Continuum of Excellence

Museum Membership • Pledge of Excellence • Museum Assessment Program • Core Documents Verification • Accreditation

Whether your museum is already accredited or taking the first step in its professional journey, the Continuum of Excellence provides multiple entry points and customized assistance for all museums to reach higher levels of recognition.

The new multi-program structure offers opportunities for various levels of assessment, feedback and recognition that build on one another.

- **Accessible**: Museums of all sizes and categories benefit from the recognition and improvement available through the programs.

- **Flexible**: Two new programs—Core Documents Verification and the Pledge of Excellence—promote professionalism and offer recognition for your commitment. Our Museum Assessment Program (MAP) helps small and mid-sized museums through self-study and site visit.

- **Efficient**: The streamlined, online Accreditation process will take about 50% less time to complete.

- **Collaborative**: The Continuum extends beyond the Alliance by linking to other standards recognition and assessment programs, such as AASLH’s StEPs program and AZA’s Accreditation. These cooperative partnerships reduce the time and steps needed to for Alliance Accreditation.
Museum Membership: The Foundation of Excellence

The Alliance’s museum membership is your museum’s first step on the Continuum of Excellence. Membership grants you access to the resources your museum needs to excel; these tools include resources on standards and best practices, online learning opportunities and informative publications. The Alliance embraces all museums from “A to Z,” art museums to zoos and everything in between. Responding to direct market feedback about cost, value and benefits, the Alliance has revitalized its museum membership to better serve the field and all museums, regardless of size or type. Three membership tiers, beginning with a “pay what you can” option, allow all museums to self-select their ideal level of benefits.

Pledge of Excellence: A Commitment to the Field

The Pledge is an easy and achievable step along your museum’s path to excellence. Showcase your museum’s commitment to the field by joining a national, public list of museums whose staff and leadership have pledged to strive to operate according to field-wide standards and best practices.

Core Documents Verification: A Demonstration of Professionalism

Build on your museum’s accomplishments with a document review program that verifies your institution's educational mission and affirms that core museum-specific plans and policies meet the standards of professional museums. Use Core Documents Verification as a launching pad for accreditation, as part of the implementation of MAP recommendations or for third-party vetting of documents created as part of earning StEPs certificates.

Museum Assessment Program (MAP): A Customized Roadmap for Improvement

MAP is a powerful tool designed to support your museum at any point along the Continuum of Excellence. Through a one-year process of self-assessment, institutional activities and consultative peer review, your museum emerges with an analysis of its strengths, weaknesses and opportunities and a prioritized roadmap for improving operations and meeting standards. MAP is supported through a cooperative agreement between the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the American Alliance of Museums.

Accreditation: A Mark of Distinction

As the museum field’s mark of distinction, accreditation offers high profile, peer-based validation of your museum’s operations and impact. Accreditation increases your museum’s credibility and value to funders, policy makers, community and peers. Accreditation is a powerful tool to leverage change and helps facilitate loans between institutions. The recently streamlined process maintains the same high standards while significantly reducing the time needed for completion.