

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
DEPARTMENTAL MANUAL

Museum Property Handbook
(411 DM, Volume I)

Chapter 14 Programming, Funding, and Staffing

A. INTRODUCTION

The first step in programming for museum property is planning. Refer to Chapter 2 for guidance on planning for museum property management.

1. Preparing the Programming Document

The programming document is the result of good planning. The specific format and content will vary for each bureau. It is the key to obtaining funds for a project. It should provide the manager with a succinct, clear definition of project needs. Answer the following questions:

- ! What is the project?
- ! Why is the project required?
- ! How much will the project cost?
- ! How will the money be spent?

Remember: the persons who will review these documents will not be familiar with the problem(s). A well-written document has a better chance of being approved. In preparing programming documents, keep in mind the time needed to actually receive the funds. If a programming document prepared in Fiscal Year 1993 receives approval, the funding will be allocated in Fiscal Year 1995.

2. Budgeting for an Ongoing Museum Property Program

Data on the work elements of a museum property program is essential for developing a budget. Document the ongoing workload and costs that are needed to properly manage and care for the museum property collection. Refer to Chapter 7, "Housekeeping: Preventive Conservation." Briefly, steps in this process include:

- a. identify all the museum property management work activities;
- b. describe each work activity;
- c. outline the procedures needed to complete each

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activity;

- d. maintain a daily record of the hours spent on each work activity; and,
- e. keep a record of the costs of supplies and materials used in each work activity.

At the end of each year, the data will help to identify what activities cannot be performed within the base funding for curatorial staff and supplies.

B. SOURCES OF CURATORIAL FUNDING

Funding for the museum property management program can come from several sources. These sources include:

- ! Bureau Funding
- ! Unit Operations
- ! Other Funding Sources

1. Bureau Funding

Each bureau may identify specific funding sources for the care and management of museum property. In addition, museum property needs may be funded from monies allocated for general resource management projects. Match funding sources to specific museum property management projects. Remember that to compete on an equitable level with other priorities, project justification statements should be well-written.

2. Unit Operations

The bureau's museum property program should have an adequate funding base. The size and nature of a museum property collection helps to establish needed base funding. The amount of base funding should be enough to keep the program operating at an acceptable level without having to rely heavily on special project funds. Operating funds should be directed at maintaining an

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ongoing program of accounting and documenting new acquisitions and of preventive conservation for objects in storage and on exhibit. This funding covers the museum property management program on an annual basis: the cost of museum property staff, clerical support; supplies, materials, and references specific to museum property; and travel to training courses and professional meetings.

3. Other Funding Sources

Some bureaus have developed a "Gift Book" as fund raising strategy for particular needs. The museum property program can benefit from this strategy. List such items as hygromographs, portable humidifiers and dehumidifiers, museum specimen cabinets, and acquisition of needed objects. Cooperating associations and other organizations directly associated with a museum property collection may apply for funding for special projects from government funding agencies, such as the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and other foundations and individuals. Refer to Appendix B for a list of the names and addresses of these organizations and foundations.

C. STAFFING FOR MUSEUM PROPERTY COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

Whether curatorial staff is titled museum curator or technician, property management specialist, or a person in another classification with collateral museum property duties, their duties relevant to museum property should be described in position descriptions and critical elements of performance standards.

1. Position Descriptions

Position descriptions for these individuals should include at least some of the following elements:

- ! size and/or complexity of the museum property collection
- ! involvement with long-range planning for expansion,

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- improvement, use, and security of the collection
- ! responsibility for developing operating policy
- ! scientific, artistic, and historic significance of the museum property collection
- ! requirements for knowledge, initiative, imagination, and independent professional judgement
- ! nature and extent of supervisory controls
- ! degree of supervisory responsibility
- ! scope of research projects
- ! frequency of use of the collection by scholars and the resultant exchange of objects, ideas, and information
- ! complexity of identification and authentication of museum objects and degree to which such work is dependent upon available precedents
- ! degree of involvement in exhibit planning and design
- ! extent of public service and educational assignments

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Classification Standards identify two occupation series for those charged with the performance of professional and technical duties related to the management of museum property. The Museum Curator Series (GS-1015) is the professional series for positions, the primary duties of which are to administer, supervise, and perform professional work related to research, museum property management, exhibits, and education. Positions in the Museum Specialist and Technician Series (GS-1016) have duties that include technical and specialized work in connection with the management of museum property. OPM Classification Standards for the museum curator series indicate the minimum acceptable grade for a person working independently in a small, medium, and large sized museum property collection.

Registrars specialize in the development and implementation of policies and procedures for museum property recordkeeping. This position requires knowledge of museum classification and records management systems. (Registrars may be classified as GS-1001, 1015, or 1016.)

Archivists (GS-1420) specialize in the selection, preservation, and use of documents and records determined to have permanent or ongoing value.

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The Office of Personnel Management's Personnel Qualifications Standards Handbook (X-118) contain the basic qualifications for museum curators, specialists, and technicians.

2. Professional Development

Training applicable to museum property management is available from many non-Federal institutions, including local museums, schools, American Association of Museums and the American Association for State and Local History. In addition, courses sponsored by individual bureaus may be open to employees of other bureaus. Curatorial staff may find it beneficial to maintain membership in appropriate state, regional, and national museum associations and societies. Refer to Appendix B of this part of the Handbook and, when possible, send a representative to the annual meetings of these professional organizations.

3. Other Sources for Staffing

Other sources of staffing include volunteers from the community and student interns. Volunteers can provide assistance with cataloging, photographing, arranging and organizing the museum property storage space. Curatorial staff need to provide volunteers with sufficient training and close supervision. It also is possible to contract for staffing to accomplish projects such as cataloging objects.

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