

# Program Overview

## What is the Conservation Assessment Program?

The Conservation Assessment Program (CAP) is a technical assistance program that provides small and mid-sized museums with an objective general conservation assessment of their collections and historic structures (if applicable) by an outside assessor.

A **general conservation assessment** is a broad review of museum policies, procedures, and conditions that relate to and affect collections care, such as:

- museum staffing and training
- policies and procedures concerning the use of collections
- storage and exhibition conditions
- and the museum environment, including the fabrication and condition of structures housing collections

The general conservation assessment has three components: a site questionnaire undertaken by the museum's staff which compiles basic operational information; the site visit by the assessor(s); and a final report that identifies areas of concern, with a corresponding outline of realistic recommendations for improvement based on accepted best practices.

In the case of **historic structures**, the proper care and preservation of the structure is an important consideration. Museums in buildings 50 years or older will receive support for both a collections assessor and a historic structures assessor.

CAP does not provide for any activities outside a general conservation assessment, such as conservation treatment or supplies, building preservation projects, or general operating costs.

## What types of museums get CAPped?

**All types of museums** participate in the program: aquariums; arboreta, botanical gardens, and nature centers; art museums/centers; children's museums; historic houses and sites; history, science, and natural history museums; science technology centers and planetariums; specialized museums; and zoos. Zoos and aquariums that are not already accredited by the American Zoological Association may use CAP to assess their living and nonliving collections. Botanical gardens and arboreta may use CAP to assess the conservation needs of both their living and nonliving collections.

## What is ReCAP?

Museums may apply for **ReCAP** and update their original CAP assessment if seven years have passed since the museum participated in the program and if the circumstance and accomplishments of the museum warrant it. As in the first CAP, the museum will receive another general assessment that examines all collections and facilities within a two-day site visit. Before the site visit, the assessor should talk to the museum about its preservation efforts since the first report and the need for another assessment. It is recommended that the museum provide a copy of the original CAP report to the assessor.

CAP and ReCAP are appropriate for **small to medium-sized museums** whose entire collections and facilities can be assessed within a two-day site visit. If a museum has grown since its first CAP so that its collections and facilities cannot be assessed within a two-day site visit, it may not be eligible for ReCAP.