



Youth Powered for Unity

Community Powered, a project of Wisconsin Humanities that helps Wisconsin communities unearth and tell local stories, is piloting a new program as part of the White House's [United We Stand](#) initiative on hate crimes, violence, and domestic extremism. **We are developing a curriculum to train high-school-age youth to facilitate community conversations across Wisconsin.** We plan to pilot our curriculum this Spring by hosting a series of trainings and conversations to build awareness of and consider responses to hate crimes and hate-motivated violence.

Currently Seeking Partners

We are currently seeking organizations to partner with us in these initial trainings and conversations in Spring 2024.

- **Contacts:** Please email Benny Witkovsky (benny.witkovsky@wisconsinhumanities.org) and Chrissy Widmayer (chrissy.widmayer@wisconsinhumanities.org) if you are interested in learning more.
- **Info Session:** We will be holding an informational conversation for potential community partners over **Zoom on Thursday January 25 at 1pm.** Contact Chrissy and Benny for details.

Why Youth-Led Community Conversations?

We believe that all youth can benefit from developing facilitation skills. The skills taught in this training will focus on planning and organizing conversations, fostering engagement and addressing conflict, and communicating difficult material to a varied audience. In addition, we know that youth can often be agents of change and progress, and we hope that these conversations help bring that youth power to Wisconsin communities and demonstrate their potential for local leadership.

Why Conversations about Hate Crimes and Violence?

Recent events, both in Wisconsin around the country, have demonstrated the need for a deeper engagement on issues of hate, hate crimes, and violence. We believe that youth have a tremendous opportunity to connect us in a multi-generational process of recognizing the potential for hate and hate crimes in our communities. Furthermore, since this theme has been set by the White House and the National Endowment for Humanities, Wisconsin youth are joining thousands of youth and adults across the country having similar conversations.

What will this program look like?

The program will consist of two parts:

1. A 1-day training for youth facilitators in each community (with potential to join together with another community depending on timing and geography)
2. A 2-hour community conversation open to the broader public



We plan to train 5-10 high-school-age youth to serve as facilitators in each location. We anticipate that the community conversations will engage 20-30 members of the public. These two events can be scheduled at the convenience of our local partners; they could be on the same weekend or within a few weeks of each other. **We plan to hold the trainings and conversations in March, April, or May 2024.**

What are we asking for from local partners?

- An adult engaged with local youth who can help organize and support the youth
- Help identifying a small group (5-10) of high-school-age youth who are interested in the project.
- Help scheduling both the training and the community conversation
- Help securing space for both the training and the conversation
- Help publicizing and recruiting members of the public to join the conversation.

What will Wisconsin Humanities provide?

- A curriculum for the training and funding for needed materials and supplies
- A detailed guide for the structured community conversation
- Trainers who will travel to you to lead the training and support the youth facilitators during the community conversation
- A certificate for the youth recognizing their participation and training

Who could be a local partner?

- Libraries, Religious Institutions, Community Centers, etc. whose mission includes gathering and connecting community members
- Educators from schools, Extension, or youth organizations who have relationships with youth with experience or an interest in leading others
- Adults or youth who want to join and bring others to a local leadership team for a short-term, but significant project

If you are interested in learning more and in attending our informational conversation for community partners, please contact Benny Witkovsky at benny.witkovsky@wisconsinhumanities.org and Chrissy Widmayer at chrissy.widmayer@wisconsinhumanities.org