

Empowering African American History and Culture Institutions

Office of Strategic Partnerships

OUR MISSION AND INITIATIVES



NATIONAL
MUSEUM *of*
AFRICAN
AMERICAN
HISTORY &
CULTURE

 Smithsonian

The Office of Strategic Partnerships at the National Museum of African American History and Culture was established to fulfill one of the mandates in The National Museum of African American History and Culture Act (U.S. Legislative Act H.R. 3491), enacted by Congress on Dec. 16, 2003. Along with other key provisions, the Act directed the Museum to provide for:



PHOTO CREDIT: BENJAMIN G. SULLIVAN/NMAAHC

“...collaboration between the Museum and other museums, historically black colleges and universities, historical societies, educational institutions, and other organizations that promote the study or appreciation of African American life, art, history, or culture, including collaboration concerning development of cooperative programs and exhibits; identification, management, and care of collections; and training of museum professionals.”

Giving Prominence to Those Telling the Stories of African American History and Culture

The Office of Strategic Partnerships is a unique department within the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Our mission is to strengthen the capabilities and sustainability of historical, cultural, and art institutions focused on African Americans and the African Diaspora, which we do through our collaborations with museum service organizations, professional associations, and related organizations. While we do not partner directly with individual museums, we do serve as a central location for resources, professional development opportunities, and partnerships — strengthening the infrastructure of our field.

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HOW WE SERVE

The Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP) develops and delivers programs and resources to African American and African Diaspora History and Culture institutions to support and empower them to make self-directed lasting changes, the benefits of which strengthen not only their institutions, but the communities they serve.

Through mutually beneficial relationships, we provide access to professional development and capacity-building opportunities. We also work to amplify the message that African American History and Culture institutions are vital parts of our nation’s social and cultural fabric.

Through collaboration and partnerships, OSP:

- **Delivers** far-reaching and transformative support for under-resourced organizations on a regional, national, and international level
- **Connects** and **builds** awareness about the work of its participating institutions
- **Provides** access to training and resources that support and advance leaders and field-wide best practices



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CASE STUDIES

OSP focuses on improving inclusion, job creation, professional development, and leadership in the museum and related cultural heritage fields. Our partnerships strengthen and increase organizational sustainability. Below are three programs that illustrate the breadth of our work.

Museum Best Practices

The Interpreting African American History and Culture Workshop provides a professional standard and benchmark for ethical interpretation, customized to the specific needs of African American institutions. Participating cohort members engage in an immersive training experience that results in new knowledge of interpretive techniques and methodologies that museums and cultural heritage sites can incorporate into interpretation practices at their home institutions.

Professional Development Opportunities

The Robert Frederick Smith Fund for the Digitization and Curation of African American History was established to advance digital curation, community outreach, and internship initiatives at the Museum. OSP supports this effort with paid internships at its Museum in Washington, D.C. and at select African American museums, art galleries and museums of historically black colleges and universities, cultural institutions and historic sites, and other institutions dedicated to the study and preservation of African American history and culture.

Organizational Capacity Building

OSP works to increase and sustain the capacity of allied organizations across the globe, including University Cheikh Anta Diop in Senegal. The university is a West African leader in advancing critical conversations and research around the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Our partnership connects the university with resources including physical property improvement, specialized lab equipment, and training opportunities.

SELECT LIST OF COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS

American Association for State and Local History

Association of African American Museums

Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission

Cheikh Anta Diop University de Dakar

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Museums Association of the Caribbean

National Trust for Historic Preservation

Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service

Southeastern Museums Conference



OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
nmaahc.si.edu/connect/osp