



AASLH
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for State and Local History

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Field Services

An Old Profession with Fresh Solutions

Purpose

The idea of field services is that larger cultural institutions or statewide organizations have an obligation to increase the capabilities of local partner/grassroots organizations within their service area. Field Services assists historical organizations and museums, and museums of art, science, children, and natural history, as well as planetariums, zoos, archives, libraries, and many other cultural institutions.

Professional Generalists

Field services personnel are professional generalists who can provide professionally developed training, advice, contacts, and technical information on every aspect of museum and organizational work from governance issues and fundraising, to interpretive technique and membership programs. If field services personnel cannot answer a question, they almost always have access to a specialist who can.

Services Provided

Strong field services programs have three core services: grants, either through their offices or by offering assistance in finding grants; regular, ongoing, and consistent professionally developed training opportunities for historical organization or museum professionals and volunteers; and, consultations, advice, and technical information on demand. Field services offices might also offer further programs such as historic markers, traveling exhibits, lending libraries, needs assessments, awards programs, and much more.

Guiding Principle

The unofficial motto of field services is, "We're just here to help." Help is just a phone call or email away, and field services staff almost always can pay a visit to an organization or museum in need of assistance, especially in the event of natural disasters. Those who work in field services genuinely want to help their local partner/grassroots organizations and museums help themselves. Field services advocates for best practices of museum standards with every institution.

Cost

The best part of field services is, the service is often free or available at low cost such as a modest workshop fee.

Finding Field Services

The easiest way to find Field Services in your state is to look on the website of the Field Services Alliance, the national association of field services professionals: <http://www.aaslh.org/FSA/fsamemb.html>.