

The call will be made public by October 31, 2022

Deadline for submissions: January 6, 2023.

The Archives Association of Ontario is pleased to announce its Call for Papers for the 2023 Annual Conference to be held from May 10th to May 12th at the Cobourg Community Centre in Cobourg, Ontario.

### **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

With a commitment to the theme of health and wellness, presenters considering submitting proposals could 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 three-day event. Submissions of proposals for complete sessions or individual papers are welcomed. Proposals should consist of a brief abstract of approximately 250 words, a mini bio, your institutional affiliation, and if you prefer to present in-person or virtually and be sent to:

The AAO Office at [aao@aao-archivists.ca](mailto:aao@aao-archivists.ca)

**The due date for applications/submissions is January 6, 2023.**

Sessions may take the form of a:

- Traditional session - 2 to 3 presentations of 20 minutes per speaker with questions to follow
- 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
- Demonstrations with a hands-on component - 1 hour, 15 minutes

We especially welcome and encourage papers by and from archivists who identify as part of minority communities. We also welcome proposals from students, new graduates, emerging archivists, or those archivists associated with under-represented

institutions or collections. All individuals who work with archival records are invited to submit a proposal.

Join us in Northumberland County, the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg, where rolling hills and lake shores offer scenic respite and natural adventures. The historic Town of Cobourg welcomes you to enjoy charming downtown amenities and a great beach boardwalk. Enjoy spring unfolding by the water in Cobourg!

While we are preparing to see everyone in person in May, there may be a need for a shift to a virtual-based environment depending on ongoing pandemic measures.

*On behalf of the 2023 Conference Program Committee*