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INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTIONS ADVISOR

A RESOURCE FROM IHS LOCAL HISTORY SERVICES

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SPECIAL EDITION COLLECTIONS MINIVISOR: REVIEWING MUSEUM PLANS AND POLICIES

By Karen DePauw, manager, IHS Local History Services

We all face the new reality of trying to do our work from home as we do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19. With this in mind, we thought it might be helpful to do a short-term weekly mini version called Collections Minivisor to give you some ideas of things you can do from home that still help propel our work with museum collections. These special editions will come out each Wednesday for the next few weeks and won't replace the monthly Collections Advisor, which will still be sent on the first of each month. If you have ideas for content, or if you would prefer not to receive the weekly editions but would like to continue to receive the monthly Collections Advisor, please email collectionsadvisor@indianahistory.org to let us know.



[Attucks Night School](#). (Indianapolis Recorder Collection, Indiana Historical Society)

One of the silver linings to working from home is that it can provide an opportunity to do some of the little things that so often get pushed onto the back burner in favor of larger projects with a seemingly bigger impact on our day-to-day work. This is not to say that some of those back-burner projects, like the ones we are discussing today, are not highly important. In the first issue of Collections Minivisor we specifically talked about and linked to resources regarding a Collections Management Policy. This policy serves as the backbone of your collection, however, it is not the only one the collection, and museum, should have. Below are a list of

[APPLY FOR A HERITAGE SUPPORT GRANT](#)

ONLINE RESOURCES

[Collections Advisors](#)
(Indiana Historical Society, Local History Services)

[Encyclopedia of Resources for Small Historical Organizations](#)
(Sustaining Places)

[Exhibit Planning Technical Leaflet Bundle](#)
(American Association for State and Local History)

[Guest Post: The HR Problem in Small Museums](#)
(Leadership Matters)

[Guide to Exhibit Development](#)
(Smithsonian)

[Operations and Maintenance for Historic Structures](#)
(Whole Building Design Guide)

others to either write or pull out and refresh. Each includes a link to either an explanation of the type of plan or a sample plan from another institution.

PLANS (in no particular order)

[Disaster Preparedness/Emergency Response Plan](#)

[Exhibitions Plan](#)

[Interpretive Plan](#)

[Maintenance Plan](#)

[Operations Plan](#)

[Strategic Plan](#)

POLICIES (in no particular order)

[Code of Ethics Policy](#)

[Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

[Financial Policy](#)

[Human Resources Policy](#)

[Image Service/Copyright Policy](#)

[Institutional Archives Retention Policy](#)

[Insurance Policy](#)

[Rental Policy](#)

[Social Media Policy](#)

Although many of these should be finalized by committee, it is a great time to pull them out, read them over, and ask others working with the museum (board members, staff, or volunteers) to take some time and see if they have any questions. If you need to start fresh with a policy or plan you might take this time at home to search around on the internet for sample policies and plans for similar organizations and get familiar with the types of things they cover so you can jump in well informed and with both feet once those fuller conversations can happen.

It may not be necessary for your museum to have all of these policies right now, and if you currently have few or none of them this list can be overwhelming. Consider prioritizing what plans and policies should be enacted first and which ones can come at a later date. Also, keep in mind that while some of these policies might be multiple pages others may be only a few quick paragraphs. Having some sort of plan is always better than having nothing. Start where you can and move forward when possible.

This is a free publication. Anyone may subscribe.

[Local History Services](#)

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