



A Provincial Acquisition Strategy for Ontario

Vision

The documentary heritage of Ontario is a resource to be shared among all of its citizens. It is the combined responsibility of all archives in Ontario to hold these records in trust and ensure that they are preserved and accessible for future generations.

By agreeing to the principles of this strategy, the Ontario archival community recognizes that a collaborative approach will best enable it to safeguard the preservation of significant private and government records in the most appropriate repository and ensure every effort is made to make them accessible to all Ontarians. Further, it will allow Ontario's archival community to share and acknowledge the individual and collective mandates for private and government records acquisition in the province.

This strategy, a first for Ontario's archives, is a stepping stone towards a broader vision. It is hoped that a provincial acquisition strategy will position Ontario's archival community to identify gaps in the province's holdings and to build a collaborative archival network that reflects Ontario's regions and people in all of their diversity.

Strategy Background

The [Canadian Council of Archives](#) (CCA) has long promoted the development of acquisition strategies at both the national and the provincial levels. In fact, the CCA "Guidelines for Developing an Acquisition Policy" (1990) suggest that "acquisition policies can be used as the basis for cooperative acquisition strategies and as an important tool in planning for the systematic identification and preservation of our national archival heritage".

Although most major archival institutions have well-developed acquisition policies, and sometimes acquisition strategies in place, little progress has been

made towards developing provincial models. To date, Nova Scotia is the only Canadian jurisdiction that has developed a cooperative acquisition strategy.

The 2014 Canadian Archives Summit called for increased collaboration between archival institutions and the sharing of information to strengthen partnerships in the archival community. The Summit's focus on dialogue and community inspired a renewed interest in and support for collaboration between archives, which makes the development of a provincial acquisition strategy for Ontario a timely undertaking.

In a presentation at the Archives Association of Ontario's (AAO) [2015 Annual Conference](#), the benefits of a provincial acquisition strategy were discussed among community members. After receiving unanimous support for developing such a strategy, the [Institutional Development Committee](#) (IDC) of the Archives Association of Ontario (AAO) decided to undertake the development of such a strategy. As a first step in this direction, the IDC organized an Institutional Issues Forum in October 2015 to allow for an open, yet focused, discussion on a provincial acquisition strategy for Ontario. Following the Forum, the IDC formed a working group tasked with developing the strategy for adoption at the AAO's [2016 Annual Conference](#).

It was generally agreed upon by all members of the working group that the overall purpose of the provincial acquisition strategy would be tied to a broader vision for Ontario's archives. The value of Ontario's provincial strategy will be enhanced through tools to assist with its implementation and dissemination. Once adopted, the provincial acquisition strategy will then provide the basis for an ongoing discussion among Ontario archives interested in the documentary heritage of the province as a whole. Working with the strategy will strengthen the archival profession by providing it with a common purpose and move it towards adopting a documentation strategy to fill in gaps in the province's collective holdings.

Consultation has been recognized by the working group as vital to the project's success. As such the working group has identified key stakeholders to be consulted during the strategy's development. These stakeholders include the [Council of Nova Scotia Archives](#) (whose strategy served as a model), AAO Chapters, institutional members and individual members of the Ontario archival community at large. In addition, the working group will be reporting regularly on its progress to the IDC and to the [AAO Board of Directors](#). The collective feedback of the community will provide the strategy with strength and vitality.



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A final draft of the provincial acquisition strategy will be distributed to all AAO institutional members for final comment in advance of the 2016 Annual General Meeting, where a motion for its approval will be put forward.

The Provincial Acquisition Strategy – Looking Forward

2015-2016: Develop strategy and tools for implementation. Strategy is adopted in principle at 2016 AGM.

2016-2017: Strategy is implemented. Tools are adjusted as required. Regional acquisition strategies are developed, as required.

2017-2018: Development of documentation strategy for Ontario.



1.0 STRATEGY STATEMENT

Ontario archives will acquire archival materials on a cooperative basis according to the Guidelines set out in 4.0 and the Acquisition Criteria set out in 5.0.

2.0 STRATEGY OBJECTIVE

The objective of this strategy is to ensure and promote the cooperative acquisition and preservation of Ontario's archival heritage at the local, regional and provincial levels and to lay the foundation for a provincial documentation strategy aimed at filling in the gaps in the province's documentary memory.

3.0 APPLICATION

3.1 This strategy applies to all acquisitions of archival materials, regardless of medium, by Ontario archives.

3.2 This strategy also applies to the reappraisal and de-accessioning of archival materials by Ontario archives; however, de-accessioning for the purposes of transferring records to another institution should only occur where there is mutual interest between institutions and where resources allow for it.

3.3 In this strategy "scope" means the predominant geographic focus of activity or interest of the creator of the records. It may also refer to a thematic or other area, as defined by a particular institution's collections mandate.

4.0 GUIDELINES

4.1 In general, Ontario archives acquire archival materials from their sponsoring body and/or Ontario individuals, families, and corporate bodies.

4.2 In general, Ontario archives will acquire archival materials which are local or regional in scope, pertaining to their locality, or which pertain to their thematic acquisition mandate, which may be local, regional, or provincial in scope. In general, the Archives of Ontario (AO) will acquire archival materials which are provincial in scope.



4.3 Ontario archives will normally, where material falls outside their sphere of acquisition as set out in section 5.0, refer the prospective donor(s) to the most appropriate repository.

4.4 In the absence of a suitable repository, all Ontario archives share some responsibility for the preservation of archival material of suitable significance.

4.4 If an Ontario archives is offered the records of a corporate body which maintains or has designated another archives as its repository, the archives to which the records have been offered will refer the prospective donor(s) to the designated repository.

4.5 If an Ontario archives is offered the records of an individual or family whose records are known to be at another repository, the archives to which the records have been offered will so advise the prospective donor(s).

4.6 Ontario archives developing or revising their acquisition policies should do so in accordance with this Provincial Acquisition Strategy and in recognition of the collection mandates of other Ontario archives.

4.7 Ontario archives reappraising and de-accessioning archival materials should do so in accordance with this Provincial Acquisition Strategy and in recognition of the collection mandates of other Ontario archives.

4.8 Ontario archives acquiring, reappraising and de-accessioning archival materials should take into consideration donor wishes in relation to the records, as well as any legal requirements which may apply.

4.9 Ontario archives in the same location or region or with overlapping thematic acquisition mandates are encouraged to develop cooperative acquisition strategies.

The AAO Executive, via the IDC, will provide a forum to discuss any issues which may arise in relation to the application of the Strategy.

5.0 ACQUISITION CRITERIA

The collections mandate of an archival institution may be partially or completely defined in legislation. In the absence of legislated responsibility, it is the



responsibility of individual institutions to define their collection mandates for the benefit of this strategy.

5.1 In general, Ontario archives acquire archival materials from:

Their sponsoring body and its predecessor body/ies.

Organizations and individuals associated with the sponsoring body e.g. government departments, school boards and schools, etc.

Corporate bodies which are provincial, local or regional in scope or whose records fall within thematic acquisition mandates, which may be local, regional or provincial in scope.

Ontario individuals and families whose activities are provincial, local or regional in scope or whose records fall within thematic acquisition mandates, which may be local, regional or provincial in scope.

6.0 GLOSSARY

What Are Archives?

An archives is a permanent establishment dedicated to:

- appraising, selecting and acquiring the archival records of its sponsoring institution (normally its primary goal) and/or the archival records of corporate bodies, families or individuals relevant to its sponsoring institution or to a defined community or thematic interest;
- conserving the archival records or the information acquired;
- arranging and describing the archival records according to accepted archival principles;
- making the archival records available for continuing use under defined conditions by the sponsoring institution and by the public.¹

For all other associated definitions, please refer to the glossary in Appendix D of the Rules for Archival Description.²

¹ Canadian Council of Archives Institutional Guidelines for Archives, 2001
(http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/GuideSmallArchives_EN.pdf)

² Rules for Archival Description, revised July 2008
(<http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/archdesrules.html>)



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7.0 APPENDICES

[Collection mandates of Nova Scotia archives](#)

For information on archival holdings of AAO institutional members, see [Archeion](#), Ontario's Database of Archival Descriptions.