

RECOGNIZED MUSEUM PROGRAM

# OVERVIEW



The Recognized Museum Program (RMP) is a standards-based accreditation program for museums in Alberta offered by the Alberta Museums Association (AMA). Participants in RMP submit Evidence in alignment with the AMA's member-approved Definition of a Museum:

*A museum is a non-profit making, permanent institution, in the service of society and its development, and open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates, and exhibits, for the purpose of study, education, and enjoyment, material evidence of people and their environment.*

To participate in RMP, your institution submits Evidence to demonstrate how its work aligns with the best practice standards in the *Standard Practices Handbook for Museums, 3rd Edition* in the following practice areas:

- Non-profit making
- Permanent institution
- In the service of society
- Open to the public
- Acquires
- Conserves
- Researches
- Communicates
- Exhibits

A Review Panel consisting of three Individual Members of the AMA assesses the Evidence to determine whether it meets the Minimum Requirements and Standards for each practice area. The Review Panel uses the assessment to determine which designation your institution receives, and provides comments and instructions to guide your institution along the path to become a Recognized Museum.



## Meet, Maintain, and Model

RMP is a journey not a destination. The journey begins as your institution works to **meet** best practice standards. Once designated a Recognized Museum, your institution strives to **maintain** those standards in the long-term. Finally, your institution can choose to **model** for your peers how you meet and maintain best practices long-term by becoming a Recognized Museum Leader.

### MEET

The first step in building sustainability is to meet minimum best practice standards. Institutions that are working to meet minimum best practice standards are designated Conditionally Recognized Museums or Candidates in RMP.

Participants in the program receive support from the AMA as they work to meet those best practice standards and contribute to a collaborative and robust museum community. Institutions that demonstrate they meet minimum best practice standards are designated Recognized Museums.

### MAINTAIN

The second step is for Recognized Museums to demonstrate how they maintain minimum best practice standards. Institutions that reapply for accreditation every five years are committed to the ongoing process of demonstrating they continue to meet the Minimum Requirements and Standards required to maintain their Recognized Museum designation.

Institutions that maintain Recognized Museum designation over the long-term are leading contributors to the social, cultural, and educational fabric of Alberta.

### MODEL

Institutions with Recognized Museum designation have the option to model what it looks like to meet and maintain best practice standards by applying to become a Recognized Museum Leader. These institutions meet, maintain, and model a long-term commitment to go above and beyond minimum best practice standards.

Institutions designated as Recognized Museum Leaders contribute to a culture of dynamic learning and creativity among Alberta's museums and museum professionals. These institutions give back to other RMP participants by sharing their knowledge and experience.



## Becoming a Recognized Museum or Recognized Museum Leader

Your first step is completing the Institutional Profile by May 31. The Institutional Profile ensures your institution is eligible to participate in RMP and creates a profile of your institution for the Review Panel to reference when assessing your Application, Reapplication, or Reapplication with Leader Application.

Your second step is to complete the Application, Reapplication, or Reapplication with Leader Application by November 30. The Application is for institutions that are not currently Recognized Museums and consists of fifteen pieces of Evidence.

The Reapplication is for current Recognized Museums to renew their designation and consists of ten pieces of Evidence. The Leader Application is an optional addition for Recognized Museums that want to take on a challenge and identify themselves as leaders.

A Review Panel consisting of three Individual Members of the AMA assesses the Evidence submitted. The Review Panel determines which designation your institution should receive and provides feedback for your institution. The results of the Review Panel's assessment are mailed to institutions by April 1.



## Designations

For new applicants and Recognized Museums that want to reapply, there are three possible designations from the Review Panel assessment:

- **Recognized Museum**  
All required Evidence met all Minimum Requirements and Standards.
- **Conditionally Recognized Museum**  
The required Evidence submitted by the institution met most Minimum Requirements and Standards but some minor administrative follow-up is needed to become a Recognized Museum. Conditionally Recognized Museums have eight weeks to complete and submit revisions.
- **Candidate in the Recognized Museum Program**  
The required evidence submitted by the institution met some of the Minimum Requirements and Standards but several are still outstanding. To become a Recognized Museum the institution must submit Upgrade Evidence. Candidates have up-to-three years to complete the Upgrade Evidence requested. The annual deadline to submit Upgrade Evidence is October 31.

For Recognized Museums that want to become Recognized Museum Leaders, there are three possible designations from the Review Panel assessment:

- **Recognized Museum Leader**  
The required Evidence submitted by the institution met all Minimum Requirements and Standards.
- **Conditionally Recognized Museum Leader**  
The required Evidence submitted by the institution met most Minimum Requirements and Standards but some minor administrative follow-up is needed to become a Recognized Museum Leader. Conditionally Recognized Museum Leaders have eight weeks to complete and submit revisions.
- **Candidate Leader in the Recognized Museum Program**  
The required Evidence submitted by the institution met some Minimum Requirements and Standards but several are outstanding. To become a Recognized Museum Leader the institution must submit Upgrade Evidence. Candidates have up to three years to complete the Upgrade Evidence requested. The annual deadline to submit Upgrade Evidence is October 31.



## What to Submit

### INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

All institutions are required to complete an Institutional Profile before submitting their Application. This will help the Review Panel better understand your museum, how ready you are to embark on your RMP journey, and areas where the AMA can provide Advisory Services to support your institution.

**Deadline May 31**

### APPLICATION

This is for institutions not currently designated a Recognized Museum that seek to demonstrate they meet the best practice standards to become a Recognized Museum.

**Deadline November 30**

### REAPPLICATION

This is for institutions currently designated a Recognized Museum that seek to demonstrate they maintain the best practice standards to become a Recognized Museum for another five years.

**Deadline November 30**

### REAPPLICATION WITH LEADER APPLICATION

This is for institutions currently designated Recognized Museums that seek to maintain that designation and demonstrate they are Leaders that can model best practice standards in the long-term. Accreditation is awarded for eight years.

**Deadline November 30**



## Support for RMP Participants

The Recognized Museum Program supports institutions throughout their journey to accreditation. All participants in the Program have access to increased advisory services through draft review, site visits, and the Grants Program.

### DRAFT REVIEW

The AMA offers complementary draft review of Applications, Reapplications, and Reapplications with Leader Applications received prior to September 15. Institutions that use draft review are designated as Recognized Museums faster than those that do not use this service. Over 80% of Recognized Museums used the complementary Draft Review Service.

### SITE VISITS

Institutions that request site visits while working towards Recognized Museum status or preparing an Application or Reapplication receive priority.

### GRANTS PROGRAM

Candidates in RMP and Conditionally Recognized Museums have access to Institutional Project Grants that support their work to meet the best practice standards. Recognized Museums and Recognized Museum Leaders have unrestricted access to the AMA's Grants Program.

	INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS	OPERATIONAL STAFFING GRANTS	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS (Institution Applications)
Recognized Museum	Full	Full	Full
Recognized Museum Leader	Full	Full	Full
Conditionally Recognized Museum	Full*	Full	Full
Conditionally Recognized Museum Leader	Full*	Full	Full
Candidate in RMP	Limited*	Full	Full
Candidate Leader in RMP	Limited*	Full	Full

\*Access to the Institutional Grants category is limited to projects relating to required Upgrade Evidence. Conditionally Recognized Museums have full access to the February 1 Institutional Grants under the condition they submit required Conditional Evidence for the February 28 deadline.



## Benefits of Participating in RMP

There are many tangible and intangible benefits to participating in the Program regardless of what designation your institution holds. The benefits ensure your institution is supported in its work to meet, maintain, and model best practice standards. Participating in RMP benefits your institution in the following ways:

- Participants in RMP benefit from a process that reinforces best practice, provides feedback on ways to improve practice, and builds long-term sustainability across Alberta’s museum sector.
- Museum staff, volunteers, and board members know they are part of a community of museums and museum professionals that share common standards, ethic and commitment to continuous learning and community engagement.
- Participants in RMP are committed to best practice and upholding the ethics and public trust responsibility of the museum sector.

Once your institution receives the designation of Recognized Museum or Recognized Museum Leader, they get the added intangible benefits that come with displaying the Recognized Museum logo:

- The Recognized Museum logo sends a clear message to communities, supporters, politicians, donors, and funders that they can have confidence and pride in the work of the institution.

There are also benefits that are specific to each designation within the Program.

DESIGNATION	BENEFITS
Conditionally Recognized Museums, Conditionally Recognized Museum Leaders, Candidates in RMP, Candidates Leaders in RMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-access to the Professional Development and Operational Staffing Grants offered by the AMA.</li> <li>• Limited access to the Institutional Grants offered by the AMA. Institutional Grant applications must connect to outstanding evidence required to receive Recognized Museum designation.</li> <li>• Access to RMP networking and learning events hosted by Recognized Museum Leaders</li> <li>• Eligible for consideration to receive the Robert R. Janes Award for Social Responsibility</li> </ul>
Recognized Museums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognized Museum metal sign to display at their institution</li> <li>• Full-access to all AMA Grants (Institutional, Operational Staffing, and Professional Development).</li> <li>• Access to Recognized Museum Promotional materials including: dated Recognized Museum logos, promotional templates, etc.</li> <li>• Opportunity to be featured in the annual Alberta Views museums guide and other promotional opportunities.</li> <li>• Access to the condensed RMP Reapplication.</li> <li>• Included in #RecognizedMuseum social media promotions by the AMA</li> <li>• Eligible for consideration to receive the Robert R. Janes Award for Social Responsibility</li> </ul>
Recognized Museum Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognized Museum Leader metal sign to display at their institution</li> <li>• Full-access to all AMA Grants (Institutional, Operational Staffing, and Professional Development).</li> <li>• Access to the Recognized Museum Leader promotional materials including: dated Recognized Museum Leader logos, promotional templates, etc.</li> <li>• Opportunity to be featured in the annual Alberta Views museums guide and other promotional opportunities.</li> <li>• Opportunity to host networking and learning events to share their model for success with Recognized Museums, Conditionally Recognized Museums, and Candidates in RMP.</li> <li>• Included in #RecognizedMuseum social media promotions by the AMA</li> <li>• Eligible for consideration to receive the Robert R. Janes Award for Social Responsibility</li> </ul>



## History of Museum Accreditation in Alberta

The need for standards-based accreditation for museums in Alberta was identified through research and consultations on the part of the AMA's Board of Directors and Secretariat in the early 2000s. The first iteration of standards based accreditation, the Museum Affirmation Program, saw over 140 applicants become Recognized Museums from 2005 to 2010. The second iteration of accreditation was released in 2010, and renamed the Recognized Museum Program to reflect the accreditation focus of the program. Since 2010, over 140 Institutions have participated in the Recognized Museum Program with most institutions receiving the Recognized Museum designation.

In 2017 a multi-year review of the Recognized Museum was undertaken to further streamline the application process and ensure it continued to uphold best practice standards while serving the needs of the Alberta museum community. The result is an update to the Recognized Museum Program that includes an Institutional Profile, a condensed reapplication process, and the addition of the Leader Application for Recognized Museums.