



February 14, 2014

We have had a very solid start in these first two biennia of stewarding the substantial resources provided by Minnesotans through the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

For example, in December 2013, the Historic Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC) recommended close to \$4 million dollars in Legacy grants that will support 44 projects in 29 counties. Cumulatively, since 2009, HRAC and MNHS have awarded \$24.2 million in Legacy grants to over 1,200 projects and considered along the way over five times that much in requests for support. These grants have benefited Minnesotans in every county of the state.

Late last year we asked Access Philanthropy to help us assess our administration of the funds, develop a 20-year vision, and suggest priorities for the next five years.

Specifically we asked:

1. *What should or will history look like in Minnesota because of the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund?*
2. *What must the Minnesota Historical Society and other history partners do to maximize the opportunity provided by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund?*

This report is the work product of Access Philanthropy. Although MNHS has found the report to include some inaccuracies and recommendations for action that are already in place, we believe it to be a good starting-point for discussion with history and heritage colleagues and citizens across the state.

It is clear from the report that there is much to celebrate in the history investments made by the Legacy funds. From statewide to local initiatives, Legacy funds are connecting groups and organizations in remarkable ways and are having a meaningful impact across the state.



Here's what happens next:

- We've embarked on a twelve-month work plan to develop policy and procedural revisions for implementation in calendar year 2015.
- Team members will begin discussions with staff and interested stakeholders on the report and its implementation.
- By January 1, 2015, we will have a Legacy Strategic Agenda to guide us for the second five years of Legacy funding.
- We'll work with the Minnesota History Coalition to develop our 2015/2016 biennial fund request.

The Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund provides an extraordinary opportunity to preserve Minnesota's history and cultural heritage. With partners and citizens across the state, we look forward to working together to create an equally extraordinary legacy with this funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Stephen Elliott'.

D. Stephen Elliott
Director and CEO

The Future of History Matters

20-Year Vision and Five-Year Strategic Plan for History in Minnesota and the Minnesota Historical Society



Report to the Minnesota Historical Society

Franke Wilson Consulting
Access Philanthropy

December, 2013

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Executive Summary

"In that museum... everything always stayed right where it was. Nobody'd move... Nobody'd be different. The only thing that would be different would be you."

- Holden Caulfield, *Catcher in the Rye*, July 16, 1951

In the world of Holden Caulfield, the young protagonist in J.D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*, history museums, such as the Museum of Natural History, represented life *stuck in time* – simple and static places where you needn't worry about all of the confusion, complexities, and fears related to change.

The Assignment

In 2012, the Minnesota Historical Society issued a challenge to history-keeping inertia: *What will history be like in 20 years and how can we use the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund to advance history-keeping in Minnesota?*

Franke Wilson Consulting, in partnership with Access Philanthropy, Inc., was retained by the Minnesota Historical Society to assist the Society and its history-keeping partners in creating a strategic vision for Legacy funding and programs in order to address two questions:

- What will or should history look like in Minnesota because of the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund?
- What must the Minnesota Historical Society and other history partners do to maximize the opportunity provided by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (ACHF)?

While the intent of this report is to provide – and the report contains – many ideas and answers, it quickly became apparent that there are many questions that the history and cultural heritage community in Minnesota must collectively address, and continue to address, in order to truly maximize the opportunities afforded by the ACHF. If history leaders throughout Minnesota know the key questions that must be asked and discussed now, in five years, and on an ongoing basis, these leaders will be able to come together for the frank discussions required to make the tough decisions about how best to change the future trajectory for Minnesota history-keeping.

In addition to closely examining all aspects of the ACHF and the significant revenue stream it represents, we also considered the many transitions that have taken place over the last five years within Minnesota's history community. These include the deep cuts in State funding for history and cultural heritage, the 2011 change in leadership at the Minnesota Historical Society with the hiring of a new executive director, as well as huge changes history museums locally and globally have and continue to experience – changes in technology, audience engagement, the volume of material to preserve and present, and funding. We even explored questions about the role of history keeping in the world today. Shifts in the museum industry – including history/cultural organizations – will continue to dramatically influence Minnesota's history community today and well into the future.

Project Methods

During our assessment, Franke Wilson Consulting and Access Philanthropy met in person with nearly 100 local museum leaders and volunteers, museum consultants, staff of other museums, funders, donors, nonprofit consultants, history experts, media consultants, educators, and program evaluators.

We also interviewed more than 70 national museum leaders, consultants, funders, civic leaders, industry experts, and technology experts by phone (and Skype). We reviewed tax filings, annual reports, and online information of literally hundreds of local, national, and international history museums and other cultural institutions.

An online survey was conducted, in conjunction with the Minnesota Historical Society and Wilder Research, of local museum leaders and volunteers who are engaged in, or could be engaged in the Legacy Fund. As well as 5 in person, public meetings held across the state and included more than 100 interested citizens.

Our work is also informed by the first five years of history Legacy Fund allocations and guided by a desire to promote excellence and foster innovation in the use of history Legacy Funds.

Research Findings

Significant research was conducted to help inform our work on behalf of the Minnesota Historical Society and the broader Minnesota history community. At the risk of creating too lengthy a report that might be difficult to navigate, we include excerpts of our research throughout this report.

Our research findings – just like our “additional” recommendations (page 31) that follow our most “immediate” recommendations (page 22) – are presented based on the seven most significant changes history and cultural heritage organizations are facing.

Strategic Plan

One of the outcomes of our work – the strategic plan – is intended to provide a “roadmap” for the Minnesota Historical Society and broader Minnesota history community to use over the next five years to build on and strengthen the foundation made possible by the ACHF funds that have been invested to date in Minnesota. This report, detail the issues we examined, our analysis, and the resulting recommendations. While most of our recommendations are aimed at the Minnesota history community as a whole, we also have recommendations specific to the Minnesota Historical Society because of the significance of the Society’s role in the ACHF.

While the strategic plan provides focus and guidance, it is not a static document. It asks questions that will require organizational leadership and their history partners to think, analyze and adapt strategies as time goes by; recognizing the economic, social, political, and technological change that will occur.

The goal of the plan is to ensure funds are utilized for maximum effectiveness and with the 20-year vision for Minnesota’s history and cultural heritage in mind. The plan is inspired by the countless

conversations and interactions held with people throughout the State of Minnesota and beyond, including people inside and outside the history and museum fields.

The extent of the Legacy's geographic range, the complexities of history-keeping questions, and the number of people and organizations impacted by the Legacy Funds is immense. Literally thousands of people are closely vested in the Legacy Fund and what these funds can do to promote local and statewide history.

Consequently, we believe moving this plan forward is not simply a matter of putting together a proposed implementation work plan. Ideally, Minnesota Historical Society leadership and staff, along with other members of the Minnesota history community, will agree upon joint priorities for the next year, the next biennium, and the next three-to-five year range, and only then, arrive at a joint implementation work plan.

Immediate Recommendations

The (eight) most immediate recommendations (detailed beginning on page 22) focus on the Minnesota Historical and Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants Program, Legacy Funds for programs conducted by the Minnesota Historical Society, and history partnerships. They provide a basis for productive dialogue and collaboration around the issues we believe to be most pertinent to history and cultural heritage organizations throughout the State of Minnesota. (The recommendations are summarized here):

1. More clearly define the leadership and support roles of the Minnesota Historical Society in relationship to other state historical and cultural heritage organizations, based on available resources and a thorough understanding of the needs and expectations of history-keeping organizations.
2. Move away from the myriad individual Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants and more toward common funding pools based on established priorities. Also, create a more cost efficient and coordinated joint purchasing program and/or utilize the Minnesota Historical Society's greater purchasing power.
3. Strengthen the roles of the Historical Resources Advisory Board and the Minnesota History Coalition as a means of increasing input from other local history organizations and the presence of history organizations at the State Legislature.
4. Continue to improve grant making procedures and staff grant making knowledge.
5. Increase transparency and communications around processes and procedures used for the internal and external distribution of Legacy funds.
6. For Legacy funds utilized by the Minnesota Historical Society, create funding pools that support the Society's strategic priorities and avoid a competitive allocation process.

7. Invest Legacy funds in innovation; encourage and reward a culture that embraces innovation.
8. Seek further input from history keeping organizations in order to establish and agree on the purpose and goals around partnership grants and the subsequent allocation of history partnership Legacy Funds.

Additional recommendations for use of Legacy Funds follow our initial (immediate) recommendations and are based on seven dramatic changes we identified that history centers, museums, and other history-keeping organizations are experiencing specific to:

1. Audience
2. Whose Story Are We Telling?
3. Technology and Digital Preservation
4. Education
5. Collaboration and Partnerships
6. Financing and Fundraising
7. Internal Museum Culture and Management Tools

Acknowledgements

We wish to recognize the generous amount of time Minnesota Historical Society staff spent on this project, especially Steve Elliott, Pat Gaarder, Andrea Kajer, Peggy Ingison, Matt Hill, and Minnesota Historical Society senior managers, as well as their staffs, who met with us. Their input was honest, greatly informative, and graciously patient.

We also wish to acknowledge the input and support from representatives of well over 100 local history museums who responded to surveys, went to meetings, and spent hours in conversations on the phone and in-person.

Finally, we wish to thank Dr. Elizabeth Merritt of the Center for the Future of Museums and Nina Simon of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History. They are museum visionaries whose writings, questions, and answers shaped this project's presentation and content.

Introduction

In 2008, Minnesota voters amended the Minnesota Constitution through the passage of the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment (aka the Legacy Funds). The amendment imposes an additional state sales tax of three-eighths of one percent for 25 years, beginning July 1, 2009 and ending 2034.

For the purposes of allocating these appropriations, four State funds were created:

- 1) Clean Water Fund
- 2) Outdoor Heritage Fund
- 3) Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund**
- 4) Parks and Trails Fund

The Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (ACHF) supports arts, arts education, arts access and for preservation of Minnesota's history and cultural heritage. A significant portion of the ACHF is appropriated to the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota State Arts Board; both of whom manage grant programs aimed at arts and cultural heritage in Minnesota. In State fiscal years 2014-2015, \$58,309,000 and \$57,659,000, respectively, is appropriated to the ACHF. The total allocated to History and Cultural Heritage during this time period is \$13,800,000 and \$14,075,000 respectively.

The three primary ways the ACHF funds appropriated to the Minnesota Historical Society are invested are through:

- 1) Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants Program
- 2) Programs conducted by the Minnesota Historical Society
- 3) Partnerships with and/or between other nonprofit or educational organizations

The Minnesota Historical Society has an obligation to the citizens of Minnesota – and takes this obligation very seriously – to ensure that ACHF funds entrusted to them are invested in ways that are transparent and produce the greatest measurable impact on the lives of Minnesotans, enabling the State of Minnesota to thrive.

The Minnesota Historical Society's Executive Council, with input from Minnesota Historical Society staff and the Historic Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC), has final approval of all Historical and Cultural Heritage Grant allocations.

A January, 2010 report to the Minnesota Legislature: *The State of Innovation – A 25-Year Vision, Framework, Guiding Principles, and Ten-Year Goals for the Minnesota Legacy Amendment Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund* concluded that:

“The investment of Arts and Cultural Funds over the next 25 years will transform the state, providing every Minnesotan lifelong access to programs and activities that engage him or her as innovator, historian, entrepreneur and creator of Minnesota's future. Every Minnesotan will have a voice and be

able to see the expression of his or her personal heritage in Minnesota’s arts, history and cultural heritage works. In this way, the investment of these funds will bolster Minnesota’s reputation as a center for creativity, innovation and imagination, contributing to the long-term viability of our state.”

The 11 Guiding Principles identified in this report and originally intended to inform ACHF investments over a 25-year period remain suitable today: Active Engagement; Collaborations and Connection; Preservation and Access; Healthy, Sustainable Organizations; Diversity; Lifelong Learning; Not-for-profit and Open to the Public; Statewide Impact and Universal Access; Innovation and Technology; Transparency; and Supplementing Existing Funding Sources.

Transitions Impacting the Minnesota History Community

The Minnesota Historical Society was established in 1849 to collect, preserve and tell the story of Minnesota’s past. In 2013, its mission is “Using the Power of History to Transform Lives. Preserving, Sharing, Connecting.” Minnesota Historical Society values include Stewardship and Service, Innovation and Resourcefulness, Integrity, and Inclusivity and Collaboration.

The Minnesota Historical Society consists of the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul, MN, 26 historic sites and museums throughout the state, a comprehensive library, Minnesota Historical Society Press, an extensive collection, education programs for all people of all ages, preservation and archaeology programs, and a staff dedicated to sharing their passion for history with Minnesotans.

In the last five years, four profound transitions have taken place, impacting not only the Minnesota Historical Society, but the entire Minnesota history community:

1. Significant Funding Cuts to Core Budget

Between 2003 and 2009, there were deep cuts to core funding of history and cultural heritage as the State of Minnesota struggled with a stagnant economy, declining revenues, and billion-dollar debt. There were staff layoffs and programs were cut. In 2013, the Minnesota Historical Society received its first general operations budget increase in several years.

2. Legacy Fund

During 2008, Minnesota voters approved the Legacy Amendment to the State Constitution that provided a new revenue stream that some consider a life-saving measure for not only the Minnesota Historical Society, but for other cultural, arts, and environmental causes as well.

While the passage of the Legacy Amendment represents an exceptional boon to Minnesota’s historical and cultural life, the use of Legacy funding has parameters that both the Minnesota Historical Society and other statewide and local history keepers must follow. The Legacy Fund appropriations are biennial and funds are not to be used to supplant previous funding. So while general operations funding was dramatically cut, the newly available funding could not be used to offset these reductions. Instead, Legacy Funds were allocated to create new programs.

The biennial funding cycle leads to uncertainty among staff about job security. The expectations for how Legacy Funds are to be used constrain the Minnesota Historical Society’s ability to fund foundational

programs (e.g. historic sites, library) and infrastructure so significantly impacted by the 2003-2009 budget reductions. The result is considerable internal pressure – how to maintain the Minnesota Historical Society’s foundation with declining resources while innovative and exciting new programs supported by Legacy Funds grow.

3. Change in Leadership

Shortly after the passage of the Legacy Amendment, the Minnesota Historical Society experienced significant turnover (80%) in its senior leadership. With new leadership came changes in leadership and management style. There is greater emphasis on collaboration and shared decision-making. While staff seems to appreciate the new leadership style, this is a major change in culture and staff are still making the transition to differing expectations. There appears to be some residual effects resulting from the culture previously engrained in the organization.

4. Industry Changes

Globally and nationally, museums, especially history museums and other public history organizations, are experiencing huge changes – changes in technology, audience engagement, the volume of material to be preserved, and funding. What will the role of history keeping be in the world today? While these circumstances certainly are not anybody’s specific responsibility, these shifts will continue to dramatically influence Minnesota’s history community today and well into the future.

Overarching Goals

Overall, the recommendations stemming from our work – particularly the more immediate, short term recommendations – are aimed at bringing history and cultural heritage organizations together, united by a common vision, and focused on:

- **Building a strong, statewide history and cultural heritage network and infrastructure**
- **Sustaining and growing Minnesota’s history and cultural heritage organizations**
- **Becoming more innovative, open and welcoming to all Minnesotans**

And because the health and well-being of the Minnesota Historical Society is inextricably linked with the overall health and well-being of Minnesota’s entire history community, we believe the Minnesota Historical Society should build a world-wide reputation as an outstanding organization and history institution.

Legacy Funds: Current Landscape

To inform our thinking, and for the purpose of supplementing data we collected from statewide listening sessions conducted with local historical societies/museums early on in this project – we assisted the Minnesota Historical Society in administering a survey¹ to further explore:

- 1) Perceptions of Minnesota Historical Society and staff
- 2) Understanding of Legacy funding
- 3) Understanding and expectations around Minnesota Historical Society support
- 4) Legacy funding priorities
- 5) Policies and procedures that should exist
- 6) Perceptions of the Minnesota History Coalition
- 7) How Legacy Funds can be used for history in Minnesota

Results from the survey not only provide a benchmark from which future interactions, communications and even training opportunities can be structured, but by better understanding the needs, attitudes and expectations of Legacy “customers”, the Minnesota Historical Society will be in a better position to meet their needs.

Legacy Fund Policies and Procedures: Key Findings

1. History and Cultural Heritage (External) Grants Administration

Immediately after passage of the Legacy Amendment in 2008, and to their credit, the Minnesota Historical Society Field Services office quickly developed a grants administration process and immediately began fulfilling its intended Legacy grant making function in record time.

a. **Positive Features** – The Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants Program administered by the Minnesota Historical Society has several positive features including:

- 1) The application is available online
- 2) The application includes easy-to-use templates for certain projects
- 3) The process is administered by a grants staff that includes several history professionals
- 4) The process includes timelines that are easy to understand
- 5) Application workshops are conducted by staff prior to each new funding cycle

b. **History Resources Advisory Committee** – The ACHF appropriations bill requires the appointment of a Historic Resources Advisory Committee with membership that “shall include, but is not limited to, members representing the interests of historic preservation, local history, archaeology, archival programs, and other cultural programs related to historic preservation,” to guide decisions related

¹ The survey was distributed via email to more than 500 Legacy grant recipients and more than 2500 subscribers to the Local History e-Newsletter. The survey ran from March 13 to April 4, 2013 and 157 people responded, representing 61% of Minnesota counties.

to the History and Cultural Heritage grants.

The Minnesota Historical Society's ACHF competitive grant award process includes a review of mid- and large-grant requests² by the History Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC). Minnesota Historical Society staff first reviews applications and then sends them – along with their recommendations³ – to HRAC members. HRAC meets annually to review applications and make recommendations to the Minnesota Historical Society's governing board.

HRAC consists of 13 members serving one- or two-year terms, along with two ex-officio members from the Minnesota history community. Members bring a variety of history experience and other work expertise (grant seeking, management, legal, technology) representing the entire field.

Two issues have arisen from our discussions with HRAC members and grant applicants: a) most HRAC members lack direct grant making experience, and b) HRAC meetings would benefit from having a facilitator who can moderate discussions, manage the decision-making activity, and temper the process. Additionally, some applicants are concerned that the voices of a few HRAC members unduly and unfairly influence committee decisions.

- c. **Grant making Staff** – The Minnesota Historical Society staff administering the Legacy grants has a heavy workload, impeding their ability to spend adequate time with applicants. Some of the primary concerns voiced by grant applicants are:
- Problems accessing the web portal
 - Confusion as to where needed information is located on the website
 - Inconsistencies relating to allowable expenses (such as the use of staff vs. contractors)
 - Receiving conflicting information on which policies or procedures to follow
- d. **Other Contributing Issues**
- 1) **Expectations** – History keeping organizations continue to think that the Minnesota Historical Society *should* be providing technical assistance. They trust this service is one of the core functions of the Minnesota Historical Society. While local museum leaders may expect these services, there is no state mandate that these services be provided. Instead, they are provided in response to a recognized need.
 - 2) **Technical assistance**- to local historical organizations, however, was reduced when the Historic Preservation Department reallocated staff time from this work to launching and then managing the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants Program.⁴ Society management believes service expectations need to be more formally managed.

² Smaller (up to \$7,000 for FY09-12; up to \$10,000 beginning July 1, 2013) and “fast track” grants are awarded after staff review. HRAC does not review these small grants.

³ Beginning July, 2013, staff will not include a recommendation in their evaluation of the application.

⁴ The Minnesota Historical Society has realigned resources beginning July 1, 2013 to support growth of the technical assistance provided local historical organizations.

- 3) **Growing Capacity of Local Museums** – Since local history organizations have received unprecedented grant funds for building upgrades, new programs, working with consultants, printing documents, bringing in speakers, etc., their needs for technical assistance have changed.

The ACHF grant program has allowed many local museums to grow and change, and as such, their relationship to the Minnesota Historical Society’s technical assistance has also changed.

What is the role and purpose of field assistance after nearly five years of staff, financial and technical changes for the Minnesota Historical Society staff and history partners in the 87 counties? What does technical assistance look like now; what is needed, who needs it, how should it be delivered? Most importantly for the Minnesota Historical Society: What is Minnesota Historical Society’s role in providing technical assistance to the 87 county historical societies, 42 certified local governments, and other history organizations, for that matter?

2. Legacy Funds and Transparency

The Minnesota Historical Society enjoys the respect of many as a leader in the field of history. However, interviews and meetings with stakeholders and history partners, as well as the electronic survey indicate there may be a lack of understanding in regard to processes, priorities, and short and long-term goals for the ACHF program and the allocation of funds.

Some members of the history community speculate and misunderstand the Minnesota Historical Society’s management of the Legacy Fund. Clearly, some of these misunderstandings result in inaccurate expectations and conclusions about the Fund itself and how it is managed. Greater transparency about how the Minnesota Historical Society operates the Fund and precisely how the Fund operates will not eliminate all inaccurate conclusions, but it will reduce the occurrences.

Creating more transparency is not required, but creating greater transparency will affirm the thoughtful, respectful procedures and approaches used by the Minnesota Historical Society in the management of Legacy Funds.

It should be noted that the issue of funder transparency is not unique to the Minnesota Historical Society. It occurs for nearly all funders, private and public (the Foundation Center has a transparency program called “Glass Pockets”). However, the need for transparent grant making is especially important for organizations managing taxpayer funds.

3. Legacy Funds for Internal Minnesota Historical Society Strategic Priority Projects

Currently, the internal Legacy Funds are dispersed in a manner similar to the external Legacy funds – a grant making process with pre-determined criteria (based on Minnesota Historical Society Strategic Priorities), grant seeking guidelines, transparent grant making process, and annual deadlines.

This ‘grant’ seeking process encourages individual departments to develop new, innovative ideas in presentation, content, education, exhibits, and technology. The development of creative ideas is

consistent with the “supplement vs. supplant” regulation established by State regulations, and the process offers the opportunity for the Minnesota Historical Society to integrate its strategic priorities into Legacy financing.

The grants process has resulted in several great innovations and projects, including “Then Now Wow,” the Civil War exhibits, and the education-related technology that emerged from those projects.

However, the resource seeking process for funds allocated internally at the Minnesota Historical Society has three significant downsides:

- a. The process encourages individual departments to work creatively, but often hinders cross departmental collaboration, thus reinforcing departmental silos.
- b. The process encourages use of Legacy Funds to maintain or grow the number of full and part-time employees within departments in order to complete Legacy-funded projects. Keeping or growing the number of qualified staff people when employment is tied to a cyclical grant making process is not so good for staff morale or for program continuity.
- c. The process depresses the opportunity for problem-solving and innovation grants in departments with lower public visibility – yet still important roles – such as the Library, Preservation, and Field Services departments.

Since there are no specific rules disallowing enterprise-wide projects, we suggest Minnesota Historical Society senior managers, department directors, and program staff fully collaborates on the development of two or three major enterprise-wide projects, perhaps converging on the sustained development of one or more areas within the strategic priorities. For example, enterprise-wide Legacy funding could focus on the development of a lifelong learning department or on opportunities for working with Native Americans or new immigrants, or enterprise-wide staff training.

Risk Taking and Sustaining Innovation: Senior managers should set aside a small percentage of Legacy Funds to provide support for staff in the development of higher-risk, but higher return ventures. Minnesota Historical Society senior managers should award these Innovation Funds on a rolling basis, with concurrence from department directors.

Museums Today: Industry-Wide Shifts

Our research, briefly summarized here, is based on interactions with dozens of museums – locally and through the US – and includes history and cultural heritage organizations. When we reference “museums,” in the majority of cases, we are including history and cultural heritage organizations in the definition.

Changes in Audiences

In general, museumgoers are whiter and older as they have ever been during the last two decades. However, museum audience experts report that tomorrow’s museumgoers may be different in five notable ways:

1. Race and Ethnicity

Museum audiences, including those in Minnesota, will look substantially different. Currently, less than 10% of museumgoers are Hispanic/Latino, African American/African immigrants, Asian Pacific Islanders or Native Americans.

Most Minneapolis-St. Paul schoolchildren are people of color. Most likely, audiences from the Twin Cities Metropolitan area will primarily be people of color. How will this change what history keepers do?

2. Income

Unless there is a substantial shift in earned income, tomorrow’s museumgoers will have substantially less income than visitors have today. Many American museums are already focusing on this lower-income audience and determining how this shift will affect their membership fees, entrance fees and even their fundraising.

3. Generations

One thing that may not shift dramatically during the next 20 years, but will begin to shift shortly thereafter is the generation of people attending museums. Nationally, most regular museumgoers are Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964). This will continue for the next 20 years, but as Baby Boomers start entering their 80s, the greater number of museumgoers will be Generation X and Millennials (born 1965-2000). Are museums prepared to attend to the needs of these new audiences?

4. Expected Roles

At the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, when history museums became the cultural rage, museumgoers were expected to passively absorb all the wonderful resources that museum directors shared with them.

Today and moving forward, museum audiences are anticipating a greater role in the short and long-term museum choices. Multiplex movie theatres, electronic games, iPods, and cable television are just a few

reasons why museumgoers expect more choices in their museum visits.

5. Anticipated Differences in Content and Presentation

Holden Caulfield wanted static content and presentations. Not so much anymore. Baby Boomers as well as younger audiences anticipate exciting, relevant, and changing, interactive content, to be interactive with new and changing presentations; and opportunities to continue their engagement with content after their visits.

Changes in Technology and Digital Preservation

Beyond the changes in audience, museum experts anticipate that the greatest changes in museums during the next two decades will be in the area of technology. They anticipate four key changes in technology:

1. Changing Users

Audience members, especially students, are prepared for and anticipate new forms of interaction with museum exhibits and presentations. Passive absorption of static materials is no longer an option for museumgoers.

2. Changing Competition

Home-based entertainment, amusement parks, ballparks, and even other museums (children's museums, science museums and even the Minnesota Historical Society's Mill City Museum) all offer several opportunities for interaction. National museum experts agree that audiences want museums to keep up with the competition, and will not tolerate inertia.

3. Story Telling

Exhibit designers, educators, and even museum fundraisers agree that well-told stories no longer revolve around stationary dioramas and wall hangings. Emotional and intellectual involvement requires more engagement.

4. Digital Preservation

Digital preservation is perhaps one of the largest low-attention museum issues on the horizon. The Minnesota Historical Society, for example, is managing 100 terabytes of data, which will grow to 15 times the current size of the Library of Congress within 20 years. As the preservation entity for history and for government records, the Minnesota Historical Society needs to address the growing issue of digital preservation very soon.

Changes in Education

Most major museums foresee modifications in their approach to education:

1. K-12 Schools

Less focused on closing the basic Academic Achievement Gap than K-12 schools, museums across the country have a great opportunity to use their institutions to offer less formal education opportunities that are not necessarily focus areas in schools, such as those talents taught under the umbrella of 21st century living skills like Internet literacy, problem-solving, media literacy, and creativity.

2. Lifelong Learners

The science of teaching adult learners has advanced during the last two decades, and the way lifelong learners want to learn has also shifted dramatically. Using updated teaching and engagement tools, museums locally and nationally are focusing on different age groups, different learning styles and different ways to continue their engagement with adult learners.

3. Higher Education/Professional Development

A recent survey indicates thousands of Minnesota technology jobs are not being filled, primarily because Minnesota does not have the educated/trained workforce to fill them. This is consistent with the stories we heard from other museum directors and industry leaders, especially in the technology and digital preservation areas.

4. Community-Based Learning

A major movement in the history keeping and museum industries is the shift to more community-based history presentations and content. Pop-Up museums, mini-exhibits, community history events, K-12 school based events (such as annual class time capsules), and museum “backyard” events for children are becoming fixtures in small and large museums. While the majority of these community events are planned and executed by current museum staff, many museums are looking for staff that can specialize in community-based events, informal learning, and adult learning strategies.

Changes in Collaboration and Partnerships

Worldwide, museums are creating new forms of collaboration with many new partners. Schools, local government units, and other museums have been key partners, but here in Minnesota and around America and Western Europe, collaborations have extended to hospitals, farmers’ markets, labor unions, houses of worship, major corporations, small businesses, performing arts groups, childcare centers, and especially libraries.

In smaller communities, and even in urban areas, these collaborations will mean the survival of history-keeping organizations. Sharing resources, creating new forums, and enlarging access to different audiences all will be critical to future success.

However, local collaborators are not the only new museum partners. In England, several museums are connecting with small rural African and Asian communities to exchange online “exhibits” and cross-community discussions. National organizations such as Greenpeace, Conservation International, the

Boots Project, and Amnesty International are providing ready-made online and in-person content for large and small museums.

As historical and cultural life becomes more integrated in human rights agendas, larger and smaller museums are reaching out to under-represented population groups in their own communities, especially racial and ethnic communities, immigrants, LGBT communities, people with disabilities and women.

The Internal Museum Culture

Besides funding sustainability, perhaps the most widespread topics in museum industry journals and blogs today are about museum innovations and mixing internal museum operations with external community agendas.

Like almost every nonprofit, creating an innovative environment and sustaining it throughout the organization, is one of the most challenging tasks for museums. Unlike other nonprofits, museums must heartily engage innovation to keep up with other museums and other for-profit entertainment/education offerings.

Innovative presentations and content are simply part of the sensitivity to community changes that audiences seem to be expecting from museums these days. In most communities, museumgoers are anticipating museums to understand and present their individual community's stories, to provide services that address their needs (sitting lounges) and also address their learning styles.

This report includes several of the thousands of museum innovation and community relations changes that are occurring throughout Minnesota, the United States, and Western Europe.

Minnesota's History and Cultural Heritage: 20-Year Vision

What Will History Look Like in Minnesota in 2034?

The answer to this question must drive the work of the Minnesota history community today and every day for the next 20 years.

We offer the following vision for Minnesota History and Cultural Heritage that includes five elements:

1. Minnesota History and Cultural Heritage...

... draws us together and draw others to us – both physically and virtually

2. Minnesota History and Cultural Heritage...

... is one of the top three attractions in the hearts and minds of all Minnesotans, and one of the top three appeals that attracts other people to Minnesota

3. Minnesota History and Cultural Heritage...

... is clearly the result of local, state, regional, national, and international cross-sector, cross-population collaborations and partnerships

4. Minnesota History and Cultural Heritage...

... has the organizational effectiveness and efficiencies to support Minnesota's legacy, current operations, and future plans

5. Minnesota History and Cultural Heritage Legacy funds...

... are a lasting heirloom; facilitating our efforts to preserve what we can, to present what we want, and to maintain Minnesota stories and values. And in so doing, elevate the History and Cultural Heritage in Minnesota.

Strategic Plan: Priorities for the Next Five Years

The strategic plan is intended to provide a “roadmap” for the Minnesota Historical Society and broader Minnesota history community to use over the next five years to build on and strengthen the foundation made possible by the ACHF funds that have been invested in Minnesota to date.

While this five year strategic plan will provide focus and guidance, it is not a static document. It asks questions that will require organizational leadership and their history partners to think, analyze and adapt strategies as time goes by; recognizing the economic, social, political, and technological change that will occur.

The goal of the plan created is to ensure funds are utilized for maximum effectiveness and with the 20-year vision for Minnesota’s history and cultural heritage in mind. The plan is inspired by the countless conversations and interactions held with people throughout the State of Minnesota and beyond, including people inside and outside the history and museum fields:

- In-person meetings with nearly 100 local museum leaders and volunteers, museum consultants, staff of other museums, funders, donors, nonprofit profit consultants, history experts, media consultants, educators, and program evaluators
- Conversations with more than 70 national museum leaders, consultants, funders, civic leaders, industry experts, and technology experts by phone (and Skype)
- 5 in person public meetings held across the state and included more than 100 public participants
- 157 respondents to an online survey, administered with the Minnesota Historical Society and Wilder Research, of local museum leaders and volunteers who are engaged in, or could be engaged in the Legacy Fund
- Reviews of tax filings, annual reports, and online information of nearly 400 local, national, and international history museums and other cultural institutions.

The plan is also informed by the first five years of Legacy Fund allocations, guided by a desire to promote excellence and foster innovation in the use of Legacy Funds, and intended to strengthen the foundation made possible by the ACHF.

Driven by a common vision, Minnesota’s history and cultural heritage partners will maximize the opportunity provided by ACHF by focusing the use of these funds over the next five years on:

Building a strong network and infrastructure:

- Cooperating with all kinds of organizations to build a powerful network of historical societies, preservation groups, local/state government agencies, and educational institutions that will build and sustain Minnesota history and cultural heritage
- Understanding and appreciating the needs and goals of Minnesota history and cultural heritage

organizations and applying both ACHF funding and the Minnesota Historical Society's resources to support these needs and goals

- Understanding the role of the Minnesota Historical Society in assisting Minnesota history and cultural heritage organizations in their efforts to advance their audience engagement, technology, professional development, and organizational infrastructure
- Having the right procedures, priorities, and criteria for ACHF funding to support great and small citizen efforts to build and sustain local history efforts
- Absorbing lessons from all Minnesota history and cultural heritage organizations
- Building academic, practitioner, management, and volunteer cohorts dedicated to the expansion and sustainability of Minnesota history and cultural heritage

Sustaining and growing:

- Preserving and presenting what is popular, what is needed and what is cost effective
- Creating and sustaining a culture of innovation and a commitment to world-renowned presentation and content for statewide and local historical institutions
- Advancing new methods of engaging students, families, residents, businesses, government agencies, and visitors in the process of preserving, presenting and appreciating history
- Advancing new systems for supporting history-keeping entities – museums, schools, government institutions, faith-based organizations, businesses, and other cultural entities

Becoming more innovative, open and welcoming:

- Being open to different stories, cultures, and methods of preserving and presenting history
- Inviting more audiences
- Appealing to all who approach

In addition, the Minnesota Historical Society will strive to:

Build a world-wide reputation as an outstanding history institution by being:

- A highly competent, well-functioning business
- A well-operated and innovative nonprofit organization
- A successful educational institution
- A technologically and sustainably-advanced organization
- A worthy care-taker of government funds and responsibilities
- A world-renowned history collaboration

While the strategic plan is intended to focus on those things we recommend get implemented (or begin to take shape) over the next five years, some recommendations call for more immediate implementation. These immediate recommendations are focused primarily on policies, procedures, and

partnerships. In some cases, work in these areas is already in process.

The more immediate recommendations (beginning on page 22) also provide a basis for productive dialogue and collaboration around the issues we believe to be most pertinent to history and cultural heritage organizations throughout the State of Minnesota.

Additional recommendations for use of Legacy Funds follow our initial (immediate) recommendations and are based on seven dramatic changes we identified that history centers, museums, and other history-keeping organizations are experiencing specific to:

1. Audience
2. Whose Story Are We Telling?
3. Technology and Digital Preservation
4. Education
5. Collaboration and Partnership
6. Financing and Fundraising
7. Internal Museum Culture and Management Tools

Immediate Recommendations

The most immediate recommendations are specific to the statewide Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants Program, Legacy dollars for programs conducted by the Minnesota Historical Society, and history partnerships.

1. More Clearly Define the Role of the Minnesota Historical Society in Relationship to Other State Historical and Cultural Heritage Organizations

- Expand and define both the Minnesota Historical Society's leadership and support roles in the history community, based on available resources and the needs and expectations of history-keeping organizations
- Continue to survey county historical societies to understand what type of assistance and outreach they need
- Meet with state-wide cultural and heritage organizations to determine what they are or can do to provide technical assistance and outreach to local sites
- Determine the limits and the priorities of the Society's assistance to local history keepers and periodically redefine and reprioritize
- Emphasize a spirit of collaboration between the Minnesota Historical Society and:
 - State partners, such as the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota (PAM) and the Minnesota Alliance for Local History Museums (MALHM), the Minnesota Association of Museums (MAM); and regional partners such as Minnesota's Historic Northwest
 - Minnesota's 87 county historical societies
 - Minnesota's 42 certified local governments
 - All other local history and cultural organizations throughout Minnesota

2. Move Toward Common Funding Priorities and Pools

- Move away from the myriad individual Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants and more toward common funding pools based on established priorities
- Create a more cost efficient and coordinated joint purchasing program and/or utilize the Minnesota Historical Society's greater purchasing power
 - Software, HVAC systems, and other technical assistance
 - Pre-approved contractors (similar to what the State of Minnesota does) in select areas of expertise

3. Strengthen the Roles of HRAC and the History Coalition

Strengthen the Historic Resources Advisory Committee and the Minnesota History Coalition as a means of increasing input from other local history organizations and increasing the presence of history organizations at the State Legislature.

Historical Resources Advisory Committee:

- Have regional representation, based on dividing the state up into 7-8 regions; help establish method by which regional representatives are elected with nominations coming from the regions they'll represent
- Consider nominations for at-large representatives
- Give the Minnesota Association of Local History Museums voting or courtesy representation on HRAC
- Appoint one or two members with grant making experience
- Provide training in grant making for all members of HRAC
- Hire an impartial outside facilitator to attend and/or facilitate all HRAC meetings
- Hold annual or semi-annual meetings between the committee, the Minnesota Historical Society's executive director and leaders of local history organizations to discuss partnerships and Legacy-related issues

Minnesota History Coalition:

- Have more regional representation
- Strengthen the Coalition's role in setting priorities, planning and advocacy
- Set agendas based on the seasonal nature of meetings
- Encourage dialogue around legislative requests and policy strategies, including dollar amounts and changes to Legacy procedures
- Discuss and act on the shifting needs of state and local history partners
- Motivate and organize history activities to participate in legislative activities

4. Continue to Improve Staffing and Grant Making Procedures

- Evaluate the present level of grant making knowledge and skills among Minnesota Historical Society staff
- Administer grant making and customer service training to ensure staff provide high quality customer service (and achieve high levels of customer satisfaction among constituents)
- Ensure technical support for the grants portal and website is readily available during business hours, and at least one evening, and one weekend morning or afternoon each week during application periods
- Develop a plan for walk-in requests for application assistance; acknowledge all other inquiries within one business day
- Develop and communicate the availability of a paper application for those communities which have extremely limited online access or difficulty uploading their online applications

5. Increase Transparency and Communications

- Increase participation of local history partners in the process of improving and communicating parameters around transparency
- Build partnerships and opportunities between the Minnesota Historical Society and local history

organizations via the Minnesota History Coalition, HRAC, fellowships, and regular discussions with local history-keeping leaders

- Issue an annual report on the processes and procedures used for internal and external distribution of Legacy Funds
- Plan on having at least one Minnesota Historical Society staff member attend meetings of statewide organizations to inquire about what is/is not working as it relates to reaching and serving their members

6. Create Legacy Funding Pools that Support Strategic Priorities of the Minnesota Historical Society (for those Legacy funds directed for MNHS use)

- Avoid counterproductive, internal competition for Legacy Funds allocated to the Minnesota Historical Society in favor of developing Legacy Fund pools based on Minnesota Historical Society's strategic priorities
- Develop organization-wide, cooperative efforts for use of Legacy Funds that align with the Minnesota Historical Society's strategic plan (e.g. Lifelong learning, technology, sustainability, and enterprise development)
- Encourage and set aside a small pool of funds that support the development of higher-risk/higher-return opportunities proposed by Minnesota Historical Society staff

7. Invest Legacy Funds in Innovation

- Create cross-departmental, internal communications function to increase information sharing, encourage cooperation and breakdown silos
- Encourage and reward a culture that embraces innovation
- Host creative innovation exercises and activities including, for example, inviting local corporate and nonprofit innovators to mentor staff
- Develop a process by which innovative ideas are encouraged and make it clear to Minnesota Historical Society staff how such ideas may be presented, discussed, developed, approved, financed, implemented and rewarded, including timelines

8. Develop More Effective System for Allocating History Partnership Legacy Grants

- Seek input from history keeping organizations; establish and agree on the purpose and goals around partnership grants
- Develop a well-defined method for funding partnership projects, some of which may not include the Minnesota Historical Society
- Clearly communicate process and procedures for awarding partnership grants
- Publicize the availability of partnership grants in the State Register
- Devise mechanisms for sharing what's learned, developed or conducted as a result of partnership grants; coordinate listening sessions, podcasts, or conferences where partnership grantees can share their projects
- Make the results of partnerships projects (grantees' final reports, products, exhibits, etc.) widely

available

- Cultivate partnerships beyond the history field (e.g. Explore Minnesota, Department of Health, Minnesota corporations, etc.)
- Create joint partnership grant opportunities with statewide partners and the heritage centers of Minnesota's communities of color

All Legacy Policy/Procedure-related Recommendations

1. Historical and Cultural Heritage Grant Program, Grant Making Resources

Though in many respects, the Minnesota Historical Society's Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants Program continues to meet the ever-changing needs of ACHF constituents, we recommend the grants department be given sufficient resources to assure they continue to meet the needs of constituents.

- a. **Staff Training** – Grants office and field services staff must have professional grant making skills and consistently provide excellent customer service, including:
 - 1) Training in grants management and understanding the needs and expectations of grant applicants
 - 2) Contracting with a grant making professional for staff training
 - 3) Training in customer service best practices
 - 4) Plans for ongoing training opportunities
- b. **Hardcopy Grant Application** – While hardcopy applications may make life difficult in the grants office, we recommend that a policy be established in which applicants in specific communities either are allowed to provide hardcopy applications or are given extra support from Minnesota Historical Society staff to assist them in mounting their online application. History keeping in communities which have extremely limited online access is probably more vulnerable than in other Minnesota communities, and should be extended every opportunity to submit requests for funding. We expect the hardcopy application would be used relatively infrequently.
- c. **Regular Online Assistance** – At least one grants staff person should be available during regular business hours to provide technical assistance for the grants portal and website.
 - 1) Technical assistance for the grants portal and website should be readily available during business hours, and at least one evening, and one weekend afternoon each week during application periods
 - 2) Grants staff should receive cross training to assist applicants by the phone or email
 - 3) A plan should be developed for walk-in requests for application assistance
 - 4) All inquiries should be acknowledged within one business day

2. Legacy Fund and Shared Responsibilities with Related Organizations

- a. **Minnesota History Coalition**: As the advocacy body for the history and cultural heritage portion of the ACHF, the Minnesota History Coalition has a special role to play in sharing responsibilities between all Minnesota history partners.

Unfortunately, the history of the Coalition and the nature of the Minnesota history legislative agenda have kept the Coalition an under-resourced entity. Fortunately, most of the key partners in the History Coalition are willing and eager to see a build-up of the History Coalition's role in legislation, partnership building, and history sector priority setting.

There is some concern about who will be responsible for the additional work involved in strengthening the History Coalition. However, if these concerns can be resolved, here are some ways the History Coalition can be a source of shared responsibility:

- 1) The Minnesota History Coalition should be more than just illustrative, with all of the statewide history organizations represented along with representatives from each of the major state regions (currently, NE, NW, Central, Metro, and South)
 - 2) Agendas for the History Coalition meetings should be set by mutual agreement with special emphasis on the seasonal nature of meetings (such as pre-legislative, post-legislative, and year-end analysis)
 - 3) Coalition meetings should actually discuss and decide upon legislative requests and policy strategies, including dollar amounts and changes in Legacy procedures. While the Minnesota Historical Society's legislative team currently needs the support and flexibility required of all legislative advocates, the current legislative team is open to developing a more consensus-driven policy strategy with greater participation by others
 - 4) Coalition members should be responsible for discussing and acting upon the shifting needs of state and local history partners, as well as shifting strategies to strengthen the Coalition
 - 5) Coalition meetings should discuss and decide legislative action strategies, including strategies for Minnesota History Matters Day and local participation in legislative activities
 - 6) Coalition staff and leaders should take on the responsibility of coordinating communications between local and state legislative activists and take on the responsibility of motivating and organizing history activists to participate in legislative activities
- b. **Historic Resources Advisory Committee** (HRAC): Recommendations for operational shifts in the HRAC process are addressed under "Immediate Recommendations". However, the question of who shares HRAC responsibilities is a major matter of trust and accountability between many local history organizations and the Minnesota Historical Society.

While Legacy-related arts and library grants more actively engage local participants in the grant making process, it is evident that key legislative leaders and many history sector leaders question the need for a new, more encompassing set of players for the History and Cultural Heritage grants.

Consequently, many local history leaders recommend a few changes to the way HRAC members are selected. These are the procedural recommendations we gathered from local history leaders and HRAC members regarding membership in HRAC:

- 1) **Regional Representatives**: Regional groups of local history museums (NW, NE, Central, Metro,

and South) should nominate one of their members to be on HRAC. The Minnesota Historical Society's board of directors should take these nominations under advisement and name members of HRAC

- 2) **At-Large Representatives**: Regional groups of local history museums should feel free to nominate other at-large members for HRAC, with the Minnesota Historical Society board taking these nominations under advisement
- 3) **Regional Input**: Openings on the HRAC board resulting from regional members' resignations should be filled after the appropriate regional group has had the opportunity to nominate a new regional representative for the Minnesota Historical Society board's consideration
- 4) **MALHM**: Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums (MALHM), the statewide association of local history museums, should have a voting or courtesy representative at HRAC meetings. This representative should be nominated by MALHM but confirmed by the Minnesota Historical Society board
- 5) **Meeting with the Minnesota Historical Society**: Annual or semi-annual meetings between the Society's executive director, deputy directors, and representatives of local history museums should be held to discuss sector building, Legacy-related issues, and partnerships between the Minnesota Historical Society and local museums

3. Legacy Funds and Technical Assistance

The Minnesota Historical Society's field assistance and outreach program must continue to meet the changing needs of Minnesotan's history professionals and organizations.

- a. **Assessing County Historical Society Needs** – The Minnesota Historical Society must continue to seek out and assess the local technical needs of the 87 county museums, and differentiate between those with budgets of less than \$100,000 per year and those with budgets of more than \$100,000 per year.
 - 1) Survey current and former grant applicants to learn what technical assistance they require
 - 2) Regularly talk to, meet with and annually survey the 87 county historical societies to learn what type technical assistance and outreach they need
 - 3) Talk with state-wide cultural and heritage organizations to determine what they are doing to provide technical assistance and outreach
 - 4) Look to other professions for what other technical assistance models are available in education, health, transportation, and business development
- b. **Defining the Minnesota Historical Society's Role in Providing Technical Assistance to County Historical Societies** – The Society should differentiate its goals for providing assistance to the 87

county historical societies and other local history partners.

- 1) Beyond technical assistance and grants support, is it clear what other resources or information other Minnesota Historical Society departments may possess that local museums may want or need – and/or should have access to – and who they should contact to access?
 - 2) Assign a Minnesota Historical Society team, comprised of people from different departments, to establish a county history-keeping partners policy
 - 3) Make sure that all Minnesota Historical Society employees can properly direct constituents to the department or person they should speak with, depending on the inquiry
- c. **Determining Limits of Technical Assistance** – The Minnesota Historical Society should define the limits and the priorities of its assistance to local history keepers and be prepared to periodically redefine and re-prioritize.
- 1) Determine what role or staffing changes, if any, must occur to accommodate re-established technical assistance and outreach model
 - 2) Provide necessary training, if any, for staff
 - 3) Make equipment and/or supplies needed by technical assistance/outreach staff available
- d. **Feedback from Local History Keepers** – The Minnesota Historical Society should use internal or external evaluators to assess the level of satisfaction and recommendations for changes.
- 1) Provide opportunities to answer questions and discuss changes
 - 2) Make staff person(s) available to communicate with 87 counties regarding changes

4. Legacy Funds and Transparency/Communications

Transparency and communications are critical to the success of any grant making operation, but particularly for organizations that are responsible for taxpayers' dollars. We recommend increasing transparency and communications around administration of Legacy Funds through the increased participation of local history partners in the process.

- a. **Relationships with Statewide and Regional Local History Keeping Organizations** – Build partnerships and opportunities between the Minnesota Historical Society and local history museums via the Minnesota History Coalition, HRAC, fellowships, and regular discussions between the Minnesota Historical Society and local museum leaders.
- b. **Organized Participation of Regional Representatives of Local History Keeping Organizations in HRAC** – Consider elect local history museum representatives from each of the seven state regions.

- c. **Increased Input from Local History Keepers in the Minnesota History Coalition** – Perhaps elect representatives from seven state regions to the Minnesota History Coalition.
- d. **Issue an Annual Report on Processes and Procedures Used for Internal and External Legacy Fund Distribution** – Publish an annual report from the Minnesota Historical Society director and staff on procedures and outcomes for both internal and external Legacy Fund uses.
- e. **Other Communication with History Partners**
 - 1) Identify current and potential new communication methods for reaching different audiences: current and former grantees, historical societies and organizations, organized historical and cultural organizations, key individuals, and other stakeholders
 - 2) Ensure one or two Minnesota Historical Society staff members attend meetings of statewide organizations to inquire about what works and does not work in terms of reaching their members

5. Internal Use of Legacy Funds

- a. **Institution-wide Legacy Goals** – Adopt and develop museum-wide priorities for selecting projects based on Minnesota Historical Society strategic priorities, rather than a competitive grants process that discourages cross-departmental collaboration and innovation. Internal Legacy Funds should focus annually on two or three major priorities that cut across several internal departments and respond to long term system-wide needs such as new lifelong learning systems, new presentation formats, or new visitor technology.
- b. **High Risk/High Return Innovation Funds** – The Minnesota Historical Society should set aside a small pool of funds to support the development of higher risk/higher return opportunities proposed by staff. Senior managers, in concert with department directors should allocate funds on a rolling basis.

6. Legacy Funds and Statewide Partnership Grants

Minnesota Historical Society partners such as the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota are awarded Legacy Funds via a standard grant making process involving Minnesota Historical Society senior and grant making staff. We recommend this grant process be continued, with perhaps additional input from the Minnesota History Coalition. Additionally, we recommend that Partnership grants should promote the following priorities:

- a. Stimulate history to new audiences or greater outreach to current audiences
- b. Promote a new or improved method of presenting history
- c. Encourage or develop new technology to further the field of history
- d. Focus on cultural and/or ethnic diversity within history
- e. Encourage the sharing of findings with other history-keeping partners statewide

Additional Five-Year Recommendations

It is a credit to the framers of the Legacy Amendment and Minnesota voters that within weeks of starting this assignment, it became very apparent that the ACHF is not a stand-alone entity, disconnected from the organizations and the visions they were created to support.

Legacy Funds touch virtually everything and everybody at the Minnesota Historical Society and in Minnesota's history-keeping community.

Everything. Everybody.

So we examined all the ways the Legacy Fund has been touching Minnesota history-keeping with the goal of helping to determine how history and cultural heritage-related Legacy Funds could be used most effectively to create a robust and resilient history-keeping industry in Minnesota; one that would leave an indelible mark on Minnesota by and beyond the year 2034.

The fact is history centers, museums and other history-keeping organizations are changing. All over Minnesota. All over the United States. All over the world. History-keeping organizations are facing dramatic changes.

So in addition to our immediate recommendations, we have additional recommendations that are presented based on the seven most significant changes that history-keeping organizations are facing.

1. Audience

Who are our audiences now and into the future? What do they expect from the Minnesota history community? How do we attract non-traditional audiences and how can Legacy Funds be used to advance our work with our current and new audiences?

2. Whose Story?

Whose stories are we telling? In whose voice will Minnesotans hear these stories? As stewards of Minnesota's stories, how will we balance our limited resources so we are able to share as many stories as possible?

3. Technology and Digital Preservation

Digital preservation calls for a new type of conservationist with skills that span hardware technologies, file structures and formats, storage media, electronic processors and chips, and more, blending the training of an electrical engineer with the skills of an inventor and a computer scientist.

What technological changes must we make to keep up with industry standards, and more importantly, to keep up with our audience expectations? How can we use new technology in presentations, content, and administration? How can Legacy Funds be used to keep up with our needed advancements?

4. Education

How will we address the needs of K-12 students/institutions, lifelong learners and higher education/professional development and how can Legacy Funds be used to enhance museums' education work?

5. Collaboration and Partnership

Collaboration with other populations, such as racial and ethnic communities and communities of interest, are critical to our future success. How can the Minnesota history community work together to partner with these communities and how can we use Legacy Funds to improve these collaborations?

6. Financing and Fundraising

How will the Minnesota Historical Society and local history and cultural heritage museums remain financially sustainable during the next 20 years? What are they doing right? What should they consider changing? And what new opportunities do they have in financing and fundraising? What can the Legacy Funds do to improve their finances?

7. Internal Organizational Culture and Management Tools

What internal culture and management tools need to be in place for history keepers to achieve their short term and long-term goals? How will the Minnesota Historical Society, in particular, secure a reputation as an innovative institution and how will find, develop and support new leaders?

For Minnesotans, the ACHF is a true blessing. Unlike most history-keeping organizations around the country and the world (at least the western world), the ACHF offers Minnesota history keepers additional resources to stabilize current operations and an opportunity to more thoroughly and creatively address the seven key changes facing all history keepers.

Based on our in-depth examination of these seven areas, available in our more detailed research report, what follows is a summary of our short term recommendations as to what we believe Legacy Funds should support. By "short term," we mean those recommendations that are implemented, or begin to take shape, over the next five years relative to the seven areas we identified. We acknowledge that there are additional resource and financial implications for the Minnesota Historical Society and potentially other history-keeping organizations that must be taken into consideration in order to determine precisely what – or how much – can or should be implemented.

1. Audience Recommendations

The demographic of the museum audience has changed and will continue to change during the next 20 years. The Minnesota Historical Society and Legacy Fund grantees must be prepared to engage audiences in a manner meaningful, engaging and memorable to this new and ever-changing audience. In addition, the relationship between audience and museum has shifted. Audiences are less tolerant of 19th century doctrinaire cultural institutions and more insistent upon content and presentations that are more audience-friendly. They want more say in what and how content is presented and how the stories relate to them and their lives.

Small Town Museumgoers

While museums of the future will need to concentrate on attracting and pleasing repeat visitors, more so than one-time tourists, museum authorities suggest that one of the primary visitor-related goals of museums in smaller and rural communities is to draw out-of-town visitors who can support local businesses and contribute to the community's economic development. Consequently, rural and smaller town museums must develop highly eye-catching and intriguing exhibits and crowd-pleasing items that will draw visitors from out-of-town. Dassel's ergot museum, Bemidji's Paul Bunyan statue, and Austin's Spam Museum are three great visitor-attracting, marketing-related exhibits.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- Keeping small town museums in good physical shape and presenting great programs to local audiences
- Conceiving, planning and developing great visitor-pleasing exhibits that attract attention from out-of-towners

Baby Boomers

There is little doubt that Baby Boomers who engage with history centers as donors, volunteers, and visitors are lifelong learners. Further, our visits and workshops with local history museums throughout Minnesota showed that these Baby Boomers are anxious to learn how to improve their roles as volunteers and leaders of local history museums.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- Providing nonprofit board and management learning opportunities for the benefit of local history museums

Generation X and Millennials

Much more so than the Minnesota Historical Society, smaller, local museums are attentive to Baby Boomers. Our conversations with and visits to local history museums indicated that the majority of local history museum volunteers and board members are Baby Boomers or older. While it may be common sense for local history museums to attract younger leaders and visitors, there is currently no common movement in that direction.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- Assisting local history museums in attracting and keeping Generation X and Millennial visitors as a means of enhancing local history museum sustainability

The Capturing Age

The Center for the Future of Museums and other history advisors suggest directing attention at children ages five to seven years old. Museum audience advisors and educators suggest this 5-7 age range is the time when children are most likely to become interested and engaged in history. Museums must capture the imagination and fascination of children in this age range. And in the Twin Cities especially, the Minnesota Historical Society and other local history museums must pay particular attention to young children of color who make up the majority of St. Paul and Minneapolis school children and will, by 2034 be nearly half of the State’s young people.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- Developing “Then Now Wow”-style exhibits and play-related demonstrations for children in the “capturing age” as this will help shape the face of Minnesota history lovers, and perhaps create a cadre of new employees in the history field

Racially and Ethnically Diverse Visitors

As the proportion of people of color in Minnesota’s urban population grows, the proportion of people of color in rural and non-Metro communities grows, notably in Rochester, Duluth, St. Cloud, and southwestern agricultural communities.

Legacy funds should help support:

- Serving these communities better by encouraging greater participation by communities of color within local history and heritage centers
- Documenting the growth of immigrant communities and their cultural heritage and creating greater community-wide understanding of and within these communities

Income, Gender and Education

Unless something happens that economists do not predict, museumgoers in 2034 will have less money, but more entertainment choices than their grandparents did. Economists suggest that the proportion of low-income people in the US population will continue to grow, especially in urban core communities; and, that the rising cost of housing and transportation, as well as low-paying jobs, will keep people looking for new, interesting and affordable forms of entertainment and engagement.

By 2034, the number of US women with post-graduate degrees will out-number the number of US men with similar degrees. And according to the American Association of University Women, since the mid-1990s, both feminist and post-feminist female high school and college graduates expect their learning opportunities to include some gender standpoint.

Educational attainment may be the strongest predictor of cultural engagement, but museum

consultants and demographers predict the majority of museum visitors will have much less formal education than current visitors. Within 20 years, college graduates will no longer be the largest group of museum visitors.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- Congregating members of the Minnesota history community to ponder several questions relative to issues of income, gender and education, from the standpoint of growing the audiences to which institutions of history and cultural heritage might appeal. For example:

Can relationships between local history museums and local human service agencies encourage new relationships between low-income families and museums? Can museums be employed to support health and human service strategies (such as Britain’s Healthy Happy Museums strategy) for low-income children and their families? Since museums generally attract college-educated people, are there means by which museums can support ongoing education for non-college educated community members?

Can Legacy Funds support museums’ preservation, presentation and analysis of women’s issues in Minnesota? Can Legacy funds support museum-based, women-focused history learning circles and the development of local and statewide women’s history curriculum and research?

Can Legacy funds be used to develop and implement strategies that attract more non-college attendees? Do non-college attendees indicate interests that history museums can adapt? Can specific exhibits, presentations, cultural or social events, attract rural and young adults of color who have not attended college?

What Do Visitors Want from Museums?

From the research we conducted, and at the risk of oversimplifying the results, visitors expect five basic assets from great museums.

- 1) Great Content/Great Stories**
- 2) Great Presentations**
- 3) Great Customer Service**
- 4) Appeals to the Head and Heart**
- 5) Accessible History in Accessible Places**

While Legacy Funds are already being used to create great content and stories in individual museums, and create great local exhibits, **Legacy Funds should help support:**

- Local museums in developing a model to create common content that can travel to a score of local museums (e.g., turkey farming in southwest Minnesota, the Mayo Brothers in southeast Minnesota)

- Opportunities for local history keepers to experiment with or borrow presentation technology for special occasions such as centennial celebrations and special traveling exhibits, or even simple opportunities to kick the tires and test drive, prior to purchasing expensive technology
- Creating a more effective, cost-efficient customer service system for local museums – perhaps common software or database for members, or perhaps a courtesy membership (such as half price entrance fee for members of other Minnesota museums)
- Creating a backroom support system for museums that are only open a few months of the year
- Creating awareness and facilitating discussions on subjects where we often are divided and where emotions run deep
- Working with community associations, business associations, houses of worship, and local government entities to create successful opportunities for more accessible history, especially in the Metropolitan Area
- More, and more sophisticated, marketing resources to reach all audiences and communicate the rich opportunities to observe, engage with, be entertained by, and be a part of Minnesota’s history and cultural heritage

Public funding and donor support have not kept pace with the financial needs of museums. Managers over the past 25 years have become increasingly entrepreneurial. More fee-based programs have been introduced. Museum managers are asking, “Should we charge for History?” The Center for the Future of Museums asks, “Which is more important: long terms visitor engagement or cash?”

Legacy Funds should help support:

- The identification of options that answer the need for cash flow and the need for creating long-term relationships
- Developing plans for, and financially supporting, local history museums’ outreach to critical prospective audiences, especially young adults and communities of people who are not regular museum visitors

2. Whose Story Recommendations

During the next 20 years, two major trends will deeply affect how the Minnesota history community operates and how the ACHF dispenses its funds.

Minnesotans will become more global in their cultural perspectives and more curious about life all over Minnesota and all over the world. This will affect the role of the ACHF by shifting grants towards a broadening function and expanding the Minnesota history community's role in two opposite directions: paying more attention to smaller stories throughout the State and creating opportunities for Minnesota students and lifelong learners to learn more about how Minnesota is part of a global community.

In addition, the demographics of the State of Minnesota will continue to change. More than 25% of Minnesota's residents will be people of color, the majority of which will be first, second or third-generation immigrants from Africa, Asia, and South/Central America. This shift will require the focus of our stories to change in order to support two of the underlying goals of the Legacy Fund: 1) to expand the audience for history in Minnesota and 2) to assure that the stories of all Minnesotans are available to museumgoers.

Ongoing Partnership Discussions, Research, Cultural Events Commemorations

The Minnesota Historical Society's and local museums' external relationship agenda should include ongoing relationship building with major racial and ethnic communities. Each racial and ethnic community in Minnesota has a group of great historians and cultural researchers. Each community also has special holidays, holydays, commemorations, and memorials they annually observe.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- Identifying opportunities for more racial and ethnic representation at Minnesota History events
- Collaborations with these great cultural leaders to deepen their research and then distribute their stories throughout Minnesota
- The expansion of Minnesotans knowledge of special events and why they are commemorated (going beyond the obvious ones such as Chinese New Year, Cinco de Mayo, and Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday)

Honoring Families and Individuals

Each racial and ethnic community in Minnesota has its legacy leaders – families and individuals who have contributed substantially to the life of their community as well as to the advancement of all Minnesotans.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- Partnerships with racial and ethnic leaders, media representatives, and school leaders to create monthly observances that honor Minnesota's oldest and newest residents
- The development of racial and ethnic cultural centers in order to create and market "Legacy Centers," where families and individuals are honored, not only by their racial and ethnic communities but also by all Minnesotans

Inviting Active Engagement

Active engagement as board members, volunteers, program advisors, co-presenters, donors and staff members are key methods for engaging any history-keeping aficionado.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- The Minnesota history community in developing longer-term relationships with members of all four major racial and ethnic communities.

Native Americans

Our discussions with Native American leaders and tribal members disclosed five activities that the Minnesota Historical Society could lead that would tactically reshape Native American history for all Minnesotans.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- Efforts to improve and correct Minnesota K-12 history textbooks' portrayal of Native Americans in Minnesota.
- Increasing the tribal government's capacity to collect, present, preserve, and assess Native American culture in their communities and throughout Minnesota and further developing the technology and skills needed to preserve American Indian cultural assets.
- Take advantage of major urban Indian settings (such as Franklin Avenue, American Indian Center, Little Earth of United Tribes, New Native Theatre) to present both historical and current Native American cultural assets to the broader community. Such work would open up greater K-12 and lifelong learner opportunities across the Metropolitan Area.
- Work with Native American tribal leaders, spiritual leaders, and historians to determine if any of the Minnesota Historical Society's possessions are Native American cultural assets that should be returned to Native American tribes or cultural centers.

African Americans/African Immigrants

Along with Native American cultures, the legacies of African Americans are an indispensable component of the 19th century and early 20th century Minnesota story. Beyond their migration to Minnesota and their lives here, African Americans have important stories to tell – The Rondo Renaissance, the development of North Minneapolis, lynchings in Duluth, and the development of social and church-based communities throughout the Twin Cities.

New African immigrants have created a rich new facet of Minnesota life. New foods, new worship, new social customs, new dress, and new history are part of the Minnesota's life thanks to immigrants from Somalia, Kenya, Liberia, and other African nations. Now African immigrant-voters are changing the political landscape of Minneapolis.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- Work with African American-focused print and electronic media outlets to create Minnesota African American and African immigrants history and cultural packets that schools, newspapers

and electronic media outlets all over the State can use, especially during Black History Month, but also during the rest of the year.

- Capture – as it is happening – Minnesota’s forthcoming history, through oral interviews, document collections, and preservation of the social history of African immigrants.

Hispanics/Latinos and South/Central American Immigrants & Asian Americans

Similar to the African American/African Immigrant experience, Hispanics/Latinos who have been an integral part of Minnesota life for a hundred years or more, are now welcoming their brothers and sisters from other nations in Central and South America. New arrivals add to the already powerful and dramatic history of Hispanics/Latinos in Minnesota.

How the Hmong community first arrived in Minnesota is a story like no other story from American immigrants – life/death encounters, government intervention, starvation and thirst, extended families hidden in tiny spaces for months, disease/disabilities, successes, failures, and dramatic culture shock followed by great stories of welcoming friends and communities.

Cambodians, Burmese, Tibetans, and other South and Southeast Asians have similar stories. All with drama, all with sacrifice and most with happy endings.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- These communities in sharing their stories with all Minnesotans, as well as people all over the United States and the world.

3. Technology/Digital Preservation Recommendations

The Legacy fund has made a substantial contribution to the general advancement of museum technology within its local history grantees. There is, however, no unified comprehensive policy or vision of how Legacy Funds can be used to advance a comprehensive technology strategy for both the Minnesota Historical Society and local history keepers during the next 20 years.

The unadorned truth is that advancing and retaining an outstanding technological capability is as profoundly essential to a reputable museum as the building itself that houses the museum's collections.

For any museum engaged in basic history keeping tasks – including collection, preservation, presentation, communications, fundraising, education, and analysis – first-rate technology is fundamental. However, for a top notch museum with aspirations of excellence for its constituents, the ability to anticipate, integrate, operate, and innovatively employ both current and developing technology is no longer just important – it is central to the institution's presence, character and success.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- The development of a comprehensive policy/vision to help determine how a technology base for local history museums would be constructed over the next 20 years. Model technology priorities, strategies, and policies could set standards for all museums, reducing the overhead and resources required for individual museums to develop such priorities and policies.

Grant Making and Technology Requests

Since its inception, *nearly one in four Legacy grants has been awarded for some form of technology* – such as software, hardware, HVAC systems, adaptive technology, microfilm readers, digitalization and staff training in technology areas.

The similarity of technology proposals and the knowledge required to effectively handle these proposals offers HRAC and Legacy grant managers a timesaving opportunity. Having an HRAC sub-committee review all (or most) technology-related proposals before each standard HRAC meeting and then offer to the full committee a modified consent agenda or committee report, would allow more time for the full committee to spend on unique proposals, assessing their past grants work, or learning about new issues they may be facing (such as changes in digital preservation, or small museum budget management).

Technology Planning, Strategies, and Equipment

Rewarding technology planning, strategies and equipment that is shared could increase local museum's interests in upgrading technology or considering new technology that would otherwise have been unavailable to local museums. Creating a sub-pool for technology upgrades will reduce both applicant and Minnesota Historical Society staff overhead. A technology sub-pool will also allow the advisory committee to use its most effective resource people to consider grant requests, make informed decisions, and offer advice to individual or group applicants.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- Shared technology planning, strategies and equipment that would otherwise be unavailable to local museums

With a more well-defined and discrete pool of technology funds, local technology companies will be more willing to offer in-kind contributions, services or equipment. Others may be more inclined to offer matching grants.

Digital Preservation

At the current rate of preservation, within 20 years, the Minnesota Historical Society may have more than 340 terabytes of information under management; about 15.5 times the current size of the Library of Congress.

Most of this information will not be history-keeping materials, but rather Legislative, State and some local government records that the Minnesota Historical Society is required by law to keep at the direction of the Records Disposition Panel which includes the attorney general, legislative auditor, state auditor and the director of the Minnesota Historical Society, who is the chief preservation officer for the State of Minnesota.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- Assessing the state of the State's preservation needs to determine what work or equipment is required to stabilize or improve their safeguarding
- Developing strategies and policies for determining what and how State information will be kept
- Developing a centralized database about the State's most significant historical assets
- Educating Minnesotans about historical assets and their preservation, and engaging Minnesotans in preservation
- Working with libraries, state colleges/universities, local government, other departments of state government and non-history museums to establish a statewide consortium of history and cultural preservation professionals to develop a long term strategy to preserve Minnesota's crucial history, information and cultural assets
- Develop a central resource center (perhaps the University of Minnesota) to assist statewide institutional collectors with preservation surveys, assessments, fundraising and plans
- Working with libraries and non-history museums to develop a statewide consortium of preservation and technology specialists to address storage needs to collecting institutions

4. Education Recommendations

Museums and libraries already provide strong support and enrichment for formal K–12 education and create a dynamic environment for free-choice learning designed to engage learners throughout their lifetime. However, *developments in technology and information access* combined with *changes in methods of formal and alternative education*, will impact how museums and libraries deliver educational services.

Besides collaborating among history keepers, the most important collaborations supported by Legacy Funds are with education and learning sector organizations. There are three key education and learning sectors.

K-12 Education

Legacy Funds are already being used effectively and often for collaborations between K-12 educators and museums.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- Museums in developing lower cost technologies that will increase the museum-related technology available for K-12 learners, especially in rural and smaller communities as well as urban schools with limited technology access, and that will encourage young people to engage with museums on a more regular basis
- Assisting teachers who are restricted to teaching core subjects, in teaching 21st century skill areas such as global awareness, internet literacy, creating thinking, media awareness, etc.
- Collaborations between history keepers and local libraries, after school programs, and parent associations to establish online and physical “resource shelves” for culture and history teachers
- The development of STEM, literacy, and other curriculum – in partnership with schools – that will employ history museums and museum exhibits

Lifelong Learners

There is a substantial difference between adult/lifelong learners and K-12 learners. Education for lifelong learners can be much more informal and less focused on the necessary life skills K-12 learners require.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- Engaging adult learning specialists to work with local history keepers to develop curricula and learning environments for adult learners
- Establish relationships and joint strategies between libraries and neighboring cultural and history centers to develop integrated, but wide-ranging learning opportunities
- The development of strategies for appealing to and recruiting young adults as members and volunteers of history museums.

Higher Education and Professional Development

According to industry literature, there may be a need for specialized history-related IT professionals, including programmers, data analysts, volunteer managers and customer relations management.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- Increasing Minnesota history research – both academic and community-based
- Collaborations with local colleges to use local museums to assist with undergraduate programs, such as history, sociology, business management, and creative writing
- Collaborating with local colleges, vocational training institutions and universities to determine what history and museum-related jobs will be needed in the future, such as digital preservation and cultural management

Capacity Building for Local History and Cultural Heritage Organizations

Formally or informally, an annual share of Legacy funding should be employed to raise the professional standards of county historical societies; providing Minnesota with a stronger legacy of strong local history programs.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- The Minnesota History Coalition – using the American Alliance of Museums and other accreditation standards – in determining what type of activities might encourage history keepers to upgrade their professional and operational standards (and perhaps funding professional development opportunities, e.g. tuition reimbursement for staff from local museums)
- Ways to upgrade museum values and standards, especially for the 87 county history keepers
- The evaluation of how capacity building efforts worked; whether they had the desired effect, how many applicants took advantage of it, and how much staff time and/or technical assistance was needed for this process

5. Collaboration/Partnership Recommendations

Most of the recommendations regarding work with local history keepers are detailed earlier under “Immediate Recommendations.” However, there are two key subsets of history keepers that will support the sustainability of history in local communities and thus support the long-term vision of the Legacy Fund.

County History Keepers

It appears there is nothing in the State Constitution or the related ACHF legislation that restricts the Legacy Funds from paying selected special attention to county museums that are under-resourced and in danger of not being able to sustain their state and county-mandated roles of history keeping for their counties. Particularly in southwest and northwest Minnesota, the vast majority of county museums are under-resourced not just for lack of local museum support, but because they communities have higher unemployment rates, less institutional funding, greater poverty and fewer corporate sponsors.

County museums in 28 of the 29 northwest and southwest Minnesota counties have annual budgets of less than \$100,000 but raise a greater share of their annual income from memberships and events, indicating strong local support. But it’s just not enough.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- Dedicated efforts to sustain the infrastructure that supports a strong statewide network of history keepers

Statewide and Regional History Capacity Building Partners

In addition to direct Legacy grants, Legacy Funds could be used to support intermediaries that can provide additional technical and financial support for local history museums.

Legacy Funds should help support:

- The Preservation Alliance of Minnesota (PAM), the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums (MAHLM), and the Minnesota Association of Museums in increasing the resources local history organizations have for technical and financial support
- An effort among history leaders to plan and implement sector capacity-building strategy that may include common conferences, requests for capacity building grants from private foundations, developing opportunities for shared non-financial and fundraising resources
- Minnesota’s Historic Northwest as a model to help strengthen Minnesota’s one successful model of a regionally-based, self-support coalition of history museums
- Negotiations with technical support organizations such as the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, the Minnesota Planned Giving Council, the State University system, MAP for Nonprofits, and the Nonprofit Assistance Fund to provide on-call and online technical support for a select number of local history keepers

6. Financing/Fundraising Recommendations

While great presentations, audience engagement, education, exhibits, and technology are central to the spirit of the use of Legacy Funds, if local museums cannot be sustained, a very core purpose of the Legacy Funds is defeated. Consequently, Legacy Funds must, in the long-term, support the financial sustainability of the Minnesota Historical Society and its local history partners.

Legacy funding has been a major miracle for history keepers throughout the State. Historically, just as State funding for history and heritage activities was hitting one of its lowest points in the last three decades, the people of Minnesota passed the Legacy Amendment that revitalized history and heritage activities, and saved several great history programs from an early death.

Legacy funding continues to provide great opportunities, but Legacy funding cannot sustain history and heritage programs at the levels required to maintain basic operations. The core funding required for history and cultural heritage exceeds the capacity of the Legacy Funds – for both the Minnesota Historical Society and for its history partners.

Furthermore, while Legacy Funds are generally growing each biennium, core funding for history and heritage institutions is stagnant or growing minimally.

Clarifying Core Funding vs. Legacy Funding

Since the distinctions between Legacy and core funding are soft (neither the Legacy Amendment nor legislative actions have firmly established the differences), it is realistic that core funding and Legacy funding items occasionally overlap.

To retain the spirit of the Legacy Amendment, to avoid embarrassing mistakes, and to make a stronger case for the need for core history and cultural heritage funding, the Minnesota Historical Society, the Minnesota History Coalition, MALHM and local history museums must act to further clarify and communicate definitive distinctions between museums' core funds and Legacy Funds. And all Legacy Fund recipients must follow the same rules.

In the long run, soft distinctions between Legacy and core funding may open up potential negative analyses of the use of Legacy Funds, thus weakening the argument for core funding, which by far is the more imperative support required by Minnesota's history community.

Reliance on State Funding

To the extent the Minnesota Historical Society and local history museums reduce their efforts to diversify their annual sources of income, Legacy Funds can have a detrimental effect on their long-term financing strategies. Legacy Funds are intended to grow history-keeping organizations, but the efforts miss the mark if recipient organizations rely too heavily on this source of support.

Effect on Prospective Donors

Our very small, very informal survey of 15 or so donors indicated that many prospective donors might

mistakenly believe that Legacy Funds are sufficient annual income for the Minnesota Historical Society and local history museums. Most Minnesota Historical Society and many local museum brochures and advertisements show the Legacy Fund logo, giving some donors the sense that their dollars could be used more urgently elsewhere.

Initiating Special Donor Funds

We recommend working with individual donors and institutional funders to create special funds for special purposes, such as:

- 1) Historic Preservation Fund
- 2) Minnesota History Research Fund
- 3) History Technology Fund
- 4) Innovation Fund
- 5) Western Minnesota History Fund

Both individual donors and institutional funders would find matching monies from the Legacy Funds an attractive incentive to give to one or more of these special funds.

7. Internal Culture/Management Recommendations

In speaking with museum leaders both locally and nationally, we identified common themes that describe a healthy internal organizational culture. A positive culture, along with the right management support, will encourage more creative and innovative thinking when it comes to identifying and tackling opportunities that might previously have been lost.

Chief Learning Officer

The Minnesota Historical Society should establish the role of Chief Learning Officer, responsible for assisting managers struggling through the myriad of innovative designs and concepts available, identifying those that can be most transformational, long term, significant, large scale and part of a replicable process.

Small Scale I-Labs and “Quick Failure” Risk-Taking Opportunities

The Minnesota Historical Society should consider working with major Minnesota corporations (such as United Health Group) to develop small gauge innovation labs and “quick failure” opportunities that permit its staff to experiment with presentations, preservation, financing, and audience engagement on a reduced scale.

Chief Operating Officer

The Minnesota Historical Society board of directors and executive director should consider establishing the position of Chief Operating Officer for the Society, a position that would lessen some of the administrative headaches currently the responsibility of the executive director, deputy directors, and departmental managers.

Monetizing Legacy Dollars

Within the constitutional and legislative limits, Minnesota history leaders, boards, and perhaps State Legislators should begin heart-to-heart conversations about the possibilities of more creatively using the anticipated \$300 million of Legacy Funds in effective, long-term, income-producing systems.

Large-Scale Projects

Strive to develop comprehensive ventures that generate large-scale history keeping projects affecting *everyone* in Minnesota.

Innovation

Use Legacy Funds to encourage history keepers to establish more innovative presentations and history-keeping procedures. Use them to help local history keepers generate innovative management structures that will save money and save museums.

Leadership Development

Some Legacy Funds are already being used to support local leadership training and conference fees. Can Legacy funds be further employed to create “fellowships” for local history museum leaders and staff to spend extended learning time at the Minnesota History Center? Creating local fellowships at the History Center will strengthen local museums and perhaps more importantly, can be used to generate and audition small-scale innovations for local history museums in general.

Identifying and Encouraging New Leaders

The Minnesota Historical Society and other history leaders should develop management systems that engage and encourage involvement from younger and new museum staff.

In-House Staff Learning

The Minnesota Historical Society should create a formal ongoing learning curriculum for its staff in areas such as political awareness, a culture of philanthropy, new and emerging technologies, new audiences, and new Minnesota cultures. Staff should be required to attend regular learning sessions, either in person or online. This curriculum could also potentially be available or adapted for its history partners.

Staff Field Training

The Minnesota Historical Society should create opportunities for its staff to assume six-month leadership roles or consulting roles in local history museums around the State. Acting as museum directors or providing hands-on support for programming and administration will provide great training for staff and provide great opportunities for local museums.

Change Agency

The Minnesota Historical Society should consider how best to integrate corporate cultural changes into its operations – seminars and formal learning opportunities, annual departmental goals, formal consultancies with corporate change agents (such Cargill Corporation). These, too, could be adapted for its history partners.

Senior Manager Mentors

The Minnesota Historical Society should consider developing management mentor positions that allow experienced managers to guide new managers in the day-to-day operations of the museum. Losing senior managers to retirement without the benefit of distributing their prodigious information and skill sets into new managers would be a great waste of talent and time.

Advocacy Planning

The Minnesota State Legislature, which appropriates Arts and Culture Heritage Fund monies on a biennial basis, seems to have great respect for Minnesota history keepers. The Minnesota Historical Society's management and staff are well-regarded by Legislators, the work of Minnesota's 500+ history-keeping organizations is deeply appreciated, and the annual History Matters Day at the State Capitol is well attended and well-regarded by those working at the State Capital.

The State Legislative Auditor had generally good things to say about the history Legacy Fund and its management. A few clarifications and recommended changes are already in the Legacy system. Overall, the Legacy Fund, its principal partners and its managers, particularly the Minnesota Historical Society, have done excellent work in maintaining and sustaining its relationship with the Minnesota State Legislature and the appropriate state administrative offices.

Therefore, it is interesting that one of the most often suggested changes in the Legacy process that we heard from local history keepers was to *increase* local historical and cultural heritage organizations' involvement in the public policy and advocacy work on behalf of Minnesota history keepers. Small and large history societies and museums from all over the State desire a greater role in educating, advocating and asserting the outstanding role that history and cultural heritage plays in Minnesota's education, economic, social, cultural, character-building, and storytelling functions.

With input from history keepers from all over the State, as well as from Minnesota Historical Society staff, we recommend a few key adaptations in the Legacy Fund managers' advocacy functions. We believe these recommendations will bring greater support for history and cultural heritage from State officials and greater unity among Minnesota's history keepers.

Partner Involvement

History leaders throughout Minnesota trust that increasing local history keepers' role in history advocacy will a) improve State Legislators' respect for the role of history and culture in Minnesota's education and economy, b) improve State Legislators' respect for the great work of the Legacy Fund, and c) further connect history keepers in a united vision for history keeping in general, and specifically the Legacy Fund.

These are some of the recommendations we heard from local history keepers that can improve their role in history and cultural heritage-related advocacy and public policy.

Develop a Greater Advocacy Partnership between Local and State History Keepers

- 1) Increase the engagement of the Minnesota History Coalition in decision-making in regard to the Minnesota history community's legislative agenda

- 2) Work with statewide history keeping organizations to set more aggressive advocacy goals on behalf of the ACHF
- 3) Create and organize a role for Minnesota educators in history advocacy efforts, beginning with an expansion of History Day at the Capitol
- 4) Identify history-friendly Minnesota-based corporations and work with them to establish a history advocacy role for them

Create Expectations for Stakeholder and Partner Advocacy Efforts

- 1) Establish an annual strategy and policy by which Minnesota Historical Society managers and staff engage stakeholders and partners in history advocacy
- 2) Host a series of meetings with statewide history organizations to gauge their willingness and capacity to conduct advocacy activities and support a common message on behalf of the history portion of the ACHF
- 3) Provide or assist in providing organizational support for state organizations to strengthen their advocacy capacity
- 4) If possible, identify and train key advocates in media relations, the legislative process and outreach skills

Communications

Establishing key messages that advocates can use with State Legislators and then assisting advocates with training, materials and leave-behinds are essential to increasing local history keepers' role in history advocacy.

Messaging

- 1) With input from history keepers across the State, Minnesota Historical Society staff and friendly legislators, the Minnesota History Coalition should annually develop and promote two or three key messages or themes that history advocates and partners use when communicating with legislators and stakeholders. Within this function, the Minnesota Historical Society and history advocates should:
 - Assess current legislative body's knowledge and understanding of the great work that Minnesota history keepers do for Minnesota's education, economic, culture and character building
 - Test the annual history advocacy themes and key messages with several audiences
 - Make sure messages are cohesive and easy to translate/share with varied audiences

2) Share history themes and key messages

- Train Minnesota Historical Society outreach staff on the key messages, their significance and what issues/worries/challenges they counteract
- Convene meetings with leadership of state partners (such as the History Coalition, the Preservation Alliance, the Digital Library and the Minnesota Association of Local History Museums) and regional partners (such as Minnesota’s Historic Northwest) to share and train them regarding the use of these key messages
- Include all other local history and cultural organizations when Minnesota Historical Society staff members visit State Legislators, during trainings, webinars, History Day at the Capitol, etc.

Materials

- 1) Assist local history keepers with their communications with state legislators by publishing an advocacy resource guide or a brochure similar to Ohio’s “Citizen’s Guide to Ohio History” as a leave-behind for advocates to share with legislators
 - Print and distribute the advocacy resource guide, making it readily available
 - Create a PDF version available via email to partners who have received advocacy training

20-Year Yardsticks and Considerations

Beyond the next five years, we offer thoughts and ideas around what success in the various categories we examined might look like in 20 years, as well as the kinds of things the Minnesota Historical Society along with the broader Minnesota history community might focus on in the years succeeding the five-year plan, to continue on the path to achieving the vision for history and cultural heritage in Minnesota.

Audience

Audience Knowledge

The Minnesota Historical Society and its history partners are fully cognizant of who is visiting their history and cultural heritage institutions in Minnesota, what these audiences are like, what they expect from the engagement – all of which will help to inform what else museums can do to engage even more new visitors. Museums continually update their profiles of visitors, members, and donors, and continuously evaluate how their audiences engage with content and presentations.

Top Choice

The rich array of history and cultural heritage organizations become more popular destinations for more people (e.g. new audiences) and the Minnesota Historical Society is one of the three top choices for Minnesotans and non-Minnesotans to visit.

Audience Engagement

Minnesota history organizations have policies, strategies and tools in place that fully engage audience members in shaping the content and the presentation tools for the History Center and its history partners. These policies and strategies focus on encouraging audiences to participate as full-fledged “museum citizens,” not just as occasional or passive visitors.

Diverse Audience

The history community has policies, strategies, and tools that attract several different types of audiences, including diverse populations by age, race, ethnicity, income levels, and education levels.

Embraces and Manages Controversy

The Minnesota history community is not afraid to address controversial subjects that facilitate community discussion and community discovery.

Greater Outreach

State and local history museums use membership and attendance fees not only as income-producing tools, but as a means of attracting others who could otherwise not afford to visit many of these museums, or those not normally engaged with history keeping centers.

Strong and Well-known Brand

All Minnesotans, including its partners in the history-keeping community, recognize the Minnesota Historical Society for the great stories it tells, the great presentations it makes, the great customer service it provides and the means by which it makes the history community stronger and history accessible to all people.

Whose Stories?

Human Rights

Minnesota history keepers recognize and support the role of cultural heritage in the maintenance of international human rights, both tangible and intangible. They are committed to mixing the founding history of the State of Minnesota – the immigrant and pioneer experience and how they got to Minnesota – with stories of Minnesota’s more current arrivals and how they got here.

Storytelling

Minnesota history keepers continually ask three questions:

- a. Whose story are we telling?
- b. In whose voice are we telling the story?
- c. Given limited resources, are we telling as many stories as we can?

Role of Native Americans

The Minnesota history community recognizes the role Native Americans played in the history of Minnesota, pre- and post-European immigration, has ensured sufficient resources, talent and research and has effectively expanded the depth and breadth of the Native American story in Minnesota.

Global Perspective

The history community recognizes the shifting global perspectives of the people of Minnesota and the growing interests of people worldwide in Minnesota’s stories. As such, Minnesota history keepers preserve and present the history of its many communities – geographic, income, age, gender, race and ethnicity.

All of Minnesota

The Minnesota history community is committed to sharing the stories of different parts of the State and different communities within the State with all the people of the State – helping each Minnesotan gain access to the phenomenal stories of people who founded Minnesota, lived in Minnesota and are committed to making Minnesota their home.

Technology and Digital Preservation

Technology

Capacity

The Minnesota Historical Society, like every major cultural heritage institution in Minnesota and the United States requires an excellent technological capacity as much as it needs a collection and a building to house its collection. The Minnesota Historical Society will know it has been successful in the field of technology if, in the next 20 years, it can state with confidence (along with its history-keeping partners):

- We have sufficient technological resources to open our doors, maintain and present our collections, keep our visitors engaged and satisfied, and provide outstanding educational opportunities that are equal or better than the experiences of our visitors' elsewhere.
- We are constantly striving to a) assess our ongoing technology needs, b) establish new standards for our use of technology, c) upgrade our current technology and integrate new technology, and d) maintain effective financing means for our technology needs.
- The use of Legacy Funds has established a stable and successful system of effective technology in history and heritage institutions across the State of Minnesota.

Technological success will mean that the Minnesota history community has:

Continuous Improvement

They have determined and continually review their overall commitment to new technology and how this commitment integrates with major expenditures in other areas such as programming, audience engagement, management, partnerships.

Functioning Technology Policy and Strategy Committee

There is a joint technology policy and strategy group that addresses technology issues, including technology financing, upgrades in current technology, new technology, technology for programming, technology for history keeping and maintenance.

Policy and Strategy

A comprehensive policy and strategy related to State digital and record keeping needs has been established.

Financing Strategy

There is a long term financing strategy for technology upgrades and new technology, including annual capital expense line items for emerging and new technology.

Audience Engagement

There is an evolving strategy for reviewing technology uses at every level of audience engagement – marketing/communications, exhibits, programs, K-12 education, lifelong learning, family engagement, online presence, and audience engagement in all history sites. Further, museums periodically review the age appropriateness of its audience engagement tools. Surveys will confirm that the use of technology satisfies and stimulates visitors’ technology expectations.

Technologically Savvy

At a minimum, the Minnesota Historical Society has a trained and highly competent staff in the development of upgraded and new technology. They use in-house training, scholarships, fellowships, online learning, and staff rewards to encourage and sustain staff proficiency. They work with history, education and cultural partners to ensure a constant flow of trained history technicians are always available.

Shared Technology Partnerships

A strategy and policy has evolved in regard to the deployment of, and sharing of technology among history partners to assure standard and new technologies are being effectively used across the State.

Digital Preservation

Statewide Policy for Government and Legislative Records

The Records Disposition Panel has updated its policies and rules regarding what Legislative and State government materials must be preserved, for how long, and under what conditions. Other state government departments engaged in record-keeping are included in a cohesive statewide government records disposition policy.

Digital Preservation Policy

There is an integrated statewide policy for what digital data can be kept and must be kept, what timelines dictate their storage, how many copies must be kept, and for what purposes they must be kept. Further, there is a satisfactory distribution of preservation placement and responsibility.

Annual Report

The Minnesota Historical Society publishes an annual report on the state of technology, the state of digital data, and upcoming digital preservation issues.

Issues Awareness

An external consultant or a volunteer advisory team is charged with keeping abreast of digital preservation issues in the Minnesota history community.

Core Budget and Funding

The Minnesota Historical Society's core budget includes annual line items to anticipate growth of digital needs and to update digitalization not adequately addressed by current digitalization practices. They keep abreast and take advantage of government and private funding opportunities for financial support for digital technology updates.

Collaboration and Partnerships

The Minnesota history community and the people of Minnesota must have the opportunity to commemorate and when appropriate, celebrate the stories, lives, and historical markers for common interest groups. Formal exhibits and formal presentations may be rewarding, but the costs, time and human resources required to develop these formal pieces, make these affairs rare jewels in the life of Minnesota history keeping.

Established Protocol

For the sake of the people of Minnesota and the people whose stories will excite and intrigue the people of Minnesota, history leaders have developed a protocol of informal exhibits, offsite exhibits, informal and perhaps community-engagement events. Think about an annual "Nine Nights of Music" for community groups, using songs, speeches, performing arts, theater and celebrations to engage labor union members, communities of worship, women's organizations, farmers, etc.

Statewide Building Preservation Fund

A seven- to eight- figure statewide Building Preservation Fund is established, with statewide and local history keepers as well as labor unions, economic development corporations, ethnic/cultural heritage groups, other arts organizations, chambers of commerce construction firms, foundations, local government units, faith-based organizations.

Minnesota History Coalition

The Minnesota History Coalition is a recognized and respected force in strengthening history partnerships and history partners' roles in the legislative policy and strategy efforts.

Financing and Fundraising

Well-Balanced Income Picture

A balance of funding from the federal government, state government, private institutions, private individuals, and earned income will provide a stable base of income that allows minimal financial uncertainties or vulnerabilities for the Minnesota Historical Society and other history partners.

Engaged Boards and Fundraising Volunteers

The history community has volunteers who understand the vision for Minnesota history, as well as the

financial picture, and are willing to engage donors to support the vision.

Internal Culture of Philanthropy

The staffs, boards, and volunteers of more and more history-keeping organizations understand and appreciate the level of interaction required for members, major donors and all visitors to aspire to donate to history and cultural heritage organizations, not just one time, but on an ongoing basis.

Increased Earned Income

Consistent with the current earned income levels of other major American museums, the Minnesota Historical Society is earning between 25% and 30% of its funds from services, sales of goods, and other income producing products. Increasingly, other history keepers are utilizing earned income as a source of revenue.

Dynamic Donor Communications System

There is a system that continues to provide donors and prospective donors with information about major Minnesota history milestones and accomplishments, and provides compelling reasons to continue (or begin) their support for Minnesota history and cultural heritage organizations.

Right Size Staff with the Right Technology

Adequate human resources are available to develop and maintain fundraising relationships and opportunities, especially in the private sector. This includes not only the right level of human resources, but possessing and utilizing the necessary technology as well, and having the financial resources required.

Age-Appropriate Fundraising Tools

Fundraisers for the Minnesota history community are engaging both younger and older donors, using the communications and fundraising tools that most attract various age groups.

Donors Giving on Their Terms

Monthly donor programs, designated giving funds, planned giving programs, donor advised funds and other specialized giving mechanisms are available to Minnesota history donors.

Program Evaluation

Program evaluation is a central emphasis of all fundraising and program planning, and is used to adjust programs mid-stream and in the development of new fundraising operations and new programs. Program evaluation meets donor and funder expectations.

Viable History Organizations

The majority of Minnesota county history museums are organizationally viable, technologically up-to-date, and financially stable, with dependable plans for maintaining their viability and growing their capacity.

- Local history museums work in partnership with nearby museums and the Minnesota Historical Society to create successful marketing, cooperative purchasing, roaming exhibits, and other common systems that reduce individual museum costs.
- Statewide history partners are organizationally viable and financially stable, and able to provide technical assistance and sometimes, financial supports to local history partners
- Differences between non-Legacy eligible and Legacy-eligible projects are well defined and well understood by museum leaders across the State.
- With support of Legacy Funds, the Minnesota Historical Society provides ongoing planning and training support for local county history organization board members and fundraisers.

Internal Organizational Culture/Management Tools

Balancing New and Old, Formal and Informal

The managers and staff at history and cultural heritage organizations have ongoing conversations about their own attitudes toward new presentations, preservation, and content policies, and conversations about what are acceptable shifts – from rigorous professional history keeping and preservation standards to perhaps less formal history-keeping criteria.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Training, planning, consulting, and goal-setting opportunities are available to managers who are expected to employ CQI in their departments. CQI systems – either department-by-department or on a museum-wide scale, are formalized and expectations about the integration of CQI systems incorporated into all managers' job descriptions.

New Era of Leadership

New leaders have either been trained, nurtured and brought up through the ranks, or have been brought in from outside the organization, and have assumed the reins of the Minnesota Historical Society and other leading history institutions, and are providing dynamic leadership and direction. The Minnesota Historical Society's role as Minnesota's primary history keeper has been solidified and is celebrated by and throughout the history community, as well as in the hearts of Minnesotans. A formal system of leadership development and support is now part of all of its program and administrative departments.

Management Structure

The Minnesota Historical Society's management structure cross-fertilizes departmental leadership, annual planning, and budgeting into an integrated whole that serves the needs of the whole institution rather than being focused on individual departments.

Culture of Innovation

The Minnesota Historical Society – and many of its history-keeping partners – have a national reputation for cost-effectively incorporating innovative concepts and plans into presentations, programs, preservation, and audience outreach.

Use of Legacy Dollars

The entirety of the \$300 million of Legacy funds from the people of Minnesota has been effectively employed and invested year-by-year in a manner that goes far beyond annual grant making. These funds have been leveraged within creative, large-scale projects and income-earning efforts, the benefits of which will continue beyond the conclusion of the 25 years of funding. The majority of Minnesotans will have been touched by projects, programs, or exhibits made possible by this investment.

The history community, legislature and people of Minnesota extol the Minnesota Historical Society, for its creative, effective and efficient administration of Legacy dollars for comprehensive and collaborative ventures that affect everyone in Minnesota.