

Museum Evaluation Program Policy

I. Introduction

- a. The Museum Evaluation Program (MEP) originates from the Government of Nova Scotia's Community Museum Assistance Program* evaluation process, which operated from 1995-2011. The Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) revised the evaluation process and launched the MEP as a separate and distinct program in 2016.
- b. ANSM delivers the MEP in partnership with the Government of Nova Scotia and the Halifax Regional Municipality.
- c. The MEP is guided by the MEP Working Group (MEPWG), a team of museum professionals who provide vision, expertise, and guidance to ANSM. The MEPWG consists of a minimum 9 members and is guided by *Terms of Reference*.
 - i. Vacancies are filled using an application process, unless a member is unable to complete their full term, in which case the MEPWG may recruit and appoint a replacement to fulfill the term.
- d. ANSM staff and evaluators operate the MEP in an impartial, ethical, and professional manner. They will maintain strict confidentiality regarding the specifics of museums' situations that emerge through MEP work, including evaluation results.

II. Participation

- a. The MEP operates on a four-year cycle. Participation is capped at 33 museums per year.
- b. A museum wishing to participate in the MEP must submit an *Intention to Participate in the Museum Evaluation Program* notice to ANSM, for consideration by the MEPWG. Museums must also:
 - i. Meet the ICOM definition of a museum, as adopted by ANSM.
 - ii. Recognize that the MEP has limited capacity (132 participants, maximum 33 per year); if participation is full for the year the museum wishes to opt into the MEP, the MEPWG will recommend an alternative year.
 - iii. Maintain communication and current contact information with ANSM, including a plan for off-season communications and alternative contact information.
- c. Notices of *Intention to Participate in the Museum Evaluation Program* will be reviewed on a first come, first served basis. If need be, museums will be put on a waiting list until they can be accommodated.

- d. A museum wishing to opt out of the MEP must submit this to ANSM in writing, including the date that the governing authority made the decision.

III. Program Elements & Timeline

- a. Preparation Support – orientation sessions are delivered every Fall in preparation for the following year’s evaluation. A support worker is available to answer questions and provide guidance on an ongoing basis. A variety of resources including a detailed timeline are available on ANSM website and delivered through online formats.
- b. Documentation Review – First part of the MEP, wherein museums complete and submit a questionnaire and supporting documentation. Deadline to submit is the first Friday in May.
- c. Site Evaluation – Second part of the MEP, wherein a team of three museum professionals visit museums, complete a questionnaire and make observations about the museum. Site Evaluations take place Tuesdays through Thursdays, the 2nd, 3rd and 4th weeks of July.
 - i. Evaluators are selected by the MEPWG using an application process and adhere to the *Evaluator Job Description*. The call for evaluators is released in January, the deadline to apply is mid-February, and the review and selection takes place in late February.
 - ii. Museums provide input on the site evaluation schedule. Availability information is received by ANSM by mid-March as the site evaluation schedule is released in early April.
- d. Evaluation Report – Results are scored and compiled into a comprehensive report for each museum, released in early September.
 - i. Results and reports are confidential. They are only shared with the museum, with copies being submitted as part of the Annual Report to the Department of Communities Culture and Heritage. Reports of museums located within the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) are also submitted to HRM as part of its funding report.
 - ii. Museums may query results and request clarifications. The deadline for queries is early October.
 - iii. Museums may formally appeal results in accordance with ANSM’s *Appeal Process*.
 - iv. Overarching Annual Reports which outline the process and trends in a given year’s results are submitted to ANSM’s funding partners in late November and posted on ANSM’s website upon receipt of approval from same.
- e. Accreditation – Museums that achieve positive evaluation results and meet other eligibility requirements can apply to be accredited; public recognition of excellence in operational practices. The deadline to apply is the 3rd Friday in December of the year the museum is evaluated.
 - i. Applications will be adjudicated by the Accreditation Panel, a sub-group of the MEPWG with its own Terms of Reference. Announcements will be made in May, coinciding with International Museums Day.

*CMAP is an operating grant program delivered by the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

Note - Documents listed in italics are available on the ANSM website.

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