

Strategies for Expanding Partnerships with Local Museums and Institutions

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Throughout New York State, local history museums and cultural institutions play a vital role in preserving and highlighting the stories of peoples who have contributed to society in a myriad of ways. Whether large or small, each institution has important stories to share.

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Many museums and cultural institutions across the state share the mutual goal with local social studies councils of finding ways to make history accessible and relevant for the next generation. The adoption of the New York State K – 12 Social Studies Framework (NYS Framework) and development of Inquiries using the Inquiry Design Model (IDM) as featured in the NYS K – 12 Social Studies Toolkit, present each local council additional opportunities to consider when expanding their relationships with local museums and cultural institutions in the region that they serve.

Below are three simple strategies to consider for expanding partnerships with local institutions:

1

Host a NYS Framework Awareness Event for local institutions

Typically, each institution has a point person who handles educational outreach. As a council, offer an evening event to discuss the language of the NYS Framework. Highlighting specific terms from the NYS Framework will offer those who develop programming the opportunity to better understand the statewide social studies vernacular. Also, as a bonus, hosting such an event may bring like-minded volunteers from various institutions together for the first time.

2

Feature local source material to develop Inquiries through on-site professional development

There is an added feeling of historical reverence when teachers have the opportunity to participate in professional learning in a museum or cultural institution. Providing teachers time to incorporate artifacts into inquiries using the IDM, creates teacher-created materials that feature local history connections.

3

Regularly meet as a council at Local History Museums and Cultural Institutions

Partnering with local museums and cultural institutions is a natural goal for local councils. In many cases, local councils can serve as the unifying educational thread between museums and cultural institutions in any given region. Utilizing historic spaces to host regular council meetings promotes a collaborative spirit between all organizations involved. Over time, having a physical and regular presence at various historical localities will lead to more opportunities for joint programming, promotion, and educational opportunities for teachers and students alike.