

# CREATED EQUAL: AMERICA'S CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE

The Abolitionists ❖ Slavery by Another Name ❖ The Loving Story ❖ Freedom Riders

## A. GENERAL

### 1. Contact Information

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**FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING:**

- Programming Resources
- Curriculum Materials

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**FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING:**

- *Created Equal* Themes

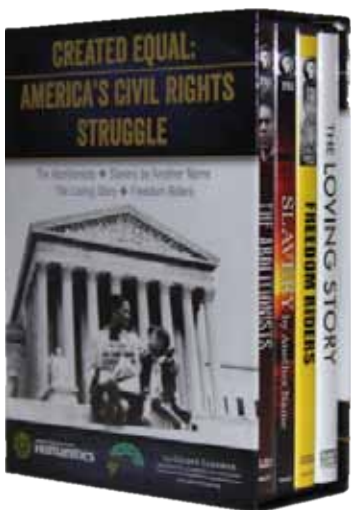
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## 2. Overview of the *Created Equal* Initiative



To mark the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has developed a special initiative, *Created Equal: America's Civil Rights Struggle*. As part of the Endowment's *Bridging Cultures* initiative, *Created Equal* uses the power of documentary films to spark public conversations about the changing meanings of freedom and equality in America.

Four outstanding documentary films, spanning the period from the 1830s to the 1960s, are the centerpiece for this project. Each of these films was supported by the NEH, and each tells the remarkable stories of individuals who challenged the social and legal status quo of deeply rooted institutions, from slavery to segregation.

*Created Equal* encourages communities to revisit the history of civil rights in America and to reflect on the ideals of freedom and equality that have helped bridge deep racial and cultural divides. Four hundred and seventy-three communities across the nation will receive the *Created Equal* film set, accompanied by resources to guide public discussion programs.

With the participation of distinguished scholars, these resources were developed through a partnership of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. Since its founding in 1965, the NEH has been a chronicler of the struggle for freedom and human dignity at the core of the American experience. As a steward of the nation's history, NEH has helped scholars and the public better understand this long narrative of civil rights. The Gilder Lehrman Institute, which has a track record of working with public and academic libraries on public programs in American history, has developed programmatic and support materials for the sites and hosted an orientation webinar, and will manage the logistical and reporting process.

As the *Created Equal* films have been viewed, they have inspired conversations. In public libraries, in school classrooms, and in churches across the nation, on Twitter, blogs, and Facebook pages, people of all ages and different races and walks of life have been moved to continue talking about the themes presented in the films. Often, viewers are left pondering what it takes to achieve real change in a democracy, what can be learned from the struggles of those who went before us, and how to connect our own lives and experiences to this history of heroism and struggle.

The *Created Equal* initiative extends and deepens those discussions, offering scholarly resources and program guides to help Americans reflect on the legacy and meaning of our shared civil rights history. As we launch this initiative and distribute film sets to communities across the nation, we invite each of you to join this important conversation.

“The legacy of slavery and emancipation forever forces us to face morally and ideologically who we believe we really are as a people. Are we the people who freed slaves in an all-out civil war with a huge portion of the country trying desperately to prevent it, or the country that can actually face this dual, complicated legacy head-on? And, are we the country that truly believes in section one of the Fourteenth Amendment that emancipation spawned, or do we simply go to it selectively to use it to our own personal or group ends? The legacies of emancipation are likely forever with us in this country; just who and what gets to control those legacies is what shapes the history in our own time.”

—DAVID W. BLIGHT, *Historian*

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## 3. About This Guide

This *Created Equal* Programming Guide provides project information and resources for sites using the film set for public programming. The Guide's Toolkit for Facilitated Discussion provides resources and models for developing local public screening and discussion events exploring the changing meaning of freedom and equality.

The Guide is organized into six sections:

**A. GENERAL** provides an overview of the initiative.

**B. PROGRAMMING** provides historical context and an overview of the films as the basis for developing facilitated conversations in your community.

**C. PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS** includes suggestions for promotion.

**D. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES** includes suggested books and web resources.

We hope you will find this guide helpful as you develop programming for your community.

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## 4. Acknowledgments

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History in partnership with the National Endowment for the Humanities is pleased to acknowledge the institutions and individuals who have contributed to the planning, development, and implementation of *Created Equal: America's Civil Rights Struggle*.

We recognize the Tribeca Film Institute for sharing its reading and discussion model, which has been freely adapted for this programming guide, and the New York Council for the Humanities for sharing their moderated discussion plans.

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- Carol Peters, Project Director, EDSITEment: The Best of the Humanities on the Web
- Joseph Phelan, Program Specialist, EDSITEment: The Best of the Humanities on the Web

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