

AAM Core Documents Workshop: Organizer and Facilitator Guide

AAM has created a one-day workshop on the five Core Documents, complete with PowerPoint and materials, and encourages museum service providers replicate it, supplementing or customizing it with localized resources and examples. Our goal is for every museum to have the five Core Documents in place to create a stronger museum field. AAM does not charge a fee for use of the content or materials for educational purposes.

About Core Documents

The following five documents have been designated as Core Documents because they are fundamental for basic professional museum operations and embody core museum values and practices. They codify and guide decisions and actions that promote institutional stability, flexibility, and viability, which in turn allows the museum to fulfill its educational role, preserve treasures for future generations, and be an enduring part of its community.

- Mission Statement
- Institutional Code of Ethics
- Strategic Institutional Plan
- Disaster Preparedness/Emergency Response Plan
- Collections Management Policy

Each document has a set of minimum required elements associated with it. The Required Elements for each Core Document, along with some AAM resources related to each, are found at: <http://www.aam-us.org/resources/assessment-programs/core-documents/documents>

The Core Documents, like the Characteristics of Excellence (aka Core Standards for Museums), underpin the Continuum of Excellence. Museums that have all five documents are encouraged to submit them to AAM through the Core Documents Verification Program for review and recognition. Completing Core Documents Verification is a prerequisite for Accreditation.

About the workshop

Level

- Introductory
- Participants do not need to have any of the Core Documents to attend; but encourage them to bring copies of any they have, for their own reference during the workshop.

Time

- Designed for a full day (approximately 7 hrs. including a 1hour lunch break)
- Can be compressed into less time but that means less time for the valuable hands-on and interactive learning: the activities and discussion
- Can be done modularly over the course of several shorter trainings—one document at a time or broken into two sessions. If you want to break it up, we suggest Mission, Plan, and Code of Ethics be done together and Collections Management Policy and Emergency Plan be done either together or independently.

Content/Scope

For each of the five Core Documents:

- Why the document is important to have in place
- Required Elements (and what they really mean)
- Related standards and best practices
- Strategies for developing/strengthening them
- Common problem areas

Objectives

Attendees will:

- Find out which plans and policies are the core documents necessary for a professionally operating museum
- Understand the critical importance of having each document
- Learn what the standards and best practices are for each document and strategies for developing them
- Leave with motivation, resources, and some next steps to get started assessing, writing, or revising their core documents

Design

- From 30,000 feet to on-the-ground
- Presentation + Interactivity
- PowerPoint: goes through each Core Document with emphasis on the Required Elements of each one
- Activity(ies) associated with each document deliver content and/or reinforce it; opportunity for interaction and discussion
- Workbook: main tool for the participant both onsite and afterwards
- Order (see sample agenda attached)
 - Introduction & Overview (Objectives; Value and Role of Core Documents)
 - Mission Statement
 - Institutional Code of Ethics
 - Strategic Institutional Plan
 - Collections Management Policy
 - Disaster Preparedness/Emergency Response Plan
 - Taking It Home (While the information is still fresh, participants take some dedicated time to reflect back on what they learned and begin to develop an action plan to get their Core Documents to their next iterations)
 - Wrap-Up

Materials you get

AAM provides you with:

- Organizer & Facilitator Guide
- Sample agendas: one version for the facilitator and another for the participant
- PowerPoint (with presenter notes under each slide)
- Participant Workbook (plus template to create a customized cover)
- Facilitator instructions for activities
- Related resources (e.g., AAM Reference Guides, *Museum* articles) (optional to provide)
- Email template for pre-workshop data
- One year out follow-up survey email template w/ Survey Monkey URL

Breakdown of each Design Element/Materials

PowerPoint (Presentation)

- The backbone of the workshop
- Goes through each Core Document with emphasis on the Required Elements of each
- Includes detailed talking points and facilitator notes
- Keep intact but we encourage you to customize the Emergency Plan section with state-specific resources; you can examples from local/participating museums in other sections
- You may definitely provide copies of the slides to the participants during or after the workshop (provide as a PDF without the presenter notes)

Activities

- Designed to:
 - Provide audience engagement and in some cases deliver some of the content about the document and Required Elements without having to present it didactically
 - Allow participants to apply what learned to their own situation and to assess their own documents
 - Get participants thinking about issues their documents need to address and the next steps to revise or create them
 - Generate discussion
 - Be fun
- At least one for each core document
- Woven into the course of the day
- Different styles: some are designed to be general group discussion, some are on-your-own, others involve discussions with a partner or others seated at each table
- Reporting out: Depending on the time available and the size (and energy) of the group, the facilitator should decide on discussion and reporting out style (e.g., call for volunteers to share some results or answers, do discussions with tablemates without or without report out by table)
- Instructions and facilitation notes for each activity are provided
 - For example: Print the document “Bingo cards – 8 randomized” in color. Make enough copies for everyone to have one bingo card. Put the cards in the handout packet or distribute before starting the CMP section.
- There are multiple activities for some Core Documents. You may need to cut out one or two depending on the time, but you should do at least one per document. Participants can go back to do the skipped ones at home.

Participant Workbook

- The main tool for the participant to use throughout the workshop to do the activities and take notes. Plus it's an important take-home resource as well—for reference and so participants can continue to assess their own documents/draft plans to develop them.
- The information presented in the slides is in the workbook, just in a different format. The workbook is designed to track along with the content. The workbook offers more detail, plus additional content.
- At the front there is list of all the Core Documents with their required elements. There is also a page about the document life-cycle, explaining the best practice that applies to any document.
- For each Core Document, the workbook includes:
 - Required Elements checklist
 - List of topics that are considered best practice to have in the document
 - Activities worksheets with place to put answers and notes
- The end of the Workbook includes a series of worksheets to help participants begin to build an action plan for tackling their documents when they get home. The Taking it Home section of the workshop focuses on these tools but encourage participants to jot some notes here throughout the workshop as they realize the results of each activity.
- A list of some AAM resources is included at the end. Feel free to add your own.
- The workbook is a PDF and is laid out ready to print double-sided.
- Keep it intact but use the Word template provided to create a cover customized with logos, etc. (Turn it into a PDF and append it to the workbook as the first page.)
- We suggest you provide participants a copy of the Workbook electronically after the workshop so they have clean copy to share or use as references. Encourage participants to do or re-do some of the activities with their staff/board and spend more time on them when they get home.

Agenda

- Sample of two versions provided: one for the participants and one with more detail for the facilitator. An example of the facilitator version is appended.
- Feel free to customize as needed for your schedule and add logos, headers, etc.

Other Resources

- In addition to any resources you want to provide to participants, AAM suggests you hand out “How Can My Small Museum Handle Core Document Verification?”—a four-page article by Tamara Hemmerlein, reprinted from Museum magazine. A copy is part of the workshop materials AAM provides. We can also email you a copy if needed.
- AAM also has additional activities and Reference Guides—all available on the AAM website for free (no login or membership required)—that we've packaged up into one PDF for easy distribution. These resources are meant to be used at the museum, not the workshop.
- We encourage workshop facilitators to read these materials as part of preparing to teach the workshop.

Other Notes on Organizing and Facilitating

Logistics

AAM provides the materials, content, and structure, but you are responsible for all other logistics to organize and execute. On-site it's up to the presenter to gauge your audience and make the appropriate decisions about how to best facilitate discussions, encourage participation, and manage the timing. However, Excellence Programs staff is available to talk with you one-on-one if you're thinking about doing a workshop or have questions about delivery as you are preparing for one. **AAM contact:** Julie Hart, jhart@aam-us.org, 202-218-7712.

Supplies

- Computer, projector, screen, remote slide clicker
- Flip chart and markers (+ masking tape/blue tape if the flip chart doesn't have a self-stick strip)
- Colored pencils/crayons (for activity #6)
- Oversized sheets of paper (legal or 11x17, or just use the flip chart paper) (for activity #6)
- Good to have a couple pads of sticky notes on hand
- Plus see the handout packet materials to duplicate and assemble

Before

- Please let AAM know that you are doing the workshop ahead of time
- Carefully review the AAM materials
- Set up a time to talk with Excellence Programs staff if you have questions or need any guidance
- AAM suggests you ask all participants about 1-2 weeks in advance of the workshop to tell you about the status of each of their Core Documents: which ones do they have (done or in draft) and lack; and which one or two they need the most guidance on. This is helpful in knowing where you might need to take a bit more time. An email template is included in the workshop materials if you'd like to use it.
- Duplicate materials and compile into handout packets:
 - Agenda
 - Participant Workbook – copy double sided, saddle staple
 - Bingo Card (use the “Bingo Cards—8 randomized” document provided to print, in color, a card for each participant; yes, there will be some duplication. There's a bingo card in the Workbook but everyone's is the same so that one's best used for a do-at-home version or just for reference.)
 - Evaluation form
 - Brochures or other literature about your organization/services
 - (Optional: “How Can My Small Museum Handle Core Document Verification?”)
 - (Optional: AAM Reference Guides & Other Activities compilation PDF—copy double sided, saddle staple; you might want to just email the PDF or website links after the workshop since it's a lot of paper.)

A note on handing out copies of the slides in advance. While it's your call, AAM discourages including these in the handouts (send afterwards instead) because the Workbook is set up to include the content from slides along with space for participants to make notes. It's easier for participants to focus one all-in-one tool during the workshop.

After

- Use your own program evaluation form if you want to collect data about attendee satisfaction or presenter effectiveness. AAM does not have a prescribed evaluation form or require one.
- Send a follow-up email to participants with a copy of the Workbook and the PowerPoint slides as a PDF, plus any electronic copies or web links to other resources handed out
- Complete the brief Reporting Form (see attached) within two weeks of the event so we have a record of the reach and impact of these programs and the Core Documents message. (This helps us with reporting to our CEO and Board.)
- We strongly encourage you to survey the participants one year after the event to gauge progress and impact of attendance. AAM has a survey for this purpose in SurveyMonkey, which you can use. A copy of the survey questions are in the workshop materials along with an example of an email with the link in it. Put a tickler in your calendar for the one year mark.

Cost

AAM does not charge you or the participants any fees; however, you may charge a fee to cover your costs. To make the program as accessible as possible, please keep fees modest.

Title & Credit Line

You can call your event whatever you like, but please credit AAM as follows:

This workshop is hosted by [insert organization] and sponsored by [insert organization]. The Core Documents Workshop materials have been developed by the American Alliance of Museums as part of the standards-based Continuum of Excellence that supports and celebrates every museum's commitment to professional standards.

Branding and Co-Branding

- Retain AAM branding (name and logo) on all materials
- You may co-brand and add your logo or other text

Sample FACILITATOR Agenda Full-day Core Documents Workshop

9:00am – 9:30am	Prep	
9:30am – 10:00am (30)	Introduction & Overview Value & Role of Core Docs Introduce self & ask attendees to introduce selves (or ask how many are directors, board members, collections, exhibits, etc.) (5) <i>Activity 1: Objectives for the workshop (5)</i> Slides (20)	
10:00am – 10:45 (45)	Mission Statement Slides (5) <i>Activity #2A (5)</i> Slides (20) <i>Activity #2B & C (14)</i> Slide (1)	Slides, then A More slides, then B & C
10:45 – 11:00 am (15)	Break	
11:00 am – 11:45 (45)	Code of Ethics Slides (10) <i>Activity 3A: Are You Covered? Scenarios (~20 min)</i> <i>Activity 3B: Your Ethical Issues (15)</i>	
11:45 – 12:15pm (30)	Institutional Plan Part I Slides (15) <i>Activity 4A: Engaging Stakeholders in the Planning Process (15)</i>	
12:15pm – 1:15pm (60)	Lunch	
1:15pm – 2:00pm (45)	Institutional Plan Part II Slides (15) <i>Activity 4C: Assess Your Plan (20)</i> Slides (10)	
2:00pm – 3:00pm (60)	Collections Management Policy Slides (10) <i>Activity 5: CMP Bingo (20)</i>	

	Slides (30) *Start Emergency Plan if done before 3pm	
3:00pm – 3:15pm (15)	Break	
3:15pm – 4:00pm (45)	Emergency/Disaster Plan Slides (15) <i>Activity 6: Create your Risk Profile (25)</i> Slides (5)	
3:30pm – 4:00pm (30)	Taking It Home No slides – just explain activity <i>Activity: Build Core Docs Action Plan (20+)</i>	No slides
4:00pm – 4:30pm (30)	Wrap Up: Resources Slides (15) Final questions & closing remarks (15)	Buffer here if running late

Agenda Template (Participant Version)

Core Document Workshop

Location

Date

Times

9:30am	Introduction and Overview Perspectives on Core Documents: Value and Role Mission Statement
10:45am	Break
11:00am	Code of Ethics Institutional Plan Part I
12:15pm	Lunch
1:15pm	Institutional Plan Part II Collections Management Policy
3:00pm	Break
3:15pm	Emergency Preparedness / Disaster Recovery Plan Wrap-Up & Taking It Home

Core Documents Workshop: AAM Reporting Form

After your event, please tell AAM about it so we can track the reach and impact of Core Documents.

Send your completed form and a copy of any promotional material to core@aam-us.org.

1. **Event title:**
2. **Date:**
3. **Location:**
4. **Venue:**
(e.g., part of a conference, a stand-alone workshop, etc.)
5. **Organizer:**
6. **Presenter(s):**
7. **Format (full-day, half-day, etc.):**
8. **Number of attendees:**
9. **If you collected evaluation forms from participants, provide a brief summary of the results (and any positive testimonials as well):**
10. **Any suggestions for change or improvement to the materials AAM provided?**
11. **Other comments:**

*Please attach a copy of any workshop promotional material
(e.g., a flier, webpage)*

For the organizer/facilitator **Core Documents Workshop: Pre workshop Email Template**

AAM suggests you ask all participants about 1-2 weeks in advance of the workshop to tell you about the status of each of their Core Documents: which ones do they have (done or in draft) and lack; and which one or two they need the most guidance on. This is helpful in knowing where you might need to take a bit more time. This is the template AAM uses but free to use your own or adapt as needed.

Subject line: Core Document Workshop: Input needed / preparation

Dear workshop participants,

I am looking forward to seeing all of you on [date]. To help us make the best use of our time together, please email me answers to a few questions by end-of-day [date]. (If you're coming to the workshop with someone else from your museum, only one of you needs to respond.)

We'll cover all five documents but this data will help me know which ones to take a bit more time on, and which to zip through because you've got them nailed down.

1. Which one of the five Core Documents (listed below) do you need the most help with or are most interested in learning about?

2. For each Core Document tell me which one of these four categories best describes its status at your museum:

Finalized and in use / In draft / Don't have / Not sure

- Mission Statement:
- Institutional Code of Ethics:
- Strategic Institutional Plan:
- Disaster Preparedness/Emergency Response Plan:
- Collections Management Policy:

3. Any specific questions, issues, or challenges that you would like to have me cover?

If you have any of these documents you might want to bring copies for your own reference but *it's not necessary that you have any of them*. And you won't be asked to share your documents. I look forward to hearing from you and seeing you [when/where].

Example of the 1-year out survey/check in email

Dear [NAME],

It's hard to believe, but a year's already passed since you participated the Core Document workshop in [location]. I wanted to check in to see how things were going and how the workshop helped prepare your museum to move forward with its core documents.

I'd really appreciate it if you could take a few minutes (5 to 10 at the most) to answer this quick ten-question survey to update us on your progress and satisfaction with the workshop:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FTW7GXS>

Your feedback will help [organization] and AAM us gauge impact of the workshop and to document field-wide levels of best practice; plus it will help us develop future workshops that can support your museum continue to advance along the Continuum of Excellence.

Thanks in advance. I hope you've had a great year and look forward to more opportunities to help you and your museum succeed!

Sincerely,