

Relationship Building Templates for Local, State, and Federal Leaders

These templates are designed to provide a starting place for museums to speak up for their value and build lasting relationships. Each supports a unified message about the importance of museums, but allows you to customize the details to harness the power of your own story.

Remember that effective support requires long-term investment. It takes time and consistent engagement, from meeting with officials to inviting them for tours and sharing updates on your work. Rushing or neglecting these relationships can backfire, undermining future efforts.

Important: Only staff who are authorized to speak on behalf of the museum should use these materials. Clear internal communication about who represents your institution is key to maintaining credibility and trust.

General Tips for Using These Materials:

- **Be clear and concise.** Respect the recipient's time by keeping your message clear, direct, and to the point.
- **Personalize each communication.** While the templates are a helpful guide, always add personal touches to make your message stand out and resonate more with the recipient.
- **Be timely.** Send emails/letters when there are relevant opportunities for government engagement (e.g., after budget proposals, at the start of legislative sessions, or when funding decisions are being made).
- **Track your communication.** Keep a record of all your outreach efforts, and follow up if you don't receive a response within a reasonable timeframe.
- **Don't make promises you cannot keep.** Over deliver rather than over promise. Ensure that relationships are two-way—ask for help and thank for support.
- **Collaborate with other museums.** If you are part of a museum association or coalition, work together on a coordinated effort. The greater the number of institutions involved, the louder your collective voice will be and the more consistent the intended message.

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Statement Template for Town Halls or Public Forums

When to Use:

- At local town hall meetings, public forums, or community hearings where you have an opportunity to speak.

How to Use:

- Adapt the statement to your specific museum, community, and goals.
- Be clear and concise in expressing why museums matter to the community.
- You will likely have a short window of time to talk (45 seconds to 1 minute). Time your message accordingly.
- Local media may attend. Be prepared to follow up with a quick pitch bottom line. If you are speaking at a time of widespread or known issues and you want to speak to that, be prepared with talking points so the media can share the message with a broader audience.

Good evening, my name is [Full Name], and I serve as the [Title] of [Museum Name], located in [City/Region]. I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak.

At [Museum Name], we believe a museum is an engine for community growth and a gathering place for learning, creativity, and pride. Every year, we welcome [number] visitors, which helps support nearby restaurants, shops, and hotels.

Beyond dollars and cents, we also offer free programs for schools, hands-on learning for families, and events that bring neighbors together. Investing in our museum is investing in our community's quality of life, economic vitality, and future. When our museum thrives, our community grows stronger together.

We are proud to be your partners in making [City/Region] a vibrant, welcoming place for everyone and we look forward to finding even more ways to serve, support, and celebrate this incredible community. If you'd like to get more involved as a volunteer, partner, or supporter we'd love to talk with you after tonight's meeting.

Thank you.

Quick bottom line: [Museum Name] is a catalyst for community pride and local growth. When we invest in arts, culture, and learning, we invest in a stronger, more vibrant [City/Region] for everyone. Investing can be as simple as visiting, volunteering, donating, or partnering with us. Every connection helps strengthen our community.

Letter or Email to Local Government Officials for Support

When to Use:

- When addressing local leaders like mayors, city council members, or county commissioners.
- After attending a town hall or meeting to reinforce your message, or as a proactive approach to garner support.

How to Use:

- Personalize the message. Add specific information about your museum's impact on the local community.
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Subject Line: Strengthening Cultural Resources for Our Community

Dear [Councilmember/Mayor/Commissioner Name],

My name is [Your Full Name], and I serve as [Title] of [Museum Name], a community-centered institution dedicated to preserving local history and providing cultural and educational programming here in [City/County/Region].

I'm reaching out to invite your continued partnership and support as we work to strengthen the cultural and educational resources available to our community. Museums like [Museum Name] play an essential role in civic life — offering programs for students and families, supporting local tourism and small businesses, and creating spaces where residents of all ages can learn and connect.

Community support is vital to helping institutions like ours thrive. As a local leader, your voice is powerful. I respectfully ask you to consider:

- Helping spread the word about the vital role cultural organizations play in supporting education, economic development, and community pride
- Partnering with us to promote local cultural initiatives
- Visiting or partnering with [Museum Name] to amplify the importance of our work in the community

We are committed to being a strong partner to [City/Region], and we believe that investing in cultural spaces is investing in the future of our community. I would welcome the opportunity to meet, share more about our work, and explore ways we can collaborate.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your ongoing dedication to building a vibrant and connected [City/Region].

Sincerely,
[Full Name]
[Title]

[Museum Name]

[Email Address]

[Phone Number]

[Website URL]

Letter or Email to State or Federal Leadership for Support

When to Use:

- When addressing state senators, representatives, or federal lawmakers.
- This letter is ideal for requesting more formal support from officials who can influence policy at the state or national level.

How to Use:

- Tailor the message to the specific representative, noting how the cuts will affect their district or the state at large.
 - Find your representatives here: [Who Represents Me?](#)
 - Ensure that you include your institution's street address in all forms of communication, confirming for your representative that you are their constituent.
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Subject Line: Strengthen Local Museums and Community Resources

Dear [Representative/Senator],

My name is [Your Full Name], and I serve as [Title] of [Museum Name], a community-based institution that provides educational, cultural, and historical programming to [City/County/Region].

I'm reaching out to ask for your support in strengthening the role that local museums like ours play in building strong communities. Museums like ours help fuel local economies, attract visitors, support small businesses, and contribute to vibrant downtowns.

Beyond economic impact, our work fosters lifelong learning and ensures that culture and creativity are accessible to all residents, regardless of zip code. Every program we offer, every partnership we form, and every student we inspire strengthens the fabric of our community.

I urge you to support initiatives and policies that invest in community-based arts, history, and culture. Our work in public education, historic preservation, and community engagement depends on this infrastructure. With your support, we can continue to ensure that every resident of [City/Region/Texas] has access to culture, learning, and history.

Sincerely,

[Full Name]

[Title]

[Museum Name]

[Email Address]

[Phone Number]

[Website URL]

Thank You Template for Meetings, Support, or Statements

When to Use:

- After meetings with government officials or after they've issued public statements supporting museums and cultural institutions.
- After any verbal or written support is expressed in a public forum or in response to your outreach efforts.

How to Use:

- Show appreciation. Always thank officials for their time and support.
 - Build a relationship. Reaffirm the importance of their continued leadership in the cultural sector and invite them to future engagements.
 - Keep the dialogue open. Express interest in continuing to work together and keeping them updated on your museum's progress and needs.
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Subject Line: Thank You for Supporting Museums and Cultural Institutions

Dear [Representative/Senator/Mayor Name],

On behalf of [Museum Name], I want to thank you for your support of museums and the vital work we do in [Community/Region]. Your [recent statement/support at the town hall] means a great deal to our institution and the communities we serve.

Public leaders like you play a critical role in ensuring that cultural organizations have the resources and visibility they need to thrive. We deeply appreciate your acknowledgment of the value we bring and your commitment to supporting public investment in local arts and history.

Please know that our doors are always open to you, and we would be honored to host you at [Museum Name] anytime, whether for a tour, a program, or a conversation about how we can continue to work together.

With gratitude,
[Full Name]
[Title]
[Museum Name]
[Contact Info]

Invitation to Visit for Local Leadership

When to Use:

- When inviting local government officials (mayors, city council members, etc.) to visit your museum in person to witness its impact firsthand.
- Ideal for cultivating relationships and building greater visibility with local leaders.

How to Use:

- Highlight the local relevance. Emphasize how the museum impacts the community and how their support could further that impact.
 - Make it personal. Mention specific programs or initiatives that could benefit from their support.
 - Coordinate the visit. Be flexible in scheduling and make sure the experience is engaging and informative. However, only offer what you have capacity to fulfill and keep in mind that their visit is likely to be brief.
 - Always send a thank you letter.
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Subject Line: You're Invited: Visit [Museum Name] and See the Impact of Local Cultural Institutions

Dear [Councilmember/Mayor/Commissioner Name],

On behalf of [Museum Name], I would like to warmly invite you to visit our museum and see firsthand the work we're doing to serve the residents of [City/County/Region].

As a local institution committed to education, preservation, and community engagement, we are proud to be part of [City's] cultural landscape. Whether through exhibits, school partnerships, or free public programs, we aim to make history and learning accessible to all.

We would be honored to welcome you for a guided tour, introduce you to our team, and share how institutions like ours contribute to local quality of life, especially as national funding for cultural programs faces new challenges.

Your leadership plays a vital role in sustaining spaces like ours. We would love the opportunity to talk with you about our impact, our vision, and how we can continue to collaborate to serve [City/County] together.

We are happy to coordinate a time that best fits your schedule. Please feel free to reach out directly to me at [phone number] or [email address].

Thank you for your service to our community. We hope to welcome you to the museum soon.

Warm regards,
[Full Name]
[Title]
[Museum Name]
[Email Address]
[Phone Number]
[Website URL]

Invitation to Visit for State and Federal Leadership

When to Use:

- When inviting state or federal leaders to visit your museum and see how federal funding impacts local cultural institutions.
- This is an excellent opportunity to highlight your work to those in positions to influence larger-scale policy or funding decisions.

How to Use:

- Find your representatives here: [Who Represents Me?](#)
 - Ensure that you include your institution's street address in all forms of communication, confirming for your representative that you are their constituent.
 - Align with their priorities. Connect their public service goals to your museum's work.
 - Personalize the visit. Mention how state or federal funding supports your museum's growth and the need for continued investment in the field.
 - Engage their interest. Highlight specific programs or initiatives that could benefit from their support, and how their visit would underscore the importance of preserving cultural funding.
 - Be practical. Only offer what you have capacity to fulfill. Visits are likely very brief so plan to concisely make your key points—personalizing them with your local examples—and be flexible with timing.
 - Always send a thank you letter.
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Subject Line: Invitation: Visit [Museum Name] and See Your Support in Action

Dear [Senator/Representative/Delegate Name],

I'm writing to extend a warm invitation on behalf of [Museum Name], a community-serving museum in [City/County/Region] that provides vital access to cultural, educational, and historical resources for residents of all ages.

As a leader committed to public service, we hope you'll consider visiting [Museum Name] to see firsthand the value of continued investment in our nation's cultural infrastructure.

Your visit would offer an opportunity to:

- Learn more about the museum's programs and outreach
- Meet local educators, staff, and community partners
- Discuss how state and federal policies shape access to history, culture, and education at the local level

We would be honored to host you at a time that fits your schedule. Please feel free to contact me directly at [email address] or [phone number] to coordinate a visit.

Thank you for your leadership and for your ongoing support of cultural institutions like ours. We hope to welcome you soon.

Sincerely,
[Full Name]
[Title]
[Museum Name]
[Email Address]
[Phone Number]
[Website URL]

Memo Prior to Visit for State and Federal Leadership

When to Use:

- When inviting state or federal leaders to visit your museum and see how federal funding impacts local cultural institutions.

How to Use:

- Align with their priorities. Connect their public service goals to your museum's work.
 - Personalize the visit. Mention how state or federal funding supports your museum's growth and the need for continued investment in the field.
 - Engage their interest. Highlight specific programs or initiatives that could benefit from their support, and how their visit would underscore the importance of preserving cultural funding.
 - Always send a thank you letter.
-

MEMORANDUM

TO: [Name of Official or Scheduler]

FROM: [Your Full Name], [Your Title], [Museum Name]

DATE: [Insert Date]

****RE:** Briefing for Upcoming Visit to [Museum Name]

About [Museum Name]

Founded in [Year], [Museum Name] is a [short description—e.g., community-based, nonprofit, etc.] located in [City, State]. Our mission is to [insert mission statement or a concise version]. Each year, we serve [number] visitors through exhibitions, public programs, and educational outreach.

Our Community Impact

- **Economic Contribution:** The museum supports [number] jobs and draws cultural tourism that benefits local businesses.
- **Educational Access:** We steward a collection of [describe collection, if relevant], ensuring future generations have access to shared culture.
- **Hands-On Learning:** We partner with [number] local schools, offering curriculum-aligned field trips and learning resources for students K–12.

Public Funding in Action

[If applicable, briefly note specific grants or programs—NEH, IMLS, state arts council, etc.—that have supported the museum. Example:

Thanks to [name of program], we were able to [restore a key exhibit / expand youth programming / digitize our archives], directly benefiting our local community.]

Visit Goals

We look forward to:

- Sharing how [Museum Name] connects with [City/Region] residents
- Demonstrating the value of continued investment in cultural institutions
- Exploring future opportunities for partnership and support

Key Contacts

- **Primary Contact:** [Your Name, Title, Email, Phone]
- **Visit Location:** [Museum Address]
- **Date/Time:** [Insert, or "To Be Confirmed"]
- **Estimated Duration:** [e.g., 30 minutes–1 hour]

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions in advance of the visit. We're excited to welcome you and share the impact of your support in action.

Hosting Elected Officials at Museums: A Quick Guide

Engaging elected officials through museum site visits can build lasting support. Follow these steps to make your visit impactful:

- **Send a formal invitation.** Follow verbal conversations with a formal letter to the official's scheduler. If a board member or community partner has a relationship with the official, ask them to co-sign. If you don't hear back, politely check in with the scheduler to confirm receipt of your invitation.
- **Be flexible.** Offer several potential dates and times. Flexibility increases the chance of scheduling a visit. Also keep in mind that officials may not be able to stay long, maybe only 10 minutes.
- **Invite key stakeholders.** Include funders, community partners, or educators to speak to the museum's broader impact.
- **Stay nonpartisan.** Visits must be educational, not political. Avoid campaign-related activity and materials.
- **Prepare briefing materials.** Elected officials typically review a briefing memo prepared by their staff before attending events. Sending a memo of your museum's mission, programs, and impact to their team a few days before the visit helps them prepare efficiently, ensures your key messages are clearly conveyed, and demonstrates your professionalism.
- **Stick to your talking points!** Stay on topic, and back them up with materials—keep it to three to five pages—that you can leave with your official.
- **Send a thank you note.** Follow up with a note to the official and their staff, thanking them for their time and support. A simple thank you goes a long way. Provide any materials that were discussed or requested during the visit.
- **Debrief and plan next steps.** After the visit, debrief internally and with partners to maintain and build on the relationship.