

Allies in Excellence



Museum Assessment Program Peer Review Manual

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1575 Eye Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005



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Museum Assessment Program

Peer Review Manual

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Page 1 (left to right)

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Contents

2 Introduction

- History of MAP
- MAP: What is it?
- How a Museum Gets “MAP’d”
- Assessment Type
- Who Is Involved?

4 Peer Review Information

- Role
- Considering Requests
- Getting Feedback
- Remaining an Informed Colleague
- Maintaining Confidentiality
- FAQs
- Fulfilling Your Responsibilities

11 Site Visit

- Purpose of the Visit
- Preparing for the Site Visit
- Establishing Contact
- Scheduling the Site Visit
- Site Visit Expectations

- Visit Length
- Financial Arrangements
- Setting the Agenda
- Conducting the Visit

18 Assessment Report

- Writing the Report
- Deadline
- Wrapping Up
- Follow Up

23 Appendices

- Using the Appendices
- Sample Timeline of Events
- Peer Reviewer Travel Policy
- Characteristics of Excellence for U.S. Museums
- Organizational Assessment Resources
- Collections Stewardship Assessment Resources
- Community Engagement Assessment Resources
- Leadership Assessment Resources

Introduction

HISTORY OF MAP

Developed by the American Association of Museums (AAM) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the Museum Assessment Program (MAP) offers small and medium sized museums an opportunity for self-improvement through guided self-study and consultation with an experienced peer reviewer. Since 1981, more than 4,000 museums have participated in MAP.

MAP: WHAT IS IT?

MAP is a confidential, consultative process, designed to help museums understand how their operations compare to standards and best practices in the field. MAP provides museums, science centers, historic houses, botanic gardens and arboreta, zoos and aquaria, nature centers, and art galleries with the tools and resources to recognize how other institutions deal with similar challenges, while providing suggestions for improvement. The process also draws upon a collegial relationship with a peer reviewer serving as a sounding board for new ideas, challenges and discussion.

HOW A MUSEUM GETS “MAP’D”

MAP accomplishes its mission by guiding museums through self-study and peer review. A Self-Study Workbook directs each museum through the process of examining its own performance and comparing itself to standards and best practices in the field. Peer review is undertaken by museum professionals who volunteer their time to MAP. The MAP staff matches each museum with a peer reviewer who has expertise pertinent to the museum’s challenges and demographics. After a site visit—consisting of one to three days of touring the facilities and meeting with members of the governing authority and staff—the peer reviewer prepares a 15-20 page report that provides a critical analysis of the

organization along with prioritized recommendations for improvement. Museums then use the information resulting from the self-study, site visit and assessment report to guide decisions and set goals for the next few years. MAP’s purpose of providing collegial, consultative feedback is upheld by the guided self-study and peer review, both of which allow the museum to set priorities, plan and identify opportunities for improvement.

ASSESSMENT TYPES

MAP offers four assessments, focusing on different aspects of museum operations. Museums choose the assessment that best matches their needs.

Organizational Assessment

Formerly known as the Institutional Assessment, this assessment reviews all areas of a museum’s operations. Upon completion of this assessment, a museum is better prepared to operate as a 21st century museum with a strong understanding of core museum standards and good practices that support sustainability. This assessment places significant emphasis on strategic planning as well as ensuring operations and resources align with the museum’s mission.

Collections Stewardship Assessment

Formerly known as the Collections Management Assessment, this assessment focuses on collections policies, planning, access and documentation within the context of the museum’s total operations. The scope of the assessment includes collections care and use, acquisitions and deaccessioning, legal, ethical, and safety issues, documentation, inventory, and emergency planning.

Community Engagement Assessment

The Community Engagement Assessment is an evolution of the Public Dimension Assessment. It assesses the museum’s understanding of and relationship with its various communities and conversely examines their perception of and experience with the museum.

It helps museums gather better input from their constituents, develop a more nuanced view about the community's demographics and needs, respond to the changing nature of its audiences and incorporate these findings into planning and operational decisions. It helps museums form new collaborations and strengthen old ones.

Leadership Assessment

Formerly known as the Governance Assessment, this assessment guides a museum's governing authority and senior leadership in examining their roles and responsibilities. It focuses on basic non-profit governance practices and legal and ethical issues specific to museums. It enhances the ability of the museum's leadership to advance the museum's mission, plan more strategically, and meet the standards for public trust and accountability.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

MAP Peer Reviewers

This manual is a primary reference for conducting reviews for AAM's MAP program and will:

- guide you through every step of a visit
- include tools and resources for conducting a review
- provide a reference for important policies
- answer frequently asked questions

MAP Participants

Museums participate in MAP for many reasons, including:

- Identifying key issues at the start or conclusion of a large project
- Improving the staff and/or governing authority's understanding of standards and best practices
- Gaining new perspectives on difficult issues
- Beginning a planning process
- Receiving a "check-up" before pursuing accreditation

Each participating museum is encouraged to create an Assessment Team to foster an atmosphere of dialogue, planning and cooperative decision-making. The Assessment Team's responsibilities are:

- overseeing the completion of the assessment
- scheduling the MAP peer reviewer's site visit
- ensuring that the museum begins the process of planning and implementation.

MAP Staff

MAP is funded through a cooperative agreement with IMLS and is administered by AAM. MAP staff's key duties are to:

- guide participating museums through the assessment process
- identify peer reviewers with appropriate background for each assessment
- secure peer reviewers to visit each museum in the program
- support peer reviewers throughout the review process
- review the peer reviewer's report
- create and revise program materials, policies and procedures as needed, with the ongoing input of the museum field
- reimburse peer reviewer travel costs

Peer Review Information

ROLE

As a MAP peer reviewer, your role is to be a supportive colleague while assessing the museum's operations and making constructive and achievable recommendations for change. In the context of your dialogue with the museum, you will provide information about how its operations measure up to standards and best practices in the field, as well as ideas about how it might address its current challenges and which resources might aid that effort. During your review of the institution, identify and refer regularly to the museum's key goals. Occasionally the goals might seem out of line with what is in the self study. In such cases, structure the assessment in the context of institutional issues and recommendations, and work with the museum to receive the goals. The primary audience for the resulting report is the museum's staff and governing authority, funders, affiliate groups and the community at large. You will review the museum's performance in the context of its mission.

When you communicate with the museum's staff, it is important that you balance the museum's stated need with your professional determinations of its most critical issues. Further, it is important that the staff is aware of the purpose of a MAP assessment, as well as your promise of confidentiality.

As a peer reviewer, you will:

- review the museum's documentation
- schedule the site visit
- notify MAP staff of the visit date
- develop a visit agenda in cooperation with the museum
- visit the museum
- review plans to implement recommendations with the museum staff
- write an Assessment Report that reviews overall operations, addresses issues of major concern, offers constructive suggestions for change, addresses the museum's strengths and weaknesses, assesses how

well the museum is meeting standards and best practices, and offers prioritized recommendations

- submit the report to MAP staff on time
- follow up with the museum after the report has been submitted

PEER REVIEWER TEAM

Sometimes, due to the complexity and size, museums may require two MAP peer reviewers. In that case, you will be working with another peer reviewer.

A Peer Reviewer Team must think and act collaboratively during all aspects of the assessment. Each team member is responsible for ensuring that the site visit occurs smoothly by: reviewing the museum's self-study and documentation beforehand; participating fully while on site; drafting the Assessment Report; and maintaining the highest professional conduct. Although both team members participate equally in the assessment, one Peer reviewer is designated the "lead contact." MAP staff will determine which peer reviewer is the team contact when they confirm the assignment.

As a team, you must work together to decide how the assessment will be conducted. You may want to participate in all the tours and meetings together, or you may want to divide assignments and compare notes later. It is particularly important to decide how you will collaborate on the writing of the report.

The Lead Contact serves as the official contact between the peer reviewer team, the museum's Assessment Team and MAP staff. Specific responsibilities include:

- Arranging the visit dates and developing the agenda with the museum contact
- Informing MAP staff of the visit date
- Taking primary responsibility for the timely completion of the Assessment Report
- Submitting the Assessment Report to MAP staff by the deadline

The Team Member completes the team, ensures objectivity and is responsible for:

- Helping the team contact schedule the visit and develop the agenda
- Ensuring that the team follows the agenda during the site visit
- Contributing to the assessment report

Generally, the team participates in each component of the site visit together. For large or complex sites, divide the responsibilities with your team member in advance so you know who takes the lead on questions and writing the report for specific departments or functions. Draw upon each other's expertise and comfort level with a topic.

CONSIDERING REQUESTS

Before you agree to conduct a MAP visit, consider the following:

Time Commitment

A review generally takes 40-60 hours of time, spread out over several months. The process includes reading the materials, developing an agenda, keeping in mind initial questions and points of discussion, conducting the site visit, writing the report and following up with the museum. You should be sure you can provide the time and attention to be fair to the participating museum, meet the program's expectations and benefit from the process yourself. It is better to decline to participate than agree to conduct a visit you do not have time to complete. Your time commitment for this assessment will depend on your work style and the complexity and size of the participating museum.

Potential Conflicts of Interest

Some questions to consider:

- Have you worked at the institution within the past 10 years?
- Have you served as a peer reviewer for this institution—MAP, accreditation or another non-anonymous reviewer—within the past 10 years?
- Have you engaged in a business relationship with the institution or any of its senior staff—including consulting or long-term collaborative agreements—within the last three years?

If any potential conflict of interest exists, please contact MAP staff to discuss any concerns.

Responding to the Request

Please respond to all requests from the museum and MAP staff within 5 business days. It does not have to be an absolute confirmation, but in the response, please note interest, acceptance, or denial.

GETTING FEEDBACK

MAP's peer reviewer evaluation process is designed to:

- Provide consistent and constructive feedback to peer reviewers
- Identify ways in which AAM can provide additional training or support for peer reviewers
- Ensure the strength and consistency of the MAP program, benefiting the participating museums and the field at large

Participating museums and program staff are asked to give feedback regarding the peer reviewer's performance during the site visit and in the written report. Each group is asked to evaluate the peer reviewer from its own perspective. You will receive this feedback approximately three months after you submit your report to MAP. You will always receive staff feedback, but the museum feedback is dependent on the museum submitting an evaluation.

Peer Review Information

REMAINING AN INFORMED COLLEAGUE

Your commitment to peer review requires you to maintain an awareness of evolving standards and best practices in the field. AAM supports you in this effort through:

- **A peer reviewer-only section of the AAM website**

(www.aam-us.org/peer-review), which includes:

- Program criteria, policies and procedures, forms, and other materials, including this manual
- References and resources to assist your work and broaden your understanding, including standards developed by related organizations
- Opportunities to participate in program-related discussions

- **This Peer Review Manual**, which contains a collection of references that provide a basic understanding of critical areas of museum operations — a great resource for searching for information about a new topic or for a museum that is going through MAP

- **Other AAM resources**, which include:

- AAM's website (www.aam-us.org), which provides access to the bookstore, professional education and annual meeting information and registration, MAP and accreditation program information and the Information Center
- AAM's Bookstore, which includes more than 250 books, videos and audiotapes on a wide variety of museum-related topics. In addition, technical handbooks outline procedures for various aspects of museum work
- AAM's Annual Meeting and MuseumExpo™, the most comprehensive conference and exposition for museum professionals
- AAM Professional Development, which provides additional professional education opportunities throughout the year on a variety of topics in different cities around the country

- AAM's Information Center, which offers all AAM members online resources that provide guidance on museum operations, standards and best practices, and emerging issues
- AAM's Standing Professional Committees, which represent specific disciplines within the museum community, and Professional Interest Committees, which enable people and institutions with common interests or needs to develop professional associations

There are many other opportunities to engage in field-wide discussion on standards and best practices through a variety of regional, state, local and discipline-specific museum organizations. Links to many of these organizations can be found on the AAM website.

Contact MAP staff at 202-289-9118 or map@aam-us.org if you have any questions.

MAINTAINING CONFIDENTIALITY

MAP is most successful when museum staff is open and honest. To preserve the integrity of the program, the museum's disclosure of private information must also be handled discreetly by the peer reviewer. Treat all activities and information acquired through the process as privileged. Do not talk or write about the proceedings, your conclusions or any other information about the museum to anyone but peer review team members and MAP staff, as appropriate.

After the review is complete, your report is received and accepted, and your commitment is ended, destroy or return any notes and copies of the self-study and application in your possession (see *Wrapping Up*, p. 22). Your responsibility of confidentiality continues after review. You may not use your knowledge about an institution to gain an advantage in future business decisions, such as consulting assignments or to pursue employment. You may not identify the specific museums you have visited, but you can and should include your participation as a MAP peer reviewer on your resume. Refer only to the time period of visits.

Fulfilling Your Responsibilities

MAP staff understands that unforeseen events may prevent you from fulfilling a commitment. If such an event arises, contact MAP staff immediately so we can inform the museum and find a replacement. A significant delay may endanger MAP's funding with IMLS. MAP staff may remove your name from the peer reviewer roster if you consistently agree to conduct a visit or write a report and then do not fulfill your commitment.

FAQs

Q. I have been a peer reviewer for three years but have never been asked to do a review. Am I needed? Should I take my name off the roster?

A. You may not have been contacted yet because:

- We have more peer reviewers than we need in any one year. This allows each program to meet the needs of all the museums participating at any one time and also respect reviewers' schedules. Depending on your experience and expertise, you can reasonably expect AAM to contact you every two to three years.
- Although a variety of museums participate in each program, your expertise and experience may not match those of the current participants. This is especially true if you are from a museum of a discipline or size that is not well represented in MAP. This does not make your experience any less significant to AAM; when such a museum does come through the program, your insight will be very valuable.
- AAM may not have current or accurate information about your location, experience or expertise. If you have moved in the past few years, make sure the MAP staff has your correct contact information and you continue to update your experience with the MAP staff.

Regardless of the reason, inform the MAP staff about your current availability and interest. We do our best to balance the workload among all reviewers.

Q. How is a museum matched with a peer reviewer?

A. Museums receive a list of potential peer reviewers and brief biographical profiles for each. These individuals are the best matches for the museum based on the museum's size, type, governance structure and

objectives stated on the MAP application. They are not determined by geography, unless the museum makes a specific request. Museums then rank the potential peer reviewers and return the sheet to MAP. Then, MAP staff begins contacting peer reviewers in the order of which they are ranked.

Q. I know someone who would make a fantastic peer reviewer. Should I let you know about them?

A. Yes! Peer Review Applications are considered throughout the year and MAP always needs new peer reviewers. Information and application materials are available upon request or from the peer review section of the AAM website (www.aam-us.org/getinvolved/pr). Let us know who you are recommending by contacting MAP staff at 202-289-9118 or map@aam-us.org.

Q. I have changed positions/developed new responsibilities recently. How do I update my peer review information?

A. Contact the MAP staff at map@aam-us.org or at 202-289-9118. You can also change the information yourself by logging in to the AAM website at www.aam-us.org. Select "Edit Account" on the top and then select "Update Profile." Scroll down to the section labeled "Peer Review Profile" and use the "Click Here" button to add or edit information.

Q. I am in the middle of a visit and have run into a situation where I am not sure what to do.

A. Call. Call. Call. If you are ever in a situation where you are concerned or uncomfortable, call the MAP staff immediately. Other situations in which you should call the MAP staff include:

- Needing to drop out of a visit
- Report is going to be late
- Needing help with resources
- Unusual circumstances during the visit

Q. I just finished my site visit. How do I go about submitting my travel expense request? What can be reimbursed? What do I do if I go over the cap?

A. Please submit copies of your receipts with the Travel Expense Reimbursement Form, which can be found on the Peer Review website. These receipts should pertain to your meals, lodging and travel, as well as any other site visit-related costs (visiting a neighboring museum, for example). We prefer that you submit your expenses as they are incurred. All expenses must be submitted within 30 days of expenses incurred.

Contact the MAP office if you anticipate going over the cap so we can adjust our budget. We ask you to keep your travel expenses at a reasonable minimum but understand the cost of travel can exceed the cap.

Q. I am prepared to go on the site visit but am having trouble maintaining contact with the museum. They have not submitted their additional documents to me. What should I do?

A. If the museum is being unresponsive, it is best to call the MAP staff. We can mediate the situation and keep museums up to date with their deadlines and responsibilities.

Q. What should I do if I expect to submit my report late?

A. Assessment reports are to be submitted four weeks following the site visit date. Contact the MAP office immediately if you foresee that the report will be late for any reason. Report processing takes 2-3 weeks upon receipt and museums expect to receive their final report within 10 weeks following the site visit.

Late reports can also compromise the integrity of the program and can have a negative impact on the museum's momentum as it seeks to implement suggested improvements to their institution. The overall funding for the program is also time-sensitive which is why MAP enforces such strict deadlines.

Q. I am a MAP peer reviewer assessing a museum that wants to become accredited. What do I need to know?

A. You may discuss accreditation requirements and procedures, such as whether the museum is eligible to apply. We also encourage you to help the museum understand Museum Accreditation Criteria, the Characteristics of Excellence and the Accreditation Commission's Expectations. This information is available on the AAM Website. Make no promises about the museum's potential accreditation status, but give them recommendations for improvement.

Q. The scope of the assessment has expanded dramatically since our initial discussions around agenda. Considering the limited amount of time I have on site, how do I consolidate expectations and also provide the best service possible to the museum?

A. Begin the discussion by setting expectations with the museum, explaining the role of the peer reviewer and the objectives of the program. Having this sort of dialogue, and discussing the museum's goals and objectives, is a useful way to manage expectations from the outset of the visit. If the museum still has expectations beyond the scope of this visit, please contact the MAP office.

FAQs

Q. What are the difference between MAP and Accreditation in regards to your responsibilities and role as a peer reviewer?

A.

MAP

Accreditation

The purpose of the program is to:

Provide collegial, consultative feedback that the museum can use to set priorities and identify needs for change.

Recognize museums for excellence and high professional standards, public service, leadership and educational role; promote quality and public accountability; certify that a museum operates according to the current best practices.

The purpose of self-assessment is to:

Help museum staff and members of the governing authority share information, test assumptions and try new ways of operating, as well as provide the MAP peer reviewer with information.

Provide a framework for an overall evaluation, catalyze strategic planning, and engage staff and board to focus on mission/goals; provide the Visiting Committee and Accreditation Commission in-depth information about the museum's operations.

The purpose of peer review is to:

Provide the museum with information on how their operations measure up to standards and best practices in the field, suggest ideas on how they might address current challenges and identify resources that might be of help to them.

Verify for the Accreditation Commission that the museum operates as reported in its self-study and meets the program requirements; and, for the museum, provide an outside perspective on strengths and weaknesses. Visiting Committee members' role is not to provide specific recommendations to the museum on how to improve operations or rectify problems

The outcome of the program is that:

Museums completing MAP have two new resources: their completed Self-Study Workbook and the Assessment Report from their peer reviewer(s). These documents help them engage in planning and identify opportunities for improvement.

Museums that apply for accreditation are: (1) granted accreditation; (2) tabled for the purpose of clarifying information or correcting deficiencies; or (3) denied accreditation.

Site Visit

PURPOSE OF THE VISIT

The questions you ask, discussions you hold and recommendations you make on-site set the stage for future museum growth and your report's incorporation in that process. Use the Report Writing Guidelines and Critical Issues Checklist in the Appendices to focus your thinking during the site visit, comprehensively review institutional operations and emphasize strategic issues.

PREPARING FOR THE SITE VISIT

Reviewing the Documentation

Prior to the site visit, MAP will send you the museum's application and self-study workbook, and the museum will send a binder of additional documents to you in order to develop an understanding of the museum. Please review the documents. Your analysis of these materials will help you:

- Decide which additional materials to request and which questions you'll ask on-site
- Develop the agenda
- Draft an outline for the report (please refer to the report writing guidelines) that includes key areas for discussion and questions you may have developed from the self-study

As you review the documents, develop a list of questions. Before the visit, sort the questions according to potential interviewee (registrar, governing authority, etc.) and refer to the list during the assessment. This will make for a comprehensive review and minimize follow-up calls.

What you should expect from MAP staff:

- MAP Application: the museum's goals for the assessment, as well as descriptions of its mission, programs, exhibits and collections
- Self-Study Workbook and Activity Summaries: description of the areas of the museum's operations relevant to the assessment, as well as the articulation of the museum's areas of concern.

What you should expect from the museum:

Additional documentation (e.g., strategic plans, collections management policies, financial audits, etc.), if any, are required supplements to the information packet. Any relevant additional documentation needed to support the self-study should be requested from the museum and shipped directly to you. Please note that MAP participants might not have many of the requested documents and are asked not to create them solely for the purpose of the peer review. A list of potential additional documents is listed in the appendices.

ESTABLISHING CONTACT

Contact with the Museum

After your participation in the review is confirmed, MAP staff will send contact information to the museum and the peer reviewer(s). The museum will then contact you within one month to make arrangements for the site visit and set the agenda. If you do not hear from museum staff within this time, use the information provided in your notification letter to contact them. For a two-person visit, the lead contact will receive the initial communication from the museum. Initial phone conversations may give you a clear sense of why the museum is conducting the assessment at this time and its goals for the process.

Typically, visit arrangements are made with the museum's director. However, sometimes you may work with another staff person delegated to guide the museum through the visit. Setting up the visit in a timely manner is critical to keeping the museum on schedule throughout the process. If any serious challenges arise, please contact MAP staff.

Site Visit

Contact with Your Team Member (if applicable)

Prior to the visit, work together to establish and confirm the dates for the visit, incorporate the strengths of each partner and divide responsibilities. You and your team member should work together to ensure that the museum's written documentation is complete and current. Coordinate requests to the director to clarify or update materials as necessary. The lead contact should serve as the official contact person between the team and the institution under review.

SCHEDULING THE SITE VISIT

The site visit should take place:

- when the director, relevant staff and members of the governing authority are available
- when you have time to complete the report within four weeks of the site visit
- when the museum is open to the public (major exhibits should not be closed)
- within the time frame provided by MAP staff

When the visit has been scheduled, inform MAP staff of the date. This is important for establishing the report deadline.

SITE VISIT EXPECTATIONS

Most site visits go very smoothly and are a source of satisfaction for the peer reviewer, the museum staff, the director and the governing authority. There are, however, occasional tensions. The most common sources of frustration reported by peer reviewers and museums are:

- conflicting expectations
- hesitation about openly addressing underlying issues or concerns
- lack of involvement of key staff or members of the governing authority
- specific expectations or goals of individuals involved in the process, due to conflicting agendas, goals that don't reflect those of the MAP program, etc.

Open a dialogue with the museum by speaking with your contact several times before you arrive at the institution. Use these occasions to:

- explore the museum's situation in terms of its evolution and challenges
- manage expectations
- hone objectives
- understand the museum's communities
- understand the director's and governing authority's expectations for the assessment
- discover any complicating factors that may affect the site visit or the report
- ensure that the right stakeholders will be available during the site visit or soon afterward via phone

Clear, consistent and regular communication helps to avoid these potential problems. Clarifying the purpose of the site visit in the review process and the peer reviewer's role will set the stage for a successful visit.

VISIT LENGTH

The appropriate length for a site visit depends on the size and complexity of the museum and its governing structure. Please discuss with your museum contact and, if applicable, team member the ideal time frame for accomplishing the goals of the review. Typically, visits last 1½ - 2 days (one to two nights). Large museums, those with multiple sites or those with multiple supporting groups or advisory boards may require a longer site visit.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The site visit is a professional business trip that typically includes transportation (airfare and car rental), hotel accommodations and meals. The museum and peer reviewer must agree to all travel arrangements in advance, particularly for any unusual or very high expenses, to ensure that the plans are reasonable, appropriate and acceptable to both parties. Any limitations or plans for special events (e.g., receptions, dinners at a home or group meals) should be included in these discussions.

MAP is directly responsible for the expenses. Peer reviewers are reimbursed directly by the MAP office for any documented, out-of-pocket expenses and are responsible for making all travel arrangements. You can request reimbursement from AAM/MAP as soon as an expense is incurred. Depending upon the institution's location and restrictions, the costs for reasonable travel arrangements may exceed AAM's cap. Contact AAM staff about any questions regarding the travel cap. Before making plans for the site visit, please review AAM's peer reviewer travel policy as located in the appendix.

Reimbursement forms can be found on the AAM website: www.aam-us.org/getinvolved/pr/

SETTING THE AGENDA

Work with the museum to set a sit visit agenda to help conduct a comprehensive review that provides:

- insight into each area of the museum's daily operations relevant to the assessment type
- answers to questions or concerns raised in the self-study and supporting documentation
- time to visit off-site branch, satellite and storage facilities, if necessary
- full participation of museum stakeholders: staff, governing authority, support organizations, volunteers or any other key figures
- time for reflection and taking notes

In collaboration with the museum—using the Report Writing Guidelines and Critical Issue Checklist (in the Appendices), referring to your own, and, if applicable, your team member's notes and questions—develop an agenda that allows for the following:

1. Initial interview with the primary contact
2. All-staff meeting to explain the purpose of MAP
3. Facility tour
4. Assessment team meeting
5. Individual staff or departmental meetings
6. Governing authority member meeting
7. Additional stakeholders
8. Exit interview with the primary contact
9. Assessment-specific components

Explain to the museum that it is important for all staff and governing authority members to be familiar with the MAP process, the self-study and the museum's priorities for the process (as identified in the MAP application and self-study conclusion). When on-site, introduce yourself and the process at an all-staff-and-governing-authority meeting or at the start of each interview, if an all-staff meeting is not possible.

Sample agendas can be found in the peer review section of the AAM website: www.aam-us.org/getinvolved/pr/.

Site Visit

CONDUCTING THE VISIT

The site visit is an important part of the process. It is your opportunity to find out more information about the museum and help the museum begin to address its needs. You can use this opportunity to help the museum hone its objectives for the assessment, explain the assessment process better to museum staff and governing authority, set expectations for the visit and report, find out more about the museum that wasn't fully revealed in the application, self-study or additional documentation, and get a better understanding of the state of the museum. Sometimes the stated goals for the visit do not align with what you have identified in your exploration of the museum's operations. Some information that you gather during the site visit will never go into the report but will help you gain a more holistic understanding of the museum's strengths and weaknesses. Be attentive, listen carefully, initiate a dialogue and take notes. By the time you end the visit, you should share with the MAP contact the main points that you plan to include in the report so the museum is not surprised by the report and can begin making changes even before receiving the final report.

Please refer to the Critical Issues Checklist and Report Writing Guidelines throughout the MAP process. These are useful tools in designing and conducting site visits, as well as drafting and guiding the report's content and organization.

1. Initial Interview with the Primary Contact

Set the tone of the visit by stating its purpose and your role. Emphasize the confidential nature of the information gathered during the visit and that you are there to help the museum advance its own operations. Review the agenda and make any necessary changes. Review the museum's objectives for the assessment and ask the purpose of the report.

2. All-Staff Meeting

Meet with museum staff and the governing authority as a group to help participants:

- understand MAP and your role in the MAP process
- understand what to expect from MAP
- determine their role in the outcome of the assessment
- build teamwork
- establish a common mission and nurture involvement
- gain a broader perspective of their institution
- understand how the museum measures up to museum standards and practices

The meeting also can provide you with information about the dynamics of the museum.

3. Facility Tour

Tour the entire facility alone or with staff to get a full picture of the museum's physical resources and how they are used and maintained. Observe whether facilities are well maintained, safe, accessible and adequate in fulfilling the museum's mission. Some peer reviewers take a tour on their own to see what an "actual" visit would be like.

4. Assessment Team Meeting

Use this meeting to:

- set a collegial tone for the visit
- clarify the museum's reasons for initiating MAP
- review the museum's expectations for the assessment
- request additional supporting documents, if necessary

5. Individual Staff or Departmental Meetings

Use the one-on-one or departmental meetings you have scheduled to:

- explain MAP and your role in the MAP process
- learn more about how the museum operates
- ask questions that arose during your reading of preparatory materials
- explore the range of views regarding the museum's mission, plans, weaknesses and opportunities
- ask people about their vision for the museum
- solicit ideas for improving operations
- gauge departmental metrics for success

6. Governing Authority Member Meeting

When meeting with governing authority members, explore their understanding of:

- their roles as trustees of a nonprofit organization
- the museum's mission and performance
- the MAP process and how they will use the resulting information

Consider meeting with the full governing authority at the end of the site visit to hear their comments on the MAP process.

- For Collections Stewardship: Examine their understanding of their responsibilities as stewards of the collections.
- For Leadership: If possible, meet with the key governing authority members or the full governing authority to determine their concerns regarding museum governance.
- For Community Engagement: Ask about the institution's role in serving its audiences and community.
- For Organizational: Examine their understanding of their responsibilities and role as stewards of the museum.

Your feedback, observations and the resulting dialogue at these meetings can help the governing authority gain a broader perspective of the institution and understand how it measures up to national museum standards and practices.

It is important that you meet with the head of the governing authority. MAP tries to ensure that members of the governing authority participate in all phases of the assessment. Work with museum staff to determine how governing authority members will be involved. Ask your museum contact if a call from you to the head of the governing authority might increase his or her understanding of the assessment goals and lay the groundwork for a productive meeting during the site visit.

7. Additional Stakeholders

This can include any other support organizations or groups that have an investment in the museum.

8. Exit interview

Use the exit meeting(s) with the assessment team and the museum director to:

- check facts and clarify ambiguous points
- summarize your observations
- offer initial ideas about the focus and content of your report
- discuss the museum's plans for disseminating the report, reviewing assessment findings and implementing changes
- confirm that you will submit your report to MAP within four weeks, and that MAP staff will review the report and forward it to the museum within 10-12 weeks of the visit

Ask for a complete list of staff and governing authority members to make sure all names are accurate in your report.

Site Visit

9. Conducting Assessment-specific components

Organizational Assessment

- Tour the entire facility
- Meet with the director to assess his or her understanding of the state of the organization
- Determine where it is in its lifecycle and where it is envisioned to go
- Meet with key staff to:
 - observe their levels of professionalism and commitment to the museum mission
 - understand how efficiently and focused museum operations are functioning
 - determine the sustainability and levels of best-practice that the museum is employing
- Meet with members of the governing authority to:
 - better understand its role and responsibility in meeting the museum mission
 - get a sense of its level of commitment to long term sustainability
 - determine its understanding of the museum and its place in the community
- Talk with your team member and:
 - discuss your observations
 - compare notes and discuss any concerns that might require a follow-up review of the facilities or further discussion with staff
 - determine whether further meetings, documents or visits are needed to complete the review

Collections Stewardship Assessment

- Meet with the director to explore his or her:
 - commitment to the care and integrity of the collections
 - concerns or questions regarding the assessment
 - resource commitment to collections
 - ideas for improving collection and its management
- Tour the storage facility and areas where collections are used
- Meet with the collections manager(s) to explore his or her:
 - commitment to the care and integrity of the collections
 - concerns or questions regarding the assessment
 - processes and methods of care and management
 - ideas for improving the collection and its management
 - concerns at this time or for the future
- Meet with collections staff to:
 - understand their standards of care and interface with the collections
 - understand collections systems
 - solicit the staff's ideas for improving museum governance
- Talk with your team member and:
 - discuss your observations
 - compare notes and discuss any concerns that might require a follow-up review of the facilities or further discussion with staff
 - determine whether further meetings, documents or visits are needed to complete the review

Community Engagement Assessment

- Observe public use of museum facilities and interaction with museum staff. Consider scheduling time to visit the museum—unannounced and prior to the formal site visit—as public visitors to observe the museum’s public dimension. Use this time to validate what the museum may have written or told you about as to how they approach informal learning.
- If possible, attend an event or program at the museum.
- Tour nearby attractions to:
 - observe the competitive environment in which the museum operates
 - compare the museum’s signage and advertising to those of its competitors
- Meet with funders
- Meet with community partners
- Talk with your team member and:
 - discuss your observations
 - compare notes and discuss any concerns that might require a follow-up review of the facilities or further discussion with staff
 - determine whether further meetings, documents or visits are needed to complete the review

Leadership Assessment

- Meet with the director to explore his or her:
 - perspective on the museum’s governance
 - concerns or questions regarding the assessment
 - working relationship with the governing authority
 - ideas for improving museum governance
- Meet with all staff to:
 - learn more about how museum governance affects museum operations and the staff’s ability to do their jobs
 - understand the ways in which staff interface with the governing authority, how they contribute to the work of the governing authority and vice-versa
 - solicit the staff’s ideas for improving museum governance
- Meet with head of governing authority to explore his or her:
 - perspective on the museum’s governance
 - concerns or questions regarding the assessment
 - working relationship with the director
 - ideas for improving museum governance
- Meet with support organizations, if applicable:
 - Include representatives of supporting groups and individuals who have a significant influence on governance. Check the museum’s self-study for a list of influential forces.
- Talk with your team member and:
 - discuss your observations
 - compare notes and discuss any concerns that might require a follow-up review of the facilities or further discussion with staff
 - determine whether further meetings, documents or visits are needed to complete the review

Shortly after the end of the visit, record your initial thoughts using the Report Writing Guidelines and Critical Issues Checklist. This helps keep your ideas fresh and gives you a place to start when you sit down to write. You may want to do this right after the exit interview, on the trip home or the day following the site visit.

Assessment Report

WRITING THE REPORT

Your Assessment Report will be the permanent record of the museum's participation in the program and will be available to the institution in the years and decades to come. A fair and balanced report based on specific observations, critical thinking and a collegial approach will contribute to the institution's growth and development.

Report Writing Guidelines for each type of MAP assessment are available in the Appendices section.

Purpose

The report marks the beginning of the implementation and change phase for the institution. Its usefulness and credibility will determine how effectively it can meet the museum's needs. Many museums use the report to:

- guide institutional planning
- prioritize needs
- catalyze change
- guide institutional growth and development
- affirm institutional strengths
- orient new staff and governing authority members
- identify the museum's needs to potential supporters
- make the case for increased funding

Audience

The museum is the primary audience for the report. However, it may choose to share some or all of the report with a variety of audiences, including current or future:

- staff
- members of the governing authority
- donors and potential funders
- community leaders
- other stakeholders

Sample reports and excerpts may be found on the AAM website: www.aam-us.org/getinvolved/pr/

Organization

The report should include the elements listed below. Most reviewers use 15-20 double-spaced pages to cover the full scope of the review.

- **Executive Summary:** Briefly review your significant observations and most critical recommendations. Include both positive remarks and constructive criticism. This may be the only section that governing authorities, funders or other outside individuals read.
- **Introduction:** State here when the visit took place, whom you met and the museum's goals for the assessment (if needed, a longer visit agenda can be included as an attachment). The Introduction or Executive Summary also should include the museum's mission as it is the keystone for much of the report's analysis.
- **Brief Institutional History:** To place the visit in the institution's historical and physical context, include a brief description of its current situation and important elements from its past.
- **Body:** Use the Report Writing Guides for the suggested sections within the body of the report. Identify each topic clearly and ensure that recommendations and resources are easy to find. Headings, italics, bold type, and bulleted lists all will help make the report easy to read, understand and use.
- **Summary:** At the end of the report, summarize your major observations and recommendations. Often, reviewers group their recommendations to help the museum determine how it might implement them. Examples of organizational strategies include:
 - by priority: high, medium, low
 - by time frame: short-term, long-term
 - by anticipated operational impact
 - by resources required: low cost, medium cost, high cost

- **Attachments, Appendices:** If the main text does not cite resources or references to support your recommendations, consider attaching a list of articles, organizations, websites and other useful resources. You may choose to include examples of documents from your own institution. You may send the attachments to MAP to be included in the final report.

Tone and Writing Style

A successful report is not only accurate, it is influential. When making recommendations or criticizing existing practices, ask yourself, "How can I express this in a way that has the greatest influence on the staff and governing authority?" A recommendation seen as overly critical or biased toward a group or individual undermines its own effectiveness. You may want to soften a criticism to increase the likelihood that the report will have a positive effect on the behavior of the staff and governing authority. MAP staff are available to discuss issues of concern.

Reports are most effective in influencing the museum when they are:

- concise
- diplomatic
- practical and realistic
- motivational
- balanced in analysis, combining praise with constructive criticism
- written for a broad range of audiences (staff, governing authority and other interested parties)
- inclusive of prioritized recommendations
- accessible in rhetoric and style

Content

The Report Writing Guide provides the outline for the report's content. The report is guided by these goals.

- MAP's goal is to:
 - provide a comprehensive review of a museum's operations from the perspective of the specific assessment and relate those operations to current standards and best practices in the field
 - provide constructive and achievable recommendations to the museum along with supporting resources and references
- The participating museum's goal is to:
 - obtain an accurate description of the institution's current state from an outside, knowledgeable museum professional
 - obtain a comprehensive analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the museum's operations
 - address the specific issues unique to the museum, based on the goals in its application and self-study and those identified on-site

Meeting the Program's Purpose

Comprehensive Review of Operations

Present a full picture of the museum, touching on all areas of operation. Some areas may only need a few paragraphs to describe the current activities; you might provide positive feedback for work well done or acknowledge challenges without focusing too much on details. Other areas may need a few pages to describe concerns in great detail, outlining specific suggested action steps and available resources.

Assessment Report

Standards and Best Practices

The museum expects you to bring an outside perspective to the review and place its operations within the larger context of the museum field and the appropriate discipline. As you describe the museum's current operations and analyze its strengths and weaknesses, refer to appropriate standards and best practices to provide the larger context to the museum. In addition to including a bibliography of books, websites and other resources, make sure to allude to these important sources during the course of the report. Additionally, the Characteristics of Excellence for U.S. Museums is available in the Appendices section.

Suggested resources might include:

- bibliographical suggestions with information on where to find these resources (including websites)
- networking opportunities for staff members (state and regional associations, AAM's Standing Professional Committees, other professional organizations)
- professional development for staff and board (if possible, suggest specific upcoming training opportunities in the area)
- sample documents and articles

Constructive, Achievable and Prioritized Recommendations

The recommendations you provide will be most helpful if they reflect the institution's resources, abilities and stage of institutional development. If you have a suggestion that the museum is not ready to implement, consider explaining how it might get ready. Too many recommendations or those that are too difficult to implement might discourage rather than challenge and energize a museum's staff. Make sure to offer a couple of recommendations that will be easy for the museum to implement. This should offer them the positive reinforcement to continue implementing recommendations.

Meeting the Museum's Purpose

Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses

Your analysis should be supported by specific observations and concerns, described as concretely as possible. Be careful to focus your concerns and observations on the institution and not on any specific individual. The report should have an overall positive approach. The museum should feel energized and ready to tackle its challenges.

Comprehensiveness

MAP asks you to make a comprehensive review; in addition, the museum looks for a report to be understandable to a wide audience. Therefore, you should provide sufficient description and context for your analysis and recommendations to allow outsiders to understand both the museum's operations and your recommendations. Avoid using jargon and provide definitions for words that may be unfamiliar to non-museum audiences.

Reviewing for Accuracy

Please double-check all facts and proofread the text carefully. Changes in wording can turn an aggressive comment into a constructive recommendation. Small errors, such as misspelling a staff member or museum donor's name, can undermine the credibility and effectiveness of an otherwise excellent report.

Submitting the Report

All reports should be submitted electronically as a Word document. Please do not send the report directly to the museum because MAP staff reviews all reports first. Please include the following:

- A cover memo or e-mail to MAP staff. This is the place to describe any unique circumstances that provide context for the report; the museum will not see this document.
- A list of attachments provided to the museum. (MAP staff does not need to see the attachments, but a list is informative. Send any attachments directly to the museum.)

Revising the Report

Writing the report is a collaborative process between the museum and you (and your team member, if applicable). The process does not end when the report is submitted to MAP staff, who read and evaluate all reports.

After the MAP staff ensures that the report reflects the goals of the program, you may be contacted to:

- clarify certain points
- add analysis, recommendations or resources
- make substantive changes to tone or content

This review and revision process helps maintain the consistency of the MAP experience for all participants and is part of your commitment to the program.

Assessment Report

Deadline

Your final report is due to the MAP office four weeks after the site visit. It is crucial that you meet this deadline. AAM has found that if more time than this elapses, other priorities begin to claim your attention and time, the relevancy of the report's information decreases and the museum's momentum and enthusiasm begin to drop. Writing the report soon after the visit will keep your memories fresh and lead to a more specific and stronger document. MAP is committed to providing the report to the participating museum in a timely fashion, and the ability to fulfill that commitment rests in your hands. Additionally, funding for the program may be jeopardized if key deadlines are not met.

If MAP staff is informed of the visit date, the following steps are taken:

- Before the report's deadline, you will receive a reminder from MAP staff with the due date.
- If no report is submitted by that date:
 - MAP staff will contact you and your team member (if applicable) to determine the cause of delay, establish a revised date of delivery, negotiate needs or concerns and offer support.
 - If the report is not in by the revised deadline, you risk the following consequences: forfeiting honorarium or being dropped from the peer review program.

Wrapping Up

MAP staff will:

- read and edit the report for grammar and content and may contact you with any substantial concerns, if necessary
- forward the report to the museum
- ask the museum for an evaluation of the MAP process, including an evaluation of your review

● send:

- your honorarium: Please let MAP staff know if you cannot accept an honorarium, or would like to donate it to the museum
- an evaluation of the MAP peer review process for you to complete
- feedback on the visit and report compiled from the museum's evaluation and the MAP staff's evaluation

You should:

- complete and return the evaluation of the MAP process
- follow up with the museum to answer questions about the report
- return or destroy any materials the museum provided to you
- destroy your notes from the visit
- consider maintaining a long-term relationship with the museum

Follow Up

Please follow up with the museum after it receives the final report. This follow-up can take a number of forms including conference calls, e-mails and a repeat site visit. The type of follow-up will depend on the needs of the museum, your schedule and the funds available. Regardless of the form of the follow up, it is an important step to help the museum staff and board understand the report and begin to implement it. You may need to follow up with the museum multiple times after completing the site visit to help them prioritize their needs and end the program with a "roadmap" in hand to help them achieve their primary goals. Unless you would like to, spend no more than five hours working with the museum in this post-report step.

Appendices

24	Using the Appendices
25	Sample Timeline of Events
26	Peer Reviewer Travel Policy
30	Characteristics of Excellence for U.S. Museums
32	Organizational Assessment Resources
36	Collections Stewardship Assessment Resources
40	Community Engagement Assessment Resources
43	Leadership Assessment Resources

Using the Appendices

The Appendices are organized around assessment type. Use the following materials to help organize your visit and write your report:

The **Sample Timeline of Events** outlines the timetable for both museums and peer reviewers during the overall MAP process, beginning with the application process and ending with the final report. Please note that this is a sample timeline and is subject to change.

As you can see museums complete the program in under a year. This quick turnaround helps museums keep the momentum going and enables them to start implementing recommendations immediately.

The **Peer Reviewer Travel Policy** communicates the details of the reimbursement process and explains acceptable reimbursable expenses. Peer Reviewers should follow the guidelines listed in the Peer Review Travel Policy as they fulfill their responsibilities in making travel arrangements for the site visit. For current requirements, please check the policy on the peer review section of the AAM website. Any questions about the policy should be made to MAP staff.

The **Characteristics of Excellence for U.S. Museums** can be used as a guiding document throughout the visit and report writing. The Characteristics address big picture issues about how museums operate and can help the museum benchmark its performance and better understand how it could improve certain areas of operations. If the museum is interested in Accreditation, please go to the AAM website (www.aam-us.org) to reference specific expectations.

The **Critical Issues Checklist** is a tool to help guide and structure the visit. The checklist includes diagnostic questions to ask regarding strategic issues. Use the checklist to note any particular successes or weaknesses and to take notes during the visit. If “no” is an answer to any of the checklist questions, this could flag an area that should receive careful attention in your report. The Critical Issues Checklist should be used with the Assessment Report Writing Guide.

The **Assessment Report Writing Guide** can be used to organize your findings during the site visit and write a comprehensive review of the museum’s operations. This guide includes the framework for the report’s content and should be used along with the Critical Issues Checklist to make sure you are providing the institution with a comprehensive report.

Use the above resources to:

- **Analyze the self-study materials:** Once you have familiarized yourself with the museum’s issues, concerns, strengths and weaknesses, use the resources to shape the agenda and identify questions you should ask, as well as additional information you need.
- **Set the Agenda:** Compare the assessment report writing guide and critical issues checklist with the museum’s self-study and additional documentation; consider what you should review and whom you should interview to develop a good understanding of the institution.
- **Write the report:** The report writing guide can be used as an outline for the report and the questions covered in the critical issues checklist should help you focus on areas within each section to cover. Also include resources, related documents, references to standards and best practices and additional information to help the museum implement recommendations.

Sample Timeline of Events

FALL

- Museums apply to MAP program and begin working on Self-Study Workbooks

WINTER

Museums are sent a list of potential peer reviewers in early winter

Museums are matched with peer reviewers, receive materials from MAP and begin scheduling host visits

Museums continue working on Self-Study Workbooks

SPRING

- Museums and peer reviewers finalize site visit details in early spring
- Museums send additional documentation
- Self-Study Workbooks due
- Site visits occur
- Peer reviewers submit travel reimbursements
- Peer reviewers begin writing reports

SUMMER

- Reports are due four weeks following the site visit
- After reports are received, evaluations are sent out
- Museums begin implementing report recommendations

Peer Reviewer Applications are considered throughout the year. MAP always needs new peer reviewers. Please help us by recommending outstanding professionals. Serving as a MAP peer reviewer is an excellent form of professional development and a wonderful way to give back to the field. Information and application materials are available upon request or from the peer review section of the AAM website (www.aam-us.org/getinvolved/pr).

Peer Review Travel Policy

The Policy covers issues related to travel activities and expenses, and expense reimbursements, associated with an AAM Peer Reviewer's assigned and confirmed site visit for the Museum Assessment Program. AAM's Peer Review Travel Policy aligns with AAM's overall corporate travel policy and accounting policies.

The MAP site visit is a professional business trip that typically includes transportation, hotel accommodations, and meals. All reasonable expenses directly related to a Peer Reviewer's site visit (outlined below) are reimbursable. It is the peer reviewer's responsibility to report his/her actual travel and related expenses in a timely, responsible, and ethical manner, in accordance with the regulations set forth in this Policy. Peer Reviewers are expected to use good judgment regarding travel-related expenses.

TRAVEL PLANNING

The museum and peer reviewer should discuss all travel arrangements in advance, particularly for any unusual or very high expenses, to ensure that the plans are reasonable, appropriate, and acceptable to both parties. It is mandatory for the Peer Reviewer to communicate with the museum about establishing a suitable site visit date. Before finalizing site visit plans (e.g. buying tickets, etc.), the Peer Reviewer and museum must confirm the details of the trip in writing.

The hosting museum has the option of directly paying a vendor for the peer reviewer's expenses (e.g., having the hotel or airfare directly billed to the museum) but should not directly reimburse the reviewer. All reimbursements to the peer reviewer must be requested from, and issued by, AAM. Again, these details should be discussed between the museum and the peer reviewer as part of the travel planning.

EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT TIMING

Request for reimbursement of expenses, with the appropriate documentation (see below) should be submitted for reimbursement within 30 days of the site visit. This timing very important as it impacts the management and the requirements of AAM's Cooperative Agreement with IMLS for MAP and AAM's standard accounting practices. Once received and processed, AAM will issue a check. This usually takes about two weeks. Overdue travel reimbursement requests may result in a delayed payment to the peer reviewer.

EXPENSE DOCUMENTATION

AAM does not reimburse on a per diem basis. Only itemized expenses will be reimbursed. Exceptions will be made to this policy only for incidental cash transactions under \$15 in situations where receipts are not traditionally provided (e.g., vending machines, tips, subway fares, in-flight food purchase, etc.).

Acceptable documentation:

- Original itemized receipts (date, service description, provider)
- Copies of itemized receipts

Unacceptable documentation:

- Copies of credit card statements
- Handwritten notes

PRE-VISIT REIMBURSEMENT

Certain prepaid expenses such as airfare, hotel or car rental may be reimbursed when expense is incurred, upon receipt of appropriate documentation of actual full payment. However, for any reimbursement of expenses before the site visit has occurred, the peer reviewer must also provide documentation of use of service (e.g., board passes, hotel statement, car rental agreement, etc.) after the site visit has occurred. No pre visit reimbursement will be given for estimated expenses, a reservation, or expenses such as food, fuel or taxi.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation expenses will be reimbursed based on the most economical mode of transportation that is practical and the most commonly traveled route consistent with the authorized purpose of the trip. If possible, transportation tickets should be procured in advance so as to obtain any discounts offered by the carrier. AAM covers the cost of coach (economy) class tickets. Any upgrades or enhancements are the personal responsibility of the peer reviewer and will not be reimbursed. In such circumstances, AAM will reimburse the documented cost of a coach ticket for the same trip purchased at the same time. If transportation arrangements include segments or start/return destinations unrelated to the site visit (e.g., personal or museum business), the traveler should discuss with MAP staff how to determine, calculate, and document the portion that will be reimbursed.

Air or Rail Travel

If possible, air travel should be procured in advance so as to obtain any discounts offered by the carrier. The cost of coach class tickets is covered and any upgrades or enhancements are personal expenditures and will not be reimbursed.

Private Vehicles

Travelers may use their private vehicle as the primary mode of transportation if it is less expensive than using alternative transportation, if it saves time, or if flying travel is not allowed for health reasons. The cost of meals and lodging, parking, mileage, tolls, taxis, and ferries incurred while in transit by private vehicle transportation are reimbursed. (Note that extended stopovers or out of the way mileage for personal or museum business is not covered). Such costs shall generally not

exceed the cost of airfare, based on the regular coach fare available for the location of travel from a standard commercial air carrier. If use of a private vehicle as the primary means of transportation is necessary or more appropriate but more expensive than flying, the peer reviewer must let the museum and AAM know to ensure this is an acceptable and mutually agreed upon expense.

AAM reimburses at the current standard federal mileage reimbursement rate. Please refer to the Travel Reimbursement Form to confirm current mileage reimbursement rate.

Rental Cars

A vehicle may be rented when it is an appropriate means of transportation. Advance reservations should be made whenever possible and the peer reviewer may request pre-travel reimbursement as long as he/she submits an itemized receipt upfront and proof of use/travel after the site visit.

Other Ground Transportation

Public transportation, taxis, shuttles, supplementary rail, etc. are reimbursable expenses. Limousine transportation is not acceptable or reimbursable.

LODGING

Nights (room and taxes) in a commercial lodging establishment are reimbursed (hotel, motel, inn, B&B). If staying an extra night in order to get a less expensive plane ticket nets a cost savings overall, this is acceptable. If the peer reviewer prepays in full for his/her lodging to lock in a more economical rate, AAM will reimburse the peer reviewer at that time upon request. However documentation of stay at the hotel must be provided after the site visit. In room pay-per-view entertainment and other additional cost hospitality services (except room service) are not reimbursable.

Peer Review Travel Policy

FOOD

All reasonable food expenses directly related to a Peer Reviewer's site visit are reimbursable. This includes meals and snacks during travel and at the final destination. Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursed.

OTHER

Parking (including airport and hotel) is reimbursable. Standard airline checked baggage fees for up to two bags are reimbursable. Fees for additional luggage and/or oversized/weight bags are not reimbursable.

CANCELLATIONS AND LAST MINUTE CHANGES

If travel has to be changed or cancelled at the last minute the peer reviewer must call the MAP staff immediately to discuss options. Such alternations to travel tickets usually result in a change fee, an additional fare, or forfeiture of payment. Who is responsible for the cost and how it will be handled differs based on the nature of the situation (fare restrictions, airline policies, peer reviewer emergency vs. host museum requests the change, weather, etc.).

SUMMARY OF REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES

Yes:

- Coach class air, rail, or bus fare
- Mileage for use of personal vehicle
- Rental car
- Ground transportation (airport shuttles, taxis, public transportation, etc.)
- Lodging in a commercial establishment (hotel, motel, inn, B&B)
- Airline standard checked baggage fee for up to two bags
- Meals en route and at destination
- Standard tips
- Parking (airport, hotel, on site)

No:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Personal services such as dry cleaning, in-room pay-per-view entertainment (movies, games, etc.)
- Unreasonable or unsubstantiated expenses
- Personal travel
- Travel upgrades
- Expenses related to any spouse/family/friend accompanying the peer reviewer on the visit
- Expenses related to other business (personal or museum business) enroute to the site visit destination or when at the destination
- Overweight/sized checked bagged fees

WITHHOLDING HONORARIA

MAP reserves the right to hold a Peer Reviewer's honorarium under the following conditions:

- Peer Reviewer fails to submit confirmation of payment or itemized receipts after prepaid travel reimbursement request has been processed.
- Peer Reviewer does not submit a Form W-9 to AAM (if one is not already on file).

MAP reviewers need to submit a Form W-9 only once. If you do not wish to submit a W-9 form to AAM, you may donate your honorarium to the MAP museum, or recycle it back into MAP's funds.

Any questions or concerns should be directed to MAP staff: map@aam-us.org or 202-289-9118.

Characteristics of Excellence for U.S. Museums

PUBLIC TRUST & ACCOUNTABILITY

- The museum is a good steward of its resources held in the public trust.
- The museum identifies the communities it serves and makes appropriate decisions in how it serves them.
- Regardless of its self-identified communities, the museum strives to be a good neighbor in its geographic area.
- The museum strives to be inclusive and offers opportunities for diverse participation.
- The museum asserts its public service role and places education at the center of that role.
- The museum demonstrates a commitment to providing the public with physical and intellectual access to the museum and its resources.
- The museum is committed to public accountability and is transparent in its mission and its operations.
- The museum complies with local, state, and federal laws, codes, and regulations applicable to its facilities, operations, and administration.

MISSION & PLANNING

- The museum has a clear understanding of its mission and communicates why it exists and who benefits as a result of its efforts.
- All aspects of the museum's operations are integrated and focused on meeting its mission.
- The museum's governing authority and staff think and act strategically to acquire, develop, and allocate resources to advance the mission of the museum.
- The museum engages in ongoing and reflective institutional planning that includes involvement of its audiences and community.
- The museum establishes measures of success and uses them to evaluate and adjust its activities.

LEADERSHIP & ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

- The governance, staff, and volunteer structures and processes effectively advance the museum's mission.
- The governing authority, staff, and volunteers have a clear and shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- The governing authority, staff, and volunteers legally, ethically, and effectively carry out their responsibilities.
- The composition, qualifications, and diversity of the museum's leadership, staff, and volunteers enable it to carry out the museum's mission and goals.
- There is a clear and formal division of responsibilities between the governing authority and any group that supports the museum, whether separately incorporated or operating within the museum or its parent organization.

COLLECTIONS STEWARDSHIP

- The museum owns, exhibits, or uses collections that are appropriate to its mission.
- The museum legally, ethically, and effectively manages, documents, cares for, and uses the collections.
- The museum's collections-related research is conducted according to appropriate scholarly standards.
- The museum strategically plans for the use and development of its collections.
- Guided by its mission, the museum provides public access to its collections while ensuring preservation.

EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION

- The museum clearly states its overall educational goals, philosophy, and messages, and demonstrates that its activities are in alignment with them.
- The museum understands the characteristics and needs of its existing and potential audiences and uses this understanding to inform its interpretation.
- The museum's interpretive content is based on appropriate research.
- Museums conducting primary research do so according to scholarly standards.
- The museum uses techniques, technologies, and methods appropriate to its educational goals, content, audiences, and resources.
- The museum presents accurate and appropriate content for each of its audiences.
- The museum demonstrates consistent high quality in its interpretive activities.
- The museum assesses the effectiveness of its interpretive activities and uses those results to plan and improve its activities.

FINANCIAL STABILITY

- The museum legally, ethically, and responsibly acquires, manages, and allocates its financial resources in a way that advances its mission.
- The museum operates in a fiscally responsible manner that promotes its long-term sustainability.

FACILITIES & RISK MANAGEMENT

- The museum allocates its space and uses its facilities to meet the needs of the collections, audience, and staff.
- The museum has appropriate measures to ensure the safety and security of people, its collections and/or objects, and the facilities it owns or uses.
- The museum has an effective program for the care and long-term maintenance of its facilities.
- The museum is clean and well-maintained, and provides for the visitors' needs.
- The museum takes appropriate measures to protect itself against potential risk and loss.

Organizational Assessment Resources

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT CRITICAL ISSUES CHECKLIST

A. Mission and Planning

- Do staff and governing authority members have a clear, shared understanding of the museum's mission?
- Is the mission one that the museum has the ability and resources to fulfill?
- Are policies, procedures and resource allocation focused on fulfilling the mission?
- Are staff and governing authority members engaged in an effective planning process for the museum's future?
- If there is a current plan, is it being used to address the museum's major challenges, and is it guiding the museum's actions?

B. Interpretation

1. Audiences and Visitors

- Does the museum clearly identify its target audiences and take appropriate steps to serve their needs?
- Is the museum gathering information about its audiences and visitors and using it to evaluate performance and guide planning?

2. Community

- Does the museum have a clear understanding of its role in the community?
- Is the community active in and supportive of the museum?

3. Public Programs

- Are the educational goals of the museum clearly articulated and appropriate to its mission, audiences and resources?
- Do the museum's programs meet the needs of audiences?

4. Exhibitions

- Do the exhibitions reflect the museum's mission?
- Does the museum have a process for exhibit selection and development that:
 - makes appropriate use of collections and human resources;
 - meets audience needs;
 - and serves the financial needs of the museum?

5. Research (for museums conducting or supporting research)

- Does the quality and extent of research fulfill the potential of the collections?

6. Publications

- Do the publications have appropriate goals for communicating with the museum's audiences and community, and do they achieve these goals?

7. Marketing and Public Relations

- Is the museum making good use of its resources to promote goods and services?
- Does the museum have clear and appropriate goals for attendance?
- Does it have a marketing plan that effectively supports these goals?

C. Collections Stewardship (for museums that own or borrow collections)

- Are the collections appropriate to the museum's mission?
- Is the museum exercising responsible stewardship of the collections?
- Is the museum making effective use of its resources to provide appropriate care for its collections?
- Is the museum functioning legally and ethically in the way it obtains and maintains its collections?

D. Administration

- Do staff have a clear understanding of their jobs?
- Does the staffing meet the needs of the institution in terms of:
 - number of staff?
 - responsibilities?
 - training?
- If not, what additional staff are needed most, and how could the museum obtain the resources to add them?

1. Membership and Affiliate Organizations

- Is the museum making effective use of membership and affiliated organizations to provide financial and other support?
- Does the membership reflect the target audience of the museum, and is the number of members appropriate to the location and size of the museum?

2. Finance

- Is the museum in good financial health?
- Will its financial position and planning meet its current and future needs?
- Is the governing body appropriately involved in the museum's financial management and fund raising?
- What new or expanded sources of income, earned and unearned, might the museum explore?
- Is the budgeting process linked to institutional goals and planning?

3. Facilities

- Does the museum have adequate facilities to support and fulfill its mission (e.g., collections, exhibitions, public programs, visitor services, parking)?
- Does the museum have effective policies and procedures for maintaining the facilities in good, safe, working condition?
- Is the museum using its facilities in ways that are in keeping with the mission?

4. Safety and Security

- Does the museum's emergency preparedness address its greatest risks in an effective manner?
- Does the museum provide a safe working environment for staff?
- Does the museum provide a secure environment for the collections?

E. Governance

- Do governing authority members have a clear and shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities in administering a public trust?
- Does the composition of the governing authority meet the needs of the museum in fulfilling its mission and implementing its planning?
- Is the governing authority operating in an effective manner?

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT REPORT WRITING GUIDE

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1. How is or isn't it working well?
2. How is it meeting best practices?
3. What would you recommend?

Offer constructive criticism along with suggestions for resolution. Benchmark the institution's current state of affairs in regards to national standards and best practices.

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Organizational Assessment Resources

Brief Institutional History (1/2 page)

Provide the institution's historical and physical context. Include a brief description of the museum's current situation and important elements from its past (e.g., date founded, museum's purpose, overview of exhibitions/collections, program highlights, etc.).

Mission and Planning (1-2 pages)

Evaluate the institution's mission statement for clarity of purpose and how this statement guides its planning and decision-making. Consider this topic from the perspective of staff, governing authority and community stakeholders. Provide recommendations for how the museum can further strengthen its mission and planning with regard to its collections.

Interpretation and Education (1-2 pages)

Evaluate how the institution identifies its audiences and assesses/addresses their needs. How are collections used within exhibits and beyond? What publications does the institution produce, and what role do collections play, if any? What are your recommendations for improvement?

Collections Stewardship (1-2 pages)

Provide an overview of the collection management and assess its appropriateness to the institution's mission. Determine the institution's ability to demonstrate stewardship and care of its collections. Point out any areas for improvement and offer suggestions/resources on actionable steps the museum can take to improve the state of its collections and its collections policies and procedures.

Administration and Finance (2-3 pages)

Evaluate the institution's financial/human resources and use of its facilities. Reflect on financial sustainability, adequacies of staffing and overall management and allocation of its facilities. Offer suggestions and guidance in areas not meeting best practices.

Governance (1-2 pages)

Evaluate the composition and functioning of the governing authority as they relate to its commitment to the mission and oversight of the organization. Provide a sense of policies/procedures that define roles/responsibilities, recruitment/training and legal/ethical issues. How does governance play an active role in organizational planning? Is the governing authority managing resources appropriately (i.e. collections, financial, human)? Does it have a full understanding of its legal and ethical responsibilities regarding the collections? Provide an analysis that communicates its strengths and shortcomings in this area and offer helpful suggestions for improvement.

Summary (1 page)

Summarize the major observations and recommendations of the report.

Recommendations (1-2 pages)

Provide a prioritized (if possible) list of all recommendations cited throughout the report.

Resources (1-2 pages)

Support your recommendations by providing a list of relevant books, articles, organizations, websites, etc., that you think will assist the organization in executing its plans.

Appendices (as needed)

Include sample documents or printed resources that support information you have provided in the report.

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- Provide a balanced presentation of strengths and weaknesses of the institution.

Submitting the Report:

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Collections Stewardship Assessment Resources

COLLECTIONS STEWARDSHIP ASSESSMENT CRITICAL ISSUES CHECKLIST

A. Mission and Planning

1. Mission

- Do staff and governing authority members have a clear, shared understanding of the museum's mission?
- Do the collections support this mission?
- Are policies, procedures and resource allocation focused on fulfilling the mission?

2. Planning

- Are staff and governing authority members engaged in an effective planning process for the museum's future?
- Does this planning effectively address the most important issues regarding collections use, care and development?

B. Interpretation

1. Audiences and Visitors

- Does the museum clearly identify its target audiences and take appropriate steps to serve their needs?
- Are the museum's collections and collecting tied to the needs of its audiences?

2. Community

- Does the museum have a clear understanding of its role in the community?
- Is the community active in and supportive of the museum?

3. Public Programs

- Do the museum's programs make effective and appropriate use of its collections?
- Do the collections support the museum's programming goals?

4. Exhibitions

- Do the museum's exhibits make effective and appropriate use of its collections?
- Do the collections support the museum's exhibit program?

5. Research (for museums conducting or supporting research)

- Is the quality and extent of research fulfilling the potential of the collections?

6. Publications

- Do the publications have appropriate goals for communicating with the museum's audiences and community regarding the collections, and do they achieve these goals?

7. Marketing and Public Relations

- Are the museum's collections integrated into the image it presents to the public?

C. Collections Stewardship

1. Scope of Collections

- Are the collections appropriate to the museum's mission?

2. Collections Management

- Is the museum exercising responsible stewardship of the collections?
- Is the museum making effective use of its resources to provide appropriate care for its collections?

3. Acquisitions and Accessioning

- Is there an effective process guiding the content of the collections?
- Is the museum functioning legally and ethically in the way it obtains its collections?

4. Deaccessioning and Disposal

- Is there deaccessioning that needs to occur and, if so, are there procedures in place to facilitate this?
- Is the museum functioning legally and ethically in the way it deaccessions and disposes of its collections?

5. Loans

- Are the museum's loan activities appropriate to the support of its mission and service of its audience?
- Are there appropriate procedures to document and safeguard incoming and outgoing loans?

6. Legal Issues

- Is the museum exercising oversight to ensure that it is in compliance with any applicable local, state or federal laws and regulations?

7. Safety as it Relates to the Collections

- Do museum staff have the knowledge and resources it needs to detect and manage safety issues related to the collections?
- Are procedures in place that protect staff and visitors from any collections-related hazards?

8. Documentation

- Is the museum maintaining documentation that is sufficient to establish ownership of its collections and to track all associated data?

9. Backlog

- If the museum has a backlog of unprocessed or uncatalogued material, how does this impact the use of space, care of collections and need for resources?
- Are there plans and procedures in place to manage this backlog?

10. Inventory

- Does the museum have procedures in place to verify what collections it holds, their status, and their location?

11. Risk Management

- Does the museum have a sound understanding of what factors pose the greatest risks to the collections it holds?
- Is the museum exercising appropriate management to mitigate these risks?
- Are there effective plans and procedures in place to respond to emergencies affecting the collection, and are staff trained in the implementation of these plans and procedures?

12. Conservation

- Does the museum have conservation issues for which it should seek assistance?

D. Administration and Finance

1. Staff

- Does staff have a clear understanding of responsibilities as they relate to care of the collection?
- Does staffing meet the collections-related needs of the institution in terms of:
 - number of staff?
 - responsibilities?
 - training?
- If not, what additional staff are needed most, and how could the museum obtain the resources to add them?

2. Finance

- Is the museum in good financial health?
- Is the museum providing appropriate support for the collections use, care and development?

3. Facilities

- Do the museum's facilities provide appropriate conditions for collections storage and use?
- Does the museum have effective policies and procedures for maintaining the facilities in good, safe working condition?

4. Safety and Security

- Does the museum's emergency preparedness address the greatest risks in an effective manner?
- Does the museum provide a safe working environment for the staff?
- Does the museum provide a secure environment for the collections?

E. Governance

- Do governing authority members have a clear and shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities in administering a public trust?
- Do governing authority members have a clear and shared understanding of the significance of the museum's collections, the collection's role in fulfilling the museum's mission and the governing authority's role as stewards of the collections?
- Is the governing authority operating in an effective manner?

Collections Stewardship Assessment Resources

COLLECTIONS STEWARDSHIP ASSESSMENT REPORT WRITING GUIDE

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1. How is or isn't it working well?
2. How is it meeting best practices?
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collections, program highlights, etc.).

Mission and Planning (1-2 pages)

Evaluate the institution's mission statement for clarity of purpose and how this statement guides its planning and decision-making. Consider this topic from the perspective of staff, governing authority and community stakeholders. Evaluate any plans that are in place and specifically address the role of collections use, care and development. Provide recommendations for how the museum can further strengthen its mission and planning with regard to its collections.

Interpretation (1-2 pages)

Evaluate how the institution identifies its audiences and assesses/addresses their needs. How are collections used within exhibits and beyond? What publications does the institution produce, and what role do collections play, if any? What are your recommendations for improvement?

Collections Stewardship (3-4 pages)

Provide an overview of the collections (i.e. size, type). Determine the institution's ability to demonstrate stewardship and care of its collections. Point out any areas for improvement and offer suggestions/resources on actionable steps the museum can take to improve the state of its collections and its collections policies and procedures. Be sure to include details on specific stewardship topics (i.e. (de)accessioning, loans, legal issues, backlog, safety, risk management, etc.)

Administration and Finance (1-2 pages)

Evaluate the institution's financial/human resources and use of its facilities. Reflect on financial sustainability, adequacies of staffing and overall management and allocation of facilities. Offer suggestions and guidance in areas not meeting best practices.

Governance (1-2 pages)

Evaluate the composition and functioning of the governing authority as they relate to its commitment to the mission and oversight of the organization.

Provide a sense of policies/procedures that define roles/responsibilities, recruitment/training and legal/ethical issues. How does the governance play an active role in organizational planning? Is the governing authority managing resources appropriately (i.e. collections, financial, human)? Does it have a full understanding of its legal and ethical responsibilities regarding the collections? Provide an analysis that communicates its strengths and shortcomings in this area and offer helpful suggestions for improvement.

Summary (1 page)

Summarize the major observations and recommendations of the report.

Recommendations (1-2 pages)

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Resources (1-2 pages)

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Community Engagement Assessment Resources

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT CRITICAL ISSUES CHECKLIST

A. Public Perception

1. Mission & Planning

- Do staff and governing authority members have a clear, shared understanding of the museum's mission?
- Is the mission one that the museum has the ability and resources to fulfill?
- Is the mission, vision and planning of the museum oriented toward public service?
- If there is a current plan, is it being used to address the museum's major challenges, and is it guiding the museum's actions?

2. Audience, Attendance, Public Relations and Marketing

- Does the museum have a clear understanding of its target audience and of the competition for this audience?
- Is the museum making good use of its resources to promote goods and services?
- Does the museum have clear and appropriate goals for attendance?
- Does the museum have a marketing plan that effectively supports these goals?
- Does the museum clearly identify its target audience and take appropriate steps to serve its needs?
- Is the museum gathering information about its audience and visitors and using it to evaluate performance and guide its planning?

B. Public Experience

1. Content, Ideas and Concepts

- Does the museum have a clear, mission-driven plan for the content it presents to its audience?

2. Visitor Services

- Is the museum providing the best visitor experience it can given the scope of its resources?
- Is the museum creating a safe and accessible environment for visitors?

3. Exhibitions and Programs

- Are the educational goals of the museum clearly articulated and appropriate to its mission, audiences and resources?
- Do the exhibits and programs serve the needs of the museum's audience?

C. Public Involvement

1. Community Participation

- Does the museum have a clear understanding of its role in the community?
- Is the community active in and supportive of the museum?

2. Human Resources

- Does staff have a clear understanding of their jobs?
- Is staff training and performance directed at serving the needs of the museum's audience and community?

3. Financial Resources

- Is the museum in good financial health?
- Will its financial position and planning meet current and future needs?
- Are appropriate resources directed towards serving the museum's audience and community as well as marketing and publicizing the museum's services?
- What new or expanded sources of income, earned and unearned, might the museum explore?

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT REPORT WRITING GUIDE

Each section below presents a set of guiding statements/questions to consider. Respond only to points that are most relevant to the institution. Be sure to provide an analysis of the museum's strengths and weaknesses. For each section, ask yourself the following questions:

1. How is or isn't it working well?
2. How is it meeting best practices?
3. What would you recommend?

Offer constructive criticism along with suggestions for resolution. Benchmark the institution's current state of affairs in regards to national standards and best practices.

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Brief Institutional History (1/2 page)

Provide the institution's historical and physical context. Include a brief description of the museum's current situation and important elements from its past (e.g., date founded, museum's purpose, overview of exhibitions/collections, program highlights, etc.).

Audiences and Community (3-4 pages)

Provide an overview of the organization's current/target audience(s) and community. Describe how the museum does/does not address their needs and how they are evaluating those needs. Evaluate the institution's mission statement for clarity of purpose. Give a sense of how the museum's mission responds to the needs of the audience(s)/community and whether or not those strategies are articulated in a written plan. Evaluate any plans that are in place and provide recommendations for how the museum can further strengthen its mission and planning.

Public Perception (3-4 pages)

Evaluate the museum's interpretation of public perception. How does the museum demonstrate a clear understanding of its audiences and of the competition for these audiences? Address the museum's strategies for gathering/collecting information about its image within the community and how it is using this data to inform its practices. Provide an overview of the community (i.e. population size, demographics, other cultural organizations, etc.) and identify tools/mechanisms used to gather such data. Be sure to address public relations and marketing strategies employed by the museum. Evaluate how they appeal to and serve the public. Offer suggestions and guidance in areas not meeting best practices.

Public Involvement (3-4 pages)

Describe the ways in which the community engages with the museum (i.e. volunteers, board members, financial sponsors, focus group participants, etc.). Provide a summary of the institution's collaborative relationships and the nature of those relationships—benefits, barriers, etc. Evaluate the composition and functioning of the governing authority as it relates to its commitment to the mission, understanding of and interaction with the community, and oversight of the organization. Evaluate the institution's financial /human resources. Reflect on the organization's financial sustainability and priorities. Offer suggestions and guidance in areas not meeting best practices.

Community Engagement Assessment Resources

Public Experience (3-4 pages)

Describe the different ways in which the organization engages with its public (i.e. programs, exhibits, events, publications, etc.). What does the planning process entail throughout conception, development, publicity, implementation and evaluation? What visitor services concerns are/are not taken into consideration (i.e. special needs, amenities, learning styles, etc.)? Are any advisory groups involved in the planning process? How are programs and exhibits being developed with different target audiences in mind? How have programmatic efforts been successful in meeting educational, attendance and financial goals? What are your recommendations for improvement?

Summary (1 page)

Summarize the major observations and recommendations of the report.

Recommendations (1-2 pages)

Provide a prioritized (if possible) list of all recommendations cited throughout the report.

Resources (1-2 pages)

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Leadership Assessment Resources

LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT CRITICAL ISSUES CHECKLIST

A. Vision and Leadership

1. *Mission and Vision*

- Does the governing authority have a clear understanding of the museum's mission?
- Does the mission guide the way in which they operate?
- Does the governing authority have a clear vision of how the museum should develop in the next few years?

2. *Strategic Planning*

- Has the governing authority engaged in appropriate and effective planning to achieve this vision?

3. *Evaluating the Museum's Performance*

- Does the governing authority have an effective process for measuring and assessing the success of the museum's exhibits, programs and services?

4. *Succession Planning*

- Does the governing authority have an effective process to identify and recruit the next head of the governing authority?

5. *Managing Change*

- Does the governing authority have a clear understanding of the major forces affecting the museum's ability to succeed, and are they responding effectively to these challenges?

6. *Governing Authority/Staff Composition*

- Does the governing authority have the diversity of representation, skills and resources needed to help the museum achieve success?
- Does the staff have the diversity of representation, skills and resources needed to help the museum achieve success?

7. *Building a Strong Relationship between the Director and the Head of the Governing Authority*

- Do the director and head of governing authority work together effectively?
- Does the governing authority create a supportive working environment for the director?

B. Structure and Function

1. *Bylaws/Organizing Documents/Committee Structure*

- Does the museum's documentation adequately establish the organization's structure, function and delegation of authority?
- Has the governing authority established a committee structure that is effective in addressing all major aspects of governance?

2. *Roles and Responsibilities of the Governing Authority Members*

- Do members of the governing authority share a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities?
- Do members of the governing authority understand and respect the distinction between the roles of the governing authority and staff members?
- Are members of the governing authority knowledgeable about and do they effectively represent the needs of the museum's audiences and community?
- Does the governing authority expect members to serve as ambassadors to the community, as advocates to other organizations and agencies? Are these expectations clearly communicated?
- Does the governing authority establish appropriate guidelines for its members concerning financial support of the museum, and do all members fulfill this expectation?
- Does the governing authority expect members to volunteer time and expertise to the museum? Are these expectations clearly communicated?

3. *Size, Composition and Tenure of the Governing Authority*

- Is the size and structure of the governing authority serving the needs of the museum?
- Does membership of the governing authority have a rate of turnover that provides an appropriate mix of new perspectives and energy as well as continuity and experience?

Leadership Assessment Resources

4. Relationships with Supporting Groups

- If the museum has supporting groups that significantly influence governance of the organization, has the museum's governing authority clearly defined the nature and scope of these relationships?
- Do the museum's relationships with these groups function to the benefit of the museum?

5. Relationship to Parent Organization

- If the museum is part of a larger organization, does the governing authority or advisory board have an effective working relationship with the parent organization?

6. Running Effective Meetings/Time Management

- Is the governing authority spending the majority of its time and effort on issues that are key to the success of the organization?
- Does the governing authority have the necessary and appropriate information it needs for effective decision-making?

7. Evaluation of the Governing Authority's Performance

- Has the governing authority established procedures for evaluating its own performance, and is it using the information from that evaluation process to make improvements?

8. Recruiting, Training and Orienting Members of the Governing Authority

- Does the governing authority have an effective process to select and recruit new members?
- Are new members of the governing authority provided with a comprehensive orientation to the museum, its mission, vision, goals and plans?
- Are new members of the governing authority provided with a comprehensive orientation to their roles and responsibilities, and what is expected of them in terms of time and financial commitment?

9. Hiring and Evaluating the Director

- Does the governing authority have a clearly defined process for identifying and recruiting a new director?
- Does the governing authority have a systematic, fair and supportive process for evaluating the director on a regular basis?

C. Resource Management

1. Fiduciary Responsibilities

- Is the governing authority exercising prudent fiscal oversight of the museum?
- Does the governing authority demonstrate a sound understanding of the museum's financial position and financial needs?
- Does the governing authority engage in effective financial planning?
- Does the governing authority exercising prudent oversight of the museum's buildings and grounds?

2. Collections Stewardship

- Does the governing authority demonstrate a clear understanding of its stewardship responsibilities regarding the museum's collections?
- Is the governing authority exercising prudent oversight of the museum's collections?

3. Human Resources

- Has the governing authority supported the creation of a comprehensive and equitable system of employee recruitment, evaluation and compensation?
- Has the governing authority approved a comprehensive personnel policies manual that addresses compliance with major employment laws, employment classifications and definitions, hours of work, performance evaluations and salary review, leaves of absence, disciplinary action and grievance procedures, and termination of employment?

D. Public Accountability

1. Ethics/Conflict of Interest

- Does the governing authority demonstrate a sound understanding of the ethical standards for museums and for governance of a nonprofit?
- Does it conduct itself in accordance with those standards?

- Has the governing authority created written policies and procedures to identify and resolve potential conflicts of interest?

2. Furthering the Museum's Public-Service Role

- Does the governing authority demonstrate a commitment to the museum's role in serving the public?
- Does the governing authority devote leadership and financial resources to strengthening the public dimension of the museum?
- Does the governing authority work to educate the public on the museum's mission and the outcomes it has achieved?

3. Reflecting and Representing the Needs of the Museum's Audiences

- Does the governing authority demonstrate leadership in developing diversity by diversifying its own membership in order to assure a breadth of perspective?
- Does the governing authority solicit input from the museum's audiences when evaluating the museum's performance and planning for its future?

4. Community Relations

- Does the governing authority encourage the museum to engage in active, ongoing, collaborative efforts with a wide spectrum of organizations and individuals who can contribute to the expansion of the museum's public dimension?

LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT REPORT WRITING GUIDE

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Provide the institution's historical and physical context. Include a brief description of the museum's current situation and important elements from its past (e.g., date founded, museum's purpose, overview of exhibitions/collections, program highlights, etc.).

Vision and Leadership (3-4 pages)

Evaluate the institution's mission statement for clarity of purpose and the governing authority's understandings of the mission as a guide post for activities and decision-making. Review/assess any written institutional plans and comment on its appropriateness and the measures established to determine its success in fulfilling educational/financial goals and community need. Assess the governing authority's practices for maintaining continuity in leadership (e.g., CEO turnover) and supporting the organization during times of change. Provide recommendations for how the museum can further strengthen its mission and institutional planning process.

Leadership Assessment Resources

Structure and Function (3-4 pages)

Evaluate the composition and functionality of the governing authority as it relates to its oversight of the organization. Give a sense of committee structure and evidence of formal written expectations outlining roles and responsibilities, recruitment, training, orientation and evaluation. What are your findings? How does the governing authority represent the needs of the museums' audiences, community and promoting the museum (i.e. board diversity, fund/friend-raising, etc.)? How might the governing authority improve the organization's systems/practices to better fulfill its mission?

Resource Management (3-4 pages)

Evaluate the governing authority's knowledge and oversight of the organization's financial needs and status. Provide an assessment of the governing authority's shared understanding of the significance of the collections and its role in fulfilling the mission. Report on governing authority members' mutual understanding of their roles as stewards of the collection. Include a review of the organization's human resources and use of its facilities. Are these areas sufficient and suited to the needs of the museum? Identify strengths/weaknesses of the museum's resource management and offer suggestions for improvement.

Public Accountability (3-4 pages)

Review any documents that have been established by the governing authority that articulate the museum's understanding of ethical standards and that identify/resolve potential conflicts of interests. How does the governing authority demonstrate its understanding of public accountability, and what measures are taken to inform the public? What are its strengths/weaknesses, and what would you recommend for improvements?

Summary (1 page)

Summarize the major observations and recommendations of the report.

Recommendations (1-2 pages)

Provide a prioritized (if possible) list of all recommendations cited throughout the report.

Resources (1-2 pages)

Support your recommendations by providing a list of relevant books, articles, organizations, websites, etc., that you think will assist the organization in executing its plans.

Appendices (as needed)

Include sample documents or printed resources that support information you have provided in the report.

AVERAGE REPORT LENGTH: 15-25 pages double spaced; 12-20 pages single spaced

Organizing & Writing the Report:

- Organize your site-visit notes upon your return.
- Re-familiarize yourself with the Self-Study Workbook and documentation.
- Focus the report—organize your notes and thoughts within the designated headings.
- Consider your intended audience(s) for the report as identified by the museum—staff, governing authority, donors and potential funders, community leaders and other stakeholders.
- Don't assume—provide enough detail for those not privy to the MAP process, but be concise.
- Be cognizant of tone—the use of euphemisms and colloquial language can be misinterpreted.
- Provide a balanced presentation of strengths and weaknesses of the institution.

Submitting the Report:

- Reports should be created and submitted as a Word document.
- Double-check all facts and proofread the text carefully.
- Send your report to the MAP office and not the museum. MAP staff reviews all reports before sending to the museum.
- Be timely. Reports should be e-mailed to the MAP office within four weeks of the site visit.

If you have any questions or need additional resources, please contact MAP staff at 202-289-9118 or map@aam-us.org.

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