

September, 2016

Thank you for your interest in the Arizona Historical Society Certified Museum and Historical Organization Program. The AHS Certified Program was originally established to provide assistance to museums and historical organizations that preserve, interpret, and promote Arizona history. Especially created to support organizations in communities that are maintained by a limited number of staff and volunteers, the program offers the services of AHS staff in all aspects of museum operations as well as small grant opportunities. The Arizona Historical Society is pleased to network with its family of certified museums that celebrate the history of our state through collecting and preserving objects, archives, photographs, visual and oral records and utilizing these for educational and public programs, as well as research, both academic and avocational.

At this time there are over 75 certified museums and historical organizations across the state that interpret the regional and local history of their communities. These certified organizations have certain common characteristics which are described in the attached *Profile and Explanations*. To become a member of the Certified Museum and Historical Organization Program, please review these materials and complete the accompanying form.

Call (520-617-1169) or email (vshanahan@azhs.gov) us with any questions you may have. We look forward to hearing from you. With best wishes.

Sincerely,

Anne I. Woosley, Ph.D.
Executive Director

AIW/vms
Enclosures

Arizona Historical Society
Certified Museum and Historical Organization
Profile

Museums and historical organizations certified by the Arizona Historical Society (AHS) have certain common characteristics. In developing the certified profile, AHS follows standards or “best practices” established by the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) and the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). If requested, AHS staff are willing and able to assist local organizations in all aspects of their operations, with questions relating to managing collections, as well as developing educational and public programs---in short---in whatever capacity may be useful in our mutual commitment to preserving, interpreting, and promoting Arizona history. The Certified Profile has these universal attributes:

- Is guided by a mission statement that clearly describes the purpose of the organization.
- Operates as a not-for-profit organization.
- Has a governing structure including by-laws, articles of incorporation, and a board of directors.
- Conducts meetings and holds elections on a regularly scheduled basis.
- Develops membership or volunteer groups that support the organization.
- Is open to the public or offers interpretive programs on a regularly scheduled basis for at least 208 hours per year.
- Offers educational and public programs, special events, and other activities tied to its mission. Is accessible to academic and avocational researchers.
- Encourages public awareness and a sense of value for Arizona history.
- Responsibly manages its collections and ensures they relate to the mission of the organization.
- Ensures a secure environment for staff and visitors, as well as the historic collections in its care.

Arizona Historical Society
Certified Museum and Historical Organization
Profile Explanations

1. Operating as a Not-for-Profit

To become a not-for-profit organization in the State of Arizona, Articles of Incorporation are filed with the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC). When approved and registered as a museum or historical organization by the ACC, it can file with the IRS for 501(c)(3) recognition. The 501(c)(3) status not only exempts the museum or historical organization from federal income taxes, but permits donors to deduct monetary and in-kind contributions.

2. Governing Structure

In the not-for-profit application process, both the State of Arizona and IRS require documents including Articles of Incorporation and By-laws that govern the organization. Governing documents define its policies and assign the responsibilities of board members, staff, and volunteers.

3. Regularly Scheduling Meetings and Election of Officers

The success and vitality of museums and historical organizations depend on regularly scheduled meetings that bring together staff and board members to discuss and assess current operations, activities, and future directions. Election of officers, too, is conducted on a defined schedule, preferably with established term limits (for both officers and board members).

4. Developing Membership and Volunteers

Members and volunteers are invaluable to the success of most museums and historical organizations. They contribute time as docents, assist curators behind-the-scenes, provide administrative support, and make monetary donations. They often serve as the conduit linking the museum or historical organization to the community it serves.

5. Public Visitation and Participation

AHS certified museums and historical organizations are open to the public an average of at least four hours per week (208 hours annually), with many following a seasonal schedule based on climate and tourism patterns. Public hours are posted at the museum entrance and advertised using signage, flyers, brochures, the internet, and other forms of media. In the case of a historical organization that does not operate a museum facility, interpretive programs and activities can fulfill the certification requirement.

6. Promoting Public Programs

AHS certified museums and historical organizations promote Arizona history through public programs of various sorts including exhibitions, docent tours, classroom presentations, by providing access to collections for researchers, hosting special events, celebrations, and commemorations. Importantly, an organization's public programs relate to its mission statement.

7. Encouraging Public Awareness for Arizona History

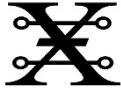
In addition to networking with AHS, successful historical museums and organizations may partner with local governments, businesses, civic and service clubs, schools, and libraries to champion the history of their communities. Many certified organizations take advantage of AHS workshops and seminars, as well as through individual contact with staff to exchange ideas and be of mutual assistance. They may become members of state, regional, or national museum organizations.

8. Endorsing Sound Collections Management Practices

AHS certified museums and historical organizations that collect are expected to have, or be in the process of developing, a collections policy that governs the acquisition, accession, care, and use of objects, documents, oral histories, maps, photographs (including electronic formats) related to their mission statement. AHS staff are available to assist with any collections management issues as requested.

9. Ensuring Safe Environments for Staff, Public and Collections

Security measures exist to protect the museum and its contents from theft and vandalism, while safety precautions are taken to protect staff, volunteers, and the general public in a pleasant environment. In addition, conservation methods are comprehensive and in place to shield collections from detrimental elements including direct sunlight, insects, moisture, or temperature fluctuations.



Arizona Historical Society
2016-17 Certification, Review and Verification Form



Name of Organization _____

Mailing Address _____

Physical Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Contact Person _____

Phone and Email if different than above _____

Date of Incorporation _____ IRS Status Code _____

Mission Statement Yes___ No___

Date Adopted _____

If new/revised provide date _____

Attach a copy of current mission statement.

Not-for-Profit Status Current Yes___ No___

By-laws Current Yes___ No___

Governing Body Yes___ No___

Elections Held Yes___ No___ How often _____

Business Meetings Held Yes___ No___ How often _____

Membership Yes___ No___

Dues Yes___ No___

Provide membership levels _____

Volunteers Yes___ No___

Approximate hours/year volunteer contribution _____

Collecting Institution Yes___ No___ Approximate % relating to Arizona history _____

Objects Yes___ No___ Archives Yes___ No___ Photographs Yes___ No___

Other _____

Public Programs Yes___ No___ Type _____

Educational Programs Yes___ No___

Encourage Research Yes___ No___

Exhibits Yes___ No___ Approximate sq. ft. of exhibit space _____

Open to public a minimum of 208 Hours/Year Yes___ No___

List regularly scheduled hours _____

List regularly scheduled closings _____

Significant changes from previous year Yes___ No___ If so, please comment:

I hereby affirm that the above information is correct.

Name President or Director (print) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

**Return completed form to:
Arizona Historical Society
Attn: Valerie Shanahan
949 E. 2nd St.
Tucson, AZ 85719-4898**

If you have questions, please contact Valerie Shanahan at: vshanahan@azhs.gov, or 520-617-1169