

The following policies and procedures are taken from the Field Museum's Collection Management Policy (approved March 15, 2021):

4. Repatriations

4.1 Introduction. This section describes the Museum's principles and policies concerning the repatriation of human remains, funerary objects, and certain other cultural items. With regard to human remains and funerary objects, the Trustees have sought to strike an appropriate balance between the Museum's obligation to maintain the integrity of and the fiduciary responsibility for its collections and its willingness to work with indigenous peoples and cultural groups in returning their ancestors to a state of repose that is consonant with their belief systems. Accordingly, the Trustees hereby have made an exception to the Museum's general deaccession policies in authorizing the permanent transfer of human remains and associated funerary objects from the Museum's collections to appropriate cultural repose consistent with these repatriation policies.

Further, the Trustees hereby reaffirm their recognition of the importance of the values held by indigenous peoples and cultural groups, and the Trustees also seek to foster respectful and productive communications with indigenous peoples and cultural groups for all aspects of the matters covered by these repatriation policies.

The Trustees believe that the positive resolution of repatriation concerns is achieved through mutually respectful dialogue among representatives of indigenous peoples, cultural groups, and Museum personnel. The Trustees believe that such dialogue should be focused on achieving an understanding of the following:

- The cultural connection between the requesting group and the requested items;
- facts related to how the requested items entered the Museum's collections;
- facts related to the group requesting repatriation and whether the requesting group is the appropriate representative of the people or cultural group most closely affiliated with the requested items; and
- other facts, cultural considerations, or other factors considered relevant by the Trustees, the Repatriation Subcommittee, or Museum administration.

The Museum will continue to make the requested objects and its archives and collections records related to such requested objects available for review by representatives of cultural groups or direct lineal descendants making claims to such items. The Museum will work cooperatively with such representatives to facilitate and expedite the evaluation of each repatriation request received by the Museum.

4.2. Definition of Terms

"Ancestors" will include any past members of the requesting group so long as there is a clear shared group identity between the requesting group and the requested objects based on historical, archaeological, or ethnographic information. It will not be necessary to establish direct kinship ties between living members of the group and the deceased individuals.

“Appropriate representative” is the person or persons authorized by the group to make the request on behalf of the group.

“Associated funerary objects” are objects that are directly linked to a particular burial, and both the human remains and the associated funerary objects must be present in the Museum collection.

“Cultural group” is any recognized descendant community or kinship body, such as a Canadian First Nation, tribe, or clan.

“Repatriation request” is any formal request for the return of a Museum collection item that is initiated from outside the Museum by a cultural group or lineal descendant.

“Repose” is the culturally appropriate method of treating the bodies of the deceased, and will include physical burial in the ground, but may also include other traditions such as cremation or an above-ground resting place. It does not generally include placement in a museum or exhibition context.

4.3 Principles. This Policy addresses three types of repatriation requests: (1) repatriation requests made pursuant to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (“NAGPRA”) (“NAGPRA repatriation requests”), (2) Non-NAGPRA repatriation requests for human remains and associated funerary objects, and (3) Non-NAGPRA repatriation requests for collection materials other than human remains and associated funerary objects. The Repatriation Subcommittee is authorized to review and make decisions on behalf of the Museum regarding NAGPRA repatriation requests and Non-NAGPRA repatriation requests for human remains and associated funerary objects; and it is authorized to review and make recommendations to the Trustees on all other Non-NAGPRA repatriation requests.

(1) NAGPRA repatriation requests. The Museum shall comply with all applicable laws on repatriation, and with NAGPRA in particular. Where applicable, all repatriation decisions with respect to US Native American human remains, associated and unassociated funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony shall be made in accordance with the requirements of NAGPRA.

(2) Non-NAGPRA repatriation requests for human remains and associated funerary objects. The Museum shall give full consideration, on a case-by-case basis, to repatriation requests from indigenous peoples and cultural groups for the return of human remains and associated funerary objects that are not made pursuant to NAGPRA. In accordance with the provisions of this Policy, the Museum is authorized and willing to consider transfer of human remains and associated funerary objects from the Museum’s collections to their appropriate cultural repose when requested by a cultural group or direct lineal descendant.

Non-NAGPRA repatriation requests for human remains and associated funerary objects shall be considered for repatriation only upon demonstration of the following:

- There is a policy on the part of the requesting group to place in repose the human remains and associated funerary objects.

- The remains are of ancestors of the requesting group, or it can be clearly demonstrated that the requesting group is otherwise the proper group to request and receive the human remains and funerary objects.
- The human remains and associated funerary objects are requested by an appropriate representative of the requesting group.
- Once deaccessioned by the Museum, the human remains and associated funerary objects shall not be subject to accession by any museum and shall be placed in repose in accordance with the applicable cultural practices of the society involved.

(3) Non-NAGPRA repatriation requests for collection items other than human remains and associated funerary objects. The Repatriation Subcommittee may consider, on a case-by-case basis, requests for collection items other than human remains and associated funerary objects that are made not pursuant to NAGPRA as a repatriation matter. Any such consideration shall be cognizant of the Trustee's fiduciary obligations under Illinois law to protect and preserve the Museum's collections. Such requests shall be decided by the Trustees, upon the review and recommendation, as appropriate, of the relevant CAT, Directors of GFCC and NIRC, Office of General Counsel, Vice President, President, Repatriation Subcommittee, and Collections Committee.

4.4 Repatriation Implementation. The Repatriation Subcommittee shall implement these repatriation policies in consultation with the President, Vice President, Director, Repatriation Director, relevant CAT, and Office of General Counsel. The Museum shall process repatriation requests in accordance with repatriation procedures approved by the Repatriation Subcommittee ("Repatriation Procedures"). The Repatriation Subcommittee shall periodically review and revise the Museum's Repatriation Procedures to ensure that the Museum is acting in accordance with the provisions of this Policy.

4.5 Conditions for Repatriation. Prior to any repatriation by the Museum, the Repatriation Subcommittee shall determine that the repatriation request satisfies the requirements of applicable law and this Policy.

4.6 Relationship to Other Deaccession Requests. All deaccession matters not addressed as a repatriation request under this Policy shall continue to be addressed and resolved on a case-by-case basis pursuant to the general deaccession provisions of this Policy.