

COLLECTIONS ACCESS GUIDELINES

For Indigenous Communities

This brief guide provides information on how to access objects and belongings in the collection at the Museum of Anthropology at UBC (MOA). This information is not related to repatriation. (For repatriation information, please see [MOA's Repatriation Guidelines](#).)

How can MOA's collection be accessed?

Collections can be accessed online or in person at MOA. Visits with ancestral objects and belongings can also be arranged in communities:

Virtual Access

Collections Online (MOA-CAT)

This online system contains catalogue records and images (if available) on the objects in MOA's collections (over 10,000 from the British Columbia/Northwest Coast area).

Reciprocal Research Network (RRN)

The RRN is an online research portal that now provides access to collections from 29 partner institutions (from Canada, the US, England and Brazil), with a focus on First Nations items from the Northwest Coast/British Columbia. It facilitates access for First Nations community-based researchers who might otherwise be unable to travel to see these works in person. It was co-developed by the Musqueam Indian Band, the Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Council, the U'mista Cultural Society and MOA.

Collections visits at MOA

The [Indigenous Collections Access Grant](#) offers funding to help cover the costs of bringing Indigenous individuals (up to \$500) or community groups (up to \$3,000) to travel to MOA to visit with and study the collections and archives. Applications are accepted year-round on a rolling basis. It is not necessary to receive a Collection Access Grant in order to schedule an in-person visit with MOA's collection.

To schedule a visit with belongings at the museum, please contact our Collections department at collections@moa.ubc.ca. We recommend that you contact us two to three weeks before you wish to visit, otherwise we may not be able to accommodate your request. The number of items is limited to 20-30 per visit due to space constraints.

Please let us know:

1. The general purpose of your visit.
2. Your preferred date(s). (Please note: visits normally occur Monday through Friday, between 9 am and 4 pm.)
3. A list of the belongings requested, with their MOA ID number. (Please note: some objects may not be available due to loans or exhibitions, or may not be accessible due to size, access restrictions, or difficulty removing them from display.)

More information about arranging visits in person can be found in our [Collections Access Guidelines](#).



Collections visits in home communities

Belongings and treasures in MOA's collection can travel within BC for a temporary visit home when requested. Helping communities and families connect to their belongings is an important function of MOA. The collections at the Museum contain items that are important to Indigenous communities, and their placement and care within the Museum continue to affect the values and beliefs of those communities. The Museum understands that these belongings often embody cultural rights, values and knowledge not owned or possessed by the Museum, but retained by the originating communities. MOA understands that many pieces held here still have important work to do in the community.

Frequently asked questions:

Can ancestral belongings be used or activated?

Yes. MOA conservators will work with the family or designate of the family to determine if pieces are strong enough to be worn or danced. Sometimes this may involve modifying or adding to a piece in order to make it stronger. If it is decided that an item is too fragile, then it may still travel in order to be presented at an event.

How is a request made?

Requests can be made to Collections or Curatorial staff (see the [staff directory](#) on the MOA website), or emailed to collections@moa.ubc.ca.

The following information will be needed:

1. Which belongings are being requested (if possible please include MOA ID numbers, which can be found through the [MOA CAT](#) online)
2. Who is requesting the visit and their connection to the belongings
3. How the belongings will be used, including the event at which they will be danced or displayed
4. The specific dates the belongings are needed, and
5. Contact information (name, phone numbers, email, etc.) for correspondence.

If the request is for a multi-day event, MOA may also request local cultural centers or museums to assist with the visit.

Who is responsible for approving requests?

Museum staff will work together with the family or designates of the family to approve the request. Factors that will be considered include: physical condition of the object(s), timeframe of request, transportation requirements, intended use, and temporary storage (if applicable).

What are the insurance requirements?

Objects and belongings held in MOA's collection are required to have insurance coverage at all times. Coverage is provided by MOA (via the University of British Columbia) when a MOA staff person accompanies the belongings to the community event.



What costs might a family/community expect to incur?

The Museum will cover the costs associated with a visit home to Indigenous communities/individuals in BC through MOA's Indigenous Collections Access Fund.

Is there a limit on the number of belongings that can travel for a visit?

There is no set number of belongings that can travel for a visit home. However, the number of objects that can be accommodated may be limited by staff resources and transportation availability.

How much advance notice is required to process a visit request?

The Museum's internal process to prepare for collections visits home can take several weeks to a few months, depending upon the size of the request and the complexity of the travel arrangements. Three months' notice is appreciated.

