

Archives, HRM

From: Archives, HRM <Archives@halifax.ca>
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2020 3:26 PM
To: CNSA listserv
Subject: [External Email] Message to CNSA members re. COVID-19

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Dear CNSA members,

In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, the CNSA Board is concerned about the health, safety, and well-being of our members, your staff, volunteers, researchers, and communities. As measures are put in place to encourage social distancing, we recognize that many of our members are choosing to close to the public if not entirely. These are difficult decisions to make and there is no one-size-fits-all choice, as each organization is different. Whatever you do, we urge you to consider the wellbeing of your community inasmuch as your organization when evaluating how to respond to the growing health crisis. Remember, too, that keeping you and your staff safe may be the best way to ensure you can continue to care for your community's documentary heritage.

If you choose to close, below are some tasks that could be performed remotely, adapted from the Association of Canadian Archivists. Not all of these tasks will apply to you, but some may help you to keep operating and keep your people safe.

Administrative work, such as:

- developing or revising policies, workflows, or manuals
- continuing committee work via phone or teleconference
- updating emergency planning protocols and continuity planning

- cleaning up shared work drives by standardizing file names, organizing files, and deleting duplicates, etc.
- researching new and emerging technologies applicable to collections management

Collections work, such as:

- checking your finding aids for outdated/oppressive language
- converting legacy finding aids into MemoryNS RAD-compatible descriptions
- adding information from your collections to Wikipedia and Wikidata, or uploading images to Wikimedia Commons, or transcribing documents in Wikisource
- identifying collections for digitization and planning out each project (PADP season is open!!)
- transcribing/translating digitized handwritten documents (e.g, diaries, correspondence, etc.)
- creating research guides
- maintaining and cleaning up websites, checking for alt-text in images and doing accessibility audits

Reference and outreach work, such as:

- answering reference requests as appropriate and possible
- creating FAQs or “ready reference” answers
- engaging with users online through social media platforms
- Pull together your [organization’s origin story](#) (if not other stories too) for [Historic Nova Scotia](#)

Staff/volunteer development work, such as:

- reaching out to hourly and student workers to ensure that they are able to submit timesheets electronically
- arranging for regular phone calls/email check-ins with staff and volunteers
- inviting fellow workers to collaborate on a project
- researching and writing grants to support projects or research

As always, please feel free to use the CNSA listserv as a way of staying connected to colleagues and peers in the province. We all need to support each other through this crisis and find ways to maintain a sense of community despite social isolation. Archives Advisor, Sara Hollett is working from home but still available for advice at advisor@councilofnsarchives.ca until April 1.

Finally, for members planning to apply for PADP grants, you can expect an announcement soon from Nova Scotia Archives about any changes to deadlines in light of COVID-19.

On behalf of the CNSA Board, we hope you all stay safe and stay well

~Susan, CNSA President (still working from the Halifax Municipal Archives but only providing phone/email reference since Monday)

SUSAN MCCLURE

(she/her)

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