2024 Total Solar Eclipse Planning Toolkit

INDIANA UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR RURAL ENGAGEMENT

TAKE THE STEPS TO PLAN FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

1. Know the facts
2. Create a plan
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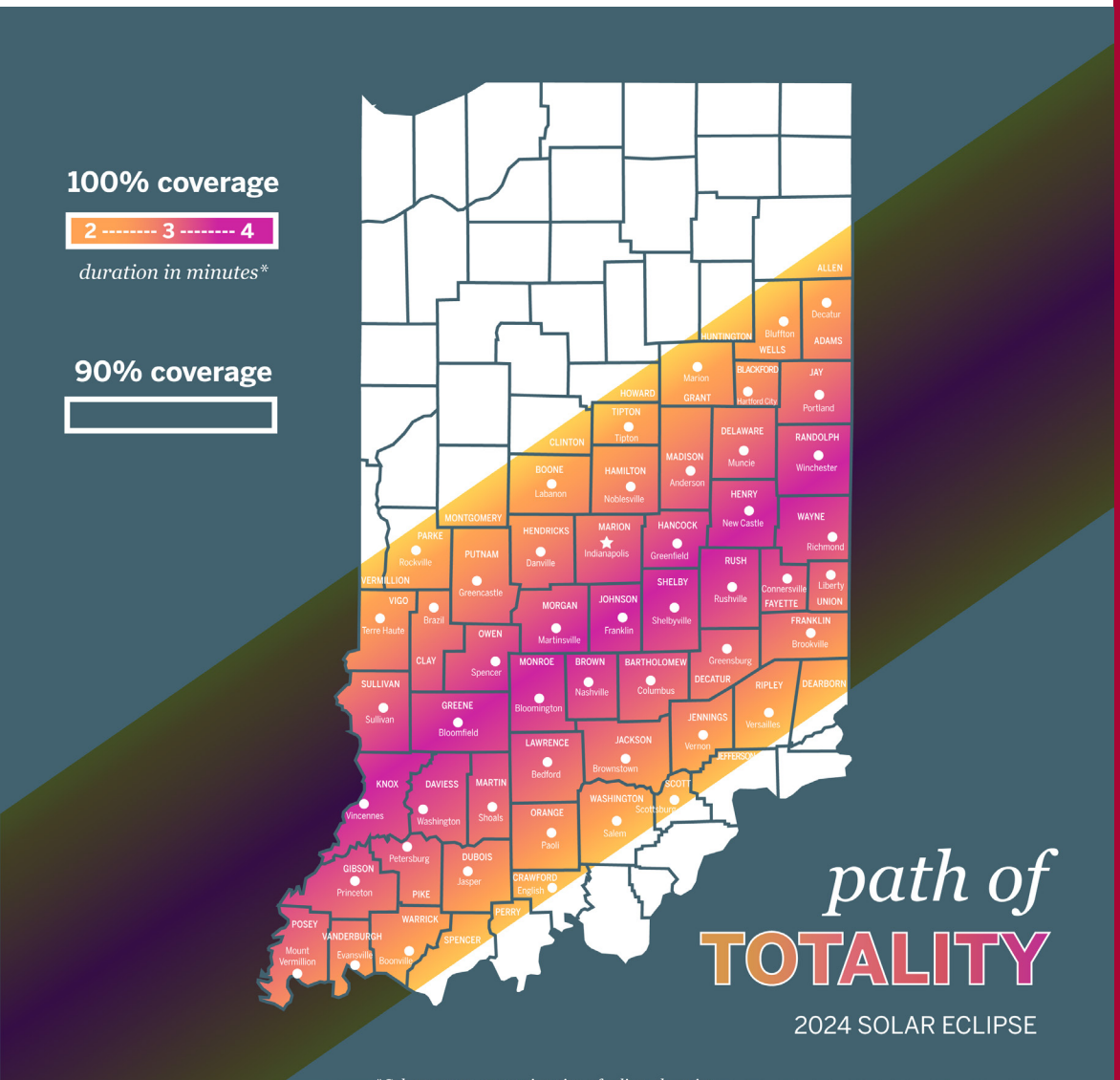
2024 TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE PLANNING TOOLKIT

The precise alignment required for a total solar eclipse to cross over a specific region, such as Indiana, is a rare and awe-inspiring celestial coincidence. Despite total solar eclipses occurring approximately every eighteen months worldwide, they only occur about every 400 years in the same place.

To put things into perspective, the next total solar eclipse to reach the state of Indiana after April 8, 2024, will be on September 14, 2099—and the next one to cross Indianapolis, IN, will be on October 26, 2153.[1] The Moon's elliptical orbit around the Earth, and it's five-degree tilt to Earth's orbit around the Sun, truly make it a once-in-a-lifetime experience to see the Moon and the Sun align from your home on Earth![2]

And the rarity of this event makes it a big task to plan for it. Indiana's rural communities are going to not only face large crowds, traffic, and congestion, but also an exciting opportunity to engage with locals and tourists. Planning early will allow community leaders to make the most of the total solar eclipse.

The 2024 Total Solar Eclipse Planning Toolkit is organized to provide background on the next total solar eclipse and resources to help you prepare yourself and your community for the anticipated excitement surrounding this event—both logistically and creatively.



COUNTIES IN THE PATH OF TOTALITY INCLUDE:

Adams
Allen
Bartholomew
Blackford
Boone
Brown
Clay
Clinton
Crawford
Daviess
Dearborn
Decatur
Delaware
Dubois
Fayette
Franklin
Gibson
Grant
Greene
Hamilton
Hancock
Hendricks
Henry
Howard
Huntington
Jackson
Jay
Jefferson
Jennings
Johnson
Knox
Lawrence
Madison
Marion
Martin
Monroe
Montgomery
Morgan
Orange
Owen
Parke
Perry
Posey
Putnam
Randolph
Ripley
Rush
Scott
Shelby
Spencer
Sullivan
Tipton
Union
Vanderburgh
Vermillion
Vigo
Warrick
Washington
Wayne
Wells

1 | KNOW THE FACTS

WHAT IS AN ECLIPSE?[3]

A total solar eclipse occurs when the Earth, the Moon, and the Sun form a straight line, resulting in the Moon completely blocking the Sun and casting a shadow on the Earth. The next total solar eclipse with a path of totality to cross Indiana will be on April 8, 2024.

Before totality begins, you will start to see changes around you. If the Sun is out, you might notice that shadows sharpen and the temperature decreases. To the southwest, you will see the clouds darken as the Moon starts to block the Sun. Faint ripples of fluctuating light, called shadow bands, will begin to appear on the ground. Winds might pick up, or even change direction. In the last phases of the partial eclipse, before totality begins, an eerie light will emerge—this is because the edges of the Sun, the only part visible in the partial eclipse phases, are a different temperature of light. This causes colors to appear "off," or more saturated and with more contrast.

As totality approaches, a momentary spectacle known as Bailey's beads emerges. As the moon starts to cover the Sun's disk, the sunlight passes through the valleys and mountains on the Moon's edge, creating a series of bright spots that resemble shining beads around the Moon's silhouette. These beads only occur just before and after the total eclipse phase, creating a stunning visual spectacle for observers on Earth. The first and last beads shine like a bright diamond on a thin ring—this is called the diamond ring effect.

Even if your view of the total solar eclipse is obstructed by the clouds, there will still be exciting changes in the environment. Depending on your location relative to the center of the path of totality, it may appear as though there is a "360-degree sunset" around you, deepening as the Moon increasingly blocks the Sun until transitioning into complete darkness. This replication of night can onset behavioral responses in pets and wildlife—birds may stop singing and start to roost, bees may return to their hives, and bats may begin to forage.

In totality, once your eyes adjust, you will start to see the Sun's corona: a halo of wispy, white plasma surrounding the obscured Sun. The extent of activity in the corona varies on an 11-year cycle, and we are lucky enough to experience a total solar eclipse when it is increasingly active.

SAFELY OBSERVING A TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

Looking directly at the partial solar eclipse without adequate eye protection, even for just a few seconds, can lead to permanent eye damage or even blindness.

To directly observe a solar eclipse during its partial phases, **you must use proper eye protection** such as solar viewing glasses ("eclipse glasses") or a handheld solar viewer that comply with the ISO 12312-2 international standard.[4] Note:

- Regular sunglasses are **not** safe for viewing the partial phases of a total solar eclipse.
- Viewing the Sun through binoculars or a telescope without the correct solar filters will immediately cause **severe eye injury**, as the lenses in these devices concentrate the sunlight and direct it toward your eyes.

ECLIPSE GLASSES AND HANDHELD SOLAR VIEWERS

When purchasing eclipse glasses or handheld solar viewers, it is essential that they are sourced from a reputable company where the products are properly tested and shown to be safe. Visit the American Astronomical Society website to find a list of safe manufacturers and importers of eclipse glasses and handheld solar viewers, as well as their resellers and distributors: https://eclipse.aas.org/resources/solar-filters.

You may alternatively find eclipse glasses or handheld solar viewers at local, reliable institutions, such as libraries, schools, or museums—just ensure that the products are ISO 12312-2 certified (usually noted in small print, on the back). For added measure, you can also check that no light comes through the solar filter of the glasses or handheld solar viewer besides that of the Sun. Otherwise, they are not ISO 12312-2 certified and are unsafe for viewing the total solar eclipse.[5]

Before using a solar filter to directly view the eclipse, check the material for scratches, holes, or other imperfections, as damage to the solar filter in eclipse glasses or handheld solar viewers could lessen its ability to protect your eyes. Keep your eclipse glasses or handheld solar viewer in a safe place while not in use, to prevent damage to the solar filter throughout the day.

INDIRECTLY VIEWING THE ECLIPSE

If you are unable to obtain eclipse handheld solar viewers or glasses, or want to experiment with other ways to view the eclipse, you can try indirect viewing methods. If you are crafty, simple materials like cereal boxes, colanders, and paper can be used to indirectly view a solar eclipse through a pinhole projection—visit the Resources section to explore a variety of indirect viewing methods. These are particularly helpful tools for passing the time during the partial stages of the solar eclipse, which can last over an hour!

Remember, never look directly at the sun during the partial phases of a total solar eclipse without eclipse glasses or a handheld solar viewer. *You can only safely view the eclipse directly during totality.*

WEATHER CONDITIONS

Weather conditions play a significant role in the comfort and safety of viewing the eclipse. Adequate preparation, such as bringing sunscreen, wearing appropriate clothing, or taking note of the nearest shelter before finding a viewing spot can be planned if you know what to expect for your area.

Based on historical weather conditions in April, there is about a 60% chance that clouds will obstruct the view of the eclipse across Indiana. By monitoring the weather forecast, you can determine the likelihood of cloud cover during the eclipse for your area and plan accordingly; if there's a high chance of cloudy conditions, you might consider finding an alternative viewing location. But even if clouds do block your view of the eclipse, you will still notice exciting changes in the environment around you.

RESOURCES

Information by state. The Great American Eclipse website provides a depth of information on solar eclipses in general, with pages covering basics of the eclipse, logistics and safety considerations, and state-specific statistics based on previous eclipses: https://www.greatamericaneclipse.com.

Resources and eclipse information. The American Astronomical Society provides a variety of resources relating to the eclipse, covering topics ranging from eye safety to photography. Additional resources for apps, maps, books, articles, and more are located on their website: https://eclipse.aas.org.

Eclipse activities. Science-Technology Activities and Resources for Libraries (STAR net) has numerous activities on their website, including methods for how to indirectly view the total solar eclipse: https://www.starnetlibraries.org/about/our-projects/solar-eclipse-activities-libraries-seal.

CHECKLIST

Can I Safely View the Eclipse?

The only time you can view the total solar eclipse safely is if:

- ☐ I am in the path of totality ***and*** the Sun is completely blocked by the Moon
- ☐ I have eclipse glasses or a handheld solar viewer.

It is recommended to wait a few seconds after totality begins before viewing the eclipse directly, and it is imperitave to proactively reapply eclipse glasses or use a handheld solar viewer before the end of totality, so you are never unintentionally looking at the Sun directly.

Timing the Solar Eclipse

Visit the interactive Time and Date website to find when and where the eclipse crosses your area. https://www.timeanddate.com/eclipse/map/2024-april-8

- ☐ Location: _____
- ☐ Start of partial eclipse: _____
- ☐ ***Start of total eclipse:** _____
- ☐ ***Maximum eclipse:** _____
- ☐ ***End of total eclipse:** _____
- ☐ End of partial eclipse: _____
- ☐ Duration of totality: _____

**If you are in the path of totality, then it is safe to directly view the total solar eclipse directly without eclipse glasses or a solar handheld viewer within these times.*

Assessing the weather

Locate historical and projected weather data, to get a sense of what to expect on April 8, 2024:
https://www.weather.gov/wrh/climate
https://www.timeanddate.com/weather

- ☐ Temperature: _____
- ☐ Precipitation: _____
- ☐ Percent chance of clouds: _____

2 | CREATE A PLAN

Equipped with a foundation of what to expect during the next total solar eclipse to cross Indiana, you can begin to plan for yourself and your community. Given that the eclipse will affect everyone in its path, it is crucial to inform and involve all stakeholders in preparing for this event.

BUILD YOUR TEAM

Make a task force. Include a diverse representation of those impacted by the eclipse to help ensure that plans address the needs in your community across a variety of scales. One way to do this is to form partnerships across your community. Including stakeholders from different backgrounds will fill in the gaps with the unique expertise and experience you will need in order to work through all elements in the days leading up to and including the eclipse.

Include anyone leading organizations in your community that may by impacted by the total solar eclipse. Add members as the eclipse nears based on the direction of your plans and where you need more support.

Reach out to contacts from these organizations and create a plan to meet regularly and at increasing frequency as the eclipse nears. Use these meetings to develop an eclipse planning strategy that accounts for both the needs and resources within your community. Start by gathering the most recent quantitative data on housing for the county in question.

Bring in support. The total solar eclipse is a unique event, making it necessary to call on experts for advice on understanding and communicating the event accurately.

Astronomy organizations are a great place to start when trying to bring in amateurs or experts in astronomy, science, weather, or eclipses to help inform decisions made by the task force team. In the months leading up to the eclipse, it may help to bring in additional support to take on tasks relating to media, marketing, and communications. You can also hire or assign an individual to the role of eclipse coordinator—someone who leads eclipse planning efforts, acting as a resource to community members and a point of contact between stakeholders.

KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT—AND WHAT YOU CAN'T PREDICT

There are many unknowns when it comes to planning for the total solar eclipse—weather conditions, number of visitors, and the inevitable day-of mishaps. But you can still make a plan to address what you do know, and to buffer the impact of any unexpected circumstances.

Expect crowds. Indiana is expected to see between 145,000 and 581,000 eclipse visitors, in addition to the 3,947,000 people already living inside the path of totality.[6] Visitor estimates for each community vary, but are necessary to estimate for effective planning.

Estimate visitors. You can use the "knowns" in your community to estimate the unknowns—such as the number of anticipated visitors in your community.[7]

Dr. Kate Russo, eclipse experience expert, suggests first identifying the largest event for your community (i.e., the Fourth of July, the County Fair) and multiplying this number of visitors by an "x factor." This "x factor" is based on educated assumptions such as, the number of family members that may accompany each "known" visitor, or the number of hotels and campgrounds that are booked already. Depending on the assets in your community, you may be multiplying the number of visitors by an "x factor" of 1.5, or 2, or even 2.5.

Factors to consider in your estimate:

- The population of your community
- Anticipated number of friends and family per each member of your community
- Formal accommodation capacity (e.g., hotel rooms, camp sites)
- Informal accommodation capacity (e.g., fields, woods)

Note that these are estimates. And regardless of the anticipated number of visitors for your community, you will also need to know your capacity and what you will do if it is exceeded. It is better to overestimate the number of visitors—and have plans to accommodate them—rather than underestimate.

Expect traffic. One of the key concerns with the total solar eclipse is the number of visitors traveling by car.[8]

Traffic considerations for your community:

- Where will people park? Will there be off-site parking with shuttles?
- What is your plan for accommodating emergency services?
- How will you accommodate routine travel?
- How will you communicate plans with long-distance travelers?

Convene your eclipse task force to collaboratively estimate eclipse visitors and plan for potential traffic issues. Utilize diverse perspectives to prepare for accommodating visitors and managing excessive traffic. Develop contingency measures for higher-than-expected visitor numbers. A well-prepared plan enhances your community's readiness to celebrate the eclipse.

RESOURCES

Lessons learned from the 2017 eclipse. Materials from the Solar Eclipse Planning workshop hosted by the American Astronomical Society are available on their website. Experts speak on topics ranging from community experience to traffic and safety: https://eclipse.aas.org/workshops/jun2023.

General guidance for safe eclipse planning. The Homeland Security Digital Library is a great resource for fact sheets, checklists, locally developed guidance documents, and news articles on eye safety, injury treatment, and planned mass gatherings in rural and urban areas. The Solar Eclipses: Planning Resources [September 2022] document compiles many of these sources: https://www.hsdl.org/c/view?docid=880095.

Eclipse planning in Indiana. The May 2023 issue of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security magazine, The Hoosier Responder, includes a section on eclipse planning in Indiana: https://www.in.gov/dhs/files/Hoosier-Responder-2023-05.pdf.

Finding eclipse experts. Discover amateur astronomers who may be interested in supporting your community's eclipse planning: https://lovethenightsky.com/astronomy-clubs-in-indiana

https://www.go-astronomy.com/astro-clubs-state.php?State=IN.

CHECKLIST

☐ **Make a Task Force**
Use the space below to create a list of key stakeholders to include. Consider representatives from organizations like local government, emergency management agencies, tourism bureaus and visitor centers, transporation departments, local businesses and non-profit organizations, and local libraries and public schools.

☐ **Bring in Experts and Support**
Next, create a list of experts and support. Consider representatives from astronomy organizations or science clubs, support staff and volunteers, and an eclipse coordinator.

☐ **Estimate Your Visitors and Address Traffic:**
Using the guidance on the previous page, write your visitor estimate and plans to accommodate travel.

3 | ENGAGE WITH THE COMMUNITY

STARTING POINTS FOR ECLIPSE EVENTS

By organizing eclipse events, communities can create unique opportunities for interaction, connection, and a stronger sense of community. Find a balance between creativity and leveraging what assets your community already has. Consider using the total solar eclipse as an opportunity to implement new, recurring activities or downtown events, such as:

- Festivals
- Downtown or main street events
- Viewing parties at parks
- Science demonstrations at libraries or schools
- Panels on cultural perspectives and science of the eclipse

Encourage local businesses to think creatively. Are there new ways to serve visitors? What local goods might they highlight? Not all eclipse programming has to be considered separately from "business as usual.

REPRESENTATION AND INCLUSIVITY IN EVENT PROGRAMMING

Working with underserved audiences is key to hosting inclusive eclipse events in your community. Build these connections in your community early in the planning process, to build trust and create space to curate inclusive programming. Consider collaborating with service organizations in your community that work with underserved populations and learn from their expertise. Take time to note potential barriers to eclipse events, work with your community to address them, and explore how you can increase access to your event.[9]

It is up to event hosts and planners to create eclipse events that are inclusive and accessible to diverse audiences. There is no way to predict who might come to your event, but there are ways to prepare accommodations. Have an open mind when coordinating facilities, parking, restrooms, activities, and marketing, and take into consideration the functional abilities of your community and visitors.[10]

Rochester Accessible Adventures has created a quick guide for ensuring that all potential participants are able to fully engage in eclipse activities: https://rochesteraccessibleadventures.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/RAA-Eclipse-Key-Planning-Principles.pdf.

COMMUNICATE EARLY—AND CLEARLY

Develop a system to communicate crucial information for the total solar eclipse through a central hub. This is especially important for communities within the path of totality. Although you might not have all the information for your community from the start, create spaces to gather information as it comes, like events calendars or "coming soon" pages.

Be sure to note how and where visitors might access essential services such as food, restrooms, gas, and first aid. Consider that cellular service may not be adequate for the number of people visiting your area, so critical personnel may need an alternate way to communicate.

Cohesively cross-promote and disperse information through numerous channels to reach a wider audience. Web pages, social media, newsletters, and other methods of communication can be adapted to include information on the eclipse to keep your community and visitors informed.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Integrate eclipse messaging into existing social media pages to enhance them, rather than creating separate social media accounts. Not only might these be difficult to grow and keep up with—for both the creator and followers—but they will serve little purpose to your community after the eclipse. When planning for the eclipse in your community, always keep in mind how it can weave into existing physical and social infrastructure, rather than strain it.

"Align your eclipse planning with your community strategic plans. The eclipse then becomes a focal point—not a diversion—to meeting your long-term goals."

– Dr. Kate Russo, 2022

FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

Although safety is the priority, fear is not—and there can be fine line between communicating best practices for safely viewing the eclipse and convincing locals and potential visitors to skip it entirely. Here are some examples of how to pair important safety messages with positive language.

It is unsafe to directly view the partial phases of the total solar eclipse without a solar filter (i.e., eclipse glasses or a handheld solar viewer). Regular sunglasses are **not** safe for viewing the partial phases of a total solar eclipse.

+

You can safely view the total solar eclipse if you are: in the path of totality and the Sun is fully blocked by the Moon (i.e., during totality).

Do not stop on the interstate or a shoulder to view the eclipse, and do not take photos of it while driving.[11]

+

Here is where to comfortably view the eclipse in our community, how to find accommodations for your stay, and resources for planning your trip.

Prepare for crowds, traffic, and congestion before and especially after the total solar eclipse.

+

Plan to arrive at least two hours before totality, and bring extra water, food, and activities to pass the time.[12]

RESOURCES

Eclipse planning and communication. Dr. Kate Russo's Community Solar Eclipse Planning guide provides further information on assembling a task force, developing a strategy, and planning for your community through the knowns and unknowns: https://www.beingintheshadow.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/WHITE-PAPER-SECOND-EDITION.pdf.

Facilities and preparedness. Mark Howell, Director of Grounded Truths LLC, created a quick guide for best practices in estimating facilities needed at eclipse events. Consider how to implement the 3 "T"s and 2 "C"s for your eclipse events: https://eclipse.aas.org/sites/eclipse.aas.org/files/Howell_Jun2023_Poster.pdf.

For libraries. In collaboration with the STAR Library Network, astronomers Andrew Fraknoi and Dennis Schatz created "A Guide For Public Libraries and their Communities." This double-header contains eclipse information, safe viewing activities, ideas for eclipse events, and links to finding science-literate partners. https://eclipse.aas.org/sites/eclipse.aas.org/files/SEAL-Booklet-for-Libraries.pdf.

For educators and administrators. In collaboration with the National Science Teaching Association, astronomers Andrew Fraknoi and Dennis Schatz also produced two solar eclipse guides:

Educators https://static.nsta.org/pdfs/SolarEclipses2023_Educator.pdf.

Administrators https://static.nsta.org/pdfs/SolarEclipses2023_Administrator.pdf.

CHECKLIST

Your Ideas for Eclipse Events

What kind of events could enhance your community? What new ideas could you try? Where might you host events? What audiences would you serve? *Note: there is no need to re-invent the wheel! Keep in mind what events you host in your community that you can adapt to highlight the eclipse.*

Event Accessibility and Inclusivity

Using the Rochester Accessible Adventures (p. 8) key planning principles for inclusive eclipse events as a guide, map out how your eclipse task force can increase accessibility to your community's events. Consider parking, wayfinding, path of travel, restrooms, and viewing locations.

Think back to who you included on your task force. Are there community leaders of underserved audiences who are unrepresented? Are there organizations that are left out? Note them here—and reach out to them.

Creating a Central Hub

Every community within the path of totality should have a web page—either on its own website, or as a part of an existing website—about the total solar eclipse to serve as a resource to locals and visitors. It should contain, at least, the following sections and information:

- ☐ *General information*: eclipse basics, local eclipse details, information about your community
- ☐ *Safety:* eye safety, traffic conditions, event accessibility
- ☐ *Tourism:* local accommodations, events and activities, eclipse viewing locations

Once this web page is created, assign at least one team member to maintain and update it as the eclipse nears. Link to social media pages that will also cross-post eclipse information and updates, such as those of tourism bureaus, businesses, and other local organizations. Make sure that the page stays active and links are functional.

4 | EXPLORE CREATIVE ELEMENTS AND ARTISTIC INTEGRATION

The eclipse creates opportunities for expression and education beyond the STEM field. The eclipse can also be a source of inspiration for visual artists, writers, performers, and creative community members alike. This section explores the potential for incorporating creative aspects into eclipse planning and how they might encourage community engagement and foster a sense of place.

STARTING POINTS FOR CREATIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Visual Arts

- *Art Installations or Exhibits*: Collaborate with local artists to design and construct art installations that reflect the themes of eclipses and feelings they evoke. Host art exhibitions featuring eclipse-inspired artworks, inviting artists of all ages and backgrounds to showcase their interpretations. Invite local artists to set up booths, showcasing their artistic process and offering insights into the creation of eclipse-inspired artwork.
- *Murals*: Transform public spaces with murals that depict the eclipse experience in your community to commemorate the event space. Create workshops where local artists and community members can come together to paint murals in public spaces, promoting community involvement in art creation.
- *Dedicated Photo and Video Zones*: Set up designated areas or viewpoints at eclipse events where attendees can capture unobstructed views of the eclipse. Provide signage or markers indicating ideal photography or videography spots to help guide interested attendees to these areas.

Music, Dance, and Performance

- *Live Music Performances*: Organize live music performances during eclipse-viewing events, offering a diverse range of musical genres to complement enhance the experience and pass the time during the partial eclipse phases.
- *Choreographed Eclipse Performances*: Collaborate with dance groups to create a unique performance that interprets the drama of an eclipse through expressive movement.
- *Artistic Shadow Play*: Create an interactive shadow play installation, allowing visitors to manipulate light and shadows to mimic the eclipse's phases with their hands or objects.

Sense of Place

- *Storytelling Booths or Stations*: Establish storytelling booths or stations equipped with recording equipment or paper and pens where attendees can share their personal experiences and stories related to the eclipse. Encourage participants to reflect on the significance of the event and its impact on their lives.
- *Guided Nature Walks*: Organize guided nature walks or hikes that lead attendees to scenic viewpoints for eclipse viewing. Highlight the natural beauty and landmarks of the area can foster a stronger sense of connection to the eclipse, the community, and the environment.

CHECKLIST
Building Upon Existing Creative Resources

Consider leveraging artistic assets already present in your community. These could include public art installations, art studios, theater and performance spaces, arts and cultural centers, museums, or other creative venues. List potential resources that could be utilized here:

If your community already has opportunities for creative engagement in these spaces, you can focus on how you might adapt these existing resources as the eclipse nears. Work with local artists and craftspeople to see how your community's vision for the eclipse might align with existing work, where these collaborations might take place, and what needs should be met to make an artistic approach to the eclipse possible.

Your Ideas for Creative Community Engagement:

5 | LEVERAGE THE LEGACY OF THE TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE

The impact of the eclipse does not have to end on April 8, 2024; rather, your community can use it as a starting point for future community building, tourism, and event planning. Make plans to debrief with your community leaders after the eclipse to discuss ways to leverage the legacy of once-in-a-lifetime event. Add meaning to your discussion by brainstorming pilot projects and spaces for feedback at events.

STARTING POINTS FOR TRYING SOMETHING NEW IN YOUR COMMUNITY

It is up to those in the path of totality to capitalize on the popularity of the eclipse and to use it as an opportunity to learn more about their community. Explore new ideas and brainstorm how to test them, using the eclipse as a natural starting point. Prepare to evaluate their success, and use the experience to integrate new ideas into existing programming. Some ideas for might include:

Astronomy and Science Programs: Take advantage of the eclipse's popularity in your community to introduce astronomy and science-related programs. Continue engagement by hosting educational workshops, talks, or stargazing sessions to spark interest and curiosity among residents even after the eclipse.

Arts and Culture Programs: Use the eclipse as a starting point for new, creative ways to engage with your community. If space for art galleries, public art installations, and arts workshops were implemented for the eclipse, consider integrating into the community more permanently. Use this as an opportunity to find, retain, and support local artists.

Tourism: Utilize physical and social infrastructure that was put in place to accommodate interest in the eclipse for future events. Learn from the eclipse to see what works in your community, and replicate effective methods of event planning, communication, and programming for long-term success.

GET FEEDBACK

The total solar eclipse does not only bring opportunities to celebrate your community, but also thousands of people to experience it. Locals and visitors alike can serve as a resource in better understanding the success of your community events. Be proactive and plan ways to encourage feedback, either on-site, through social media, or online. Include questions on the evaluation that ask for feedback about making the event more inclusive. and use responses to drive continuous improvement toward more inclusive experiences in your community.

Collecting responses

- *On-Site Feedback Stations*: Set up dedicated feedback stations at the event where attendees can provide their input in person. This can be done through physical comment boxes or through short paper forms for attendees to fill out to share their experience.
- *Social Media Engagement*: Monitor social media channels closely, interact with attendees' posts, and encourage them to provide testimonials and feedback directly on the event's social media pages.
- *Online Surveys*: Distribute a survey to gather feedback on various aspects of the event, such as organization, logistics, accessibility, educational content, and overall experience. It can help to include open-ended questions to encourage attendees to provide detailed feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Topics to address

- Event organization and logistics (ex. Did you find the event location easily accessible?)
- Content and activities (ex. Did the event meet your expectations in terms of educational and entertainment value?)
- Facilities and services (ex. How were the facilities, such as restrooms and seating, etc. at the event?
- Overall experience (ex. Were there any aspects of the event that you feel could have been improved?

CHECKLIST

Ideas for Trying Something New in Your Community:
What types of community engagement does your community lack or need? How might you try implementing these ideas? How might you evaluate success?

Using the eclipse to better understand your community and your ability to support it.
Assemble your team for a post-eclipse meeting to go over participant feedback and discuss the following topics:

- ☐ Visitors and traffic

  Estimate_____ Actual_____

- ☐ Were your estimates accurate? Did you overestimate, or underestimate?

- ☐ How did this impact the eclipse experience in your community?

- ☐ Based on feedback and your experience, which events were successful? Which ones were not?

- ☐ What could you do to improve? What might you implement for future events?

RESOURCES

How the 2017 total solar eclipse impacted communities. Plenary Session 2 of the American Astronomical Society's Solar Eclipse Planning workshop covers the topic of "The Personal and Community Experience On & Off the Eclipse Path and in Urban & Rural Environments." Get inspired by how communities leveraged the total solar eclipse: https://youtu.be/uTJ-w5SYUsk.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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- Kyla Cox Deckard, Director of Communications, Center for Rural Engagement

For more information on the Solar Eclipse Planning Toolkit, please contact the Center for Rural Engagement at iucre@indiana.edu or (812) 855-0568.

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NOTES

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