

COLLABORATION + RELATIONSHIP BUILDING | REFLECTION GUIDE

This is a tool to reflect on your own organization's work as you consider whether affiliating with the Smithsonian is right for your organization. The questions are meant to serve as prompts for internal discussion and reflection but you'll also find highlighted sections that signal information relevant for the Affiliate application process. If you choose to apply, the guide and your answers can serve as a reference for your team as you complete your application.

I. THE FOUNDATION

Our Affiliates are leaders in the museum field, and we rely on them to share their expertise with other Affiliates and the Smithsonian. Reflect on your organization's current capacity to collaborate and provide leadership in the Affiliate network.

Your Expertise

What areas might your organization be able to provide thought-leadership on to other Affiliates or the Smithsonian? What aspects of your organization's work- processes, exhibits, programming- are you most proud of? What models of community collaboration have you found challenging and/or successful that others could learn from?

Your Capacity for Collaboration

Would your current organizational capacity- staffing, finances, etc- enable you to meaningfully engage with the Affiliate community (participating in discussions with Affiliates and Smithsonian colleagues, attending conferences, taking advantage of collaboration opportunities offered by Affiliates or the Smithsonian)?

II. THE VISION

How could a reciprocal Affiliate relationship benefit your work in the future?

Benefiting from a Community of Practice

Reflecting on the examples in the Learning Excursion, what are specific ways you could imagine activating the Affiliate network to support your work? Note: Use the answer to this to prepare your Statement of Purpose.

Contributing to a Community of Practice

Reflecting on the expertise you outlined above, what are areas you would like to lead, share best practices in, or model success for others in the Affiliate network or at the Smithsonian? What would you like to share with the Smithsonian, Smithsonian Affiliates and the public? Note: Use the answer to this to prepare your Statement of Purpose.

III. THE BUILDING BLOCKS

Reflect on the assets, resources, and support you would need to realize your vision.

Cultivating Capacity

Are there areas that you think might hinder your organization's ability to engage with the Smithsonian and the Affiliate network? Are there things you can do or want to do to overcome those challenges?

Activating Smithsonian

Building on your existing resources, how might Smithsonian help you in building the capacity to engage in the Affiliate network? Note: Use the answer to this to prepare your Statement of Purpose.