



2018 Survey on Inclusive History Organizational Practice

As part of an IMLS National Leadership Grant, the Naperville Heritage Society (administrators of Naper Settlement) is conducting a national assessment of how history (and related) organizations are doing at sharing more inclusive history, both through collections and through interpretation. We are grateful for the support of AASLH and other museum associations that are disseminating this survey.

Some of these questions may be challenging to answer, as every organization is responding with their own perspectives, needs, communities, resources, missions, and histories in mind. The questions are written for what we expect to be the most typical approaches being taken to this work, but we also are interested in hearing the experiences of museums where the interpretation of the subjects is approached differently, not at all, successfully or unsuccessfully, or may have taken on a larger or more central role.

All this is to say that every organization's complete and honest responses is critical for us to have a benchmark for the field. At the end of the grant period, the learnings will be shared with the field via on-line resources, conference sessions, white papers, and journal articles. As benchmark data, results will also be available for future studies and comparisons over time.

Research opportunity: At the end of this survey, you will have an opportunity to volunteer your organization to participate in a free audience research survey this September on inclusive history interpretation.

We expect this survey to take about 20 minutes to complete. If you don't have exact answers, estimates are perfectly acceptable. You will be asked if your museum owns any inclusive collections, and if you have done exhibitions or programs that interpret people of color, religious minorities, LGBTQ, or others who have faced discrimination. A familiarity with your museum's work in these areas will be helpful in answering the questions.

Confidentiality: Your individual responses will be kept confidential and will only be known to Susie Wilkening of Wilkening Consulting (the researcher for this project). Aggregate results, however, will be shared with the field. Individual comments from open-ended questions will be deidentified and may be shared, but if the comment is clearly identifying, permission will be sought prior to its release. If you have any questions about this research or survey, please contact Susie at susie (at) wilkeningconsulting (dot) com.

Thank you in advance.

1) What is the name of your organization? _____

2) What is your organization's website? _____

3) Where are you located? (City, state; if you have more than one location, please note your *primary* location.) _____

4) Which of the following *best* describes your organization? (Please choose only those that are most relevant.)

Local history

Historic house museum

Outdoor history museum

African American history

Tribal history

Jewish history museum

Religious history

Racial or ethnic history (please specify): _____

Presidential site or museum

Military history and/or sites

Industrial history

Maritime history

Railroad, car, or transportation museum

Other history or historic site (please specify):

Library or archive

Related museum - art

Related museum - natural history

Related museum (please specify): _____

Other - Write In: _____



5) Which of the following best describes your governance structure? (Check all that apply.)

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Government - Municipal

Government - County

Government - State

Government - Federal

Park district

College or university

Tribal

Other - Write In: _____

6) What is your annual visitation? _____

7) *Briefly* share, in a sentence or two, a description of your organization.

For example, "The Naper Settlement is a 12-acre outdoor history museum that consists of a collection of thirty historical buildings and structures from the Naperville, Illinois area."

8) What is the size of your staff? (Estimates are fine if you don't have exact numbers.)

Full-time: _____

Part time: _____

We are entirely volunteer-run

9) What is your name? _____



10) Which of the following best identifies who you are at your organization?

- Trustee/board member
- Executive director/president/CEO
- Vice president/deputy/COO
- Education director
- Education staff member
- Curator
- Collections staff
- Public programs director/chief program officer
- Marketing/PR
- Development
- Volunteer
- Other - Write In: _____

11) What is your email address? _____



For the following questions, please use your own definition for what you would define as your geographic "community." Thus, this may be your neighborhood, town/city, metro area, etc.

12) Have you ever pulled US Census Bureau (or Statistics Canada, etc.) data on your community to better understand its racial and ethnic composition?

- Yes
- No/not that I am aware of

13) What percentage of your *community* is white, non-Hispanic? (If you do not have accurate information, please share your best estimate.) _____

14) Has the racial and ethnic makeup of your community changed in the past 50 years?

- Yes, it is becoming MUCH MORE diverse
- Yes, it is becoming SOMEWHAT MORE diverse
- No, it is about the SAME
- Yes, it is becoming LESS diverse
- I don't know

15) What percentage of your *visitors* are white, non-Hispanic? (If you do not have accurate information, please share your best estimate.) _____

16) If your community has a different racial and ethnic composition than your visitors, why do you think that is? (If it is about the same, please continue on to the next question.)

17) What percentage of your *board* is white, non-Hispanic? _____

18) What percentage of your *staff* is white, non-Hispanic? _____



For the following questions, your "collections" may include permanent, education, or study collections.

"Inclusive collections" refers to any collections reflecting the experiences of diverse populations, including people of color, religious minorities, LGBTQ, and other segments of the population that have faced discrimination.

19) Does your museum have collections that reflect the experiences of people of color, religious minorities, LGBTQ, or others who have faced discrimination?

Yes

No/not that I am aware of

If yes (question 19):

20) What percentage of your collections reflect the experiences of people of color, religious minorities, LGBTQ, or others who have faced discrimination? (If you do not have accurate information, please share your best estimate.) _____

21) Does your museum possess in its collections items that you might define as "difficult," such as KKK materials, blackface posters, materials with swastikas, sundown signs, etc.?

Yes

No/not that I am aware of

If yes (question 21):

22) Please briefly describe what those items are.

23) Does your museum possess in its collections or oral histories evidence of formal segregation in your community, such as real estate covenants, advertising for whites-only neighborhoods or businesses, Fair Housing materials, swimming pool discriminatory practices, etc.?

Yes

No/not that I am aware of



If yes (question 23):

24) Please briefly describe what those items are.

25) Is your museum actively collecting any of the above inclusive collections?

- Yes
- Not actively, but would seriously consider those offered to us
- No

If yes to questions 19, 21, 23, OR 25:

26) Have you interpreted any of your inclusive collections?

- Yes, we are actively interpreting these collections
- We have interpreted from them in the past, but are not currently doing so
- No, but we have plans to do so soon
- No, and we have no plans to do so

If “yes, we are actively interpreting these collections” (question 26):

27) How and why have you done so?

Please include in your answer if you included any disclaimers that artifacts or images might be troubling for guests, or if there were any relevant partnerships that may have helped you in your efforts.

28) What has been the response of your community?



If “we have interpreted from them in the past, but are not currently doing so” (question 26):

29) How and why did you do so?

Please include in your answer if you included any disclaimers that artifacts or images might be troubling for guests, or if there were any relevant partnerships that may have helped you in your efforts.

30) What was the response of your community?

31) Why are you not actively doing so now? (Select those most relevant.)

- They are not relevant to our mission
- Our local community isn't ready for this
- They present issues that are too contentious
- This is not an appropriate role for our organization
- Concerns about loss of funding
- Our organization has other priorities right now
- None of these

32) If you have any other reasons for not actively interpreting these items now, or anything else to add about your experience interpreting these items in the past, please share them here.

Otherwise, please continue with the survey.



If “no, but we have plans to do so soon” (question 26):

33) What are you planning to do, and why did you plan this?

34) Have you met any resistance to these plans? If so, please explain.

If “no, and we have no plans to do so” (question 26):

35) Why are you not sharing these collections items? (Select those most relevant.)

- They are not relevant to our mission
- Our local community isn't ready for this
- They present issues that are too contentious
- This is not an appropriate role for our organization
- Concerns about loss of funding
- Our organization has other priorities right now
- None of these

36) If you have any other reasons for not actively interpreting your inclusive collections, please share them here.

Otherwise, please continue with the survey.



If no to questions 19, 21, 23, AND 25:

37) In your opinion, why does your organization *not* have collections related to people of color, religious minorities, LGBTQ, and other segments of the population that have faced discrimination? (Select those most relevant.)

- They are not relevant to our mission
- Not aware of any such items in our community
- None have been offered to us
- If offered, we have refused them
- Collecting these items are not appropriate for our organization
- They are not relevant in our community
- None of these
- Other - Write In: _____

If "they are not relevant in our community" (question 37):

38) In the previous question, you noted that these types of collections are "not relevant in our community." Can you share with us information about your community that makes you think that?

ALL respondents:

39) If you have any other comments about the collection of racially-related and/or other inclusive objects or materials, please share them here. Otherwise, please continue with the survey.



40) Does your organization interpret any of the following topics? (Select all that apply.)

- Underground Railroad
- Green Books
- Jim Crow laws
- Real estate segregation/Fair Housing Act (e.g., segregated neighborhoods, redlining, racial and/or religious exclusionary covenants, etc.)
- Hate groups/crimes (e.g., KKK, anti-Semitic groups, etc.)
- Slavery
- The Civil Rights Movement
- Social justice issues (please specify): _____
- None of these
- Other - Write In: _____

If any of the above EXCEPT "none of these" (question 40):

41) When do you typically interpret these topics? (Select all that apply.)

- It is part of our regular interpretation
- During special events, such as Black History Month
- When we have a relevant special exhibition or program
- Other - Write In: _____

42) What percentage of your programs or events include more inclusive viewpoints or stories, such as perspectives from people of color, religious minorities, LGBTQ, and other segments of the population whose voices have gone unheard? (Your best estimate is fine.)

If "none of these" (question 40):

43) In your opinion, why doesn't your organization interpret any of these topics? (Select those most relevant.)

- No collections to base it on
- They don't reflect our history as a community that is exclusively/almost exclusively non-Hispanic white



- They are not relevant as a community that is exclusively/almost exclusively non-Hispanic white
- These topics present issues that are too contentious
- This is not an appropriate role for our organizations
- Concerns about loss of funding
- Never been an organizational priority
- We lack authority on these topics
- They are not part of our mission
- None of these
- Other - Write In: _____

44) Are there any difficult or sensitive topics that are relevant to your mission, but have thus far never been interpreted or may have been avoided? This may include topics that always seem to be on the back burner, but never become a priority.

- Yes
- No, we are pretty proactive about taking on these topics
- No, other reasons (please specify): _____
- No

If yes (question 44):

45) Please share some examples of these topics, and why you avoid them.

46) Does your organization think it is responsible for sharing the complete history of your community, historic site, or area of expertise, even if the stories you might share are difficult or controversial?

- Yes, absolutely
- Yes, somewhat
- To be honest, this hasn't come up
- No, it doesn't



47) Does your mission or vision specifically include anything about inclusion or multiple perspectives?

Yes

No

If yes (question 47):

48) Please share your museum's mission or vision (excerpting or paraphrasing as appropriate), and any thoughts about how your organization came about including these goals in these statements.

If no (question 47):

49) Why do you think your mission and/or vision statements do not include such language? (Please select those reasons that are most important.)

Not a priority at this time

We have so many of these types of priorities that we don't list any specifically

Our community is almost/100% non-Hispanic white, so it isn't relevant

Our audience is almost/100% non-Hispanic white, so it isn't relevant

Board or governance resistance

Staff leadership (CEO/executive director) resistance

Community resistance

Our mission is narrowly defined to a topic that is unrelated

It is an organizational priority, though it isn't specifically in our mission or vision

To be honest, it has never come up

Other - Write In: _____

If "not a priority at this time" (question 49):

50) You indicated that inclusive language was not a priority at this time. What are your organization's priorities?



If “our community is almost/100% non-Hispanic white, so it isn’t relevant” (question 49):

51) You indicated that your community is almost or 100% non-Hispanic white. Why do you think this is? (Please share if this is an educated hypothesis or if you know of historical evidence that makes it so.)

If “board or governance resistance” (question 49):

52) Why do you think your board or governing body is resistant to this inclusive language? What are their concerns?

If “it is an organizational priority, though it isn’t specifically in our mission or vision” (question 49):

53) If inclusion is an organizational priority, how do you make that clear without it being in the mission and/or vision?

ALL respondents:

54) If you have any further thoughts about inclusion and your organization's mission and responsibilities, please share them here. Otherwise, please continue with the survey.

55) Are you aware of any missing voices or perspectives that are *not* being interpreted by your organization, but should be? If so, please share whose voices or perspectives, and why you think they are not being shared. If not, please type in "no" and continue with the survey.



56) If your organization became visibly more active in collecting and sharing multiple viewpoints about your history, especially from people of color, religious minorities, LGBTQ, and others that may have been excluded from the primary historical narrative, how do you think your community would respond?

57) If your organization became more proactive about sharing topics specifically around segregation, racism, and discrimination in your community, how do you think your community would respond?

58) Has anyone from the public or media essentially "called out" your organization for your current inclusionary practices?

Yes, for doing too much to be inclusive

Yes, for not being inclusive enough

No/not that I am aware of

If "yes, for doing too much to be inclusive" (question 58):

59) Please share with us what happened when you were "called out" for your inclusive practices, and how you responded.

If "yes, for not being inclusive enough" (question 58):

60) Please share with us how you were "called out" for not being inclusive enough, and how you responded.



61) Is there anyone affiliated with your organization that you feel doesn't value more inclusive practices at your museum? (Select those most relevant.)

Please remember that your individual response will be kept confidential and will only be known to Susie Wilkening.

No, I think we are all on board with this

Some/most of our staff

Our CEO/executive director

Some/most of the Board of Trustees

Volunteers

N/A, as it isn't relevant to our organization

Other - Write In: _____



For these next two closed-ended questions, we want *your individual opinion*, which we realize may not reflect that of your organization.

Please answer honestly, as we will be comparing the results from history museum professionals to those of museum-goers and the broader population, using the exact same questions.

62) Should history museums present historical information neutrally, just “the facts,” or can they take a position that may be divisive or widely accepted, e.g., slavery was bad.

- Neutrally, sharing only facts
- Taking a position is OK

63) If you were torn about your answer to the previous question, or if there is anything else you would like to add about how historical information is presented by museums, please share here. If not, please continue with the survey.

64) Should history museums present ALL viewpoints about the past?

- Yes, no matter what
- Yes, but only the most commonly held viewpoints
- No, the majority viewpoint is sufficient

65) If you were torn about your answer to the previous question or have anything you wish to share about multiple viewpoints, please do so here. If not, please continue with the survey.



66) Would you like to learn more about how to help your organization be more inclusive? If so, what are your preferred ways of doing so? (Select those you would most likely participate in.)

- No, this is not a pressing need or primary goal for us
- Online resources
- Magazine or journal articles
- Webinars or virtual learning/discussions
- Conference sessions
- Discussions with peers
- Affinity groups
- Having a mentor to guide me/us
- In-depth workshop at a conference
- In-depth workshop at my museum
- Visiting museums or sites that are actively practicing inclusive interpretation
- Staff and/or board professional development
- Other - Write In: _____



67) Free research opportunity for your organization

This survey is only the first part of a large-scale research project to share the history of formal and informal segregation and racism in all parts of the country, including the history of segregation in the Northeast, Midwest, and West, which is a largely unknown and untold history.

This September we will be surveying museum-goers across the country, beginning to thoughtfully and carefully assess their attitudes and behaviors around inclusive history in museums. We'll be walking a fine line in the survey design to make sure it has the right questions and tone, providing answers to our lines of inquiry but not shutting down respondents with differing viewpoints.

If you would like to learn more about your museum's visitors, and their thoughts on these issues, we invite you to apply to participate in this next phase of research. We'll be selecting up to 20 museums across the country to participate. Participating museums will be expected to send an email blast to their contact list in September 2018, asking their visitors/members/contacts to take the survey.

Participants will receive:

- **Your confidential results compared against the aggregate, topline results via spreadsheet and slide deck (likely late fall)**
- **A one-hour phone call with Susie Wilkening to discuss your results**

Would your museum be interested in participating in this next phase of research in September?

Yes, we are definitely interested

We may be interested, but would like to hear more

No, not at this time



You are almost done. *Thank you for your candor and honesty, as well as the time you dedicated to this long survey.*

Just one last question and a place to share any further thoughts you have.

68) What kind of information would be helpful to your organization to help make a case that inclusive history is important and worth doing?

If nothing comes to mind, please feel free to skip.

69) If there is anything else you want to share with us about history organizations and more inclusive history, please do so here.

Otherwise, please click on "submit" to complete the survey. *Thank you.*

Thank you!

