



# New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education Collections Management Policy

Approved by the Collections Committee

*Adopted by the Board of Directors  
NMHM*

**New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center  
for Education  
Collections Management Policy**

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# **New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education Collections Management Policy**

## **Statement of Purpose**

The mission of the New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education is to eliminate hate and intolerance, one mind at a time. We accomplish this through exhibits and education programs that teach about genocide, prejudice, human rights, and social justice issues. These lessons are the foundation that build understanding and compassion in a troubled world. preserve and create interest in the tangible evidences of local and regional communities and of settlement and development of New Mexico by: locating and preserving written and spoken records; obtaining and preserving artifacts, memorabilia and books; locating and preserving photographs; obtaining and preserving local landmarks; working to benefit and maintain the New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education; publishing and making available the history of New Mexico; and promoting cooperation with similar organizations and with local civic and social groups in furthering the mutual interests of the groups relative to the history maintained by the New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education.

This collections policy defines how the museum acquires, cares for, and manages its collections. The goal of the policy is to establish and implement professional standards of care and management of the museum's collections.

## **Statement of Authority**

The New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit New Mexico corporation. The State of New Mexico vests authority to manage the affairs of the museum in a board of directors. The Board of Directors of the New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education promulgates this policy for care and management of the collections of the museum and assumes the responsibility of oversight of implementation of this policy.

Authority to modify this policy shall rest with the board of directors.

## **All Previous Collections Policies Revoked**

All previous collections policies of the New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education are hereby revoked. This document is the sole current collections policy of the New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education. Operational policies and supporting documents and forms in compliance with this policy remain in force. Operational policies and supporting documents and forms not in compliance with this policy shall be revised to comply.

## **Collections Committee**

The bylaws of the museum invest the chair of the board of directors with authority to establish such committees as necessary for the effective management of the museum. The chair has established a

committee whose responsibility is the care and management of the museum's collections. The museum shall maintain such a committee, whose responsibilities may include more than collections.

The chair of the board appoints the members of the committee from among the board of directors, members of the museum, friends of the organization, or outside professionals. Chair of the committee shall be selected by the chair of the board of directors and approved by the board.

The Executive Director of the New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education and the Collections Manager are ex-officio voting members of the committee.

The collections committee shall meet quarterly or more frequently as needed. All members of the committee must be notified in advance of each meeting. A quorum for the committee is a majority of the members of the committee. Decisions of the committee are by majority vote.

## **Scope of Collections**

The New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education collects in accordance with its mission. In keeping with the purpose of the museum, the museum shall restrict its collecting to those objects, books, and images of cultural, historical, or technical significance that can contribute to the documentation and interpretation of the mission of the museum; as well as be used to support the exhibition, research, and education programs of the museum. This may include material that puts the Holocaust and other acts of intolerance in context within the region, state, nation, or world, so long as such material is not available elsewhere within the immediate region and the material does not place an undue burden on overall collections management.

## **Accessioned Collection**

Accessioning is the formal, legal process by which an object becomes a part of the museum's permanent collection. Accessioned objects, images, and documents have priority in the collection due to their unique, rare, and historical significance. They are subject to strict accountability and receive the highest level of care. They are scrutinized for authenticity and their physical integrity is of primary importance. These objects uniquely illustrate or document the history which the museum's mission has set out to document and are part of the permanent collection of the museum.

## **Non-Accessioned Collection (Objects for Educational Programs)**

In recognition of the museum's focus upon education, some acquisitions may be organized into an educational collection. Original objects that may have historic value for the accessioned collection must be considered for that collection first. Objects not accepted into the permanent collection may be considered for the educational collection.

The educational collection may include: objects, books, and cultural material that are unsuited for the permanent collection but provide visitors with a hands-on experience under staff or volunteer supervision; objects in poor condition that still might be used for educational or research purposes; and props and reproductions.

Although not accessioned, objects accepted and used for educational programs must be recorded and tracked to avoid confusion with accessioned collections objects.

## **Acquisitions & Accessions**

### **Method of Acquisition**

The museum acquires objects primarily through donation, purchase, exchange, bequest, abandonment, or field research.

### **Acquisition Authority**

The Executive Director or the Collections Manager may recommend an object to the committee for acquisition. The committee will recommend acquisition or non-acquisition of the object to the full board of directors of the museum, which will make final decisions over all acquisitions for the museum.

### **Criteria for Accession**

An object must meet the following criteria to be accessioned into the permanent collection of the New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education:

1. It must be relevant to the museum's mission.
2. It must be useful for research, exhibition, or education.
3. It must be legally and ethically acquired.
4. It must come with clear title and without significant encumbrances or restrictions.
5. There should be documentary information concerning provenance and history of the object.
6. The museum must be able to provide adequate storage, protection, and preservation of the object under conditions in keeping with current professional standards.

The museum will also consider an object's rarity or typicality, and whether it duplicates other objects in the collection and whether such duplication is a benefit or detriment to the museum and its collections.

The museum will strive to acquire and maintain full copyright to objects and images in the collections.

If the museum accepts material with encumbrances or restrictions, the conditions shall be stated clearly in an instrument of conveyance, which becomes part of the object's permanent record and will be permanently on file with the museum.

Objects not accessioned into the permanent collection may be accepted for the education collection.

### **Deaccessions**

Deaccessioning is the process by which an accessioned object is removed permanently from the museum's collections. The purpose of deaccessioning is to improve the overall quality of the

museum's collections through the deliberate, cautious, and selective removal of previously accessioned objects that no longer serve the museum's mission, because they meet one or more of the criteria for deaccession.

### **Criteria for Deaccession**

The museum may deaccession an object from the collection for any of the following reasons:

1. The object is not relevant to the museum's mission.
2. The object lacks useful research, exhibition, or educational purpose.
3. The museum cannot properly store, preserve, or conserve the object.
4. Cost to maintain the object is prohibitive.
5. The object has deteriorated or is damaged beyond repair, conservation, or useful purpose.
6. Its condition is detrimental to the condition of other objects in the collection or to persons.
7. The object duplicates another in the collection without advantage to the museum.

### **Process of Deaccession**

A member of the collections committee may recommend an object for deaccessioning to the committee, based upon one or more of the deaccession criteria. A member of the collections committee and staff will conduct an analysis of the object to determine whether it meets deaccession criteria and report these findings to the collections committee.

The collections committee recommends deaccession of an object only after due deliberation and a finding that one or more of the deaccession criteria apply. The recommendation to deaccession will be by majority vote. The chair of the collections committee will present the recommendation of the committee to the full board of directors for final action on the deaccession.

### **Disposition and Disposal of Deaccessioned Material**

The collections manager will develop and implement a disposition and disposal plan for the object. Disposition refers to all transactions by which title to outgoing objects is transferred from New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education to another entity, as well as disposal by intentional destruction. Disposal is the act of physically removing an object from a museum collection. Final disposition of the object deaccessioned from collections will occur in a timely manner, but in no case more than four months after the action authorizing deaccession.

Deaccessioned material may be transferred to New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education's education collection.

The museum will offer deaccessioned material first to other museums or other nonprofit organizations with similar educational missions, through exchange, gift, or sale before any other means of disposal is considered.

The manner of deaccessioning will meet the ethical and legal responsibilities of the New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education.

The museum will permanently keep complete records of each deaccessioning decision and final



disposition of the object.

Members of the museum staff, board, their families or close associates, shall not possess any deaccessioned object from the museum collections.

Proceeds from deaccessioning an object from collections will be used solely for acquisitions to the museum's permanent collection or for direct care of collections.

## **Documentation of Collections**

The objects and associated information in a museum collection are the heart of the museum. Without documentation, the objects lose much of their value. The documentation of a museum collection defines legal custody, assists research, and records the history of an object once it reaches the museum. Collection records should be accurate, timely, complete, and secure. The museum shall maintain documentation of collections in perpetuity. At the time of acquisition, the museum will attempt to obtain all available information regarding provenience and history of the object.

### **Records in Paper and Electronic Formats**

The collections staff will keep legal records in paper form, including records of gift, permits and permissions, receipts, accession log, appraisals, loans, and like documents. Detailed information such as maps and condition reports may be kept solely in paper form. A computer collection management system will also be used for documentation to facilitate retrieval, access, and reporting. Electronic records will include at a minimum accession records, catalog records, donor information, and location and inventory information.

A backup copy of legal and initial registration paperwork will be made and housed in a separate building from the originals. Electronic backups of computer records will be made frequently and housed in a separate building.

### **Documentation of Acquisitions**

New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education acquires collections in several different ways, each of which has its own documentation requirements. The museum may acquire objects by field collection, donation, bequest, exchange, purchase, and abandonment. For purposes of this policy, the term object encompasses all collection materials including, but not limited to, specimens, artifacts, articles, photographs, artworks, archival and library materials, field notes, records, and exhibit elements.

The museum will not take final action on an acquisition until the museum receives all required documentation.

Donations require:

1. A completed deed of gift and/or other instrument transferring title to the object, stating provenance, and specifying rights transferred.
2. Signature by the board chair, board vice chair, Executive Director or chair of the

collections committee documenting approval by the committee and acceptance of the gift by the museum board.

3. Where required by federal or state law, a copy of information warranting compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
4. Documentation of approval of the collections committee and final board action.

A copy of the instrument conveying ownership with original signatures will be deposited in collections files. Another copy with original signatures will be given to the donor.

At the request of the donor, the Executive Director may sign IRS form 8283 (Non-cash charitable contributions) after the object is in the possession of the museum and has been accepted by the collections committee.

Purchases require:

1. A copy of the receipt or invoice.
2. Documentation of approval by the collections committee and final board action.

Donations from or exchanges with 501(C) (3) organizations require:

1. A copy of minutes of the organization authorizing the gift.
2. A copy of the receipt or invoice if the gift was a purchase.
3. A copy of a record of gift signed by an officer of the organization.
4. Documentation of approval by the collections committee and final board action.

Bequests require:

1. A copy of the testamentary document or a letter or affidavit from the executor of the testator's estate authorizing the gift.
2. Documentation of approval by the collections committee and final board action.

Unclaimed Property:

1. The State of New Mexico abandoned property laws will apply to establish ownership of a collection object when applicable.
2. Collections staff will keep copies of all documentation.

### **Documentation of Accessions**

Accessioning is the formal process used to accept and record an item as a permanent collection object. The collections manager shall keep a record of all accession decisions made during collections committee meetings. The Executive Director, the collections manager, a member of the collections committee or board chair or vice chair will sign each record of gift, different from the staff person who signed the receipt. When the museum accessions an object, museum staff will assign a unique number for identification. Collections staff will list the assigned number in the museum accessions log. The accessions log will contain at least: the assigned number, a brief description of the accession, the source of the accession, and the value of the object(s) if purchased or if the donor supplies an appraisal. The object will be marked or tagged with the accession number according to generally accepted practices. The museum should also maintain a photographic record

of each accessioned object.

The record of gift with original signatures will be held in a safe or secure file. A provenance file containing a copy of any signed forms and minutes that establish ownership and rights of the museum will be maintained for each object.

### **Non-Accessioned Objects for Education**

The collections manager will keep a record of any objects acquired for use in educational programs. The objects may be marked ED to identify them as education objects.

Objects that are deaccessioned to education will keep their original accession numbers with the addition of the suffix -ED. The collections manager will retain all files, as with all deaccessioned objects.

Objects loaned to the museum for education purposes will be documented with an appropriate loan agreement. Objects entering the museum accompanied by a presenter need not be documented if they are in the presenter's custody.

### **Description, History and Location**

Accessioned objects will be documented with a written description, a photograph, and a condition report. Information describing the object, its source, history, condition, and location will be kept in provenance files. The type of object will determine the extent of the description. The condition of the object will be described using standard vocabulary and forms. The history of the object while in the collections will be recorded, including loans, exhibits, conservation or treatments performed, and storage location. Collections staff must record temporary removal of an object from its location in storage with a card in its place that documents the new location of the object.

### **Documentation of Disposal of an Object**

If the museum removes an object from the collection, the museum will document the disposition of the object including the date of disposition, and the museum shall keep all such records.

### **Documents Pertaining to Loans**

The original or a copy of an agreement for objects loaned from and to the museum will reside with the Collections Manager. The agreement will consist, at a minimum, of the name and contact information of the lender and recipient, list of objects, their values, purpose of the loan, and its dates.

A loan form, temporary custody form, or acquisition paperwork must accompany all objects entering the museum. Collections staff should complete a condition report for each incoming and outgoing loan.

## **Documentation of Conservation**

Collections staff shall keep a record of any conservation surveys or treatments in the provenance file of the object. Extensive conservation requires a written conservation plan that is approved by the Executive Director. Photographs will be taken documenting the condition before and after the treatment. Collections staff will record all adhesives and consolidants used during preparation of specimens and objects.

## **Collections Care**

The New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education has a responsibility to preserve and safeguard the collections it holds in trust for the public. The museum's ability to carry out its mission is directly related to its ability to preserve its collections and information about them. The museum recognizes the importance of preserving the collections records and other documentary materials supporting the collections.

## **Commitment to Care for Collections**

The New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education will care for objects in its permanent collection in perpetuity if they continue to meet the accessions criteria.

## **Standard of Care**

The museum shall provide the necessary preservation, protection, and security for all collections acquired, borrowed, or in the custody of the museum, including the information associated with the objects. The museum treats loaned objects with the same standard of care as permanent collections.

The museum will balance research, exhibition, and educational uses with the preservation requirements of collection objects to ensure that the museum maintains collections for future generations. Museum staff trained in collections care will instruct all persons who meet collections, whether other staff, board members, volunteers, researchers, or visitors, in proper handling of collections.

## **Authority for Care**

Ultimate authority for the care of the collections resides with the board of directors. The staff has primary duties for the care of the collections. All museum staff should be alert to the safety and preservation of museum objects in the performance of their daily activities.

## **Preventive Care from Sources of Deterioration**

It is the New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education's policy to apply preventive conservation methods for the collections by providing safe, stable environments for storage and exhibition. The museum staff plans and executes activities, services, and programs to ensure the safety, security, and protection of the collections from the following sources of deterioration:

1. Direct physical forces (earthquakes, wind, rain)
2. Theft and vandalism
3. Fire and smoke
4. Water from all sources, including plumbing, fire suppression, and severe weather
5. Pests
6. Contaminants
7. Radiant energy such as infrared light, ultraviolet light, and high-intensity visible light
8. Temperature extremes and fluctuations
9. Relative humidity extremes and fluctuations
10. Custodial neglect

It is a goal of the museum strategically and systematically to improve conditions in structures, storage, and collections to prevent deterioration.

## **Conservation and Preservation of Collections**

### **Conservation**

Corrective conservation or restoration measures will be taken when the relevant staff member finds that the probable consequences enhance the preservation of the collection.

Proposals for active conservation must take into account the:

1. Precise intention for altering the item
2. Known and less-understood contextual values represented by the object
3. Conditions and risks posed by the intended use
4. Possible benefits of more detailed investigation, or of selecting an alternate object
5. Possible strategies for mitigating the risks
6. Consequences of the mitigation strategies upon the preservation of the item

Because of the inherent risk to permanent collections posed by corrective conservation measures, the museum requires that proposed measures reflect:

1. Minimal intervention with maximum reversibility to meet the requirements that have precipitated the need for treatment
2. Documentation of an object's condition before, during, and after treatment

Documentation of corrective conservation or restoration should include the justifications for the intervention, its objectives, alternative approaches considered, and the considered potential risks and consequences.

### **Preservation Plan**

Museum staff, in collaboration with the collections committee, will develop a preservation plan at regular intervals specifying those areas or objects within the collections that need conservation improvements or treatments.

## **Access to Collections and Records**

### **Physical Access**

The permanent collection and related records will be made available to responsible parties for study, research, inquiry, and examination.

Approval for collections or records access is subject to completion of a written request stating the reasons for the visit. The museum will make a good faith effort to expeditiously accommodate requests for access to collections and records. Accessibility may be limited by staff availability, conservation considerations, donor mandated restrictions, issues of confidentiality, security issues, and/or the purpose of the request. The person requesting access will be informed of the reason for restriction or denial of access.

All persons requesting access will be supervised at all times, unless the Executive Director or collections manager grant unsupervised visitation. Museum staff is not obliged to assist inquiries that involve excessive time or cost to the museum.

Access to and use of the permanent collection will be credited appropriately in all publications, exhibitions, and other presentations. There will be no commercial use of the collection, information, and images resulting from their examination, unless the Executive Director grants such permission in writing. Conditions may be imposed for requests that involve royalties, reproduction rights, copyrights, costs of reproduction, or credit to the museum or donors.

### **Digital Access**

The New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education may provide access to collections records and images on the Internet. The museum will review such records before adding them to any public database. Museum staff, in collaboration with the collections committee, will determine what information may be published on the Internet.

Records may be excluded from Internet access when any of the following apply:

1. Ownership is unclear.
2. Copyright is unresolved.
3. Information is protected by law.
4. Images or information may be sensitive.

The museum may consider other criteria when reviewing information for Internet access, such as completeness and accuracy of the record, research status, and quality or condition of the object. The museum will not publish on the Internet deaccessioned objects, donor information, values and sensitive site locations. The collections committee will review public objections to objects or images on museum Internet sites.

## **Photography and Photographic Collections**

### **Permission to Photograph**

The museum allows photography for non-commercial purposes within its long-term exhibitions. Photography is prohibited in temporary loan exhibitions except where the contract explicitly allows photography or owners of objects have given permission to photograph. Tripods and floodlights may not be used without permission from the Executive Director.

The Executive Director may authorize still or moving photography, with tripods and artificial lights, in any gallery where not prohibited by contract or by endangerment to collections, for educational or promotional purposes.

### **Reserved Rights**

The New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education reserves all intellectual property rights that it owns in regard to its photographic collections. Ownership of photographs of collection items does not imply permission to reproduce or publish such materials, although the Executive Director may assign these rights in writing. The museum reserves the right to restrict photography of copyrighted, culturally sensitive, or physically endangered materials.

### **Requests for Images**

The museum will provide images in print, slide, or digital formats to interested persons upon request, subject to availability, staff time, and costs. The museum will maintain an established fee schedule for image reproduction and provide the fee schedule to the public upon request.

### **Reproduction**

An applicant must request in advance permission to reproduce images and items from museum collections in print, film, digital, Internet, or other formats or media. Neither permission to photograph nor the purchase of an image constitutes permission to reproduce. Individuals or organizations requesting authorization to reproduce images of collection items must agree to give due and proper credit to the museum in all publications. Applicants may obtain fee schedules and regulations from museum staff.

### **Museum Archives**

The institutional archives of the institution are the published and unpublished texts, data, and records relevant to the history and operations of the museum. Items suitable for museum archiving include correspondence, exhibition records, contracts, grant proposals, press releases, still and moving images, blueprints, and similar materials.

The collections committee will determine the content of the archive and may pre-approve categories of documents and related materials for accession. The originating staff may screen items before submitting them to the collections section for processing. The originating individual may retain records in categories pre-approved for the archives until they are no longer in active use. The collections manager will accession, document, and care for those records selected for permanent retention like museum collections. No one shall dispose of records previously determined to be of value for the museum archives, except through the deaccession process.

## **Inventory**

Periodic inventory of the collection is necessary to ensure the ability to locate individual pieces and to assess the condition of objects. Collections staff will devise a system of inventory that is suited to the size of the collection and includes appropriate checks and balances. The collections committee will approve the inventory plan. The museum will retain inventory lists and records permanently.

## **Loans**

A loan is the temporary physical transfer of material without transfer of ownership. Loans may be outgoing from the museum's collections or incoming to the museum for specified purposes.

### **Outgoing Loans**

The New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education will lend objects from collections for temporary exhibition, conservation, identification, research, or related educational purposes. Loans normally will be made only to nonprofit organizations with similar mission who adhere to generally recognized professional museum standards. Except for purposes of conservation, identification, or research, loans will not be made to individuals. Loans will not be made for commercial purposes.

The Executive Director and the Collections Manager have authority to approve outgoing loans. Decision to lend an object will be made after the Executive Director and the Collections Manager agree to the loan. Outgoing loan activity must be reported to the collections committee. Loan requests for objects with an estimated value in excess of \$10,000 must be approved by the collections committee and board of directors. All loan requests will be evaluated in regard to the following criteria:

1. The borrower's intended use
2. Condition of the object and potential deterioration of the object due to proposed use
3. Duration of the loan
4. Conditions of the borrower's physical plant and facilities
5. Security
6. Level of professional handling
7. Insurance coverage
8. Transportation
9. The museum's needs during the loan period

Request for loans must be made in writing at least 30 days in advance of the loan period. Loaned objects may not be forwarded to another borrower without the written permission of the New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education. Loans are subject to the availability of museum staff.

Loans will be made for up to two years, and the Executive Director of the museum, after consultation with the Collections Manager and collections committee, may renew the loan twice. Requests for more than two renewals require approval of the board of directors. The museum will not issue



permanent loans.

Borrower will insure the loan under its policy and forward a certificate of insurance to the museum or will reimburse the museum for the cost of insurance.

The object may not be altered, conserved, cleaned, or repaired during the loan without written permission from the museum. Loan items may not be photographed or used for any commercial purpose without written permission from the museum.

Borrower must arrange and pay for shipping both directions for the loan by methods approved by the museum. Packing for return shipping must be in the same manner as the original shipping. Borrower may be required to pay all costs of preparing items for shipping.

The museum should receive credit for all loan items placed in the public domain through exhibition or publication. Acknowledgement should credit the New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education.

Appropriate loan forms shall prescribe the procedure for all loans. A complete record of the loan transaction shall be kept as a part of the museum's permanent records.

The New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education retains the right to revoke an outgoing loan for cause and with notice to the borrower.

### **Incoming Loans**

The New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education will receive loans from individuals and institutions for purposes of exhibition, identification, examination, research, or education.

The Executive Director and the Collections Manager have authority to approve incoming loans. Decision to borrow an object will be made after the Executive Director and the collections manager agree to the incoming loan. Incoming loan activity must be reported to the collections committee.

Loans are limited to two years' duration, and the Executive Director may authorize one renewal of up to two years' time. No indefinite or long-term loans shall normally be accepted. The board of directors, upon the recommendation of the collections committee, may approve longer-term loans in special situations. The museum will not store or care for items belonging to individuals or institutions falling outside regular incoming loan requirements.

All borrowed objects must be covered by a written agreement signed by the lender and borrower. The loan form must give a detailed description of each object, state the manner in which the object will be used, the terms of the loan, and the dates the loan will be in effect. Loan forms shall become part of the museum's permanent records.

The museum will exercise the same care with objects on loan as it does with its own objects. No portion of an incoming loan will be transferred to a location or person that has

not previously been approved in writing by the lender. Borrower will undertake no modification of the object by cleaning, conservation, alteration, or repair without written prior permission of the lender.

Unless otherwise specified by the lender in writing, the museum assumes the right to photograph the loan object for purposes of publicity, catalogue, or educational purposes.

The museum currently does not insure its collections beyond its current building. If the lender maintains his or her own insurance, the museum must be supplied with a certificate of insurance naming the museum as an additional insured or waiving subrogation against the museum.

Objects that are damaged or lost while on loan to New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education will immediately be documented in writing and the lending institution or individual notified.

### **Unclaimed Loans and Abandoned Property**

The museum shall make systematic and diligent attempts to contact the original owner or heirs of unclaimed loan material and to facilitate its return. If such searches are unsuccessful, the museum will follow New Mexico state statutes regarding unclaimed property.

### **Temporary Custody**

The Executive Director and the Collections Manager exclusively have the authority to accept objects into the museum's temporary custody, not to exceed 90 days, for purposes such as identification, research, possible donation, or potential loan. All objects thus received will be documented with a temporary custody receipt signed by the owner and the receiving museum official. The temporary custody receipt should inform the lender that the object may not be covered by the museum's insurance.

All materials deposited with the museum for purposes of informal identification are not to be left on the museum's premises for more than 30 days. The museum accepts no responsibility for notification of individuals for the return of such deposits. Items not claimed within 90 days of deposit will be disposed of according to the laws of the state of New Mexico.

The museum will notify the depositor within 30 days of the museum's decision regarding objects left in the temporary custody of the museum for the purpose of consideration for acquisition or loan. Items not claimed within 90 days of deposit will be disposed of according to the laws of the state of New Mexico.

### **Risk Management and Insurance**

Risk management for museum collections requires the identification and elimination or reduction of factors that may cause loss, damage, or deterioration of collections. This includes potential hazards such as vandalism, human error, mechanical or operational failure, pests, and natural disasters.

Effective risk management is the responsibility of the Executive Director, who will attempt to

minimize loss or damage to collections through established collections management practices.

It is the policy of the New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education periodically to evaluate and provide remedies to risks through the strategic planning process, to develop and consistently apply an integrated pest management plan and disaster preparedness plan, as well as fire, safety, and security procedures. Once in place, these plans and procedures will be periodically updated.

The objects in a museum will naturally incur exposure to risks of damage or loss as they are used for their intended purposes. These risks can occur when an object is on exhibit or on loan, in transit, in storage, or while being studied, handled, or conserved. The goal of the risk management policy is to minimize these risks.

Museum staff should be aware of the museum's risk management processes and comply with risk management policies and procedures.

The New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education aspires to acquire insurance coverage for its permanent collections, as well as objects on loan or in the custody of the museum, to cover probable loss at any one time due to theft, negligence, or catastrophe.

Anyone discovering damage to an object should immediately report the incident to the Executive Director and the collections manager. The collections manager will fully document the circumstances and nature of the damage.

Anyone discovering an object missing should immediately report the incident to the Executive Director or the collections manager. The collections manager will fully document the loss. The Executive Director will determine whether the loss was by theft. If the loss was by theft, the Executive Director may inform the city police and file a loss report with the insurance carrier.

## **Responsibilities of Staff and Board**

### **Ethics**

Staff and board members of the New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education are committed to upholding current standards of professional ethics in the museum community and adhering to laws and regulations regarding collections management and care.

### **Standards of Conduct**

In all activities employees and board members shall act with integrity and in accordance with all museum policies. At no time shall any staff or board member knowingly misrepresent the mission, policies, or programs of the museum.

### **Personal Collecting**

The personal acquiring, collecting, and owning of objects is not in itself unethical, and can enhance professional knowledge and judgment. However, the acquisition and management of a personal collection of a museum staff member can create an ethical question. Staff members may not collect

in competition with the museum and to its detriment. Staff members may not commingle personal and museum collections nor divert museum resources to care for personal collections. The New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education shall not maintain or insure collections of staff.

Employees shall not act as dealers (buy and sell objects for profit on a regular basis) in any objects, images, or materials related to the mission of the New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education, act on behalf of a dealer, accept outside employment for a dealer, or retain an interest in a dealer's business.

Board members and members of the collections committee shall not use their positions, or the information and access gained from their positions, for personal or financial gain. Board members and collection committee members shall not knowingly compete with the museum in any personal collecting activity, nor shall they be construed as representing the museum while engaged in any personal collecting activity.

### **Appraisals**

Museum employees shall not perform appraisals. The exception to this principle is appraisal for internal use by the museum, such as insurance evaluations. Any such appraisal shall represent an honest and objective judgment and shall indicate how the judgment was reached. If the museum offers referrals to the public, then it must provide multiple referrals without preference.

### **Authentication**

Although museum employees are barred from appraising objects, knowledgeable and informed staff may help identify an object based on their expertise in the field. Staff members shall make it clear to the public that such identifications are not appraisals that no financial or insurance value should be based on such identifications, and that secondary identifications are often warranted. Museum employees may assist a private individual with research, but employees shall not issue a certificate of authentication.

Based upon their professional knowledge and expertise, museum employees may provide the public with advice about the care of their private collections. If questions exceed the bounds of a staff member's personal capabilities, they shall refer those questions to other appropriate museum professionals, such as conservators. If the museum offers a referral to another museum professional, it must provide multiple referrals without preference.

### **Truth in Presentation**

It is the responsibility of the museum and its staff to present the best current information about the collections it holds. Intellectual honesty and objectivity in the presentation of objects is the duty of every professional. The stated origin of objects or attribution of work shall reflect a thorough and honest investigation by museum staff and shall yield promptly to change with the advent of new facts or analysis.

### **Employees and Intellectual Property**

Publications, lectures, manuscripts, and all other materials involving collection, research, interpretation, or other activities regarding museum collections, prepared by employees within the scope of their employment at the museum, and/or any scholarly works produced by an employee as a result of financial support from the museum, are the sole property of the museum except as authorized in writing by the Executive Director.

Employees shall confer with the Executive Director before agreeing to author, as a private individual, any publication that substantially draws upon collections materials prepared in the scope of employment with the museum.

### **Review of Policy**

The collections committee shall review this policy annually. Substantive changes to the policy shall be submitted to the Board of Directors of the New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education for approval.

## **Adoption**

The Board of Directors of the New Mexico Holocaust Museum and Gellert Center for Education adopted this Collections Management Policy at its meeting on this 15<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2020.

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Secretary