

Project Overview

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Enduring Communities was considered such a model, focusing on such an important national chapter of our history, having powerful educational goals and involving partnerships with an impressively diverse group of organizations and individuals that would build, grow, and be sustained long past the formal end of the grant.... There's no doubt in my mind that Enduring Communities will have an enduring, living legacy as these stories must and should.

Marsha Semmel
Director of Strategic Partnerships
Institute of Museum and Library Services

Enduring Communities: The Japanese American Experience in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah

This *Field Guide to Collaboration* provides like-minded institutions, educators, and community groups with specific examples about how to start and complete a multi-layered collaborative project.

Two other components of the multi-year *Enduring Communities* project include the collaboration with educators, community members, students, and five partner anchor institutions—Arizona State University's Asian Pacific American Studies Program; University of Colorado, Boulder; University of New Mexico; UTSA's Institute of Texan Cultures; and Davis School District, Utah—which resulted in the curriculum created by educator teams from five states, and a national conference “*Whose America? Who's American? Diversity, Civil Liberties, and Social Justice*” hosted in Denver in July, 2008.

Building upon the Museum's history as a nationally recognized leader in the collaborative study and teaching of the Japanese American experience, the guide uses Enduring Communities as a point-of-entry to provide direct evidence of the transformative experience and impact that the process and programs had on the partners and the communities involved.

The guide shares answers to frequently asked questions about the collaborative process. Also included are sample documents used in undertaking several national, multi-year collaborations.



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Museum Overview

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The Japanese American National Museum is becoming an agent of change as it evolves from a place of memory to a catalyst for building communities of awareness, tolerance, caring, concern, compassion, and understanding in order to create a just society, a just world.

Sybil Jordan Hampton, Arkansas
Enduring Communities Final Convening
March 24–25, 2009

The mission of the Japanese American National Museum is to promote understanding and appreciation of America's ethnic and cultural diversity by sharing the Japanese American experience.

Since its inception in early 1980's, the Japanese American National Museum has taken a community-based collaborative approach to projects; these collaborative efforts have been recognized as an important direction for the museum field in general. An assessment of the National Museum, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services in 1994, observed, "The Museum has set a model not achieved by many other institutions through actively engaging outside communities in its work; this is an exciting prospect and model which should be shared with other museums across the country."

Since 1994 the National Museum has gained a wealth of even more experience in leveraging such partnerships by testing and refining its methodologies through large collaborative projects. From 1995 to 2003, the National Museum collaborated with a number of Los Angeles arts institutions on *Finding Family Stories*, an Arts Partnership Project which received major support from The James Irvine Foundation and the Nathan Cummings Foundation.

The 2000 project *Boyle Heights: The Power of Place*, funded in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, engaged four institutional partners to examine a dynamic Los Angeles neighborhood that epitomizes the ongoing evolution of multicultural America. From 1998 to 2002 the National Museum assembled



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a multidisciplinary, multinational project team that included 14 institutional partners and more than 100 contributors located in ten different countries to produce two major research publications: *New Worlds, New Lives: Globalization and People of Japanese Descent in the Americas and from Latin America in Japan* (Stanford University Press, 2002) and *Encyclopedia of Japanese Descendants in the Americas: An Illustrated History of the Nikkei* (AltaMira Press, 2002).

The National Museum has been repeatedly approached for guidance by institutions seeking to initiate and sustain a variety of large-scale partnership projects. Consultations sought by the Arab American National Museum in Michigan, the Chicago Historical Society in Illinois, and the Paso al Norte Immigration Museum in Texas, to name a few, demonstrate a need to formally document the process involved in major partnership projects.

To meet this need, the National Museum published its case studies on museum/community collaborations in a landmark book entitled *Common Ground: The Japanese American National Museum and the Culture of Collaborations* (University Press of Colorado, 2005). As Professor John Kuo Wei Tchen of New York University states, the National Museum has “articulated a new paradigm of organizational collaboration for the new millennium, embodying both successful practices and luminescent theories.”

Based on past experiences, the National Museum understands that collaborations require a significant amount of time and can be unpredictable. Nonetheless, the National Museum has found that

a partnership model that involves a mutual education process—in which all participants have a voice, knowledge is shared, and decisions are democratic—can result in new sets of dialogues and practices that connect with broader constituencies and build a richer sense of community.



Purpose of this Guide

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Diversity is a web, not a pyramid.

Janet Hironaka, California
National Institute for Educators
July 19–22, 2006

In 2005 the National Museum received a multiyear grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services for *Enduring Communities: The Japanese American Experience in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah*. The grant proposed work in five states and laid out three major deliverables:

- **Curricula:** Work with teams of educators to create curricula about the Japanese American World War II experience specific to each of the five states' needs;
- **National Conference:** Produce a conference from July 3 to 6, 2008, in Denver, Colorado, entitled "Whose America? Who's American? Diversity, Civil Liberties, and Social Justice." The conference's focus was on the connections between the Japanese American experience and the historical and contemporary issues surrounding democracy and civil rights;
- **Field Guide to Collaboration:** Use the experience gained through previous collaborations and during the course of this specific project to develop a practical guide that lays out concrete strategies that will help facilitate other collaborations between institutions.

While creating the curricular materials and producing the national conference, the project staff kept notes about the journey and the process for incorporation into the *Field Guide to Collaboration*. The project staff distilled four years of meeting notes, check lists, emails, documents, spreadsheets, PowerPoints, photographs, and discussions into six sections:

1. Internal Planning Preceding the Collaboration
2. Establishing Project Partners
3. Empowering Project Partners
4. Managing Expectations
5. Checking the Pulse
6. Conclusion of the Collaboration

Each section includes documents created for the various project components at different stages of the project. It is important to note that all documents generated for this project are not included in the *Field Guide to Collaboration*; however, the documents that have been selected remain largely unedited and demonstrate the range of strategies employed in order to complete the project.

For the long term, the Japanese American National Museum is committed to engaging in collaborations with communities, organizations, and individuals—indeed, collaborations are the fundamental means by which the National Museum seeks to fulfill its mission.



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