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## WORK ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM: A Small Museum's Dream

By Mona Gudgel, Executive Director, [Monterey County Historical Society, Inc.](#), Salinas, CA

Small museums at times require labor for maintenance and repair to their facilities along with office and archival assistance, which surpasses their dedicated volunteers' time or abilities as well as the museums' budget.

The local Sheriff's Work Alternative Program (WAP), if your community has one, can be a small museum's dream. The program provides a workforce along with skilled workers at no cost to you, which may save you an incredible amount of money and time.

### What is the Work Alternative Program?

The WAP is a county sheriff's program whereby jail time is converted into hours worked at a participating agency or nonprofit. The WAP program is responsible for workmen's compensation insurance. They provide a training program once a year and schedule a site visit from one of their representatives so there is an understanding of the needs of participating agencies.

### Whom to contact

Contact your local sheriff's department to see if they have a Work Alternative Program in your county.

### Your Responsibilities

*Big Ideas for Small Museum* is a quarterly email just for people who work in small museums. With this publication, the AASLH Small Museums Committee shares resource that are pre-tested and approved by actual small museum professionals. The articles are brief and practical - giving the shortcuts you need when you don't have enough time, money, or people.

## AASLH Resources

To sign up to receive *Big Ideas for Small Museums*, join the AASLH Small Museums Affinity Group. **The Affinity Group is not a membership organization and there is no fee to join.** Go to the [Small Museums](#) webpage and click on "Join the Small Museums Affinity Group" at the top.

### [JOIN AASLH TODAY!](#)

Not an **AASLH** member? Check out benefits that our members enjoy.

**AASLH** is the **ONLY** national organization dedicated to the field of state and local history. AASLH provides leadership and support for its members who preserve and interpret state and local history in order to make the past more meaningful.

You must have a well-planned training and working schedule, supplies and materials available for the WAP worker. You are required to log and monitor worker days and hours on an attendance roster and must closely supervise him/her. Should the worker fail to report for duty, the staff's WAP coordinator must be notified as soon as possible. Upon completion of the program, you must forward the completed attendance roster to the WAP office.

### Advantages of the program

As a participant you may request a professional painter, carpenter, someone efficient in office work, records, or any skill that you may require. If someone is available, the sheriff's office will send him/her to you.

As an example, [our museum](#) is located on five acres with seven structures. It needs a tremendous amount of maintenance. One of our structures required a professional painter who could properly prepare and paint rusted steel beams and roof braces on our [Bataan World War II Monument](#). This required an expertise in the preparation and use of epoxy mixed with paint to provide a coating that would last ten years. We were fortunate that the WAP was able to send us such an individual, which saved costly labor costs. We also asked for people skilled in office work and because of the people we were sent we were able to archivally process and place on a database over 2,200 obituary clippings from our local newspaper within a short period of time.

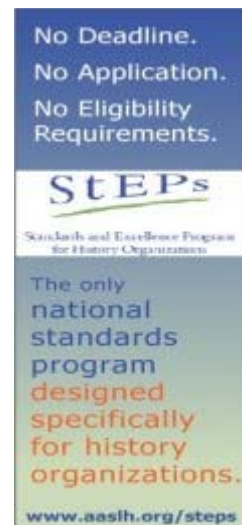
This is just the tip of the iceberg on the many projects that have been completed on our five-acre site through the Work Alternative Program that saved us time and money.

For us, our local Work Alternative Program is a small museum's dream and a win/win situation for both the sheriff's department and the museum. The sheriff's department is giving to the community with the participation of individuals that are able to assist a nonprofit museum and, in turn, the museum is giving back to the community by perpetually maintaining their facilities for local visitors, tourists, and researchers along with helping to rehabilitate the individuals that are assigned to them.



### Small Museum Scholarship Application Now Open

The Small Museums Committee of AASLH is offering scholarships for an individual to attend the **2013 AASLH Annual Meeting, Birmingham, Alabama, September 18-21**. This scholarship is available to a full, part time, or volunteer



### AASLH Summer Workshop Series

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**June 20-21 [Exhibit Makeovers](#)**  
Milwaukee County Historical Society,  
Milwaukee, WI  
**Cost: \$270 member/\$345 nonmember. \$40 discount if registration is received by May 16**

**July 11-12 [Collections Management and Practices](#)**  
Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA  
**Cost: \$270 member/\$345 nonmember. \$40 discount if registration is received by June 5**

**July 18-19 [Project Management for History Professionals](#)**  
Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, GA  
**Cost: \$475 member/\$550 nonmember. \$40 discount if registration is received by June 10.**

employee of a small museum (annual budget of up to \$250,000). The \$500 scholarship will cover the cost of the conference registration and the Small Museums luncheon with any remaining funds to offset travel and/or lodging expenses. The scholarship is open to AASLH individual members or people working for institutional members and is a benefit of membership.

**The application deadline is June 15.**

For more information about how to apply, please go to [AASLH Small Museums](#).

**July 24-26 [Collections Camp: Costumes and Textiles](#)**

*University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI*

**Cost: \$300 members/\$375 nonmembers. \$40 discount if registration is received by June 19.**

**Online Workshops**

**[The Basics of Archives](#)**

**Dates: April 29-May**

**24 Time/Duration:** 15-20 hours to be completed anytime during the above dates **Cost: \$85 members/\$160 nonmembers**

**[Engaged Volunteers, Engaged Communities](#)** **Date: April**

**30, Time/Duration:** 1 hour 15 minutes

3 pm eastern/2 pm central/1 pm mountain/12 pm pacific **Cost: \$40 members/\$115 nonmembers**

For more information or to register, visit [www.aaslh.org/workshop.htm](http://www.aaslh.org/workshop.htm), email [hawkins@aslh.org](mailto:hawkins@aslh.org), or call Bethany Hawkins at 615-320-3203.



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