

History Colorado Anti-Racism Work

Grounding Virtues | Goals | Accountability



Grounding Virtues

We, as History Colorado, acknowledge that museums, historical societies, schools, and fields such as history, anthropology, archaeology, and historic preservation have historically prioritized EuroAmerican perspectives and experiences and have misrepresented, excluded, and erased Black, Indigenous, and People of Color perspectives and experiences. Individually and as an organization, we are shaped by and contribute to these racialized systems that manifest in often subtle or invisible ways. Naming and confronting these systems requires us to unlearn harmful long-held ideas, practices, and methodologies and to learn new ways of being in the world.

In pursuit of a more just and equitable Colorado, we embody the grounding virtues listed below as the foundation of all aspects of our work: our thinking, communication, process, outcomes, and evaluation. We commit to work that is guided by, for, and of the communities we build, belong to, and serve.

Being in Community. History Colorado is committed to being present in and learning about communities across Colorado to ground our work. We invest in authentic relationships and seek to build bridges by being curious about, listening to, and meeting communities where they are, without assumptions or preconceived conclusions. We know it is our responsibility to (re)build trust with communities who have not always felt connected to or appropriately represented by the stories we tell. We know that developing understanding takes time, and in the spirit of healing, we embrace the process.

Amplifying and Centering Voices of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). We at History Colorado are committed to centering BIPOC stories, perspectives, and representation within our staff, exhibitions, museums, collections, preservation projects, publications, education programs, and ongoing dialogue across communities today. We acknowledge, welcome, and engage the many different ways to produce, preserve, and present knowledge. We strive for an expansive historic record that is inclusive of many stories, traditions, practices for communicating knowledge, and communities.

Co-creation and Shared Authority. We build authentic community partnerships and create opportunities to co-author Colorado's shared history so that the work we do is neither owned nor told by any single institution but held in trust between and among collaborators.

Humility and Reflection. We recognize and understand that we cannot know all things and are ultimately interdependent with others. We engage in intentional, self-reflective practices about our own work and organizational culture—especially in hiring and retention—that allow ourselves to be vulnerable, recognize that growth is uncomfortable, name and address past and current structural racism, and transform systems. Our words and actions matter.

Responsiveness and Flexibility. We imagine new ways to foster relationships, connections, and generative practices that allow us to respond to communities' needs and interests in ways that are nimble, flexible, mindful, and meaningful. We build new processes that allow us to overcome obstacles to engagement and that prioritize relationships over paperwork.

Shared Destiny. We recognize that our success is bound up in the success and vitality of Colorado communities. We explore practices that allow us to question how we work together and dream about our future, creating a deep sense of belonging and connection to History Colorado's mission. We confront historical systems of oppression, unpack our own personal biases, lift up multifaceted stories of our shared past, and continuously advocate for equitable, systemic changes to break the cycles of oppression and discrimination.