

# Strategic Planning for Museums in Ontario: Planning for the Future

Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming

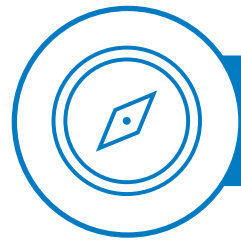
March 2026



# Purpose

- Provide additional context for the Ministry's request for a **Strategic Plan** in 2026 and an overview of the requirements as set out in the Standards for Community Museums.





# Museum Standards

- Museums applying for the Community Museum Operating Grant (CMOG) must comply with requirements set out in the Standards for Community Museums in Ontario.
- The Ministry requests specific policies and plans with reference to the Standards on an annual basis to demonstrate a museum's compliance with requirements.
- The 10 standards for community museums represent the minimum operating requirements for a community museum to receive provincial operating support.
- The goal is to help museums meet the Standards and to support continuous improvement and professionalism in the sector.
- For 2026, the Ministry is requesting **a Strategic Plan, due June 30, 2026**, along with CMOG applications.
- For 2027, the Ministry is requesting an Exhibition Development Plan. More information will be made available next Spring.





# Requirements in the Governance Standard

“As a community museum, you must be governed according to standards and be open and accountable to the public for your decisions...”

5. The museum's operations and activities must be:
- a) Directed by short and long-term written plans (e.g., business plan, strategic plan, visioning plan, or master plan) that are:
  - b) Approved by the governing body
  - c) Contain goals and objectives relevant to the museum's statement of purpose”



*The creation of a strategic plan should be a collaborative effort that involves museum staff and board, stakeholders and all voices in the community. The time and effort it takes to engage people in the community and listen to their input will result in a strategic plan that is more relevant and impactful.*

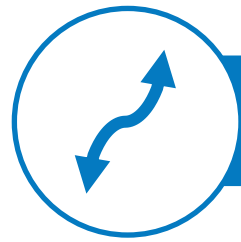
**Museum Note: Governance**



## Additional Standards to Consider

- The Standards set out the minimum requirements for museum functions that are necessary to the continuing operation of the museum.
- While all of the Standards will help guide the strategic planning process, the following key additional Standards should be considered as they support long-term organization planning:

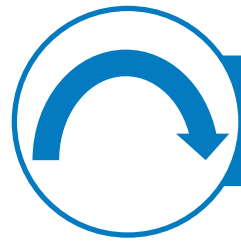




# What is a Strategic Plan?

- A strategic plan is a **3–5-year roadmap** that defines a museum's future, sets clear goals, and outlines actions to achieve its mission.
- It **aligns vision, resources, and community needs** and includes stakeholder input.
- A strategic plan should assess the **overall performance** of the museum and establish measurable objectives for growth, sustainability, and impact.
- The plan can be in one document, or in two, e.g., broad vision and goals and then a workplan that details implementation.





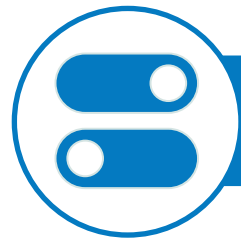
# Elements of a Strategic Plan

## **A museum's Strategic Plan should:**

- ✓ Be currently active and multi-year
- ✓ Articulate a strategic vision and demonstrate alignment with the museum's mission
- ✓ Include goals as well as actions to achieve them over the span of 3-5 years
- ✓ Cover all areas of museum operations e.g., collections management, community development
- ✓ Identify the human and financial resources required to carry out the plan
- ✓ Assign responsibility for completion of action steps
- ✓ Include information about how success will be measured and evaluated
- ✓ Bear the date approved by the governing authority
- ✓ Provide a summary of the planning process

## **For institutions with parent organizations:**

- ✓ The plan should reference and align with the strategic plan of the parent organization



# Strategic Plan Development Process

## Identify Stakeholders

- Start by finding out who your community is

## Invite Honest Dialogue

- Make it clear that many diverse perspectives can be shared openly

## Structure Participation

- Decide how different voices in the community will be engaged

## Synthesize Input

- Gather what you've heard and look for patterns.
- Where is there agreement?
- Where is there disagreement?



# Example of a Strategic Planning Retreat

**DAY TWO** **BCMA** STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

**HIGH LEVEL GOALS**

**SYSTEMS THINKING**

**BRAVE AND BOLD**

**STEP FORWARD AND BE**

**LISTEN FIRST**

**CATALYST FOR CHANGE**

**INCREASE THE DIVERSITY OF THE PEOPLE WE ARE BRINGING TOGETHER**

- INCLUSION
- RESPECT
- ACCESSIBILITY
- ADVOCACY

**CELEBRATE THE PROGRESS THE SECTOR HAS ACCOMPLISHED**

**POWER AND PRIVILEGE**

**WE ALL HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY**

**CONFLICT IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH**

**WE WORK ON STOLEN LAND**

**LET'S INITIATE CONSTRUCTIVE DAMAGE**

**WE ALL HAVE UNCONSCIOUS BIAS NOTICE IT. QUESTION YOUR ASSUMPTIONS**

**TEACH THE COLONIALISM IN OUR STORY**

**WE ALL HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY**

**NOT A LOT OF BLACK FOLKS NEWCOMERS IN THE ROOM**

**HIRE INDIGENOUS EXPERTS TO WORK ON CALL 667 FULL-TIME**

**OPEN YOUR SPACES TO BLACK-LED ORGANIZATIONS**

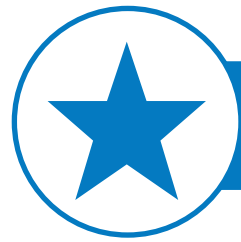
**SYSTEMIC RACISM**



## Next Steps and Deadlines

- Deadline for submission is **June 30, 2026**, with your CMOG grant submission.

- Reach out to the Ministry at [CMOG-SFMC@ontario.ca](mailto:CMOG-SFMC@ontario.ca) with any questions.



# Appendix: Recommended Resources

## Museum Standards resources:

- [Standards for Community Museums in Ontario](#)
- [Alberta Museums Association. Standard Practices Handbook for Museums, 3rd edition. 2014.](#)
- **Museum Note Governance and Strategic Planning**
- <https://www.ontario.ca/document/museum-notes/museum-note-governance-strategic-planning-and-evaluating-success-non-profit>

## Strategic Planning Resources:

- **OMA Strategic Planning Resource Pack**
- <https://resources.museumsontario.ca/resource/strategic-planning-resource-pack/>



## Appendix: Looking Ahead: 2027-28

- For 2027, the Ministry is planning to review key elements of the Exhibition Standard.
- Museums will be asked to submit an Exhibition Plan that includes, for example, details on current and planned exhibits and how they plan to engage their communities.
- More details on the Exhibition Plans will be provided in early 2027.