

Introduction – Background for the Toolbox

To help institutions of all sizes consider their work from the broader perspective of sustainability, AAM is offering this “toolbox” of references and an accompanying rubric. It is not a workbook about how to deaccession or govern. Rather, it is designed for institutional conversations on both subjects that can be internal or part of a collegial network. It includes numerous existing resources that serve as guidelines, workbooks, or other formats that provide a wealth of information available to the fields of museums and special collections libraries.

Deaccessioning is a regular part of museum and special library collections or archives management. It is considered good practice when the process follows professionally accepted ethical and legal standards. Generally speaking, deaccessioning does not cause institutional failure. However, deaccessioning is sometimes a symptom of institutional challenge if it is considered as a means to financially stabilize an institution.

An institution that is stable and sustainable is one in which collections management is an integral aspect of maintaining the museum’s relevance to its community and adherence to its mission. Collections management is strategic and should be clearly linked to the mission of the institution. Therefore, a clear mission and viable strategic plan are critical. Overall, governance practices have the same need to be current, ethical and legal.

How To Use the Toolbox

This resource list is organized with color coded headings according to the levels of need identified in the accompanying Sustainability Rubric. These resources will lead the user to information about deaccessions, collections management, abandoned property laws, governance, and so on.

Level 1 - Resources that all institutions should be aware of.

The institution is doing well. Staff and board regularly review professional standards and are consistent in their methods of operating.

Definitions, Activities and Statements

SAA Glossary

<https://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/d/deaccessioning>

AAMD position

paper <https://aamd.org/sites/default/files/document/PositionPaperDeaccessioning%2011.07.pdf>

AAM deaccessioning activity

<https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/deaccessioning-activity.pdf>

Deaccession and Disposal in Small Museums, Terms and Fact Sheet

<https://sustainingplaces.files.wordpress.com/2012/09/deaccession-and-disposal-in-small-museums.pdf>

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AAMD Policy on Deaccessioning

https://aamd.org/sites/default/files/document/AAMD%20Policy%20on%20Deaccessioning%20website_0.pdf

AAM Description of Core Documents

<https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/core-documents/>

What Every Institution Should Know About

Marie C. Malaro and Ildiko Pogany DeAngelis, *A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections*, 3rd edition, Smithsonian Books, 2012

<https://www.amazon.com/Legal-Primer-Managing-Museum-Collections/dp/1588343227>

Marie C. Malaro, *Museum Governance*

https://www.amazon.com/Museum-Governance-Mission-Ethics-Policy/dp/1560983639/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1528120462&sr=1-1&keywords=malaro%2C+museum+governance

Deaccession Done Right, Jennifer Holt, 2009

https://www.okmuseums.org/sites/oma2/uploads/documents/Technical_Bulletins/Technical_Bulletin_47_-_Deaccessioning_Done_Right.pdf

Steven Miller, *The Anatomy of a Museum: An Insider's Text*, 2017

<https://www.wiley.com/en-us/The+Anatomy+of+a+Museum%3A+An+Insider%27s+Text-p-9781119237037>

A Deaccession Reader, edited by Stephen E. Weil, 2000

<https://www.amazon.com/Deaccession-Reader-Stephen-Weil/dp/0931201500>

AAM Whitepaper on Direct Care

<https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/direct-care-of-collections-ethics-guidelines-and-recommendations-pdf.pdf>

Level #2 – The institution is struggling, despite doing good and effective things.

In addition Level #1 resources, these options provide additional insights into improving challenges with the collections or governance and consideration for deaccessioning.

Stand for Your Mission, The Power of Board Advocacy: a discussion guide for museum trustees, AAM

<https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/stand-for-your-museum-mission-final.pdf>

The Deaccessioning Dilemma: Laws, Ethics, and Actions, John E. Simmons, PowerPoint and handouts from 2015 webinar:

https://www.connectingtocollections.org/the_deaccessioning_dilemma_laws_ethics_and_actions/

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Why Do We Need This? Insights and Hindsight from Deaccessioning, Leslie B. Jones, PowerPoint and handouts from 2017 webinar:

<https://www.connectingtocollections.org/why-do-we-need-this/>

Martha Morris, *Managing People and Projects in Museums*, 2017

<https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781442273665/Managing-People-and-Projects-in-Museums-Strategies-that-Work>

Martha Morris, *Leading Museums Today*, 2018

<https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781442275324/Leading-Museums-Today-Theory-and-Practice>

Anne W. Ackerson and John Baldwin, *Leadership Matters* (AASLH, 2013)

Martin Gammon, *Deaccessioning and Its Discontents: A Critical History*, 2018

<https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/deaccessioning-and-its-discontents>

Marie C. Malaro, *Deaccessioning: The American Perspective* (this is reprinted in *Museum Governance*, Chapter 7)

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09647779109515279?src=recsys&>

Never let me go? A case study of deaccessioning and disposal undertaken at Museum of Wellington City and Sea, Rebecca Loud 2013

<http://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10063/3421/thesis.pdf?sequence=2>

Museums and the Disposal Debate

<https://museumsetc.com/products/disposals-debate#ptab-editor>

To Have and To Hold...Or Not? Deaccessioning Policies, Practices, and the Question of the Public's Interest, Deandra Rose Mann

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-journal-of-cultural-property/article/to-have-and-to-hold-or-not-deaccessioning-policies-practices-and-the-question-of-the-publics-interest/699DD45C7F2E9514FEFC1851344C9B5C>

*The citations alone for this journal article are all worthy for this toolkit

Varner, Elizabeth. *Deaccessioning in Museums: Evaluating Legal, Ethical and Practical Dilemmas*, 9 Collections: J. Museum & Archive Professionals. 209 (available at

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2174071).

Level #3 - In crisis.

In addition to Levels #1 and #2. One or more areas of the institution are floundering. Usual institutional resources are not readily available. Operations and/or governance are inconsistent.

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AAM Customized Assistance, for tier 3 museums

<https://www.aam-us.org/programs/information-center/customized-research-assistance/>

Deaccessioning and Capitalization of Collections, Darah Fogarty on behalf of AASLH, 2017

<https://aaslh.org/deaccessioning-capitalization-collections/>

Ethics Position Paper: The Capitalization of Collections, AASLH Technical Leaflet, 2003

<http://download.aaslh.org/AASLH-Website-Resources/Ethics+Position+Paper+1.pdf>

Level #4 – Hospice

There is no obvious community support. The current format of the institution is not relevant to the public good.

The state Attorney General's office in each state provides guidance for legal aspects of handling community property.

Making a Good End: How to Close Museums, webinar handouts and PowerPoint:

<https://www.connectingtocollections.org/close-a-museum/>

What to Do to Collections When a Museum Closes?

<http://zet.gallery/blog/en/what-happens-to-collection-when-museum-closes/>

When a History Museum Closes: Ethics Position Paper, AASLH

http://download.aaslh.org/history+news/ethics_paper_no2.pdf