

The Illinois Freedom Project**[- Illinois Freedom Project \(lookingforlincoln.org\)](#)**

The Illinois Freedom Project is a youth focused multimedia effort that includes a web site, videos, printed materials, curriculum, and a traveling exhibit. Together, these resources present the stories of everyday people in Illinois who struggled against slavery and prejudice covering over 200 years of Illinois history. Our hope is that The Illinois Freedom Project will inspire youth by presenting stories of victory through adversity. The State Historic Sites at Springfield (Illinois Department of Natural Resources) is our primary partner in this effort along with the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. The Illinois Freedom Project was the 2021 winner of the Organization of American Historians Stanton-Horton Award for Excellence in National Park Service History.

In the summer of 2017 we conducted Illinois Freedom Journeys to historic sites and museums in Illinois for area youth. Video summary of that program is available at: [\(4\) The Illinois Freedom Project: Freedom Journeys - YouTube](#) See also this photo collection that was put together by one of the youth mentors: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=erl2Q4tAtSI>

We conducted trips again in 2022 and 2023 and are working with our cooperative agreement partners, Urban America Outdoors/SODAS Life Inc. on a video documentary of our trips. See the draft trailer from our 2022 trips here: [IL Freedom Project Draft Trailer 2023 v 1 \(vimeo.com\)](#)

In February 2019 we launched the Illinois Freedom Project traveling exhibit initiative. To date, the exhibit has been exhibited over 30 times by over 320,000 people at venues throughout Illinois ranging from historic sites and museums to local churches to small town libraries to the Boys and Girls Club National Conference in Chicago.

Below are some links related to the traveling exhibit:

https://multimedia.illinois.gov/ioci_vid/Archive/2019/WebpageOnly/DNR/021119-ILFreedomProject/021119-ILFreedomProject.mp4

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ouop6RKbQw>

https://www.wandtv.com/news/videos/illinois-freedom-project-teaches-history-of-slavery/video_2f444cee-234f-5bd2-8334-3c3b756cc1ce.html

Shawnee Community College Extension Center, Cairo
[Cairo Travel Exhibit | | wsiltv.com](#)

African American Museum of Southern Illinois, Carbondale
[African American Museum of Southern Illinois debuts exhibits on Black history in Illinois \(kfvs12.com\)](#)