

**Association for the Study of African American Life and History
(ASALH) Black History Freedom Schools Initiative
February 10, 2025**

CRITERIA:

1. ASALH Freedom Schools must be an ASALH Branch or an institutional member in good standing.
2. ASALH Freedom Schools must be a 501 (c)(3) organization or have a fiscal agent who is.
3. ASALH Freedom Schools must have an assigned coordinator who is responsible for organizing the Freedom School, ensuring its operation in accordance with all ASALH policies, and providing reports to ASALH's National Freedom School Coordinator.
4. ASALH Freedom Schools must focus on college age and older adults (18 plus). Others may participate but Mellon grant funds cannot be expended on them.
5. *Lead Instructors at ASALH Freedom Schools must be certified teachers, a college/university Professor or a Ph.D. candidate in a History Department with a specialization in African American History, a Professor or Ph.D. candidate a Black/Africana Studies Department or Program or an independent scholar recognized for their expertise in African American history. * Only applies to recipient of the Mellon Flexible grant.

SCOPE/PERSPECTIVE:

1. ASALH Freedom Schools must teach a comprehensive rounded Afrocentric view of Black peoples' sociohistorical experiences.

- a. ASALH Freedom Schools must begin Black history with the origin of humanity, homo sapiens sapiens in Africa and trace their development of civilizations and societies in Africa and other parts of the world;
 - b. ASALH Freedom Schools must trace the creation of the African Diaspora via the European Slave Trade throughout the Americas;
 - c. ASALH Freedom Schools must be Afrocentric in that they center the lived experiences, cultural productions, and perspectives of Black people in whatever society they reside;
 - d. ASALH Freedom Schools must be inclusive of the lived experiences, cultural productions, and perspectives of Black people across the social relationships of class, ethnicity/nationality, gender, generation, and sexual orientation, etc. in whatever society they reside.
 - e. ASALH Freedom Schools should privilege the modal (most frequently occurring) experiences of the majority of Black people during each sociohistorical period, e.g., as enslaved persons, tenant farmers, domestic servants, washer women, industrial workers, and as a subproletariat of parttime, temporary, ununionized low paid benefitless workers; but must not neglect the lived experiences, cultural productions, and perspectives of the minority of striving middle class professionals and wealthy entrepreneurs in whatever society they reside.
2. ASALH Freedom Schools will teach the basic skills of historical periodization, that to be understandable the past must be interpreted as “one thing after another,” but must be organized in an interpretative frame that makes sense of past.

3. ASALH Freedom Schools must practice a culturally relevant pedagogy, they must privilege the use of instructional materials drawn from Black sociohistorical experiences (primary documents), interpretations created by Black people (secondary sources) and make use of Black cultures in the teaching process.
4. ASALH Freedom Schools must adopt critical pedagogy that makes extensive use of discussion and encourages participants to question and think critically about the information and knowledge presented to them.
5. ASALH Freedom Schools must adopt a multimedia pedagogical method that uses primary documents and other historically specific cultural artifacts such as music, poems, paintings, murals, recordings, videos and films, etc. in the teaching/learning process.
6. ASALH Freedom Schools must incorporate the history of Black people in their local communities and teach students how to investigate and construct family and local histories.
7. ASALH Freedom Schools must investigate local and state options for funding.
8. ASALH Freedom Schools must provide for a process for participants and instructors to provide evaluative feedback on the program.

DOCUMENTATION/EVALUATION:

1. ASALH Freedom Schools must submit a report 60 days after the end of the program. The report must include curricular materials such as lesson plans, teaching aids such as the names of primary documents and other historically specific cultural artifacts such as music, poems, paintings, murals, recordings, videos and films, etc. in the teaching/learning process.

2. ASALH Freedom Schools contract an evaluator to provide a professional assessment of the program.