

2023 Spirit & Place Festival Application Guidelines

Spirit & Place is housed in the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI

Application Narrative Review Deadline:
Friday, April 28

Application Deadline:
Sunday, May 7 by midnight
(Event must be scheduled from Nov. 3 – Nov. 12)

Online Application Link:
https://iu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6Wo5Kb4kOICVWAu



EXCITING NEWS!!!

Accepted events into the 2023 festival will receive a \$200 stipend from Spirit & Place!

2023 Key Dates & Meetings

All dates subject to change

APPLICANT MEETINGS & DEADLINES	DATES & TIMES
Applicant Meetings – Five virtual info sessions open to anyone interested in the Spirit & Place Festival application process. Optional, but strongly recommended. Visit spiritandplace.org to register. (Each session will present the same information.)	March 29 at 10am & 4pm April 6 at 12pm April 13 at 10am & 4pm
Application Portal Opens – Applicants are encouraged to review these guidelines AND the Narrative Examples and Application Prep Sheet before starting the online application. Applicants may save content and return to their online application as needed.	April 3
Festival Application Deadline – All applications must be submitted via the online system. Emailed applications will not be accepted.	SUNDAY, MAY 7 (midnight)
Selection Notification – The Selection Committee will meet in mid-June.	June 12–19
FESTIVAL PARTNER MEETINGS & WORKFLOW	DATES & TIMES
REQUIRED Festival Partner Meeting – If selected for the festival, you and/or a collaborating partner are required to attend this meeting.	July 6 at 11:30am
OPTIONAL Partner Meet-Up – Informal gathering to meet other festival event creators.	Summer. Date TBA.
Event Essentials Finalized – Titles, dates, times, and descriptions as well as event images for the Festival Event Guide must be finalized.	August 1
Training and Event Design Coaching Sessions – Optional training sessions including Eventbrite 101 and Social Media Basics. At least one check-in with the Program Director should also occur during this time.	August – October
Registration Link Due – Partners are responsible for creating and managing their own registration process that grants the sharing of emails with Spirit & Place . Spirit & Place encourages the use of Eventbrite.	September 8
28TH ANNUAL SPIRIT & PLACE FESTIVAL Spirit & Place opens the festival on Nov. 2 and closes it at 4:30pm on Nov. 12. Schedule your event between Fri., Nov. 3 and 4pm on Sun., Nov. 12.	November 2: Opening November 3–12 (4pm): Partner Events Scheduled
Partner Survey & Registrant Email List – Completing a year-end survey and supplying a registrant email list is a requirement to being in the festival.	December 1

What is the Spirit & Place Festival?

The Spirit & Place Festival is a unique 11-day festival of events. Launched in 1996, it is the nation's *only* arts, humanities, and religion festival and the only festival we know of that is created and curated by the community.

With exception for the opening and closing night events, everything offered in the Spirit & Place Festival is created by the community – artists, musicians, poets, writers, clergy, people of faith, scholars, educators, museum and library staff, social service workers, activists, storytellers, and more. Working in collaboration with **at least one other community partner**, event creators design and host events **reflective of the annual theme** that use either the **arts, humanities, and/or religion** to bring the community together for 11 days of shared experiences.

A team of reviewers representing different faith traditions, races, genders, and ages read the festival applications and select festival events. Of those selected, 3 to 5 events are nominated for an **Award of Awesomeness**. This \$1,000 award goes to the event that best exemplifies Spirit & Place's mission and values. (And, you know, provides an awesome experience for attendees!)

So What?

Why take on the workload of designing an event, finding collaborative partners, securing a date and venue, and all the other work that goes along with offering an event in the Spirit & Place Festival? Here is what some of our past festival event partners have to say:

- *That [our] proposal was chosen ...provided the validation needed to raise the level of [our organization's] status and respect.*
- *Piloting this idea with Spirit & Place helped us get a feel for what it would entail to offer this kind of programming again.*
- *The ability to experiment with the festival is one of the boons of participating in my opinion.*
- *Planning, collaborating, and participating in the [festival] stretched us to consider how ... others' experiences have differed from our own...and how to discuss difficult topics.*
- *[Being in the festival] helped build hidden organization and leadership skills I never knew I had.*

Designing an event for the Spirit & Place Festival entails a commitment to creating an intentional experience for the public rooted in our civic tools (arts, humanities, and/or religion) and deeply reflective of the annual theme. It takes a lot of work! **But it also provides you a platform to shine, amplify marginalized voices, take risks and experiment, cultivate meaningful relationships, and develop new skills.**

Most importantly, an event in the festival is your gift to the community. During these polarizing and divisive times, festival events provide people an opportunity to connect. By sharing spaces, stories, and ideas with each other, we do the hard work of *building up* rather than *tearing down*. **Spirit & Place invites you to be a part of its work to build community, foster deeper connections, and heal the world around us.**

Civic Tools, Values, & Annual Theme

Successful applicants intentionally engage one or more of Spirit & Place’s civic tools, reflect on our core values, and thoughtfully engage the annual theme.

Civic Tools

ARTS	HUMANITIES	RELIGION
<p>By engaging our senses, the arts provide opportunities for embodied learning, liberate the imagination, and unlock fresh perspectives.</p> <p>Spirit & Place recognizes a wide mix of art forms. Applicants need not worry about being classically trained (although we welcome those with formal training!). Artistic practices from fine to folk art, poetry and spoken word, music, dance, and beyond are welcome.</p>	<p>Through history, literature, philosophy, anthropology, language, and related disciplines, the humanities explore the complex interactions between people, place, and time.</p> <p>Humanities-based disciplines allow us to find common narratives of the human condition and can be a powerful tool in exploring the annual theme, especially when combined with other civic tools.</p>	<p>The world’s spiritual traditions invite us to examine what it means to be human, how we live our values in both individual and public life, and how we should live in relationship to others.</p> <p>Through religion, Spirit & Place embraces the values of compassion, fairness, hospitality, and service and welcomes people of faith to bring their authentic selves to the festival. However, the festival is not a space for proselytizing.</p>



Engaging with our Civic Tools

Intentionally engaging the arts, humanities, and/or religion is critical to a successful festival application and event. Below are just a few examples of what we mean by “engaging” with these civic tools.

ARTS	HUMANITIES	RELIGION
<p>If designing a lecture or panel discussion, please remember <i>talking</i> about an art form, genre, or artist <i>without</i> also sharing artistic examples is a huge miss.</p> <p>So is adding in an art-making activity without tying it to theme or the overall goals of the event.</p> <p>To strengthen your application, consider sharing examples of theme-based questions or prompts you will give featured artists or speakers to reflect on and/or how your art-making activities will help attendees connect more deeply with the theme.</p>	<p>Your application should specify the humanities-based discipline(s) you will use to explore the theme.</p> <p><u>Creating an event where people connect around their “humanness” is <i>not</i> using a humanities discipline.</u></p> <p>Be specific in which discipline you’ll use (i.e., history, literature, law, etc.), how you will use it, and why it is important to your examination of the theme.</p>	<p>If an exploration of religion and the theme (i.e., unpacking practices, beliefs, music, text, etc.) is not central to the audience experience, you will need to go deeper.</p> <p>A faith-based or congregational venue or promotional partner alone does NOT make an event “religious.”</p> <p>We also urge applicants to be mindful of the language they use. For example, “Christianity” is not a synonym for “religion.” All expressions of faith are welcome and interfaith efforts with non-Abrahamic traditions are encouraged.</p>

Values

Spirit & Place’s mission is to **catalyze civic engagement and enduring change through creative collaborations among the arts, humanities, and religion.**

We are also committed to dismantling our complicity in upholding institutional racism and white supremacy (see our [Black Lives Matter statement](#) at spiritandplace.org). Our equity values are defined as being **people-centered, co-creative, generative, abundant, “glocal,” and emergent.**

Furthermore, we acknowledge calls for civility have often been used to silence dissent. We embrace Krista Tippett’s definition when she writes, “Adventurous civility honors the difficulty of what we face and the complexity of what it means to be human. It doesn’t celebrate diversity by putting it up on a pedestal and ignoring its messiness and its depths . . . Civility, in our world of change, is about creating new possibilities for living forward while being different and even continuing to hold profound disagreement.”

2023 Theme: *NOURISH*

Every living thing needs nourishment.

Seeds need fertile soil so that they might sprout. Those sprouts become crops that then need sunshine and rain to thrive. Animals need plants and other animal life to consume so that they might live to reproduce and continue the cycle of life.

We humans? We need nature’s bounty to sustain life too. But we also need music. And dance. And poetry, literature, faith, art, stories . . . and each other. Nourishment is more than sustenance. Nourishment is what is necessary for us to grow and be healthy not only physically, but emotionally and spiritually.

- How does art feed the soul?
- How do the humanities help us connect more deeply to each other so that we not only survive in the world, but thrive in it?
- What do our faith traditions tell us about holding onto hope and nurturing a shared sense of purpose?

Check out our [Theme Prompts](#) found under the FESTIVAL tab of our website (use the drop-down option, “Festival Application Process”) to brainstorm ideas with your event planning team and collaborating partners.

Selection Committee Process

Applicants often ask, “What does Spirit & Place *really* want with festival events?” Let us share what the Selection Committee wrestles with in terms of [Selection Criteria](#) when they evaluate the applications. (*Starred items are required elements for festival events.)

- 1.) **Clarity.** Does the application show a clarity of purpose and clearly articulate what the event is? The committee wants to understand why you think the event is a good fit for the festival and what the audience will experience. If these basic elements are not clear, it is hard for the committee to evaluate whether you have the capacity to pull off what you’re proposing.
- 2.) ***Theme (required).** A great beauty of Spirit & Place is that you get to interpret the annual theme however you want! This is part of what makes the festival such a wonderfully diverse experience. The theme should not be an afterthought in your planning. Your event idea needs to emanate from the theme and should be central to what the audience will experience and reflect upon.
- 3.) ***Civic Tools (required).** Intentional use of the arts, humanities, and/or religion is a key criterion. If an event proposal says it is using the arts, how so? If it is tied to the humanities, which *specific disciplines* are being used? How might a faith-inspired event examine a tradition’s beliefs, practices, or texts?
- 4.) ***Collaborative (required).** You must collaborate with at least one other external partner. “Collaboration” is broadly defined (e.g., venue partner, promotional partner, etc.) and we give you leeway. At the same time, collaborations between—rather than within—the arts, religion, and humanities are given preference as are collaborations that are co-creative and share authority (i.e., a real team effort!).
- 5.) **Inventiveness.** Does this event offer a “wow-like” approach with fresh insights, bold topics, thought-provoking speakers, creative partnerships, an inventive format, or a unique venue? Is this something folks are only going to find within the Spirit & Place Festival? (Nailing the first 5 criteria are key to being competitive for an Award of Awesomeness nomination!)
- 6.) **Audience Care.** The committee is often looking for design strategies that involve the senses, physical movement, and/or the intellectual and creative contributions from the audience. The committee wants to understand how you have shaped your event around your audiences’ needs—including their time and desire to share their own experiences.
- 7.) **Commitment Beyond Self.** If the committee thinks your only goal for applying to the festival is for marketing purposes or to elevate your brand or organization, we’re not a good fit. **The Spirit & Place Festival is a communal experience.** Your event is part of a collective whole and Spirit & Place’s values of reciprocity, abundance, emergence, and centering people need to be part of your intentions.

Award of Awesomeness Tips

Want to be considered for an Award of Awesomeness nomination? ***Lean into Spirit & Place's values and embrace a creative use of the arts, humanities, and religion!*** Be

as prepared as possible when you apply, center the theme, demonstrate how you will address audience needs, share authority, and take some risks.



- **Details!** Nominations are based on the strength of the application. The more details you have nailed down, the stronger your chances are to be nominated. It is NOT a requirement to have all your speakers and performers confirmed when you apply; but details like these help your nomination chances.
- **Clarity & Focus.** Be intentional with how you address the theme. Be specific about your use of the arts, humanities, and/or religion. Clearly describe the event experience. Present a well-crafted title! (Brevity is best.) “Awesome” events also have focus. They go deep rather than broad.
- **Strong Roots.** If you have a deeply rooted art, humanities, or religion event, be true to that. Don’t try to cram in elements that aren’t true to your intentions. Go deep rather than broad. Move beyond a surface level approach to using the arts, humanities, and religion.
- **Surprising Juxtapositions & New Locations.** Whether pairing unlikely speakers or providing a moment of levity at an otherwise serious event, exceptional festival events often provide moments of contrast. Audiences not only love new and fresh presentations, but also new spaces and places. If you have an opportunity to use a new venue – or use a familiar venue in a surprising way – do so!
- **Fresh Approaches & Smart Partnerships.** There is nothing wrong with working with trusted community partners. Many people use the festival to strengthen existing relationships and we’re proud of that. However, standout events courageously bring in partners with new points of view and/or ways of doing things. This is especially true if you are tackling issues outside your area of expertise or organization mission. **In these cases, culturally sensitive and knowledgeable partnerships are a must!**
- **Curiosity & Risks.** Awesome events ooze with the curiosity of their creators. That is, partners who actively want to learn themselves, delve into the complexity of the theme, and ask provocative questions. Nominated events are often ones that experiment with a new event format and show imagination.
- **An Invitation to Bring Your Whole Self to the Table.** Events that invite panelists, speakers, performers, and even the audience to bring their whole selves – their artistic sides, inquisitive minds, and spiritual halves – to the process are some of the most magical.

Learn more about [Past Award of Awesomeness Winners](#) on our [website](#).

Application & Event Design Support

All applicants, especially first-time applicants, are **strongly encouraged** to attend one of the spring info sessions (March 29 at 10am or 4pm; April 6 at 12pm; and April 13 at 10am or 4pm) **AND** schedule a one-on-one meeting with the Program Director before beginning their application. Spirit & Place is happy to help brainstorm creative ideas using our civic tools, suggest collaborative partners, recommend possible venues, and review an application draft. (Review requests should be submitted by April 28.)

At a minimum, everyone –including new *and* veteran festival creators – are encouraged to review the [Narrative Examples](#) and [Application Prep Sheet](#) before beginning their application.

Other useful application planning tools include our [Theme Prompts](#), [Application Tips](#), and [“Red Flags” sheet](#).

ADDITIONALLY, we have an array of resources found in our online [Event Design Toolkit](#) that provide general event design advice. (Feel free to use these resources for whatever event you might be planning.) Look under the RESOURCES tab on our website (spiritandplace.org) to find worksheets, tip sheets, and checklists including:

- [Event Intentionality Worksheet](#) – A great starting place to determine the “why” behind your event.
- [Audience Worksheet](#) – Once you know your event’s “why,” work on defining for whom.
- [Moderator Tip Sheet](#) – Moderators need guidance too!
- [Community Engagement & Events](#) – If you’re hoping to build new partnerships with your (festival) event, check out this advice sheet.
- [PR Matrix](#) – Well-attended events take promotional efforts from everyone! Sit down with your event partners to map out a plan.
- [Choosing an Event Image](#) – Learn where to find copyright free images to help promote your event.
- [Event Logistics Checklist](#) – Does your venue have the equipment you need? Do your speakers know when to arrive? Use this checklist for all those essential logistical details.

The Toolkit also has tip sheets related to (in-person) [Event Accessibility](#) and [Zoom Accessibility](#) and a growing library of short videos aimed at helping you design the most creative and inclusive events possible.

Current videos include [Event Design for Virtual Events](#), [Tech Tips for Virtual Events](#), and [Event Accessibility](#).

Festival Event Support/Partner Benefits

If selected for the festival, we support your efforts through continued one-on-one event design coaching and typically 2 to 3 training sessions depending on partner needs and interests. Spirit & Place also has a **portable sound system (speaker & two wireless hand-held mics)** and an **OWL 360 Meeting Pro Camera** available for festival partners to borrow.

In partnership with Bohlsen Group, Spirit & Place promotes the festival *as a whole* and looks to garner media attention through the following tactics:

- Creating and distributing **press releases** announcing the festival theme and Award of Awesomeness nominees, as well as **media alerts** grouping festival events by specific categories.
- Posting overall festival dates to **community calendars**. (Event partners are urged to post individual events.)
- Contacting local, regional, and national media members about the festival to **generate interviews** and eventual media coverage for Spirit & Place spokespeople and event organizers.
- Designing and paying for **digital ads on Google and Facebook** for ALL festival events!!!

Spirit & Place prints 7,000+ event guides and delivers them to all event venues and partner organizations in October and sends out e-blasts to more than 9,000 email subscribers leading up to the festival. We attend large events such as Penrod and Festival of Faiths to promote the festival and even design flier templates for you to personalize.

For as much as we do, event partners should NOT rely on these efforts alone to generate an audience. EVERYONE needs to engage in promotional efforts. Using the [PR Matrix](#) in our toolkit helps. Learn more about [Partner Benefits here](#).



Facebook Ad Example

Limitations & Restrictions

The Spirit & Place Festival is a celebration of arts, humanities, and religion in community life. It is a platform for experimentation and a space to cultivate new relationships, catalyze civic engagement, amplify unheard voices, and uncover community solutions. The festival is an inclusive arena that often delves into difficult dialogues while embracing the idea of “[adventurous civility](#).”

In other words, the festival is not a platform to preach to your choir, a podium from which to proselytize, a placeholder for existing events, or a mere marketing tool for your organization. Please read about [Spirit & Place’s values](#) to learn more.

[Limitations and restrictions](#) include:

- **Accessibility.** All events must be in handicap accessible venues unless the venue is a designated historical structure or an outdoor event. Event partners should make every effort to provide large font materials and other accommodations when requested.
- **No personal development workshops.** We are looking for community-focused events.
- **No research studies.** Scholars wishing to showcase their work within the festival are welcome, but the festival is not a site to conduct research. (Rule of thumb: If an IRB is required, the festival is not the best fit.)
- **No fundraising & limited fee-based events.** Fundraisers are not allowed, and free events are preferred. We recognized performing arts events, events with licensing fees, and those serving food must recoup cost through ticket sales.
- **Conflicting dates.** Event creators are responsible for selecting their own dates. However, when events appealing to the same audience are scheduled for the same time (e.g., two classical music events), applicants may be asked to consider re-scheduling their events.
- **Date restrictions.** The festival begins the first Thursday of November featuring an opening event created by Spirit & Place. ***Partner events may be scheduled beginning the first Friday of November running through the second Sunday of November ending by 4pm.*** The festival closes with the Spirit & Place Public Conversation which begins no earlier than 4:30pm. Partners should be mindful of major events such as the **Monumental Marathon** and **Election Day** when choosing their event date.

Partner Agreement

Participating as a Spirit & Place Festival event partner means agreeing to certain things. The full [Partner Agreement](#) should be thoroughly read and discussed with your team prior to applying. (The bullet points below are an overview.)

The **LEAD PARTNER** is the individual (or individual representing an organization) who will be Spirit & Place's main point of contact and who will communicate important updates to their collaborating partners. The **lead partner** agrees to the following:

- Attend the required partner meeting on July 6 or ensure a collaborating partner attend.
- Schedule a one-on-one meeting with the Spirit & Place Program Director prior to October 15.
- Engage in event promotions.
Required promotional activities include:
 - Mentioning the event is *part of the Spirit & Place Festival* in all press releases, web descriptions, social media posts, and interviews.
 - Using the Spirit & Place theme logo, when possible.
 - Distributing Spirit & Place Event Guides. (Delivered to all venues and partners in October.)
 - Providing Bohlsen Group the name and contact information of a media contact.Suggested promotional activities include:
 - Submitting event details to community calendars.
 - Using the *PR Matrix*.
 - Creating a Facebook Event Page.
 - Sending out press releases and media pitches. (Please copy Spirit & Place. We don't need to approve it but will want to coordinate with our own efforts.)
 - Utilizing personal contacts, organizational email lists, and in-house marketing teams.
- Submit an event image and secure its use permission by August 1.
- Create and manage an event registration system that **secures permission to share emails with Spirit & Place**. (Eventbrite is preferred and Spirit & Place will provide instructions and training.)
- Not repeat the event between August 1 – December 31, 2023 (some exceptions apply).
- Use provided talking points and/or PowerPoint when introducing your festival event. (Includes asking attendees to fill out an event evaluation.)
- Set out a table and chairs near the entrance of your event for Spirit & Place volunteers.
- Submit a Partner Survey and supply a list of registrant emails by December 1. Failure to supply this information will make you ineligible for next year's festival.

We hope you are interested in applying to the 2023 Spirit & Place Festival as we explore the theme of NOURISH. Please do not hesitate in reaching out with any questions or concerns. Thank you!