

In 1996, The Museum and Library Services Act established the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and defined a museum as:

A public or private nonprofit agency or institution organized on a permanent basis for essentially educational or aesthetic purposes, which, utilizing a professional staff, owns or utilizes tangible objects, cares for them, and exhibits them to the public on a regular basis.

Statement of Purpose

The Aztec Museum and Pioneer Village, a non-profit, member-supported private corporation, collects objects related to the Four Corners region (“the region”), especially eastern San Juan County, New Mexico, in order to preserve them for the future, to study them to obtain knowledge about the community’s past, and to interpret the objects and the resulting body of knowledge to the public. It is the larger purpose of this Museum to aid the public in understanding the past as a prelude to the present and future, and to give to the community tools for informed decision making and problem solving.

- **Collection**

The Museum collects objects related to human activities, thoughts, and endeavors in the region. Collecting is further governed by the ability of the Museum to provide proper care for the object. Systematic collections plans will also consider specific interpretive and research needs.

- **Preservation**

Collecting mandates a reciprocal responsibility to care for the objects collected. The Museum must be able to provide a physical environment which, at the least, does not contribute to the object’s deterioration. The goal is to ensure the object’s integrity, so that it can fulfill the Museum’s purposes.

- **Study**

Research forms the primary source of information for all Museum programs. Further, as much as possible, objects are to be made available for researchers other than the Museum staff.

- **Interpretation**

The information derived from research is a tool for the Museum to expand the public’s understanding of the area’s past, especially as it relates to the present and future. Methods of interpretation include exhibits, tours, special events, publications, and outreach programs.

Collections Scope

The Aztec Museum's Collections Scope is dictated by its Statement of Purpose. The Museum will accept donations of objects that:

- are not encumbered by copyrights or other restrictions, and are outright and unconditional gifts from persons who have legal ownership of the object. (The Museum may accept an encumbered object if it is intended for a foreseeable, finite use, and other similar objects are not available or are not in acceptable condition.)
- relate to the region's material culture, persons or events. (Unrelated objects may be accepted, provided that related items are not available or in acceptable condition, and provided that the object is typical of and accurately reflects the region's life, culture, people, places, or events.)
- possess potential for research or interpretative uses.
- will not endanger visitors or other objects in the collection, either by physical properties, infestation, size, or costly conservation or security demands that sap staff, space, and financial resources.
- will not have the effect of giving a commercial endorsement.

Collections Categories

- **A primary object** is of the best quality and condition available, and is to be used for the purpose of interpretation through exhibition.
- **A secondary object** may be of lesser quality or condition, may duplicate other objects in the collections, or may lack a direct connection to the region's culture, people, or events. Secondary objects may be used in exhibits, for study, or for loans to other institutions.
- **An expendable object** is one which duplicates objects in the collections, or whose conservation needs would be more costly than the object warrants. Such objects can be offered to another collecting institution, or can be used by the Museum in its outreach or in-house "hands-on" programs.

