



BLACK METROPOLIS
BMRC
RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

Strategic Plan 2018-2021





Letter from the Board Chair and Executive Director

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Staff, and Members of the Black Metropolis Research Consortium (BMRC), we are pleased to present our 2018-2021 Strategic Plan! Sincere gratitude is extended to BMRC Board Members and Staff who worked diligently from 2017 to 2018 to ensure this Plan will aid us in charting our course.

As a consortium created in 2006 with a dedication to the acquisition, preservation, discovery and use of archives and historical documents on the Black experience throughout metropolitan Chicago, we recognize the importance of “*Sankofa*” as a guiding principle for our collective work. *Sankofa* – a word from the Akan language of Ghana, Africa – translates in English to “go back and get it.” Like the Akan people, we move forward while remaining conscious of the past and the wisdom therein. We believe the past can and should serve as a guide for planning the future. BMRC stakeholders drew upon the organization’s past successes and challenges, as well as members’ prioritization of goals and an understanding of the future of cultural heritage professions to create a strategic framework for excellence.

In our second decade, we are committed to implementing the Strategic Plan as a guide for continuing the work of BMRC, achieving our revised mission, and striving toward our vision. Core values have been included to keep our fundamental principles and beliefs centered in our work. Through consensus, we identified five priority areas to inform our strategic direction for growth and impact: education, collections, collection advisement, membership and sustainability.

This work is impossible in isolation. In sharing our Strategic Plan, we anticipate that you will discover goals and strategies aligned with several common interests. Together with you – *our members and community* – we look forward to connecting and exchanging ideas, as well as engaging and collaborating.

We are grateful for your continued support of the Black Metropolis Research Consortium!

Steven Adams
BMRC Board Chair

Andrea R. Jackson
Executive Director

Mission

The Black Metropolis Research Consortium (BMRC) connects all who seek to document, share, understand and preserve Black experiences.

Images on cover, from top to bottom:

2016 Archie Motley Archival Intern, Sabine Nau, at Chicago Public Library, Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature

Cherry Family photo, Bethel New Life Collection, Harold Washington Library Center, Special Collections, Chicago Public Library

Archives Storage, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

Nat King Cole and Sarah Vaughan with band in Evanston, Shorefront Legacy Center, Evanston, Illinois

BMRC and Inflectionals “PROTEST!” panel with archivists Skyla Hearn and BMRC Board Member, Raquel Flores-Clemons, and Inflectionals founder, Kristyn Carragher, Chicago State University

Vision

To be essential to promoting discovery, preservation, and use of Black historical collections.



Core Values

- Trust across communities
- Honest and transparent communication
- Commitment to being knowledgeable and responsible custodians
- Respect for those who develop collections - community members, members institutions, ancestors and Chicagoans
- Commitment to member archives continuing to reflect the broad, complex, intersectional experience of the Black metropolis
- Advocacy for equitable collaboration while acknowledging Chicago's divided history
- Increased diversity of caretakers of our collections
- Care for community archives as vital to documenting the Black experience
- Equity in resource access and assistance across varied institution types

Images:

BMRC Board Chair, Steven Adams with Esmeralda Kale, Curator of Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University

Unveiling of the Dr. Georgiana Rose Simpson bust, BMRC staff with the founder of the Monumental Women Project (MWP), Shae Omonijo, University of Chicago

Priority Areas, Goals, and Strategies



Education

Goal

Illuminate Black history and culture by supporting the diversification of the archival profession, and the creation and dissemination of research and scholarship

Strategies

- Foster a more inclusive and culturally competent professional community
- Promote the archival field to prospective Black cultural heritage professionals
- Support the production and sharing of new knowledge

Collections

Goal

Enhance the preservation, discoverability, and visibility of member institutions' collections and legacies

Strategies

- Enhance the preservation and processing abilities of member institutions
- Enhance the discoverability of member institutions' collections
- Promote the resources of BMRC and its member institutions to diverse audiences

Images:

Fellows Ashlie Sandoval and Misty DeBerry at the BMRC Fellows Presentations (Photo by Jean Lachat)

Fellow Marcus Shelby, and band, present composition about Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement after conducting research at Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College Chicago

Collecting Advisement

Goal

Develop archives educational resources and programming to provide community members and prospective donors with impartial legacy management advisement

Strategies

- Develop and nurture relationships with community members, organizations, cultural heritage groups, scholars and experts who share an interest in preserving Black history
- Design and build educational services
- Build a Legacy Management Resource Portal

Membership

Goal

Create an exemplary experience for all members and prospective members

Strategies

- Develop a distinctive and unique member benefits package
- Increase the number of members – institutional and community – while retaining current members
- Increase engagement with member organizations in ways that are mutually beneficial

Sustainability

Goal

Build the resources and reputation to accomplish the BMRC's goals

Strategies

- Develop a funding model that pursues and balances a diverse set of income streams
- Promote the BMRC mission to increase and improve our reputation internationally as a key, trusted hub
- Increase visibility of BMRC within member organizations



The Black Metropolis Research Consortium (BMRC) is a Chicago-based membership association of libraries, universities, and other archival institutions. BMRC was initiated in the spring of 2006 at a meeting of chief administrators and executives from fifteen Chicago area institutions.

Since its founding, the BMRC has completed two major archival management projects making previously “hidden” collections available for researchers, scholars, and artists. Known for their Summer Short-term Fellowship and Archie Motley Archival Internship programs, BMRC is committed to diversifying the archives profession, historical record and scholarship. The University of Chicago serves as the current host institution of the BMRC and is the organization’s fiscal agent.

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Erik Gellman / *Vice Chair*

Associate Professor of History, Roosevelt University

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Founder, Shorefront Legacy Center

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2017-2018 BMRC Member Institutions

Bronzeville / Black Chicagoan Historical Society

Columbia College Chicago

Chicago History Museum

Chicago Public Library

Chicago State University

Dominican University

Illinois Institute of Technology

Loyola University Chicago

The Newberry Library

Northwestern University

Rebuild Foundation

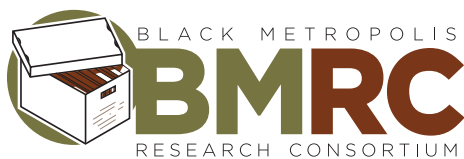
Roosevelt University

Shorefront Legacy Center

University of Chicago

University of Illinois at Chicago

BMRC Membership is constantly growing!



Andrea R. Jackson
Executive Director

Anita Mechler
Project Manager/Archivist

Jacqueline Stewart
Faculty Liaison
Professor, Department of Cinema and Media Studies, University of Chicago

