

Final author pitch deadline: August 6

Dear publishing partners,

This year, Heartland's author events will be crafted as uniquely thematic cross-publisher conversations our booksellers and audience members can't get anywhere else.

The first deadline for author pitches has passed. We reviewed the submissions and isolated a number of common themes, which are listed below. Help us build robust events by pitching authors for the themes listed here. We are looking for authors perfect for the topics below with books coming out this fall and early winter. In addition, we want to hear ideas for moderators who would serve these topics well—anyone in the literary world, including publishing staff. Once the final themes and participants are selected, we will work with publishers to confirm dates that work for the authors we choose to showcase.

Please know, not every event listed here will make it to fruition. For better or worse, we have far more content to work with than any one virtual trade show will allow! The slate of events we have in mind will likely showcase 30-35 authors, while we were pitched more than 125. Know that we're excited to get back to our in-person trade show format where we have the capability to showcase far higher quantity of authors than a virtual venue allows.

If you've already pitched authors, thank you! We will be in touch after the deadline passes to let you know our final decisions. We are excited to create unique and compelling author events with our industry partners. Please email Carrie Oby if you have questions about author placement (carrie@midwestbooksellers.org).

This second call for authors will close on August 6.

Note: These are not the final event names or descriptions. They will evolve as more pitches are received.

The Elements of Excellent Book Clubs

What makes a book an excellent book club selection? How can authors facilitate rewarding book clubs with independent booksellers? Our vision is to have two seasoned, charismatic keynote authors with a proven indie bookstore affinity introduce a series of debut and up-and-coming authors, kind of like The View for book clubs.

Our request: Authors with extensive book club experience and/or authors with books presumed to have exceptional book club potential. We'd love to see authors who have specifically worked with indie bookstores to offer book club events.

Teaching Black Lives Matter through Books

Heartland Fall Forum 2021, second call for authors

Books are often the best way to facilitate hard conversations and build a path to better understanding. We've been pitched a cluster of nonfiction books written to educate and inspire our young children in the fight for equal rights, lifting up of Black lives and heritage, and dismantling white privilege. We'll ask these authors to talk about what inspired them to create these books, which books are equally important to the message, and what books on their shelves keep them motivated to create a better world.

Our request: Authors with books geared for YA, Middle Grade, and children's picture book audiences with content that actively educates children on how systems of oppression affect our lives and what we can do to create a better world.

Representation Matters: YA and Middle Grade Books for Everyone

In the book publishing world, a refreshing diversity of previously unheard identities are getting protagonists of their own. In the categories of Middle Grade and YA, "seeing yourself on the shelf" can fundamentally transform one's perception of themselves and how they interact with the world.

Our request: Authors expanding representation in YA and MG literature by writing diverse protagonists in the widest possible sense of the term.

Make a spectrum of your shelves: Trans titles for independent bookstores

Motivated by A Room of One's Own call on Twitter for "more trans protagonists," our vision is to work with trans bookseller activists to shape an event that informs us of some the best trans books being published and how to stock your shelves to best represent this category. We hope to include a number of trans authors in the conversation.

Our request: Authors with trans characters in fiction for all ages. This is currently envisioned as an event for fiction authors.

Midwest to the Moon

What do visions of a future America look like from the heart of the country? This event showcases a collection of Midwestern sci-fi and otherworldly authors who spin a story out of visions of a near future America and speculate on where our most challenging problems and moments could lead us.

Our request: Midwestern fiction authors whose books put forward an imaginative vision of the future.

Spinning a Midwest yarn

That feeling when you discover a book and an author so thoroughly steeped in the Midwest you just know it's going to resonate with a wide cross-section of bookstore customers. This event focuses on a handful of hyper regional Midwest titles, some of them categorized as Midwest Gothic.

Heartland Fall Forum 2021, second call for authors

Our request: Authors who live in the Midwest or are closely associated with it publishing books where Midwestern states are an active element in the storyline.

Fantasy for tiny feminists

Whether light and quirky or dark and brooding, we're looking for YA and Middle Grade fantasy where the person who saves the kingdom, heals disease, unites the warring factions, reunites lost family, and conquers the battle is a girl and demonstrates powerful young female protagonists in action.

Our request: Middle grade and YA fiction in which young female protagonists inhabit powerful roles.