

MUSEUM NOTE

HUMAN RESOURCES: Job Descriptions and Performance Review

This Museum Note will help your museum to comply with the Ontario government's **Human Resources Standard** outlined in the [Standards for Community Museums in Ontario](#).

Standards enable community museums to:

- provide the appropriate care and management of collections
- meet visitors' expectations
- be accountable and transparent to the community, funders and donors

Objective of the Human Resources Standard

As a community museum, your ability to fulfil your museum's purpose depends largely on the professionalism and capabilities of your staff.¹

You are better able to meet your mandate and carry out activities if you recruit qualified staff and provide ongoing training opportunities.

As an employer, you are concerned with the safety, security, wellbeing and continued motivation of the people who work with you.

Benefits of job descriptions

A museum's ability to fulfill its purpose depends to a large degree on the professionalism and capabilities of its staff.

The museum is better able to meet its mandate and carry out its activities by recruiting qualified staff and providing ongoing training opportunities. As an employer, the museum is concerned with the safety, security, well-being and continued motivation of the people working for it.

Job descriptions allow your museum to attract the right person with the right skills, experience, whether it's for a position on a governing body, for a specific committee (finance, fundraising, strategic planning, advisory), or to attract individual volunteers or volunteer groups with valuable skills such as carpentry, gardening, web design or social media expertise.

Job descriptions define the requirements and responsibilities of a job, benefitting your new employee and your organization. Written job descriptions should be much more comprehensive than a job ad.

For the employee, or potential employee, a job description clearly identifies:

¹ In this context, "staff" includes both paid and unpaid staff.

- responsibilities of the position
- expectations of successful performance
- nature of the reporting relationships, both between the position and the position or body they report to, and any positions that may report to them
- special conditions or expectations of the position such as overtime, weekend work, travel and how these conditions are compensated (or not) e.g. time in lieu, out-of-pocket or travel expense permissions, reimbursement rate or restrictions

The job description also protects an employee who may receive:

- unexpected and/or contradictory feedback on their performance on work not identified as a responsibility
- job performance feedback or action from an individual who does not have the authority to do so

For the employer, a job description ensures that your organization is clear about the knowledge, skills and experience required for the position so you can:

- attract and identify the best candidate
- provide and document regular performance evaluations based on agreed upon criteria
- determine fair salary and benefits based on a comparison with similar positions, in terms of knowledge, skills, responsibility
- help plan future human resource needs for your organization
- document performance expectations in case of later disagreement or as a basis for renegotiation by either party

Your **volunteers** will also benefit from receiving a job description that outlines their roles and responsibilities and performance evaluations. Outlining your expectations and reporting requirements allows your volunteers to know in advance what's expected from them and who to go to if they have questions or need to rearrange their work schedule.

Job descriptions also ensure that **board and committee members** know exactly what they are committing to prior to accepting a nomination. This can ensure less group strife later and contribute to effective governance and committee success when all involved understand the task at hand, the ultimate goal and their role in achieving it.

Dealing with skill shortages: collaboration strategies

Collaborating with other organizations can help you deal with a skill shortage.

Organizations you could potentially partner with include –

- Non-profit or cultural organizations in your community
- Regional museum network
- Educational institutions

- Sector support organizations

Depending on your mutual interests and needs, collaboration could include –

- informing the type/content of courses offered by educational or sector-support institutions
- developing promising individuals to prepare them to become future leaders
- sharing the costs of training for groups of employees
- arranging for board members, staff or volunteers to visit other organizations to gain skills and insight

Human Resource Planning and Succession Planning

Human resource planning ensures you have the right people with the right skills doing the right job i.e. contributing directly to the achievement of the organization's mission statement and the goals and objectives of its' strategic plan.

Planning helps an organization to identify gaps in skills and knowledge that may have been hindering success and develop solutions.

In an era of an aging workforce, organizations also need to plan for succession by identifying and preparing staff for management roles. HR planning is also important when a museum is preparing to develop, expand or reframe its role and/or mandate.

Human resource plans should be reviewed on a regular basis, when:

- new initiatives or strategic plans are considered requiring specific knowledge or skills
- a long-time staff member leaves
- there has been a pattern of rapid staff turnover
- a new staff position or committee is being considered

Recommended Resources

The resources recommended below provide:

- *sample job descriptions*
- *templates for human resource management planning and practice*
- *templates/considerations for developing job descriptions and performance evaluations*

Alberta Museums Association. Standard Practices Handbook for Museums, 3rd edition. 2014.

Governance and operations resource that addresses human resource policy and good practice in roles and responsibilities, skills and expertise, diversity and inclusivity, staff development and performance assessment, pp.95-104.

CMOG Standards Resources - Human Resources section

<https://members.museumsontario.ca/resources/tools-policies/CMOG-standard-resources> :

Stasiuk, Victoria. Recruiting and Hiring Museum Curators and Directors: A Human Resource Tool for Local Government, Museum Trustees and Cultural Managers. Ontario Museum Association, 2003.

The Learning Coalition. Improving Performance Through Evaluation: A Resource Guide for Museum Training Providers and Managers. 2004.

Identifies the specific benefits for the participant and the resulting improvement in an organization.

Compensation and Benefits. HR Tool Kit. Human Resource Council for the Non-profit Sector, 2013. <http://hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/developing-compensation-rewards-program.cfm>

Museums Association of Saskatchewan.

Provides examples of job descriptions in all areas of museum work, including board positions and summer students, and information on how to use them. <http://saskmuseums.org/assets/File/Job%20Desc/Using%20the%20Job%20Descriptions.pdf> http://saskmuseums.org/resources2/job_descriptions

SaskCulture. <http://www.saskculture.ca/programs/organizational-support/organizational-resources?resource=3&subresource=21>

The Learning Coalition. Human Resource Planning Tool. 2006.

Includes templates for volunteer/staff inventory, transfer of learning plan and job description format. <http://www.workinculture.ca/getmedia/7fda184d-4cb0-4e73-91f7-fc2b907f4fad/ToolsHRplanning.pdf.aspx>

WorkinCulture.

Helpful online tipsheets and publications on cultural sector human resource topics. <http://www.workinculture.ca/Resources/Our-Publications.aspx>

Sources for distance education and/or Ontario-based museum-sector training

Algonquin College, Nepean.

<http://www.algonquincollege.com/healthandcommunity/program/applied-museum-studies/>

Athabasca University distance education Heritage Resource Management. <http://heritage.resources.athabascau.ca/>

Fleming College, Peterborough.

<http://flemingcollege.ca/programs/museum-management-and-curatorship>
<http://flemingcollege.ca/programs/collections-conservation-and-management>

Georgian College, Barrie Campus. Museum and Gallery Studies <http://www.georgiancollege.ca/academics/full-time-programs/museum-and-gallery-studies-musm/>

Ontario Association of Art Galleries.
Professional development programs, mentorship, and publications.
<http://oaag.org/>

Ontario Museum Association. Certificate in Museum Studies program.
Professional development programs, publications and annual conference. www.museumsontario.com

University of Toronto. Master of Museum Studies program
<http://www.ischool.utoronto.ca/mmst>

University of Western Ontario, London. Master of Public History. http://history.uwo.ca/public_history/index.html

University of Victoria, Department of Continuing Studies Cultural Resource Management (several courses offered in online format) <https://www.uvcs.uvic.ca/cultural/>

Bursaries for museum training

CMA Bursary Program <http://www.museums.ca/site/bursaries>

The CMA offers four types of bursaries to assist museum professionals in the following areas:

- conferences
- emerging professional development
- mid-career professional development
- preserving Canadian treasures