholar's contact information. If your contact information has changed, please contact the Programs Coordinator, Melissa Giblin, to update this information.

12. How am I paid? How much am I paid?

The host organization pays the scholar an honorarium of \$200. The host organization reimburses the scholar for travel expenses. **Please note:** Reimbursement for, or assistance with additional travel costs is the responsibility and discretion of the Host Organization. If an overnight stay is necessary, it is the Scholar's responsibility to make arrangements with the Host organization in advance.

13. Additional questions?

If you have additional questions regarding the Road Scholars program, please contact the Programs Coordinator, Melissa Giblin. You can email questions to mgiblin@nchumanities.org or can call (704) 687-1526.