

BUILDING CAPACITY TO PRESENT, INTERPRET, & DISCUSS DIFFICULT ISSUES IN AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

THE SANKOFA
COLLABORATIVE
AASLH 2019 MEETING





CASE STUDIES FOR REFLECTION

The “Peculiar Institution”

- Are your visitors generally expecting to hear or learn about African American history when they come to your site?
- What do you think your visitors’ responses are to what you present about African American history?
- How prepared is your site/organization to identify and respond to visitor discomfort about what is presented?

Rethinking the Honors Bestowed

- Who in the past is your site/organization most associated with and for what reason?
- What is presented about the connection this person had with African American history?
- How does your site/organization help visitors deal with this connection?

A Simple Lawn Ornament

- How does your site/organization make sure that information presented to visitors is accurate and complete?
- What “myths” about your site might visitors have about people or events associated with African American history?
- How does your site/organization respond to visitors’ misinformation or preconceptions?



BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Who Are You Currently Engaging?

- Stakeholders
 - Board/Governing body
 - Donors/Supporters
 - Staff
 - Volunteers/Members
- Audiences
- Partners
 - Peer organizations
 - Community groups
 - Experts

What's Missing

- Who is your organization/site not attracting as volunteers or members? As donors/supporters? As audiences?
- How committed are your staff and board/governing body to the work?
- What is missing in terms of your organization's/site's own knowledge, skills, experiences, resources, visibility?
- Who could be valuable partners that your organization/site is not engaging?

Reporting Out from Tables

- Who are the frequently missing stakeholder or audience groups?
- Who are frequently mentioned as potential partners?
- What are the most promising opportunities and most difficult challenges in developing relationships with stakeholders, audiences, and partners?



Target Audiences & Agendas

What Do You Hope to Get from Creating a Capacity-Building Experience?

- Learn?
- Build?
- Teach/Share?
- Change?
- Grow?
- Reap and Sow?
- Fulfill your mission?

Creating a Capacity-Building Experience

- Who would be your target audience and what do you know about their current knowledge and skills and their interests?
- What specific goals would you have for creating a capacity-building experience with this audience?
- What would your agenda for this experience be and what resources would you need?



FINDING COMMON THREADS IN CREATING A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Table Work

- Share examples of situations from your experience when presentation or discussion about African American history was comfortable for those involved
- Share examples when this was uncomfortable for some or all of those involved – Who was uncomfortable? How was that discomfort displayed? What was the response of others? What was the effect on the presentation or discussion?
- What made the difference? Was it the topic? The setting? The mix of people involved? What people already knew, believed, or expected?

Dynamics of Race

- What resistance or “push back” do whites presenting information or leading discussions on difficult topics face...From white audiences? From African American audiences? From mixed audiences?
- What about when African Americans are presenting information or leading discussions?