

Collections De-accessioning Procedures

The objects in the Museum's collections are held in trust for future generations. The objects must receive the care that this trust warrants. Acceptance of new objects is governed by the tenets in the Museum's Statement of Purpose and Collections Scope.

Sometimes an object already in the collections may be determined to be irrelevant to the Museum's purposes or activities, of such nature that it cannot be stored or preserved, or being of such condition or having characteristics that the object is hazardous to staff or to the rest of the collections. In these cases, the Museum Accessions Committee may prepare a recommendation for the Board of Directors that the object be de-accessioned.

In considering whether to de-accession an object, the Museum should be sure that the action is in the best interests of the Museum, the public it serves, the trust it holds, and the professional or cultural communities it represents.

1. The accepted methods of de-accessioning are:

- Sale, exchange, or transfer to a like institution, preferably within the Four Corners region, so that the object can fulfill the use intended by the donor when it was initially given.
- If sale, exchange, or transfer is not suitable, the object may be discarded, after all identifying marks have been removed.

Note that it is never acceptable for the object to become the property of a Museum staff or Board member, or volunteer, as it is contrary to the profession's ethics that a person connected in any way to the Museum would benefit from the de-accessioning process.

2. Steps for de-accessioning:

- The Collections committee discusses and prepares a recommendation for the Board. The Board accepts the recommendation.
- If the Museum has clear title to the object, the committee may proceed to de-accession it, using the approved methods above.
- If the Museum does not possess clear title, the Museum must follow the restrictions until such time that the restrictions have been lifted by the donor or donor's agents. For example, if the object is originally designated as a loan, the Museum will make all reasonable efforts to contact and return the loan to the lender or his agent.

- The Museum will contact the donor of its intention to de-accession the object, via certified letter (return receipt), including Release Letters A and B for donor's signature.
 - If the donor indicates his desire to regain ownership (Letter B), then the Museum will make the object available for the donor to retrieve within 60 days. If the donor indicates that he does not wish to regain ownership of the object (Letter A), then the Museum may proceed to de-accession as in (1) above.
 - If the donor is unreachable or does not respond within 60 days, the Museum may proceed to de-accession as outlined under (1) above.
- A list of all objects de-accessioned will be kept with the collection's files. A separate (cross-collections) list of all de-accessioned objects will also be kept. Such records will include all information produced by the process, including rationale, persons involved, provenance, a photograph of the object, its disposition, and any other materials that may be deemed pertinent.

Another reason an object may be de-accessioned is in response to a written request from a Native American or Hawaiian tribal entity, pursuant to The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). In this case, the object's identifying numbers shall be removed, and the object will be returned to the entity as soon as practicable, and at the expense of the Museum. Complete records regarding the transference will be kept by the Museum.

Please note that museums are considered "interested parties" by the Internal Revenue Service. Museum staff members may wish to recommend that the donor contact the Internal Revenue Service or a tax consultant about tax concerns if he decides to donate the object to another institution. However, care should be taken that the Museum staff in no way acts or is seen as a tax consultant.

This procedure statement was adopted by the Aztec Museum Association Board of Directors, 6/10/2010.



Release Letter A

I hereby unconditionally and without restriction give the item(s) described below to the Aztec Museum Association, to be administered in accordance with its policies and procedures.

Signature

Date

5/14/10

AZTEC MUSEUM

125 N. MAIN AVE. · AZTEC, NM 87410



PIONEER VILLAGE

505-334-9829 · WWW.AZTECMUSEUM.ORG

Release Letter B

I wish to regain ownership of the item(s) listed below, and will recover them from the Aztec Museum Association within 60 days.

Signature