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*Exploring Our Heritage
Shaping Our Community*

Charette Application Papers

Rolling review – no due dates

Please call in advance before submitting an application. Charettes are a flexible strategic and interpretive planning service.

Types of Charette

1. Interpretive Planning for Communities (Cultural Tourism)

Following a site visit by MHC Director, Michael Bouman, a team of consultants spends a day or a day and a half working with community leaders to begin a process of interpretive planning. Examples of charettes following this model include the Salem Area Community Betterment Association in 2001, the Sedalia Heritage Foundation in 2005, and Springfield's Urban District Alliance (for Route 66 tourism) in 2005. Also the Waverly Arts Council in 2005, which took steps to create an interpretive plan and "Virtual Museum" for the small town of Waverly.

Applicant is an organization, such as the Betterment Association, Chamber of Commerce, or an umbrella organization for local cultural groups.

2. Interpretive Project Planning for Humanities Institutions (historical societies, historic houses, museums, umbrella organizations, libraries)

Following a site visit by MHC Director, Michael Bouman, a team of consultants makes the first of two planned visits to assess opportunities to modernize the methods of display, interpretation, and public involvement. The emphasis during the first visit is the study of potential. Several weeks later the consultants return to present ideas for possible projects. Priorities are set by the sponsoring institution. The outcome of this kind of charette is a general design for a project that will accomplish new modes of experiential, interactive learning at the institution, possibly including web site enhancements or "virtual museum" creation. It is hoped that the projects will be developed into applications for MHC implementation funding as part of the **21st by 21** initiative, which seeks to modernize interpretive practices throughout the state in time for the statehood bicentennial in 2021.

Applicants should use one of the two different application forms that follow.



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Charette Application: Interpretive Planning for Communities (Cultural Tourism)

Sponsoring Organization name, address, telephone/e-mail
(Must be incorporated in the State of Missouri)

Contact person's name, title, address, telephone, e-mail

What is the population and geographical area to be served?

Briefly describe the need or opportunity for interpretive planning. Is there a particular historical theme to be addressed? Are there several ideas that need to be harmonized into one plan?

What do you expect to gain from the Charette?

Please attach the following to your application:

- A copy of any of the following: IRS non-profit status letter, or Form 1023 – Application for Recognition of Exemption, or Non-Profit Incorporation Papers – State of Missouri, or Annual Registration Form – State of Missouri Secretary of State’s Office.
- A list of board members, indicating officers as well as the professional affiliation (or professional skills) of each board member.
- A balance sheet (statement of revenues, expenses, and fund balance) for the most recent fiscal year. Lacking that, a budget for the current year.



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Charette Application: Interpretive Planning for Humanities Institutions (museums, historic houses, historical societies, umbrella organizations, libraries)

Sponsoring Organization name, address, telephone/e-mail
(Must be incorporated in the State of Missouri)

Contact person's name, title, address, telephone, e-mail

What is the population and geographical area served by this institution?

Does your organization want to work toward a pilot project that might be funded through the **21st by 21** initiative of the Missouri Humanities Council? Please explain. (The initiative seeks to statewide improvement of interpretive practices to 21st century standards by the statehood bicentennial of 2021. The purpose of the initiative is to dramatically increase public participation and support of local institutions.)

Briefly describe any existing use of **experiential, interactive learning** in your institution's programming. Do you have hands-on exhibits, living history presentations, sound or lighting effects to enhance displays?

Do you offer guided tours of your institution? If so, would it be fair to say that most of the interpretation is **verbal**, and is dependent on the knowledge of one or two key people? If you have **labels**, what sort of information is typically on them?

What are your hours of operation and how many visitors do you serve in a year?

Do you have regular visits by school classes?

Do you have a physical facility (museum, historic house, library)?

Are you interested in developing a “virtual museum” on the world wide web?

If you have a physical facility, does it have heating and air conditioning?

Do you have collections management or conservation problems?

If you have collections or objects on display, what do you think are the best features about your institution or its collections?

Please attach the following to your application:

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- A list of board members, indicating officers as well as the professional affiliation (or professional skills) of each board member.
- A balance sheet (statement of revenues, expenses, and fund balance) for the most recent fiscal year. Lacking that, a budget for the current year.

This is the end of the application form. There is no need to submit the pages that follow.

What Happens at a Charette?

A small group of consultants meets with the community leaders associated with the desired outcome, and they brainstorm together and learn about strategic planning and interpretive planning for cultural projects. The “leaders” may be board members and staff of an organization, or they may be town officials if the project involves community betterment or tourism. The local people generally number more than five and fewer than twenty.

The charette may begin as a moderated group discussion. Parts of a charette resemble a management seminar. There is a great deal of local participation. Consultants sometimes create group exercises to help people think creatively.

All charettes are focused on highlighting human assets as well as story assets and physical assets. The objective is to give focus and purpose to local creative energy so that good projects can come to life. The last part of a charette always identifies a variety of “baby steps” that the local people can undertake to establish confidence and motion toward larger objectives.

Almost every charette results in ideas that can be developed into grant applications to the Missouri Humanities Council.

What Does the Host Organization Do?

The host organization’s coordinator for the charette will work closely with the Humanities Council in the weeks leading up to the event. This time and effort on the part of the site coordinator is an “in-kind” contribution by the host organization to help match the funds expended by MHC. The host institution provides meeting space for up to 20 people and develops a packet of information and photographs, if possible, documenting the site or subject matter of the charette. The host institution provides basic supplies (pens, paper, easel, etc.), and arranges to have lunch catered in. These expenses are reimbursed by the Council.

What is the outcome of a charette?

The purpose of a charette is to bring a concentration of intelligence and creativity to a strategic challenge of an organization. The products of a charette are ideas:

- About your institution’s mission
- About networks of people who are willing to help your institution
- About things your institution can or should do to engage the public
- About ways of thinking that are “outside the envelope”
- About how your institution helps people think, learn, and grow

Every participant at the charette contributes intelligence and creativity. The out-of-town consultants provide specific kinds of expertise and they help local people see their

institution's potential with "new eyes." A charette often leads to an extended set of relationships:

- To other cultural institutions in the region
- To the arts and humanities councils, the State Historic Preservation Program, the State Archives, and to other sources of professional expertise
- To local, state, and national funders
- To renewed energy and a sense of progress at your institution.

Case Studies – types of charettes

Waverly Arts Council and Community History Project

A small town with bountiful stories in its past has no historical society or museum, but it has fine schools and a small group of adults who are diverse in their skills and talents when it comes to local history. The goal of this core group was to widen community participation in activities related to the town's history and heritage. A charette provided a workshop in caring for antique photographs and "scrapbooking." A brainstorming session revealed a depth of historical knowledge and material that would support a series of community history projects including oral history interviews and the creation, one topic at a time, of a "**Virtual Museum**" on the internet. A follow-up visit four months later helped the group review the many possible topics for the virtual museum, to consider the "Gold Standard" for experiential and interactive learning, and to select one topic for initial development. This topic was then outlined in detail, moving toward "action steps" for the group.

The group then began work with an assigned consultant who was on call to help the group find resources, speakers, workshops, etc. that would help further the project. The investment of local energy will put this group into position to write a grant application to fund the activities that will generate the first "room" of the Waverly Virtual Museum.

Heritage Interpretive Planning in Sedalia

The Sedalia Chamber of Commerce hosted a charette in 1999 to help define interpretive ideas for the development of the Katy Depot as a community center. The restoration of the old depot was ultimately accomplished with imagination and beauty. This project led directly to the development of a concept for a "Heritage Trail" through the city. Another charette in 2005 brought together the leaders of most of the cultural organizations in the Sedalia area. The purpose was to draft an interpretive plan to which all the organizations could subscribe. The charette helped the community leaders identify a priority need for them to meet regularly and see "the big picture." Six months later the group was poised to tackle the large question of a comprehensive interpretive plan.

Route 66 Tourism in Springfield

In 2005, Springfield's Urban District Alliance convened a charette involving community leaders with an interest in Springfield's heritage as the "home" of Route 66. The group spent a day and a half reviewing the cultural assets, landmarks, and people who could help make the Route 66 memories come to life. The group also had to look for ways

that the Route 66 story could be given meaning for generations of people who didn't grow up with the lore of that highway. Otherwise, "Route 66" would be a story without traction for the cultural road ahead.

Birth of a Historic House in Columbia

Over a period of several years, the house that had belonged to John William Boone had been eyed by local historians as a prize that must not be lost to development. "Blind Boone" was an important historical figure in American popular music from the 1880s into the 1920s. His phenomenal success as a touring musician enabled him to help the African-American community in Columbia. His former residence was that last remaining structure of what once was the African-American neighborhood. The home was in poor condition and was being operated as a business when a local committee formed itself to avert its eventual destruction.

An initial charette demonstrated the feasibility of restoring the house as a Victorian residence and adding a new structure on the property to expand the potential for programming and interpretation. The board of the John William Boone foundation reorganized itself to move toward this vision and, when the City of Columbia acquired the property, undertook a lengthy project to rehabilitate the structure. Another charette took place in 2005 to create a new vision of community history projects related to the Boone legacy and Boone County African-American history. The charette created a vision of "baby steps" that would give the organization a better public profile in the years it will take to establish a cultural center at the Blind Boone Home.

Shaping a New Vision for the Laura Ingalls Wilder Home

The Laura Ingalls Wilder/Rose Wilder Home and Museum in Mansfield asked for a charette in 2004 to help create new, modernized interpretive plans for an institution that attracts 60,000 visitors a year. Consultants from several disciplines looked at ways and means of learning more about the visitors, upgrading existing displays, and working toward some new modes of interpretation.

Shaping a New Vision for the Champ Clark Home

In 2003 the Champ Clark Honeyshuck Restoration organization achieved the long-sought accomplishment of a fully-restored home, a one-room-at-a-time project that had taken twenty-five years. Suddenly, the organization saw a generation's work as just the first phase in its history. What should come next? A charette in 2004 assessed the physical assets, collections, and program potential for the house. The immediate need, it turned out, was for enhanced building security systems. When that was accomplished, the organization turned its attention to new interpretive planning in 2005 and 2006.