

Maryland Heritage Area Program
Interview Questions for Heritage Area Executive Directors

Interview: _____ **Telephone:** _____
Conducted by: _____ **Date:** _____

Local Heritage Area

Organization and Management

- 1) What year was your heritage area “recognized”? “Certified”?
- 2) Why did your community or region want heritage area designation?
- 3) What organizations or government agencies led the application process?
- 4) How did you build local support for becoming a heritage area?
- 5) How did you determine the best organizational structure for your area?

6) There are 10 Core Components of Heritage Areas for designation. On a scale of 1 – 10, with 10 as excellent, please rate the importance of these components for the sustainability of a heritage area:

1. Identified boundaries, land use recommendations, and zoning _____
2. Inventory & evaluation of natural, cultural resources _____
3. Public and private support, uses _____
4. Acquisition of property _____
5. Education, interpretation, recreational programs & projects _____
6. Encourage, accommodate visitation & economic development _____
7. Cost/benefit assessment & funding needs to implement plan _____
8. Preservation, protection of natural and cultural resources _____
9. Defined organizational structure to develop, manage HA _____
10. Schedule for developing, managing HA _____

Program Development

- 1) How were your area’s Target Investment Zones selected? What results have you seen?
- 2) How important is continued operating support from the state to your heritage area program?
___ Somewhat important - if it were decreased or discontinued, we might be able to find other sources of funding
___ Very important – it provides leverage for continued local support
_ Essential – our program could not operate with it

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- 3) What types of project grants does your heritage area apply for to the Maryland Heritage Areas Program? How are the grants publicized? How are they reviewed and selected for submission to the MHAA?
- 4) Do organizations in your heritage area apply for mini-grants? What are the primary types of grants funded under this program?
- 5) How did you determine the themes for the heritage area? Were they market tested?
- 6) Has an authenticity program been discussed? (Some type of recognition program to help tourists identify sites that authentically reflect the culture and heritage of the heritage area.) Is one needed? If so, how should it be structured?
- 7) Do you work with other heritage areas? In what ways? (sharing information, resources, expertise)
- 8) Does your heritage area tend to focus more on either preservation or tourism? Would you like to see a stronger focus (or better balance) in one area or the other? How would this be accomplished?
- 9) Do you see the heritage area management entity's role as being a preservation advocate? Has your heritage area experienced any challenges in supporting preservation projects?
- 10) What preservation-related activities has your heritage area initiated or partnered in?
- 11) Do you interact with your local DMO? In what ways?

Program Assessment

- 1) What were the greatest challenges in establishing a heritage area?
- 2) What are the greatest challenges in ongoing management of a heritage area?
- 3) What are the greatest accomplishments of your heritage area?

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- 4) How often does your heritage area conduct an internal evaluation of accomplishments of management plan goals?
- 5) Is your management plan revised and updated? How often? How does the process work?
- 6) Do you track the economic impact of heritage area activities? How? What resulted have been tracked?

State Perspective

- 1) The mission is to have a system of recognized and certified heritage areas that reflect the cultural themes of the state's development, and provide educational, inspirational, economic and recreational benefits for present and future generations.

On a scale of 1 – 10, with 10 as excellent, how well has the Maryland Heritage Area Program achieved its original mission (need)? Why?

- 2) Which state agency has been the greatest champion?
- 3) Which state agency has not been a champion (if any)?
- 4) Do you interact with the MD Office of Tourism? In what ways?
- 5) Are there now enough resources – staff and funding – to assist 11 Certified Heritage Areas? YES NO If more is needed, what would be adequate? For what purposes?
- 6) On a scale of 1-10, with 10 as excellent, rate how well (based on frequency, types of collaboration) you work with the following state agencies:
Maryland Office of Tourism
Maryland Historic Preservation Office
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Maryland Department of Transportation
Maryland Arts Council
Maryland Humanities Council
Others:

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The Future

- 1) What type of products, services, or programs would you like to see developed by the Maryland Heritage Areas Program to enhance the viability and sustainability of the heritage area program?

- 2) How do you envision your heritage area in 10 years?

- 3) Anything else you'd like to share?