

# Principles of CAP

The goal of the assessment is to enable museum staff to develop or improve their overall collections care program, and to establish conservation as an integral part of the museum's mission. A key to CAP's success is understanding each particular institution—how it works and what it can reasonably be expected to achieve. While conservators are knowledgeable about ideal collections conditions, their goal with the CAP museum is to determine what is achievable.

## Understanding the Small Museum

The majority of CAP participants are **small museums** that face unique challenges. In recent years, the average annual operating budget of a CAP museum has been \$330,000. Frequently the staff and volunteers in these institutions wear many hats. Though they aspire to be good stewards, daily practical needs of opening a museum to the public preempt tasks with long-term benefits. Chances are the staff already has a long “to do” list before undertaking CAP. Assisting them by providing a concise final report focused on current needs and resources based on doable projects is a CAP goal.

Likewise, small museums face financial constraints. Not only their institutional budgets, but also their ability to go after outside funding are limited. The assessor can recommend that they apply for a grant to implement recommendations, but it may not be a practical choice when they compare the time and effort it takes to develop a proposal with their chances of getting funding. Furthermore, many CAP museums rely heavily on a few dedicated individuals, some of whom contribute their personal time and funds. Offending these key stakeholders could negatively affect the possibility of effecting positive change. Keep these principles in mind throughout the CAP process to help bring about positive outcomes for museum and assessor alike.

## Establishing a Positive Relationship

A positive relationship between museum and assessors is critical for museums to have a valuable CAP experience. More often than not, the staff and volunteers at CAP museums are anxious about the process. CAP assessors should begin by putting museum staff at ease before arriving on site. Make it clear that CAP is not an audit to pick out deficiencies; it is an opportunity to work with an outside consultant to strengthen a museum. Stress that they should not “clean up” for your visit. Remember, these first conversations are a starting point for establishing the rapport and trust that will support a long-term relationship.

There are some important elements common to successful CAPs. These are helpful to keep in mind from the initial interview through the final report.

- *Establish rapport and trust.*  
A nurturing, positive relationship will help the museum staff set their sights on accomplishing goals and feed into a long-term relationship. Be flexible when working with the staff. They may not be seasoned museum professionals, but they are most likely in their positions because they have sincere interest and good intentions.
- *Don't be judgmental.*  
Document conditions and try to be helpful. Identify ways to make “wrongs” right.
- *Be positive.*  
Emphasize what is being done right, then move on to the challenges the museum faces. Starting with praise will make those challenges seem easier to overcome.
- *Success takes perseverance and persistence.*  
This applies not only to the museum in implementing the recommendations, but also to the assessor in working with the museum.

## Schedule

Applications for the each year’s CAP program are made available in the first week of September. The postmark deadline is December 1. Heritage Preservation reviews the applications in September, October, November and December, and notifies museums of their status immediately upon completion of the review process. CAP participants can begin contacting and hiring assessors as soon as they receive notification of acceptance into the program, which can be as early as October 1. Site visits can be scheduled anytime after January 1 of the program year provided that all required materials are submitted to Heritage Preservation by the participating organization and approved. The institution and assessor determine the date of the site visit as well as the due dates for the rough draft and final report. (*See Appendix B: Sample Agreement, page 29*).

Normally, the schedule for the CAP report is:

- a rough draft is sent to the museum within eight weeks of the site visit
- the museum provides comments to the assessor within two weeks of receiving the draft
- the final report is due to the museum two weeks after the comments have been received

Although this time frame can be adjusted to meet the circumstances of the museum and assessor, it is very important that the schedule be included in the agreement and followed. Many museums use the recommendations outlined in the report to secure funding for preservation projects. **All assessments and final reports must be completed by November 1 of the program year.**

## Assessment Costs

The costs of conservation assessments vary based on professional fees and the costs of travel, lodging, meals, and other on-site expenses. The estimated cost for an assessment is \$4,010 (per assessor). These costs are covered by the museum’s CAP allocation and contributions.

There is no standard professional fee charged by assessors, and fees should be based on a two-day site visit and three days of report writing. All assessment fees are determined between the institution and individual assessor. This includes professional fees, per diem, travel, lodging, meals, and any additional expenses (such as telephone calls, duplicating, postage, and photography).

Museum allocation amounts range from \$3,390 to \$7,190 and are determined based on whether the museum needs one or two assessors and on the budget of the institution. Below is a chart outlining the breakdown of the allocation amounts.

CAP Allocations

Museum Budget	1 Assessor		2 Assessor	
	CAP Allocation	Estimated Museum Cost	CAP Allocation	Estimated Museum Cost
Less than \$250,000	\$3,590	\$430	\$7,190	\$670
\$250,000 to \$1,000,000	\$3,490	\$530	\$7,020	\$850
More than \$1,000,000	\$3,390	\$630	\$6,840	\$1,020