



# Putting it on Paper: Incorporating MOUs into Your Community Engagement Plans

**Welcome!**

**The webinar will begin at 2:00 p.m. CT.**

**While you wait:**

1. Download PDFs of the webinar slides and handout under the “Handouts” tab of your control bar.
2. Confirm that your speakers are turned on and your audio is working by doing a sound check in the “Audio” tab of the control bar. Having problems? Exit and restart the webinar or switch to “phone call” for a phone number and access code to hear the audio through your telephone.

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On our webpage:

- Webinars
- Workshops
- Grants and Fundraising
- Helpful Resources
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# Museum Services

Laura Casey

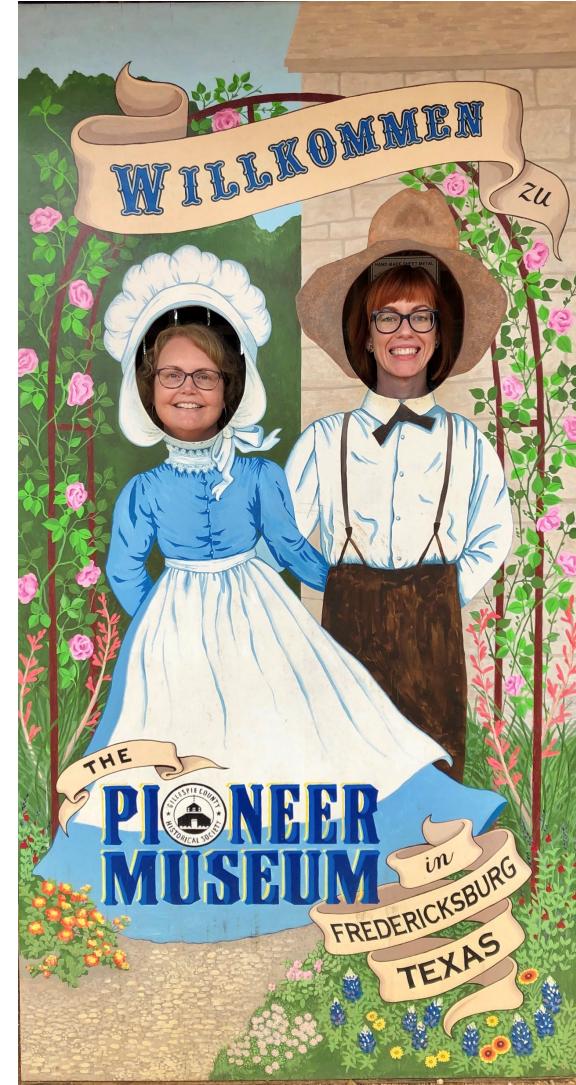
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## Upcoming Free Museum Services Webinars

[www.thc.texas.gov/museumwebinars](http://www.thc.texas.gov/museumwebinars)

### **Inclusive Museum Leadership**

- Thursday, May 6, 10:00 a.m. CT

### **Exploring Social Justice on a Limited Budget**

- Thursday, May 13, 10:00 a.m. CT

### **Moving from Theory to Practice: Doing the Work of DEAI**

- Thursday, May 20, 10:00 a.m. CT

## Upcoming Free Webinars from Other Orgs

[www.thc.texas.gov/museumconnections](http://www.thc.texas.gov/museumconnections)

- *Putting Shared Leadership into Practice*, April 21, 1:00 p.m. CT, Candid
- *The Great Reopening*, April 21, 1:00 p.m. CT, Gateway Ticketing
- *Using Streaming Content to Expand Audiences and Income*, April 21, 2:00 p.m. CT, TCA
- *Live/Streamed Program Accessibility*, April 22, 1:00 p.m. CT, Museum Learning Hub
- *CEO Roundtable on Equity and Inclusion Efforts: How Did I Get Convinced?*, April 22, 2:00 p.m. CT, CCLI
- *Project Management in Museums: Herding Cats and Other Skills*, April 22, 7:00 p.m. CT, National EMP Network
- *Overcoming Organizational Fears of Failure*, April 28, 9:00 a.m. CT, ICSC
- *Facilitating Successful Youth Programs in a Virtual World*, April 28, 11:00 a.m. CT, NEMA
- *Accessibility in Digital Collections*, April 29, 1:00 p.m. CT, Museum Learning Hub
- *NEH Virtual Grants Workshop: Museums*, April 29 ,1:00 p.m. CT, NEH

# Valerie Wade



# **Putting it on Paper: Incorporating MOUs into Your Community Engagement Plan**

**Valerie Wade**

**Lynnfield Historical Consulting, LLC**

**Thursday, April 22, 2021**

# Overview

Collaborative opportunities between museums, historical societies, community organizations, and individuals sometimes present themselves in unique circumstances. A memorandum of understanding is an important but often overlooked tool that can facilitate the logistics for various collaborations. In this webinar, we will cover the essential components of a memorandum of understanding and evaluate examples of MOUs. We will explore how these documents can be used creatively to encourage community engagement and assess various partnerships over time.



# Agenda



- 1. Introduction**
  - **What is an MOU?**
  - **MOUs vs Contracts**
- 2. Essential Parts of an MOU**
- 3. Partnership Example**
- 4. A Not-So-Great MOU**
- 5. A Solid MOU**
- 6. Q & A**

**Poll**  
Who here has written or  
assisted with a  
memorandum of  
understanding before?

# What Is a Memorandum of Understanding?

- An MOU is a formal document that communicates an agreement between two or more parties. It indicates the intent of all involved parties to move forward with a project or partnership.
- MOUs are typically not legally binding, but they can provide a foundation for more negotiations or for more detailed agreements in the future.

# MOUs vs. Contracts

- Collaborative vs. One-Sided
- Simple language vs. Legalese
- Emphasis on brevity and practicality
- MOUs set the stage for more in-depth paperwork later.
- Contracts are legally binding and enforceable.



# Essential Parts of a Memorandum of Understanding

Not all MOUs are the same! That's the magic of these documents. There are essential parts of all successful MOUs, but each one will vary based on the project and involved parties.

- Introduction / Document Purpose
- Project Background or Summary
- Respective Mission Statements & Goals
- Key Areas of Shared Interest
- Project Logistics / Roles & Responsibilities
- Provisions (Handling of Confidential Information, Disputes, Amendments, Terminations, etc.)
- Designation of Representatives
- Administration & Signatures

# Essential Parts of a Memorandum of Understanding

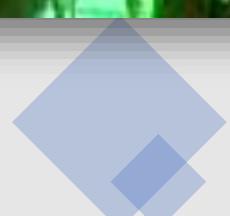
Remember!

MOUs are tools for communication and good faith in your outreach efforts. Everyone should feel involved in the process, and everyone should come away with something at the end of the project.

Having all these sections in the document are less important than building a positive relationship with our communities through partnerships and projects.

# Partnership Example:

The Emerald City History Museum and the Emerald City Fashion Society



# The Emerald City History Museum

In their new strategic plan, the Emerald City History Museum has decided to do a better job of preserving bygone eras of the city's aesthetic history. Although green has been the official hue for a while, there was a significant point in the city's history where red ruled supreme. Archivists and curators on staff have been having trouble finding art, housewares, and clothing to document Emerald City's Red Era. They recognize they need some help locating these materials.



# The Emerald City Fashion Society

The Emerald City Fashion Society prides itself on being the experts on all sartorial topics. A few of the older members of the Society have recently donated an extensive collection of clothing, jewelry, and even art from the city's Red Era. However, the Society is not quite sure how best to organize, preserve, and display these items. Some of the fabrics are quite old and fragile, and some of the art needs a bit of restoration. They feel that if the citizenry of Emerald City could see some of these treasures, the popularity of the Society might grow.



# A Partnership Opportunity!

The Museum's Director and the Society's President happen to meet at a social event where they casually discuss their respective dilemmas. The Fashion Society is willing to donate some of its Red Era items to the History Museum for future exhibits. In exchange, the Museum will help the Society catalogue its Red Era Collection.

They decide that a memorandum of understanding will help them move forward with this new partnership.

# POLL

**What do you think is NOT an essential component for an MOU for the Emerald City project?**

- A. A proposed general timeline for completing a thorough inventory of the Red Era Collection
- B. An outline of the responsibilities of each organization regarding the project
- C. A list of all the items in the Red Era Collection
- D. Contact information for key participants for the project

# A Not-So-Great MOU Example

Here are a few excerpts from the very first draft of the MOU between these two groups.

## Introduction

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms and understanding between the Emerald City History Museum and the Emerald City Fashion Society to collaborate in enhancing cultural preservation in our city.

HOW will it enhance cultural preservation? This isn't specific enough. Add some text explaining what this project is about.

## Background

The Emerald City History Museum (ECHM) will be adding items belonging to the Emerald City Fashion Society (ECFS) to its collections.

The Background section doesn't adequately explain how this project came to be or why these two groups are choosing to work together.

## Goals

Both ECHM and ECFS want to use this project to educate the community about a bygone era in Emerald City's history.

The Goals section should clearly state the individual missions of each party, and explain what each party intends to accomplish with this project.

## Roles and Responsibilities

ECHM staff will help ECFS conduct an inventory on items related to the Red Era in Emerald City's history. Certain items will be donated and accessioned.

Be sure this section isn't one-sided. Don't make it seem like one group is contributing more than another. Active voice, not passive voice, is useful here.

# A Solid MOU Example

Here are a few excerpts from the final draft of the MOU between these two groups.

## Introduction

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms between the Emerald City History Museum (ECHM) and the Emerald City Fashion Society (ECFS) to collaborate on the preservation and documentation of the ECFS's collection of Red Era items. By working together to care for these items and share some of them with the public, we will enhance cultural preservation in our city.

## Background

ECHM wants to develop more exhibits on little-known aspects of Emerald City's history. ECFS wants to be sure it properly documents and cares for the historic items that recently came into its possession. To this end, each party has decided to work together to share caretaking responsibilities for items in ECFS's Red Era Collection.

## Goals

ECHM is Emerald City's foremost advocate for historical preservation and education. ECHM's mission is to collect, document, and celebrate the history of Emerald City and its immediate surroundings. ECFS began three decades ago as a professional group for Emerald City's seamstresses, tailors, milliners, and cobblers. Today, ECFS's mission is to maintain the high standards of Emerald City's fashion culture through educational and social events. Both groups recognize the inherent value of the irreplaceable items from the Red Era. The goal of this project is to use this collection as a tool for long-term public history education through exhibits at ECHM, as well as to assist ECFS with its own preservation procedures.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Each group will share its knowledge and resources to care for this unique collection. The initial proposed timeline for this project is one year, from May 2021 to May 2022, at which time we will assess our progress and determine next steps. ECHM staff will help ECFS conduct an inventory on items related to the Red Era in Emerald City's history. Members of ECFS will offer their expertise on textiles and jewelry throughout the inventorying and cataloging processes so that we all can ascertain which items are best donated to the museum, and which ones are to be left in the stewardship of ECFS. The project will begin with both groups drafting a potential budget for storage materials and other necessities for the project.

There are all kinds of templates and examples of MOUs online. Some are very formal and read like traditional legal contracts. Others are quite casual and reminiscent of an interoffice memo. No matter the format, **the point is to create a USEFUL document in the spirit of collaboration** that clearly communicates the contributions of each party.

Happy Collaborating!



# A Few Closing Thoughts

## Q & A // Discussion

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### Let's Stay in Touch!

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Thank  
you