



## **AAM Receives Kresge, IMLS Grants to Re-Design Museum Accreditation Program**

Objective is to Streamline Process, Maintain Rigorous Standards

WASHINGTON, D.C., (February 3, 2009) — The American Association of Museums (AAM) has been awarded two major grants to fund the thorough study and re-design of its museum Accreditation Program, the field's foremost barometer of museum excellence. AAM received a \$100,000 grant from The Kresge Foundation and a \$50,000 grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to support its initiative on accreditation. Created nearly 40 years ago, the Accreditation Program reinforces and promotes best practices, institutional ethics and the highest standards of museum operations.

"These generous grants will enable us to meet one of our prime objectives: to make the accreditation program more accessible to museums of all types and sizes, while maintaining the high standards expected of all accredited museums," said Ford W. Bell, AAM president.

AAM will collaborate with affiliated museum associations and consult with organizations beyond the museum field that also have accreditation, standards and assessment programs. With the benefit of their experience, AAM will develop a network of mutual support and cross-promotion.

"Accreditation has, to this point, perhaps been onerous and cumbersome," Bell continued. "The outcome of this re-examination will be a more streamlined but no less exacting program that will meet the needs of all museums."

As presently constituted, the Accreditation Program is a three-step process. First, the museum implements a comprehensive self-study. The second step is a thorough review by a team of peers, followed by the evaluation of the two reports by the Accreditation Commission, an independent, autonomous group of museum professionals, which ultimately determines if a museum is worthy of accreditation.

Museums are evaluated on all aspects of operations — governance, financial stability, collections stewardship, educational and public programs, transparency and public accountability, among others. Of the estimated 17,500 museums in the United States, currently 777 are accredited.

“We are pleased to support AAM’s efforts to lay the groundwork for a full revision of its accreditation program,” said Rip Rapson, president and CEO of The Kresge Foundation. “We appreciate AAM reaching out to affiliated professional museum associations and realize the impact that potential shared standards will have within the field.”

This grant represents the latest manifestation of the longstanding support of museum excellence on the part of IMLS.

“Museums are part of the lifeblood of our communities. They are centers of excellence and this program assists them in maintaining those high standards,” said Anne-Imelda Radice, Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

### **About The Kresge Foundation**

*The Kresge Foundation, based in Detroit, is a national, private foundation that seeks to influence the quality of life for future generations by creating access and opportunity in underserved communities, improving the health of low-income*

*people, supporting artistic expression, assisting in the revitalization of Detroit, and advancing methods for dealing with global climate change.*

### **About the Institute of Museum and Library Services**

*The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 122,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development. To learn more about the Institute, please visit [www.imls.gov](http://www.imls.gov).*

### **About AAM**

*The American Association of Museums has been bringing museums together since 1906, helping to develop standards and best practices, gathering and sharing knowledge, and providing advocacy on issues of concern to the entire museum community. With more than 15,000 individual, 3,000 institutional and 300 corporate members, AAM is dedicated to ensuring that museums remain a vital part of the American landscape, connecting people with the greatest achievements of the human experience, past, present and future. For more information, visit [www.aam-us.org](http://www.aam-us.org).*

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