



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE™
1 100 SPAATZ STREET
WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE OHIO 45433-7102

Frequently Asked Questions

National Museum of the United States Air Force's (NMUSAF) Civilian Museum Loan Program

1. *Why does the U.S. Air Force loan historic aircraft to other museums?*

The loan program exists to fulfill two functions. First, it brings Air Force history to a wider audience. Second, it assists civilian institutions in fostering a deeper appreciation and interest in aerospace history and technology.

2. *How are you authorized to loan aircraft to these certain institutions?*

Title 10 of United States Code (USC) Section 2572 authorizes the Secretaries of the military services to loan surplus Air Force historical property under specific conditions. The NMUSAF has been delegated this authority by the Secretary of the Air Force. We are the only organization within the Air Force with this authority. All loans are made on an "as is, where is" basis and at no cost to the government.

3. *Who currently participates in the loan program?*

The NMUSAF loans aircraft and other artifacts to more than 300 military organizations, 350 veterans' organizations, and cities, counties and municipalities, and over 100 civilian museums. Currently, more than 650 aircraft are on loan to civilian museums all over the world.

4. *Who can borrow an aircraft from the U.S. Air Force?*

Title 10 USC §2572 authorizes three types of civilian institutions to borrow property from the Air Force: 1) civilian museums, 2) incorporated municipalities, and 3) veterans' organizations. However, all of these civilian organizations must meet pre-loan certification requirements. Certified museums participate in our Civilian Museum Loan program. Certified cities, counties, and municipalities as well as veterans' organizations participate in our Community Static Display Program. For more information about the Static Display Program please see contact information at the end of this document.

5. *Why does my museum need to become certified in order to borrow artifacts from the NMUSAF?*

The NMUSAF is responsible for the stewardship of all the artifacts entrusted to its care. Certification ensures that these irreplaceable items are only loaned to institutions able to care for them according to professional standards.

6. *How does the NMUSAF define a museum?*

The NMUSAF defines a museum according to the definition provided by Title 20, USC §9172: “The term "museum" means a public or private nonprofit agency or institution organized on a permanent basis for essentially educational or aesthetic purposes, that utilizes a professional staff, owns or utilizes tangible objects, cares for the tangible objects, and exhibits the tangible objects to the public on a regular basis.

The Federal Management Regulations (Subchapter B, Part 107.37, Appendix C) provides additional definition: “Museum” means a public or nonprofit institution that is organized on a permanent basis for essentially educational or aesthetic purposes and which, using a professional staff, owns or uses tangible objects, either animate or inanimate; cares for these objects; and exhibits them to the public on a regular basis (at least 1000 hours a year)... For the purposes of this definition, an institution uses a professional staff if it employs at least one full-time staff member or the equivalent, whether paid or unpaid, primarily engaged in the acquisition, care, or public exhibition of objects owned or used by the institution. This definition of “museum” does not include any institution that exhibits objects to the public if the display or use of the objects is only incidental to the primary function of the institution.

7. *My museum has no paid staff, only volunteers. Can we participate in the loan program?*

No. The NMUSAF follows the definition of a museum set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations (41 CFR Sec § 101.44.207(16)), which states that “an institution uses a professional staff if it employs full time at least one qualified staff member who devotes his or her time primarily to the acquisition, care, or public exhibition of objects owned or used by the institution.” The NMUSAF considers this to be one **full-time, paid** professional staff person. The professional staff person must be concerned with the overall welfare of the museum and its collection. Other kinds of employees (e.g. administrative support, retail staff) do not meet our staffing requirement for the purposes of certification.

8. *I am certified to borrow items from the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Army, or the U.S. Marine Corps. Does this automatically certify me to borrow items from the U.S. Air Force?*

No. All of the armed forces approach the loan of items from their collections in a slightly different manner, within the bounds of public law and Department of Defense regulations. NMUSAF does not maintain reciprocal agreements with the loan programs of other services. Therefore certification by another service does not automatically mean your organization is certified by the Air Force.

9. My museum is located outside the United States. May we apply for certification with the NMUSAF?

Yes, but loans to foreign museums are limited to those that are state organized and managed. Private museums unaffiliated with their respective national governments are not eligible to receive loans.

10. My museum flies its historic aircraft. Can we fly aircraft that we borrow from the NMUSAF?

No. The NMUSAF only loans aircraft for static display. Our collection is held in trust for the American public, and our stewardship responsibilities prohibit "consumable use" of the collection. This means that our aircraft are not flown, our vehicles are not driven, our uniforms are not worn, and so on. Loaned aircraft have also undergone a process called "demilitarization," in which certain parts of the aircraft are removed for security and safety reasons or for future governmental use. These parts removals often render the aircraft non-flyable.

11. My museum is just getting started. We just opened our facility and don't have a collection of our own. Can we borrow NMUSAF property to start our collection?

No. The NMUSAF only loans aircraft to museums that are open and operational. We do not provide collections to museums just getting started, nor do we loan to museums that have not yet opened their doors to the public. However, once your museum has been open and operating for a few years and establishes a viable track record, it is welcome to apply for NMUSAF certification.

12. Why do you require my museum to submit financial information? Why do you care about my museum's financial viability?

We care about a museum's financial status because organizations with sound financial resources are more likely to remain open and operational year after year. A museum's financial information also provides the NMUSAF with assurances that it has sufficient resources to maintain any artifacts on loan. Finally, by law, a museum's Internal Revenue Service's Form 990 is open for public inspection.

13. *What is involved in the certification process?*

There are two steps to certification: administrative and operational. The NMUSAF requires that both be completed prior to any loans of artifacts.

Administrative certification requires that an interested museum send us basic documentation in an application package, including (but not limited to) articles of incorporation, by-laws, and proof of tax exemption. These materials undergo a review by the Air Force Materiel Command's Staff Judge Advocate Offices. If the review is positive, the museum will receive notification of administrative certification and it can then proceed to operational certification.

During operational certification, a NMUSAF staff member will make an on-site visit to the applying museum to further determine eligibility. During the site visit, the NMUSAF will look at all aspects of the museum's operations and talk one-on-one with its staff and stakeholders. **Please note: because loans to civilian museums are made at no cost to the government the applying museum will be responsible for funding all travel expenses associated with the site visit.**

14. *Are museums ever denied certification?*

Yes, but almost always at the administrative certification phase, prior to a site visit. Some museums do not meet the definition of museum (no full-time, professional staff, open only seasonally, etc.) or their facilities do not meet minimum standards (no exhibit space, no collections storage). Others are just getting started and are seeking items to populate their exhibits. As per paragraph B.3. of the Civilian Museum Loan program Information, the NMUSAF is prohibited from making loans to museums that do not have a "demonstrated record of professional performance, institutional viability, and resources sufficient to ensure the security and conservation of loaned artifacts." Finally, some museums lack the required collections management documents (scope of collections statement or collections policy), or lack the appropriate financial resources to care and conserve loaned aircraft.

Museums denied certification are encouraged to re-submit a new application package once their staff and operations have matured.

15. *Once the NMUSAF certifies my museum, how do we request an aircraft?*

Once certified, a museum is invited to submit a written request (letter or email) for aerospace vehicles, to the NMUSAF's Collection Management Division. Specific contact information will be provided. Museums may request multiple aircraft in a letter and request should be as specific as possible (model, series, tail number, etc). Once received, staff will place the request on our master request list (organized by

aerospace vehicle model and series) based on the date we receive them. Requests are then filled in the order received. Please note: military requests are always filled before civilian requests.

16. How do we get an aircraft, once it is available to us?

Federal law requires that loans, including those of aircraft, be made on an "as-is, where-is" basis. This means your museum is responsible for all charges associated with preparing an aircraft for transport, transporting it from its current location, re-assembling and preparing the aircraft for display. Once we provide you the paperwork releasing the aircraft into your custody, you may arrange for its movement.

17. How much does it cost to borrow an NMUSAF aircraft?

That depends on a number of factors. As the certified borrowing organization, museums fund the transportation, demilitarization, hazardous materials removal, and continued upkeep of the aircraft. Transportation costs vary, depending on how close the aircraft is located to your institution. Be aware of the significant cost associated with the long-term maintenance of borrowed aircraft, and that factors such as size, type, and material of aircraft will effect transport and maintenance costs. Also, be aware that if you decide at a later date that you wish to return the aircraft, you will most likely bear the cost of returning it to the NMUSAF.

18. What are my museum's responsibilities as borrowers of NMUSAF artifacts?

You will sign a Loan Agreement that, along with its attachments, lists all of your responsibilities. The NMUSAF requires a high standard of stewardship and accountability, and requires that artifacts on display reflect credit upon the Air Force. If you do not adhere to the Loan Agreement requirements, loaned items may be recalled from your museum at your expense.

19. What if the NMUSAF recalls an aircraft or artifact we have on loan?

While it occurs very infrequently, the NMUSAF does reserve the right to recall items on loan to your museum if needed to serve other needs (i.e. active Air Force requirements). If we recall items on loan to your museum for these purposes, we will do so at our expense.

20. Can my museum borrow artifacts other than aircraft?

In some instances the NMUSAF will loan artifacts other than aerospace vehicles. Such loans are at the discretion of the NMUSAF Director and depend on a variety of factors. Additional requirements (e.g. conservation, security) will need to be considered prior to loans of non-aerospace vehicles.

21. How do I receive more information?

Contact the Civilian Museum Certification administrator, via e-mail at NMUSAF.MUC.Certification@us.af.mil or by regular mail at:

Civilian Museum Certification Program
NMUSAF/MUC
1100 Spaatz Street
Wright-Patterson AFB OH 45433-7102

If you are with a veterans' organization or a city, county or municipality and would like information about the NMUSAF's Community Static Display Program, please send inquiries via email to nmusaf.muc.staticdisplay@us.af.mil or regular mail at:

Community Static Display Program
NMUSAF/MUC
1100 Spaatz Street
Wright-Patterson AFB, OH 45433-7102