

Deadline for submissions: January 30, 2023.

The Archives Association of Ontario is pleased to announce its Call for Papers for the 2023 Annual Conference to be held from May 10-12 virtually on the Whova Platform.

### **Archives Rx: Healthy Collections and Communities**

“Over recent years, there has been a growing understanding of the impact that creative or cultural activity can have on health and wellbeing.” (Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance,

<https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/who-we-are/what-culture-health-and-wellbeing>)

The concepts of health and wellness have become ingrained in conversations concerning our lives and how to make the most of the time we have. Within the archival setting, the concepts of health and wellness can mean different things depending on the focus. We can look at the health of our collections from a conservation point of view. We may want to examine the wellness of our researchers and those who are stakeholders of the information held within our collections, particularly when the subject matter is traumatic. Archives play an important role in the wellness of our communities as we are charged with caring for the history and stories of those communities.

The Conference Program Committee invites proposals for examinations on this general topic in past, present, and future contexts.

Potential subjects for consideration include:

- Mental health in archives:
  - How to deal with staff burnout? Manage healthy work relations?
  - Handling difficult/sensitive materials: how to support staff? How to support researchers working with difficult/heavy topics and materials?
- Healthy physical archival spaces for collections and people:
  - The importance of air and ventilation, when it also needs to be controlled!
  - Active preventive conservation for collections management
  - How to best support researchers physically when a large part of the researcher demographic is aged.
  - Health & safety policies: are they implemented? How do we make them unique and successful in archives where we often are on ladders, in narrow skinny bays, lifting boxes, and handling awkward size materials? When archival tasks are often manual, how do we accommodate the different accessibility needs of staff and volunteers?
- Archives as part of healthy communities:

- How do archives contribute to healthy communities? How do we get involved with communities beyond the activities within our walls, and give back?
- Programming: archives programming/partnering with social services and healthcare for programs re: dementia, Alzheimer's, end-of-life care, mental health, addiction et al.
- Healthy archival infrastructure and operations:
  - Healthy funding base: how can archives expand revenue streams to create a healthier and more sustainable funding base?
  - Healthy volunteer base: how to build and retain?
- Other subjects will be considered

Proposals should consist of a brief abstract of approximately 250 words, a mini bio, your institutional affiliation (if applicable), and filled out online [here](#) or emailed to the AAO Office at [aao@aao-archivists.ca](mailto:aao@aao-archivists.ca).

Submissions of proposals for complete sessions or individual papers are welcomed. All individuals who work with archival records are invited to submit a proposal. We welcome and encourage papers by and from archivists and members of the GLAM sector who identify as part of minority communities, students, new graduates, emerging professionals, or those associated with under-represented institutions or collections.

Do you have questions or want to discuss your ideas before submitting a proposal? We encourage you to reach out to [aao@aao-archivists.ca](mailto:aao@aao-archivists.ca).

**The due date for applications/submissions is January 30, 2023.** All proposals will be reviewed by a peer panel. We expect to inform all those who have put forward a proposal the result of the panel's deliberations by the end of February.

With a commitment to the theme of health and wellness, presenters considering submitting proposals are encouraged to consider creative ways to be engaging or present their information. The goal of this conference is to learn and share, and for all participants and volunteers to feel supported in their mental and physical well-being during this virtual event.

Sessions may take the form of a:

- Traditional session - 2 to 3 live or pre-recorded presentations of 20 minutes per speaker with live questions to follow via the Whova platform
- Discussion panel - brief presentations of approximately 10-15 minutes per speaker with discussion to follow

- Roundtable or structured conversation - presentations of 5 to 7 minutes with an open discussion between speakers
- Creative and innovative approach to presentations - 1 hour, 15 min
- Virtual Workshops - 1 hour, 15 minutes

The Programming Committee is open to virtual formats not listed here, as we aim to make this conference as engaging and community spirited as possible.

*On behalf of the 2023 Conference Program Committee*