

EDUCATION AND INTERPRETION POLICY

Museum of Riverside

[adoption date]

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APPENDIX A: RESOURCES

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Public programs developed by education staff support the Museum of Riverside's (Museum) mission and core values and promote understanding of the unique forces that have created and continue to shape the City of Riverside and the region, a region historically known for its diversity. This includes investigation into Riverside's history, appreciation of Native American and other cultural groups who have influenced Riverside, and understanding the region's natural environment. Through adherence to best practices in interpretation,¹ a focus on specific strengths, and continual adaptation to visitors' needs, the education staff are committed to offering authentic and compelling programs for diverse audiences of all ages. While the education staff emphasize programming for children, "education" is integral to exhibition development and experience planning throughout the Museum's operations. As the Museum transforms through renovation and reopening of the downtown site, education staff will engage audiences through outreach, off-site programs, and utilizing the Museum's historic properties.

SECTION 2: PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of the Museum's education staff is to guide participants on their journey for knowledge, tapping into their individual experiences as they create meaning for themselves. All visitors bring with them a wealth of experiences, beliefs, and points of view as well as specific learning needs and styles that assist them in forming meaning. There is no one path nor one correct answer. Thus, the role of the Museum's educational programs is not to dictate what individuals should or should not believe, but rather, to enhance participants' learning by providing the necessary tools and support as they engage in the process of discovery. As Eleanor Duckworth, Professor Emeritus at Harvard School of Education, states, this room for discovery allows for "a messier, unfinished, and deeper form of understanding."

All individuals, whether they be staff, volunteers, or visitors are active participants in this exchange and bring their own unique experiences that contribute to the learning process. The Museum's pedagogical practices rely on this idea that any teaching is a conversation, encouraging constant questioning and requiring the educator to listen and guide learners in making connections between their lives and new information. The Museum aims for the goal of children leaving with a stronger foundation for their futures and adults leaving with a curiosity

¹ "Interpretation" in this document refers to the creative processes that museums employ to build audience engagement and improve learning. It does not refer to "interpretation" in the sense of language translation.

that nourishes lifelong learning and supports their ongoing emotional, cognitive, and social development.

SECTION 3: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

The education staff's values are reflected below and are developed in practice in the objectives outlined in the Museum's current strategic plan.

3.1 Professionalism and Inclusivity

Education staff practice up-to-date interpretive and museology strategies through the application of appropriate and contemporary educational models and interpretive strategies.

Staff value inclusivity of all visitors and implement differentiated programs and exhibitions that maximize visitors' engagement with content.

Education staff act as advocates for inclusion of the visitor voice in all exhibitions and programs. For best outcomes, staff will work with Riverside's communities rather than separately from them. Further, staff encourage programs and interpretation within the galleries that may differ from approaches traditionally adopted in museums. Staff will consider the impact of narratives and how the museum has positioned groups traditionally less involved in writing their own history.

3.2 Training

Staff engage in ongoing study of evolving interpretive, museological, and teaching strategies through participation in formal or informal continuing education opportunities.

3.3 Sustainability

Education staff ensure that the Museum's adherence to sustainability includes and extends beyond careful use of natural resources. Working to extend creatively the well known tripartite definition of sustainability (people, planet, profits), education staff emphasize cultural sustainability in the presentation of the history and culture of the region in ways that give voice to living cultures and provide context for understanding diversity and regional history.

Staff adhere to socially and environmentally responsible policies and practices that include reduction of waste, use of recycled and reusable materials whenever possible, and abstaining from public programming that encourages waste of resources. Staff identify opportunities to interpret these choices for the public and refresh messaging about sustainable resource use to keep pace with changing resource science and technology.

3.4 Authorities

Education staff make optimum use of primary resources and rely upon primary resources before resorting to use of secondary resources. Living cultural and social groups that are the subject of any education program are included in planning, documentation, and presentation of programs. Reliance on primary sources includes preference for the voice and cultural expression of the ethnic, social, or historic group under study over secondary interpretive voices.

Education staff remind program planning teams that objectivity is not possible and is not to be equated with factual accuracy. All choices reflect a point of reference, including choices not to exhibit or not to present. Education staff ensure that points of view are recognized, examined critically, and revealed, as appropriate.

All primary resources, including specimens, live animals, artifacts, and objects are handled and cared for using accepted professional techniques and practices and in accordance with practices included in the Collections and Exhibitions Management Policies for living and education collections.

3.5 Supporting Staff

The education staff provides support to interns, volunteers, contract staff, and other adjunct supporters in the form of appropriate training, supervision, and engagement. Support staff, interns, and volunteers are provided with opportunities that are engaging, rewarding, and appropriate for varying skill levels, and are historically, culturally, or scientifically accurate.

Education staff work as part of integrated teams for content development, whether for exhibitions or public programs. Teams may comprise educators, curators, scholars, culture bearers, historic descendants, experience designers, artists, marketers, students, and all other contributors to program development.

3.6 Evaluation

Education staff take the lead in developing formative, summative, and other types of evaluative tools in order to gauge program efficacy, improve public engagement, and confirm that the Museum's curriculum-based programs are perceived as valuable by area educators. Evaluation encompasses an assessment of a visitor's overall Museum experience as well as determining whether specifically program-related educational goals were met. The Museum focuses on outcome-based evaluation, which measures benefits experienced by audiences and program participants, including changes in knowledge, skills, behaviors, and perceptions. It is predicated on articulation of desired outcomes at the start of program planning processes and definition of quantitative and qualitative mechanisms of assessment.

SECTION 4: INTERPRETIVE PRACTICES, CULTURAL ACCURACY, AND REPRESENTATION

The Education staff provide accurate representation and interpretation of cultural groups and individuals by engaging persons of specific cultures to serve as representatives of their cultures. Cultural interpretive programs, including any activities or demonstrations, are developed in conjunction with representatives of the culture being interpreted.

Education staff, thus, actively seek and maintain partnerships with a wide variety of cultural groups, institutions, and organizations in the region including, but not limited to:

- Sherman Indian Museum
- Japanese American Citizens League
- Riverside Museum Associates' Multicultural Council
- Hua Xia Chinese School
- African American Historical Society

- Save Our Chinatown Committee
- Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
- International Relations Council

4.1 First-Person Representation and Cultural Accuracy

Education staff does not participate in first-person representation or reenactment of any culture, unless they themselves are actual representatives of that culture. First person representation of cultural groups is carried out only by designated members of that cultural group. Exceptions may include narration including direct quotes, reported statements, or similar expressions of the voices of others based on well researched primary sources. Every effort will be made to identify individuals of the corresponding culture, age, gender, and/or with an appropriate accent to perform such narrations. In some cases, such as performances and large-scale historic reenactments, creative casting will be considered, in consultation with the culture that is the subject of the performance. Such performances must not detract from or in any way diminish or erase the lived experiences of that culture or nationality. All such narrations and performances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and rely on the Museum's commitment to diverse, equitable, accessible, and inclusive cultural interpretation.

4.2 Religious Practices

Museum programs do not reenact, replicate, or simulate religious or spiritual practices or ceremonies. Staff will adhere to this prohibition regardless of the authenticity or integrity of primary sources. Education staff ensure that no program is publicly misleading in this respect. This includes vigilance regarding the incorporation of objects, photo-documentation, or other records that may be prohibited by cultural strictures from being shared publicly. Religious ceremonies—for example, smudging or blessing ceremonies—may be performed only by authorized spiritual leaders.

4.3 Modes of Learning

Education staff recognize that audiences benefit from multiple forms of learning in museum environments, and staff design learning opportunities around a variety of educational models and theories. Learning opportunities range from pure play to provocation with intent to modify perceptions or change behavior to instruction with intent to expand cognitive skills. Various learning environments and multiple intelligences are also recognized, and education staff seek to provide a wide spectrum of opportunities from free choice learning to structured programs.

The variety of modes of learning also encompasses multi-sensory and kinesthetic approaches. Education staff ensure that approaches to each program are as diverse as is possible and practical. On planning teams, education staff function in part to remind the team that few visitors read or engage in all content; thus, content of value must be accessible in each part of every exhibition or program.

Educators design Museum programs with reliance on learning theories and concepts such as Constructivism, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and Bloom's Taxonomy, as well as an understanding of Piaget's developmental milestones for early childhood.

- Constructivism: Allows visitors to construct their own meaning from museum-provided content. Programs and interactive elements are designed with an

- understanding that all visitors will bring with them their own unique set of experiences and prior knowledge that informs these interactions with the museum.
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: Recognizes that physical and other basic human needs must be met before an individual can learn. This hierarchy also emphasizes the need to "belong" before learning can begin. This element of the hierarchy informs the education staff's belief that visitors must be greeted and welcomed by all "frontline" employees and recognized as belonging in the Museum.
- Bloom Taxonomy addresses varying levels of thought processes. Good exhibitions and structured programs will utilize varying levels of questioning from basic recall to higher level thinking tasks such as asking the visitor to evaluate, create, and synthesize information.
- Piaget's theory suggests that children move through four different stages of intellectual development each with increased sophistication. These stages of cognitive development include sensorimotor, birth to age 2; preoperational, ages 2-7; concrete operational, ages 7 to 11 years; and formal operational, adolescence to adulthood. All children go through each stage in the same order, and development is determined by biological age as well as interaction with the environment.

Emphases is placed on human interaction and the visitor experience. Gallery guides, docents and/or staff are present as often as possible to actively engage with visitors in gallery spaces and Nature Lab.

SECTION 5: PROGRAM EMPHASES

5.1 Core Content

Education programs are based on collections, exhibitions, and themes present within the Museum of Riverside and its associated sites. Education programs that are associated with specific exhibitions seek to reinforce themes and messages inherent in those exhibitions and engage visitors in relevant, contemporary issues. These include, but are not limited to, the following core-content areas:

- Natural history of the region: botany, earth sciences, zoological studies.
- Prehistory of Riverside: fossil records and archaeological evidence of first peoples.
- Early history of the founding of the city, regional history of Southern California and the state's beginnings.
- Contemporary issues: local Indigenous peoples, civil rights, and climate change.

Education staff, working with educators and other advisors, develop school tours to meet teachers' needs and are designed to align with current federal and California state educational standards and curriculum mandates. Special emphasis is placed on natural sciences and social studies curricula, with a focus on local and primary resources.

5.2 Recurring Programs

Examples of recurring and core programs include:

- Nature Lab
- Heritage House school programs

- Nature Study school program
- Riverside Arts Walk on First Thursdays
- First Sunday Family Programs
- Discovery Days
- Culture Quest
- Family gallery guide
- Exhibition take-home guides
- Traditional arts workshops
- Cross-generational learning fairs and festivals: Insect Fair, Moon Festival
- Federal Work Study
- Internship program
- Volunteer training program

SECTION 6: ENGAGING THE VISITOR AND INCORPORATING THE VISITOR VOICE

6.1 Welcoming the Public

Education staff are at the core of ensuring that the Museum of Riverside is a welcoming, interactive, and engaging destination for all, with special focus on multi-generational audiences, school tours, and outreach for grades K-12. Public programs explicitly foster community-building through safe, non-threatening learning environments.

Education staff train regularly to provide memorably high-level customer service and hospitality. This includes facilitating training in turn for other staff, supporting staff, and docents. Also included is staying abreast of the Museum's emergency response plans and maintaining a safe environment through friendly vigilance.

6.2 Unstructured Choice

Museum education programs promote an environment where visitors choose what and how they learn. This is accomplished through free-choice learning opportunities and through on-going evaluation of visitors' interests and knowledge to design appropriate learning opportunities. In other words, educators strive to meet visitors where they are.

Museum environments and galleries invite visitors to be active participants in what they learn and how they learn it. Exhibitions are designed not only to elicit ongoing feedback and commentary on the content but invite visitors to make their voices heard and build on the exhibition's content. These elements can be as simple as a board with a prompt and Post-It note responses to high-tech opportunities to capture and display short oral histories and visitors' stories.

Education staff remain mindful of museum audience studies and assist in exhibition planning to permit free-flowing participation. While all staff engaged in program development are expected to be audience advocates, education staff in particular internalize and lead with the "visitor first" ethic.

6.3 Barriers to Participation

Barriers to participation in Museum activities can relate to family finances, access to transportation, learning disabilities, a sense of whether one is welcome, childcare concerns, whether the Museum presents subjects of personal relevance, physical mobility, shortage of leisure time, and many other factors.

Education staff believe that all learners, whether residents of the region or of the global digital community, should have ready access to the resources and tools available via Museum programming. To this end, most education services are subsidized to be low-cost or free of charge. Free programs permit underserved and non-traditional audiences to benefit from Museum programs. Many avenues of access to subject matter are also developed, including multi-sensory, interactive, and inter-disciplinary.

Specialized programming for people who are visually-impaired, hard-of-hearing, and have other disabilities is available, refreshed often, and communicated to those who may benefit. Digital programming can supplement but does not replace authentic, in-person experiences. Specialized programming may also apply to the gifted and talented, which may include children who are insufficiently challenged by school. Education staff offer outreach programming to overcome as many barriers to learning and engaging as feasible, whether those barriers are material, psychological, or physiological. Educators work with Braille Institute, Blindness Support Services, and the California School for the Deaf in Riverside, as well as interpreters from Riverside City College. All major programs are budgeted when appropriate to include bilingual (Spanish) tours, labels, and publications. Working with Education Specialists, education staff develop tours for children and adults who are disabled.

6.4 Program Balance

Funding levels and other resources will never permit implementation of all possible educational programs. Therefore, education staff are pivotal in ensuring that during planning processes no aspect of the region's cultural, historical, or natural history receives disproportionate attention or, conversely, that no subject of importance or high public interest is overlooked.

SECTION 7: PROGRAMMING PRIORITIES

In addition to supporting the foregoing, and the Museum's mission and core values, education programs will emphasize the following priorities, which pertain to existing programs and new programs under development:

7.1 Incorporating the Visitor Voice

Educators ensure that exhibitions and public programs meet the needs and expectations of all Museum visitors, through participatory elements in exhibition and program spaces.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Community-curated content: oral history gatherings, youth art, objects borrowed from the public
- Many "moments" within exhibitions for individual and group/family discussions and interaction with the content. Through kiosks, puzzles, direct questions, and visual opportunities to share opinions.

During the closure of the main downtown site, Museum education staff will assist in gathering information so that residents' voices are heard. This will occur at outreach events, as well as Museum-hosted events such as First Sundays, Moon Festival, and Christmas Open House.

7.2 Partnerships and Collaborations

Educators engage external and internal (City of Riverside) partners, collaborators, and experts in creating programs that use primary resources to create accurate and appropriate learning opportunities. This includes collaborating to include the performing and literary arts as additional entry points to Museum content.

Educators regularly assess capacity for partnerships with school districts, private schools, and homeschool organizations and maintain open lines of communication with school district administrators.

Education staff serve on internal and external advisory teams such as the Program Advisory Team and the Branding and Marketing Advisory Team.

7.3 New Science and History Outreach Programs for K-8

Science ToolBox outreach programming aligns with the federal Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), cross-cutting concepts, and the California Science Framework for grades K-8. These programs serve as continued outreach until the Museum's downtown site is reopened. When reopened, these programs will constitute pre- and post-educational trip activities for the classroom.

"What's in the Trunk? History Adventures" aligns with California Common Core standards and the California Content Standards for History and Social Studies. These can be stand-alone trunks or can supplement a tour of Heritage House or virtual access to other sites in Riverside through Riverside Unified School District's soon-to-be-launched Google Expedition series. Topics will vary but will all emphasize local and regional history, thus maximizing the Museum's historic sites and collections.

7.4 Inquiry-Based Science Education at Nature Lab

This priority emphasizes live animal interaction, natural sciences, and local nature education available after reopening of the downtown site during Museum open hours on a "drop-in" basis.

Specialized nature-based programs and workshops for pre-K through adult include:

- Discovery Days (pre-K through early elementary) – Hands-on science investigations targeting an after-school audience.
- Botany, entomology, and taxidermy workshops (high school +).
- Nature Study school tours (pre-K through high school), aligned to NGSS and the California Science Framework. Older grades do specialized studies in botany, climate science, zoology, and similar subjects.
- Jr. Naturalists (pre-K through middle school) – Naturalist "club" for youth, under supervision. These trained naturalists can serve as ambassadors and junior docents in the Nature Lab.

Nature Lab will also feature a "lending library" for high school and middle school students to complete assignments and science fair projects. Staff host after-school drop-in sessions with support from area university science students, such as the UCR Science Ambassadors.

7.5 Experiential Learning in Social Science School Tours

- School tours are developed to meet teachers' and district needs and are designed to align with current California standards and frameworks.
- Through interactive games, hands-on STEAM challenges, and other interactive means, staff engage students in refreshed tours of Heritage House.
- "History on the Streets" architectural walking tour for grades 3-8.
- Cultural educational tours for grades K-12, with emphasis on California Indigenous peoples and their lifeways and other local populations that are featured in changing exhibitions.
- Staff implement regular, recurring history program for children, K-5, and their families. The format is based around reading an historic fiction or non-fiction picture book and a corresponding activity.

7.6 Adult Programming

- Founded in 2007, Riverside Arts Walk on First Thursdays engages a young adult audience in arts, culture, and science-based activities.
- Traditional arts workshops through collaboration with local tribal representatives.
- Historically accurate "escape room" experience at Heritage House, tied to Black Veil event.
- Performances, lectures, films, tastings, and other programming customized to each exhibition.

7.7 Cross-Generational Learning

Large scale events such as Insect Fair, founded in 2015, and Moon Festival, founded in 2004, provide opportunities for entire families, sometimes three generations, to learn together.

First Sunday Family Programs, founded prior to 2000, features activities and performances for all ages. Before the downtown site closure, the Museum was the organizing entity and primary marketer of the program.

"Noche de Ciencias," or Science Night, is a new program to engage Spanish language speakers, including the large population in Riverside Unified School District's Dual Language Immersion programs, in scientific concepts through interaction with university students and their research at local universities. This program is planned to launch after re-opening of the downtown site.

7.8 Exhibition Support

Educators provide pivotal support to the development of temporary exhibitions including, but not limited to:

- Family gallery guides
- Interactive elements in the galleries
- Programmatic tie-ins with regular programming
- Special tours
- Label writing and editing to maximize accessibility for visitors with differing learning styles and diverse backgrounds
- Docent training for each exhibition

7.9 Environmental Education Initiatives

Education staff encourage responsible environmental stewardship by inviting visitors to engage in Community Science programming and other environmental education opportunities, such as air pollution and water quality monitoring. This includes staying abreast of local one-time opportunities for citizen / volunteer engagement and maintaining an up-to-date database of relevant contacts.

The Museum's dedication to resource sustainability can further be demonstrated in the design and building of the main museum site through water-wise landscaping methods, LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) building practices, and attention to environmentally conscious cleaning and maintenance procedures. All of these choices provide opportunities for public interpretation.

7.10 Historic Sites

Education staff support the historic sites through formative evaluation during the interpretive planning process at Harada House and interpretive support at Heritage House. With the Curator of Historic Structures, educators plan and implement new programmatic elements at Heritage House and facilitate virtual access to Harada House and its collection.

With a goal to instill local pride as well as assist in meeting curriculum goals, educators continue to collaborate with Heritage House docents to offer California state standards-based social studies programs for students in elementary grades. Docents' continuing education is required for all volunteers participating in school tours.

Educators work with volunteers and advisory teams to develop additional programs targeting older children, teens, and adults at Heritage House.

7.11 Develop New Volunteer / Intern Program

Education staff take the lead in recruiting, training, and energizing an effective docent and volunteer pool for outreach program in grades K-6. Educators develop initial and ongoing training for gallery docents on new exhibitions. Training may include seminars with curatorial input for continued learning.

Education staff strengthen internship and federal work study opportunities with local universities and colleges, including UC Riverside, California Baptist University, the Riverside Community College District, and La Sierra University.

7.12 Continuing Education for Educators

Museum education staff share Museum resources and expertise with local teachers through education consultation and workshops. These sessions can include workshops on Native American topics such as ethnobotany and basket weaving with local tribal partners, local history subjects such as citrus history and civil rights issues illustrated at the Museum's historic houses, primary document use in the classroom, and inquiry-based science education through hands-on investigations in the Nature Lab.

7.13 Education Collection

Education staff maintain, inventory, and assess the education collections in the areas of Indigenous resources, history and natural history in accordance with the Museum's Collections and Exhibitions Management Policies. Education staff ensure that the education and hands-on collections are identified and stored in such a way as to prevent intermingling and confusion with permanent collections. Staff maintain education collections in safe condition for handling.

Education staff serve as standing members of the Museum's Collections Committee to provide input on additions to all collections, and in particular the education and community collections.

APPENDIX A: Resources

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