

2024 Spirit & Place Festival Application Guidelines

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

Narrative Review Deadline

May 13, 2024

Application Deadline

Friday, May 17 by 5pm

Scheduling & Venue Clarification

You pick your own event date & venue.

Events must be scheduled from Nov. 1 – Nov. 10.

**We're a 10-day festival this year since Nov. 1 falls on a Friday*

Online Application Link

Opens April 1, 2024

New for 2024

- 10 days added to the application deadline.
- \$200 event stipend is back!
- No Award of Awesomeness.
- In-Person & virtual info sessions this spring.
- Narrative count is now 1,200 characters (up from 750).

2024 Key Dates & Meetings

All dates subject to change

APPLICANT MEETINGS & DEADLINES	DATES & TIMES
<p>Applicant Meeting Optional but encouraged. Applicant meetings are approximately 60 minutes long and open to anyone interested in applying to the Spirit & Place Festival.</p> <p>Learn more and register for a session on Eventbrite.</p>	<p>Mar. 19: 10:30am at College Ave. Library & 6pm at Haughville Library</p> <p>Apr. 9: 12pm on Zoom</p> <p>Apr. 26: 12pm on Zoom</p>
<p>Application Portal Opens Besides the guidelines, additional tips and resources are found at spiritandplace.org under the “Festival” tab.</p>	<p>Apr. 1</p>
<p>Festival Application Deadline Applications are only accepted through the online system.</p>	<p>Friday, May 17 by 5pm</p>
<p>Selection Notification The Selection Committee will meet in June.</p>	<p>Late June/early July</p>
FESTIVAL PARTNER MEETINGS & WORKFLOW	DATES & TIMES
<p>REQUIRED Festival Partner Meeting – If selected for the festival, you and/or a collaborating partner are required to attend this meeting.</p>	<p>July 9 at 11:30am on Zoom</p>
<p>Event Essentials & Images – Titles, dates, times, and descriptions as well as event images for the Festival Event Guide must be finalized.</p>	<p>August 1</p>
<p>Training and Event Design Coaching Sessions – Optional training sessions including on TBD topics of need will be offered. At least one REQUIRED check-in with the Program Director should also occur during this time.</p>	<p>July, Aug., & Sept. – Exact dates & topics TBD based on festival partner needs.</p>
<p>Registration Link Due – Partners are responsible for creating and managing their own registration process.</p>	<p>No later than Oct. 1.</p>
<p>29TH ANNUAL SPIRIT & PLACE FESTIVAL Events should be scheduled beginning anytime on Friday, Nov. 1 and conclude no later than 4pm on Sunday, Nov. 10.</p>	<p>Nov. 1 – 10</p>
<p>Partner Survey & Registrant Email List – This is a partner requirement.</p>	<p>Dec. 2</p>

What is the Spirit & Place Festival?

The Spirit & Place Festival is a unique multi-day festival of events. Launched in 1996, it is the nation's *only* arts, humanities, and religion festival. It is also 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** (i.e., our “civic tools”) to bring the community together around a series of shared experiences.

A team of reviewers representing different faith traditions, races, genders, and ages read the festival applications and select festival events. **Selected events receive a \$200 stipend to help with event costs payable between late August – early October.**

Why Bother?

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:

- *[Being in the festival] allowed us to work with new partners we've always wanted to work with.*
- *[O]ur preparation [for the festival] also helped us support other organizations nationwide who are sponsoring a [similar] film screening.*
- *Without the validation from a local mainstream organization like Spirit & Place, [some] ideas . . . would not enter the public conversation.*
- *We really had a beautiful experience. Spirit & Place festival and staff were amazing to work with. They were very supportive, informative, and accommodating.*
- *Spirit & Place is a well-oiled machine that oversees a huge event and makes sure all of us little cogs can turn!*

Designing an event for the Spirit & Place Festival entails a commitment to creating an intentional experience for the public reflective of the annual theme (GRATITUDE) and rooted in the arts, humanities, and/or religion. 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.**

Key Components: Theme, Civic Tools, & Collaboration

2024 Theme: GRATITUDE

Imagine what Central Indiana would look and feel like if we practiced 10 days of gratitude? If we collectively reflected, enacted, and demonstrated what it means to give, accept, and center a spirit of appreciation while sharing space with strangers, wrestling with new ideas, and creatively expressing ourselves?

Gratitude plays a role in several of the world's religions, influences ancient and modern philosophical thought, and finds expression in a range of artistic practices. In November of 2024, Spirit & Place invites you to move beyond clichéd interpretations of "thanksgiving" to **explore the theme of GRATITUDE** in all its depth and meaning.

By asking how our communities and organizations could be different if we foregrounded gratitude, we hope festival applicants will craft events designed to explore from where gratitude emanates, how it is expressed, the function it serves in public and spiritual life, and the ways in which human creativity has blossomed and shined when expressing gratitude. We also hope the community will be given a chance to express its own feelings of gratitude in participatory events aimed at strengthening our collective sense of place and belonging.

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.

Civic Tools

Successful applicants intentionally engage one or more of Spirit & Place’s civic tools. While interdisciplinary events are encouraged – and given special preference by the Selection Committee – use of more than one tool is not required. (Don’t force what isn’t there!) **Intentional engagement with at least ONE civic tool is required to be considered for the festival.**

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.

<p>ARTS</p> <p>If designing a lecture or panel discussion, note that <i>talking about</i> an art form, genre, or artist without also sharing artistic examples is a huge miss. So is adding in an art-making activity without connecting it to the theme. To strengthen your application, share examples of theme-based questions or prompts guiding your efforts and/or how art-making activities connect with the theme.</p>
<p>HUMANITIES</p> <p>Applications MUST specify which humanities-based discipline(s) will be used (i.e., history, literature, law, etc.). Successful applicants also demonstrate how these disciplines will be used in examination of the theme. Connecting around a shared sense of “humanity” or “humanness” is NOT using a humanities discipline.</p>
<p>RELIGION</p> <p>Engaging with religion as a civic tool means unpacking practices, beliefs, music, text, etc. in relation to the theme. It does not mean creating a religious event nor does hosting an event at a place of worship constitute a religious connection. Applicants are asked to be mindful of language. 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>

Collaboration

All festival events must involve at least one external partner. The **lead partner** is responsible for submitting the application and serving as the primary liaison to Spirit & Place. There is no “right” number of **collaborating partners**. Past events have had anywhere from 1 to 10 (or more!) collaborating partners. What is important is breaking down silos and working with others to create the best event experience possible.

Special preference

Besides giving special preference to **interdisciplinary events** – those that feature a combination of our civic tools – the committee also favors. . .

- **"Never-before-seen" opportunities** that illuminate the theme.
- Dynamic and **interactive events**.
- **Diverse ideas, people, and organizations**.
- Creative endeavors that inspire attendees to be more **engaged** in their communities.
- **Collaborations** based on shared authority and co-creation.
- Interfaith events involving **non-Abrahamic traditions**.
- **Opportunities that highlight, celebrate, and intentionally include** the complex diversity of our community across faith traditions, age spans (we welcome youth events!), life experiences, and ability levels.

Spirit & Place's Mission & Values

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

Spirit & Place's values are manifested through its commitment to dismantling its own complicity in upholding institutional racism and white supremacy (see our [Black Lives Matter statement](#)). Spirit & Place strives to create welcoming and inclusive environments for all, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. 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."

Successful event applications lean into Spirit & Place's mission and values.

Community Engagement

Welcoming and inclusive events are not created *for* people, but *with* them. Keep in mind the adage, "**Nothing for us, without us.**" Authentic community engagement efforts build trust, center the voices and experiences of others, awaken new perspectives, and make a real difference. To learn more about Spirit & Place's **people-centered approach** to community engagement, visit the [Who We Are/Community Engagement Principles](#) section of our website at spiritandplace.org. You can also download a [tip sheet](#).

Accessibility

We can all do a better job in making our events accessible to those living with disabilities. To help, Spirit & Place has created [Zoom](#) and [event design tips sheets](#), as well as an [event planning video](#), aimed to help you create more accessible events.

Here are a few suggestions when working to better serve **blind and visually impaired guests**:

- Provide large font versions of printed materials.
- San serif fonts are better for digital presentations, including PowerPoints, while serif fonts work well for printed materials.
- For written materials and PowerPoints, use dark text on a light background and avoid multiple changes in font size and color.
- Reserve seating towards the front of the venue and check that sightlines are clear.
- Consider how **audio description services** might enhance your event.

When planning accessible events for the **deaf and hard of hearing communities**, consider:

- ASL services. Spirit & Place can help you identify organizations as well as independent contractors who provide ASL. (If you work for a university, check in with student services!)
- If you do provide ASL, reserve seats with a clear sightline to the interpreter.
- Always use a microphone when speaking to large groups. **Spirit & Place has a portable sound system you can borrow.**
- Does your venue have assistive listening devices available? Use them.
- If your event has a virtual component, use the live captioning option.

For those with **mobility concerns or service animals**:

- Clearly designate appropriate seating. Reserve seats in the back, sides, and front of the room. Guests deserve options but make sure pathways and seating areas are free of obstacles.

In all cases, make sure **handicapped parking, restrooms, and entrances** are clearly marked and that your **volunteers are trained to help guests make the best choices for themselves** on where to sit and which accommodation to use.

If you are providing ASL interpretation, assistive listening devices, audio description services or any other accommodation, let Spirit & Place know! We will work with you to ensure this important information is included in your event description and other promotional materials.

Contact Spirit & Place to learn more.

Accessibility Grants

Indiana Humanities will launch a new grant in early 2024 which will provide organizations up to \$5,000 to help make their **public humanities** programming more accessible. Visit **indianahumanities.org** to learn more.

Selection Criteria

Learn more about the selection process and criteria on the [Festival Application Process](#) page of our website.

- 1.) ***Theme (required).** Freedom to interpret the theme is part of what makes the festival such a wonderfully diverse experience. Event ideas should emanate from the theme and the theme should be central to the audience experience.
- 2.) ***Civic Tools (required).** Intentional use of the arts, humanities, and/or religion is essential. 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?
- 3.) ***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**.
- 4.) **Clarity.** Does the application show a clarity of purpose and explain what the event is? The committee needs to understand what the audience will experience and how. Remember, this is a festival of events – describe the event!
- 5.) **Inventiveness.** Will people only find this event within the Spirit & Place Festival? Does the event offer fresh insights, bold topics, thought-provoking speakers, creative partnerships, an inventive format, or a unique venue?
- 6.) **Audience Care.** The committee wants to know WHO your audience is and HOW you will design for their needs. Will you involve the senses, physical movement, and/or the intellectual and creative contributions from the audience? How are you shaping your event around your audiences' needs?
- 7.) **Commitment Beyond Self.** If the committee thinks your only festival goal is increased visibility or brand awareness, 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. (Hey, we're not saying you can't leverage your festival event for greater organizational visibility, but that shouldn't be your #1 goal.)

WE rather than ME.

Events focused on presenting an organization's story (**infomercial events**) rather than creating a dynamic audience experience connected to the theme will struggle. So will events that fail to remember, "**Nothing for us, without us.**" If planning an event *about* a group of people, that group needs to be involved from the beginning. This is an important element of **knowing your lane**. Engage prospective collaborative partners early in the process. Don't wait to contact key partners until after you've learned if you've been selected. **Community partners should be advising on your application and event design!**

Application & Event Tips

Want your application to really stand out? ***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.** Event selections are made based on the strength of the application. The more details you have nailed down, the stronger your chances. It is NOT REQUIRED to have every event detailed confirmed, but the more you have, the better.
- **Clarity & Focus.** Know your “why” and 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.) 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. Move beyond a surface level approach to using the arts, humanities, and religion and go deep.
- **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 in 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 or hoping to engage audiences outside your area of expertise or organizational mission. **In these cases, culturally/religiously sensitive and knowledgeable partners are a must!**
- **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.

Getting Started:

Design for your Audience.

Start with an idea rooted in the theme. Next, define your audience. Be specific. Design an event tailored to your audiences’ needs and interests. Don’t start designing an event based on your passions and then try to squeeze in a theme connection or “find” an audience after the fact.

Find more application tips on the [Festival Application Process](#) page.

Event Design & Application Support

All applicants, especially first-time applicants, are **strongly encouraged** to attend one of the [spring info sessions](#) (in-person or Zoom) **AND** schedule a one-on-one meeting with the Program Director before beginning their application.

Applicants are also encouraged to take advantage of the event design materials found in Spirit & Place's [Event Design Toolkit](#) prior to submitting their application. Useful materials include:

- [Event Intentionality Worksheet](#)
- [Who's Your Audience Worksheet](#)
- [Community Engagement & Events](#)
- [Designing Successful Events \(video\)](#)
- [Event Accessibility \(video\)](#)

After homing in on an event idea, audience, and collaborating partners, these additional resources found on the [Festival Application Process](#) page of our website can help you draft a compelling application:

- Narrative Examples
- Application Tips
- **Red Flags**
- Dynamic Application Prep Form

Online Application: Audiences & Accessibility

The application prep form and online application prompt you to drill down on the **characteristics of your audience**. This is meant to help you focus on your intended audience and aids the Selection Committee in understanding who your event is for.

You will also be asked about any **accessibility accommodations** you plan to offer. Not sure how or where to start with accessibility planning? Contact Spirit & Place to discuss ideas.

Festival Event Support/Partner Benefits

If selected for the festival, we will support your efforts through a **\$200 event stipend** (payable no later than October), continued **one-on-one event design coaching**, and **assorted training sessions** leading up to the festival.

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, as well as **media alerts** grouping festival events by specific categories.
- Posting overall festival dates to **community calendars**. (Event partners should 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 **Facebook carousel ads** and **Google ads** for all events. (Specific social media ad categories are subject to change.)

Spirit & Place prints **7,000+ event guides** and delivers them to all event venues and partner organizations in October. Spirit & Place also sends out **e-blasts to 7,000+ 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, DO NOT rely on Spirit & Place alone to generate an audience.
EVERYONE needs to engage in promotional efforts.**

Using the [PR Matrix](#) helps.



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 meet accommodation requests.
- **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 unless it is community-engaged.
- **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.** Events should 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.

Community-Engaged Research

Outputs from events with research or project goals must center the community and be shared with the community. Audiences need to understand *from the beginning* that the event has research/project goals, and their participation will be used to further these goals. (University Folks: Events requiring an IRB that do not have a public component as an output will not be accepted into the festival.)

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 (July 9, 2024) or ensure a collaborating partner attend.
- Schedule a one-on-one meeting with the Spirit & Place Program Director prior to October 15. (In person, Zoom, or phone call.)
- 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**.
- Not repeat the event between August 1 – December 31, 2024 (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 2, 2024. Failure to supply this information will make you ineligible for next year's festival.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions.

Thank you!