Deferred Maintenance:
Investing in the Upkeep and Care of Our Frontline Staff
Session Guidelines

- What’s said here, stays here; what’s learned here, leaves here.
- When one person is speaking, others should be listening.
- Take space; make space
- Use “I” statements
- We are all learning
- Care for yourself; care for each other
Ice Breaker

- Hopes & Fears
Session Framing

- Museums want to tackle issues of social relevance: racism, xenophobia, painful/traumatic histories, etc.
- Our frontline staff work has evolved, BUT recruitment, training, and compensation models haven’t.
- What are we truly asking of our frontline teams?
- How can we rebuild our institutional structures so they truly support and sustain the intellectual, emotional, and physical labor of our frontline workers?

*Credit to Saleem Hue Penny, Associate VP of Chicago Children’s Museum for teaching this to LZ!*
What’s in it for me?

What do you think the outcomes will be?

What will your role be?
Subtopics

● Training
● Recruitment
● Institutional Support
Training

- Transitioning
- The Pipeline
Transitioning

So you want to do more socially relevant work. How do you build the team you need on the frontlines to engage audiences in more nuanced ways?

- Professional development (ramping up & ongoing)
- Redefining the work (hiring & for current staff)

Challenges
- Involving frontline staff in the process/transparency
- Buy-in from above and below
The Pipeline

With momentum in the field to do more socially relevant work, how might our choices around training support the development of a “pipeline” of workers able to do this work?

- Rethinking formal training/education requirements
- Supporting skills development
- Creating opportunities for advancement
Recruitment

● Identify skills & behaviors
● Diversify recruitment sources
Institutional Support

- Compensation
- Emotional Support
- Retention
- Professional Development
- Inclusion
Compensation

If the work and the content being interpreted has changed, then it stands to reason that the job description and compensation should too.

- Value the work, not just intellectually, but financially. Not everyone can “afford” to work in a museum and we shouldn’t rely on people who “don’t need the money” or who “need to pay their dues.”

- If you can’t get to where you want to be right away, what else can you do?
Emotional Support

If the work and the content being interpreted has changed, then it stands to reason that the job description and compensation should too.

- Acknowledge the emotional labor of the work and provide space and strategies to advocate for and support frontline staff

- What are some strategies you use, or would like to see at your organization?
Retention

It is more cost effective to retain staff than to recruit, hire and train staff. Training and support is needed to make the work personally and institutionally sustainable.

- Appreciated, happy employees are more likely to stay at their jobs, do their jobs well, and be loyal and continuously build organizational brand and community.

- How important is retention to you? What value does it provide the individual and the organization?
Professional Development

Provide opportunities for frontline staff to continuously learn, practice and grow.

- Everywhere
- All of the time

- What does/will this look like at your institution? How will you benefit?
Empowered, inclusive leadership is essential at all levels of an organization. Systemic change is vital to long-term, genuine progress.

- **Build Trust** - *Everyone* has to do the work.
- **As a group affirm:**
  Who are you? What do you stand for?
Group Work Guiding Questions

- What are your frustrations with this topic in your work?
- What is your blue sky idea related to this topic?

- What are realistic goals in improving this topic in your work in the next year? What are the action steps to achieve those goals? How long might it take to achieve these goals?
- What could the field at large do to address the challenges you notice with this topic?
Sharing Out

Summarize the main points of your conversation and ideas generated towards taking action in your work.

5 minutes/group
Personal Commitments

What are you waiting for?!

What are you going to do now?!
THANKS!!

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