

Call for Working Group Discussants – Extended!

NCPH 2021 Annual Meeting

Convening Virtually

What are NCPH Working Groups?

Working groups, involving up to five facilitators and up to twelve discussants, allow conferees to explore in depth a subject of shared concern before and during the annual meeting. In these seminar-like conversations, participants have a chance to discuss questions raised by specific programs, problems, or initiatives in their own public history practice with peers grappling with similar issues. Working groups articulate a purpose they are working toward or a problem they are actively trying to solve. They aim to create an end product(s), such as a report, article, website, or exhibition. Ordinarily these working groups would meet onsite at our annual meeting to present their work to the NCPH community; this year the working groups will be completing all their work virtually, with a virtual session at NCPH 2021.

2021 Working Groups

For 2021, two working groups are still seeking discussants:

- ~~1. Building Equitable Remote Internships~~
- ~~2. Challenging White Public History~~
- ~~3. Developing Best Practices Guidelines for Consulting Historians~~
4. Foregrounding Questions of Citizenship in Public History
5. Keeping the Faith!: Sustaining Black Public History in Historically White Institutions
- ~~6. “Nevertheless, She Persisted”: Preserving Local Women’s History in the Wake of the 19th Amendment Centennial~~

To apply to join one of these working groups, please [fill out the form](#) describing the issues you wish to raise with your peers, together with a one-page resume, CV, or biographical statement, by **January 6, 2021**. We welcome submissions from individuals across a range of professions and career stages. Please see the specific working group descriptions below. Individuals who are selected will be listed as working group discussants in conference materials and will participate in the virtual working group session at the annual meeting.

Expectations

This fall the group facilitators will ask discussants to contribute a 500-1,000-word case statement. The case statement will describe a discussant’s particular experience, define the issues this experience raises, and suggest strategies and/or goals for resolution. Case statements will be circulated among participants and posted to the NCPH website. Discussants are expected to read and provide written comments on one another’s case statements well before the conference date. Some working groups may also have additional shared background reading materials identified by their facilitators or may choose to open up case statements for wider public input. Discussants are expected to participate in a virtual session as part of the National Council on Public History’s 2021 annual meeting.

To apply

Please fill out the [discussant application form](#), making sure to select which working group you are applying to join. (You may apply to participate in a working group whether or not you have submitted

another presentation or session proposal. You may apply for only one working group.) All working group discussants are expected to register and pay for the annual meeting within six weeks of acceptance.

Apply at <http://ncph.org/conference/working-group-discussant-application/>

About the 2021 Working Groups

Foregrounding Stories of Citizenship in Public History

Facilitators:

Patrice Green, University of Georgia

Eric Hung, Music of Asian America Research Center

Mandi Magnusen-Hung, Music of Asian America Research Center

Andrew Urban, Rutgers University

At its most formal, citizenship is a status that a state grants to certain subjects to denote membership and belonging. However, state-granted citizenship often bears very little resemblance to membership and belonging in everyday life. This working group aims to help public historians discuss citizenship-related issues that recent events have brought forward, and create nuanced and impactful exhibits, programs, educational materials and staff training plans. We aim to produce a crowdsourced annotated #Citizenship syllabus and a podcast series featuring interviews with practitioners and theorists who are working on public history projects that deal with citizenship.

Our goal is to develop resources and case studies that can help contribute to the ongoing conversation on how public history institutions can responsibly create exhibits, programs, educational materials and staff training on issues of citizenship. The core issues are:

- What are the key questions that public history projects about citizenship need to raise? Examples include: what does the term “citizenship” include? Who benefit and are harmed by this concept? What are the different pathways to citizenship? How does the meaning of citizenship vary in different lived environments and for people with different racial, gender, class and ability identities? How can we discuss citizenship in light of settler colonialism? In what “non-state” ways do we use the word “citizenship?”
- How can institutions influence the way people think about citizenship? What positions, advocacy and actions should public history institutions take with regard to citizenship, and with civic obligations?
- How do public history institutions help to grant, safeguard or take away citizenship in everyday life, through creating certain exhibits or programs, through showcasing certain monuments, or by defining membership in certain ways?
- What are useful frameworks for discussing citizenship in public history settings? Can we move beyond nationalist, American-Dream or feel-good narratives?

In terms of discussants, we are seeking a mixture of scholars and practitioners who are interested in creating public history projects on citizenship. We are particularly interested in including people who are undertaking digital humanities projects, artists and filmmakers, and students.

Keeping the Faith!: Sustaining Black Public History in Historically White Institutions

Facilitators:

Fath Davis Ruffins, Smithsonian National Museum of American History

Modupe Labode, Smithsonian National Museum of American History
Crystal Moten, Smithsonian National Museum of American History
Tsione Wolde-Michael, Smithsonian National Museum of American History

Public history practitioners who focus on Black history and culture in “historically white institutions” have worked hard to include Black histories and cultural perspectives where they have been absent, erased, silenced, and otherwise missing. Unfortunately, in many instances, these efforts have been fragmented, inconsistent and deprioritized. The purpose of this working group is to gather people who have been doing Black public history in historically white spaces to consider the usable past of Black public history, identify barriers to doing this work, and discuss useful frameworks and practices that can aid us in transforming these historically white institutions into places where Black life, history, and culture are taken seriously. We will consider the following theoretical and practical questions:

- What is the usable past of Black public history for this work? This would involve a consideration of the pioneering efforts of various grassroots, culturally specific institutions whose work has long preceded similar work in historically white institutions. What are the lessons to be learned here?
- What have been the barriers to doing Black public history in historically white institutions? What can we do (now!) to remove, go around, and climb over such obstacles?
- How can intersectional approaches provide an opportunity to foreground and take Black life, histories, and cultures seriously? How can Black theory making inform and challenge how cultural sites do their work?
- How do we infuse Black histories and Black perspectives into the stories we tell at the public history sites where we labor?
- What do we mean by “community engagement,” “co-curation,” and “co-authorship”? In other words, what does it mean to do Black public history with and within communities, collaboratively?

This working group is an opportunity to convene with other Black public history practitioners to think through and imagine a new future for truly inclusive, diverse, and relevant public history sites. We imagine this working group to be the first of a series of conversations meant to explore these and other pressing questions. Those interested in exploring these questions should consider the following prompt: Based on your experiences doing Black public history in a historically white institution, what are the issues you feel will be most important for this initial conversation?