

# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

## 2020 WATERWAYS FILM PROJECT



**CALL ANNOUNCED:** JULY 7, 2020  
**PROPOSALS DUE:** AUGUST 21, 2020  
**FILMS COMPLETED BY:** JUNE 1, 2021

### OVERVIEW

Indiana Humanities seeks proposals for the creation of high-quality short films (5-15 minutes) that explore Hoosiers' relationships to our state's waterways, including but not limited to the White River watershed. We plan to award 3-6 proposals that represent a range of stories and viewpoints that complement and/or deepen (rather than repeat) themes and ideas expressed in previous films about Indiana waterways, including those we produced about the White River in 2018-2019.

Thanks to special funding from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, at least two of the selected proposals will be about or set along/in the White River and/or the White River watershed.

Our goal is to sponsor the production of educational yet moving films that invite Hoosiers to think, read and talk about the past, present and future of Indiana waterways, with a humanistic lens. We plan to use these films in 2021 and beyond in two primary ways: 1) on our website and social media for audiences to view and learn on their own; 2) pending the quality of the final products, at screenings we sponsor.

Selected filmmakers will receive \$6,500; a match is not required but the proposed project must be able to be completed with the funds we provide and on the timeline we outline (applicants can combine our funds with other support). Applicants can be independent filmmakers, teams, creative agencies, experienced or novice filmmakers. We will consider proposals for works-in-progress that align to the themes and timeline outlined below. Completed films, instructional films, films that advocate for a particular political outcome, films made for a client, and sponsored films are not eligible.

It is important to Indiana Humanities to have a diverse set of voices and perspectives included in this project. We know that who is behind the camera affects the kinds of stories that are told and how they're told. We hope to receive applications from diverse filmmakers in regards to race, religion, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, national origin, and veteran status.

### PROJECT BACKGROUND

Next year, Indiana Humanities will launch a variety of programs to help Hoosiers consider the ways their lives are shaped by the environment, and how they in turn shape the land, air and water of Indiana. A particular focus, building on several years of programming around the White River through its Next Indiana Campfires program, will focus on Hoosiers' particular relationship to our waterways.

The 2020 Waterways Film Project builds on the success and momentum of the [White River films we funded in 2018-2019](#), as well as [subsequent film projects](#) we have initiated. Film is a special medium that allows for

storytelling that complements the other ways we're inviting Hoosiers to think, read and talk about Indiana waterways, including the White River, through our [Next Indiana Campfires](#) program. We are also eager to create more opportunities for Hoosiers to have their own experiences documented and reflected back to them on screen, as well as to support the burgeoning community of filmmakers based in and telling stories about Indiana.

The 2020 Waterways Film Project is made possible through a generous grant from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust. Indiana Humanities is a proud member of the Partners for the White River, which collectively are focused on improving the health of the White River, improving access to the White River and increasing the public's appreciation for this vital Indiana waterway.

## FILM THEMES AND MESSAGES

We're looking for waterways stories that hook us and surprise us, that are worth talking about with our friends and neighbors. We're asking for films between 5 and 15 minutes in length that introduce viewers to memorable characters and big ideas. We expect all information presented in the film to be factually accurate and encourage the use of historical sources, authoritative experts and fact-checkers as part of your process. We are equally open to documentaries that trace history or focus on a key historical moment, as well as "essayistic" films that reflect a personal point of view and individual creator's sensibility, or films that take an idea and explore its variances and complexity.

As stated above, while we will consider all proposals, we are especially eager to support films that explore new territory from the ones that have been made about Indiana waterways, including the White River, to date. Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- people of color and/or low-income people's experiences in and relationship to Indiana waterways, including questions of access and environmental justice, especially in the White River watershed;
- a closer look at farmers and the role of agriculture in shaping the overall health of Indiana's waterways, or a look at industry and development and its impacts on a specific waterway;
- the efforts to imagine and create new recreational opportunities along Indiana rivers, lakes or other bodies of water, and the outcome of these projects;
- the historical moments, decisions or individuals/organizations that have impacted the health of specific Indiana waterways over time;
- how pollution, overuse and/or climate change is affecting Indiana waterways and how communities are grappling with these changes;
- and the significance of particular waterways to the history and development of particular Indiana communities and/or the lived, intimate experiences of Hoosiers in relation to their waterways

In keeping with our first round of White River films, filmmakers might also consider these humanities themes:

- **Connectedness:** By their nature, waterways (especially rivers and watersheds) connect people across broad geographies; urban, rural and suburban; agricultural, residential and industrial; and so many other kinds of boundaries. The varied ways Hoosiers use the land surrounding their waterways affects the health of the systems and the communities along them. Ecology is the study of how organisms relate to each other and their environment; ecology is a good metaphor for thinking about human relationships too.

- **Difference:** Hoosiers relate to their waterways in a variety of ways. There are competing claims—recreational, commercial, environmental, etc.—on how they and the land around them should be used. Not everyone agrees on what steps should be taken to care for Indiana waterways. Though united by a common geographic feature, the lives of people who live in the watershed can be very different.
- **Identity and Place:** Many elements influence our sense of who we are, including landscape and environment. We form identities as individuals but also collectively as members of neighborhood, local and statewide communities. Generations of Hoosier writers, artists and creators have expressed their relationship to the natural world and helped to define a sense of character and place in Indiana. How have our waterways influenced who we are as Hoosiers or how we see ourselves?
- **Values:** At the end of the day, how we do (or don't) care for our waterways is a question of our values and beliefs. Many factors shape our moral framework, which in turn guides our personal actions and policy choices. It's important to create space for Hoosiers to consider multiple points of view and discuss openly and respectfully even when we disagree.
- **Action:** Hoosiers take steps in their everyday lives to clean up and care for their waterways. An inspiring network of volunteers and professionals have dedicated their lives to improving water quality, ecological health and access to the White River, the Lake Michigan lakeshore, the Maumee and Wabash rivers, our lakes and streams. Decision-makers and influencers have a special role to play in the future of these waterways. Sometimes we need examples and models that inspire us, as well as help us to think through the different possibilities before us.

**Only non-fiction/documentary film proposals will be considered;** please do not submit a fictional film proposal.

## FILMMAKER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Indiana Humanities seeks applications that reflect the entire scope of work from development and pre-production to production and post-production. Additional funds will not be granted if applicants fail to finish the film within the budget outlined below. When submitting a proposal, please keep in mind deliverable expectations and timeline.

## TIMELINE

Applications open on July 7 and proposals are due by end of day August 21, 2020. Selected candidates may be asked to have a short phone call or video chat with reviewers to learn more about their ideas and vision. Our goal is to notify filmmakers by September 15 at the latest.

Films should be completed and digital file(s) submitted to Indiana Humanities by June 1, 2021. Prior to that deadline, Indiana Humanities should be notified of any major changes to proposed timeline and contents; we may also ask for short clips to use for fundraising and/or promotional purposes prior to the deadline. In general, we hope to enjoy a collaborative and generative relationship with each filmmaker.

## OWNERSHIP/COPYRIGHT

While the filmmaker retains ownership and copyright, Indiana Humanities retains the right of unlimited use to screen and/or stream the film and/or edit clips or screengrabs for a trailer or other promotional purposes.

Filmmakers are encouraged to submit their completed films to festivals, etc.

Indiana Humanities must be credited on screen in both the opening credits (if there are any) and the closing credits, as follows:

Opening Credits:

- Acknowledged as funder, i.e., “with the support of Indiana Humanities”

Closing Credits:

- Acknowledged as funder, i.e., “Indiana Humanities” appears in any listing of funders
- IH logo appears on screen for minimum of 3 seconds (we will provide animated and still versions of our logo for your use)

## FILM PRODUCTION BUDGET

Filmmakers will receive stipends of \$6,500. Filmmaker stipends are paid out in two installments. The first is paid after return of a signed MOU and storyboard, with the final half paid after the successful completion of the film and delivery of the digital file(s).

## TO APPLY

Individual filmmakers or video production companies should submit a proposal to Leah Nahmias ([lnahmias@indianahumanities.org](mailto:lnahmias@indianahumanities.org)) by August 21, 2020. The proposal should include the following:

- Background and resume of filmmaker/production company
- Online reel or links to other work for reviewers to reference
- Personal statement of interest
- Description of how you will approach the project, including story ideas and/or creative approach
- Timeline showing how you will complete work by June 1, 2021.
- List of project team and their roles, including any vendors or subcontractors and how they will be involved
- A list of at least two references