

Writing a Mission Statement

Every museum should have a written mission or statement of purpose approved by the museum's governing body. This statement communicates the identity and purpose of the museum and who benefits as a result of its efforts. This statement should articulate the museum's roles and responsibilities to the public and its collections, and the environment in which it exists. All activities and operations of the museum should support, directly or indirectly, this mission statement. The museum's governing body and staff should act strategically to acquire, develop, and direct resources to advance this mission and thus this statement also provides the museum with clear and consistent objectives by which they can evaluate their performance.

In a clear and concise paragraph, the mission statement should include the following:

- A definition of the purpose of the museum, that is to say, what the museum does, for whom and why. This will include a definition of the time period and thematic scope of the collection as well as the geographical area to be served by the museum. The scope and limits of the museum's relationship with its community should also be defined in this statement.
- A statement of the museum's operations and functions as it relates to the museum purpose. This statement will include collection, research, preservation, interpretation, exhibits and programming as well as any other operations that serve the purpose of the museum.
- This statement should also include a statement of authority, defining the governing body, its' responsibilities and the methods of review and amendment for museum policies.

Samples of Mission Statements

Dr. Henry N. Payne Community Museum – Statement of Purpose

The Dr. Henry N. Payne Community Museum was established to preserve the local history of the area. The museum, managed by the Cow Head Conservation and Heritage Committee will collect, research, preserve, exhibit and interpret a collection of historical artifacts and archival material. It will serve the people of Cow Head and surrounding area by carrying out these functions. This board will encourage local interest from schools, nonprofit organizations and community groups in a desire to keep knowledge of local history alive and to enhance specific activities and events.

The Berndt Museum of Anthropology, University of Western Australia

In accordance with the Constitution of the museum advisory board, the Berndt Museum of Anthropology of the University of Western Australia acquires, catalogues, preserves and saves for the use and appreciation of present and future generations socio-cultural materials relating to Aboriginal Australia, Papua New Guinea and Asia.

The Basilica Cathedral Museum

The Basilica Cathedral Museum will collect, record, research, preserve, exhibit, and interpret artifacts and archival materials that tell the broader story of the history of the Roman catholic Church and community in Newfoundland and Labrador, encompassing the history of the Basilica Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, the Roman Catholic religious congregations in Newfoundland and the Catholic societies in the archdiocese of St. John's. The museum is governed by the Basilica Museum and historical committee and serves the Archdioceses of St. John's as well as the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Museum will operate under national and international museum standards and ethics and will promote its programs as well as encourage and seek partnerships with regional and national cultural organizations to assist in the fulfillment of these goals.