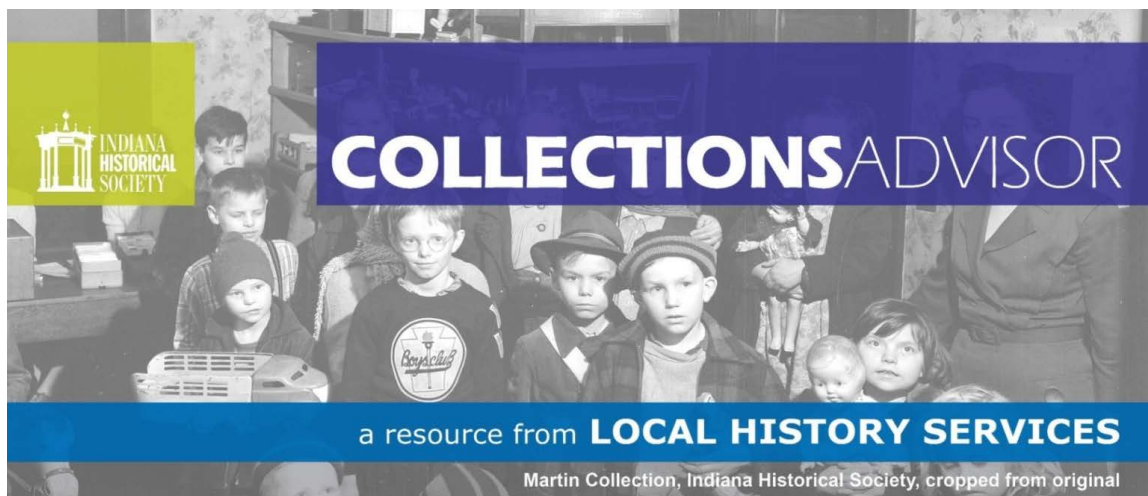


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Collections Assessments Made Manageable: Long Range Goals

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

In the [March 2015](#) issue of Collections Advisor, Samantha Dorsey shared a collections assessment checklist for small museums that posed a series of questions and intermediate plans for evaluating the environment, storage and housing of objects, condition of objects and the display of objects. If you would like to begin the collections assessment process, refer to the [July 2014](#) issue of Collections Advisor for a series of manageable questions and immediate action steps. Use the following checklist when you are ready to move the assessment process from intermediate planning to long range goals. Long range collections planning will give your organization greater control over how much money you will need to raise for collections care, build in the time to gather knowledge of best practices and focus precious volunteer hours where they are most valuable.

Long range goals collections assessment checklist for small museums:

Environment: Long Range Goals

Assessment Questions:

- What would you change about your collections management policy?
- What would you add to your current collections management policy?
- Do you have a collections management procedural manual?

Next Steps:

- Revise your collections management policy and distribute to staff and volunteers.



Staff at the City of Bowie Museums are encouraged to gain collections management and object identification training. Accurately identifying objects is an important step in determining how to care for your collections.

Write or revise the collections management procedural manual.

- Make facility improvements (install energy saving window treatments, insulation, etc.).
- Improve climate monitoring technology.
- Improve HVAC technology (energy efficient, dust filtering, etc.).
- Write and implement an integrated pest management plan.

Storage and Housing:

Long Range Goals

Assessment Questions:

- Will your storage facility accommodate a growing collection?
- What supplies or storage skills can you forecast and make into a special funding project?

Next Steps:

- Create designated storage facilities.
- Purchase sturdy shelving made with powder coated steel or sealed materials.
- Plan for future storage needs and growth.
- Label storage box contents using printed catalog sheets or photo identification and ID labels.
- Approach funders and donors for money to purchase additional supplies and skills for special storage projects.

Condition Reporting:

Long Range Goals

Assessment Questions:

- Has your collection been identified and/or cataloged by someone with collection-specific expertise?
- Has your collection been assessed by a conservator?

Next Steps:

- Ask objects experts for identification and general condition assessments.
- Identify and keep track of objects with condition issues that are regularly exhibited or used for research.
- Send requests for proposals to conservators for a soft estimate to inform your timeline and budgeting for care of objects with known conservation needs.
- Create a long-term schedule for collections conservation on an object-by-object and as-needed basis.

Display and Exhibition:

Long Range Goals

Assessment Questions:

- Does your museum have and follow an exhibitions policy?

Next Steps:

- Write an exhibitions policy. Distribute to staff and volunteers.
- Acquire your own exhibition furniture.
- Monitor light levels with a light meter.
- Consider tracking hourly and seasonal data over an extended period of time.
- Install a lighting system that uses compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs), motion sensors and dimmer

switches.

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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