



## Museum Assessment Program (MAP) Peer Review

MAP peer reviewers assess museums going through the Museum Assessment Program, working with those museums to help strengthen operations, plan for the future and meet/align with the [Core Standards for Museums](#) through this self-assessment process. A MAP peer reviewer's 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 the dialogue with the museum, peer reviewers provide information about how the museum's operations measure up to ethics, standards and professional practices in the field, as well as ideas about how it might address its current challenges and which resources might aid that effort. This is a confidential, consultative process.

Serving as a peer reviewer is an excellent professional development opportunity and a way to pick up new ideas, network, and actively participate in the Alliance's efforts to advance standards and best practices. A peer reviewer's service is the critical backbone to the success of this program.

Most MAP assessments are conducted by one peer reviewer. Reviewers are assigned to participating MAP museums using the information in their peer review profile, which must be kept up to date by the reviewer. Reviewers work closely with the museum and the AAM MAP program officer throughout the entire process.

### Qualifications

Peer reviewers demonstrate knowledge of basic, overall museum operations by having participated in one or more of the following situations:

- Holding a professional-level decision making role at a museum, participating in day-to-day operations of the institution.
- Having worked in the museum field in a professional capacity a sufficient length of time to develop an understanding of museum operations, generally at least five years.
- Demonstrating a breadth of experience with various museum operations, by:
  - Holding positions at more than one museum
  - Holding positions with different roles and responsibilities at the same museum
  - Growing within a position, as demonstrated by a list of achievements
  - Participating in museum and nonprofit-related activities outside the museum (board service, teaching, advising other institutions, etc.)
- Gained an understanding of various effective operational techniques used across the museum field by participating in at least one of the following professional activities:
  - Officer in a museum organization
  - Committee member for a museum organization

- Grant reviewer for a federal or state museum agency (e.g., IMLS)
- Member of a peer roundtable or other information-sharing program

Successful applicants demonstrate familiarity with core standards for museums. They are current, former or retired museum professionals or museum consultants.

### **Expectations**

Peer reviewers must possess strong skills in oral and written communication skills and interpersonal qualities (diplomacy, discretion, empathy, critical thinking/analysis, time management) needed to conduct a successful site. Peer reviewers understand the professional nature of museum work and participate in the field-wide dialogue about museum operations, standards and best practices, and emerging issues. They must demonstrate this understanding and participation through being active in the field at large.

### **AAM expects peer reviewers to be:**

- Well-informed about current standards and professional practices in the field
- Willing to familiarize themselves with the museums application, MAP workbook and additional materials
- Have broad knowledge about institutions similar to the ones they review
- Objective, observational, professional, thorough, and diplomatic while visiting the museums and preparing their reports and working with the museum on action planning for the future
- Scrupulous in maintaining confidentiality throughout the entire MAP process
- Provide the museum with information about how it compares to standards and professional practices in the field
- Recommend how the museum might address current challenges and provides resources to help that effort
- Share information on how similar institutions operate
- Write a report for the museum's benefit
- Follow up with the museums after the report is submitted to assist with implementation
- Share resources to help the museum work towards their future goals

### **Responsibilities**

MAP museums and Alliance MAP staff rely on peer reviewers to verify the accuracy of MAP materials, to observe the institutions operations and to craft a useful report for the institution. The steps peer reviewers take in order to fulfill this directive are:

- 1. Read the MAP Workbook & additional materials.** Become as familiar as possible with the museum and its operations prior to the site visit by reviewing and analyzing the MAP workbook and additional materials.
- 2. Schedule the site visit.** Work with the museum to arrange a mutually convenient date, notify MAP staff of the date and jointly develop an agenda for the visit. If two peer reviewers are assigned their visits must be conducted together as a team.

3. **Visit the museum.** Conduct the visit in a thorough, professional and objective manner. Review any updated materials the museum provides. Conduct an exit interview with the director.
4. **Write an Assessment Report.** Write an assessment report that reviews overall operations, addresses issues of major concern, offers constructive suggestions for change, address the museum's strengths and weaknesses, assesses how well the museum is meeting standards and best practices, and offers prioritized recommendations. Submit to MAP staff in a timely manner.
5. **Maintain confidentiality of the museum's circumstances and MAP workbook materials.** To preserve the integrity of the program, the museum's disclosure of private information must also be handled discreetly. Treat all information acquired through the process as privileged. Reviewers do not talk or write about the proceedings, conclusions or any other information about the museum to anyone other than the Museum, MAP staff and a second peer reviewer if one is assigned. The responsibility of confidentiality continues after the review. Peer reviewers may not identify the specific museums visited but can and should include participation as a MAP peer reviewer on their resume. Refer only to the time period of visits.

### **Time Commitment**

A review generally takes 60-80 hours of time, spread out over the length of the assessment. The process includes reading and reviewing 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. Peer reviewers should be sure to provide the time and attention to be fair to the participating museum, meet the program's expectations and benefit from the process yourself.

Reviewers are free to decline the visit if their schedules will not accommodate a visit during the required window of time. It is better to decline to participate than agree to conduct a visit you do not have time to complete. The time commitment for this assessment will depend on an individual's work style and the complexity and size of the participating museum.

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.

A peer reviewer may be removed from the roster if they commit to an assignment and then do not fulfill that commitment in a timely fashion.

Please note all communications, trainings and transactions will be conducted electronically.

## **Compensation**

MAP Peer Reviewers receive a modest honorarium for their service. In order to receive this honorarium, the following documents must be filled out and submitted to MAP staff. This includes a [W9](#) and to have the funds electronically deposited a [Direct Deposit Form](#) must be completed.

Expenses incurred by the peer reviewer for a MAP site visit will be reimbursed by AAM. This reimbursement is dependent on the reviewer following the Peer Review Travel Policy which is outlined [here](#). More details will be shared when an assignment is offered.