

ANTI-TETHERING GUIDE

How FBAs Prevent Substitution, Erasure, and Structural Harm

PURPOSE

This guide provides Foundational Black Americans (FBAs) with clear language, boundaries, and standards to identify, name, and prevent tethering, which is a form of structural harm that collapses, substitutes, or erases our lineage-based identity.

It is designed as a practical reference for use across media, institutions, organizing spaces, and public discourse.

This guide supports:

- lineage protection
 - narrative integrity
 - accurate representation
 - prevention of resource and policy diversion
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WHY IDENTITY CLARITY MATTERS

The USBA framework distinguishes race, nationality, ethnicity, lineage, and migration background so that historical formation, structural harm, demographic analysis, and policy discussions remain accurate and clearly grounded. Identity clarity improves orientation by helping people understand that broad racial classification does not automatically mean identical lineage, history, or institutional experience.

Within the United States, multiple Black populations may share racial classification while possessing different:

- ancestral origins
- migration histories
- ethnic identities
- lineage continuity
- relationships to American institutions and policies

These distinctions are routinely recognized across institutions through census classifications, immigration systems, demographic analysis, public policy, and research practices. The USBA framework applies identity clarity to improve structural precision, historical understanding, and lineage continuity.

FBA Identity Classifications

Within the USBA ecosystem, identity clarity distinguishes race, nationality, ethnicity, and lineage so that historical formation and demographic classification are understood more accurately.

Category	Classification
Race	Black
Nationality	American
Ethnic Identity	Black American
Lineage	Foundational Black American (FBA)

Foundational Black Americans represent a distinct American lineage formed through U.S. chattel slavery, Reconstruction, segregation, and multigenerational historical development within the United States. This framework uses identity clarification to improve historical precision, structural analysis, lineage continuity, and restoration alignment.

Black Populations in The United States

Within the United States, Black populations may share racial classification while possessing different migration histories, ethnic identities, lineage continuity, and relationships to American institutions and policies. The USBA ecosystem distinguishes these differences to improve demographic precision, historical clarity, and structural understanding.

Classification	General Description
Foundational Black American (FBA)	Distinct American lineage formed through U.S. chattel slavery and multigenerational historical development within the United States
Black Immigrant	Recent Black immigrant-origin populations and their immediate descendants
Descendant of Black Immigrants	U.S.-born descendants of Black immigrant-origin families with longstanding roots in the United States
Mixed Ethnicity	Individuals with multiple ethnic, lineage, or migration backgrounds

These distinctions are not intended to diminish shared humanity, prevent collaboration, or create hostility between populations. They exist to preserve historical accuracy, lineage clarity, structural precision, and informed participation within the USBA ecosystem.

When lineage distinctions are ignored, collapsed, substituted, or treated as interchangeable, structural confusion and representational harm often follow. Within the USBA ecosystem, these actions are referred to as tethering.

WHAT TETHERING IS

Tether (noun)

An individual, domestic or foreign, who deliberately collapses Foundational Black American identity into pan-ethnic, diasporic, or immigrant categories by:

- adopting FBA culture, language, history, or struggle
 - leveraging that adoption to gain access, legitimacy, or influence
 - advancing agendas that dilute, replace, or erase lineage-specific justice claims
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Tethering (verb)

The deliberate act of identity collapse, substitution, or conflation.

Tethering constitutes structural harm because it:

- weakens covenant clarity
- obscures accountability
- distorts identity classification
- redirects resources, representation, or political outcomes away from FBAs

Tethering is a structural violation, not a symbolic, accidental, or benign act.

WHERE TETHERING SHOWS UP

Tethering occurs across both institutional and public-facing spaces.

Institutional Settings

- academia
- media
- philanthropy
- nonprofit and civic organizations
- political systems

Public and Cultural Spaces

- social media and content creation
 - public commentary and debate
 - historical storytelling and education
 - coalition and solidarity framing
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COMMON TETHERING BEHAVIORS

FBAAs should be alert when the following patterns appear:

- using “we” language that implies shared lineage without clarification
- treating proximity as equivalence
- framing FBA history as a generalized or global Black experience
- invoking FBA trauma to legitimize unrelated agendas
- centering non-FBA experiences inside FBA-specific narratives
- teaching or narrating FBA history without FBA sources, authority, or consent

These behaviors replace accuracy with appropriation.

WHY TETHERING CAUSES HARM

Tethering produces harm through three interconnected mechanisms.

- **Historical Distortion**
When distinct lineages and jurisdictions are blurred, accountability for U.S.-specific harm to FBAs collapses.
- **Data and Classification Corruption**
Lineage-specific outcomes are absorbed into aggregate categories, distorting SSDH and ISDH analysis and obscuring FBA-specific harm.
- **Policy and Resource Diversion**
When the harmed population is unclear, repair becomes impossible and resources, protections, and remedies are redirected away from those to whom they are owed.

Intent does not neutralize impact.

INSTITUTIONAL ENABLEMENT

Tethering is often enabled by institutions that:

- collapse lineage-based identity categories
- reward substitution or representational displacement
- fail to uphold identity clarity and consent

Institutional silence or neutrality sustains structural harm.

WHAT TETHERING IS NOT

This guide does not reject:

- kinship
- collaboration
- solidarity

It rejects confusion.

FBA identity is:

- not interchangeable
 - not symbolic
 - not transferable
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It is rooted in:

- blood and lineage
- U.S. jurisdiction
- unpaid labor
- legal exclusion
- generational harm
- cultural endurance within the United States

Respect and collaboration do not require identity collapse or substitution.

THE NON-DEBATE RULE

FBA's do not debate:

- our identity
- our history
- our harm
- our eligibility

We define our identity.

Public debate shifts authority away from the lineage and creates unnecessary conflict.

Respond with one of the following actions:

- cite
- clarify
- defer
- disengage

Debate is misalignment.

FBA PROTECTIVE RESPONSES

When tethering occurs, FBA's must:

- name the behavior clearly
- restate lineage boundaries
- refuse collapsed framing
- disengage from misaligned spaces
- document patterns for accountability

Harm is assessed by outcome and impact, not rhetoric, intent, or self-identification.

CLOSING PRINCIPLE

Distinction and consent are the foundation of solidarity and collaboration. They ensure engagement honors lineage, maintains accountability, and prevents substitution. Without them, solidarity becomes extraction and collaboration becomes harm, constituting a structural violation under USBA standards.

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