



Critical Issues Checklist: Governance Assessment

A. MISSION & INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING

1. Mission and Vision

- How does the governing authority demonstrate a clear understanding of the museum's mission?
- How well does the mission guide the way the governing authority operates?
- How does the governing authority develop a clear vision of how the museum should develop in the next few years?

2. Institutional Planning

- How does the governing authority demonstrate appropriate and effective planning to achieve the museum's vision?
- How does the governing authority effectively identify and recruit its next leadership?
- How does the governing authority demonstrate a clear understanding of the major forces that can affect the museum's ability to succeed? Are governing authority members responding effectively to these challenges?

3. Institutional Performance Measures and Indicators

- How does the governing authority assess the success of the museum's exhibits, programs, and services?

4. Engaging the Community

- How does the governing authority demonstrate its commitment to the museum's role in serving the public?
- How is the public dimension of the museum strengthened by the governing authority's leadership and financial resources?
- How does the governing authority work to educate the public about the museum's mission and achievements?
- How 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?

Relevant Documentation

- IMLS grant application(s)
- Institutional plan (e.g., strategic plan, long-range plan)
- Mission statement (e.g., statement of purpose)

- Other plans (e.g., fund-raising and policy statements)
- Previous MAP assessment reports, if applicable
- Minutes from recent meeting of the governing authority
- Governing authority committee structure
- Governing authority committee descriptions

B. GOVERNANCE

1. Recruitment & Orientation

Board Development/Diversity

- How effectively does the governing authority's diversity of representation, skills, and resources help the museum achieve success?
- How do the members of the governing authority demonstrate knowledge about the needs of the museum's audiences and community, and do they effectively represent them?

Orientation

- How does the governing authority select and recruit new members?
- How are new members of the governing authority introduced to the museum, its mission, vision, goals, and plans?
- How are new members of the governing authority informed about their roles and responsibilities as well as what is expected of them in terms of time and financial commitment?

2. Relationship with Staff

- How effectively do the director and head of governing authority work together?
- How does the governing authority create a supportive working environment for the director?
- How does the governing authority identify and recruit a new director?
- How does the governing authority ensure a systematic, fair, and supportive process for evaluating the director on a regular basis?

3. Founding Documents

- How adequately does the museum's documentation establish the organization's structure, function, and delegation of authority?

Critical Issues Checklist: Governance Assessment

4. Structure

- How effectively do the governing authority's committees address all major aspects of governance?
- How well does the size and structure of the governing authority serve the needs of the museum?
- How does the membership of the governing authority ensure a rate of turnover that provides an appropriate combination of new perspectives and energy as well as continuity and experience?

5. Responsibilities

- How do members of the governing authority demonstrate a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities?
- How do members of the governing authority demonstrate their understanding of and respect for the distinction between their roles and those of staff members?
- Are governing authority members expected to serve as ambassadors to the community and advocates to other organizations and agencies? If so, how are those expectations communicated?
- What are the established guidelines for the governing authority's financial support of the museum, and do all members fulfill this expectation?
- Does the museum expect governing authority members to volunteer their time and expertise to the institution? If so, how are those expectations communicated?

6. Support Organizations

- If the museum has identified support groups that significantly influence its governance, how has the governing authority defined the nature and scope of these relationships?
- How does the museum benefit from its relationships with these groups?

7. Parent Organizations

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

8. Promoting Effectiveness

- How much of the governing authority's time and effort are spent on issues that are key to the museum's success?
- How does the governing authority ensure that it has the necessary and appropriate information it needs to make effective decisions?
- What procedures has the governing authority established for evaluating its own performance? Does it use the information from that evaluation process to make improvements?

9. Accountability & Ethics

- How does the governing authority demonstrate a sound understanding of the ethical standards for museums and nonprofit governance?
- How does the governing authority ensure that it conducts itself in accordance with those standards?
- What written policies and procedures has the museum established to identify and resolve potential conflicts of interest?

Relevant Documentation

- Articles of incorporation, charter, or enabling legislation
- Bylaws
- Institutional code of ethics
- Facility rental and special event policy
- List of governing authority members
- Governing authority committee structures and descriptions
- Governing authority orientation materials
- Letter of understanding with groups (identified in section one of the museum's self-study)
- Mandates establishing governing authority committees
- Minutes from recent governing authority meeting
- Position/job descriptions for governing authority members

C. FINANCIAL STABILITY

1. Financial Management

- How does the governing authority exercise prudent fiscal oversight of the museum?
- How does the governing authority demonstrate a



Critical Issues Checklist: Governance Assessment

sound understanding of the museum's financial position and financial needs?

- How effectively does the governing authority engage in financial planning?
- How does the governing authority exercise prudent oversight of the museum's buildings and grounds?

Relevant Documentation

Annual report (most recent)
Audited financial statements from the two most recently completed fiscal years
Budget, approved for current year
Investment policy
Minutes from recent governing authority meeting

D. HUMAN RESOURCES

- How 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?
- How effectively does the staff's diversity of representation, skills, and resources help the museum achieve success?

Relevant Documentation

Organizational chart
Position/job descriptions: staff (for large organizations, append only for key/senior staff)
Sample performance evaluation form
Staff handbook
Staff list and resumes of key staff

E. INTERPRETATION & EDUCATION

- How does the governing authority solicit input from the museum's audiences when it evaluates the institution's performance and plans for its future?

Relevant Documentation

Newsletter, most recent issue

F. COLLECTIONS STEWARDSHIP

- How do governing authority members demonstrate 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?
- How does the governing authority exercise prudent oversight of the museum's collections?

Relevant Documentation

Collections management policy
Minutes from recent governing authority meeting