

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT 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

Reflect on the current strength of your community engagement efforts and your recent experiences working with and listening to your community.

Your Communities

Which communities does your organization currently serve? Think about communities of geography, affinity, and identity. Why have you chosen to focus on these communities?

Your Work

How does your work serve those communities? What programmatic offerings, exhibitions, other engagements have you collaborated on? Which of your projects have served specific communities?

Your Experience

Reflect on the successes + challenges of those experiences. What worked well? What could you do differently in the future?

II. THE VISION

Reflect on your vision for community engagement in the next 5 years. Embrace the bold and aspirational. Refer to examples from the Learning Excursions for inspiration.

Deepening Collaboration

Which communities are you currently serving that you'd like to serve in deeper, more meaningful and more impactful ways? What is important to these communities and how might you collaborate on projects related to these interests? How could you improve on prior collaborations?

Cultivating Intentional Connections

Which untapped communities are you not yet serving that you'd like to collaborate with? Why do you want to engage these communities? How might you initiate a conversation with the community and understand their needs and interests?

Inviting New Narratives

*How will you identify and address gaps in your current narratives? Think about those stories you have been telling. What other stories do you want to include? What stories are missing from your programs and exhibitions and **why** are they missing? How can you tell those stories? How can you ensure those voices are heard?*

III. THE BUILDING BLOCKS

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

Celebrating Strengths

What internal and external resources are you already using to help you realize your vision for community engagement? Note: Use the answer to this to prepare your Statement of Purpose.

Identifying Opportunities

What areas do you need support with? How might Smithsonian resources and/or expertise help move your vision forward? Note: Use the answer to this to prepare your Statement of Purpose.

Activating Peer Support

In what ways would you want to engage the Affiliate network to support your work? What areas would you like thought-partnership on? What resources would you like to receive from or share with the network? Note: Use the answer to this to prepare your Statement of Purpose.