



Using Grants to Fund Collections Care: Where to Start

Megan Narvey, Minnesota Historical Society
April 7, 2020

Introduction

Megan Narvey

Outreach Conservator

megan.narvey@mnhs.org

651-259-3468



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Summary

- What is a long range preservation plan and general conservation assessment?
- What does a good plan look like?
- Why is it so great?
- Intro to Minnesota Historical & Cultural Heritage Grants
- Before you apply
- After you apply
- During the grant
- After the grant
- How can I make sure this is a success?
- Resources



What is a Long Range Preservation Plan?



- A long range preservation plan outlines a path forward for improving the overall preservation of your collection.
- The plan identifies your specific collections care needs, recommends actions, and places them in a prioritized list.
- The plan is comprehensive and includes all of a museum's collection.
- It is based on an assessment performed by a conservator.

What is a General Conservation Assessment?



- The general conservation assessment includes a general survey of collections, the interior environment, and all policies and procedures related to use and care of collections.
- It should address the general state of the collections, what is needed to improve that state, and how to preserve the collections long-term.
- It is not an item-level survey.
- It is based on telephone interviews, written questionnaires, and an in-person site visit lasting one or two days.

What does the plan look like?

A typical plan will have the following sections:

Overview

- Introduction to the assessors
- Brief description of institution
- Explanation of assessment method

Executive Summary

- Prioritized summary of recommendations

Observations and Recommendations

- Discussion of current conditions and recommendations that contains full explanations of each concern and recommendations

Appendices and Photos



What does the plan look like?

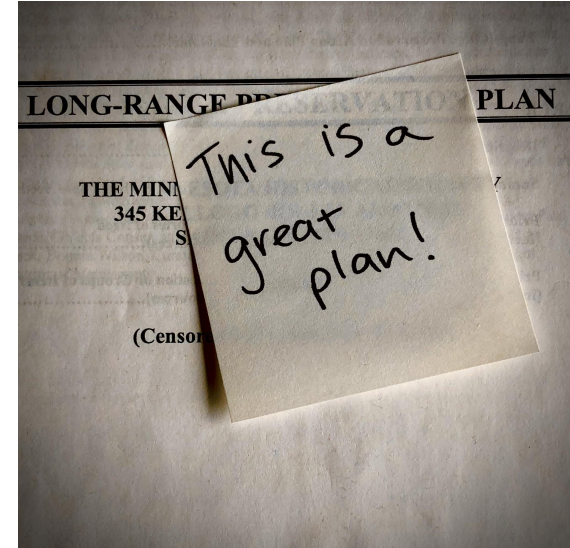
A typical plan will cover the following topics:

- General background information about the institution, governance
- History of the collection
- Staffing and staff training needs
- The collections and their general condition
- Collections and buildings uses
- Policies related to care of the collections
- Exhibition and storage conditions
- Building and facilities conditions and maintenance
- Climate control and environment (temperature, RH, lighting, pest control)
- Disaster response
- Security



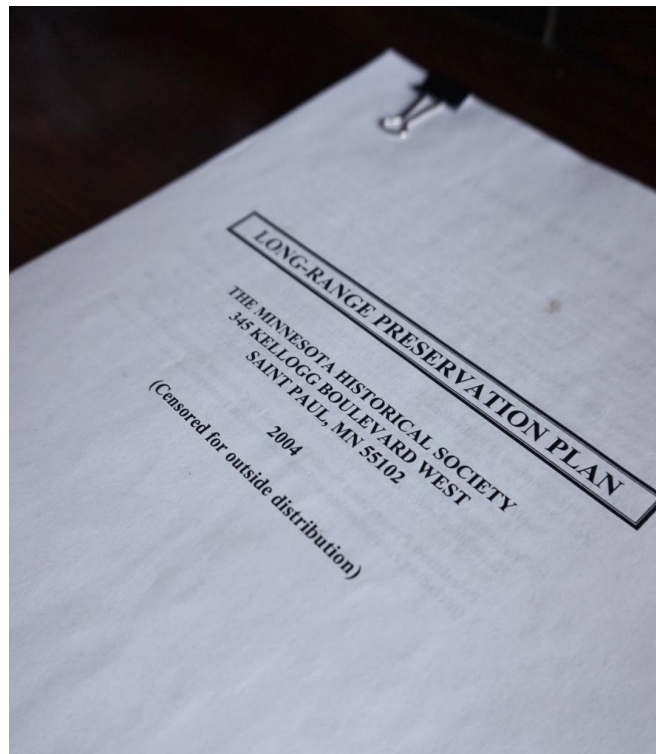
What makes a good plan?

- It includes realistic and practical suggestions for improvement
- It is specific to your situation
- It provides a framework for carrying out goals and priorities in a logical, efficient, and effective manner
- It identifies resources for implementation and recommends specific tools for the institution to refer to
- It considers the barriers the institution will face, and provides suggestions for overcoming them



Why is this so great?

- Brings in a consultant with professional expertise
- Helps you decide where to invest limited resources
- Draws the attention of your board to collections care concerns
- Provides professional argument for the need for grants, private donations, and fundraising
- Helps maintain continuity and consistency over time
- Validates the role and importance of preservation



Minnesota Historical & Cultural Heritage Grants



CLEAN
WATER
LAND &
LEGACY
AMENDMENT

Legacy Grant Eligibility:

- 501(c)(3) non-profits,
- units of state and local government,
- federally-recognized tribes,
- educational institutions

Request an account on the Grants Portal: <https://mnhs.fluxx.io/portal>

Grant deadlines:

- January
- April
- July
- October

Grants Open House: First Thursday of every month



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Before You Apply

After You Apply

During the Grant

After the Grant



Before You Apply

- Read the Grants Manual
- Get set up on the Grants Portal
- Figure out your application deadline
- Start a **Structured Grant** application
- Reach out to three consultants for quotes

“An informal, competitively based process to solicit a minimum of 3 verbal quotes must be conducted for any services and materials necessary to complete the project.”

- Choose your preferred consultant, and attach their scope of work letter to your application. **Do not** hire the consultant until after the grant is awarded.
- When everything is filled out and all your attachments are present, submit your application before the deadline.



Before You Apply

How to choose a consultant

Preservation Specialists Directory

www.mnhs.org/preservation/directory

Find a Conservator

www.culturalheritage.org/about-conservation/find-a-conservator

What to consider:

- Choose a conservator who is either a Professional Associate or Fellow of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC); **OR** a conservator who abides by the Code of Ethics of AIC.
- Are you looking for someone local who can provide ongoing assistance, or someone with specialized experience in your particular field?
- Look for someone who can work within your time frame
- If stuck, search for a conservator who accepts projects such as “assessments”, “surveys”, or “consultations”.



Application recommendations

Before You Apply

- Describe your organization
- Why would this project support the preservation of Minnesota's history?
- What are the big preservation issues you face?
- Include the name, qualifications, and scope of work of your selected consultant
- Make sure to describe how you followed procurement requirements
- Don't overthink things - it is in a structured format for a reason!
- Get in touch with us if you have any questions



After You Apply



- Your application is reviewed by administrators and a content reviewer
- If the application is considered ineligible, it will be returned with comments on how to improve for resubmission
- Applications that are selected will be recommended to the Society's Executive Council for approval
- Notifications of the Executive Council's decision are sent approximately **eight weeks** after application deadline.



During the Grant

- When you are awarded the grant, you will sign a grant agreement with the grant administration staff
- The grant agreement will describe any milestones or conditions you have to do, and the deadlines
- Standard milestones:
 - Grant Agreement
 - Report draft at 75% completion
 - Final Report
- More milestones possible, based on your unique situation
- Every milestone takes 30 days to review
- One year to finish project
- One month after project completion to submit the final report



Working with your consultant

During the Grant

- Now you can sign a contract with your consultant
- The first step may be a phone call or written questionnaire
- Questions can include: describe your pest management system; do you prepare or consume food on site; etc.
- Then, a one or two-day site visit
- Encourage as many staff and/or board members as possible to attend at least part of the site visit
- Make sure you have full access to the building
- Tour all collections storage and exhibitions spaces, including off-site storage
- The consultant needs to take photos to illustrate the report
- Consultant should provide preliminary recommendations and ask for your feedback about how easy it will be to address them





- Begin working on your “Conservation Action Plan”
- This is a working document, rather than a standalone report
- It is a working tool for achieving agreed-upon priorities over a set period of time
- Use the recommendations from the Long Range Plan to make an actionable list of tasks to accomplish, whose responsibility it will be, and soft deadlines for completion
- Implement and update the plan as you go!
- Attach the Long Range Plan to all grant applications

After the Grant



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Excerpt of Long Range Plan (example)

Priority One: Institute board-approved written collections management policies.

1. Draft policies and procedures to include collecting goals, acquisition process, and policies for use, loan, conservation, de-accession, and disposal.
2. Prepare an Emergency Response Plan.

Priority Two: Improve temperature and humidity conditions in storage areas.

1. Implement an environmental monitoring program, preferably with data loggers.
2. Hire an HVAC engineer to conduct a study of existing conditions and prepare recommendations and estimated budget for improvements.
3. Obtain funding to implement the engineering study recommendations.

After the Grant



Excerpt of Conservation Action Plan (example)

1. Action: Write Collections Management Policy
Steps: a. Research other collections management policies.
b. Write plans for loans, acquisition, de-accession, and Disposal.
Responsibility: Curator, with final approval from Director and Board
Due: April 2021

2. Action: Create Emergency Response Plan
Steps: a. Apply for Disaster Plan structured grant in July 2020
b. Work with consultant to create plan
c. Create written schedule for updating plan
Responsibility: Collections Manager
Due: Grant deadline July 2020, have plan by September 2021

After the Grant



How can I make sure this is a success?



- It's not necessary to have an inventory or catalogue first.
- But make sure your organization is ready to begin prioritizing preservation projects.
- Get as much buy in from other people at your organization as you can.
- Don't be embarrassed and clean up for the consultant, but show your collections, facilities and policies as they really are.
- Turn the final report into an action plan.
- Use your successes to fundraise and apply for more grants.

Resources

[2012 MNHS Long Range Preservation Plan](#)

[MNHS Grants Manual](#)

[MNHS Grants Portal](#)

[Preservation Specialists Directory](#)

[AIC's Find a Conservator](#)

[Collections Assessment for Preservation \(CAP\) Program
\(FAIC/IMLS\)](#)

[NEDCC - What is Preservation Planning?](#)



Questions?



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