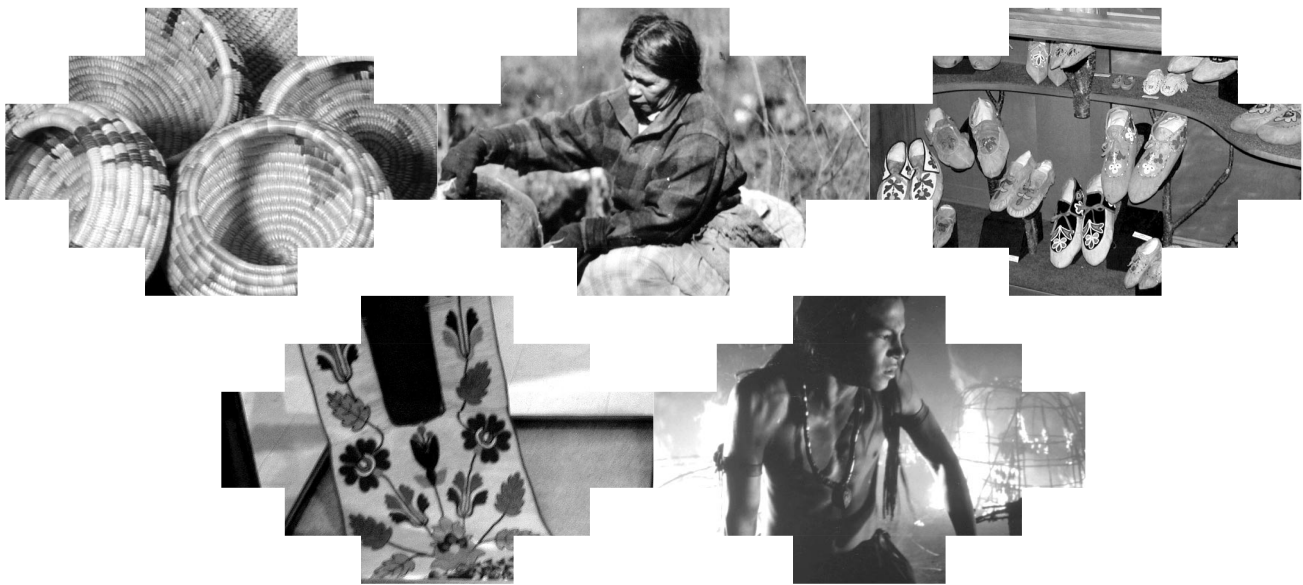




# TRIBAL MUSEUMS IN AMERICA



A Report By  
George H.J. Abrams

A Project Of  
THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR STATE AND LOCAL HISTORY

Funded By  
THE INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES



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Lac de Flambeau Chippewa Museum and Cultural Center



# Foreword



The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) is very pleased to bring you this important study of tribal museums in America. AASLH received a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to spend two years conducting mail and on-site surveys with America's tribal museums (See page 25). The project was overseen by a special American Indian\* Museums Program Steering Committee, consisting of tribal representatives and directors of tribal museums (See page 36). AASLH hired Lisa Watt to serve as project director for the survey portion of the grant. We wish to thank Lisa for her tireless work putting together the content of the surveys, then collecting the data.

Next, AASLH hired George H. J. Abrams to analyze the data and write this report. Mr. Abrams was hired because of his breadth of experience with tribal museums and tribal issues, including being a past executive director of the Seneca-Iroquois National Museum, Allegany Indian Reservation, Seneca Nation of Indians in Salamanca, New York, and special assistant to the director at the National Museum of the American Indian - Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Mr. Abrams was born on the Allegany Indian Reservation and is a full-blood member of the Seneca Nation of Indians, Great Blue Heron Clan. He has served as a member of the board of trustees and on various committees of numerous museum and education-related organizations, including the American Association of Museums, the Denver Museum of Natural History, the Mohawk-Caughnawaga Museum, the Museum of the American Indian - Heye Foundation, the Council for Museum Anthropology, the American Association for State and Local History, and the New York State Council on the Arts. He served as chairman of the North American Indian Museums Association, and has served in the American Indian education field as a university professor, president of the Seneca Nation Board of Education, and member of the National Advisory Committee on Bilingual Education for the United States Department of Education.

Obviously, Mr. Abrams was the best person for the job.

As the data was digested, AASLH asked Mr. Abrams to bring his own experience to bear on its interpretation, and make recommendations for tribal museums as well as those organizations (like AASLH) that provide professional development services to increase the capacity of those museums. He has done just that, mixing within the report the history of the tribal museum movement as well as recommended best practices from the field of museology. We know this report will be informative to not only tribal museums, but to policy makers and service providers as well. This report is not a scientific statistical analysis. But it does offer insight into the state of tribal museums in America.

AASLH's American Indian Museums Program (AIMP) was first formed in 1996 at the request of tribal museums that were members of the Association. Shortly thereafter, the AIMP Steering Committee was formed and AASLH began offering an annual American Indian Museums Symposium, bringing together between sixty and one hundred tribal museum professionals and volunteers to talk about issues unique to their niche of the museum field. This survey project grew out of that program.

AASLH owes a great deal of debt to its American Indian Museums Program Steering Committee. Various members have joined and left the committee over the past seven years, but through it all, members have provided the leadership and expertise necessary to provide much-needed professional development assistance to America's tribal museums. Thank you to everyone who played a role in the AIMP Steering Committee.

The American Association for State and Local History is a national membership organization headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee. For more information on AASLH, please visit our web site at [www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org).

Terry L. Davis  
President & CEO  
American Association for State and Local History

\*American Indian vs. Native American: This project employs the term American Indian as one commonly used to refer to the original people of the Western Hemisphere and their descendants, regardless of international borders, in preference to the now more politically correct Native American. Neither term has universal acceptance by the Indian people or those that refer to them. The Original People themselves commonly refer to themselves as "Indians," and this is the term that is utilized for this project. Tribal groups are now returning to terms that derived from their native languages, rather than the terms applied to them by others.

# Introduction



The American Association for State and Local History received a grant for its American Indian Museums Program from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to implement a national survey of American Indian tribal museums and culture centers. The stated objectives of the study were to determine the present overall status, current situation, needs, and expectations of a wide range of tribal museums and cultural centers throughout the United States. This report is not a scientific statistical analysis.

In conjunction with this project an American Indian Museums Program Steering Committee was formed to provide valuable advice, information, and direction to the project. Individuals representing various types of museums, experience, and positions met regularly with the AASLH leadership during the grant period.

In attempting to define what qualified as an eligible institution for this study, reliance was placed to some extent on the broad definition established by the National Museum of the American Indian – Smithsonian Institution (NMAI-SI) for its directory of tribal museums. Included in this definition, which is inclusive beyond a strict tribal or reservation affiliation, are museums/centers in urban sites operated by native peoples and museum centers managed by tribal entities. For this project, the major criterion in defining a tribal museum or cultural center is Indian control through governance. The report includes a wide range of types of institutions, which arguably were defined as eligible for this study.

Both museums and culture centers are included in this survey although they are not the same type of institution. Museums have collections and exhibitions as their major focus. While culture centers may have a museum or gallery, their major focus is on education and training, and they may be performance based. Some culture centers also have social service aspects.

It is formally estimated by the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) that there are some two hundred and thirty-six tribal museums in the United States. One experienced Smithsonian professional estimated that there are only one hundred and fifty to one hundred and seventy-five such institutions, using a stricter definition of what constitutes a museum. Early on, the survey project director offered a lower estimate of one hundred and ten to one hundred twenty tribal museums. The estimates of the actual number are variable largely due to which definition is used in identification of these entities, especially since some tribal museums are not 501(c)(3) institutions.

The United States officially recognizes some five hundred and sixty-two “federally recognized tribes,” with many other groups currently applying for this status. In addition, there are a number of “state recognized tribal groups.” The United States Census Bureau estimates that, as of July 1, 2002, there were 4,327,806 individuals of American Indian or Native Alaskan ancestry based on the arguable criterion of “self-identification.” Indians are located in every state in the union. It is estimated that 70% of the current American Indian population resides off-reservation or in urban areas. Especially high concentrations of American Indians are located in New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

George H. J. Abrams  
Report Writer  
American Indian Museums  
Program of AASLH

# Background



The institution of museums is a relatively recent phenomenon in American Indian communities, with some exceptions. During the latter half of the 1800s, several private museums were established by Indian individuals using personal ethnographic collections of heirlooms, local archaeological collections, and historical ephemera. One of these early examples was established in the mid-1800s on the Tuscarora Indian Reservation near Niagara Falls, New York, in the home of Mrs. Caroline Parker Mt. Pleasant. Mrs. Mt. Pleasant was the wife of Tuscarora chief John Mt. Pleasant, and sister of Seneca chief and Brigadier General Ely S. Parker. Following her husband's death, Mrs. Mt. Pleasant returned to her home on the Tonawanda Indian Reservation near Akron, New York, where she died and her collection was dispersed. The site of her museum on the Tuscarora Reservation lies beneath the reservoir that was created in the 1950s by the New York State Power Authority.

The current Indian museum movement began in the 1970s when the Economic Development Administration (EDA) provided the opportunity for federally recognized tribes to construct buildings on their reservations as part of the effort to provide jobs and potentially profitable programs to raise the living standards of tribal members. Among the options that were available were projects such as motels and tribal museums that would work in cooperation with the growing national tourism industry. These projects had varying success as the years passed. Some have proven to be moderately to highly successful, while others have failed. The successes have been primarily due to better planning and cooperation with outside entities that provide expertise in technical areas, such as museum administration.

It was during this period that an attempt was made to form a national organization that could represent tribal museums. At the instigation of the Smithsonian Institution, in 1977 the North American Indian Museums Association (NAIMA) was formed by a small group of Indian people involved in tribal museums. The organization existed for about ten years before becoming inactive due to financial, administrative, and personal reasons.

Primary reasons for earlier museum failures – and continuing major challenges for tribal museums today according to the data collected in the survey – are financing and the professional training of staff. While the earlier EDA projects provided money for bricks and mortar, oftentimes there was little consideration of how the museum or the tribe was to fund annual budgets, staff, acquiring and maintaining collections, upkeep of the building, etc. It was to become apparent for those who were involved in the actual implementation of tribal museums that buildings are not museums, and museums are not buildings – a view commonly held by the profession at large.

Data from AASLH's tribal museum and culture center survey amply demonstrate that these concerns continue to the present day. In addition, the survey strongly demonstrates that many of the challenges facing tribal museums are the very same concerns of all museums. For some, the rise of the casino gambling phenomenon has softened the financial burden, although even this has not totally eliminated financial concerns. For most, at least for the moment, tribal museums have established for themselves a secure future as a recognized and major contributing institution in the contemporary culture and life of the tribe.

# The Survey Components



The national survey project was completed in September 2002, with seventy-four institutions participating to varying degrees, with some completing multiple surveys and some completing only one. The mail-in survey was completed by fifty-one institutions and included one hundred and fifty-five questions. An on-site survey with another nineteen questions was conducted with sixty-five institutions. Finally, four small surveys were conducted with selected sites: museum archives, museum library, NAGPRA, and suggested future for a tribal museum association.

- Mail-in survey – 51 respondents
- On-site survey for site visits – 65 respondents

- Museum archives survey – 31 respondents
- Museum library survey – 28 respondents
- NAGPRA survey – 5 respondents
- Future for a tribal museum association survey – 39 respondents

The responding museums represent a wide range of development, from those that are in the earliest stages of their institution building, to those that have been in existence for some time and exhibit a greater sophistication of professionalism and understanding of the complex field of museology. At the time the survey was conducted, other museums anticipated opening in the near future.

## Methodology



The analysis of the survey data was completed from the information presented to the report writer. Therefore, there may be gaps in information on any given museum, or possible need for clarification; neither were pursued by the report writer.

The report writer was asked to move beyond mere “number crunching” and provide additional information and opinion that would provide the reader with an education in the subject, based on his years of experience in the museum field and knowledge of American Indians. An early draft report was presented to the AIMP Steering Committee and four outside reviewers. These two groups submitted their comments, suggestions, corrections, etc., for consideration. As anticipated, some of the reactions were not in agreement, although most were helpful.

For several reasons, including the use of financial and personnel information in the raw data, and, in some cases, candid comments that might prove distressing, it was agreed to not refer to specific institutions by name. A list of responding institutions for which some documentation was presented to the report writer is listed on page 35.

Not all of the institutions listed completed all survey components, but all were able to assist in the analysis by contributing information on certain sections. One major reason stated was the length and complexity of the survey and lack of personnel to address it. Other institutions did not have

sufficient data to answer some sections or questions. Again, this report is not intended to be a scientific statistical analysis on the subject of American Indian museums and cultural centers, nor a scholarly treatise. Nevertheless, the project does provide an illuminating snapshot of the field and subject matter.

Originally the data was organized by the geographical regions of the Pacific Northwest, Plains, Southwest, New England, Alaska, California, and Great Lakes. It became apparent during analysis that this regional approach would not be significant. When divided up by region, the number of responses to most questions was too small to be significant and variation in responses could skew the results for that region. Further, upon examination it appears that there is as much diversity within a single geographical region as there is between regions. Therefore, there is no significance in separating the data into geographical regions. Other than the predictable conclusions that 1) there is a general relationship between more temperate climates and increased hours open to the public, and 2) proximity to other tourist destinations often leads to increased visitation; few similarities seem to arise due to geographical location. Instead, it appears there is more similarity based on size and budget.

# Analysis of the Data



FIGURE 1

## Sample Year Opened

INSTITUTION	YEAR OPENED
Ataloa Lodge Museum/Bacone College	1932
Tribal House of the Bear	1941
Navajo Nation Museum	1961
Cherokee National Historical Society, Inc.	1963
Three Affiliated Tribes Museum, Inc.	1964
Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center, Inc.	1969
Nohwike' Bagowa-White Mountain Apache Cultural Center & Museum	1969
Quechan Tribal Museum	1969
The Lower Muskogee Creek Tribe	1970
Institute of American Indian Arts Museum	1971
Sierra Mono Museum	1972
Southern Ute Museum Cultural Center	1972
Mashpee Wampanoag Indian Museum	1973
Hopi Museum (Hopi Cultural Center, Inc.)	1973
Hoopa Tribal Museum	1974
Arvid E. Miller Memorial Library Museum	1975
The Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Inc.	1976
Seneca-Iroquois National Museum	1977
Cheyenne Cultural Center, Inc.	1977
Oneida Nation Museum	1979
Waponahki Museum & Resource Center	1980
Suquamish Museum	1983
Skokomish Indian Tribe	1984
Colville Tribal Museum	1986
Simon Paneak Memorial Museum	1986
Shoshone Cultural Center	1988
George W. Brown, Jr. Ojibwe Museum & Cultural Center	1989
Ak-Chin Him-Dak EcoMuseum & Archives	1991
Poeh Museum	1991
Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Museum	1993
The Museum At Warm Springs	1993
Agua Caliente Cultural Museum	1993
The People's Center	1995
Alutiiq Museum & Archaeological Repository	1995
Kanza Museum	1995
Cabazon Cultural Museum	1995
San Carlos Apache Cultural Center	1995
Community House (Sheet'ka Kwaan Naakahidi)	1997
Lummi Records & Archives Center & Museum	1998
Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center	1998
Abenaki Tribal Museum and Cultural Center	1998
Walatowa Cultural and Visitor Center	1999
Barona Cultural Center and Museum	2000
Fond du Lac Cultural Center & Museum	2000
Shinnecock Nation Cultural Center & Museum	2001
Potawatomi Cultural Center and Museum	2002

## ◆ Institutions Responding

The seventy-four institutions responding to survey components were geographically diverse – from coast to coast, north to south, and included Alaska. Additionally, they represent a diverse group in terms of size with annual visitor counts ranging from 132 to 235,000 and annual budgets ranging from \$10,200 to \$13,000,000.

## ◆ Founding Year

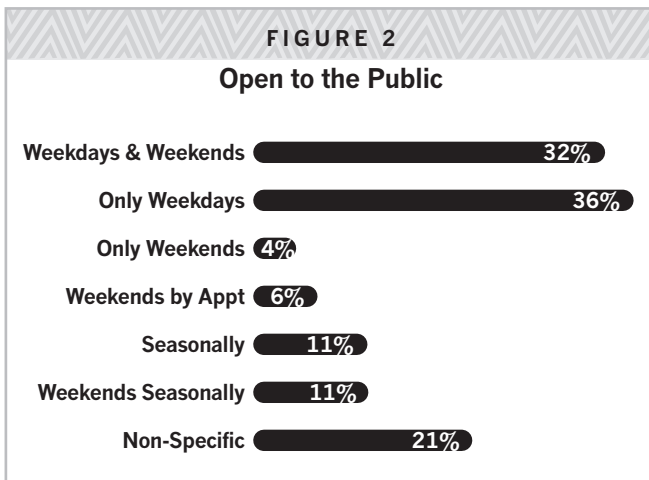
Among the initial questions asked in the mail-in survey, in addition to name, address, etc., was the date when the facility opened. There were forty-seven responses, ranging from the earliest (the Ataloa Lodge Museum at Bacone College (Oklahoma) in 1932) to the Potawatomi Cultural Center and Museum in 2002.

## ◆ Open to the Public

The hours institutions are open exhibited a wide range of variability. In this respect tribal institutions are not unlike other non-Indian institutions, required to arrange hours to conform to local climatic conditions and factors, as well as social, economic, and cultural issues. Not surprisingly, most tribal museums located in harsher climates close for the winter and have relatively restricted open hours at other times.

Tribal museums sometimes adjust hours due to the lack of staff availability and/or difficulty recruiting volunteers. Some are open only during weekends. Some are open to the public only a few days a week. Some are open weekdays, but only by appointment on weekends. Some expressed the need to be cognizant of special religious holidays, such as Catholic feast days or religious harvest dances, during which time the museum closes. Also, special events may have to be planned to conform to local tribal traditions, such as annual religious events when museum personnel function as religious participants and performers for the local community.

Tribal museums located in more temperate climates conform more closely to the hours of non-Indian museums in the same area. However, it is noted that few of the tribal museums are closed on Mondays, the traditional day museums close. Unlike non-Indian museums, tribal museums are often closed during weekends and holidays; it is often difficult for staff or volunteers to be recruited to work on weekends and holidays although a large flow of tourists can be expected through the community. (See Figure 2)



### ◆ Mission Statement

Of the seventy-four participating institutions, forty-nine institutions responded to the question and of those, 71% indicated they have a mission statement. Of those that indicated they do have a mission statement, twenty-seven provided that statement for the survey. Primary focus of the majority of mission statements is cultural retention of the tribal group and service to the local Indian community. Of secondary importance for many are external audiences—school groups, tourists, casual visitors, and others from outside the community.

An educational mandate is not generally recognized as a focus in tribal museum mission statements. Rather, the tribal focus centers on retention, reinforcement, and reintroduction of material cultural items. American Indians, like the rest of the world, have undergone tremendous cultural change, a process that continues today and will into the future. The dramatic changes in traditional culture have become issues of official concern inside individual tribes, so they focus on programs such as tribal languages or producing material culture items.

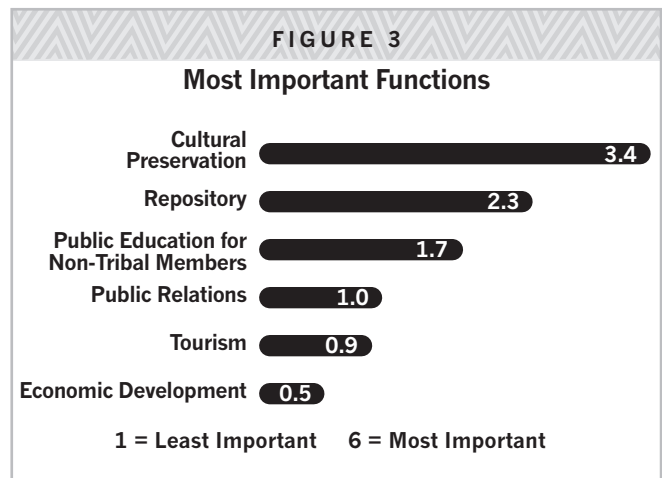
### ◆ Most Important Functions

Institutions were asked to rank their institutional functions based on their relative importance. Responding institutions clearly rank cultural preservation, perpetuation, and revitalization for the tribal community most important. Many tribes have seen their culture slowly evolve over the years, hastened even more by the rise of television and other influences. They see museums and culture centers as one way of teaching their own people, particularly the younger people, about their culture.

Second in importance is the museum/center’s function as a repository for cultural materials, with one institution even mentioning the legal requirements of repatriated or donated items.

Ranked third is public education for non-tribal members. Many feel it is important to teach others the value of their culture in order that it may be more appreciated by their tribal neighbors.

Public relations for tribal government and tourism were ranked approximately equal and economic development last in this list. It seems these three items may be grouped together and are related. Tourism and public relations would seem to go hand-in-hand. Last from this list was economic development. It may be that even if some groups originally believed that a museum could contribute to economic development, they have subsequently learned tribal museums are not moneymakers, usually requiring sustained financial support for successful and continued existence. A few respondents added to the list provided (demonstrate/teach culture/tradition; support/interact with art; repatriation/legal requirements; museum training; promote pride/self-esteem; and community support). (See Figure 3)

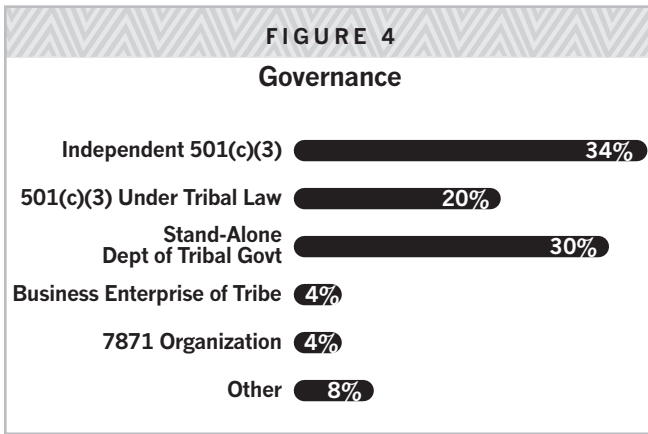


### ◆ Governance

**Governance Structure:** Of those responding to this question, most have 501(c)(3) status as not-for-profit institutions. And 30% of the fifty responding classify themselves as “stand alone,” presumably meaning they have no external governmental structure other than the tribe. Two institutions classify themselves “7871 organizations” and two as “business enterprises of the tribe.” The 7871 organization category is an alternative tax exemption status that a few newer non-profit institutions have chosen. Within this tax exemption status, tribal governments are given distinct advantages; however, the museum is not eligible to receive foundation grants. (There were no responses indicating a museum is “part of tribal government,” although this omission may be subsumed under the “stand alone” category.) (See Figure 4)

**Board:** Nearly 44% of those who responded stated they have a board of trustees/directors/advisory board and an



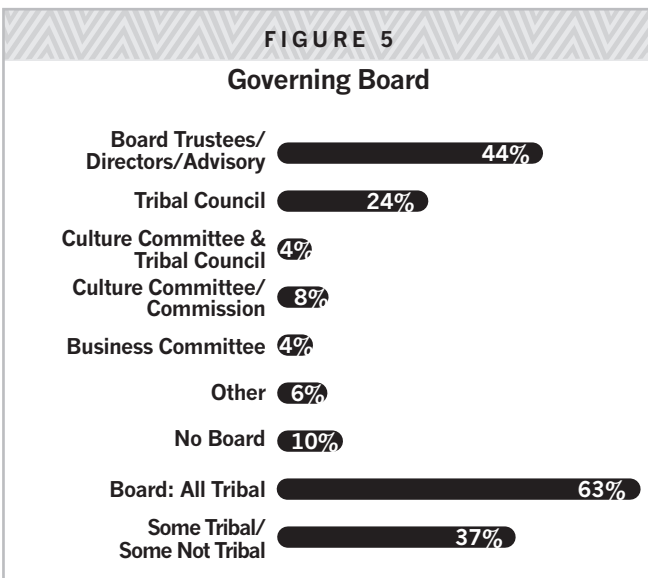


additional 24% are governed by the tribal council. Other responses make up the remaining. Note: 10% claimed they do not have a board. Of those, over half considered having one and therefore it may be assumed they rejected the idea.

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of those responding to the composition of the board stated that it is totally made up of tribal members; the remaining said the board is comprised of tribal members and non-tribal members. (See Figure 5)

**By-Laws** Just over three-quarters (77%) of those responding have bylaws, half of those (59%) have amended them within the past five years, and one was amended as far back as 1971.

In regard to governance, although not asked on the survey, one concern commonly expressed over the past several years by those directly involved in tribal museums is how to minimize or keep the museum from direct involvement in the vagaries of tribal politics. This is especially true where the tribal council has direct financial control over museum finances, and oftentimes the hiring and firing of the director beyond the role of the board.



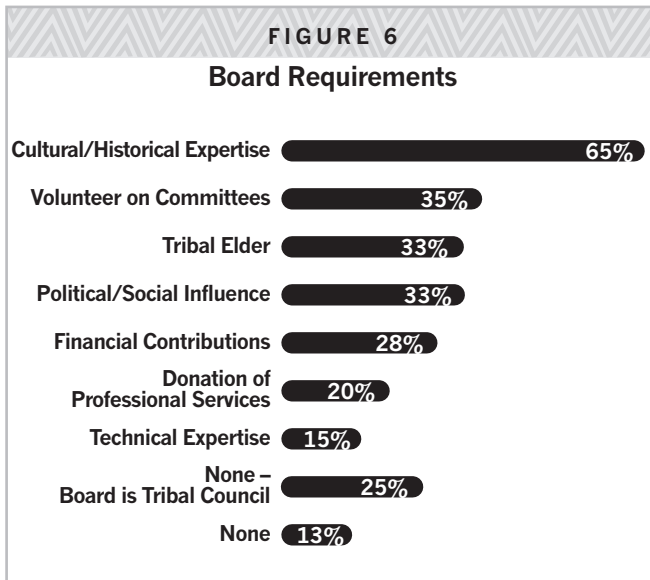
**Appointment/Approval:** The question of who appoints or approves new board members is important. Not quite half (40%) of the responding institutions report the board of trustees or director has this responsibility, although nearly as many (33%) report the tribal council has this responsibility. Four report that this is accomplished through elections or approval by the tribal people. It may be presumed there is some procedure for reporting to the tribal council or other authoritative entity in the case of the board of on-reservation museums; comparable to a non-Indian museum that reports to a city or county council.

This situation at tribal museums is somewhat similar to that of municipal museums where a board may be in place to establish policy and raise money for the institution, but decisions such as the hiring and firing of the director may need to be approved by a city council. Ideally, the board of a tribal museum would have control over the finances of the institution. However, the flow of financial and other resources via the tribal government will always be dependent on what role the museum, its board, and the director play in the community and within the tribal council.

**Board Composition:** Much depends on the composition of the tribal museum board. Obviously, community members must be represented and they must bring various types of expertise to the table. These board members should include traditional people who have special knowledge regarding tribal culture and history. For nearly two-thirds of the forty responding museums, one requirement for board membership is cultural and historical expertise. Approximately one-third require volunteer service on board committees/activities. Additionally, about one-third of the institutions require tribal elders and/or those with political and/or social influence on the board. Elders might be excellent choices, respected persons who can advise on political situations within the tribe or outside organizations. Some require financial contributions. Others feel it appropriate to have a board member who can serve as legal counsel or provide accounting services to the board and the museum. A few of the institutions considered technical expertise a necessary requirement for board membership. Interestingly, 38% say they have no special requirements (the majority of whom had no requirements because the board is, in fact, the tribal council.) (See Figure 6)

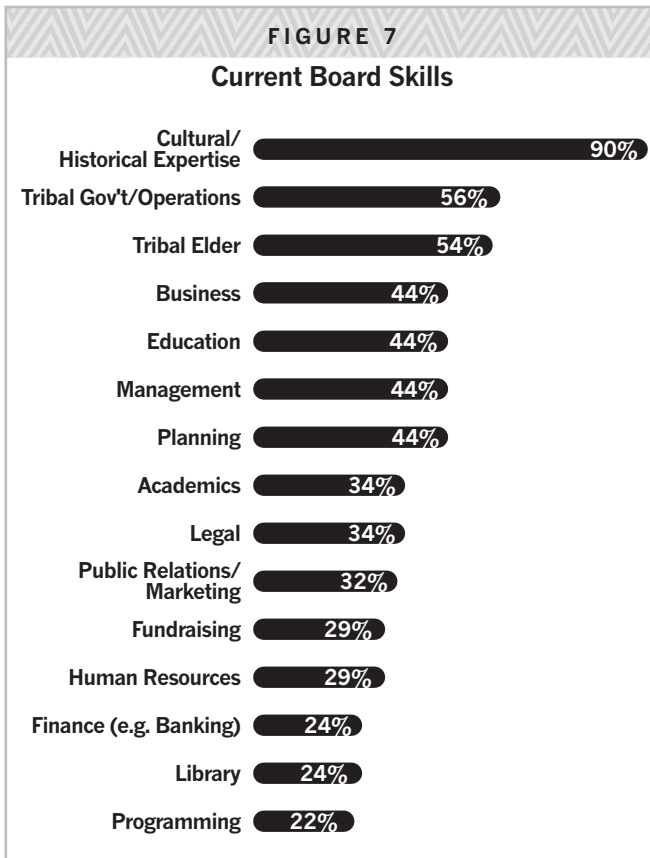
Only one-fifth (22% of the thirty-seven answering) have a formal process for board orientation, training, and evaluation.

Consistent with skills recruited for board membership are the skills/experience of those currently serving. When describing their current board membership, nearly all the institutions stated they have board members with expertise in culture and history. Falling a distant second are experience in tribal government/operations and the presence of a tribal elder (just over 50% each). Nearly half have board members experienced in business, education, management, and planning; and about one-third have members experienced in academics, law, public relations/marketing, fundraising, and



human resources. Fewer have members with finance, library, or programming experience. (See Figure 7)

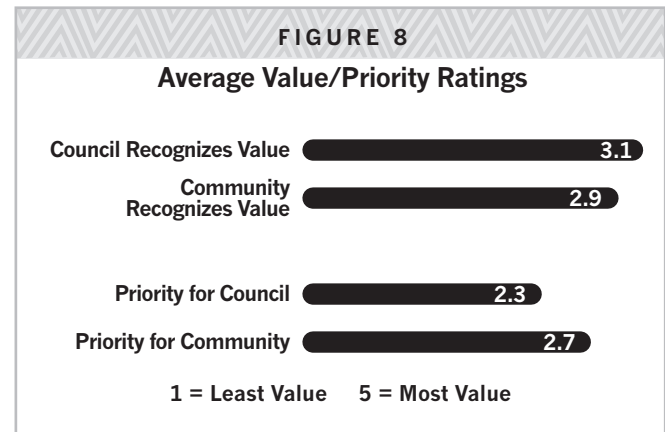
**Terms:** Twenty-two percent of the respondents indicated there are no term limits for board membership, a situation that would not be encouraged in most non-tribal institutions. Term limits that rotate membership on the board are commonly used in the museum field at large, in order that individuals do not become ingrained in the institution. The



latter can be especially vexing to museum administrators, although often their volunteerism in museum programming or their financial support, for example, has proven to be particularly valuable. Of those museums with term limits, most fell within the two to four year range.

**Committees:** Board committees can play an important role in governing a museum, although just over 50% of the thirty-four reporting institutions report they have no board committees. The most common committees include finance, fundraising/development, and collections. Fewer institutions report having nominating, executive, program, and public relations committees.

**Value among tribal council/community:** Finally, one of the most important areas for the success of any tribal museum or cultural center is the approval of the tribal council and the people. When asked outright how respondents felt their tribal council and community viewed the museum's contributions, perceived value was rated roughly neutral (3.1 and 2.9 respectively in a range from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)). The perceived priority by the tribal council and the people are also about neutral (2.3 and 2.7 respectively, with a "3" being the midpoint or neutral). (See Figure 8)

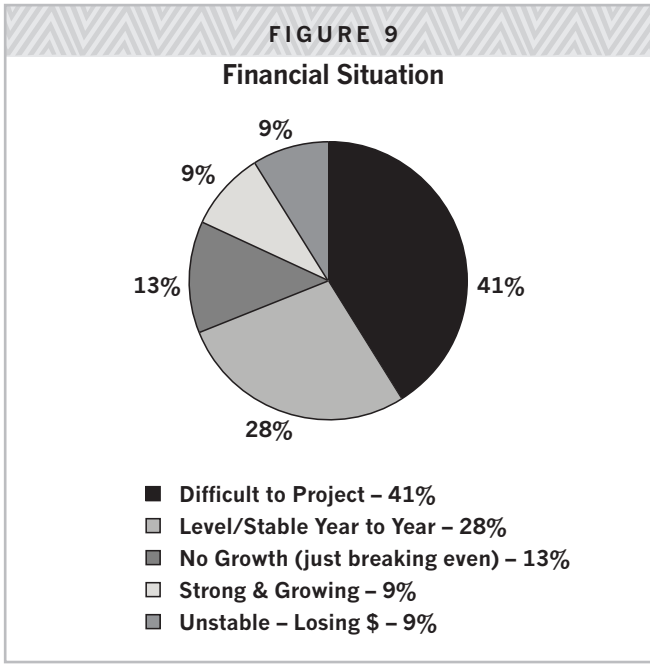


## ◆ Finance/Fundraising/Planning

**Annual operating budget:** The average annual budget figure for the thirty-six responding museums was \$801,000. The total individual annual budget ranged from \$10,200 to \$13,000,000. The three multimillion dollar institutions accounted for \$21.6 million.

When asked, 15% of the forty-seven responding stated they have an endowment.

**Overall financial situation:** When queried about their financial situations, 41% felt the financial situation is difficult to project with significant variations from year to year. An equal percent claim their situation is stable (either level from year to year or experiencing no growth but breaking even). The remaining are equally divided between



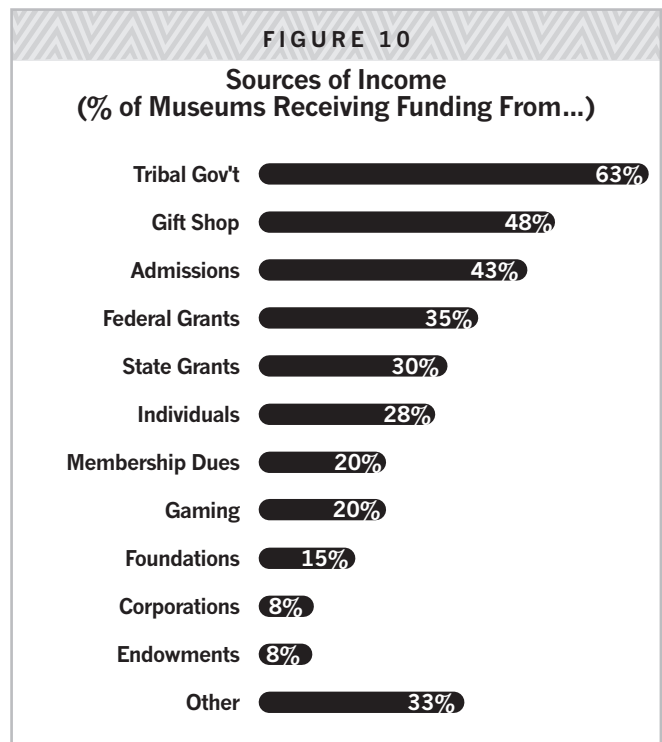
enjoying growth or losing money. The relatively large percent falling into the largest category (difficult to project fluctuating from year to year) makes planning difficult for a lot of museums. (See Figure 9)

**Sources of Income:** When queried regarding various sources of income, thirty-nine institutions responded. Among those, most (over 60%) receive funds from their tribal governments. Over one-third of the responding organizations also receive funds from gift shop sales, admissions, and federal grants. Only 20% of those responding report receiving funds from gaming endeavors. On average, a museum receives funding from 3.6 different sources. (See Figure 10)

**Relative amounts by source:** When considering all sources of income, not only do most museums get money from their tribal governments, they get the greatest percentage of funding from them – on average 41%. And although relatively few actually receive funds from gaming, the level of contribution makes it the second largest contributor overall. This makes gaming a very important enterprise for funding. Gift shop sales as well as state and federal grants contribute about 10% on an overall basis. (See Figure 11)

## ◆ Summary by Type of Funding

**Level of tribal contributions:** Twenty-five of the thirty-nine responding organizations receive tribal government support, ranging from 10% of their total income to the more common 100%. This level of support is strong and in many cases growing. In general, the level of tribal government financial support has increased for many of the recipients – 43% of those thirty-four responding – and only decreased for 20% of them. (See Figure 12)



**Gaming:** Eight of the thirty-nine institutions responding received funds from gaming. Of them, institutional money for museum support ranged from 3% to 100%. Two California tribes report the largest percentages at 90% and 100% of their financing derived from gaming.

Indian gaming or casinos date to the 1980s with rather modest bingo operations. By the middle of the decade, tribes were generating some \$100 million annually. That attracted interest from individual state governments. In 1987 the U. S. Supreme Court ruled that tribes could not be prevented

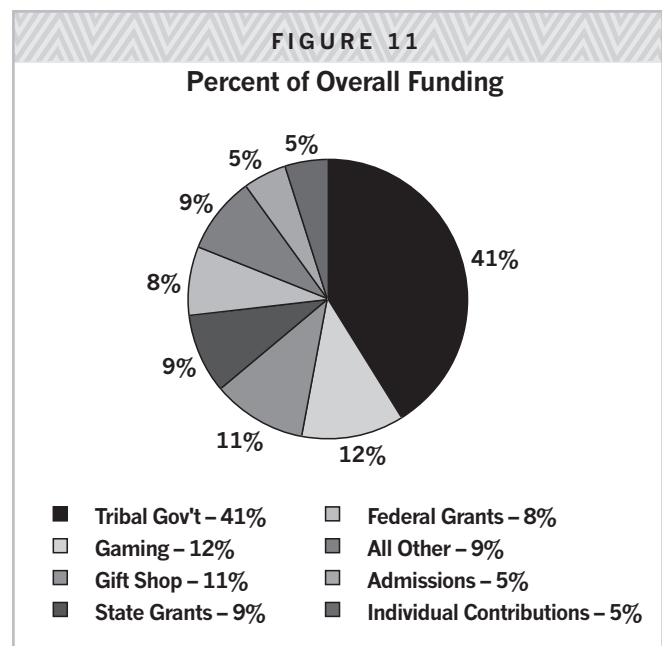
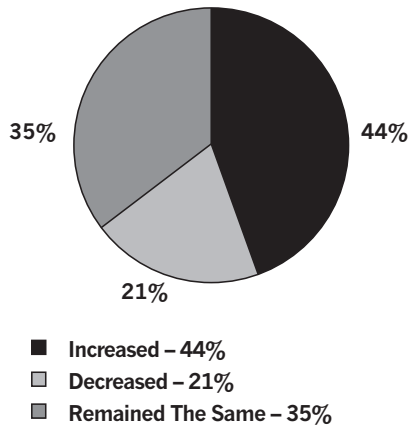


FIGURE 12

Tribal Government Support Over the Past 5 Years



from operating games on reservations. In 1988, Congress instituted the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. It allowed states to share in the regulation of gaming by entering into compacts with tribes, thereby generating millions of dollars for state budget gaps. As a consequence, negotiated agreements between individual tribes and states have, in tribal eyes, been increasingly extortive in the percentage of payments going to states.

In 2001, nearly two hundred tribes generated some \$12.7 billion in revenues from gaming. In California, as of this writing, fifty tribes operate fifty-one casinos in competition with each other and nearby Nevada operations. Contrary to popular belief, not all tribes own gaming operations, and many of those that do are only marginally profitable. It is not surprising then that few tribes have been able to use gaming revenue to create endowments for tribal museums.

Many tribes do not have the financial margin to totally underwrite the expense of a tribal museum. Although some museums were initially seen as potentially self-funding, part of the U.S. tourism industry, it soon became apparent many would require sustained financial support from tribal coffers, and outside remedies could not be expected.

Some tribal politicians began to see their tribal museums as bottomless money pits, with little chance of achieving financial independence. Others saw benefits beyond the financial commitment such as resources to reinforce and support the cultural distinctiveness of their traditions and provide a positive public face to the general public.

**Federal Grants:** Fourteen institutions report receiving federal grants. Ninety-four percent of income and 70% of income were reported by two institutions. The percent of overall funding from federal grants ranged from 1% to 94%.

**State Grants:** Twelve institutions responded that state

grants contribute from 2% to 85% of their overall funding. It might appear then that some institutions are very skilled in garnering state grant funding, while the majority are either unsuccessful or do not try.

**Foundations:** Only six institutions report receiving foundation support. One tribal museum reports receiving 10% of its overall support from foundations, and two report 8% of their overall income from foundations – others fewer. Foundation funding is often dependent on the museum’s status as a not-for-profit organization. Often governments, even tribal governments, are not eligible for funding under private foundation guidelines.

**Corporations:** Only three institutions report receiving funds from corporations. One receives 7% of its overall support from corporations, another 5%, and the third reports 2%. The three represent tribal groups which are sophisticated in the business world and have grants officers who are knowledgeable about external funding sources. Smaller tribal groups often do not have this expertise readily available.

**Individual Contributions:** Eleven institutions report receiving individual contributions. Of those, one received total funding through individual contributions. It is a multipurpose social and cultural organization that supports a gallery and is located in a major urban area without any individual tribal affiliation. The next highest is 35% then 15%. The rest report from 10% to 1% from individual contributions.

**Admissions:** Seventeen institutions report receiving from 1% to 47% of their income from admissions. The expectation that admissions can cover the costs of operations has not been realistic.

Some controversy has arisen as to whether a museum should charge admission for its tribal members, or those of related groups. Providing a “free day” or similar provision generally eliminates the need for tribal members to pay an admission.

**Museum Shop:** Nineteen organizations report some income derived from gift shop operations ranging from 1% to 80%.

Twenty-two institutions report annual shop sales from \$300 to \$300,000. Sales averaged \$34,939.

It is apparent that admissions and shop sales cannot sustain annual museum operations. Museum shop operations can provide substantial income for the museum. In addition, the shop functions as a major outlet for items created in the community, particularly traditional arts and crafts, and fine art and jewelry. Publications, post cards, and other such items have proven to be very popular with the general public. Museum shop policies should be established to conform to the community standards.

A high standard of excellence in manufacturing needs to be in place to encourage the making of both traditional and innovative items. Lower priced items for school groups and others should be available. The museum shop may also be a

source of excellently-made items acquired for the museum's permanent collection.

The museum shop can be a source of income for many artists in the community. A cadre of artisans and craftspeople can provide a valuable resource for demonstration and performance in the museum and as outreach programs. Having a permanent collection of examples of traditional material culture (e.g., beadwork) provides a ready resource for contemporary artists and craftspeople to study, oftentimes resuscitating older forms of material culture.

**Membership Dues:** Eight institutions report income from membership dues contributing between 1% and 14% of the income for those organizations. It is clear that membership, while useful for many purposes, is not a major source of income for these institutions.

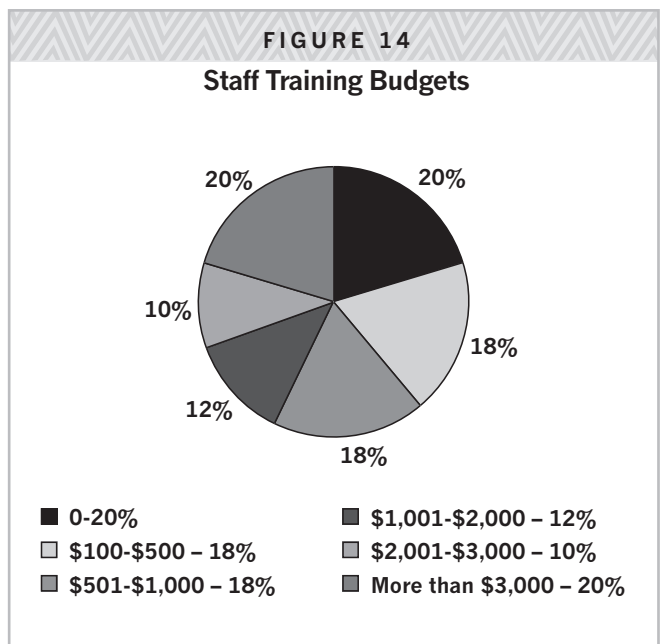
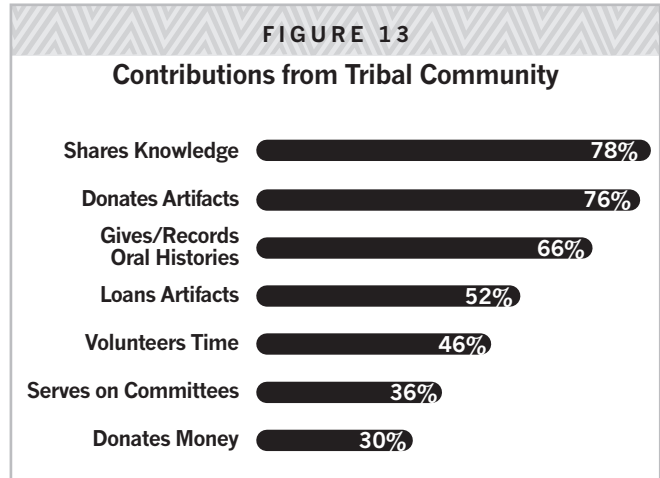
**Other:** Thirteen institutions receive funds from the "other" category which includes facilities rental, special events, food service, etc. One institution reports 100% of its income comes from this source; at the other extreme two institutions report 2%.

A note regarding endowments. Seven of seventy-four museum respondents list institutional endowments. Some of these are within the structure of the tribe rather than as separately created or independent funds. Of these, tribes actively engaged in financially successful gaming (see separate category), or Alaska tribes which have relatively strong financial bases derived from other sources, have established endowments for museums. Of these endowments, the majority are originally derived from gaming revenues. In most cases it is unclear whether control of endowments belongs to the museum board, tribal council, or other governing authority regarding access, allocation, dispersal, and approval of endowment funds.

**Other Community Contributions:** Not surprisingly, over three-fourths of the fifty responding institutions report that tribal community members regularly share traditional history and knowledge as well as donate artifacts and other history related materials. Many (66%) also receive and record oral histories. About half report that the community loans artifacts and other history-related materials to the collections and nearly as many report that the community volunteers time for programs and tours. About one-third said tribal members sit on committees or make personal financial contributions or donations to the museum. (See Figure 13)

**Staff Training Budget:** Interestingly, an equal number of tribal museums (ten institutions) report they spend nothing on staff training as those spending in excess of \$3,000 per year to train their staff. The highest reported figure for training was an annual \$20,000. (See Figure 14)

**Acquisition Budget:** Fifteen institutions (of fifty) report they have a budget to acquire items for the permanent collection. The average amount was \$11,136 and ranged from \$1,000 to \$50,000 annually.

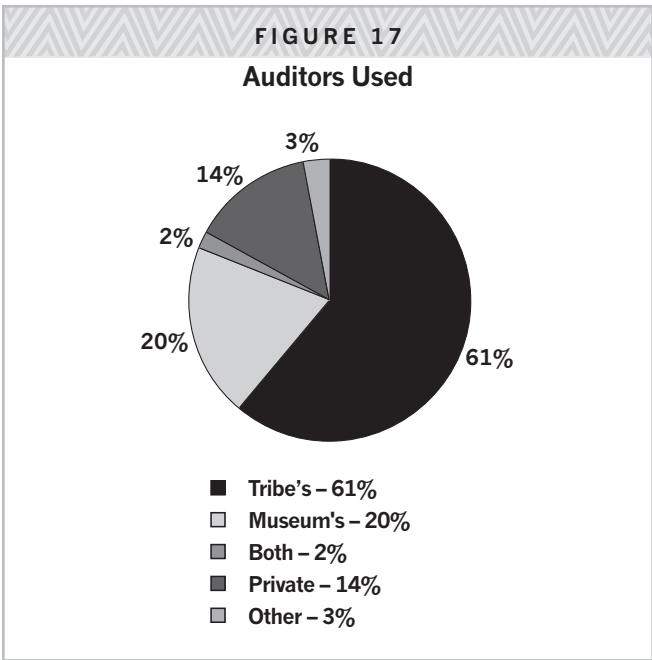
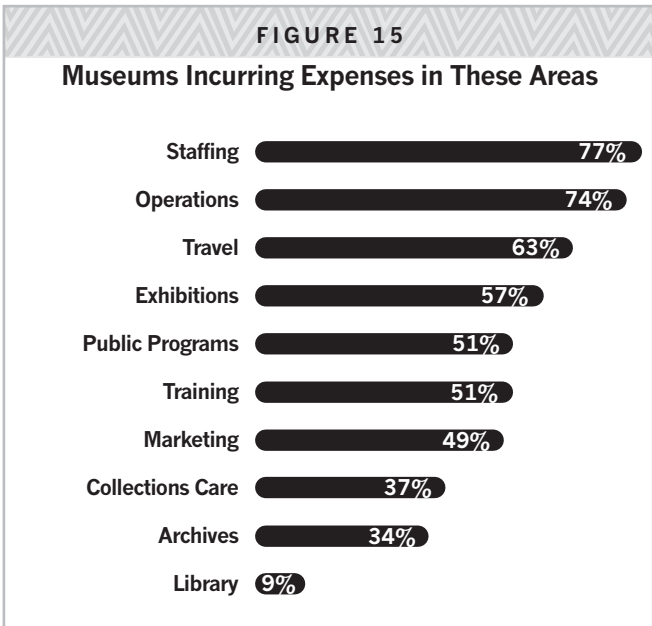


**Expenditures:** At least 50% of those (thirty-five) responding report expenditures in staffing, operations and maintenance, travel, exhibitions, public programs, and training. Nearly as many (49%) had marketing expenditures. Fewer listed collections care, archives, and library expenses. (See Figure 15)

**Relative amounts by type:** When considering all expenditures of the groups as a whole, not surprisingly, staffing and operations/maintenance takes the largest share – over 60% on a combined basis. (See Figure 16)

**Written General Policies:** The majority (67%) of the (forty-six) responding museums utilize tribal policies for financial, personnel, benefits, travel, and other administrative functions. Less than one quarter of the museums have their own written policies.

**Audits:** This utilization of tribal resources applies to audits as well. Those who have annual financial audits (63%) are



more likely to use their tribal auditor as their own or some other independent auditor. (See Figure 17)

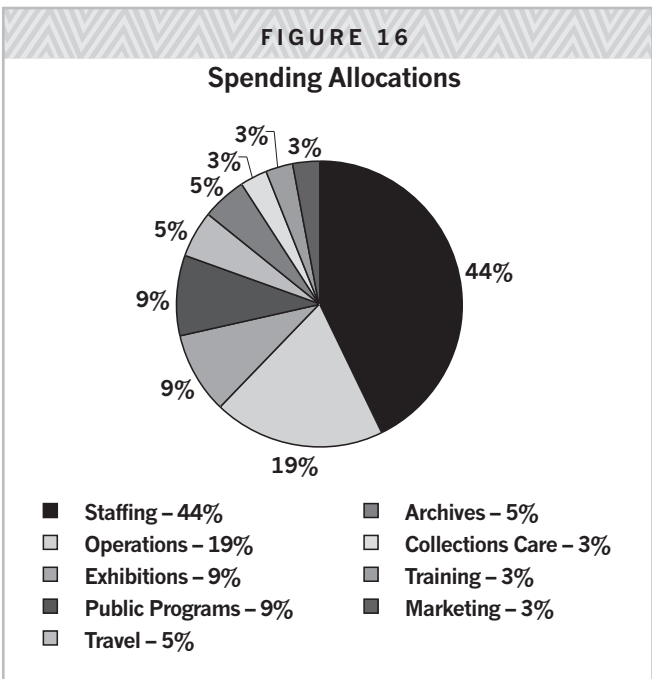
**Code of ethics statement:** Sixteen of the thirty-nine reporting tribal institutions have a formal ethics statement for their museum. Of these, they were about equally divided between using the tribal statement and having their own written statement.

**Strategic plan:** Not quite half (44% of the forty-five reporting museums) have a strategic plan. The majority of those (62%) report it is reviewed every year, with about 29% reporting it is reviewed every three to five years. By far, the majority stated that their strategic plan was created

by the director and the board working together. Only a few use outside consultants, tribal council, planners, or the director acting alone.

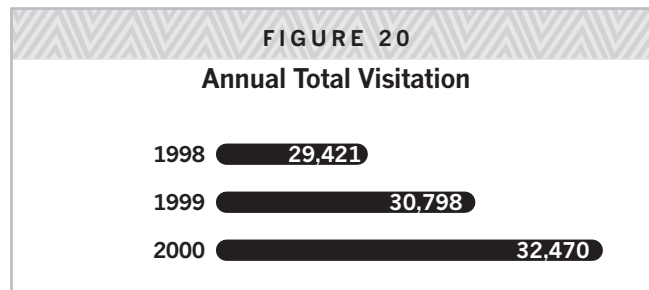
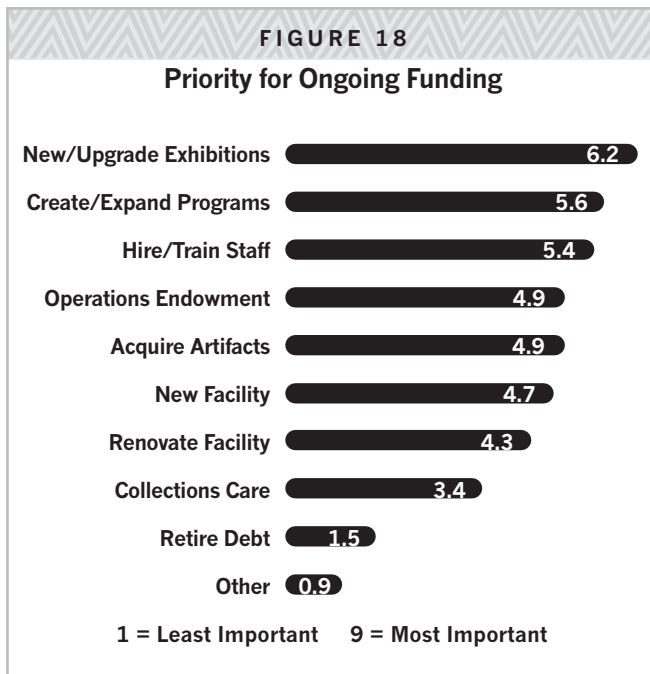
**Insurance:** Nearly all tribal institutions (90%) report they carry general liability insurance while only 33% carry insurance protecting directors, officers, etc. from being sued. This follows the general trend among smaller museums in the United States.

**Deficit situations:** When asked how deficits are covered, nearly half of those responding (48% of forty) report that the tribe designates an appropriation to cover the deficit. Nearly 25% report that deficits are carried over to the next fiscal year. Another 8% state that deficits are not allowed. Only three report that the board and director raise the money to cover the deficits and two report using their endowments to cover deficits.



**Fundraising:** It is noteworthy that only 16% of the (forty-nine) institutions report having a full-time fundraiser on staff. (And in only 46% of those, that person has received formal fundraising training. See also Needs section below.) An additional five (11% of forty-four) have used fundraising consultants at least once in the past and four (9%) are currently using one. Also, a grants person or fundraiser may be a position found within the greater organization (e.g., within the tribal administration).

When asked how they would most like to use ongoing funding from an outside source, there was no consensus among the fifty responding institutions. The nine items tested generally fell into two groups. Exhibitions, programs, staff, creating endowments, acquiring artifacts, and a new facility were of higher priority than were renovation, collections care, and retiring debt. (See Figure 18)



**Visitor counts for three years:** Although nearly all (82%) claim they formally count all visitors, only 78% supplied their visitation numbers. Based on the thirty-two responding institutions, patronage has been steadily increasing over the past three years. (See Figure 20)

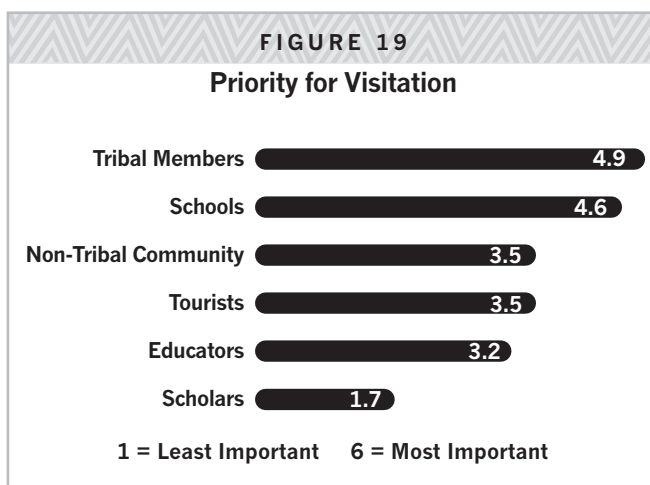
**Note:** Only 34% have a membership program.

**Relative percentage by type of visitor:** When asked to allocate visitors by type, thirty-nine institutions responded. Individuals and families make up 39% of the visitors, followed by school tours at 30%, 21% group tours, and about 10% foreign visitors.

## ◆ Audience and Visitation

When asked to prioritize among the six target audience categories presented, institutions put two near the top of their lists: tribal members and schools/students/children. The category of scholars/researchers/authors was placed at the bottom of the lists. The remaining three categories tended to be grouped together near the middle of the list. Note: placing tribal members (and maybe schools) near the top of the list is consistent with the most important function (reported earlier) of “cultural preservation, perpetuation, and revitalization for tribal community.” (See Figure 19)

**Admission:** Nearly 60% of respondents charge an entrance fee generally ranging from \$2 - \$4. (Only 21% of the reporting institutions charged other tribal members, i.e., individuals from other tribes.)



## ◆ Promotion of the Museum

Survey results show few tribal museums have marketing plans. Although only 18% (of the fifty reporting institutions) claimed they have one, many have other ways to promote their museums. (See Figure 21)

## ◆ Facility and Grounds

Only institutions defined as “stand alone,” or “dedicated museum building,” were asked to respond to this series of questions.

**Ownership of the building:** Thirty-one of forty-four responding institutions report that the tribe (or group) owns the building. Seven report that a city, college, or other entity is the owner, and six report that the museum owns the building. One cited the tribe and museum own the building jointly.

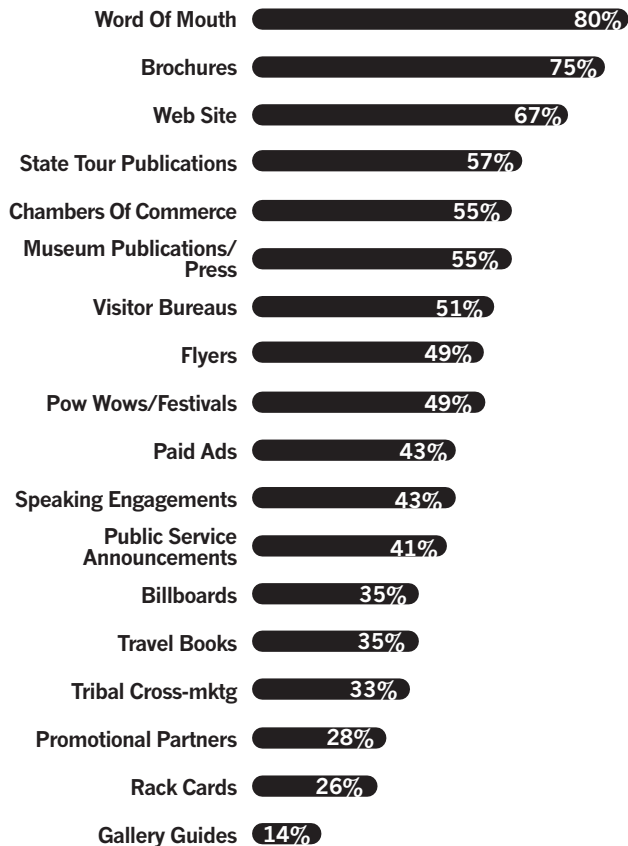
**Location:** Twenty-six respondents report that the museum is located on reservation land. Ten museums report building sites on non-tribal land, in cities, colleges, etc., and five others report the building is located on trust land.

Forty-three percent of the museum buildings were constructed since 1991 (of 44 responding institutions). Eighteen percent were constructed prior to 1960. (See Figure 22)

**ADA compliance:** Over half (59% of forty-two) report their building conforms to legal requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and is fully accessible. Another 33% of the respondents state that their building is somewhat compliant, but their facilities are not yet fully compliant.

FIGURE 21

Promotion of the Museum



**All museum functions in a single building:** Twenty-eight out of forty-five responding institutions (62%) report that their functions, services, and programs are housed within one building.

**Total square footage of single building, or multiple buildings and areas:** There were twenty-three responding to building size, and that size ranged from a modest 629 to 308,000 square feet. (The majority of the responses were at the smaller end of the scale: five report 1,000 – 1,999 square feet; four report 2,000 – 2,999; and three report 3,000 – 3,999. The only other multiple instances were two in the 5,000 –5,999 range.)

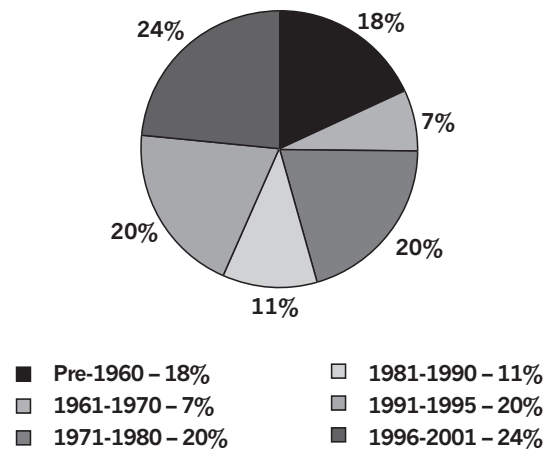
There were seven responses in the multiple building and areas category, ranging from a low of 560 square feet to a high of 54,000 and averaging 14,590 square feet.

**Building condition:** There were forty-four responses to this three-choice question. Twenty-one (48%) felt their museum building was inadequate, and an equal number report their building is adequate. Two felt their building was ideal.

**Areas that need improvement:** Responses were received from over half (twenty-six of fifty-one) of the institutions.

FIGURE 22

Year of Building Construction



**Note:** The buildings constructed prior to 1960 were built in: 1780, 1849, 1913, 1922, 1930, 1932, 1938, and 1941.

Survey responses clearly indicate the need for more adequate collection storage as well as building needs such as improved lighting, battling structural mold, repairing leaky roofs, more offices, gift shop, etc.

Of the top four choices for areas that need improvement, three relate to collection storage. The second most important areas relate to public programs and interpretation.

Respondents were asked which of the following systems they currently have. It is more interesting to note what they do not have rather than what they do have. It may not be surprising that very few have food service, but nearly two-thirds do not have a professionally-sound collection storage area and/or a disaster preparedness plan. About half do not have an emergency evacuation plan, interpreted grounds or natural areas for visitors, and/or changing exhibits. About one-third do not have a climate control system, space for public programs, and/or traditional care practices and ceremonies. (See Figure 23)

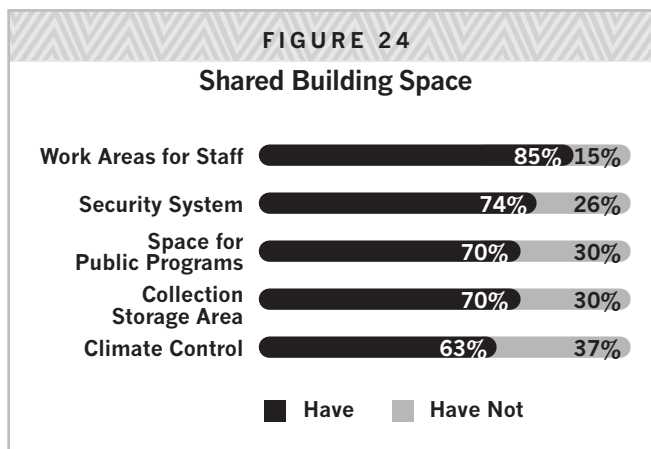
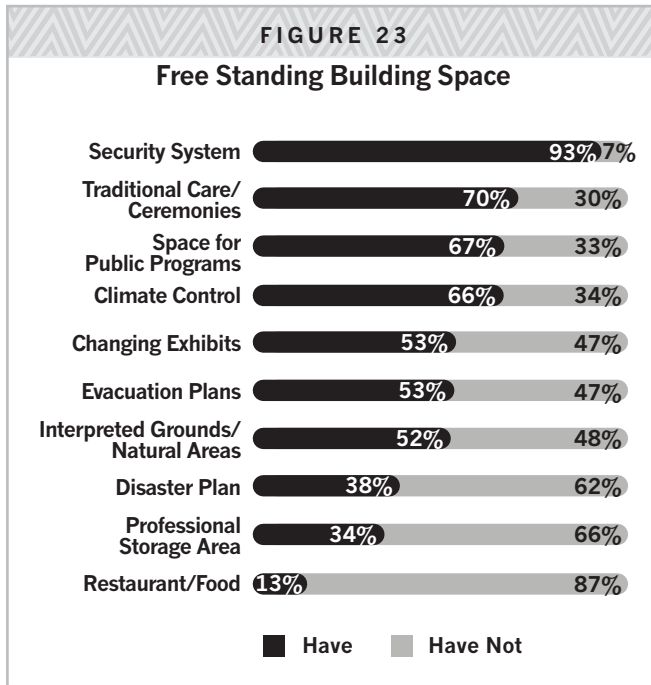
The next portion of the survey report is dedicated to those instances where there is no separate museum building but may instead entail exhibits in tribal facilities, such as administrative offices or libraries.

**Square footage:** Twelve institutions responded to this question. Dedicated square footage in other buildings averaged 18,161 square feet and ranged from 200 to 85,000 square feet.

**Note:** Figures may reflect total size of building, rather than tribal museum space. There is no way to know for sure.

When queried about museum facilities when the museum shares buildings with others, about one-third state they do not have climate control, collection storage, or area and/or





space for public programs. Over one quarter do not have a security system. (See Figure 24)

**Note:** there seems to have been some confusion regarding whether respondents should fill out the section pertaining only to those with dedicated museums or the section pertaining to shared spaces. Data are reported here as reported by respondents.

## Technology

The survey asked how the tribal museums used computer technology in their work. It is apparent there is widespread use of computer technology, but the survey results tend to indicate that the majority of use is by about half the respondents who use computers for almost all categories. It is encouraging, however, that there is scattered use, even by the smaller institutions. The bad news is that many of the institutions do not use computers

for any purpose. (See Figure 25)

**Web site:** Of the forty-seven responding institutions, over half (57%) report having a Web site.

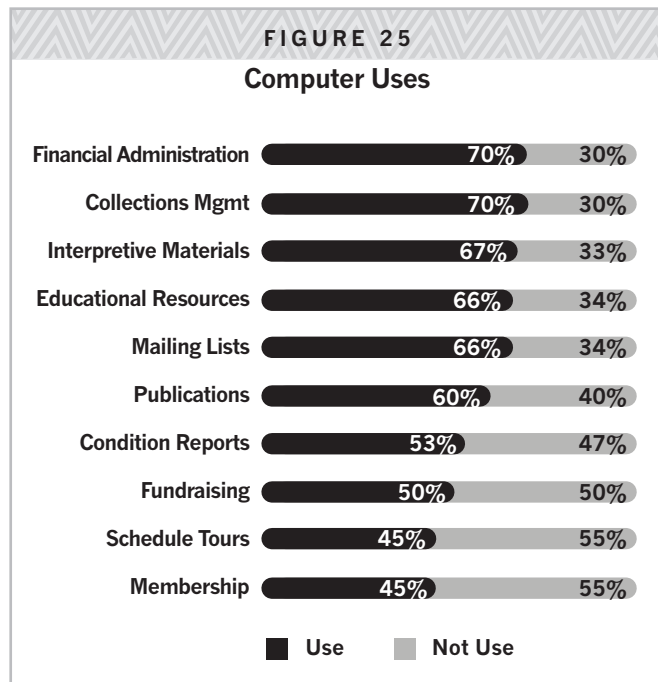
**Internet Access:** Forty-three of forty-eight reporting institutions have Internet access, although the question did not specify whether access was onsite or through another entity such as a library or tribal government building. Twelve institutions report sharing computers with another organization. The majority of the 37 responding institutions access the Internet by modem. (See Figure 26)

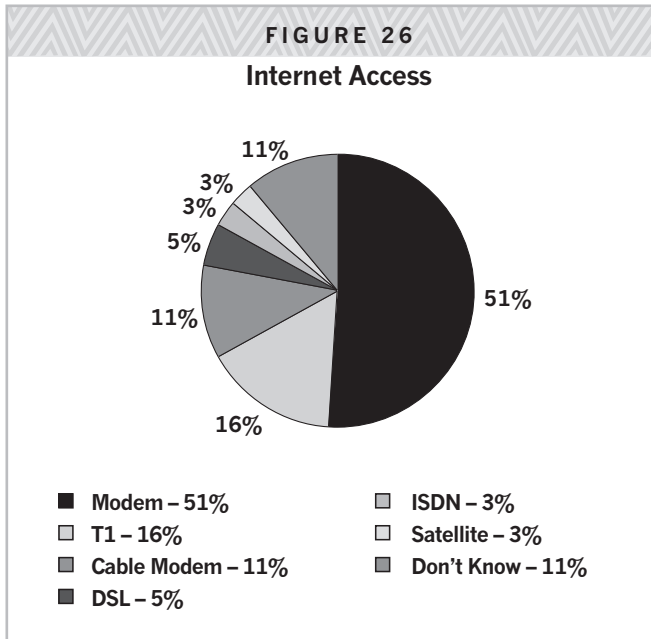
It is apparent that computer technology is not well utilized in the majority of tribal museums, and, in some cases, may not be completely understood. Ten (of forty-nine) report they provide Internet access to the general public and only five of those provide computer access of collections to the general public. Twenty-three report having technology support staff in-house, while thirty-two report the tribe supplies technology support staff, albeit usually on a limited basis. Eighteen museums report using external technology support vendors and five rely solely on volunteers.

It is encouraging that thirty report computers are available for all museum staff requiring them. The numbers bear out computers are in use for a wide variety of administrative functions.

## Collections

**History of collections:** Collections of tribal museums are generally focused on contemporary art and then ethnographic and archaeological objects. Some come from collections of local tribal members and non-Indian collectors. Tribal governments and museums have also purchased collections or





unique traditional items on the art market. There have been instances where outside foundations and individuals have purchased items for tribal groups. There have been instances in which items bought were religious items, grave goods, or other sensitive materials given to a religious group or society rather than to a museum.

Initially, there was some expectation that material from non-Indian institutions might come home to tribal museums via NAGPRA and be a new source for tribal museum collections. However, much of this material was of a religious or sensitive nature and was returned to the tribes' religious communities.

A study is now underway at several institutions to determine the extent of contamination of artifacts and potential ways to rid the items of dangerous chemicals. The first step in the process is to determine which of these objects are chemically contaminated with such things as arsenic, a common procedure used in an earlier day by museum conservators to kill various infestations in myriad artifacts.

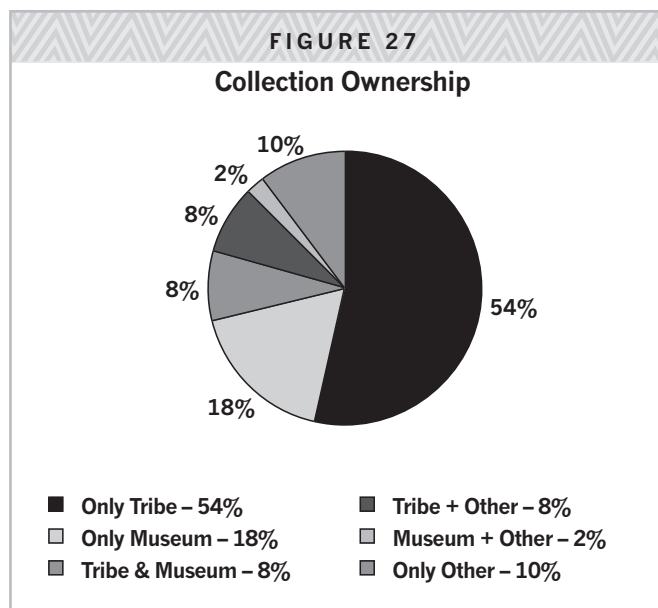
**Focus and strength of collections:** In addition to acquired ethnographic and archaeological collections, many Indian museums and cultural centers focus on contemporary art. Seen as less sensitive and arguably less potentially controversial, exhibitions of art collections of two and three-dimensional materials are popular with the local community and general public. Paintings, sculpture, textiles, pottery, jewelry, beadwork, etc., produced by local or related tribal groups, generally constitute the greatest strengths of tribal museums.

**Number of objects:** There were thirty-three institutions reporting the number of objects in their collections. The average number was 5,675 but the range was wide – from

twelve to 20,000. The museums with numbers like twelve items in their collections are especially small and may represent museums that are new or museums that extensively borrow exhibits from other museums. In addition, 36% (of forty-seven) claim they have an active program to acquire artifacts for their permanent collections.

In addition to “owning” objects, 51% (of forty-nine responding) borrow objects from other institutions and 58% (of fifty responding) lend them.

**Ownership of collection:** Among the forty-eight institutions responding, over half of the collections are owned entirely by the tribes, nearly 29% by the museums. The “other” category includes: college, board of trustees, and private pieces on loan. (See Figure 27)



In the event that the museum permanently closes, what happens to the collection? Of the thirty-eight responding institutions, most (74%) report the collection would be the responsibility of the tribe, presumably since they already have title to the collection. Other options cited by other institutions included: donation to another institution, sold and/or donated, returned to owners, donation to the tribe, and yet to be determined.

Does the museum have a written collections policy? Fifty percent (of forty-eight responding institutions) have a written collections policy. One reports their policy is “very old.” According to generally-accepted museum standards, all museum policies should be formally reviewed and revised as necessary by the governing authority on a regular basis, usually every five years.

**Location of collection storage:** Over half the reporting (forty-eight) institutions report their collections are both on exhibit and stored in a storage room/area within the

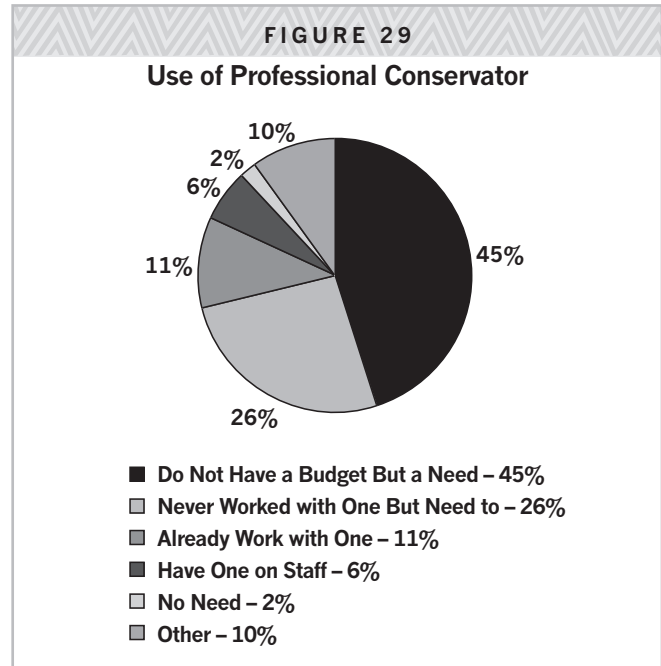
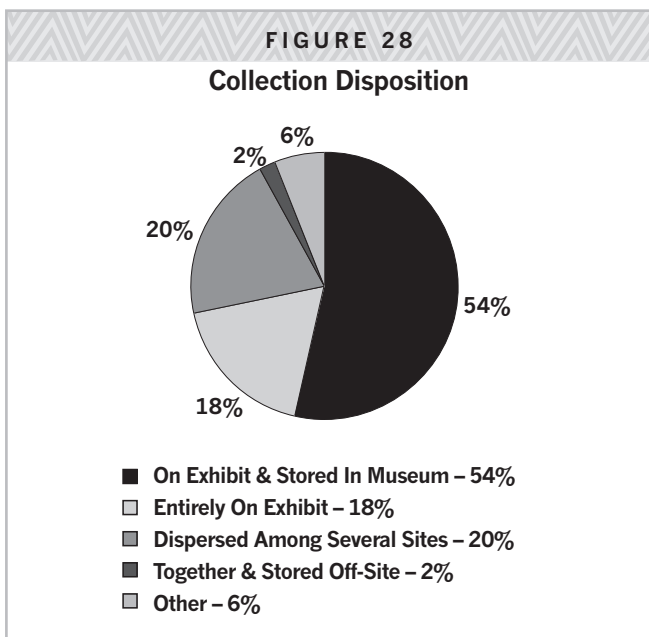
museum. In 18%, their entire collection is on exhibit, and 20% report their collection is dispersed among several locations. (See Figure 28)

Collection storage soon becomes inadequate even for relatively new facilities, requiring every available space be utilized, including space not owned by the museum or the tribe. Rental space is often required, raising issues of climate and pest control.

Written policy regarding conservation and physical care? Only 24% (of fifty) tribal institutions have a written conservation and care policy. Conservation is almost universally contracted out given that such technical expertise and training are rare in Indian museums. This constitutes one area of needed training and education, since budgets generally cannot support full time conservation or the training of staff. Educational efforts should also include bringing awareness of the need for conservation, whether contemporary paintings or ethnographic material.

**Use of professional conservators:** Over half of those (forty-seven) responding to the query recognize the need for conservation of their collections, however budget restraints impose limits on the work done in this area. (See Figure 29)

**Storage of collections with consideration of traditional tribal practices:** Of the forty-seven responding institutions, 68% store their collections with traditional care being provided “as much as possible” given limitations of space, budget, and other considerations. While the practice of storing personal or ritual collections might be frowned upon by non-tribal museums, tribal museums may be seen as the physical repository of ritual objects that are in current use. The museum may provide the security and protection, care, and respect for ritual objects when not in use. Items can be retrieved by the ritual practitioners and, following the ceremony, returned to the care of the museum.



A few institutions have made a concerted effort to establish conservation and handling procedures that conform to traditional practices. For example, women, especially menstruating women, should not handle objects used exclusively by males, such as weapons and hunting equipment. In other cases, some objects are not to be stored above the heads of people. Other objects are required to be stored in conditions where they can “breathe.” Most museums have not instituted this degree of restrictiveness.

### ◆ Exhibitions/Programs/ Interpretation

**Interpretive themes/main stories:** There is considerable bibliographic reference material on each tribal group, although comprehensive separate tribal histories may not exist. These materials include traditional stories, “mythologies,” religion, philosophy, and other related material that contribute to the corpus of prospective themes and stories that form the basis of museum exhibitions and educational programming.

**Written tribal history:** Of those forty-eight institutions responding, 67% of them report having a written history from its own perspective.

**Interpretive plan:** Of those forty-nine institutions responding, 41% report having an interpretive plan, usually created by the director. Of the seventeen reporting institutions who have a plan, over half (53%) claim the plan is reviewed and revised between three and five years; the remaining are divided between once a year (29%) and once every two years (18%).

Although not specifically reported in the survey, one area

that remains of prospective interest to the museum field is how the individual museums deal with the question of tribal origins, and how this subject is presented to the public. In at least one case, both the traditional genesis belief and the scientific explanation are presented. The merging of belief and science in policy and formal plan creates an interesting intersection for tribal museums.

**Ongoing programs/services:** Nearly half (49%) of the forty-five reporting museums offer separate programs for tribal members versus non-tribal members.

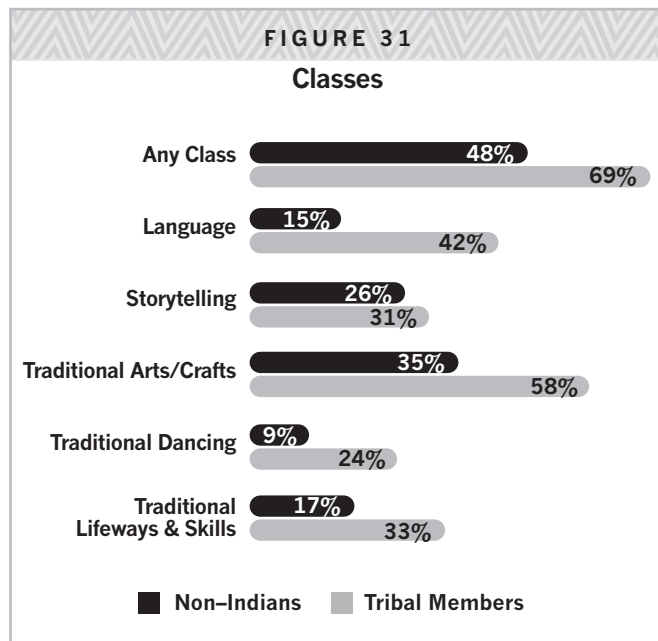
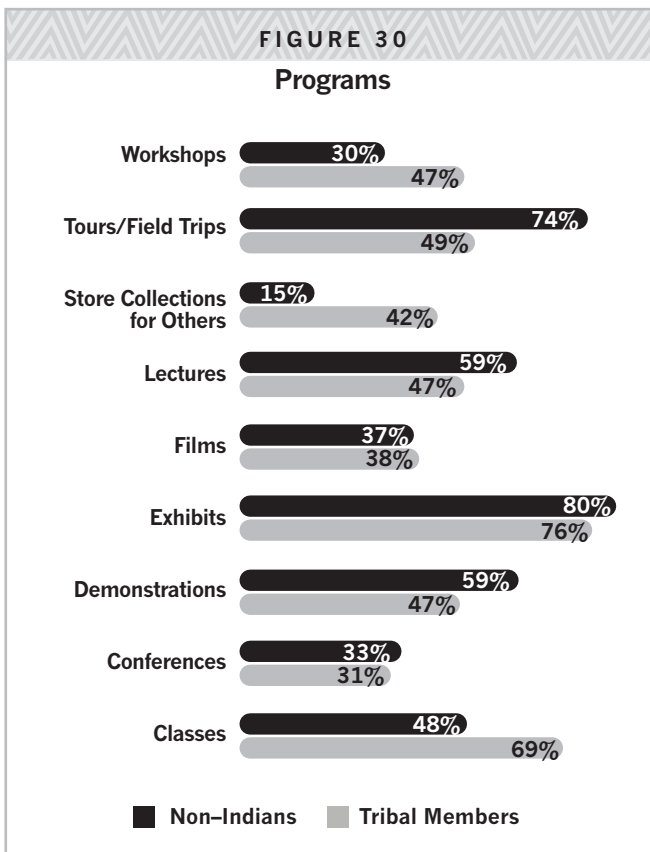
**Tribal arts and crafts carried in museum gift shop:** Of the 45 institutions responding to this survey section, 73% carry tribally produced arts and crafts in the gift shop.

**Programs:** Not surprisingly, most institutions offer educational and performance programming to both tribal members and non-Indians. Just over one-third of them offer conferences and films to both audience types. Other programs varied by audience type. Classes and workshops were more often available for tribal members. Conversely, demonstrations, lectures, exhibits, and tours were more often available for non-Indians. (See Figure 30)

In terms of classes provided, language classes are usually available to tribal members learning or relearning their tribal language. Some Indian museums require their staff to attend tribal language classes, including those who may be non-Indians or members of other tribes. Language is often a sensitive issue in Indian communities, and there may be an

informal restriction on having language classes open only to Indian people. Individuals who teach these classes in the museum or in the community are often very respected elders who may readily volunteer their expertise as a service to their community. Tour guides often benefit from learning the tribal terminology for objects or concepts featured in the museum and exhibits. The public is exposed to native language by having tour guides teach the visitors the terms for various objects and artifacts. A tape of the spoken tribal language as part of an exhibit can also be educational for visitors. Note: Some facilities have exhibit labels with the native language and English translation. Native alphabets are often used if they have been created, or some utilize the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) instead.

Traditional arts and crafts are also offered to tribal members by more than half the reporting institutions. (See Figure 31)



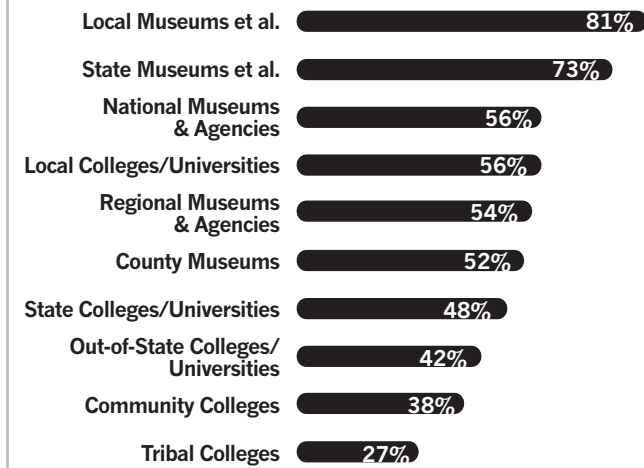
**Written educational goals:** Only seven of the forty-seven responding institutions (15%) have written goals for their defined audiences.

**Working relationships:** Most of these institutions are not isolated in their work. A majority of the forty-eight reporting institutions report they work with local and state museums, historical societies, and cultural agencies. About half report working with national museums and cultural agencies, local colleges and universities, regional museums and cultural agencies, county museums, historical societies, and cultural agencies, and state colleges and universities. (See Figure 32)

**Trend of outside relationships:** Not only do a majority of institutions work with outside museums and universities, but over the last five years, that interaction is on the increase for the majority (66% of the forty-one responding institutions). Only one institution reports a decrease in those relationships.

FIGURE 32

Partnerships



**Interns:** In addition to other relationships, 49% of the (forty-nine) reporting institutions have an average of 2.8 student interns at some time during the year.

**Working with schools:** Only eight of the forty-seven reporting institutions (17%) claim they do not work closely with local/regional school districts to provide programs/services; 45% say they do have a close relationship, and 38% say to at least some degree.

**Programs in schools:** Among the thirty-nine museums providing services in schools, nearly all (90%) give talks on history and culture and nearly half (49%) give demonstrations. Fewer institutions aid with curricula (39%), provide hands-on kits (26%), provide education trunks (15%), and give multimedia presentations (13%).

**School groups in the museums:** Among the forty-six museums providing school programs in the museums, most (83%) give tours and lectures on tribal history/culture, offer exhibits (80%), and/or give demonstrations (65%). A fewer number of institutions provide films (39%).

**Special needs visitors:** With the exception of having wheelchair accessible exhibits, most of these institutions are sorely lacking in addressing special needs visitors. Nearly 30% of the forty-nine reporting institutions do not have services to accommodate special needs visitors. Among the thirty-five institutions with some special needs services, 86% have wheelchair accessible exhibit designs. Fewer (29%) have wheelchairs, offer special tours (26%), offer audio tours (9%) and/or have signs in Braille (9%). No one offers sign language or foreign language interpretation.

**Formal evaluation:** Over half (54%) of the fifty reporting institutions have no formal evaluation process in place. Among the twenty-three institutions which do have a process,

43% conduct on-site interviews, 26% conduct by mail, and 91% use comment cards.

**Tribal member involvement:** Thirty-nine of forty-seven reporting institutions (83%) report active involvement of tribal members in the development of museum programs and exhibitions.

And 88% (of fifty) report the involvement of tribal elders.

**Volunteers:** Just over one-quarter (27%) of the forty-five reporting institutions have no volunteers; the majority of them (53%) have ten or fewer.

Seniors (tribal elders) often show great enthusiasm for wanting to serve as volunteers or paid staff at tribal museums. Indeed, they often serve as the best representatives of their culture, although this does not necessarily mean they do not need additional information about earlier times, such as the archaeologically distant past. However, they may know traditional stories about their origins and mythological past that make them invaluable in dealing with the general public and school groups. Elders function well as demonstrators in the creation of traditional material culture items, such as basketry and beadwork. Their availability for working in the museum may need to be geared to their personal timetables, physical health, and other factors.

In the case of high school students who may be recruited to function as tour guides, consideration must be made to account for other school activities. Any museum program that institutes a training program for high school students may find a real enthusiasm to learn as much as possible about their own culture, past and present, in order that they can authoritatively speak before visitors, and maybe their own people.

**Museum involvement in local festivals, powwows, etc.:**

Most (78%) of the forty-two reporting institutions play a role in tribal celebrations. They are usually open during special community events, such as powwows, at hours when the museum is normally closed. Staffing can be difficult during this time since staff usually wishes to participate in the events, such as religious occasions. Some museums may host weddings, festivals, and other social events.

**Museum role in preservation/renewal of tribal ceremonies/traditions:**

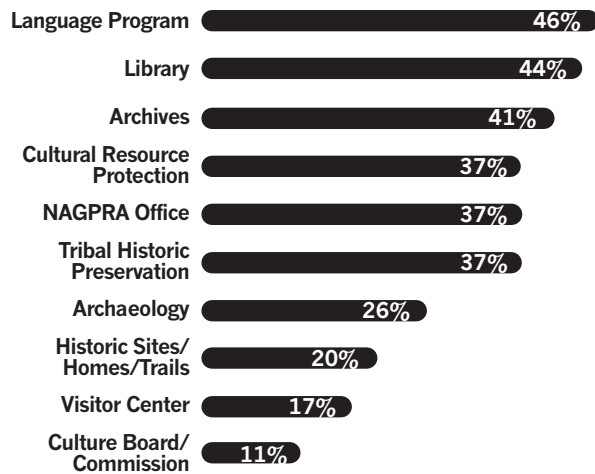
About two-thirds (68%) of the forty-one reporting museums play an active role. This is primarily informal, since many/most religious ceremonies may be closed to the public, therefore may not be sponsored by the museum or held on museum property.

**Other tribal cultural programs separate from the museum:**

In addition to the actual museum, the tribes also operate a variety of programs – although fewer than 50% operate any one specifically. Language programs top the list with 46% (of the forty-six reporting institutions) followed closely by libraries (44%) and archives (41%). Nearly as many (37%) are involved in cultural resource protection, NAGPRA, and/or have a tribal historic preservation officer. (See Figure 33)

FIGURE 33

Other Tribal Programs



All of these tribal operations can and probably do have a direct impact on museum operations. The survey does not indicate detail of their involvement.

**Other museum responsibilities:** For the most part, these institutions were not responsible for areas outside the museum. Of the forty-nine responding institutions, 69% claim they have no responsibility in any of the other areas. Of the remaining fifteen institutions which did report some responsibility, 47% are responsible for marked burial sites, 40% for archaeological sites, 33% each for historic houses and tribal cemetery, 27% for unmarked burial sites, and 20% for historic sites and trails.

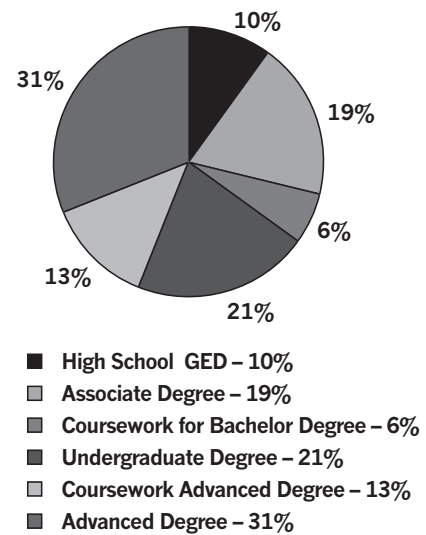
◆ Staff and Staff Development

**Full-time and part-time staff:** Of the forty-four reporting institutions answering, 89% report having at least one paid full-time staff person; the average is 5.8. The number ranged from one to eighty-nine. Of the forty-four answering regarding part-time staff, 10% report having at least one paid part-time staff person; the average is 1.1. The number of part-time paid staff ranged from one to ten. In addition just over one half (53%) reporting institutions have seasonal employees usually during a high tourist season and when schools are in recess.

**Director/Manager educational level:** Among the forty-eight responding institutions, the education levels ranged from high school/GED to advanced degrees. Interestingly, nearly half (44%) either received advanced degrees or at least completed course work towards one. Areas of study varied greatly – from education to journalism, archaeology to government, business to fine arts. (See Figure 34)

FIGURE 34

Director/Manager Education



**Position descriptions & formal performance evaluation:** Nearly all (80%) of the forty-six reporting institutions have position descriptions for all staff; 69% (of forty-five) have formal evaluation processes for staff in place.

**Other staff needs:** Not surprisingly, when queried regarding staff needs, there was no real consensus among the forty-four responding institutions. Heading the list were fundraiser/development officer (52%), tour guides (52%), exhibit designer (48%), administrative assistants (46%), and curators/historians (41%). (See Figure 35)

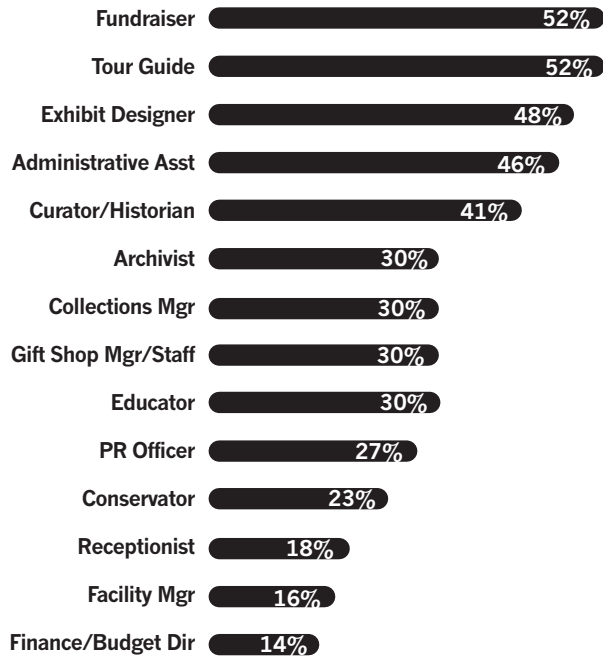
**Staff training:** Nearly half (45%) of the forty-four institutions answering feel that the director and staff have received the professional training they need. Training received over the past five years most likely included: collections management, storage, and handling (84%) and exhibition development (61%). Fewer than 50% of the institutions availed themselves of any of the other types of training. (See Figure 36)

**Organizations that have provided professional training:** Although (forty-six) institutions report receiving training from a variety of sources, nearly half (48%) have utilized the Native American Museums Program through the Smithsonian Institution. Other mentions include AASLH (35%), local/regional museums groups (30%), AAM and NMAI (22%), and finally university-based museum programs (17%) and university – non-specific (4%).

**Training value:** Most (76%) of the forty-one institutions found the training very valuable. The remaining 24% report the training to have been somewhat valuable.

**Training formats that work best:** Among the forty-six responding institutions, workshops are the best training format for 89%. Seminars and on-site technical assistance are

**FIGURE 35**  
**Staffing Needs**



**FIGURE 36**  
**Training Provided**



each favored by 60%. Less popular are one-on-one consultation (42%), publications (29%), internships between two and eight weeks (20%), and distance learning (11%).

Thirty-eight of forty-seven respondents (81%) report having sought out local resources for training opportunities, internships, and partnerships. Strong preference for short-term training and focused instruction is evidenced in the survey. This section of the survey did not request information on degree granting possibilities in museum studies, conservation, etc. at colleges and universities.

**Priorities for needed training:** Not surprisingly, needs for training varied with no real consensus. “Exhibition development” and “collection management” elicited the highest priorities followed by education and fundraising. Most of the other topics listed tended to group together – with equal priority ratings. It is worth mentioning that when museums wrote in a specific need, they generally gave that specific need a high priority. (See Figure 37)

**Membership in professional organizations:** Of the forty-eight responding institutions, 21% do not belong to any professional museum association. Among the thirty-eight that do, 66% belong to AASLH, 63% to state museum associations, 55% to AAM, 37% to regional museum associations, and only 13% to specialized associations such as the National Society for Fundraising Executives.

Professional memberships are recognized as very important

by most tribal museums; however, as costs of memberships, publications, meetings, etc., rise, institutions surviving on limited budgets are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain these affiliations.

**Note:** Questions regarding accreditation by the American Association of Museums were not a part of this survey. For a future survey, it would be important to know whether accreditation is already granted, anticipated, or not being sought.

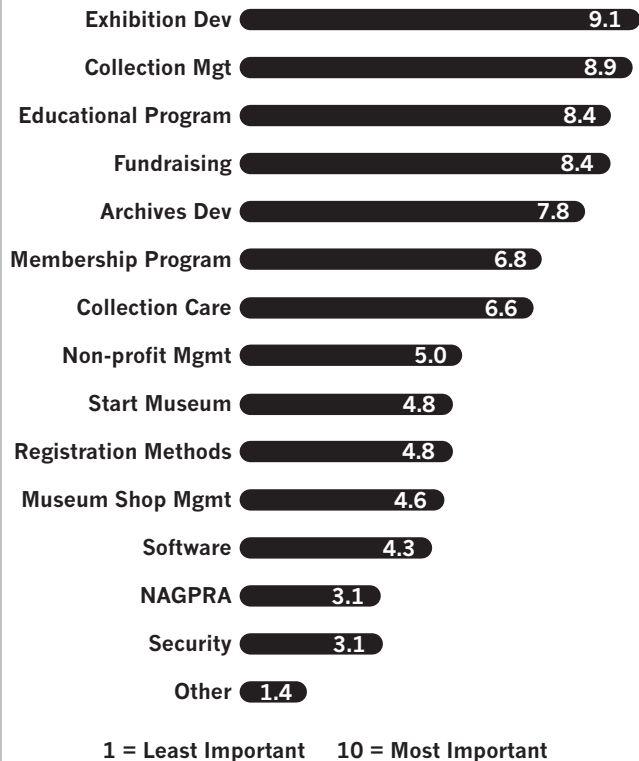
**Attendance at professional meetings:** Of the forty-eight responding institutions, 31% do not attend museum profession meetings. Among the thirty-three institutions that do, 76% attend state meetings, 67% local meetings, 52% national meetings, and 39% regional meetings.

As is true in other professional fields, as budget levels decrease so does the ability to attend professional meetings. These are often seen by budgeting authorities as having only social value, although this is not at all the case. Professional meetings are important places for information exchange, networking, and professional recognition of the institution.

**Awareness of Indian Arts and Crafts Board Act, truth-in-marketing law, “Indian made”:** Forty-five of forty-eight museums (94%) report awareness of this act, which protects recognized Indian craft persons and artists from the fraudulent marketing of non-Indian items. The Indian Arts and Crafts Board, based in Washington, DC,

**FIGURE 37**

**Training Subject Priority List**



has made a concerted effort to educate both Indians and non-Indians alike about the importance of proper labeling for all arts and crafts sold throughout the country and to combat the sale of items fraudulently labeled as Indian made. The influx of machine-made and/or foreign imports was caused the value of authentic American Indian arts and crafts to decline. The Indian Arts and Crafts Board has been attempting to correct this situation so customers have a better appreciation for authentic, hand-made arts and crafts made by authentic Indians who can document their ancestry.

Thirty-three of forty-six institutions (72%) requested information on the legislation. Thirty-seven institutions (80%) report they are aware of fake items being sold as Indian-made.

◆ **Museum Archives**

Most of the responding institutions do not have a tribal archive, but would like to have such a facility. Lacking the budget, space, trained personnel, etc., most see this possibility as being in the distant future and is not a high priority. Some of the museums already have ephemera that should reside in a clean, secure, pest-free facility, and many

worry about progressive deterioration of their collections. These include books, permanent and active paper records, historic and contemporary photographs, microfilm, audio and videotapes, etc.

Few museums have written schedules as to when archival material will be processed. Projects such as the Doris Duke Oral History Project produced valuable and irreplaceable data that is slowly deteriorating in cramped storage space, along with other valuable tribal records.

◆ **NAGPRA**

The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990) was enacted to provide federal protection of Indian grave sites and the return of osteological remains, associated grave goods, and cultural items deemed sacred and necessary for the performance of rituals. The legislation (P.L. 101-601) came about as a consequence of intense political action by tribes, national Indian interest organizations, and individuals such as Senator Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii).

Museums that receive federal funds must submit inventories to the individual tribes related to the cultural materials and/or human remains within their collections. They must return items that are formally requested. Heavy penalties can result from non-compliance. The law was recently refined to accommodate the reasonable needs of institutions to comply.

In the past, tribes have attempted to compete with outside interests in acquiring objects on the open market, usually unsuccessfully. As one successful example, the Mohave and Chemehuevi of Arizona mortgaged precious reservation lands in order to purchase at auction objects that had been made by ancestors, and these were eventually placed in their tribal museum.

One respondent points out that “the law has been effective in producing summaries and inventories, but less effective in fostering collaboration and effecting repatriation.” Also, this respondent points to inadequate funding to have an effective NAGPRA program, and believes that tribal people generally do not understand the legislation. He stresses the need for “funding, community participation and education, tribal council education, working with stubborn museum personnel and archaeologists....”

Conservation of contaminated objects returned or those eligible to be returned under NAGPRA is a major concern, especially arsenic-treated objects. Some of these repatriated items were already put back into use prior to the announcement that such chemicals may make artifacts unusable for ritual or other purposes. Few tribes have the budget to finance the very expensive chemical analysis of returned objects.



## ◆ Museum Library

Some tribes already have separately organized tribal libraries. However, some museums envision a library/archives as part of the museum's operations. Libraries face many of the same challenges as museums, including lack of funding and trained personnel.

## ◆ Future of the American Indian Museums Program

The majority of tribal museums would like to see a national organization created to represent the interests of the wide range of institutions included under the term tribal museums. They generally rank it as a very high priority. Some also see such an organization as a potential lobbying organization to press for legislation favorable to the Indian museum movement in the United States.

Advocacy ranks relatively high by respondents, and they picture an organization representing tribal museums at the national level. This organization is seen as conducting workshops and training programs, and holding conferences. Most respondents are willing to pay a membership fee to support such an organization.

## ◆ Conclusions

The survey of American Indian museums and cultural centers was designed to address four major areas: 1) present overall status, 2) current situation, 3) needs, and 4) expectations. The survey was successful in obtaining data on each of these topics. Although the sample of tribal museums and cultural centers was small, there was sufficient quantifiable data and responses from various Indian institutions to draw representative premises and principles.

The sample was wide ranging, from strictly defined tribal museums and cultural centers on federal reservations, to Indian school and college museums, National Park Service sites, and urban Indian community centers with galleries. It included some prior to their opening. Each provides a unique perspective into their situation, experience, and future.

The present overall status of these Indian institutions generally reflects that of the museum field at large—lack of sufficient funding, training, personnel, conservation, programming, and inadequate facilities. Unique to Indian museums is that legislation directly impacts their institutions, including the complex subject of repatriation,

authenticity of arts and crafts and their makers, the casino complex, and misinformation about the American Indian that needs to be addressed by educational institutions such as tribal museums. The educational mandate of tribal museums needs to be clarified and their limited resources focused on this area. Tribal museums need to recognize their responsibility to educate not only their own people about their unique history and culture, but that there is also a major responsibility to educate the general viewing public that enters their institutions.

The current situation of tribal museums and cultural centers also mirrors that of non-Indian institutions. The world and national economy directly impacts what happens in Indian communities, urban and rural. Indian museum administration and their advocates need to educate their political representatives that museums are, or can be, a major contributor to the local economy via the tourism industry, the larger local economy, the job market, and other areas.

**Needs:** All of the responding institutions indicate they have room for improvement and need assistance in a number of areas. For example, formal training is needed in various areas from finance to conservation, from museum education to exhibit design, computer technology and training, grantsmanship and fundraising—essentially all areas of museum operations. There is an unmet need for instruction in computer technology, to demonstrate what technology can contribute in areas such as collections management, financial management, electronic document storage, and human resources. And, while short-term workshops and seminars are extremely helpful, there is also the need to have students pursue formal undergraduate and graduate degrees in related areas of study. Financial assistance and scholarships should be made available to encourage Indian students to enter the museum field as a career choice.

**Expectations:** One of the major conclusions to emerge from this survey is the almost universal expression of need for the creation of a national American Indian tribal museum association; a freestanding organization unaffiliated with any existing organization. This idea has been around since the 1970s. One attempt was unsuccessful. During a recent annual meeting of AASLH in Providence, Rhode Island, September 17–20, 2003, representatives of AASLH's American Indian Museum Program steering committee began conversations necessary to organize a free-standing American Indian tribal museum organization.

# Mail-in Survey



Tribal museums and cultural centers were asked to respond to the following questions. For the sake of design and space, the survey has been reformatted for this report.



## General Information

**Year Founded**

**Opening Date, if different**

**Days and Hours Open to the Public**

**Director/Manager's Name**



## Mission

**What is your mission?**

*Please attach the written statement if you have one.*

**Has this mission been formally adopted by the tribe and/or governing body?**

**What are the most important functions of your institution? Please prioritize.**

- Cultural preservation, perpetuation and revitalization for tribal community
- Economic development
- Public education for non-tribal members
- Public relations for tribal government
- Repository for cultural materials and information
- Tourism
- Other



## Governance

**What is the museum's governing structure?**

- An independent 501(c)(3) non-profit

under state law and separate from tribal government

- A 501(c)(3) non-profit under tribal law and under tribal government
- A 7871 organization through the tribal government
- A stand-alone department of tribal government and governed by the tribe
- A program that is part of another tribal department, such as a library
- A business enterprise of the tribe
- Other

**What is your governing board?**

- Board of trustees/directors
- Business committee
- Culture committee/commission
- Tribal Council
- Other
- Do not have a board

**If you do not have a board, have you considered having one?**

**Does your institution have bylaws?**

**When was the last time your bylaws were amended?**

**What are the skills and abilities your museum requires of its board members? Please check all that apply.**

- Cultural and historical expertise, but not necessarily an elder
- Donation of professional services, such as legal or accounting services
- Financial contributions
- Political and/or social influence
- Technical expertise
- Tribal elder
- Volunteer service on board committees and activities
- Other
- There are no requirements of board members
- There are no requirements because our board is the Tribal Council

**What are the special skills and areas of expertise your current board has to offer the museum? Please check all that apply.**

- Academic

- Business
- Cultural and historical knowledge
- Education
- Finance, such as banking
- Fundraising
- Human resources
- Legal
- Library/archives knowledge
- Management
- Planning
- Programming
- Public relations and marketing
- Tribal elder
- Tribal government and operations
- Other

**Who selects and approves the appointment of new board members?**

- Board of trustees/directors
- Business council
- Museum director
- Tribal Council
- Other

**What is the length of term to serve on the board?**

**What is the board's composition?**

- All are tribal members
- All are non-tribal members
- A combination of tribal members and non-tribal members

**Do you have a formal process for board orientation, training, and evaluation?**

**Does your board have standing committees in any of the following areas? If yes, please check all that apply.**

- Board Nominations
- Collections
- Executive
- Finance
- Fundraising/Development
- Programs
- Public Relations and Marketing
- Other
- Do not have any standing committees

Please rate the following two statements on a scale from 1 to 5.

**The Tribal Council recognizes the museum's contributions and value to the community.**

**The tribal community recognizes the contributions and value of the museum.**

Please rate the following two statements on a scale from 1 to 5.

**The museum is a priority for the Tribal Council.**

**The museum is a priority for the tribal community.**



## Finance/Fundraising/ Planning

**What was the museum's total operating budget for the last complete fiscal year?**

*Please be sure to total all sources that make up the budget. For example, in some situations, museum staff salaries are paid for by the tribe and embedded in other budgets, not the museum's. We need the total amount of the operating budget.*

**Do you have an endowment?**

**The museum's current overall financial situation is:**

*Please choose one.*

- Strong and growing
- Level and stable from year to year
- Difficult to project, significant variations from year to year
- No growth, just breaking even
- Unstable and losing money

**Please break down all sources of income by percentages for the last complete fiscal year:**

- Tribal government support as a result of gaming
- Tribal government support
- Grants from federal agencies (example: NEA, NEH, IMLS, NPS, etc.)
- Grants from state agencies (example: state humanities councils, etc.)
- Grants from foundations
- Grants from corporations
- Individual contributions
- Endowment

- Admissions
  - Gift shop sales
  - Membership dues
  - Other income (combined facility rental, special events, food service, etc.)
- =100% Total of all categories

**Over the last five years, the level of tribal government financial support has**  
*Please choose one of the following.*

- Increased
- Remained the same
- Decreased
- We do not receive any financial support from the tribe
- Other

**What types of services and materials are regularly contributed to the museum by the tribal community?**

*Please check all that apply*

- Donation of artifacts and other history-related materials to the collections
- Gives and records oral histories
- Loans artifacts and other history-related materials to the collections
- Makes personal financial contributions/donations
- Serves on museum committees
- Shares traditional and historical knowledge
- Volunteers time for programs and tours
- Other

**In your last complete fiscal year, how much money was spent on staff training? Please include the cost of travel, per diem and related expenses for all staff.**

- \$0, no money was available for training
- \$100 - \$500
- \$501 - \$1,000
- \$1,001 - \$2,000
- \$2,001 - \$3,000
- More than \$3,001 per year

*Please indicate amount*

**Do you have an annual budget to acquire objects and artifacts for the permanent collection?**

- If yes, how much is devoted to this activity per year?

**Please break down expenditures by percentages for the last complete fiscal year:**

- Staffing (include all positions here except where noted below)
  - Travel
  - Exhibitions
  - Public programs (such as demonstrations, lectures, classes, etc.)
  - Collections care (includes conservation)
  - Archives [If located in the museum. Include staff position(s) here if applicable.]
  - Library [If located in the museum. Include staff position(s) here if applicable.]
  - Training
  - Facility operations & maintenance (include utilities, landscaping, janitorial, etc.)
  - Marketing and promotion
- =100% Total of all categories

**Does the museum have its own written policies for finance, personnel, benefits, travel and other administrative functions or do you follow the tribe's?**

- Museum
- Tribe
- Other

**Does the museum have an annual financial audit?**

**If yes, who does it?**

- Museum's independent auditor
- Tribe's auditor
- Other
- Do not have an annual audit

**Do you have a code of ethics statement?**

**If yes, is the ethics statement specifically for the museum or do you follow the tribe's?**

**Do you have a strategic plan?**

**How often do you review and revise the strategic plan?**

- Once per year
- Once every other year
- Every three to five years

**When was your strategic plan last reviewed?**

**Who creates your strategic plan?**

- Board of trustees/directors
- Museum director
- Museum director working with board and staff
- Outside consultant as the lead in conjunction with the director, board and others
- Tribal Council
- Tribal planner
- Other

**Do you have general liability insurance?**

**Do you have directors and officers insurance?**

**In an operating deficit situation, how are the deficits covered?**

- Deficits are carried over to the next fiscal year
- Endowment
- Museum director and board raise the money
- Tribe designates an appropriation
- Other

**Do you have a full-time, paid fundraiser on staff?**

**If yes, has he/she received any formal training?**

**Have you ever used paid fundraising consultants?**

*Please choose one of the following.*

- We are currently using fundraising consultants
- We have used fundraising consultants in the past
- We have never used fundraising consultants
- Other

**If you were to receive ongoing funding from an outside source, how would you prioritize your needs?**

*Please prioritize the following.*

- Acquire artifacts for the permanent collection
- Construct a new facility
- Create new exhibitions and/or upgrade or modify existing ones

- Create new programs and/or expand existing ones
- Establish an endowment for operations
- Hire and train new permanent staff
- Hire or contract with a professional conservator for collection care
- Renovate an existing facility
- Retire debt
- Other



## Audience and Visitation

**Please identify your target audiences in priority order.**

- Educators/teachers
- Non-tribal community from the surrounding area
- Scholars/researchers/authors
- Schools/students/children
- Tourists (American and foreign)
- Tribal members (includes elders, adults, teens and children)
- Other

**Do you charge an admission fee?**

**If yes, what are your admission rates?**

**Do tribal members and members of other tribes pay admission?**

**Do you formally count the number of all visitors you receive?**

**What was your total visitation for each of the last three calendar years? If you do not know the exact number, please estimate the best you can.**

- 1998      • 1999      • 2000

**If you have a membership program, please indicate the total number of paid members at all levels.**

- Do not have a membership program

**What is the percentage of your total visitation for each visitor category?**

- Individuals and families
- School tours (all grades, classes, and age groups)
- Group tours

- Foreign visitors  
=100% Total of all categories

**Does your museum have a marketing plan?**

**How do you promote your museum?**  
*Please check all that apply.*

- Billboards and other outdoor venues
- Booths and tables at pow wows, cultural festivals, etc.
- Brochures
- Chambers of Commerce
- Cross-marketing efforts with other tribal enterprises
- Flyers
- Gallery guides
- Museum publications and press releases
- Paid advertisements (print, radio, television)
- Presentations and speaking engagements
- Promotional partnerships
- Public service announcements on tv, radio and/or newspapers
- Rack cards
- State tourism publications and promotions
- Travel books
- Visitor and convention bureaus
- Web site
- Word of mouth
- Other



## Facility and Grounds

*Questions #56 - #75 are to be answered by those tribes that have stand-alone museum buildings. If you do not have a dedicated museum building, please skip to Question # 76.*

**Who legally owns the museum building?**

- Museum      • Tribe      • Other

**The museum building(s) is located on**  
*Please choose one of the following.*

- Non-tribal land      • Reservation
- Trust land      • Other

**When was your building constructed?**

- Pre-1960. *If so, what year?*
- 1961-1970      • 1971-1980
- 1981-1990      • 1991-1995
- 1996-2001

**Is the museum building in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements (i.e., wheelchair accessible, handicap parking, etc.)?**

- Yes      • To some degree      • No

**Are all of your functions, services and programs contained within one building?**

**What is the total square footage of the museum building or all of the buildings/areas combined?**

- One building: \_\_\_\_sf
- More than one building and areas:

**What is the condition of your facility?**

- Inadequate – *Needs major renovation and improvement.*
- Adequate – *Meets all of our current staff, program, exhibition, and collection needs.*
- Ideal – *Building exceeds our needs at the moment.*

**What areas of your building (i.e., collection storage, gift shop, etc.) need serious improvement, renovation or expansion? Please list briefly.**

**Does your facility have a climate control system?**

**Does your facility have a security system?**

**Does your facility accommodate traditional care practices and ceremonies?**

**Do you have changing exhibition gallery(ies)?**

**Do you have space for public programs?**

**Do you have a professionally-sound collection storage area?**

**Does the museum's site include interpreted grounds or natural areas for visitors?**

**Do you have a disaster preparedness plan?**

**Do you have an emergency evacuation plan?**

**Do you have a restaurant or food service on site?**

**Are you currently planning for a new facility?**

**If yes, what year do you plan to open?**

*\*If you answered Questions #56 - #75, please go to Question #84 now.*

*Questions #76 - #83 are to be answered by those tribes that do not have dedicated museum buildings but may have exhibit and program areas in other tribal buildings, such as tribal administration offices or libraries.*

**What is the total square footage of space dedicated to museum functions?**

**Does your area have a climate control system?**

**Does your area have a security system?**

**Do you have a collection storage area?**

**Do you have space for public programs?**

**Do you have work areas for staff?**

**Are you currently planning for a new museum facility?**

**If yes, when do you plan to open?**



**Technology**

**Does your museum use a computer to prepare or manage:**

- Collections management
- Condition reports
- Educational resources
- Financial administration
- Fundraising
- Interpretive materials

- Mailing lists
- Membership
- Publications
- Schedule tours
- Does the museum have a Web site?

**If yes, what is your museum's Web site address?**

**Does the museum have access to the Internet?**

**If yes, how do you access the Internet?**

- Modem      • DSL      • ISDN
- T1      • Cable modem
- Other      • Do not know

**Does the museum provide computer access to the Internet for the general public?**

**Does the museum provide computer access to collections for the general public?**

**Does the museum share computers with (an)other organization(s)?**

**Does the museum have someone on staff to support your technology needs?**

**Does the tribe provide staff support for your technology needs?**

**Does the museum contract with external vendors to support technology needs?**

**Does the museum depend solely on volunteers to support technology needs?**

**Are the telephone system and service adequate for your staff and program needs?**

**Do you have computers for all staff that need one?**



**Collections**

**What is the history of your collections? How did they start?**

**What is the focus of your collection?  
What are its strengths?**

**Total number of artifacts in your collection.**

**Do you borrow objects from other institutions for exhibit and study?**  
*Briefly, if not, why not?*

**Do you lend objects to other institutions for exhibit and study?**  
*Briefly, if not, why not?*

**Do you have an active program to acquire artifacts for the permanent collection?**

**Who legally owns the collections?**  
• Museum • Tribe • Other

**If the museum ever closes permanently, what happens to the collections?**  
• Collection can be sold  
• Collection can be donated to another institution  
• Collection belongs to the tribe collection

**Do you have a written collections management policy?**

**Where are your collections stored?**  
• Entire collection is on exhibit  
• Collection is on exhibit and stored in a storage room/ area of the museum building  
• Collection is together and stored off-site  
• Collection is dispersed and stored in several locations of care. *If yes, please describe briefly.*

**Do you have a written policy regarding the conservation and physical care of the objects in your possession?**

**Do you work with professional conservators?**  
• We have a professional conservator on staff who takes care of all of our conservation needs.  
• We have a budget for conservation and contract with professional conservator(s) whenever needed.  
• We do not have a budget for conservation but need the services a

professional conservator can provide.  
• We have never worked with professional conservators but need to do so.  
• We do not need to work with a professional conservator.

**Are your collections stored with consideration for traditional tribal practices of care? If yes, please describe briefly.**



## Exhibitions/Programs/ Interpretation

**What are your major interpretive themes? What are the main stories your museum tells?**

**Does the tribe have a written history from its own perspective?**

**Do you have an interpretive plan?**

**If yes, who created the plan?**

- Board of trustees/directors
- Culture commission/committee
- Museum director
- Museum director with board, staff, and/or culture committee
- Staff
- Tribal Council
- Tribal planner
- Do not have an interpretive plan

**How often is the interpretive plan reviewed and revised?**

- Once a year
- Once every two years
- Between 3-5 years
- Do not have a plan

**Does your institution make a distinction between programs and services for tribal vs. non-tribal members?**

**Please check all ongoing programs and services that the museum currently conducts for tribal members?**

- Carry arts and crafts created by tribal members in the gift shop
- Language classes
- Storytelling, oral history

- Traditional arts & crafts, such as basketweaving, beadworking, etc.
- Traditional dancing
- Traditional lifeways and skills, such as root digging, hide tanning, etc.
- Other
- Conferences
- Demonstrations
- Exhibits
- Films
- Lectures
- Store collections and objects for individuals, families, and/or other organizations
- Tours and field trips
- Workshops

**Please check all ongoing programs and services that the museum currently conducts for non-Indian audiences (i.e., tourists and the non-tribal community)?**

- Language classes
- Storytelling
- Traditional arts & crafts, such as basketweaving, beadworking, etc.
- Traditional dancing
- Traditional lifeways and skills, such as root digging, hide tanning, etc.
- Other
- Conferences
- Demonstrations
- Exhibits
- Films
- Lectures
- Store collections and objects for individuals, families, and/or other organizations.
- Tours
- Workshops
- Other

**Do you have written educational goals for each of your defined audiences?**

**As museum staff, do you work with any of the following?**  
*Please check all that apply.*

- Local museums, historical societies, and cultural agencies
- County museums, historical societies, and cultural agencies
- State museums, historical societies, and cultural agencies
- Regional museums and cultural agencies
- National museums and cultural

- agencies
- Tribal colleges
  - Community colleges
  - Local colleges and universities
  - State colleges and universities
  - Out-of-state colleges and universities

**Over the last 5 years, the interactions/relationships with both outside museums and universities have** *Please choose one of the following.*

- Increased
- Remained the same
- Decreased
- Do not know

**Does the museum have student interns throughout any part of the year?**

**If yes, on average, how many per year?**

**Do you work closely with local and regional school districts to provide programs and services?**

**If yes, what kinds of programs and services do you provide for schools – in schools?** *Please check all that apply.*

- Curriculum
- Demonstrations
- Education trunks
- Hands-on kits
- Multimedia presentations
- Talks on history and culture of care? *If yes, please describe.*
- We do not provide programs and services for schools in schools

**What kinds of programs and activities do you provide school group tours – in the museum?** *Please check all that apply.*

- Demonstrations
- Exhibits
- Films
- Lectures and talks on tribal history and culture
- Tours of care? *If yes, please describe.*
- We do not provide programs and services for school groups on site

**Do you provide any of the following resources and services to accommodate visitors with special needs?** *Please check all that apply.*

- Audio tours

- Braille labels or exhibit guides
- Sign language interpreters
- Special tours
- Wheelchairs
- Wheelchair accessible exhibit design
- Other
- No, we do not have services to accommodate visitors with special needs

**Do you conduct any of the following activities as formal evaluation of your exhibits, programs, and the overall visitor experience?** *Please check all that apply.*

- Comment card or book
- On-site interviews
- Questionnaires or surveys by mail
- Other

**Are tribal members engaged in program and exhibition development?** *If yes, please describe. If not, why not?*

**Are the elders involved in your museum?** *If yes, please describe all the ways tribal elders are involved.*

**How many active volunteers are currently involved with the museum?**

- No volunteers
- Less than 10
- 11 - 50
- 51 - 100
- 101 - 250
- 251 - 500
- Over 500

**Does the museum play a role in tribal celebrations, festivals, pow wows, etc.?** *If yes, please describe.*

**Does the museum play an active role in the preservation and renewal of tribal ceremonies and traditions?** *If yes, please describe.*

**What other cultural programs does the tribe operate that are separate from the museum?** *Please check all that apply.*

- Archaeology program
- Archives
- Cultural resource protection office
- Culture board/commission
- Historic sites/homes/trails
- Language program

- Library
- NAGPRA office
- Tribal historic preservation officer
- Visitor center
- Other

**Is the museum responsible for the care and protection of any of the following?**

*Please check all that apply.*

- Archaeological sites
- Historic houses
- Historic sites and trails
- Marked burial sites
- Tribal cemetery
- Unmarked burial sites
- Other
- Not responsible for any of the above



## Staff and Staff Development

**Number of paid staff:**

- Full-time
- Part-time

**Do you have seasonal employees?**

**Please describe the museum's seasonal schedule, and if you do hire seasonal employees please identify the number and type of employees hired for that period.**

**What is the education experience of the director/manager?**

- High school diploma or GED certificate
- Completed coursework towards an associate degree
- Received associate degree *(List area of study)*
- Completed coursework towards a bachelor degree
- Received undergraduate degree *(List area of study)*
- Completed coursework towards advanced degree
- Received advanced degree *(List area of study)*

**Do you have current position descriptions for all staff?**

**Do you have a formal performance evaluation process for staff in place?**

**Staffing profile.** *Please list titles of all current staff positions and include the time, whether months or years, current staff members have been in the position.*

**What other full-time, year-round positions do you need for your museum to operate smoothly and that address all museum functions?** *Please check all that apply.*

- Administrative assistant(s)
- Archivist
- Collections manager
- Conservator
- Curator/historian
- Educator
- Exhibit designer
- Facility manager
- Finance/budget director
- Fundraiser/development officer
- Gift shop manager and staff
- Public affairs/relations officer
- Receptionist(s)
- Tour guides
- Other

**Have you received the professional training that both you as director and your staff need?**

**Please identify all of the subject areas in which you and your staff have received training in the past 5 years?**

- Archives development
- Collections management, storage, and handling
- Educational programming
- Exhibition development, design, and production
- Developing a membership program
- Fundraising
- How to start a new museum
- Museum shop management
- NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act)
- Non-profit management
- Preventive care of collections
- Registration methods
- Security
- Software
- Other
- None, we have not received any training

**Please identify the organization(s) that have provided the professional training you've received.** *Please check all that apply.*

- American Association for State and Local History (AASLH)
- American Association of Museums (AAM)
- Local or regional museums
- National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI)
- Native American Museums Program, Smithsonian Institution
- University-based museum program. Which university?
- Other

**In general, to what extent has the training and/or technical assistance you and your staff received in the past been valuable to your institution?**

- Very valuable
- Somewhat valuable
- Little to no value

**What training formats work best for you and staff?** *Please check all that apply.*

- Distance learning
- Internships [ \_\_ weeks to \_\_ month(s)]
- One-on-one consultation
- On-site technical assistance
- Publications
- Seminars
- Workshops
- Other

**Have you examined local resources such as universities and other museums for training opportunities, internships, and partnerships?**

**Please prioritize the top 10 museum training subject areas you and your staff would like to have.**

- Archives development
- Collections management, storage, and handling
- Educational programming
- Exhibition development, design, and production
- Developing a membership program
- Fundraising
- How to start a new museum
- Museum shop management
- NAGPRA
- Non-profit management

- Preventive care of collections
- Registration methods
- Security
- Software
- Other
- None

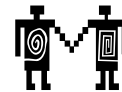
**Do you and staff currently belong to any professional museum organizations?** *Please check all that apply.*

- American Association for State and Local History (AASLH)
- American Association of Museums (AAM)
- State museums associations
- Regional museum associations, such as the Western Museums Association
- Specialized associations, such as the National Society for Fundraising Executives
- Other
- No, do not belong to any professional organizations

**Do you attend meetings of the museum profession?**

*Please check all that apply.*

- Local
- State
- Regional
- National
- No, do not attend meetings of the profession



## Additional Questions

**Are you or your institution aware of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board Act, a truth-in-marketing law that prohibits marketing of products as "Indian made" when such products are not made by Indians as defined by the Act?**

**Would you like to receive information about the Indian Arts and Crafts Board Act?**

**Are you or your institution aware of counterfeit arts and crafts sold as genuine Indian-made products?**

**In the year 2000, your gift shop sold approximately \$\_\_\_ in Indian arts and craft inventory.**



# On-Site Survey



Tribal museums and cultural centers were asked to respond to the following questions. For the sake of design and space, the survey has been reformatted for this report.

**Why are tribal museums important?**

**Does the tribe have a constitutional requirement to preserve tribal culture and traditions?**

**Is the museum working towards accreditation?**

**Has gaming had any impact on your institution? *Please describe.***

**Are there barriers that prohibit or inhibit outside funding?**

**Have there been any significant events or changes – positive or negative – which have changed the way you operate from a financial standpoint over the last 3-5 years?**

**Please describe one or two examples of worthwhile and helpful cooperative partnerships with other museums and/or universities.**

**Is the institution in step with developments in the field?**

**Is it ahead?**

**Is it behind?**

**Implementing standard museum practices?**

**On a scale from 1 to 5, please gauge your level of optimism about the future. *Please explain.***

**What improvements has the museum seen over the last 3 - 5 years?**

**Do you have any policies regarding consignment arrangements?**

**Do you pay craftspeople/artists at time of purchase or later?**

**Do you have policies to prevent favoritism of certain people?**

**How do you manage quality-control in purchasing crafted items?**

**Institutional Strengths**

**Institutional Weaknesses**

**Opportunities**

**Threats**

**Needs**

**Comments**

# Other Surveys



Tribal museums and cultural centers were asked to respond to the following questions. For the sake of design and space, the surveys have been reformatted for this report.



## Museum Archives

**Name of Institution:**

**Do you have a budget for archive operations?**

**What is the linear feet of documents?**

**Do you have adequate space, shelving and cabinets to store archival records?**

**Are all archival records storage spaces secure and clean, free from pests, etc.?**

**Do you have a records retention schedule that is followed by the museum staff?**

**Please check all the different types of resources found in the archive.**

- Audio and video tapes and/or cassettes
- CD-ROMs
- Drawings and blueprints
- Microfilm
- Oral history tapes and transcriptions
- Paper records (permanent and active)
- Photographs (historic and contemporary)
- Other

**How many researchers/students/professional colleagues/general public use your archive for research purposes per year?**

*Please combine all categories and check one.*

- Less than 10
- 11-25
- 26-50
- 51-99
- Over 100 (*Please estimate*)

**Do you have enough space for research activities?**

**Is developing the archive a high priority for the museum?**



## NAGPRA

(Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act)

**Name of Institution:**

**Please describe the museum's involvement with the tribe's NAGPRA activities.**

**Does the tribe/museum have a formal repatriation process?**

**Is staff dedicated to this activity?**  
*If yes, please indicate the number of staff.*

**Is there a budget to address tribal NAGPRA needs and issues?**

**Are pesticides and other contaminants on repatriated objects a concern to your institution and the tribe/community?**

**Have you received objects back that were too contaminated with pesticides to use?**

**In your opinion, on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being very effective and 5 not effective at all), how effective is the NAGPRA law? *Please explain.***

**In your experience, are the museums/universities that the tribe/the museum is dealing with cooperating with NAGPRA request(s)?**

- Full cooperation
- Cooperating to some degree
- No cooperation
- Do not know

**In your experience, has NAGPRA fostered better working relationships with mainstream museums and universities?**

- Yes, relationships are better and more productive
- Relationships are somewhat better
- No, relationships are worse
- Do not know

**Is the tribal community supportive of the tribe's/museum's repatriation efforts? *Please describe.***

**What do you consider to be the most important current issue(s)/concern(s) surrounding NAGPRA?**

**What are the surprises or hurdles the tribe has had to overcome in relation to NAGPRA?**



## Museum Library

**Name of Institution:**

**Do you have a budget for library operations?**

**How many volumes do you have? Please check one.**

- Less than 100 volumes
- 101 - 500 volumes
- 501 - 1,000 volumes
- 1,001 - 2,500 volumes
- 2,501 - 5,000 volumes
- Over 5,001 volumes

Please briefly list the other types of resources the library provides.

Do you have an active library acquisitions program?

Do you have adequate space, shelving, and cabinets for library materials?

Are all library spaces secure and clean, free from pests, etc.?

How many researchers/students/professional colleagues/general public use your library for research purposes per year? Please combine all categories and check one.

- Less than 10
- 11 - 25
- 26 - 50
- 51 - 99
- Over 100 Please estimate the number

Do you have enough space for research and other activities?

Is developing the library a high priority for the museum?



## Future of the American Indian Museums Program

Name of Institution:

How important is it to have a tribal museum association dedicated to the needs and interests of the tribal museum community?

- Very important
- Important
- Somewhat important
- Not important at all

If a national association were organized to address the needs and issues of tribal museums and tribal cultural facilities, what activities and services do you envision? Please check all that apply and list other ideas.

- Advocacy
- Collaborative projects, such as the development of traveling exhibits
- Conferences
- Development of promotional materials and their distribution
- Represent the tribal museum community at national meetings
- Resource development
- Serve as a clearinghouse of current and quality resources
- Training programs
- Workshops
- Other

Would you pay a fee to be a member of an independent, stand-alone association for tribal museums?

# Participating Institutions\*



**Abenaki Museum and Cultural Center**  
Swanton, Vermont

**Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum**  
Clewiston, Florida

**Ak-Chin Him-Dak EcoMuseum and Archives**  
Maricopa, Arizona

**Akwasne Library and Cultural Center**  
Hogansburg, New York

**Alaska Native Heritage Center**  
Anchorage, Alaska

**Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository**  
Kodiak, Alaska

**American Indian Community House**  
New York, New York

**Aqua Caliente Cultural Museum**  
Palm Springs, California

**Ataloa Lodge Museum and Library**  
Bacone College  
Muskogee, Oklahoma

**Barona Cultural Center and Museum**  
Lakeside, California

**Brown, Jr., Ojibwe Museum and Cultural Center, George W.**  
Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin

**Cabazon Cultural Museum**  
Indio, California

**Cherokee National Historical Society**  
Tahlequah, Oklahoma

**Cheyenne Cultural Center, Inc.**  
Clinton, Oklahoma

**Choctaw Museum of the Southern Museum**  
Choctaw, Mississippi

**Chickasaw Cultural Center**  
Ada, Oklahoma

**Chumash Interpretive Center**  
Thousand Oaks, California

**Citizen Potawatomi Nation Tribal Museum**  
Shawnee, Oklahoma

**Cocopah Museum**  
Somerton, Arizona

**Colville Tribal Museum**  
Coulee Dam, Washington

**Community House**  
Sheet'ka Kwaan Naa Kahidi  
Sitka, Alaska

**Cupa Cultural Center**  
Pala, California

**Delaware Nation Museum**  
Anadarko, Oklahoma

**Eastern Shoshone Cultural Center**  
Ft. Washakie, WY

**Fort Peck Tribal Museum**  
Poplar, Montana

**Fond du Lac Museum and Cultural Center**  
Cloquet, Minnesota

**Hoopa Tribal Museum**  
Hoopa, California

**Hopi Cultural Center, Inc.**  
Second Mesa, Arizona

**HVJ Lakota Cultural Center**  
Eagle Butte, South Dakota

**Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, The**  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**Institute of American Indian Arts Museum**  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

**Inupiat Heritage Center**  
Barrow, Alaska

**Kanza Museum**  
Kaw City, Oklahoma

**Kiowa Tribe Museum and Resource Center**  
Carnegie, Oklahoma

**Lower Muskogee Creek Tribe**  
Pensacola, FL

**Lummi Records and Archives Center & Museum**  
Bellingham, Washington

**Makah Cultural and Resource Center**  
Neah Bay, Washington

**Mashantucket Pequot Museum**  
Mashantucket, Connecticut

**Mashpee-Wampanoag Indian Museum**  
Mashpee, Massachusetts

**Menominee Logging Camp Museum**  
Keshena, Wisconsin

**Minneapolis American Indian Center**  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

**Miller Memorial Library Museum, Arvid S.**  
Bowler, Wisconsin

**Museum at Warm Springs, The**  
Warm Springs, Oregon

**Navajo Nation Museum**  
Window Rock, Arizona

**Nowehke Bagawa White Mountain Apache Cultural Center and Museum**  
Fort Apache, Arizona

**Oneida Nation Museum**  
Oneida, Wisconsin

**Osage Tribal Museum, Library, and Archive**  
Pawhuska, Oklahoma

**Paneak Memorial Museum, Simon**  
Anaktuvuk, Alaska

**Pechunga Cultural Center**  
Temecula, California

**Penobscot Nation Museum**  
Old Town, Maine

**People's Center, The**  
Pablo, Montana

**Poarch Creek Cultural Center; McGhee Cultural Center, Calvin**  
Atmore, Alabama

**Poeh Museum**  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

**Potawatomi Cultural Center and Museum**  
Crandon, Wisconsin

**Pyramid Lake Museum and Visitors Center**  
Nixon, Nevada

**Quechan Tribal Museum**  
Yuma, Arizona

**San Carlos Apache Cultural Center**  
Peridot, Arizona

**Seneca-Iroquois National Museum**  
Salamanca, New York

**Sherman Indian Museum**  
Riverside, California

**Shinnecock Nation Cultural Center and Museum**  
Southampton, New York

**Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Museum**  
Fort Hall, Idaho

**Sierra Mono Museum**  
North Fork, California

**Skokomish Tribal Center and Museum**  
Shelton, Washington

**Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center, Inc.**  
Sitka, Alaska

**Southern Ute Museum and Cultural Center**  
Ignacio, Colorado

**Suquamish Museum**  
Suquamish, Washington

**Tamastliki Cultural Institute**  
Pendleton, Oregon

**Three Affiliate Tribes Museum**  
New Town, North Dakota

**Turtle Mountain Chippewa Heritage Center**  
Belcourt, North Dakota

**Tribal House of the Bear**  
Wrangell, Alaska

**Walatowa Cultural and Visitor Center**  
Jemez Pueblo, New Mexico

**Wanapum Dam Heritage Center**  
Ephrata, Washington

**Waponahki Museum and Resource Center**  
Perry, Maine

**Yupit Piciryarit Cultural Center and Museum**  
Bethel, Alaska

\* Comprised of the seventy-four institutions that completed any aspect of the six survey components (mail-in, on-site, museum archives, museum library, future programs, NAGPRA). A few of these institutions were not included in the ultimate analysis of the data since they did not qualify as museums, such as those that do not have collections.

# Credits



Appreciation and thanks are extended to those Indian institutions and individuals that provided information to help make this project a success. Without their assistance and role in the process, this survey could not have been concluded. The dedication and enthusiasm of those involved in the profession of American Indian museums is an inspiration to all of us who labor in the field.

This AALSH project has initiated a major advance in establishing critical database on the current status of a wide range of museums and cultural centers focused on the American Indian. In addition, I would like to thank each of those individuals, especially Terry Davis, the AIMP steering committee members, and the outside reviewers, who supported this writer in the completion of this project. It is my hope that this report on the survey of American Indian museums and cultural centers will provide the basis for advancing the field of tribal museums in the United States.

Nya-wen (Thank you).

Respectfully submitted,  
George H. J. Abrams  
Ventura, California

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**American Association for State and Local History**  
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