

The CAP Assessor

Who are CAP assessors and what do they do?

Assessors for the Conservation Assessment Program (CAP) are the conservation professionals who review the participants' self assessment materials, conduct site visits, and write a report for museums participating in the program.

There are several types of CAP assessors: conservators for non-living collections, historic structure assessors for historic museum structures, and living collections assessors for public gardens, zoos, aquariums, and nature centers.

Currently there are approximately 400 CAP assessors approved by Heritage Preservation. These assessors meet the qualifications set by the CAP Advisory Committee:

- evidence of conservation/preservation training
- at least five years of experience in the field
- experience conducting general surveys or assessments

A conservator is a professional whose primary occupation is the preservation of cultural heritage in a way that retains the integrity of the object, building, or site, including its historical significance, context, and aesthetic or visual aspects. No universally accepted form of training for conservators exists in the United States; both training programs and apprenticeships are common. Conservators gain experience through internships, association with museums or conservation centers, and self-employment.

An historic structures assessor can be an architect, a conservator, or an historic preservationist. An architect is a professional trained in the design of buildings and other structures. An historic preservationist is a professional trained in the preservation of the forms and materials of historic places, buildings and landscapes. They can gain experience through internships; association with museums, architects, or preservation organizations; and self employment. All these training routes are valid.

What is the Time Commitment?

Each CAP assessment involves a two-day site visit and generally three days of report writing (approximately 40 hours). The time required may vary based on an individual's work style and the complexity and size of the museum involved.

The number of assessments that a CAP assessor conducts each year varies according to:

1. the number of site visits per year as indicated by the assessor on the Assessor Information Sheet, and
2. the participating museums' locations, as well as their primary collections concentrations and disciplines.

Heritage Preservation attempts to match every assessor with at least one institution each year and includes every assessor on a regional list in program packets that are sent to all CAP participants.