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## News Update: AAM Survey on the Use of Proceeds from the Sale of Deaccessioned Collections

The American Alliance of Museums' Direct Care Task Force is [conducting a survey](#) on the use of proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned collections, **specifically on what is generally accepted as a definition of direct care**. The survey results will assist the task force in providing guidance to the field on which uses are generally accepted by all disciplines and which ones are specific to each discipline.



Using a collections assessment checklist can reduce a monumental task into a series of immediate, intermediate and long-range steps.

## Collections Assessments Made Manageable: Intermediate Plans

By Samantha Dorsey, curator, [City of Bowie Museums](#) and Alan Rowe, coordinator, Local History Partners, [Indiana Historical Society](#)

In the [July 2014](#) issue of Collections Advisor, Samantha Dorsey shared a collections assessment checklist for small museums. Samantha's list posed a series of questions and immediate action steps for evaluating the environment, storage and housing of objects, condition of objects and the display of objects. By using the following checklist, the assessment process can be extended from immediate actions to intermediate plans.

### Intermediate collections assessment checklist for small museums:

#### Environment:

Intermediate plans

#### Assessment Questions:

- What can you change about your assessment process?
- What would you change about your building maintenance?
- What would you change about your building use?

- How can you best utilize your HVAC system?

#### **Next Steps:**

- Invite staff and volunteers to participate through internal education and cooperative assistance.
- Track object response to the environment.
- Track visitor, staff and volunteer response to the environment.
- Make comparative graphs of interior and exterior climate data and HVAC performance to reveal good and bad trends.
- Begin experimenting with changing and controlling climate.

### **Storage and Housing:**

Intermediate Plans

#### **Assessment Questions:**

- Is your storage facility or area large enough to accommodate existing collection storage needs?
- How is your storage organized? By type, material or collection?
- Is your shelving raised at least 5 inches off of the ground and is it strong enough to support the load?
- Is your shelving made of sealed or chemically stable materials?
- What general object storage supplies do you need?

#### **Next Steps:**

- Store objects in a neat and tidy fashion.
- Store objects first by climate need and security preference, followed by collection.
- Use adjustable shelving. Seal or place a barrier between non-sealed or chemically unstable shelving surfaces that come in contact with boxes or objects.
- Cover objects not stored in a sealed case, box or other housing with Tyvek or washed muslin fabric. Apply an obvious label to the exterior cover to minimize handling.
- Label cases and shelves for inventory purposes.
- Order supplies annually. Track use and cost over time.
- Monitor storage areas for pest activity.

### **Condition Reporting:**

Intermediate Plans

#### **Assessment Questions:**

- Do you have a condition reporting form?
- When do you complete condition reports for your objects?
- Have you self-assessed what condition issues may be addressed in-house and what issues will require a professional conservator?

#### **Next Steps**

- Acquire examples of condition report forms.
- Complete condition reports for objects when they are first acquired, loaned or damaged.
- Surface clean your exposed and exhibited objects regularly. Surface clean your cased or stored objects on an as-needed basis.

## Display and Exhibition:

### Intermediate Plans

#### Assessment Questions:

- What light sources can you change, add or take away from the exhibition space to better control the light levels?
- Does your museum own its exhibition furniture?
- Do you have a separate cleaning strategy for exhibition areas?

#### Next Steps:

- Filter UV-emitting light sources such as daylight and fluorescent bulbs.
- Record, track and limit the exhibition of light and environmentally-sensitive objects such as paper, ivory, pastels, photographs and textiles.
- Choose exhibition furniture such as plinths, vitrines and cases based on object need, security and visitor access. Borrow them from other museums if necessary.
- Use stanchions to control audience movement among and access to delicate objects.
- Make sure staff and volunteers are trained to regularly clean and inventory exhibited objects and spaces.

#### Coming Soon:

Look for the long-range goals collections assessment checklist in the April 2015 issue of Collections Advisor.

#### Resources

[AASLH StEPs Program](#)

[American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works](#)

[Canadian Conservation Institute](#)

[Conservation Assessment Program](#)

[Museum Assessment Program](#)

[Museums for America](#)

[Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions](#)

[Sustaining Places: Resources for Small Museums and Historic Sites](#)



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