

# MUSEUMS ALASKA

## Grant Programs Assessment 2017



Submitted by Gail Anderson & Associates + Funded by Rasmuson Foundation



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With financial support from Rasmuson Foundation, Museums Alaska (MA) administers two grant programs for the benefit of museums across Alaska: the Art Acquisition Fund (AAF), developed to support Alaska museums in their efforts to acquire art of Alaska artists; and, the Collections Management Fund (CMF), developed to support Alaska museums' efforts to undertake collection care and conservation projects. This assessment was jointly requested by Museums Alaska and the Rasmuson Foundation to understand the successes and challenges tied to these two programs, identify ways to strengthen their impact, and engage those museums that have not sought AAF or CMF grants.

This report is presented in three sections:

**Section 1** is the Assessment Report.

- The Executive Summary
- A description of the assessment methodology
- A summary of the interview and survey findings
- The research findings of similar programs in other parts of the United States
- Conclusions + Recommendations

**Section 2** presents Stories from the Field.

**Section 3** includes Appendices; provide additional background and documentation tied to this assessment.

## Highlights of assessment results

The findings from the interviews and from the surveys aligned very strongly. First and foremost, the gratitude from recipients for the Rasmuson Foundation is profound and widespread. Museum representatives and artists alike are unanimous in their acclaim of the generosity of the Rasmuson Foundation and their support of these two important funding programs. Similarly, gratitude was expressed for Museums Alaska, for their leadership, and consistent, helpful efforts administering both grant programs.

Funding opportunities that support the acquisition of art for museum collections is largely unheard of, and for most Alaska museums the ability to acquire art is not possible due to lack of resources for collecting. Collection management care, a critical requirement for any museum with collections, is rarely supported at the

state-level or national level, leaving the costly responsibilities of collection management for museums to shoulder on their own. Many stated that were it not for these two funds their museum would be unable to collect art, or be in a position to care for their collections in a manner that meets national museum standards.

Strengths of the grant programs were noteworthy as detailed in the Findings section of this report. Areas for improvement included suggestions to: allow commissioning of artwork within the AAF program, and to expand the definition of contemporary art to be broader and include a wider time span beyond just 5 years for the age of an art piece. Predominant feedback on the CMF program focused on considering larger grant amounts in order to undertake multi-year projects critical to adequately support collection management projects. Another area of impact that emerged relative to both AAF and CMF, is the lack of storage space impacting museums ability to fulfill museum standards or to continue to collect.

In addition, many interviewees and survey respondents mentioned the need to address capital improvement projects. Throughout the State there is great concern about the degradation of museum buildings, and dated exhibitions sorely in need of refurbishment. Museums do not have the funds to address these needs. Finally, many respondents pointed to the lack of professional development opportunities for Board, staff, and volunteers, and urged Museums Alaska to consider adding more offerings. For the full review of the findings, please refer to page 8.

The recommendations fall into three areas.

***Review the guidelines, goals, and parameters for both AAF and CMF in light of the findings.*** There is an opportunity to refine and increase the impact of both funds. Since AAF has been in existence longer, the changes recommended fine-tune the program tied to grant definitions, eligibility requirements, and grant cycle timing. Continue with current levels of funding upholding the long-held commitment of Rasmuson Foundation and Museums Alaska to support both museums and artists.

For CMF, the issues are more complex. Because collection management is an ongoing and expensive demand for any museum, an increase to the amount



awarded and a shift to multi-year awards are two changes that will increase the impact of CMF.

**Explore opportunities to leverage greater investment in museum capital infrastructure across the state.** Capital improvements are becoming critical as most of the 1950s buildings are showing wear, and are not up to contemporary standards. Without building improvements for many museums, the ability to pursue new acquisitions or undertake collection management projects will not be possible.

It should be noted that the Rasmuson Foundation already offers Tier 1 and Tier 2 grant opportunities for individual institutions seeking support for capital projects. In addition, Museums Alaska has mounted an effort with the State Legislature to pass a bill to support a matching grant program for capital projects for museums. Finally, the “Infrastructure Needs Study of Alaska Museums and Capital Improvement Planning Guide,” prepared by the McDowell Group for The Foraker Group completed in 2014 should be taken into consideration.

**Evaluate the capacity and scope of responsibilities of the Executive Director as they relate to changes in these programs and the mission of Museums Alaska.** While not the focus of this assessment, it is clear that the recommended scope of changes will increase the demands on the Executive Director’s time. Given the current part-time position, and the goals of both Museums Alaska and the Rasmuson Foundation, it is prudent to consider moving the Executive Director’s position to full-time.

*It is our hope that the detailed compilation of the findings will be useful as an affirmation for this important work, while inspiring some constructive ideas to consider for the future. Gail Anderson & Associates is honored to have been selected to facilitate, conduct, and compile the findings for Museums Alaska and Rasmuson Foundation.*

# ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Assessment goals as stated by Museums Alaska and the Rasmuson Foundation were to determine:

- If the grant programs objectives for AAF and CMF are being met;
- What aspects of the grant program design, structure, and process can be improved; and,
- Ways to better assist non-grant recipients in developing and submitting successful grant proposals.

The assessment strategies were a blend of interviews, an online survey, a review of relevant documents tied to these two programs, research to identify similar programs on a national level, and ongoing communication with Museums Alaska and the Rasmuson Foundation.

- **In-person interviews** were conducted on site in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau, with additional interviews conducted via telephone to reach those at a distance. Every effort was made to create a cross section of individuals for a balanced set of perspectives. Interviewees included: Museums Alaska Board and staff, Rasmuson leadership, museums who had received funding for either or both AAF + CMF, artists whose work was purchased through AAF, representatives of grant review panels, past museum leaders who had been involved with Museums Alaska, and, select long-time museum leaders from across the State, for a total of 42 interviews.
- **An online survey** was developed to gather a cross-section of information and diverse input on Museums Alaska's grant programs. The survey was designed to reach those across the State, and to reach those who have either not elected to submit a grant proposal for one of the two grant funds or had not ever received a grant. MA invited its current and lapsed members, followers to its Facebook page, and the Alaska State Museum's listserv for museum professionals to participate in the survey. Of those invited, 63 individuals opened the invitation email with 30 individuals participating in the online survey, resulting in a 47% participation rate. The 32 questions took participants an average of 15 minutes to complete.



- As part of gathering feedback from stakeholders, interviewees and survey participants were invited to **share stories** about how the funds had made a difference to their institutions, and for artists to share their experiences with their art purchased by a museum. Nineteen museum professionals and artists contributed stories. See Section 2: Stories from the Field.
- **Research** included reviewing a range of pertinent documents including:
  - The publication, *Living Alaska: A Decade of Collecting Contemporary Art for Alaska Museums*, a documentation of the travelling exhibition that featured artists funded through the AAF program written and edited by Sven D. Haakanson, Jr. and Amy F. Steffian;
  - Art Acquisition Fund Evaluation: Spring 2011;
  - Documents reflecting the range of grants and amounts given to museums for both AAF and CMF;
  - Lists of artists who have benefitted from the AAF program;
  - Review of application processes and forms for each grant program; and,
  - The most recent Museums Alaska strategic plan, other documents such as budget and by-laws to help understand how MA operates.
- **Additional research** was focused on identifying any similar programs or partnerships between a museum association and a foundation offering grant programs like AAF and CMF, as well as scanning the horizon to identify unique programs that exist for the funding of art acquisition and/or collection management projects but are perhaps not a part of a partnership agreement;
- **Ongoing communication** with Della Hall, Executive Director for Museums Alaska, and Jayson Smart, Senior Program Officer at the Rasmuson Foundation ensured smooth implementation of this assessment. Further, their counsel provided key feedback at several key junctures during the process. GA&A is most grateful for their support and open communication throughout the project.

## Strengths and limitations of this methodology

Every attempt was made by GA&A to develop and implement the best methodology given the parameters of the project and the timeline. Interview questions and the survey instrument were all reviewed and approved by Hall and Smart. As a result of their input, appropriate edits were made improving the

instruments to best align with the goals of this assessment. It is important to remember that interviews are qualitative by nature whereas surveys are quantitative. Together the two provide context and balance plus concrete results useful to this assessment. In general, the responses to both the interviews and the survey align, reinforcing the findings over all.

The positive aspect of interviews is the opportunity to reinforce the relationship of Museums Alaska and the Rasmuson Foundation with museums and artists across the State. In-person interviews have an interactive quality and the opportunity to add clarifying questions as the interviewees respond. This provided the chance to explore new threads not a part of the questioning strategy. This happened consistently through the interviews and is considered a positive outcome. At the conclusion of all the interviews, interviewees were given the opportunity to submit a brief story or perspective about the AAF or CMF program. This addition to the interview strategy allows for a very personal voice to the impact of these two granting programs.

In the case of both the interviews and online survey, invited individuals could opt to participate or not. Some invited for interviews were unavailable during the interview period, which is normal. The addition of telephone interviews captured some of those individuals.

The online survey was also up to the recipient whether to take the survey or not. Of the 30 individuals who completed the online survey, only 5 were non-grant recipients. Additionally, it was revealed that 5 individuals also took the survey even though they had been interviewed. This presents a slight margin of error but did not impact the findings overall.

The survey was designed to offer a myriad of choices to the respondents. The instrument was multi-layered and directed the survey taker to answer questions that then led the respondent to the appropriate cluster of questions depending on a specific answer. In particular, the survey enabled people who had received either grant to rate various aspects of the grant, and in several places, there were opportunities to leave comments. For those who had not received either grant there were questions specific to them. Outlined in the appendices are the survey questions with the raw data.

It should be noted general questions asked during the interviews were not covered in the survey such as: Describe the museum community; or describe the

nature of museum and artists relationships. In a survey designed to not take any longer than 15 minutes to complete, asking too many narrative questions was deemed a potential deterrent for survey takers. Thus, the questions in the survey that provided a comment section were identified as top priority areas tied to the goal of this assessment.

# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The summary of findings includes two sections. The first are the narrative responses to the interview questions followed by the survey tally and results.

## INTERVIEWS

The following interview findings have been grouped for ease of reading.

- General backdrop + context in Alaska
- Feedback on the AAF Program
- Feedback on the CMF Program
- Needs + challenges facing Alaska Museums
- Suggestions for Museums Alaska and Rasmuson Foundation

### General Backdrop + Context in Alaska

#### ***Love for Alaska is mixed with tough realities***

It is clear that museum professionals are proud to live in Alaska, love the bold and dynamic environment, and are inspired by this broad and diverse State. There are significant challenges that face residents and organizations in the State. They include the strained and vulnerable economic climate tied to fluctuations in the oil industry and shifts of legislative strategies and approaches. Other top issues mentioned were: the high cost of living and running museums; isolation due to remote locations and villages with passage often limited to boat or plane access; a predominantly oil dependent and tourist-based economy that is prone to fluctuate; and, the ever-present impact of global warming.

Artists who are trying to make a living in a State that is expensive, are further challenged by the need to find ways to sell their artwork. Many of the artists interviewed hold other jobs to piece together enough income to make ends meet.

#### ***The museum community is supportive and committed***

The museum community includes over 65 total institutions that are mostly small, rural museums located across the State with a few large institutions in the cities of Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau. Many of the small museums are volunteer-run pointing to the fact that many are operated by dedicated individuals who most likely do not have professional museum training. Quite a few are seasonal museums with limited public access typically between Memorial

Day and Labor Day. Every individual interviewed stated, “museum colleagues are generous with their time and information.” Some even said that colleagues from other institutions will drive great distances and commit time to contribute hours of advising and support to aid museums needing guidance.

### ***The artists community is diverse and complex***

The Alaska artists community is unlike any other. Artists live in urban areas, small towns, and remote communities across the varied landscape of the State. In general, many artists self-identify with a cultural group or tribal affiliation adding to the dynamic diversity of the artists community. The Alaska artists community overall is close: most artists know one another. Many artists mentioned that there is no singular organizing entity that is dedicated to representing artists across the State. This means that most artists have to make an effort to connect with other artists at events, openings, and art festivals.

The nature of the art being created is as diverse as the artists themselves and includes tribal totem poles, realist paintings, large outdoor sculptures, jewelry, masks, photography, and much more. Not surprising, Native and non-Native artists alike are experimenting with new materials, contemporary subjects, and often providing voice to controversial topics. The artists interviewed embrace the importance of traditional art, as well as forms of artistic expression found in more recent art forms such as performance art and video, for example.

Artists are masters of juggling jobs to generate the necessary sources of income to support their artistic aspirations. The range of sources to support artists are few which highlights the high regard and gratitude for the Art Acquisition Fund.

### ***Museums and artists have forged mutually-beneficial relationships***

Many pointed out that the AAF program has enabled and brought together many artists and museums. Some feel fortunate to have long-term relationships with specific museums, and museum staff members. A few mentioned that for new emerging artists it is hard to break in and get to know museum professionals. Some cited the large museums as more competitive for securing exhibitions due to their broader access to artists in Alaska and beyond, and, the desire of many artists to be shown in larger, well-known museums.

## Feedback on the Art Acquisition Fund

### **Strengths**

#### ***AAF supports museums' ability to collect art***

Without a doubt, the AAF program is heralded as “brilliant,” “a game changer,” and “door opener.” Artists expressed extreme gratitude for a program that has enabled them to continue to create art. In the words of one artist, this “program allows the art of Alaska artists to stay in Alaska, offers and exposes the art of Alaska artists to the greater community, and on a personal note, brings a sense of belonging to Alaska, plus a sense of value and appreciation as an artist.”

Museum leaders stated that without the Art Acquisition Fund, they would not be able to collect art at all. Museums in Alaska, with the exception of one or two, do not have an acquisition fund, so any additions to the collection are dependent on donations.

Many institutions stated that they now have the art of the artists located near their institution or relevant to their institution's focus. The gratitude abounded for the Rasmuson Foundation's generosity to make this fund possible since 2003. Steading funding over time has meant that many museums have grown their art collection and their ability to broaden their exhibition offerings.

The \$35,000 award cap was deemed adequate as echoed through the interviews. A few suggested that very large art pieces might necessitate a larger amount.

### **Areas for improvement and suggestions to consider**

#### ***The option of commissioning art highly desired***

Commissioning art was suggested consistently in interviews and survey results as a viable way to expand the grant parameters. Some mentioned that commissioning an installation piece or sizeable piece for an upcoming exhibit would widen possibilities to engage artists. Many artists, both non-Native and Native said large or expensive artworks cannot be undertaken without a commission, and their ability to absorb such huge costs with no guarantee of a sale is not possible. Examples of large and expensive art included totem poles, Chilkat blankets, or large sculptures. Commissioning art might also provide a way to ensure that an artist can plan properly to create the piece for the collection, or to support an exhibition.

Commissioning is not for all artists. One artist said, “I will never do a commission. I create what my vision is and prefer that approach.” This artist was a painter

while other artists in the interview that day welcomed the idea in part because their medium fell into large pieces such as murals, large outdoor sculpture, etc. During the three interviews with groups of artists, commissioning received positive feedback as an option. Museum representatives were also very positive about commissioning art as an option. Several respondents said it is important to have very clear guidelines and parameters to avoid misuse of this option should it ever be added.

### ***Ways to think about contemporary art continues to evolve***

During the interviews, several participants suggested that expanding the range of disciplines covered under the umbrella of contemporary art, as related to the grant guidelines, would allow for greater diversity of submissions and artists represented. Specifically, the disciplines mentioned were performance art, installation art, digital works, etc. Many interviewees suggested the age of an art piece be increased from 5 years to within the past 10 years. Other respondents hoped that there would be provisions to include important artists who may have recently passed away. Some of the artists wanted to be sure that the creation of art in the tradition of their tribe would be recognized as contemporary even if it doesn't feature some contemporary reinterpretation or twist on a traditional style.

### ***Limited storage and capacity to display art is a serious reality***

Many said their collection storage spaces are maxed out and their capacity to collect more art is impacted. Stated another way, many museums do not feel they should acquire art if they don't have the proper space to either store it or exhibit it. This is negatively impacting the number of applications. While collection storage isn't directly tied to the AAF, its indirect impact is most definitely felt. This ties to some of the top issues facing museums in Alaska discussed later in the Findings.

### ***Deadline timeframe should be revisited***

With two deadlines a year (March and October), the opportunity to purchase a piece may occur outside of that timeframe with the impossibility to purchase the art in sync with the AAF timeframe. Both museums and artists expressed concern that it is asking a lot of an artist to "hold" a piece with the hope the museum will receive the grant and be able to purchase the piece of art. Some suggested that moving the cycle to be quarterly might aid a more timely response to opportunities that arise throughout the year. Another respondent encouraged Museums Alaska leaders to shift the due dates of applications to not coincide with the CMF deadlines and the conference.



### ***Consider including Alaska artists living outside the State***

A sensitive topic arose around whether or not to include accomplished living artists now living outside the State. Living artists may leave Alaska for a number of reasons. Primarily mentioned was being able to support their art and life as an artist. Extending support to Alaska artists no longer living in the State was met with mixed responses. Some said for artists that should be represented in museum collections it provides a way to support the purchase of the art of significant artists. Others said if it becomes an option it should be used only in rare occasions and only for Native artists. Many support keeping the AAF awards limited to artists committed to living in Alaska and continuing to make art. In short, there was no agreement on this prospective idea. It is clear this issue needs to be revisited and discussed.

### ***The call for art could be expanded to engage more artists***

Some museums are diligent about disseminating a call for art in advance of submitting their grant proposal, but it isn't consistent with all museums. With the great expanse of the State, a number of interviewees thought it would be good to consider ways to get the word out and reach artists that may be unaware of the AAF opportunity to "even the playing field."

### ***Support other types of collections***

Not surprising, some interviewees pointed to the fact that their museum doesn't collect art but there are times when a unique object of historic, ethnographic, or archaeological significance is available, but they fall outside the parameters of the AAF. All supported AAF without question, but it was suggested that perhaps to strengthen Alaska museum collections overall, that expanding the opportunity to purchase unique, one-of-a-kind objects could greatly support some of the museum community currently not served by the AAF guidelines.

### ***Higher visibility and publicity about art and artists desired***

Quite a few interviewees suggested that publicizing the art purchased be featured on the Museums Alaska website with pictures and bios of the artists. This would raise visibility for all concerned. It should be noted that the Rasmuson Foundation's website includes a database of AAF artists, their biographies and purchased work. Others suggested another travelling exhibition featuring the art purchased would be most welcome.

### ***Impact on art market appears to be positive***

It was determined that the impact of AAF has been positive and has drawn attention to the importance of Alaska artists and art. Artists in particular voiced that it has given a boost to their careers with more visibility for their work. However, the impact on the art market was difficult to quantify, and would require additional research with galleries, and other venues that sell art to gain a clearer assessment.

### ***Percentage of AAF art on display varied widely***

Responses to this question yielded a wide range of responses from high numbers on display to a much lower number. This calls into question the expectations of grant guidelines expecting museums acquiring art to have a large portion constantly on display. For institutions rotating exhibitions often it is not a realistic expectation said some. This requirement bears review.

## **Feedback on the Collections Management Fund**

### ***Strengths***

One of the outcomes of the prior AAF assessment was the revelation that many museums need support to care for their collections properly, and in fact care for the art pieces they acquire through AAF. The Collection Management Fund has provided support to museums to grow their capacity to meet museum standards of collection care and conservation. Many institutions have secured grants for conservation of fragile objects in their collection, or purchased archival materials, or HVAC systems for proper air, humidify, and temperature control in their storage area. With the total amount capped at \$10,000 per cycle, many have to pick a small component of a larger project to include in their proposal, and then apply for subsequent deadlines to complete the project.

CMF was heralded by all interviewees as essential to supporting one of the fundamental roles of Alaska museums to care for the collections in perpetuity for generations to come and to preserve the stories that define Alaska through time – past, present, and future.

### ***Areas for improvement and suggestions to consider***

#### ***Collection storage issues at crisis levels***

One of the most resounding concerns mentioned by museum professionals during the interviews was the state of collection storage. Some stated that they have no more storage space, which limits the capacity to collect unless deaccessioning is undertaken. Some said that they don't have proper storage

facilities or archival materials, which compounds the problem. Others mentioned that the rooms and areas that they use for storage are subpar and need to be upgraded.

### ***Buildings in decay and dated exhibitions compound collection issues***

The challenges mentioned above were amplified by the fact that many said their buildings are in desperate need of upgrading to meet basic contemporary standards. This was further explained by the fact that many museums need to redesign and reinstall exhibitions that are now dated without display cases suitable for proper collection care while on exhibit.

One interviewee said her dilemma is borne out by “do I apply for a CMF which is like putting a finger in a dike or do I tackle my leaking roof or crumbling foundation.” A museum has to have a sound building to be able to house collections. Unfortunately, this story was not isolated. Alaska ingenuity has resulted in a lot of creative solutions although none resolve the long-term challenge of a building that needs considerable capital improvements or a museum that needs a new building.

### ***Access to individuals with expertise needed to implement top standards***

With the exception of the three largest museums in Alaska, museum professionals said they need trained help to undertake collection projects. Having the opportunity to have a trained person work at an institution for 6-12 months would accelerate the implementation of much needed collection management systems upgrading and care. Including this as an option for CMF funds was mentioned as key.

Some suggested the idea of a “conservation journeyman” or a “collection expert journeyman” who could move from one institution to another, providing expertise to institutions that do not have trained collections staff.

### ***Expand use of funds to include exhibitions***

Because many objects are in exhibitions and on display, those objects need care as well. One interviewee said her institution needed to upgrade the cabinetry used for housing and presenting Native objects. Again, this concern was voiced frequently.

### ***Larger multi-year grants would better support the demands of collection care***

Collection care issues are complex and large in scope by their very nature. During the interview process the idea of applying for one multi-year grant of \$10,000 per year over a three-year period would enable institutions to plan, and know the funding is in place to implement a more complex project. The top amount per year per institution would be the same but would require one application with funds dispersed annually not to exceed \$30,000. This concept was shared with appropriate interviewees and met with great enthusiasm. Some interviewees said while that might be ideal for some institutions, they felt that retaining the annual, smaller projects would need to remain an option.

### ***Communication and ways to share information needs to increase***

A couple of respondents put forward the idea of featuring shared resources, expertise, and projects on a website. Given the nature of collection management, it was felt that many other museums would benefit from access to ideas, projects, approaches, and other pertinent information that would aid them in their work, and perhaps generate ideas for projects that might be undertaken. Some interviewees suggested that more communication with a grantee would be helpful from the moment of receipt of the grant through completion of the project.

## **Needs + Challenges for Alaska Museums**

During the interview process, it was clear that museum professionals in Alaska are strong, determined, resilient, resourceful, and creative problem-solvers. Despite ingenuity on the ground, some very persistent and troubling areas plague museums across the State.

When asked about pressing needs for museums there were several issues that rose to the top. Most of these issues are tied to lack of adequate funds for ongoing museum budgets and capital projects. Concerns mentioned included:

- Museums that are in desperate need of capital improvements from upgrades to renovation and in some cases new buildings are needed;
- Many mentioned the need to upgrade and reinstall exhibitions;
- Challenges attracting trained staff and retaining them was mentioned by just about all interviewees. This is further amplified by the simple need to have more funds to hire staff;
- Access to proper training opportunities for staff in Alaska was identified as a gap, given there is no certificate or master's program in the State.

- Boards are also in need of training given that many are often unfamiliar with nonprofit and museum standards, and a sound understanding of what Board responsibilities cover; and,
- A need for reliable funding for small museum operations was also cited as key to survival.

## **Museums Alaska Regarded Highly**

Interviewees were asked to provide their perspectives about Museums Alaska. Most expressed much gratitude for the association, the annual conference, and the services they provide. Many cited the two Rasmuson Funds as key to raising the visibility of the Association throughout the State.

Some thought there were opportunities to expand offerings to address areas such as: Board training, new ways to reach and include more cultural centers, and professional training in general. Many mentioned how helpful the workshops were when they were offered for training and information about the AAF and CMF programs. It was suggested reinstituting workshops would be of great help and might capture institutions not currently taking advantage of AAF and CMF. Respondents acknowledged the need for more funding to support Museums Alaska in this endeavor since the one staff member, the Executive Director, is only part time currently. Finally, one interviewee hoped that Museums Alaska would develop a vision for museums across the State.

## ***Administration of AAF and CMF positive***

Several questions targeted at the Museums Alaska Executive Director, grant review committee members, and Board members shed some light on the mechanics of managing the two funds. Given that separate administrators were used in years past, the ability to put the administrative costs of the funds toward adding hours for the Executive Director was viewed as a positive step forward. The E.D. position is still part-time but by providing more hours it lessens the need for the E.D. to secure additional work to make up the gap in annual income. While past contracted administrators did good work, it was expressed that having one person managing the funds increases overall efficiencies, and keeps the communication lines centralized.

When asked about the grant solicitation, review, award, and management process most felt that it was smooth. That said, continuing to improve tracking, and recordkeeping was an ongoing effort and had been streamlined in recent

years. For internal management, upgrading the grant management software would greatly enhance time efficiencies and cost effectiveness.

If the scope or guidelines for either of the funds is adjusted, as a result of this assessment, broad communication will be needed, an update to the website, and likely more training workshops as done in the past. One mentioned that the guidelines needed to be dated to clarify which is the most recent. One said that the online aspect of completing a grant application can be frustrating triggering the recommendation to revisit it and hone online program efficiencies. This may be an ideal moment to undertake some of the technological upgrades on the heels of reviewing the assessment findings.

Others suggest that Museums Alaska offers a tutorial on writing grants adding that there needs to be training. Perhaps, suggested one respondent, a sample proposal could be put on line for each of the grant programs.

Further, several suggested that Museums Alaska increase professional development outside and beyond the conference offerings.

## **SURVEY**

An invitation to participate in an online survey was sent to MA's current and lapsed members, the Alaska State Museum's listserv for museum professionals, and MA's Facebook page. Of the emails sent, 63 individuals opened the email, and of those, 30 individuals participated in the online survey, resulting in a response rate of 47%.

The 32 survey questions focused on:

- Respondent's institution and role
- AAF Recipient Experience
- CMF Recipient Experience
- Non-grant Recipient Experience
- Issues and General Museums Alaska Services

### **Respondent's Profile**

The majority of survey respondents, 83% (25), had applied for AND received a Museums Alaska's Art Acquisition Fund (AAF) grant AND/OR a Collections Management Fund (CMF) grant. Only 16% (5) of survey respondents had not. Of those who had received an AAF or CMF grants, 90% had received both, illustrating that those inclined to seek funding, are utilizing all opportunities offered from Museums Alaska.

Respondents represented a wide range of institutional operating budget sizes and at least one respondent per membership category. Listed below is the number of respondents per budget category:

|          |                        |
|----------|------------------------|
| 10 (33%) | Under \$49,999         |
| 1 (3%)   | \$50,000 to \$99,000   |
| 5 (16%)  | \$100,000 to \$249,999 |
| 6 (20%)  | \$250,000 to \$499,999 |
| 5 (16%)  | \$500,000 to \$999,999 |
| 3 (10%)  | \$1M to \$5M           |
| 0        | \$5M +                 |

Most of the respondents, 76%, were in Administration, Curatorial or Board Governance roles at their museums, therefore, a majority of the survey takers are decision-makers/leaders in their institutions. The remainder included a few in the Collections / Registration, Exhibitions, Education, Volunteer, Development and Conservator roles.



## **Strengths of Project AAF Recipients Experience**

Of the 21 respondents that had received an AAF grant, 95% felt the Art Acquisition Fund grant program meet their museum's acquisitions needs well or extremely well.

### **AAF Strengths**

As reported by AAF grant recipients to this survey, the top three greatest strengths of the AAF programs are:

1. Supports living, practicing Alaska artists
2. Grows the museum's contemporary art collection
3. Provides the only funding source for art acquisition

### **AAF Improvements**

Although the respondents reported that their acquisitions needs were being met, 75% felt there were areas where the AAF program needed improvements.

Most respondents indicated that the art and/or artists requirements were too limiting or restrictive for their contemporary art collecting aim.

Of the comments to this question, 56% recommended that the ability to commission artwork, not only existing art pieces, would greatly benefit the museums and Alaska artists alike. Two comments illustrated this point:

"Almost all Native Alaskan artists, and certainly artists of any heritage, in our experience only produce larger/more time intensive pieces on commission."

"A lot of artists make affordable art (under \$500) and can surely make "dream" pieces that would cost more, but they don't have the resources to just make high dollar art."

Another 25% of respondents suggested improvements focused on the definition of contemporary Alaska artist. These respondents would like to see the definition widened to include Alaska artists that now live out-of-state and/or Canada; as well as, recently deceased artists.

Other improvements, from a few respondents, proposed altering grant guidelines as noted below:

- A percentage of funds should be allowed to go to indirect costs, overhead, care and/or exhibition costs for the artwork;

- The nepotism clause is limiting because in small towns the best artists are involved already with their local museum in some way;
- Change definition of display or exhibition of artwork to include illustration in publication, off-site installation, online, etc.; and,
- Fund collection acquisitions other than art.

### **AAF Structure**

A majority of respondents reported that the current level of funding is adequate (80%). Only 15% reported the funding level as too little. 75% of comments suggested offering larger sums for bigger, more important commissioned pieces that would elevate their collecting activities.

“Although this amount is adequate for the purchase of small scale work, it limits the possibility and potential for establishing large-scale public works that are often available at a higher cost.”

For 90% of respondents, the current 6-month grant cycle is either adequate (70%) or ideal (20%). The main comment to this question was that often artists cannot wait for months, holding onto work, waiting for the grant-funding announcement. Another few felt the deadlines were too close to other MA activities, such as the CMF deadlines or conference.

Respondents reporting the percentage of AAF funded collections on display ranged widely. All had, at least, up to 30% of artwork on display and 25% reported to having over 90% on display.

Lastly, 19 AAF recipients said they planned to apply for an AAF grant in the future, with only one not planning on applying because the funds do not cover indirect, administrative expenses.

### **CMF Recipients Experience**

Of the 20 respondents that had received a CMF grant, 100% felt the Collections Management Fund grant program meet their museum’s collections management needs well or extremely well.

### **CMF Strengths**

As reported by CMF grant recipients to this survey, the top three greatest strengths of the CMF program are:

1. Enabling the purchase of conservation materials and supplies;
2. Building collection management and conservation of collections capacity; and,
3. Enhancing staff's collections management training.

### **CMF Improvements**

Although the respondents unanimously reported satisfaction with the collections management program, 57% felt there were areas where the CMF program needed improvement. Of those that suggested improvements, 70% stated a need for increased funding amounts. These quotes provide details to this point:

"More funding! This is a wildly popular grant with ever increasing popularity. It speaks to the increased collections management needs throughout the state. For many small institutions, this grant and the Alaska State Museum's Grant-in-Aid program are the only funding sources available for collections care."

"It would be nice if the grant was a little larger, or there was an annual cap, similar to the AAF. Supplies and contractors are expensive."

Another 30% of respondents suggested that a percentage of grant funds be utilized for overhead expenses and indirect costs.

"Nice to have supplies, but you need the people and facility to be able to use them. 10% overhead should be allowed."

Other improvements, from a few respondents, proposed that grant guidelines:

- Fund exhibition development;
- Cover a longer grant period; and,
- Provide a way for museums to respond, if their grant is refused.

### **CMF Structure**

A majority of respondents reported that the current level of funding is too little (57%) and 42% reported it being adequate. The comments mirrored those above, including the need for larger grant awards and the ability to allocate some grant funds for overhead expenses. The \$10,000 cap requires several institutions to break their much needed larger conservation / collections management projects into smaller fundable pieces which often can leave them unfinished.

“Although the current amount is generous, it does not allow or take into account larger scale permanent collections management improvements such as purchasing special equipment, improving environmental conditions, creating storage mounts for large objects such as vehicles and/or the maintenance of outdoor installations/objects.”

“Collections work is expensive. The cost of purchasing archival supplies alone is exorbitant, and has to be doubled to ship those materials to Alaska. If you order \$2,000 of archival boxes, it costs an additional \$2,000 to get them to Alaska.”

For 78% of respondents, the current 6-month grant cycle is adequate time to plan and implement. The remainder of the respondents (22%) reported 6-months is not enough time to plan and implement a collections project. All comments stated that 6 months is adequate for small projects but larger projects would require more time. These quotes explain some of the nuances of the current grant cycle:

“We have had success breaking a large project into small chunks, which we complete in 3-4 months, so we are finished by the time the grant cycle comes around. The truth is, you don't have 6 months for a project if the cycle is every 6 months. You have to wait to receive funds and then finish the project with enough time to submit the final report, if you hope to catch the second annual deadline.”

“Although the current cycle allows for small scale projects such as purchasing archival materials, it limits institutions from exploring longer duration projects or collaborative projects with other institutions.”

When asked if recipients would prefer a grant structure for 1) small collections projects (The current cycle: 2 deadlines per year; \$10,000 eligibility for each cycle); large collections projects (Two-to-three year projects; \$30,000 for multi-year projects; Applications received only once a year); or 3) both cycles, 84% would prefer the opportunity for developing collections projects for both cycles. All comments were very responsive to a greater flexibility to tailor the museum's actual collection needs to a broader funding opportunity.

"Some times small works, some times the need is bigger. I like the idea of having flexibility."

Like the AAF, 18 CMF recipients said they planned to apply for a CMF grant in the future, with only one not planning on applying because the funds do not cover indirect, administrative expenses.

"Only because of our policy regarding indirect costs. Otherwise you would hear from us often!"

## **Strengths of Project Non-Grant Recipient Experience**

### **Profile**

Of the non-grant recipient respondents (5), 100% had never applied for an AAF grant and 60% had never applied for a CMF grant. Not one of the non-grant recipient respondents had applied and not received a grant.

### **Barriers + Needs**

There was no consensus on the barriers to applying, receiving, or participating in the AAF and/or CMF grant program. The barriers listed were:

- Overhead or indirect costs are prohibitive (*insurance, security, transportation, travel, shipping, installation, and/or conservation expenses*)
- Do not have the staff or resources to apply.
- Do not have staff with museum training and appropriate experience.
- Do not collect art.
- Cannot meet collections storage or care standards.
- Storage is at maximum capacity.
- Not aware of the grant until now.

Among respondents, there was also no one standout need. Over 50% needed more collection storage and training for museum staff. Where an additional 33% also needed higher quality storage area(s)/facilities that meet industry standards (HVAC, archival storage areas, etc.), collections supplies, equipment, and storage fixtures, access to outside expertise/contractors and/or digitizing collections.

### **Future Applications**

Three respondents plan to apply for CMF but none plan on applying to AAF. All respondents would like personal consulting when submitting an application and most would use a workshop to prepare a grant application.

### **Strengths of Project Issues + General MA Services**

As reported by all respondents, the top three issues facing museums are:

- Economic stability and funding
- Collections storage
- Capital improvements

Respondents were interested in the following addition to MA services:

- Professional development
- Access to experts
- Networking opportunities with colleagues
- Resources on latest trends

Other support suggestions were a mentor program, webinars, a certificate program, funding to attend conferences outside of Alaska, board development, best museum examples within the state, and an active MA advocacy arm.

### **Final Comments**

Overwhelmingly, when asked for any final comments, respondents were extremely grateful to both Museums Alaska and Rasmuson Foundation for the grant opportunities and funding. It is clear through this survey that participants feel AAF and CMF are an essential source for the museum community in Alaska and fill a fundamental need within their institution.

“The staff and boards of the institutions I have been associated with are extremely appreciative of these two generous and splendid programs. The Rasmuson Foundation, with the assistance of Museums Alaska, has done more to enhance the arts and professionalize the museums of Alaska than any other

single source or program available. We shall be forever in your debt. Thank you for your generosity, confidence and support!"

Again, when asked for any additional suggestions or feedback on the MA's grant program, 62% of comments were thankful for the program and that the grant funds were a huge boon for their museum.

"We're so lucky to have this funding opportunity and I hope the Rasmuson Foundation continues to support Alaska's museums and cultural centers."



# COMPARATIVE RESEARCH

Research was conducted to identify any similar programs or partnerships between a state museum association and a foundation offering grant programs like AAF and CMF, as well as scanning the horizon to identify unique programs that exist for the funding of art acquisitions and/or collections management projects on a state level, but are perhaps not a part of a partnership agreement.

The scan included researching sources from federal support institutions (Institute of Museum and Library Services, American Alliance of Museums, National Endowment for the Arts, and National Endowment for the Humanities) and a web search.

Based on this research, the Museums Alaska partnership with the Rasmuson Foundation is a *one-of-a-kind* program. There were no exact matches to a foundation supporting art acquisitions and/or collections management projects on the state level through a museum association. However, there were several examples that have some aspect of Museum Alaska's grant programs for reference. The results are grouped into two categories: **Art Acquisition Programs** and **Alaska State Funds for Collections Projects**.

## ART ACQUISITION PROGRAMS

We identified and interviewed just one other partnership that closely mirrors the AAF program operations between the *Oregon Arts Commission* and the *Ford Family Foundation*. The other two examples are entities funding their own art acquisition of local artists, and then partnering with other institutions to loan and display the artwork.

Some comparison findings:

- Although there are a few similar art acquisition programs, these other programs are only funding at a quarter or half of the amount Rasmuson has dedicated on an annual basis;
- The Ford Family Foundation's Art Acquisition Program has recently shifted from smaller, more numerous awards to larger, more substantial awards for more impactful acquisition purchases; and,
- Like AAF, existing work, non-commissioned, are typically funded, however, some programs do fund the purchase, transport, or prepare works for exhibition.

## **Ford Family Foundation's Art Acquisition Program**

The Ford Family Foundation's Art Acquisition Program administered by the Oregon Arts Commission, provides resources to Oregon visual art institutions and public visual arts collections for the purpose of acquiring seminal works by Oregon visual artists, thereby protecting their public access in a legacy collection, and to provide support for the artists and to the visual arts institutions that support their work through acquisition and exhibition.

The goal of the program is to:

- Accelerate an enhanced quality of artistic endeavor and body of work by Oregon's most promising mid-career visual artists; and,
- Improve Oregon's visual arts ecology by making strategic investments in Oregon institutions that further the progress of these artists.

The Art Acquisition grants are part of The Ford Family Foundation's seven-prong Visual Arts Program. In 2017, OAC encouraged applicants to request ambitious acquisitions, with a hope that their dollars will fund fewer, but more impactful acquisitions.

Established: 2010

Annual Award Total (2017): \$112,500

Total amount funded since 2010: \$426,000

Number of artworks purchased since 2010: 54

Number of artist participants since 2010: 39

Number of arts institutions that have purchased artwork 2010: 14

Average number of applications received annually: 9

Average percentage of applications funded: 72%

Average awarded amount: \$9,475

Length of funding round: 12-months

Length of grant administration: Operates in 5 year funding cycles; currently in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a second funding cycle

### **Program Structure**

- Up-to-two applications may be submitted per organization per funding round.
- Preference for leveraging other funding on a matching basis.
- Art exhibited within two years of acquisition.
- Funds may be used to purchase, transport or prepare works for exhibition. Storage, public access or documentation costs not eligible. Commissions for future works will not be competitive.
- Artwork proposed must be placed on hold by the owner/dealer for two months from time of grant deadline to notice and up to four months for payment.
- Alert and seek approval of any proposed deaccession of acquired work(s) and provide for an alternate recipient through "restricted" gift provision.
- Review panel consists of 6 artist professionals (collectors, curators, arts professors, etc.) + 2 representatives from the Ford Family Foundation.

### **Alberta Foundation for the Arts**

This program provides support for individual Alberta artists or an ensemble of artists through the purchase of their artwork as a permanent part of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Collection (AFAC).

AFAC established: 1972

Annual Art Acquisition Amount: \$50,000

Collection value in 2016: \$14M

Number of artworks purchased since 1972: 8,700+

Number of artist participants since 1972: 1,700+

### **Program Structure**

- Acquires art by application from individual artists, public art commission for not-for-profit organizations, curatorial purchases and donation;
- Loans 25-35% of collection for exhibitions, long-term, art placement in public building and traveling exhibitions; and,
- Funds through lottery revenue.

## **Alaska Contemporary Art Bank**

A program of the Alaska State Council on the Arts, the Alaska Contemporary Art Bank (ACAB) goal is to expose more Alaskans to high quality work by contemporary Alaska artists through the provision of outstanding art to public offices throughout Alaska. Due to State budget cuts, the ACAB purchases art only on a periodic basis, not annually. Therefore, this program is no longer a consistent source of support to professional artists in Alaska through purchase of their work.

ACAB established: 1972

Art Acquisition Annual Amount: No longer have annual funds allotted. \$20,000 for open call for art.

Number of artworks purchased since 1972: 744

Number of artist participants since 1972: 394

Percentage of the collection is on display: 66%

### **Program Structure**

- Acquires art by annual purchases from juried exhibitions, recommendations for direct purchases by ASCA's statewide public art advisory panel, and acquisitions through statewide calls for entries.

## **ALASKA STATE FUNDS FOR COLLECTIONS PROJECTS**

Based on the research, we were unable to identify a partnership between an association and a foundation offering collections management grant program. Therefore, we have listed details on the two other primary collections management grant funding within the State of Alaska. As illustrated below, CMF, Alaska State Museum Grant-in-Aid, and the Alaska Humanities Forum all offer the same amount, up to \$10,000, for collections projects. This leaves a gap for in State funding for larger collections projects.

It should be noted that there are numerous national funding opportunities for collection management projects, some federally funded (IMLS, NEA, and NEH), some foundations, and some private corporate foundations. These funding sources are highly competitive, require extensive advance planning, and often focus on funding specialized projects (textiles collections or digitization). A complete list of collections management funding sources would be extensive, and was not a part of the scope of work requested for this assessment project.

## **Alaska State Museum Grant-in-Aid**

Regular Grant-in-Aid Amount: \$10,000

Mini Grant-in-Aid Amount: \$2,000

Project Period: 1 year

### **Grant Structure**

- Funds can be used to purchase materials, equipment, personnel or contractual services or other items necessary to support and improve museum services and operations; and,
- Online application via Survey Monkey.

## **Alaska Humanities Forum**

### **Annual Grants**

Award Amount: Up to \$10,000, totaling \$70,000-\$140,000 awarded annually

Project Period: Up to 2.5 years

### **Mini-Grants**

Award Amount: Up to \$2,000

Project Period: Rolling Deadline

Small projects, completed within 6 months from the start.

### **Grant Structure**

- Nonprofit organizations, ad-hoc organizations, and individuals
- 100% (dollar-for-dollar) matching requirements
- Projects must have a public benefit
- Must have a Humanities scholar
- Online application via Submittable.com

# CONCLUSIONS + RECOMMENDATIONS

This assessment reveals overwhelming support and appreciation for the Art Acquisition Fund and Collections Management Fund, specifically the leadership, vision, and generosity of the Rasmuson Foundation who have made this all possible. The Rasmuson Foundation is heralded as making significant contributions to the overall health of museums in Alaska for their art collections, the artists community, and advancement of collection care projects. Museums Alaska receives high marks for their leadership in managing and working with museums across the State, advancing both funds.

It is clear that these two funds have made a significant difference for museums and artists throughout Alaska. The results of this assessment highlight useful information to guide the work of Museums Alaska and the Rasmuson Foundation moving forward.

## **Resonating feedback about AAF**

The AAF fund has made a dramatic difference for artists and museums alike. Without this fund, art acquisitions of Alaska artists would not have happened.

- The impact to artists is noteworthy. Considerable agreement was voiced about the significant support to artists who struggle to make a living with few opportunities to sell their art and achieve visibility. They are grateful for the opportunity to have their art purchased, for the public exposure, and a sense of pride for being selected and featured in a museum in Alaska; and,
- Museums quite simply don't have funds for acquisitions, so the AAF has opened opportunities for museums in Alaska to collect, and show the art of Alaska artists both Native and non-Native.

Agreement on areas for improvement with AAF include:

- Revisiting the guidelines and operative definitions relating to: definitions of contemporary art, type, and time span; and, Alaska artists living within the State and beyond;
- Considering the option of commissioning art to be supported through the AAF. There was widespread agreement that this would be a boost to the art collected with greater impact for exhibitions, new types of art, and the ability to secure large, more expensive art pieces;

- Expanding the use and display of art. It is not possible for all museums to have a high percentage of the art purchased through AAF on display. Some have the capacity for a larger percentage to be on view, while others may have lower percentages due to changing exhibitions and themes;
- Considering larger awards in order to allow for significant and expensive pieces of art such as public art, totem poles, etc.;
- Exploring the support of other types of collections critical to telling the full story of Alaska, such as historic objects, archaeological artifacts, etc.;
- Adding a percentage of an award to help defray administrative costs and overhead; and,
- Considering the timing of the AAF deadlines relative to other Museums Alaska activities and CMF deadlines.

These issues are tied primarily to the parameters of the Fund, and the range of opportunities supporting Alaska artists and museums across the State.

### **Feedback about CMF**

Enthusiasm and appreciation for CMF resounded through interviews and survey findings. Due to limited options to fund collections management and conversation projects, CMF is viewed as a critical source of support.

- Many have been able to purchase shelving, archival materials, new computer programs, and bring experts on to assist with specific projects; and,
- As a result of this fund, many collections, formerly at risk, are now in more stable condition with better storage systems.

Areas for improvement mentioned include:

- Increasing the financial ceiling for awards to better align with the costs associated with collection management projects, including an option for multi-year projects. Collection care and conservation are expensive undertakings, and in general, take protracted amounts of time to implement and address. There was positive response to multi-year grants that would allow museums with larger projects to implement with greater success of completion;
- Providing options for both smaller requests as well as larger, multi-year projects. This provides important options for applicants; and,
- Expand collection care to include care of collections on exhibition.



Several museums stated an ongoing need to tackle capital improvements, renovations, and in some cases, new facilities.

## **Recommendations**

A report of this scale deserves careful review and conversation with the leadership of Museums Alaska and the Rasmuson Foundation.

### ***Review the guidelines, goals and parameters for both AAF and CMF in light of the findings and make appropriate changes.***

- Review the report together (Museums Alaska and Rasmuson Foundation) and determine next steps including:
  - Alterations to the parameters of each fund, definitions, guidelines, etc. as referenced in the findings and conclusions sections of this report; and,
  - Any increases in amounts to be awarded, which is dependent on the Rasmuson Foundation and Museums Alaska long-term goals for these programs.
- Continue with the current funding levels for the Art Acquisition Fund.
- Increase the award amounts for CMF (if possible) encouraging multi-year projects for greater impact; and,
- Determine a timeline for unfurling changes to AAF and CMF. Identify when you will be ready to implement changes, with a year's notice or longer, providing the necessary time needed for conversations, stakeholder feedback (if desired), preparation of new documents, guidelines, website changes, etc.

***Explore opportunities to leverage greater investment in museum capital infrastructure across the state.*** Capital improvements are becoming critical as most of the 1950s buildings are showing wear and are not up to contemporary standards. It would be advisable to:

- Consider whether there is a shared interest among stakeholders to systematically support upgrading museum buildings across the State.

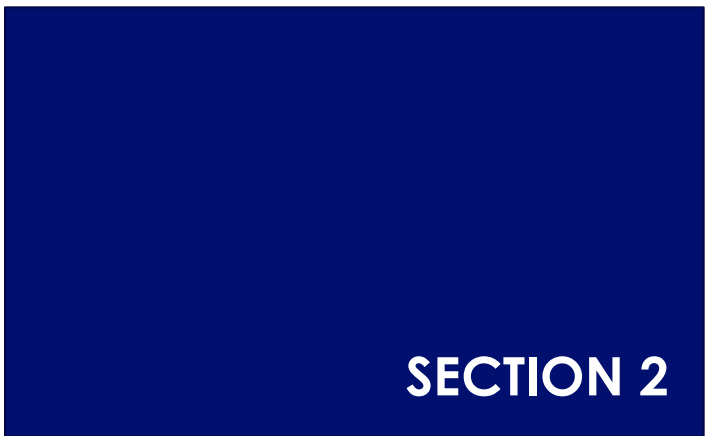
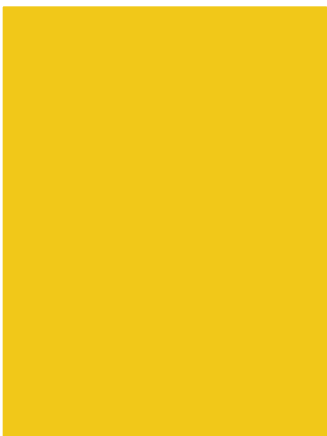
As noted earlier, the Rasmuson Foundation already offers Tier 1 and Tier 2 grant opportunities for which an individual institution could apply for capital projects. In addition, Museums Alaska has mounted an effort with the State Legislature to pass a bill to support a matching grant program in support of capital projects for museums. Finally, reference to the "Infrastructure Needs Study of Alaska Museums and Capital Improvement Planning Guide," prepared by the McDowell

Group for The Foraker Group completed in 2014 should be taken into consideration.

Other areas suggested for additional support from the Rasmuson Foundation were creating an endowment fund for museums to assist in the ongoing financial demands of operating a museum in Alaska. Whether endowment or operating grants, the concern of being able to raise enough funds to operate a small museum came up many times in both the interviews and surveys.

***Evaluate the capacity and scope of responsibilities of the Executive Director as they relate to changes in these programs and the mission of Museums Alaska.*** Recommendations include:

- Consider moving the Executive Director to full time, resources permitting. Perhaps the percentage of time allocated through the Rasmuson Foundation investment should be increased;
- Create a flow of work and correlating changes to these two funds so that any issues can be identified and properly planned for;
- Communicate changes with ample notice to stakeholders, museums and artists alike. Do it in person, through the website, workshops, and email so that the information will reach the largest group possible;
- Resurrect the workshops. Many said how helpful they were in the past and with changes afoot, it makes sense to offer a series of workshops around the State;
- Reach out to non-recipients to gain a clearer idea of their needs. With only five respondents through the survey, it is not entirely clear the range and scope of issues afoot for non-recipients of AAF and CMF. Consider collecting this information through roundtable discussions at the next Museums Alaska conference;
- Unify the records and archives for Museums Alaska in one place increasing access to the history of the organization including the two funds;
- Work with the Rasmuson Foundation on the ongoing management of the artists database. Many stated during the interviews how valuable it would be to access to and visibility for the artists across the State; and,
- Upgrade the grant management software to better support current activities, much less an increase in activities.



# STORIES FROM THE FIELD

The following is a compilation of stories as part of the assessment process.

## Grant Recipients

"The AAF provided our museum with an invaluable opportunity to purchase and share Alaska artwork with the local community and surrounding region who do not typically enjoy access to contemporary art; these works are both educational and inspirational to local youth, museum visitors, and regional artists."

- **Amy Phillips-Chan, Director, Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum**

"Grants received from the Alaska museums collection management fund have enabled us to work on our goal of properly caring for our collections. This ensures the preservation of our local history for future generations. The art acquisition grant has allowed us to purchase art from our local gifted artists benefiting both us and them." - **Terri Henson, Wrangell Museum, Director**

"With the CMF grant to bring in a professional Collections Management person for 8 weeks, our full collection is now on the computer. We were sorry not to be able to complete the project with the professional in the 8 weeks, but have managed to complete it with a local volunteer who learned along the way. We did apply for a second grant to bring in more professional expertise, a few years back, but it was not awarded. Since having the collection digitized and photographed, we have not yet been in a position to take the next steps needed." - **Sunny Cook, Board President, McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum**

"We are a small museum that is open only during the summer season from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Our museum is funded by sales at our gift shop, which does not earn enough revenue to pay staff. Our museum then tries to manage and update collections and exhibits during the winter off season but has insufficient funds to do this without grants like CMF & AAF." - **Martin Gutoski, Museum Director, Tanana Valley Railroad Museum**

"With the support of the AAF, our museum would not have a contemporary art collection. The CMF has allowed us to now provide proper storage for our collections that are more in line with AAM standards." - **Selena Ortega-Chiolero, Executive Director, Palmer Museum of History and Art**

"The impact of CMF has been enormous. When I arrived 3 1/2 years ago there were collections scattered in every nook and cranny, including an outdoor shed, a basement exhibit work space, the director's office and behind staff desks. There were piles in the storage areas of unprocessed material and unfinished projects. None of the contents of the four map cases had been cataloged and put into the database. With the help of CMF we hired consultants and interns who cataloged backlogs, moved items to storage locations, flattened rolled maps and cataloged the contents of the flat files (adding those flattened maps in the process), inventoried the entire collection, and made book boxes for fragile books in archives. The result is astounding. All of our collections are stored in one area of the museum. It is clean, organized and easy to access. Although we still have a backlog, those materials are organized in one area of the storage, so they can be pulled and processed as staff have time during slow periods. (This may be a few more CMF grants, too.) For the first time, we have put some collection finding aids on our web site. And we have seen an increase in the use of our archives due to the improved organization and accessibility.

AAF The impact of AAF is equally enormous, both to the museum and to the community. The funds have purchased the start of a sculpture garden on our grounds, which was then greatly expanded by a private donor who was inspired by the sculptures she saw on our lawn. Similarly, purchase of a scrimshaw piece inspired a donor to provide another piece by the same artist. One artist from whom we have purchased more than one piece has let us know that we are in her will for the bulk of her collection. She also has started volunteering as a guest curator, putting together one art show each year for the museum. The purchase of artworks has built good will with the local artists, many of whom take a strong interest in the museum and are some of our best local advocates. From our standpoint, the artwork has greatly enriched our exhibits and ability to interpret our region. We use artworks within historical displays as well, creating more dynamic exhibits that expand a visitor's interpretation of an event or an activity. Some of our most stunning, visually exciting items are those purchased with AAF funds. The result is that we impress visitors from "outside" and build local pride in our museum. The quality of offerings makes us look professional and worth the visit. A final change is that we felt comfortable raising our admission price this year, since the museum visit has become one that is much higher caliber than it was in the past. This has significantly helped our funding stability and hasn't impacted our visitation. People still tell us it was "well worth it." - **Helen Alten, Director, Haines Sheldon Museum**

"CMF has made all the difference in the world to the Hammer Museum. Created by an individual with over a thousand undocumented hammers, it has received donations of thousands of hammers since its incorporation as a non-profit. Relying on summer interns with no oversight by trained staff, little documentation was done for many years. Since hiring a PT Director, the CMF grant has allowed us to retain the Director over the winter months to catalog a large portion of our hammers. This elemental cataloging project would never have gone anywhere without CMF grants. Our funds alone would never have stretched that far. AAF - People understand the utilitarian use for hammers, but are quite surprised and enriched by the concept of hammers as an art form. The ability to acquire art incorporating hammers adds a depth to the museum which we had not envisioned at its inception." - **Cynthia Jones, President, Board of Directors, Hammer Museum**

"We have a minimal budget for purchasing artifacts and collections care. AAF and CMF allow us to push forward outside the norm of what we generally think is possible." – **Anonymous**

"Our institution has no funding for acquiring collections. AAF in particular has allowed us to be proactive in developing our art collection as well as art/craft created by contemporary Alaska Native peoples. The limitations are important for keeping the funding in Alaska and supporting Alaskan artists and institutions that care for the work. The CMF has provided funding for smaller projects that need supplies on shorter-time scales and for setting up the infrastructure for larger institutional ongoing projects." - **Angela Linn, Senior Collections Manger, Ethnology & History, University of Alaska Museum of the North**

"This funding source has been a game changer for Alaskan museums, and is the envy of many of my museum colleagues in the lower 48. The kinds of relationships with artists and other museum professionals that this funding facilitates is perhaps an underappreciated benefit of these two programs. Thank you!" - **Ellen Carrlee, Conservator, Alaska State Museum**

"The Art Acquisition Fund allows our institution to pursue fresh contemporary collecting centered on our history and art mission. It helps us establish relationships with local artists and invites them to be a part of our collections through mission driven themes and subjects. The art that we collect anchors our history exhibits in new and visually intuitive ways. Without this fund, museums mostly collect passively, by being offered collections and artifacts from the past.

This fund allows our institution to take control of collecting themes through artistic expression and dialogue.

The Collections Management fund has proven vital and essential to our institution in caring for all collections. It assists us with storage solutions, archival materials, and professional expertise in artifact preservation. Since the fund is open for applications twice a year, it helps us realize specialized and multi-step projects with continuity and confidence of success." - **Jane Lindsey, Director, Juneau-Douglas City Museum**

"The Living Alaska helped the Alutiiq Museum leverage local resources to show more of its own artwork. We were awarded a grant from the City of Kodiak to mount an additional 9 pieces for display and to create an online art gallery that showcases all of our Rasmuson funded acquisitions.

<https://alutiiqmuseum.org/explore/collections/types-of-collections/contemporary-art>

This gallery helped us meet two organizational goals (1) enhancing digital access to collections, and (2) promoting Alutiiq artists. There have been a number of positive comments about the online gallery – both among the artist, who are pleased to be represented, and among our patrons, who are enjoying the access to museum collections and artwork. Moreover, we are continuing to add to the gallery as we purchase new works through the Art Acquisition program. Living Alaska gave us a context to improve our resources and draw attention to the amazing collection of Alutiiq artwork we have been building with Foundation support. This also seems to be drawing attention to the biannual funding program and the opportunity for artists to sell their work to the museum. In short, Living Alaska increased visibility of the program." - **Amy Steffian, Chief Curator, Alutiiq Museum & Archaeological Repository**

## Artists

"My multimedia sculptures were featured in the "Empty Chair Exhibit" at the Juneau Douglas City Museum, a show that presented the history of the forced removal of local Japanese Americans to internment camps during WWII. My artwork is inspired by the struggles of past generations of Japanese Americans and their ability to endure many hardships as well as celebrate their successes. I am very grateful that three of my pieces from the show are now in the museum's

permanent collection and can be shared with the public, thanks to the Rasmussen Foundation Art Acquisition Fund Program.” - **Fumi Matsumoto, AAF Artist**

“As an artist, it is a great honor to be able to say that I have some pieces in the collections of a Museum. This is something that is now more possible in Alaska because this program is available. This has also helped me in knowing that there is another possible outlet for support of my art and my family. This has been a great way for me to build a greater relationship with the museums and open up new ideas for exploration, a foot in the door if you will. Thank you” - **Abel Ryan, AAF Artist**

“Museums of the obscure and amazing are places in the world I seek out. The Hammer Museum in Haines, Alaska is one of these places; the only museum dedicated to preserving the history of the hammer in the world.

The Rasmuson Art Acquisition fund has had a great impact on this museum and my artistic career. The resources RAAF provided the Hammer Museum, which was struggling and seldomly open a few years ago, created a great boon in my artistic career—four of my kiln cast glass hammers were purchased for display in the permanent collection of the Hammer Museum—

Without the support of the Rasmuson Art Acquisition fund I would never have received the prestigious honor of having my work on display in their collection of over 2000 hammers. This fantastic and progressive fund also seemed to revitalize the Hammer Museum itself, which is one of the obscure, fantastic, and thriving little museums of the great state of Alaska.” - **Rachael Juzeler, AAF Artist**

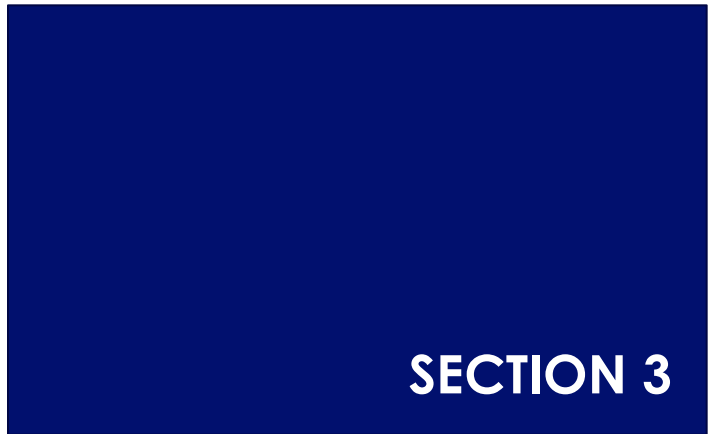
“These grant programs are essential in allowing me and many other artists the ability to create these large scale original works and for museums with little funding the ability to acquire such works for their permanent collections. The positive effects they have on Alaskan Artists, museums, economy and the public's ability to view its local artists best works are without question.” - **James Havens, AAF Artist**

“As an artist, I am most deeply grateful for the Rasmuson Art Acquisition Program because it has enabled a wider range of Alaskan museums to acquire my work, and has enabled those museums that have collected my work in depth to obtain significant examples of it from a variety of periods in my career. My



paintings have been in the collections of the Alaska State Museum, the Anchorage Museum, and the University of Alaska Museum since the early 1980s, but this program made it possible for the Alaska State Museum, especially, to acquire two quite large, major paintings of mine that significantly enhance their holdings of my work. It has also been a delight to me that the larger of those two paintings has now been on view in the Rasmuson Foundation offices for some years, and I hear regularly from those who visit those offices that they have seen and enjoyed it. I am also especially grateful that this program made it possible for the Pratt Museum in Homer to acquire a substantial painting of mine from an exhibition I had there several years ago. Smaller museums around the state have seldom collected much work by artists from other regions of Alaska, and I am honored to now have work in this important regional Alaskan museum."

- **Kesler Woodward, AAF Artist**



**SECTION 3**

# APPENDIX A:

## ASSESSMENT TIMELINE

### ***Leadership Capacity Project Preparation (June + July 2017)***

- Reviewed MA documents including strategic plan, current budget, grant application guidelines, and grant awards 2003 - 2017
- Conducted initial interview with Executive Director
- Prepared interview questions for funders, MA staff, grant recipients, grant reviewers, and artists who have received AAF funding
- Conducted research on programs with similar aims

### ***Implementation of Methodologies (July + August 2017)***

- Traveled to Anchorage, Fairbanks + Juneau for interviews and site visits
- Interviewed 42 people in-person or on the phone, individually or in groups
- Developed an online survey for grant recipients and non-grant recipients
- Invited MA current + lapsed members (222) to participate in online survey
- Collected stories + quotes about the impact of MA's grant programs

### ***Assessment of Findings + Development of Report (August - November 2017)***

- Analyzed survey results + compared them to interview results
- Drafted report + sought input from MA + Rasmuson Foundation representatives
- Finalized report + submitted to Museums Alaska + Rasmuson Foundation

# APPENDIX B:

## OVERVIEW OF GRANT PROGRAMS

### ART ACQUISITION FUNDS

The purpose of the Art Acquisition Fund (AAF) is to encourage museums in Alaska to collect the work of accomplished Alaska artists for their collections, and support living, practicing Alaska artists through these acquisitions.

The AAF program was created with three main goals:

- Support living, practicing Alaska visual artists through museum purchases;
- Enhance the permanent art collections of Alaska museums and cultural centers; and,
- Build capacity of Alaska museums and cultural centers to establish and maintain permanent collections of contemporary art through formal policies and programming.

AAF established: 2003

Art Acquisition Annual Budget (2017): \$265,000

Total amount of funds awarded to date: \$2.8M

Number of artworks purchased since 2003: 1,205

Number of artist participants since 2003: 532

Number of museum + cultural centers that have purchased artwork: 38 of 65+ museums in Alaska

Average number of applications received annually: 85

Average percentage of applications funded: 85%

Average awarded amount: \$5,100

### Program Structure

- Grant amounts are awarded up to \$35,000 per year, per institution for existing art purchases.
- Online applications are due twice a year, April 15 and October 15

For a full description of Art Acquisition Fund eligibility and funding criteria, see Appendix C: MA 2017 Grant Guidelines.

## **COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT FUND**

The Collections Management Fund (CMF) evolved out of the need to address collection care issues that Alaska museums were facing. The program was built upon the recognition that growing museum collections requires additional resources to manage these assets in a sustainable way.

The CMF's goal is to enhance collections management through professional expertise, training, and access to conservation materials and supplies. Museums and cultural centers in Alaska are eligible to apply for supplies and equipment, training, and professional services.

CMF established: 2013

Annual Budget (2017): \$100,000

Total amount of funds awarded to date: \$440,205

Number of collection projects funded since 2013: 87

Number of museum + cultural centers awarded since 2013: 35 of 65+ museums in Alaska

Average number of applications received annually: 28

Average percentage of those funded: 73%

### **Program Structure**

- Grant amounts are awarded up to \$10,000; Typical grant awards are from \$3,000-\$5,000
- Online applications are due twice a year, March 31 and September 30
- Applicants may only apply for one grant per cycle (two grants total per year)
- All grant-supported projects must be complete within six months of receipt of grant funds
- Funded grant project must be complete before a new application is submitted
- Small, rural-based organizations are encouraged to apply
- Preference will be given to projects that are collaborative or cooperative in nature
- Emergency conservation projects will be given priority

For a full description of Collections Management Fund eligibility and funding criteria, see Appendix C: MA 2017 Grant Guidelines.

## GRANT PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

Both AAF and CMF have the following review process.

Number of reviewers: 8

Time from deadline to announcement: 3 weeks

- Grant review committees each consist of typically 8 Museum Alaska members.
- Program Administrator compiles the information into uniformed format for reviewers, and schedules a time for the grant review committee to meet.
- Reviewers are provided applications at least one week in advance of the meeting.
- Reviewers read all of the applications, and are assigned several to "present" to the committee.
- Committee discusses each application, and everyone provides input.
- Committee votes whether to fully fund, partially fund (with comments), ask to resubmit (with comments), or decline (with comments).
- The final decision is communicated to those who submitted applications.

### Ratings Systems

*AAF* applications are ranked on a scale of 1-5 in the following criteria:

- Is complete;
- Exhibits quality;
- Meets eligibility criteria;
- Supports institution's mission;
- Meets institution's collection/exhibit goals; and,
- Demonstrates artistic merit.

*CMF* currently does not use a ranking. Applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which:

- The application is complete, well-organized, and understandable;
- The proposal clearly states the organization's need for collections management funds;
- The project is well-designed with clear and realistic goals;
- The application describes how the proposed project will enhance the applicant's ability to deliver programs or services;
- The funding requested is appropriate for the activities proposed;
- The proposed budget is adequately justified and supported by budget narrative; and,
- The project will have benefits that last beyond the grant term.

# APPENDIX C:

## MA 2017 GRANT GUIDELINES

### RASMUSON FOUNDATION ART ACQUISITION FUND

#### 2017 APPLICATION GUIDELINES

##### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Art Acquisition Fund is to encourage museums<sup>1</sup> in Alaska to collect the work of accomplished Alaska artists for their collections, and support living, practicing Alaska artists through these acquisitions.

The Fund is supported through a grant established by Rasmuson Foundation and is administered by Museums Alaska on behalf of the Foundation. All inquiries must be directed to the Project Administrator at Museums Alaska.

##### Eligibility

1. Only Alaska museums and Alaska Native cultural centers are eligible to participate in the Art Acquisition Program. An institution's qualified auxiliary or support group may act as the agent for purchasing if it is impossible for the museum to do so directly.<sup>1</sup>
2. A museum must be qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS Code of 1986, and classified as (1) a public charity under Section 509(a) of the IRS Code or, (2) as a unit of government, in selected cases.
3. The museum must supply its federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) on the application.
4. A museum must have a history or tradition of collecting or exhibiting art, and be able to store and care for all works purchased.
5. To be eligible, a museum must submit a plan for the exhibition of works purchased through this program. This plan should indicate when and how works will be exhibited and how the museum will incorporate these works into its overall collections (e.g., as part of a permanent exhibition, educational programs, community exhibitions, etc.).

**Note:** Rasmuson Foundation, members of the Museums Alaska board of directors, or the Project Administer may have opportunities to visit and see the artwork. For an example of an exhibitions plan, contact the Program administrator.

##### When to Apply

The 2017 deadlines for applications are April 15 and October 15.

Throughout the period before a deadline, applications are held and reviewed, but final distribution decisions are not made until the deadline.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this application and the Art Acquisition program in general, the term *museum* includes cultural centers that meet conditions of eligibility stated in these guidelines.

## **Funding Limits**

No more than \$35,000 will be allocated to a single museum in the program year. The amount of artwork to be purchased will be guided by (1) the adopted collection policy, (2) the exhibitions/programs plan, and (3) capacity for maintaining and using collections in keeping with accepted museum standards.

**Selection Criteria** (These are stipulations in addition to whatever selection criteria and process the individual museum uses in its normal acquisition process.)

1. Artwork must meet the general mission and specific goals and criteria stipulated in the applicant's formally adopted collections policy and (2) the applicant's annual exhibitions/programs plan. The program strongly encourages applicants to tie their purchasing goals very closely to the institution's exhibitions/program plan.
2. Artwork must be by a living, "established" Alaska artist.<sup>1</sup> The artwork must represent current work of the artist.<sup>2</sup>
3. Funding preference will be given to works by Alaska artists residing in Alaska. In exceptional cases, the current works of accomplished Alaska artists residing outside of Alaska may be considered. Before applying for funding to support the purchase of works by an Alaska artist who does not live in Alaska, please contact the program director for advice.
4. No artwork may be specifically commissioned for this Fund.
5. Only visual art will be considered.
6. Artwork may be in any medium.
7. Artwork may include outdoor installations.
8. Replicas of artifacts or copies of original works will not be funded.
9. All purchases require compliance with the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990 (PL 101-644), which makes it unlawful to display for sale or to sell any product in a manner that falsely suggests it is Indian produced, an Indian product of a particular Indian tribe or Indian arts and craft organization. The law further provides that the term "Indian" means any individual who is a member of a federally or state recognized Indian Tribe or is certified as an Indian artisan by an

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of the Fund, an "established" artist is one whose work has been shown or is currently being shown in (1) a juried exhibition, (2) an exhibition sponsored by a museum, a non-profit or for-profit gallery, or the Alaska State Council on the Arts (ASCA), or (3) is in a museum, library collection, or the ASCA "Art Bank," (4) has been awarded a "1% For Art" commission, (5) has had work accepted for sale by a gallery, or (6) has been purchased by a corporation/business for its public spaces. In cases of traditional native artists, whose work does not appear in these forums, please contact the Project Administrator.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of the Fund, "current" is understood to be recent work, generally no older than 4 or 5 years and preference is given to works no older than 3 or 4 years. Because the program focuses on **contemporary art**, it is necessary for the rationale for collecting these items address their importance as works of "contemporary art" and specifically how these pieces fit into the museum's collecting plan for "contemporary Alaska art." While it is difficult to define the concept precisely, the usual characteristics of "contemporary art" envisioned by this program are that a work of art not only is recent, but demonstrates innovation, a distinctive style, a fresh artistic statement, something that explores the use of media (new or traditional), or exemplifies a new, creative idea, is the artwork "of the moment?". Many Alaska Native artists use traditional materials and are inspired by traditional forms, motifs, and concepts, so it is necessary to explain how these works, otherwise so traditional, are not replicas.



Indian Tribe. The law does not restrict non-Indians from producing or selling such objects, but it must be disclosed to the public/consumer that the piece was made by a non-Indian. See <http://www.iacb.doi.gov/act.html> for full details.

10. The museum may not purchase artwork for its collections from its own current museum board of directors or staff members, or immediate family members; or from artists who serve on the board of directors of Museums Alaska or their immediate family members.

Applicant must give assurance that the artwork to be purchased conforms to current federal and state laws regulating the collection, use and sale of archeological and/or paleontological materials (please check the appropriate box on the application form). For more information, see: <http://www.nps.gov/akso/akarc/> and <http://www.fs.fed.us/geology/PaleoResourcePres.pdf> or the Alaska State Council on the Arts website: [www.eed.state.ak.us/aksca/pdf/customs\\_guide\\_to\\_ak\\_native\\_arts.pdf](http://www.eed.state.ak.us/aksca/pdf/customs_guide_to_ak_native_arts.pdf)

### **Applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which:**

1. The application is complete, well-organized and understandable;
2. The application adheres to the basic eligibility criteria for the institution, the artist and the artwork;
3. The narrative clearly states how the proposed purchase conforms to the mission of the institution;
4. The narrative clearly states how proposed purchase meets collection and exhibition goals of the institution; and
5. The narrative clearly explains the artistic merit of the artwork.

### **Purchasing the artwork**

1. Artwork must be purchased directly from the artist whenever possible.
2. Artwork may be purchased through the gallery or museum where the artwork is currently shown.<sup>1</sup>
3. Pricing of artwork must be consistent with fair market value. Applicants may be required to justify the price of any particular work of art.
4. Once the applicant museum has received a letter of approval for its purchase and a payment from Museums Alaska, the museum may proceed with the purchase. Upon completion of the purchase, the museum will become the sole owner of the artwork and will accession the piece in accordance with its approved procedures. Loans and use of images of the artwork (in any format) will be in accordance with the museum's established policies.

### **Ownership (of artwork and copyright)**

Once the purchase is completed, the museum owns the artwork in accordance with its normal accessions policy. The ownership of copyright to works of art may be a separate issue for artists. Should a museum wish to own the copyright to the purchased artwork, the institution should make the appropriate agreements with the artist. The cost of copyright may be included in the overall price of the artwork.

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<sup>1</sup> It is the artist's responsibility to meet whatever contractual or ethical requirements may exist with galleries or other venues that might receive a commission on works sold.

## **Loans**

The museum lends the artwork in accordance with its normal lending policies.

A special condition of the Art Acquisition program requires the recipient institution to work with Rasmuson Foundation to lend its purchased artwork for display in Foundation offices. The Foundation normally requests loan periods for 12-18 months. This loan agreement must be made between the institution and Rasmuson Foundation. The Foundation recognizes the need for the greatest flexibility in negotiating loans (regarding timing, security, exhibit conditions, etc.).

The Foundation is responsible for the normal expenses associated with borrowing artwork from a permanent collection, in accordance with the lending policies of the museum (e.g., crating, shipping to and from the lending institution, insurance, and installation expenses).

The Foundation reserves the right to choose not to borrow any artwork purchased through the Program.

## **Reporting**

Museums must submit to the Project Administrator within four weeks of purchase a report that contains the following:

1. Particulars of the sale (date of purchase, price, name of artist, title of artwork).
2. Copy of the bill of sale.
3. Copy of registrar's entry into the collection or copy of display label, indicating size, medium, etc.
4. Copies of publicity about the purchase (news releases, newsletter stories, etc.).
5. A digital image of the item must accompany the application. In order to be used in the online gallery, a signed copy of the "Image Use Authorization Form" must be submitted (see below).

## **Image Use Authorization (use your own or sample provided)**

This is requested by Rasmuson Foundation to provide explicit authorization by the artist and Museum for the utilization of representative images of art work purchased through this program. Rasmuson Foundation seeks permission to use such images to promote the artist, participating museums; to raise awareness of the Foundation's work and funds available for grants; and to highlight the depth of creative talent that exists in Alaska.

Images or artwork may include digital documentation such as photos, videos, audio files, etc.

Artist attribution will be supplied in all uses of the Work.

Images may be featured in press releases, on the Foundation's website, in Foundation social media sites, or in Foundation publications. Granting permission to use images for promotional purposes is not a requirement for receiving a grant from Rasmuson Foundation. No remuneration will be provided for this promotional use.

The authorization form shall affirmatively represent that the images of representative work is your organization's legal property to distribute and you are granting Rasmuson Foundation permission to use these images for publicity use only.

### **Acknowledgements**

The museum that purchases a work of art through the Art Acquisition Initiative must acknowledge the support of Rasmuson Foundation (1) in its records, (2) on a label accompanying the artwork when displayed, (3) in any printed or electronic information materials (catalogs, flyers, websites, etc.) produced to record or promote the purchase, and (4) in any press releases to the museum's local news media announcing the purchase. **Note:** it is not necessary to issue a press release every time a work is purchased.

Public acknowledgement of the support of Rasmuson Foundation should be expressed in the following standard format: "Purchased with the support of the Rasmuson Foundation." **Note:** the assistance of Museums Alaska in the purchase of artwork must be acknowledged in press releases.

### **Other Rasmuson Foundation Grants**

An institution currently utilizing a grant from Rasmuson Foundation (either Tier 1 or Tier 2, for example) may also apply for support through the Art Acquisition Program. An institution that has not completed the requirements for an outstanding grant from Rasmuson Foundation, however, will not be eligible for the Art Acquisition Program until all outstanding obligations to Foundation have been satisfied.

### **Overhead or Indirect Costs**

The Art Acquisition Program does not fund overhead or indirect costs, including insurance, security, transportation, travel, shipping, installation, or conservation expenses.

### **Where to apply**

Apply online at: <http://museumsalaska.org/art-acquisition-fund/>.



# **Collections Management Fund Grant Guidelines**

## **About the Collections Management Program**

Museums Alaska is currently accepting applications for the Collections Management grant program. The program responds to needs of the Alaska museum community to enhance collections management through professional expertise, training, and access to conservation materials and supplies. Grants will fund activities that allow organizations to build capacity in the area of collections management and conservation of collections.

Eligibility is limited to 501(c)(3) nonprofit, government, tribal entities, or equivalent organizations located in the state of Alaska. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis and reviewed in November.

Deadlines: March 31 and September 30

Museums Alaska would like to thank Rasmuson Foundation for their support of this grant program. Opportunities for larger projects may be found in Rasmuson Foundation's Tier 1 grant program.

## **About Museums Alaska**

The mission of Museums Alaska is to maintain an association of Alaska's museum professionals and volunteers in order to provide opportunities for improvement of museum and cultural center services in Alaska and to enhance public understanding of the purposes and functions of Alaska's museums and cultural centers. Museums Alaska maintains a central office to receive and disburse information about museums, cultural centers and their activities, and to collect and share professional opportunities. Museums Alaska publishes regular newsletters and organizes an annual meeting and conference to focus on the

needs of Alaska museum professionals, volunteers, and their institutions. Museums Alaska currently administers two grant programs funded by the Rasmuson Foundation: the Art Acquisition program and the Collections Management program. Details on these programs and other resources available to museums can be found on the Museums Alaska website at [www.museumsalaska.org](http://www.museumsalaska.org)

## **Eligibility Criteria**

The Collections Management program seeks applications for projects that will directly enhance the capacity of the applicant organization to care for collections held in the public trust. Applications are accepted from qualified 501(c)(3) nonprofit, government, tribal entities or equivalent organizations that hold collections in the public trust, such as a museum or cultural center. Small, rural-based organizations are encouraged to apply.

Applicants may only apply for one grant per cycle (two grants total per year). A funded grant project must be complete before a new application is submitted. Museums Alaska must receive the final report on the completed grant before a new grant application is received.

A single application for collections management funds may incorporate activities in one or more of the following categories:

### **Supplies and equipment**

Applicants may request funds for general collections management needs and specific project needs. Shipping costs are eligible grant expenses. Projects requiring larger equipment needs should first explore Rasmuson Foundation's Tier 1 grant program. Emergency conservation projects will be given priority.

### **Training**

Applicants may request to support training of museum staff and community participants. Tuition or workshop fees for training events are eligible for funding, as well as associated training costs for providing a local training event for staff and community participants. Travel costs of experts hired for specific projects and travel for Alaska museum staff to attend collections-related trainings elsewhere are eligible grant expenses.

Projects with emphasis on training staff or community members who can then pass on knowledge (i.e., “train the trainers”) are encouraged.

### **Professional Services**

Applicants may request support for specific projects, including contract hiring of conservators, registrars, collections managers, etc, who can provide expertise or services beyond the capacity of local staff. Eligible expenses for contractors are limited to short-term projects, with preference for local hire. When hiring an expert from outside Alaska, institutions are encouraged to communicate to share expert services among communities. Museums Alaska reserves the right to group like requests into a coordinated tour by a visiting professional.

Preference will be given to organizations that are collaborative or cooperative in nature. Emergency conservation projects will be given priority (following a natural disaster, for example).

All grant-supported projects must be complete within six months of receipt of grant funds. Grant amounts will be awarded up to \$10,000; typical grant awards will be from \$3,000-\$5,000. Matching funds are encouraged but not required. Price quotes, estimates, and bids for contracted services and/or significant purchases are highly recommended. Supporting materials also encouraged are: letters of commitment; recruitment announcements for short-term hires; and temporary position descriptions. Grant awards must be successfully completed and closed before applying for additional support through this program.

Individuals, for-profit, and 501(c)(4) or (c)(6) organizations and non-Alaska-based organizations are not eligible for grant funding. Ineligible uses include:

- Reimbursement of pre-award costs
- Salary of permanent staff positions
- Construction
- Pass-throughs, re-granting, or other financial assistance to nonprofits
- Indirect costs

### **Reporting Requirements**

A final report will be submitted to Museums Alaska six months after the grant award. Grantees will be required to submit a signed grant agreement prior to the

disbursement of funds. A new grant will not be awarded until the prior grant is closed out by submitting a final report.

Museums Alaska reserves the right to require return of funds if it deems that the grantee has not complied with the terms of the grant agreement for use of funds from Museums Alaska, or to comply with any law or regulation affecting the grantee, grant or Museums Alaska.

## **Preparing Your Proposal**

The link to the online application form is located on Museums Alaska's website: [www.museumsalaska.org](http://www.museumsalaska.org). Applications must be filled out and submitted electronically.

## **Grant Application Review and Action**

Evaluation criteria include but are not limited to the clarity and measurability of project goals, the benefits to those served by the applicant organization and overall sustainability of the project.

Applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which:

- The application is complete, well-organized, and understandable;
- The proposal clearly states the organization's need for collections management funds;
- The project is well-designed with clear and realistic goals;
- The application describes how the proposed project will enhance the applicant's ability to deliver programs or services;
- The funding requested is appropriate for the activities proposed;
- The proposed budget is adequately justified and supported by budget narrative;
- The project will have benefits that last beyond the grant term.

Every applicant will be sent an official notice of the award decisions. If a grant has been approved, a Grant Agreement and associated materials are sent. The Grant Agreement sets forth the terms and conditions of the grant. A signature obligates the grant recipient to conduct the project as described in the proposal

and to accept the conditions outlined in the Agreement and these Guidelines. With the receipt of the signed agreement, the grant is "activated."

If significant changes need to be made to a project's grant budget and/or program plans, please be in touch with Museums Alaska to discuss prior to making changes.

Questions should be directed to:

Executive Director

Museums Alaska

[director@museumsalaska.org](mailto:director@museumsalaska.org)

907-306-3409



## APPENDIX D: SURVEY QUESTIONS + RAW DATA

30 responses

Average 15 minutes to complete

32 questions

7 pages

### **1. Institution's operating budget:**

|          |                        |
|----------|------------------------|
| 10 (33%) | Under \$49,999         |
| 1 (3%)   | \$50,000 to \$99,000   |
| 5 (16%)  | \$100,000 to \$249,999 |
| 6 (20%)  | \$250,000 to \$499,999 |
| 5 (16%)  | \$500,000 to \$999,999 |
| 3 (10%)  | \$1M to \$5M           |
| 0        | \$5M +                 |

### **2. Your role in the institution:** Highest to lowest

|         |                               |
|---------|-------------------------------|
| 9 (30%) | Administration                |
| 8 (26%) | Curatorial                    |
| 6 (20%) | Board Leadership / Governance |
| 2 (6%)  | Collections / Registration    |
| 1 (3%)  | Exhibitions                   |
| 1 (3%)  | Education                     |
| 1 (3%)  | Volunteer                     |

Other: 1 Development, 1 Conservator

### **3. Have you applied for AND received a Museums Alaska's Art Acquisition Fund (AAF) grant AND/OR a Collections Management Fund (CMF) grant?**

Yes - 25 (83%)

No – 5 (16%)

## RECIPIENTS – AAF

### **4. Have you received a Museums Alaska's Art Acquisition Fund (AAF) grant?**

Yes - 21 (91%)

No – 2 (8%)

### **5. How well does the AAF grant program meet your museum's acquisition needs?**

|          |                 |
|----------|-----------------|
| 13 (65%) | Well            |
| 6 (30%)  | Extremely well  |
| 1 (5%)   | Not so well     |
| 0        | Not well at all |

### **6. What are the greatest strengths of the AAF program? Top Three**

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| 75% (15)   | Supports living, practicing Alaska artists                             |
| 75% (15)   | Grows the museum's contemporary art collection                         |
| 75% (15)   | Provides the only funding source for art acquisition                   |
| 50% (10)   | Enables the museum to tell a more complete story                       |
| 40% (8)    | Raises awareness of Alaska artists and their work                      |
| 25% (5)    | Allows the museum to exhibit more Alaska artists                       |
| 10% (2)    | Enhances the Alaskan art market  |
| Other (2): | Supports our community by bringing in revenues. (economic development) |
|            | We have only made one contemporary art acquisition                     |

### **7. Are there any areas of the AAF Program that need improvement?**

|          |     |
|----------|-----|
| 15 (75%) | Yes |
| 5 (25%)  | No  |

If yes, what: (comment)

Though there are many challenges, being able to purchase artwork on commission, not only pieces that have already been created would greatly help the museum and Alaska artists. Almost all Native Alaskan artists, and certainly artists of any heritage, in our experience only produce larger/more time intensive pieces on commission. Not only is it high risk to invest materials, time and resources on a piece that may not be purchased if a grant is not awarded, in many cases the identity of the purchaser/recipient of a work of art influences the nature of the piece. For example, use of certain crests or designs are appropriate for use only for specific lineages, not for general display. It can be extremely difficult to then find an appropriate buyer for a piece that is made for the Museum that does not get purchased.

The program should be opened up slightly to allow for acquisition of work that is in progress or intended for acquisition by the museum.

We have been really happy with the program and the way it is running now. As a museum it has significantly improved our offerings and our ability to collect from significant local artists. It has also been a large boon for supporting our arts culture and helping artists get over difficult "humps." Many of our artists have used the income to further their studies, travel, or otherwise enrich themselves.

A few AAF requirements are challenging for my institution. The nepotism clauses are understandable to prevent conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest and unfair gain. However, operating in a small town some of the best artists are involved with the museum in some capacity. We want to encourage artists to be involved with the organization and we also don't want to limit their ability to sell their art or our ability to acquire it. A definitive decision to include or exclude artists not physically living in Alaska would be excellent to consider for the guidelines. Many wonderful Alaska artists live out-of-state or in Canada. Plus, there are some areas with fluid borders. It's laid out in the guidelines to discuss with Rasmuson ahead of the application, but many institutions don't follow it and are therefore disqualified. Perhaps there is a way to relax the guideline that no commissioned artwork applies to the grant. Commissioning art is one way museums ensure that they get pieces that meet their mission and current needs. It's especially hard to find a large-scale non-commissioned piece of art that an artist just has lying around. It's a lot to ask artists to hold on to work that they could sell on the chance that the grant may come through. If the grant does not come through, in essence they have lost out on two sales.

I would like to see an additional percentage of the purchase price (e.g., 5-10% purchase price) go to the purchasing museum for use in the care of the acquired item. This might be used to cover framing, glazing, archival supports needed, or go towards the long-term care of the piece itself. For example, if a painting costs \$5000, the artist would get the full \$5000 and the museum would get an additional \$250 (5%) awarded to help defray the cost of crating/shipping, installing, and developing a long-term strategy for caring for the item. This is especially important for museums with smaller operating budgets where they might not have unrestricted funds to cover additional supplies or mounting hardware (if the piece is a 3D item that requires a custom-made mount for exhibiting, or specialized archival supplies to curate the piece long-term).

Although central to the mission of the AAF, something the "living Alaska artist" and contemporaneity requirement present dilemmas. The requirements make it difficult to acquire from, for example, a recently deceased artist, and also potentially encourages a scramble for aging artists' work. Additionally, I know of several occasions at my institutions when a work by living AK artists was available, but was actually created over 10 years ago.

We are currently in the process of adding a major historical exhibit to our Museum collection which involves commissioning the work to be accomplished by a railroad modeler and a visual artist who will paint the background. We wish we could apply for an AAF to see our project through, but realize that commissioning the work is not possible, only purchase of a finished product. Would be happy to hear any thoughts on this.

It is expected that artists just have thousands of dollars worth of art lying around. To obtain artwork that is museum worthy, you may have to commission it! A lot of artists make affordable art (under \$500) and can surely make "dream" pieces that would cost more, but they don't have the resources to just make high dollar art. So the program really only fits well-established artists with professional careers.

While I applied for AAF funding pre 2006 when I worked for the Juneau-Douglas City Museum, I think the issues that constrained us then continue to be constraining today: 1. Not being able to collect nationally prominent Alaska artists who have moved out of state to further their careers 2. The requirement for the work to be very recent 3. The requirement that the artist still be living while these limit the scope of contemporary collections in Alaska museums, I do understand there are good reasons for them to be in place. However, there are from time to time excellent artworks from important artists that are ineligible despite being "in the spirit" of the grant intent?

For many institutions, it is the only funding available for acquisitions of any type, meaning that the collection is skewed towards art and away from other types of collections that are more important for documenting and preserving Alaska's history and culture. The fund is important, but shifting museum collections in ways that I don't know all curators would desire.

It would be nice to broaden the parameters of the program so that it takes into account the possibility of acquiring work from notable Alaska artists that are no longer with us and whose inclusion into our collections could help us tell a better story of our region. It seems almost an injustice for institutions that reside in the hometowns of these deceased artists to not have pieces of their work in their collections. It would also be nice to reevaluate how we acquire Alaska Native art. Most of these works fall in between the line of art versus craft and can often be perceived as utilitarian objects, which can be difficult to justify under the current parameters of the grant. In addition, I also think it would be beneficial to consider the allowance of commission work. In some areas of our state, Alaska Native artists are just rediscovering their culture and do not have as many resources available to them as their more established colleagues. Commissioning work would not only allow institutions to obtain pieces from these cultural groups but would also reinforce and encourage their members to continue working in the arts. Commissioning works would also be beneficial to non-Native artists and collecting institutions by strengthening the artist/patron relationship by having the artists be

challenged in their creation process and allowing collecting institutions to have a more specialized contemporary collection catered to their mission.

We no longer participate in the AAF program because the program does not allow for indirect expenses. Although we understand the reasoning behind this from the funder's perspective, our organization's policies of not applying for grant funds that do not cover our expenses for administering those funds will not allow us to take advantage of this program any longer.

Please revisit the exhibition requirement of the program. Allow online display, illustration in publication, display off site, etc., as means of sharing and publicizing the artwork. The need to display can interfere with exhibition and interpretive plans, especially as we don't know what will be available to purchase till well after our exhibit plans are complete, and can't commission works under this program. Collection for posterity is an important goal in itself and acquisition should not be tied to exhibition.

Only being able to purchase artwork that is already complete has been difficult. Many of our Native artists work on commission only or are looking to sell at markets or the tourist trade. The timing is a challenge to secure a commitment from the artist to not sell a piece that we're interested in but may not in the end receive a grant to purchase.

I think that the primary intent of the program is to support contemporary Alaska artists. This goal aligns with Alaska Museums, but it isn't all that Alaska museums are about. Also, interestingly enough, our local arts and humanities councils don't seem to see us as an important art organization. They don't even seem to be aware that we collect contemporary art. At this point, the funds allocated to each museum are only achievable by having an open application process or allowing artists to consign. It is difficult to find a piece of art on the wall that an artist will hold until the application period to sell. It's not always easy to tell an artist to build a larger more expensive piece that meets your museum's mission and we hope we will be allocated funds to purchase it. In a smaller community, if a museum has a mission of just their area of history, the art they collect will be limited to that area. Artist's get tapped out. Smaller institutions may not have the available space to continue to purchase contemporary art and store it safely.

**8. The current level of funding (no more than \$35,000 per year per institution) is: (check one)**

- |          |            |
|----------|------------|
| 16 (80%) | Adequate   |
| 3 (15%)  | Too little |
| 1 (5%)   | Too much   |

Comment:

For occasions when a larger amount is wanted/needed for an important purchase, it

would be a wonderful opportunity to be able to apply for more funding. Potentially, with the understanding that you would not be applying for additional grants for an additional set number of grant cycles.

One would always like more funding... I am sure you feel the same. it would be wonderful in the Alaska art market to be able to - in special cases, such as Native Art (weaving especially) - to have a special larger fund. Not only would it allow for purchases above \$ 35,000 but it would also discourage the depreciation of value for objects that require years of work

We try to spend that much each year. We have been lucky because we have a large number of artists. But it has been hard to find large pieces that are not commissioned for the museum. Luckily, we have been successful asking for more than one artwork, which helps us spend more of the amount and greatly enrich the quality of our offerings.

This is a generous allocation that most museums have no problem staying within the limits.

While I am not currently applying for this grant, there are major contemporary works (such as Chilkat robes or monumental carvings) that are not able to be collected by Alaska museums. Seems a separate protocol might be needed though, with more stringent requirements?

Although this amount is adequate for the purchase of small scale work, it limits the possibility and potential for establishing large-scale public works that are often available at a higher cost.

We have not submitted a request that fully utilizes the entire amount but can foresee doing so in the future.

As stated above, I would welcome purchasing larger more expensive pieces, but I can't commission them. That means, let's say a weaver, must pay for all their materials on their own and build a piece, then I make an application on it and hope that it is funded.

**9. Museums Alaska reviews AAF applications every 6 months. The current 6-month grant cycle is:**

|          |            |
|----------|------------|
| 14 (70%) | Adequate   |
| 4 (20%)  | Ideal      |
| 2 (10%)  | Inadequate |

Comment:

Having a deadline just before or after Museums Alaska is a little problematic. I am VERY HAPPY there are no deadlines during our tourist season (May-Sept).

It would be nice to consider staggering AAF and CMF deadlines more than just a month apart, maybe one deadline every three months? It's tough when applying for both because the deadlines are so close together.

The main challenge is when an artist doesn't have the financial flexibility to wait for the 6 month cycle. A number of Indigenous artists are selling their work so they can buy gas and food, etc. They are unevenly affected by this delay in payment.

We are a seasonal all-volunteer Museum, open annually from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend. We have been lucky at fitting one AAF and one Collections Management Fund application into the picture and delighted with the results.

The downside seems to be that artists often have to agree to have their works held by the museum in hopes the funding comes through. Months of delay in paying artists can be difficult. However, the decision-making process at the museum itself is slow, too.

Having funding opportunities come around every six months allows for great responsiveness to opportunities and is much appreciated.

The process is slow for artists, who often don't want to wait three or four months for the application, review and payment process to unfold.

The current cycle doesn't allow us to be as responsive as we'd like when a piece comes up for sale.

Artist's must be asked to wait until the application cycle is complete, or the Museum must start looking at the time of the application cycle. It just limits the ability to find a piece of art and move on purchasing it. It's not like artist's have impressive business skills and have their work in professional venues or available on any consistent level.

**10. On average, what percentage of AAF funded collections do you have on display?**

|          |                     |
|----------|---------------------|
| 12 (60%) | Up to 30%           |
| 5 (25%)  | Over 90%            |
| 2 (10%)  | Between 60% and 90% |
| 1 (5%)   | Between 30% and 60% |
| 0        | 0%                  |

### **11. Do you plan to apply for AAF in the future?**

|          |     |
|----------|-----|
| 19 (95%) | Yes |
| 1 (5%)   | No  |

If no, why not?

We would like to acquire a Wayne Price canoe, a spruce root hat (all we have are cedar bark, which aren't really local), an octopus bag, and examples of some of our non-Native artists who aren't currently represented in our collection.

Yes, maybe. We have extremely limited space; mainly fill by exhibiting historical artifacts from the area. In response to #10 above, We have applied for one AAF grant to purchase a locally made quilt which we display each summer and carefully put away during the winter months. Therefore, my 90% make it 100% showing of our one piece of art acquired.

See above comments about not being able to apply for grants that do not include administrative costs.

It has been amazing to add contemporary artists to our collection. It has really helped us align past and present art in our community that will always reside in our collections.

### RECIPIENTS – CMF

### **12. Have you received a Collection Management Fund (CMF) grant?**

|          |     |
|----------|-----|
| 20 (90%) | Yes |
| 2 (10%)  | No  |

### **13. How well does the CMF grant program meet your museum's collection management needs?**

|          |                 |
|----------|-----------------|
| 9 (47%)  | Extremely well  |
| 10 (52%) | Well            |
| 0        | Not so well     |
| 0        | Not well at all |

### **14. What are the greatest strengths of the CMF program? (check three)**

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| 16 (84%) | Enables the purchase conservation materials and supplies              |
| 13 (68%) | Builds collection management and conservation of collections capacity |
| 12 (63%) | Enhances staff's collections training                                 |
| 10 (52%) | Increases collection storage capabilities                             |



- 9 (47%) Provides opportunity to outside collections management expertise
- 9 (47%) Provides the only funding source for collections management

Other strengths: (6)

- Provides additional staff (contracted and interns) to focus on the collection when other staff are pulled in many directions.
- Facilitates digitizing older records before computers
- Networking among colleagues for mutual benefit of multiple collections, the impetus to apply is the push needed for certain projects to happen
- Flexible funding scheme and the best funding opportunity available for Alaska museums.
- Overall a great program!
- I think all of the above are great strengths. Life-blood for tiny museums with large collections and one staff!

### **15. Are there any areas of the CMF Program that need improvement?**

11 (57%) Yes

8 (42%) No

If yes, what: (comment)

It would be nice if the grant was a little larger, or there was an annual cap, similar to the AAF. Supplies and contractors are expensive. If a grant is refused, there should be a way to respond to critiques. In our last grant, the reviewers misread/misunderstood the project, thinking we were providing training for a few hours instead of many weeks. I reread the grant and still thought it had been stated clearly. I am not sure where the confusion occurred and would have appreciated being able to provide feedback if there was a question like that.

More funding! This is a wildly popular grant with ever increasing popularity. It speaks to the increased collections management needs throughout the state. For many small institutions, this grant and the Alaska State Museum's Grant-in-Aid program are the only funding sources available for collections care.

Nice to have supplies, but you need the people and facility to be able to use them. 10% overhead should be allowed

It's great--- the only way to improve it would be to expand it to include exhibition development.

Based on current funding levels, we are limited to the type of projects we can accomplish.

Same comments as above regarding indirect costs. This is the only reason we do not

participate. Overall, we believe this is a terrific program and provides great benefit to Alaska museums.

The grant period could be longer, the amounts of funding larger, and a portion of staff time covered. There is a lot of paperwork for a small, but valuable amount of funding. This program could have a large and more lasting impact if larger, longer projects could be undertaken.

I would prefer to have up to \$35,000 to spend on a project and put \$10,000 into the AAF. It is so important for our institutions to be able to acquire funding for collections and conservation.

Collections management projects can be large in scale and multi-year. Sure, you can break large projects down into smaller pieces and request funding for those pieces. However, that can be difficult in situations where there are many interrelated parts. If funding is not supported for the whole project, none of it can happen. It might be nice to see something like a Tier 1 and Tier 2 approach for larger and smaller projects.

It would be great to be able to apply for more funding through the CMF.

**16. The current level of CMF funding (up to \$10,000 per grant cycle) is:**

|          |            |
|----------|------------|
| 8 (42%)  | Adequate   |
| 11 (57%) | Too little |
| 0        | Too much   |

**Comment:**

Equipment, supplies, contractors - all are expensive, especially with shipping to Alaska. Having an annual cap or being able to have a larger amount would make the ability to ask more flexible. \$10,000 may pay for one contractor or one piece of storage furniture - but wouldn't pay for personnel and furniture - which limits some projects.

I don't want to diminish AAF, but it seems that AAF is struggling for applications and in recent years monies have been shifted to the next year or a third round opened up to expend funds. Not the case with CMF. If there is a way to make the funding sources more fluid, that may benefit museums more. Maybe institutions have a cap of \$45,000 that could be used for AAF or CMF or any additional new program?

I find that a project bigger than this cannot easily be accomplished before the next round is due...plus we have so many projects that go undone at this funding level!

Although the current amount is generous, it does not allow or take into account larger scale permanent collections management improvements such as purchasing special

equipment, improving environmental conditions, creating storage mounts for large objects such as vehicles and/or the maintenance of outdoor installations/objects.

Collections work is expensive. The cost of purchasing archival supplies alone is exorbitant, and has to be doubled to ship those materials to Alaska. If you order \$2,000 of archival boxes, it costs an additional \$2,000 to get them to Alaska.

The amount works well for smaller projects but we have the need for larger \$10K-\$20K storage solutions.

**17. The CMF program allows applicants to apply for one grant per cycle (two grants total per year). A funded grant project must be complete before a new application is submitted. The current 6-month grant cycle is:**

|          |                                       |
|----------|---------------------------------------|
| 15 (78%) | Adequate time to plan and implement   |
| 4 (21%)  | Not enough time to plan and implement |
| 0        | Too much time to plan and implement   |

Comment:

We have had success breaking a large project into small chunks, which we complete in 3-4 months, so we are finished by the time the grant cycle comes around. The truth is, you don't have 6 months for a project if the cycle is every 6 months. You have to wait to receive funds and then finish the project with enough time to submit the final report, if you hope to catch the second annual deadline.

Sometimes adequate but not always

From my experience, the 6-month turn around for completing the grant and applying for the next one can be a little discouraging. It's made me readjust the types of projects I want to do in order to meet the time frame. Either that or we don't apply for the second cycle.

By the time the grant money is approved for semi-annual appropriations the six-month time period for completion is too short to be accomplished in the summer season without an extension.

Adequate for small projects, but larger projects would require more time

Adequate, maybe... Again, as an all-volunteer and summer-only Museum, we are not fully capable to plan a project off-season that can, hopefully, be accomplished during the three summer months. Should we be able at some time in the future to hire a year-round staff person, we will be better able to use the AAF and CMF grants.

Depends

If the budget were bigger it would need more time. As it is, we hustle to get a project done before the next round to avail ourselves of the opportunity as much as possible, but it is a push to get it done.

Although the current cycle allows for small scale projects such as purchasing archival materials it limits institutions from exploring longer duration projects or collaborative projects with other institutions.

Again, the six-month window allows for responsiveness to immediate issues. This is a difference from nationally-funded programs that require long lead times.

I think it allows for smaller projects as needed. For us, for example, we needed a conservator to come and clean a totem pole and do a condition assessment. It was a one week project and less than \$5. We now can look at another smaller grant project in the application cycle. If we had a bigger project, we would only apply once in the cycle and plan accordingly.

**18. Which cycle option do you prefer for the CMF grant program?** (select one)

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| 16 (84%) | Both cycles  |
| 2 (10%)  | Small collections projects (The current cycle: 2 deadlines per year; \$10,000 eligibility for each cycle.)                         |
| 1 (5%)   | Large collections projects (Two-to-three year projects; \$30,000 for multi-year projects; Applications received only once a year.) |

Comments:

Sometimes small works, sometimes the need is bigger. I like the idea of having flexibility.

It would be great to have two tiers for different kinds of projects!

We often break large projects into phases

One small project cycle, one large - offset by 6 months

I think both are needed and help complete the many different kinds of projects that need to be funded.

**19. Do you plan to apply for CMF in the future?**

18 (94%)      Yes  
1 (5%)        No

If no, why not?

This grant has been a huge boon to our significant collections upgrades in the past 3 years. We are very grateful it exists and thrilled at the changes it allowed us to complete.

Only because of our policy regarding indirect costs. Otherwise you would hear from us often!

NON-GRANT RECIPIENTS

**20. Select all that apply:**

3 (100%)      My museum has never applied for an AAF grant award  
2 (60%)      My museum has never applied for CMF grant award  
0              My museum has applied but not received an AAF grant award  
0              My museum has applied but not received a CMF grant award

**21. What are the barriers to applying, receiving, or participating in the AAF and/or CMF grant program?**

NO CONSENSUS ON BARRIERS

1 (33%)      Do not have the staff or resources to apply  
1 (33%)      Do not have staff with museum training and appropriate experience  
1 (33%)      Do not collect art  
1 (33%)      Cannot meet collections storage or care standards.  
1 (33%)      Storage is at maximum capacity.  
1 (33%)      Overhead or indirect costs are prohibitive (*insurance, security, transportation, travel, shipping, installation, and/or conservation expenses*)  
1 (33%)      Other: Not aware of the grant till now

NOT A BARRIER – 0 (0%)

Do not have required governance structure (Not a 501(c)(3), tribal entity, unit of government, etc.).

AAF grant program does not meet my institution's needs.

Cannot exhibit purchased art.

CMF grant program does not meet my museum's needs.

Do not have a collections policy or collecting plan.

**22. What are your top three greatest needs in the areas of collections management/conservation? Check up to three**

- 2 (66%) More collection storage
- 2 (66%) Training for museum staff
- 1 (33%) Higher quality storage area(s)/facilities that meet industry standards (HVAC, archival storage areas, etc.)
- 1 (33%) Collections supplies, equipment, and storage fixtures
- 1 (33%) Access to outside expertise/contractors
- 1 (33%) Digitizing collections

0 (0%)

Professional collections staff

Assistance in developing collection plan, policies and strategies

Interpreting collections

Computers and software

Other:

**23. Do you plan to apply for Museum Alaska grants in the future? (select all that apply)**

3 (100%) Yes, CMF

0 Yes, AAF

0 No

If no, why not?

Perhaps in the next two years

**24. How can Museums Alaska assist your institution in submitting a grant application in the future? Click all that apply**

3 (100%) Personal consulting

2 (66%) Workshops to prepare grant application

0 More feedback on declined grant application

0 Other: (fill in)

GENERAL QUESTIONS

**25. What are the top three issues facing your museum? Top Three**

19 (79%) Economic stability and funding

15 (62%) Collections storage

11 (45%) Capital improvements

10 (41%) Trained, professional museum staff

4 (16%) Board capacity

3 (12%)      Access to museum training  
 1 (4%)      Relevance to community  
 Other issue (please specify) (5)  
     Staff burn out  
     Not enough staff  
     Exhibit development  
     Most of the above  
     Keep pace with research requests and digital expectations of patrons.

**26. What other ways can Museums Alaska serve you?**

17 (70%)      Professional development  
 15 (62%)      Access to experts  
 14 (58%)      Networking opportunities with colleagues  
 12 (50%)      Resources on latest trends

Other suggestions: (fill in): 8

I love Museums Alaska! Perhaps a mentoring program? We have young staff that might benefit from the knowledge of older colleagues in the state.

Webinars, classes/workshops, certificate programs

Funding to attend conferences outside Alaska

Board development

Examples of what's working well around the state - a little inspiration!

MA does a great job with the above.

Stay connected to our needs and become more of an active advocacy arm for Alaska Museums.

**27. Do you have any final comments or questions? (optional) 17**

thanks for funding

We just opened our museum this summer. MUCH to learn and very limited storage.

I am interested to see if future programs are on the table. Exhibits, programs, purchasing older collections are all areas of need for Alaska museums.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to the needs of the institutions receiving funding through these programs.

The CMF grants have provided a significant portion of our museum budget that would otherwise not be possible with our limited three-month operating revenue.

As a small house museum and staff entirely by volunteers we struggle to gain community support to solve our storage needs. A grant is the only way to help continue to preserve our towns history. We appreciate all the help we can get! :) Thank you for the opportunity!

Fully appreciate all that you do. Hopeful we will be better able to take advantage of your significant offerings.

Thank you!

We appreciate all that Museums Alaska and the Rasmuson Foundation do to support Alaska museums and cultural institutions. These opportunities are invaluable for my organization.

Thanks for all you do!

I think there is a need to address museum administration and provide support and training in this area.

Thanks for all you do to support Alaska museums!

The staff and boards of the institutions I have been associated with are extremely appreciative of these two generous and splendid programs. The Rasmuson Foundation, with the assistance of Museums Alaska, has done more to enhance the arts and professionalize the museums of Alaska than any other single source or program available. We shall be forever in your debt. Thank you for your generosity, confidence and support!

Thanks for asking my opinion and all that Rasmuson and Museums Alaska has done to help our institutions continue to grow and show how important we are to our state and community.

Ours is a house museum with a static collection, in need mostly of maintenance and repair, as well as completion of digital data base

Born digital items walk into institutions across the state regularly, however, few institutions have the capacity to manage them in an enduring way. Having a subscription



based digital storage repository for the state would help small institutions, like ours, to safely store resources in deep storage.

**28. Do you have additional suggestions or feedback on AAF, CMF, and/or MA's grant programs?** (optional) 10

Great job! Thanks for everything you do for us!

Maybe more parameters on art acquisitions...or exactly what you expect to see.

We are grateful to the Rasmuson Foundation for their support and this opportunity. One suggestion for AAF. Can any improvements be made with the online process? When one institution is applying for multiple pieces, recording the same institution information and submitting the same supplemental material is redundant and unnecessary. There must be a way to create an online platform that allows for the basic information to be submitted once with room for specifics on multiple pieces

We're so lucky to have this funding opportunity and I hope the Rasmuson Foundation continues to support Alaska's museums and cultural centers.

Are the grant programs available each year? How do we find out about them? Deadlines, etc? - Sheri Hamming, Colony House Museum

Both great programs; very appreciated and fill gaps that are normally very hard to find funding for!

Improve the online applications.

CMF - I have been thinking about the 3-year grant cycle mentioned earlier in the survey. Having been a grant reviewer for the CMF since its inception, I have seen grant applications that request funds for portions of a larger project. A few have been spot on, but more often, the proposed project bleeds into the larger project. Either the narrative and/or the budget do not define or pull out the CMF portion of the larger project. If you decide to go this route, the grant parameters need to be very specific.

Not at the moment

**29. If inclined, please provide a paragraph about the impact AAF and/or CMF has had on your museum.** (optional) 10

CMF: The impact of CMF has been enormous. When I arrived 3 1/2 years ago there were collections scattered in every nook and cranny, including an outdoor shed, a basement exhibit work space, the director's office and behind staff desks. There were piles in the

storage areas of unprocessed material and unfinished projects. None of the contents of the four map cases had been cataloged and put into the database. With the help of CMF we hired consultants and interns who cataloged backlogs, moved items to storage locations, flattened rolled maps and cataloged the contents of the flat files (adding those flattened maps in the process), inventoried the entire collection, and made book boxes for fragile books in archives. The result is astounding. All of our collections are stored in one area of the museum. It is clean, organized and easy to access. Although we still have a backlog, those materials are organized in one area of the storage, so they can be pulled and processed as staff have time during slow periods. (This may be a few more CMF grants, too.) For the first time, we have put some collection finding aids on our web site. And we have seen an increase in the use of our archives due to the improved organization and accessibility. AAF The impact of AAF is equally enormous, both to the museum and to the community. The funds have purchased the start of a sculpture garden on our grounds, which was then greatly expanded by a private donor who was inspired by the sculptures she saw on our lawn. Similarly, purchase of a scrimshaw piece inspired a donor to provide another piece by the same artist. One artist from whom we have purchased more than one piece has let us know that we are in her will for the bulk of her collection. She also has started volunteering as a guest curator, putting together one art show each year for the museum. The purchase of artworks has built good will with the local artists, many of whom take a strong interest in the museum and are some of our best local advocates. From our standpoint, the artwork has greatly enriched our exhibits and ability to interpret our region. We use artworks within historical displays as well, creating more dynamic exhibits that expand a visitor's interpretation of an event or an activity. Some of our most stunning, visually exciting items are those purchased with AAF funds. The result is that we impress visitors from "outside" and build local pride in our museum. The quality of offerings makes us look professional and worth the visit. A final change is that we felt comfortable raising our admission price this year, since the museum visit has become one that is much higher caliber than it was in the past. This has significantly helped our funding stability and hasn't impacted our visitation. People still tell us it was "well worth it." - Helen Alten, Director, Haines Sheldon Museum

We have a minimal budget for purchasing artifacts and collections care. AAF and CMF allow us to push forward outside the norm of what we generally think is possible. – Anonymous

Our institution has no funding for acquiring collections. AAF in particular has allowed us to be proactive in developing our art collection as well as art/craft created by contemporary Alaska Native peoples. The limitations are important for keeping the funding in Alaska and supporting Alaska artists and institutions that care for the work. The CMF has provided funding for smaller projects that need supplies on shorter-time scales and for setting up the infrastructure for larger institutional ongoing projects. -

Angela Linn, Senior Collections Manager, Ethnology & History, University of Alaska Museum of the North

We are a small museum that is open only during the summer season from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Our museum is funded by sales at our gift shop which does not earn enough revenue to pay staff. Our museum then tries to manage and update collections and exhibits during the winter off season but has insufficient funds to do this without grants like CMF & ASM. - Martin Gutoski, Museum Director, Tanana Valley Railroad Museum

The AAF provided our museum with an invaluable opportunity to purchase and share Alaska artwork with the local community and surrounding region who do not typically enjoy access to contemporary art; these works are both educational and inspirational to local youth, museum visitors, and regional artists. - Amy Phillips-Chan, Director, Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum

With the CMF grant to bring in a professional Collections Management person for 8 weeks, our full collection is now on the computer. We were sorry not to be able to complete the project with the professional in the 8 weeks, but have managed to complete it with a local volunteer who learned along the way. We did apply for a second grant to bring in more professional expertise, a few years back, but it was not awarded. Since having the collection digitized and photographed, we have not yet been in a position to take the next steps needed - Sunny Cook

This funding source has been a game changer for Alaska museums, and is the envy of many of my museum colleagues in the lower 48. The kinds of relationships with artists and other museum professionals that this funding facilitates is perhaps an underappreciated benefit of these two programs. Thank you! - Ellen Carrlee, Conservator, Alaska State Museum

With the support of the AAF, our museum would not have a contemporary art collection. The CMF has allowed us to now provide proper storage for our collections that are more in line with AAM standards. - Selena Ortega-Chiolero, Executive Director, Palmer Museum of History and Art

CMF has made all the difference in the world to the Hammer Museum. Created by an individual with over a thousand undocumented hammers, it has received donations of thousands of hammers since its incorporation as a non-profit. Relying on summer interns with no oversight by trained staff, little documentation was done for many years. Since hiring a PT Director, the CMF grant has allowed us to retain the Director over the winter months to catalog a large portion of our hammers. This elemental cataloging project would never have gone anywhere without CMF grants. Our funds alone would never have stretched that far. AAF - People understand the utilitarian use for hammers, but are

quite surprised and enriched by the concept of hammers as an art form. The ability to acquire art incorporating hammers adds a depth to the museum which we had not envisioned at its inception. - Cynthia Jones, President, Board of Directors, Hammer Museum

**28. Name, Title, Institution (optional) 15 / 30**

|                             |  |   |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Helen Alten                 | Haines Sheldon Museum                            | Director  |
| Vicki Wisenbaugh            | Tenakee Historical Collection<br>Museum          | Collections Manager                               |
| Martin Gutoski              | Tanana Valley Railroad<br>Museum                 | Museum Director                                   |
| Angela Linn*                | University of Alaska Museum<br>of the North      | Senior Collections Manger,<br>Ethnology & History |
| Sheri Hamming               | Colony House Museum<br>Carrie M. McLain Memorial | President Board of Directors                      |
| Amy Phillips-Chan           | Museum   | Director  |
| Scott Bartlett*             | Pratt Museum                                     | Curator of Exhibits                               |
| John Rice                   | McCarthy - Kennicott<br>Historical Museum        | Treasurer   |
| Sunny Cook                  | McCarthy-Kennicott Historical<br>Museum          | President of the Board                            |
| Ellen Carrlee               | Alaska State Museum                              | Conservator                                       |
| Selena Ortega-<br>Chiolero* | Palmer Museum of History<br>and Art              | Executive Director                                |
| Jane Lindsey*               | Juneau-Douglas City Museum                       | Director  |
| Elizabeth Cook              | Wickersham Hse Museum-FAI                        | Treasurer (TYHS)                                  |
| Michael Bach                | Baranov Museum                                   | Collections Manager                               |
| Cynthia Jones               | Hammer Museum                                    | President, Board of Directors                     |

\*Answered both the survey questions and were interviewed.

## APPENDIX E: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

### Museums Alaska Board

**Molly Conley**, Historian/Collections Manager, State of Alaska, Office of History & Archaeology, *President, Museums Alaska*

**Hayley Chambers**, Senior Curator, Collections, Ketchikan Museums, *Vice President, Museums Alaska*

**Angela Linn**, Senior Collections Manager, Ethnology & History, University of Alaska Museum of the North, *Secretary, Museums Alaska*

**Michele Miller**, Keller Williams Realty, *Treasurer, Museums Alaska*

**Sarah Asper-Smith**, Exhibit Design/Owner, ExhibitAK, *Board Member, Museums Alaska*

**Scott Bartlett**, Curator of Exhibits, Pratt Museum, *Museums Alaska*

**Andrew Goldstein**, Curator of Collections & Exhibitions, Valdez Museum & Historical Archive, *Museums Alaska*

**Jacqueline Hamberg**, Curator of Collections, Sheldon Jackson Museum, *Board Member, Museums Alaska*

**Vera Kalik Lincoln\***, Museum Curator, North Slope Borough, Inupiaq, History, Language & Culture Department, Simon Paneak Memorial Museum, *Board Member, Museums Alaska*

### AAF Recipients

**Bob Banghart**, past Director, Alaska State Museum

**Savanna Bradley**, Collections Manager, Pratt Museum

**Addison Field**, Chief Curator, Alaska State Museum

**Sarah Harrington**, Executive Director, Baranov Museum

**Jane Lindsey**, Director, Juneau-Douglas City Museum

**Kathi Riemer**, Director, Clausen Memorial Museum

**Monica Shah**, Director of Collections + Chief Conservator, Anchorage Museum

### CMF Recipients

**Katelyn Dickerson**, Museum Coordinator (Haines), American Bald Eagle Foundation

**Terri Henson**, Museum Director (Wrangell), Wrangell Museum

**Darian LaTocha**, Curator of Collections, Alaska Aviation Heritage Museum

**Selena Ortega-Chiolero**, Executive Director, Palmer Museum of History and Art

**Jennifer Treadway**, Sealaska Heritage Institute

## **Alaska Artists**

**Kathleen Carlo-Kendall**, AAF artist

**Rachelle Dowdy**, AAF artist

**Mary Ellen Frank**, AAF artist

**Patrick Garley**, AAF artist

**James Havens**, AAF artist

**Linda Infante Lyons**, AAF artist

**Rachel Juzeler**, AAF artist

**Margo Klass**, AAF artist

**Abel Ryan**, AAF artist

**Kesler Woodward**, AAF artist

## **Funder**

**Diane Kaplan**, CEO of Rasmuson Foundation

**Jayson Smart**, Senior Program Officer of the Rasmuson Foundation

**Alex McKay**, Vice President of Programs, Rasmuson Foundation

## **Select Museum + Arts Leaders**

**Julie Decker**, Director and CEO, Anchorage Museum

**Aldona Jonaitis**, Director, University of Alaska Museum of the North

**Janelle Matz**, The Alaska Contemporary Art Bank (ACAB) Manager

**Andrea Noble-Pelant**, Executive Director, Alaska State Council on the Arts

**Amy Steffian**, Chief Curator, Alutiiq Museum & Archaeological Repository

## **Staff**

**Della Hall**, Executive Director, Museums Alaska

**Bianca Carpeneti**, past Executive Director, Museums Alaska

**Michael Hawfield**, past Program Administrator, Museums Alaska

\* Unavailable for interview