

RCW 63.26.040 Notice of abandonment of property. (1) When a museum or historical society is required to give notice of abandonment of property or of termination of a loan, the museum or historical society shall send an initial notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last known owner at the most recent address of such owner as shown on the museum's or society's records. If the museum or society has no address on record, or the museum or society does not receive written proof of receipt of the mailed notice within 30 days of the date the notice was mailed, the museum or society shall provide notice, at least once each week for three consecutive weeks, using one or more of the following methods:

(a) Posting on a publicly accessible page on its official website;

(b) Sending an email from an organizational email address to any known email addresses of the owner or any publicized email lists;

(c) Posting on the official social media accounts of the museum or society;

(d) Physically posting a notice in a public space at the museum's or society's primary location, such as a lobby or other area accessible to visitors;

(e) Documenting a phone call attempt to any known phone numbers of the owner; or

(f) Any other electronic communication methods reasonably expected to reach the owner or interested parties.

(2) The notice, whether digital or printed, shall contain the following:

(a) A description of the unclaimed property;

(b) The name and last known address of the owner;

(c) A request that all persons who may have any knowledge of the whereabouts of the owner provide written notice to the museum or society; and

(d) A statement that if written assertion of title is not presented by the owner to the museum or society within ninety days from the date of the second notice, the property shall be deemed abandoned or donated and shall become the property of the museum or society.

(3) For purposes of this chapter, if the loan of property was made to a branch of a museum or society, the museum or society is deemed to be located in the county in which the branch is located. Otherwise the museum or society is located in the county in which it has its principal place of business.

(4) (a) When property is found in the collection of a museum or historical society without donor documentation or when property is abandoned at a museum or historical society without the donor's identity being provided, the museum or historical society shall follow a process to establish ownership of the property. The process must include an unknown donor notification, where notice is given to the public through at least one of the following methods:

(i) Posting on a publicly accessible page on the museum's or society's official website; or

(ii) Physically posting a notice in a public space at the museum's or society's primary location, such as a lobby or other area accessible to visitors.

(b) The unknown donor notification shall contain the following:

(i) A general description of the property;

(ii) A statement requesting that any person claiming ownership or having information about the possible donor contact the museum or society in writing;

(iii) Contact information for the museum or society, including an address and email address where claims or inquiries may be sent; and

(iv) A statement that if no claim or information establishing ownership is received by the museum or society within 90 days from the date of the notice, the property shall be deemed donated and shall become the property of the museum or society.

(c) Any person claiming ownership of the property must provide proof of ownership in writing to the museum or historical society.

[2025 c 242 s 1; 1988 c 226 s 6.]