



COALITION  
of  
STATE MUSEUM  
ASSOCIATIONS

STRENGTHENING MUSEUMS TOGETHER

# REBOUND

*Special thanks to our colleague in Oklahoma, Mr. Bob Harris, CAE, for giving COSMA permission to use his article REBOUND from the Oklahoma Society of Association Executives magazine, May 2020.*

# 2020 has been a rough year, thanks to COVID-19

---

- Pandemic! Fear and uncertainty
- Shelter at home; isolation
- Unstable economy
- Record unemployment
- Social unrest

# 2020 has been a rough year for State Museum Associations (SMAs)

---

- No in-person interaction
- Canceled conferences
- Programming moved online
- Tight budgets
- Challenges to member engagement

# This unusual period is not all bad for SMAs

---

- SMAs positioned themselves as indispensable partners to members, offering empathy, information, and community
- SMAs positioned themselves as trusted resources, adding helpful links to their websites for everything from pandemic funding opportunities to tips for reopening
- Several SMAs report that they are engaging far more people with virtual programming during the pandemic than they ever reached with traditional programming
- By necessity, SMAs are learning new engagement skills

# VERB

## **rebound** (verb)

- bounce back through the air after hitting a hard surface or object
- recover in value, amount, or strength after a previous decrease or decline

# NOUN

## **rebound** (noun)

- a recovery of possession of a missed shot (basketball)
- an instance of increasing in value, amount, or strength after a previous decline

# Three characteristics of organizations prepared to rebound:

- ✓ **TECHNOLOGY READY** – Rebound organizations had already invested in technology. Their familiarity with technology tools allowed for fast adaptation to remote working and online interactions.
- ✓ **FINANCIALLY HEALTHY** – Rebound organizations had enough savings to survive for at least six months. As program and membership revenues dwindled, organization leadership could tap the reserves without damaging the strength of the organization.
- ✓ **VOLUNTEER RICH** – Rebound organizations had volunteers step up to help. Volunteers assisted to meet the needs of members and support staff. Volunteer boards of directors took on leadership roles.

# How SMAs can plan for REBOUND

---

## Decide to bounce back

- Coordinate the team of staff, board, and volunteers
- Establish a short-term mission of sustaining the organization while delivering value to members
- Set priorities
- Craft a clear vision of outcomes, timeline, and responsibilities.
- Create a REBOUND work plan and make sure your team is on board with it
- Communicate the REBOUND work plan to stakeholders

## Manage your board

- Determine if more frequent and focused meetings are needed at this time
- Empower the executive committee and authorize the executive director to make decisions within their purview
- Document all decisions and rationale to be transparent with members and stakeholders
- Demonstrate leadership



## Examine finances

- Review and adjust the approved annual budget
- Maintain a positive outlook
- Create a contingency budget
- Use reserves
- Consider government stimulus packages
- Control expenses with “purposeful abandonment” of services that no longer have value and usurp staff time

## **Embrace the changes that may be improvements**

- Eliminate travel costs for meetings that can be accomplished online
- Drop under-performing activities
- Redirect resources to what members need the most

## Plan messaging

- Identify who speaks for the organization
- Decide on frequency of messaging
- Avoid repeating news of the pandemic
- Revise the organization's "elevator speech" if appropriate
- Post resources even if you are not the first or fastest
- Set a pace that demonstrates responsiveness to members
- Acknowledge diligence of team working remotely

## Communicate

- Deliver accurate and timely information
- Listen closely to member needs, questions, and postings
- Encourage dialog with and between members
- Try new formats: zoom conversations, brown bag lunches, happy hours
- Poll members and stakeholders about their challenges
- Celebrate victories

## Nurture membership

- Anticipate member hardships.
- Extend dues to members struggling for survival
- Make the association an indispensable resource that is worth the membership dollars
- Continue to focus on education and member support to maintain value proposition
- Understand that members will judge the organization for how it responded to the crisis

## Collaborate

- Position the organization to have a seat at the table for recovery phases
- Represent your members' interests in the development of a comprehensive recovery plan

## **Maintain advocacy efforts**

- Articulate for elected officials the situation in the field
- Continue government relations
- Find innovative ways to get your message to lawmakers during times of quarantine and a lack of public meetings.
- Reach out to other organizations to coordinate more powerful



COALITION  
of  
STATE MUSEUM  
ASSOCIATIONS

STRENGTHENING MUSEUMS TOGETHER

# REBOUND

*Special thanks to our colleague in Oklahoma, Mr. Bob Harris, CAE, for giving COSMA permission to use his article REBOUND from the Oklahoma Society of Association Executives magazine, May 2020.*