

Needs Analysis

Governance and Community Pillars



5 March 2024

BACKGROUND

In October 2023 the Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) launched the TRACK program at each of the four regional heritage group meetings. These meetings provided ANSM with an opportunity to update the TRACK email list with additional contact information for museum staff, board members, and volunteers.

On January 17th, 2024, an orientation webinar was held to provide more information to museums about the year's TRACK activities, with a special focus on the February 16th Needs Assessments deadline. 65 museums participated, and the webinar recording was circulated to the TRACK email list of 257 subscribers. To date, the recording has had 119 views.

Participation in TRACK is an eligibility requirement of the Community Museums Assistance Program (CMAP) and has also been adopted by the Nova Scotia Museum. 100 Governance and 99 Community Needs Assessments were submitted by the February 16th deadline. Two additional Governance and three Community Needs Assessments were received after the deadline. Some museums skipped questions, so the graphs included in this report do not have 102 responses. The number of responses is noted next to each question.

SCOPE OF NEEDS ANALYSIS

The purpose of the Needs Assessments is two-fold. The first is to identify needs in Nova Scotia's museum community and develop a responsive training plan. The second purpose is to identify success stories within the community that can be used as case studies as inspiration for other museums.

The Governance Needs Assessment sought to answer the following:

To what extent does the museum have governance practices in place, including clearly defined roles and plans, as well as assessment measures to monitor progress and manage risks to the organization?

The first four questions asked museums to consider their boards, committees, nomination processes, inclusivity efforts, and land acknowledgement and/or commitment statements. The final question of the assessment asked museums to identify their top Governance-related goal

for the next four years.

The Community Needs Assessment sought to answer:

To what extent is the museum engaging with its community to support needs and opportunities for dialogue, collaboration, and action?

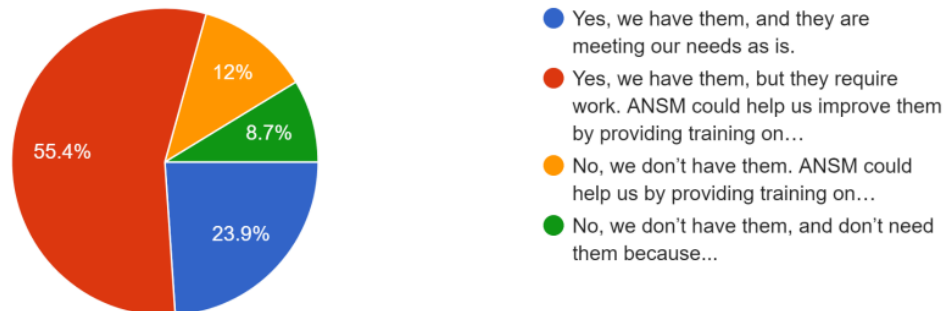
The questions encouraged museums to consider their partnerships, involvement in the professional heritage community, with the final question asking for the top Community-related goal for the next four years.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESPONSES

GOVERNANCE

1. Consider the museum's recruitment and nomination practices for the board and committees.

92 responses



Museums requested assistance with relationship-building, updating existing practices, and how to do skill set analyses and board assessments that link back to the needs identified in strategic plans.

2. Consider the board, committees and teams.

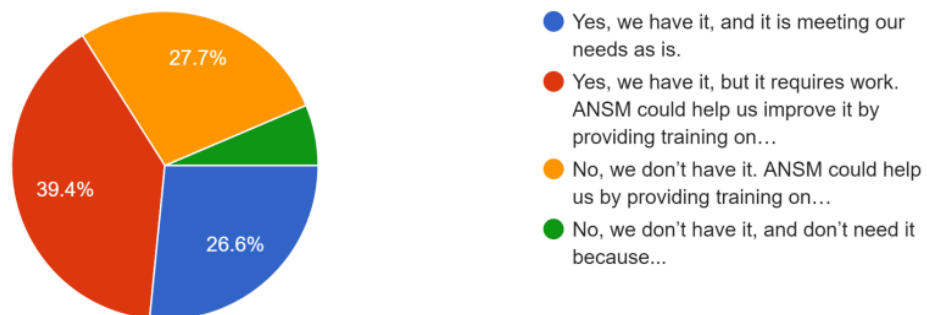
94 responses



Museums' top requests were around recruitment methods, skill set analysis and board assessment tools, and governance-related training for board members and/or how to make training a normal part of the board's activities.

3. Consider the museum's land acknowledgement and commitment statement.

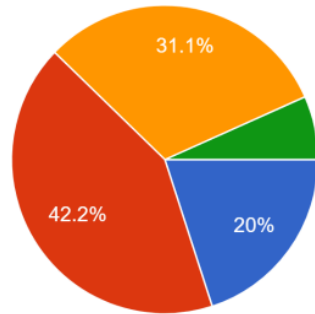
94 responses



Museums asked for guidance on building relationships with Indigenous communities, developing meaningful land acknowledgements statements, and incorporating equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility principles (EDIA) into their governance and operations.

4. Consider the Board's inclusivity efforts.

90 responses



- Yes, we have them, and they are meeting our needs as is.
- Yes, we have them, but they require work. ANSM could help us improve them by providing training on...
- No, we don't have them. ANSM could help us by providing training on...
- No, we don't have them, and don't need them because...

Museums requested training on incorporating EDIA into all areas of operation, relationship-building, and updating existing policies and standards.

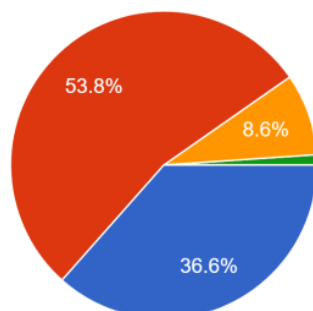
The final question of the Governance needs assessment asked museums to share their top governance-related goals for the next four years, when the next TRACK needs assessment in Governance will take place. The top priorities are:

1. Relationship-Building and Recruitment
2. EDIA
3. Succession Planning
4. Updating Older Standards of Practice
5. Funding & Sustainability

COMMUNITY

1. Consider who the museum partners with.

93 responses



- We have diverse partnerships, and they are meeting our needs.
- We have partnerships, but they require work. ANSM could help us improve them by providing training on...
- We don't have partnerships. ANSM could help us by providing training on...
- We are operating really well on our own and don't need partnerships because...

Museums requested training on relationship-building, assistance in building relationships with Indigenous communities, and advice on how to identify synergies and priorities with other organizations.

2. Consider how the museum maintains its partnerships.

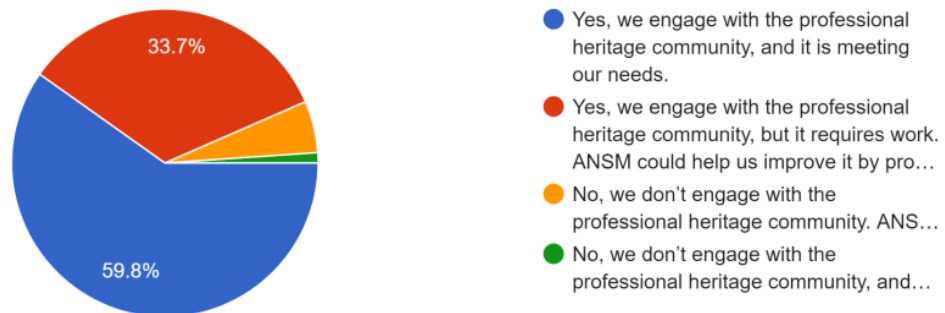
91 responses



The top requests for this question were around relationship-building, formalizing casual relationships, and succession planning with a focus on positioning the museum to weather the loss of key individuals.

3. Consider how the museum engages with the professional heritage community.

92 responses



Museums asked for information sharing opportunities with their peers, for resources and case

studies that they can learn from, for help building relationships with Indigenous communities, and for relationship-building support in general.

The final Community question identified museums' top community-related goals for the next four years:

1. Relationship-Building
2. EDIA
3. Community Engagement & Authority Sharing
4. Funding & Sustainability
5. Assess & Understand the Museum's Impact

NEXT STEPS - TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Several opportunities have been identified that will respond to the needs identified by participating museums - heritage group meetings, webinars, and knowledge-sharing.

1. Heritage Group Meetings

Heritage group meetings represent a prime learning opportunity for museums. With goals and requests for support highlighting such a need for relationship-building, exploring this within the regional meeting context will result in a diverse audience and opportunity for in-person questions and conversation.

Regional Meeting Training Session - Lynette de Montreuil of the Desbrisay Museum, and chair of ANSM's TRACK Working Group, will explore how relationships build resilience. When Lynette de Montreuil joined the DesBrisay in 2018, Town funding had been cut by 50% with the museum running a deficit and at significant risk of closure. By the end of 2019, programs had doubled, and attendance had almost tripled. This was made possible through partnerships and community engagement. Lynette will share her experiences that include positive wins, and valuable lessons learned. This workshop will focus on how to communicate effectively, meet people where they are at, and follow the platinum rule of treating people the way they want to be treated.

2. Tuesdays on TRACK Webinar Series

The success of last year's Tuesdays on TRACK webinar series cannot be understated.

Museums are still sharing how impactful these webinars were, and are using them on an ongoing basis for board, staff, and volunteer training. Four webinars have been scheduled for this spring/summer (two per pillar).

May 14 - Angie MacIsaac of the Strait Area Museum will engage in an interview-style conversation with ANSM staff about how the museum transformed its succession planning approach and is now revitalizing its programs and cultivating a vibrant community. Participants will gain insights and strategies for engaging younger community members and reinvigorating their organizations.

June 11 - Grant MacDonald, retired professor and specialist in Governance for Non-Profits, will explore how museums can strengthen their governance structures and practices so that they can easily evolve as the organization and community evolves.

July 16 - Meg Cuming of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage will explore community engagement for museums by delving into the art of community building through collaborative efforts and partnerships. She will explore strategies to foster stronger connections and create lasting impacts within communities. Participants will discover how collaboration can lead to vibrant, diverse, and active communities that thrive together.

August 13 - Nik Phillips and Semisel Sa'n of Treaty Education will lead museums in a casual conversation and sharing session about how museums can build strong and lasting relationships with Mi'kmaw communities. Bring your questions and learn from the Treaty Education team as they give guidance and suggestions on what museums can do to be better allies to Indigenous communities.

3. Knowledge-Sharing

One of the strengths of the webinar series is the flexibility of the sessions; not only are they recorded but they are only an hour long. This makes it easier for people to engage with them. In addition to this, ANSM is actively sharing success stories of museums via its communications channels. The Beacon and Facebook profile museum events, programs and other activities.

As ANSM plans its fall conference, museums are being asked to share their inspiring stories of youth engagement and community partnerships, and training facilitators are

being asked to continue the governance and community learning journey.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The museums that submitted their Needs Assessments were thoughtful and thorough in what they shared. While it is not possible to respond to each and every request for assistance, we are confident that this year's webinars, along with conferences, regional meetings, blogs and other resources will help to build the capacity of museums in governance and community-related issues. We continue to be inspired by the high participation rate and positive feedback on the TRACK program, and look forward to seeing it grow and thrive in support of Nova Scotia's museum community.