



COUNCIL OF NOVA SCOTIA ARCHIVES

ANNUAL REPORTS

2025-2026

President's Annual Report	1
Treasurer's Annual Report	5
Membership Annual Report	8
2025 PADP Adjudication Report	9
Awards Committee Annual Report	11
Education Committee Annual Report	13
2025 Conference Report	13
Archives Advisor's Annual Report	17
MemoryNS Support Specialist's Annual Report	23
Governance Review Working Group Final Report	25
Archival Workshop for Mi'kmaq Project Report	27
Update from the Nova Scotia Archives	28
Appendix A: Financial Summary of Fiscal Year 2025-2026	30
Appendix B: Budget Summary for Fiscal Year 2026-2027	32
Appendix C: Balance Sheet as of May 14, 2026	33
Appendix D: <i>Listening Forward</i> – Final Report on the Pilot Mi'kmaw Community Archival Workshop	35



President's Annual Report

2025–2026

I am pleased to present this report on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Council of Nova Scotia Archives (CNSA). In 2025–2026, the Council continued to provide practical support to members while maintaining its core services, advancing several important organizational priorities, and responding to a changing funding and policy environment for archives in Nova Scotia. This year's work reflects the Council's ongoing commitment to supporting archival institutions across the province and to strengthening the preservation, accessibility, and sustainability of Nova Scotia's documentary heritage.

Organizational Direction and Advocacy

A key priority following the 2025 Annual General Meeting was completing the administrative transfer of the CNSA's annual operational grant back to the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage (CCTH). The request was submitted to the Minister of CCTH on May 12, approved on June 4, and the new funding agreement was signed on July 11. Following discussion at the AGM, the CNSA held a special members' meeting on July 14 to provide further information and respond to questions about the change; an information package was circulated to the membership in advance of the meeting.

Separately, advocacy became particularly important in early 2026, when the CNSA was notified that the Provincial Archival Development Program (PADP) would be eliminated as part of the 2026–2027 provincial budget. At the same time, the Council was advised that its operating grant would be maintained at \$75,000. The CNSA is grateful for the province's continued support for our core operations, which remains essential to the Council's stability and ongoing service to the archival community. Dedicated project funding for individual institutions serves a distinct and complementary purpose, and PADP played an important role in enabling archival institutions across Nova Scotia to undertake preservation, access, and capacity-building initiatives. Its elimination creates a significant gap in the landscape for dedicated, application-based archival project funding in Nova Scotia.

In response, the CNSA prioritized member communication and advocacy. Formal responses were prepared by the Executive for government, member communications were developed in collaboration with the Archives Advisor, and public messaging was shared to help members and stakeholders understand the implications of the program's elimination. The Council also held an open members'



meeting by Zoom on March 6 to provide information, hear concerns, and support discussion among members about the loss of PADP.

Membership

The [CNSA's membership](#) remains strong, **continuing the pattern of steady growth since 2021**. In 2025–2026, the Council had 125 members: 47 Institutional members, 53 Associate Institutional members, and 25 Individual and Student members. The Council was pleased to welcome three new Associate Institutional members: the Aberdeen Hospital Archives Society, Clements Historical Society, and the Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia.

Heritage societies and community archives represent 70% of our member institutions. This membership profile reinforces the importance of accessible advisory services, practical training, and project-based funding for organizations that often steward significant local documentary heritage with limited staffing and resources.

Member-at-Large, Emerging Professional

The Member-at-Large, Emerging Professional position continued to bring an important perspective to the CNSA Executive this year. Created as part of the [2025-2028 Strategic Plan](#), the position is intended to ensure that students, early-career archivists, and newer professionals have a voice in the Council's governance and planning.

Over the past year, Devon Fraser contributed valuable insight to Executive discussions on sustainability, professional support, advocacy, and the future of archival work in Nova Scotia. We are grateful for Devon's participation and perspective during a significant year for the Council and the broader archival community.

Looking ahead, the CNSA hopes to build on this work by developing an **Emerging Professionals Working Group**, which would create further opportunities for connection, mentorship, programming, and input into the Council's activities. As the CNSA continues to review and refine its governance structure, this position remains an important expression of the Council's commitment to broadening participation, supporting professional development, and making space for new voices within the archival community.



Advisory & Member Services

The CNSA continued to provide essential advisory and member services throughout the year. Our tireless [Archives Advisor](#), Sharon Murray, remains central to the Council's work through direct professional guidance, education, administrative oversight, committee participation, and ongoing engagement with members. From April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, Sharon responded to **133 advisory and member service requests**, including 113 requests for archival advice, 24 for member services, 21 inquiries from non-members, and 16 requests related to education and training. These requests covered a wide range of topics, including preservation, digitization and digital preservation, arrangement and description, copyright and privacy, hiring and job seeking, grant applications, policy development, disaster preparedness, and connections within the CNSA network.

[MemoryNS](#) remains one of the CNSA's most important member services. Lisa Snider continued to support members and non-members with AtoM and MemoryNS, including with descriptions, authority records, digital object space, place names, institutional profiles, and technical issues. Lisa's time with the CNSA will conclude on July 31, 2026. On behalf of the Executive, I extend **sincere thanks to Lisa for her long-standing service, expertise, patience, and commitment to the CNSA and our members.**

Education

Education remains a core service area for the CNSA. Between May 2025 and March 2026, the CNSA offered **four Core Courses in archival practice** online: *Acquisition, Appraisal, and Accessioning*; *Learning RAD with MemoryNS*; *Arrangement & Description*; and *Introduction to Archives* was offered twice. Together, these courses generated **\$8,405 in revenue** from the **72 registrations total**. The Archival Certificate Program also continued to provide an important professional development pathway, with **six members earning their Archival Certificates** this past year and 47 members currently enrolled.

As per the [Education Committee Annual Report](#), the CNSA also administered **Professional Development and Training Bursaries to two members** and continued work on **two education projects** supported by funding from the Nova Scotia Archives: a disaster plan writing workshop series, now planned for the fall, and a new digital preservation module for *Introduction to Preservation for Archives*. These projects respond to identified member needs and reflect the growing importance of disaster readiness and digital preservation across institutions of all sizes.



Member Awards

The 2025 CNSA Member Awards were presented at the LAMNS conference gala. Congratulations are extended to **DesBrisay Museum, Col. John Orr (Ret.), Halifax Municipal Archives**, and graduates of Dalhousie University's Department of Information Science, **Clare Cheong** and **Carolyn Smith**. This year, the CNSA also added a new Outreach Award to recognize archives that creatively bring archival work into public spaces, invite new audiences into archival spaces, and create opportunities for public participation.

Special Projects and Partnerships

The [2025 Libraries, Archives, and Museums Nova Scotia joint conference](#), Intersections, was held October 2–4 in Halifax/Kjipuktuk. Co-organized by ANSM, CNSA, and NSLA, the conference brought together more than 270 attendees from across the archives, library, and museum sectors. The Council extends particular thanks to Sharon Murray for her work as one of the LAMNS Conference Co-Chairs, and to all CNSA members who contributed to the event's success.

The CNSA also saw the completion of [Listening Forward: Pilot Mi'kmaw Community Archival Workshop](#), developed in partnership with the Lnuwey Tplutaqan Wikuom and Glooscap First Nation. The workshop supported CNSA's commitment to truth and reconciliation by strengthening engagement with Mi'kmaw communities and supporting community-led archival goals.

This year confirmed a new and important partnership with Halifax Regional Municipality. As a result of HRM's new Regional Museum Strategy, on April 10, 2026, the **CNSA signed a three-year funding agreement with HRM**. This funding will support increased training and services for members, with a particular focus on building members' digital capacity.

Governance Review

A major internal initiative this year was the work of the [Governance Review Working Group](#), which was chaired by the President, and included Michelle Connick, Hansel Cook, and Sharon Murray as an ex officio member. The group met approximately every three weeks between February and May 2026 to review the Council's governance structure, clarify roles and responsibilities, and better support the work of the Executive, committees, and staff.

The Working Group's main deliverables were a revised CNSA Governance Manual and a new Governance Code of Conduct. The coming year will serve as a pilot



period for the revised Executive role descriptions, including the Members-at-Large liaising with our standing committees and a greater role for the Vice President in supporting outreach, advocacy, and Executive recruitment and nominations.

Closing Reflections

This has been a demanding year for the CNSA and for the broader heritage community. It has also demonstrated the strength and resilience of Nova Scotia's archival community. I extend sincere thanks to the Executive Committee, Sharon Murray and Lisa Snider, and to all committee members, project partners, volunteers, and CNSA members who contributed their time, care, and expertise this year.

**Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Fancy
President**



Treasurer's Annual Report

April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026

[*The new guy.*](#) Hello, I'm Jordan Audas. Professionally, I work as a Project Manager at Digital Nova Scotia (DNS), the industry association for the province's ICT and digital technologies sector. At DNS, I manage digital transformation & skill building programs, as well as partnerships across government, academic, and industry. My background is in information management and library services, and I previously worked within Reference & Research Services at Saint Mary's University. I'm pleased to be involved with the CNSA and to support the organization's ongoing work in preserving and promoting Nova Scotia's archival community.

As I step into the role of Treasurer for the CNSA, I would first like to thank Christine Hines for her dedicated service and careful stewardship of the organization's finances over the past several years. Christine's work established strong financial processes and documentation practices that have made this transition as smooth as possible. I look forward to continuing the CNSA's commitment to sound financial management.

My responsibilities continue to be made very easy by the CNSA's Archives Advisor and all around workhorse, Sharon Murray. Sharon's oversight of day-to-day transactions and preparation of materials for the bookkeeper is consistently reliable, timely, and detailed. As I become familiar with the CNSA's operations and financial protocols, I would like to formally acknowledge my appreciation for Sharon's professionalism, collaborative nature, and ongoing support.

Danielle Power of RP Accounting and Bookkeeping continues to serve as the CNSA's bookkeeper, and we have maintained a steady and efficient workflow with her throughout the fiscal year. The Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage, under which the CNSA's Anchor Grant is administered, is currently reviewing its requirement for grant recipients to submit a Review Engagement. As a result, the CNSA is not required to provide one for the current fiscal year. We do anticipate that this requirement may return in future years, however, so we would propose engaging Strong & Associates again, as we were very satisfied with the quality of their services during the previous fiscal year.

As always, The [FY 2025–2026 Budget vs. Actuals summary](#), [proposed Budget for FY 2026–2027](#), and [Balance Sheet](#) are appended here for reference. The following items are worth noting:



- We are anticipating a modest reduction in revenue from membership fees and course registrations for the 2026–2027 fiscal year due to recent provincial funding cuts affecting many of our members.
- The proposed 2026–2027 budget includes new funding via a Contribution Agreement with Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), as part of their Museum Strategy. These funds will support the hiring of a Digital Archives Coordinator – a position we hope will increase the CNSA’s capacity to provide advisory and member services on digital preservation and MemoryNS.
- As expected, we deferred the \$20,000 grant from CBU for the ongoing project to develop and deliver archival workshops for Mi’kmaq (see the [project report](#) for more).
- We also deferred the \$4500 grant from the Nova Scotia Archives for the two education projects that are still in progress (see the [Education Committee Annual Report](#) for more).

The CNSA remains financially stable and solvent, assuming continued stable funding sources. The organization also maintains reserve funds sufficient to support operational continuity and absorb modest budget fluctuations when necessary.

As I assume the role of Treasurer, I appreciate the support of the Executive Committee, staff, and membership during this transition period. I look forward to working collaboratively to ensure the CNSA continues to operate from a position of financial strength while supporting the organization’s strategic priorities.

Respectfully submitted,
Jordan Audas
Treasurer, pro tem

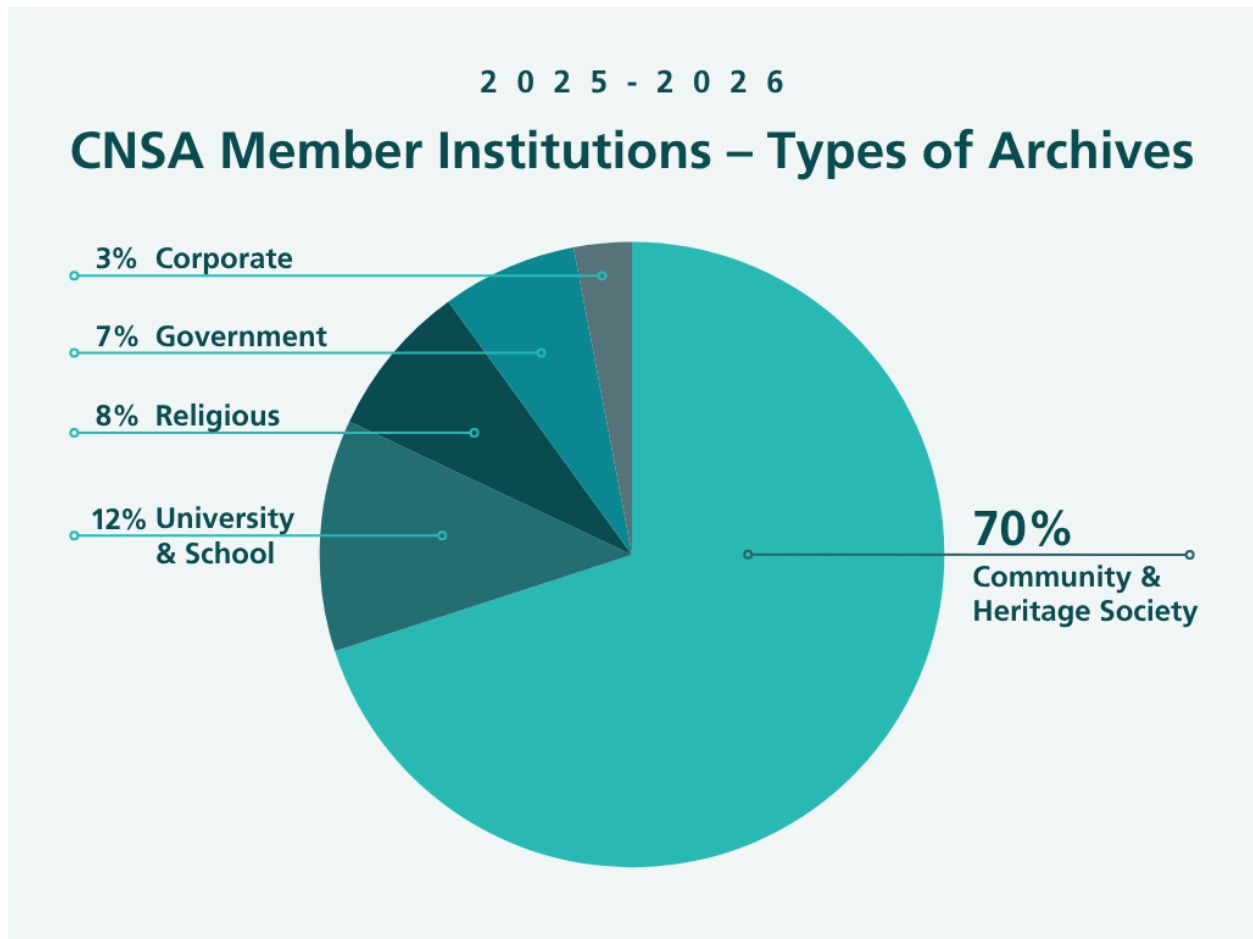


Membership Annual Report 2025-2026

As the table below shows, our membership has grown significantly over the past 5 years! For a full list of CNSA member archives, please see our [Members Map](#).

In the 2025-2026 membership year, we welcomed three new Associate Institutional members: Aberdeen Hospital Archives Society, Clements Historical Society, and Genealogical Association of Nova Scotia.

Membership Type	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Institutional	40	45	45	46	47	47
Associate Institutional	25	33	26	41	51	53
Individual and Student	19	37	38	35	28	25
Total Membership	84	115	109	122	126	125



Respectfully Submitted,
Hansel Cook
Membership & Nominations Member-At-Large



Provincial Archival Development Program (PADP) 2025 Adjudication Report

This report covers the Provincial Archives Development Program (PADP) adjudication process for 2025. The independent Adjudication Committee met on Friday, May 9, 2025, to review the six qualifying applications that were submitted from institutional members of the Council of Nova Scotia Archives. Committee members were:

- Hansel Cook, Chair (Associate Dean and Archivist, Saint Mary's University)
- Fred Farrell (former CCA Chair and former Provincial Archivist of New Brunswick)
- Jennifer Vanderburgh (Professor, Saint Mary's University)
- Heather Adams (University Archivist, Kings College)
- Heidi Schiller (Archivist)
- Sandra Toze (School of Information Management, Dalhousie University)

The committee members independently reviewed each application using the PADP Guidelines and Scoring Guide for Adjudication. These scores were averaged to provide ranking during adjudication. The meeting consisted of a review of each application to ensure its eligibility, adherence to the objectives of the program, review of the budget and the reading of consensus on the ranking of each application.

Based upon this process, we recommended to the Department of Service Nova Scotia that the following six projects be funded from the PADP allotment available for 2025–2026:

Name of Applicant	Project Title	PADP Funds Requested
Celtic Music Interpretive Centre	CMIC Global Preservation Assessment	\$4,730.00
Beaton Institute Archives	Back to Basics - Policies for Improved Preservation	\$14,902.00
King's County Museum	Forgotten Voices - Nova Scotia's Poor Farms	\$7,860.50
Eastern Shore Archives	Backlog Reduction Project	\$8,453.00
Mahone Bay Museum	Robert Sayers Backlog	\$6,396.62
Shearwater Aviation Museum	Shearwater in the Second World War	\$7657.88

Total funds requested \$50,000



Please note: Shearwater Aviation Museum generously agreed to modify the scope of their project, which changed their initial request of \$10,357.20 to \$7657.88. This allowed for full funding of the six above projects.

Also note that one of our adjudicators (Heidi Schiller) excused themselves from consideration of the Shearwater Aviation Museum application as she had a previous working relationship with them and did not want there to be any concern about a conflict of interest.

The applications represent a wide variety of institutions and regions, as well as types and sizes of projects. The enthusiasm for PADP among our members indicates the importance of a program like this for the Nova Scotia archival community. With the elimination of this program in 2026, I very much hope that a new and similar granting program be considered in future years.

Respectfully submitted,
Hansel Cook
2025 Chair, PADP Adjudication Committee



Awards Committee Annual Report

2025 CNSA Member Awards

- ❖ The **Anna Hamilton Award** for outstanding service to the Nova Scotia archival community was presented to **Col John Orr (Ret)** for his outstanding voluntary contribution to Shearwater Aviation Museum.
- ❖ The **Doug Kirby Award** for outstanding achievement in archival preservation was awarded to **Halifax Municipal Archives** for their Community Photo Scan-a-thons.
- ❖ The **Phyllis R. Blakeley Award** for outstanding accomplishment in archival work was presented to **DesBrisay Museum** for the project, "Unveiling HerStory: Amplifying Women's Voices in the DesBrisay Museum Archive."

2025 Dalhousie Student Award

The CNSA Award for a graduating student of the Dalhousie Department of Information Management who shows an aptitude and interest in the archival profession was awarded jointly to **Clare Cheong and Carolyn Smith**.

A New Award!

The seeds for this award were planted by Past-President, Jane Arnold (Beaton Institute) in 2024, and then sprouted last year during adjudication of the 2025 CNSA Member Awards. At both times, we noticed a gap in our existing Member Awards for projects that involve community.

Earlier this year, I formed a Think Tank composed of Susan McClure (Halifax Municipal Archives), Lyne Allain (Inverness County Museums), and myself to develop criteria for this new award. In addition to creating an opportunity to recognize archives for their work with and in community, this award will help the CNSA fulfill its strategic goal of community outreach.

The Outreach Award:

- Fills a void in recognizing the contributions of archives that have creatively adapted a project that ventures out into public spaces or invites newcomers into the archival space.
- Educates the public about archives, their importance, and usefulness.
- Fosters an appreciation of local history.



- Creates a space for public participation and conversation while collectively sharing information about preservation and record-keeping.
- Instills a new-found interest in archival preservation in the anticipation of obtaining a new volunteer base, while sharing the basics of best practices for the public's own collections.
- Fills a gap for the smaller archives that uses innovative solutions to protect and expand collections, while inviting the community in, by going outside of the confines of the repository to central meeting places.
- The method of the nominated project may be less formal and builds trust. Scan-a-thons are a perfect example of this.

In April, the Outreach Award was officially unveiled and added to the CNSA Member Awards, for a total of four awards. The Think Tank decided that the prize would be \$200 plus a certificate presented to the successful archives.

In the (near) future, we hope to rename the award for someone our members would like to honour for their significant contribution to their archives and community.

**Respectfully submitted,
Heidi Schiller
Communication & Awards Member-at-Large**



Education Committee Annual Report 2025–2026

Professional Development & Training Bursary Recipients

In 2025-2026, the CNSA awarded Professional Development & Training Bursaries to:

- **Sandi Stewart (student member): \$500** for attending the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education conference in Saskatoon, June 2025.
- **Stephen MacIntosh (MSVU Archives): \$90** for attending day 2 of the Libraries, Archives, and Museums Nova Scotia in Halifax, October 2025.

Education Projects (Still) in Development

The Education Committee did not meet this past year. However, work continued on two significant projects initiated by the committee the previous year.

Disaster Plan Writing Workshop Series

In March 2024, the CNSA received a generous grant from the Nova Scotia Archives to support educational programming. A portion of these funds will support the delivery of a workshop series on writing a disaster plan, as designed by the Education Committee in 2024-2025. This initiative responds to a need identified through the CNSA's Disaster Preparedness Project and the 2025 Nova Scotia Heritage Response Network feasibility study.

In 2025-2026, Sharon Murray, Karin Kierstead, and Alyssa Giles from ANSM met several times to plan the co-delivery of the workshop series, which they intended to roll out in June 2026. However, in light of the provincial budget cuts, both the CNSA and ANSM concluded that this spring was not an ideal time to launch a new training program. The workshop series has therefore been postponed to fall.

Digital Preservation module for *Introduction to Preservation for Archives*

The other portion of the grant funds will be used for the creation of a digital preservation module within *Introduction to Preservation for Archives*. This module will replace the one on disaster planning, which will now be a stand-alone workshop. The addition of digital preservation to our Preservation course reflects the growing need for archives of all sizes to develop the knowledge and skills required to care for born-digital records, as per our Born Digital Working Group. Although progress on this project was delayed due to competing priorities, plans are now in place to develop the module this summer and relaunch the course this fall.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Murray, Archives Advisor
On behalf of the Education Committee



2025 Conference Report

Libraries, Archives, and Museums Nova Scotia (LAMNS) Conference

October 2–4, 2025, Halifax/Kjipuktuk

The 2025 Libraries, Archives, and Museums Nova Scotia (LAMNS) Conference, ***Intersections: Adaptability, Sustainability, Community Connections***, was held October 2–4, 2025, in Halifax/Kjipuktuk. Co-organized by the Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM), the Council of Nova Scotia Archives (CNSA), and the Nova Scotia Library Association (NSLA), the conference brought together professionals from across Nova Scotia’s archives, libraries, and museums to share knowledge, strengthen networks, and explore collaborative approaches to common challenges.

Conference Planning Committee

- Devin Casario (Co-Chair), Executive Director, Association of Nova Scotia Museums
- Jeff Mercer (Co-Chair), President, NSLA, and Colchester East Hants Public Library
- Sharon Murray (Co-Chair), Archives Advisor, Council of Nova Scotia Archives
- Rosemary Barbour, Nova Scotia Archives
- Jocelyn Covert, Halifax Public Libraries
- Devon Fraser, StFX Archives
- Alyssa Giles, Association of Nova Scotia Museums
- Laura Jones, Nova Scotia Public Library
- Tracey Stone, Halifax Public Libraries
- Joni Thomas, Nova Scotia Museum
- Sandra Toze, Dalhousie University, Department of Information Science
- Tegan Rowlings, Musquodoboit Harbour Railway Museum
- Kelli Woo Shue, Nova Scotia Public Library

Conference Staff

- Alex Cherry, LAMNS Conference Coordinator
- Julia Million, LAMNS Conference Assistant
- Colleen Fraser, LAMNS Communications Assistant

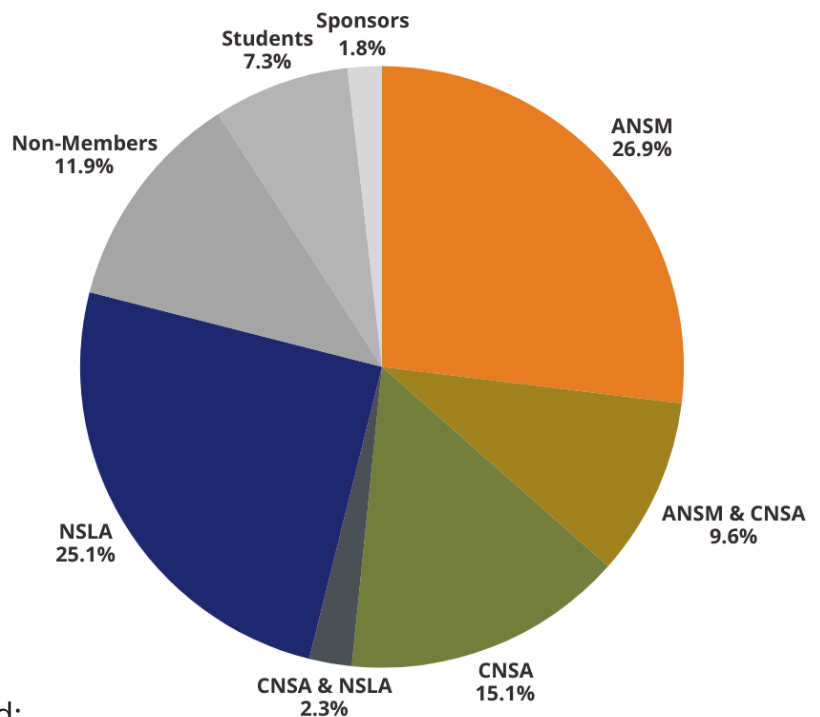
Conference Attendance

LAMNS 2025 welcomed a total of approximately **274 registrants**, including attendees, presenters, and keynote speakers, who contributed to the strength and diversity of the program. The majority of attendees registered for the full



three-days of the conference, demonstrating a high level of commitment to the program. Registration showed strong participation from all three sectors:

ANSM members	26.9%
ANSM & CNSA members	9.6%
CNSA members	15.1%
CNSA & NSLA members	2.3%
NSLA members	25.1%
Non-Members	11.9%
Students	7.3%
Sponsors	3%



Conference Program

The conference program featured:

- 3 Pre-Conference Workshops
- 4 Keynote Presentations
- 24 concurrent sessions
- An opening reception at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic
- Tours of the Halifax Central Library, Pjila’si Exhibit at the Museum of Natural History, and Nova Scotia Archives
- An ANSM, CNSA, and NSLA Awards Banquet at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21

Sessions reflected the conference theme and addressed topics such as accessibility, community engagement, sustainability, and responding to evolving community needs.

Conference Venues

The primary venue was the Halifax Central Library, with additional sessions and events held at the Museum of Natural History, Nova Scotia Archives, the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, and the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21. Attendee feedback on the venues was overwhelmingly positive.



Financial Summary

Registrations and sponsorships generated \$98,874 in conference revenue, while expenses totaled \$65,874, resulting in net revenue of \$33,000. In keeping with past LAMNS conferences, the net revenue was divided equally among the three organizing associations, with the CNSA receiving \$11,000.

Looking Ahead: 2030 LAMNS Conference

Both attendee and Committee feedback was, by and large, positive, confirming the value of this ongoing cross-sector collaboration. Both also identified opportunities to strengthen future conferences through:

- Begin planning 12-18 months in advance and hire planners and communications early in the process
- Enhance communications and promotion and begin sooner
- Consider a hybrid model for accessibility and reach
- Provide opportunities for networking and mingling – mixers, focus/special-interest group sessions, roundtable discussions
- Have a dedicated accessibility team to address obstacles and challenges as they arise
- Find ways to maintain momentum and a presence for LAMNS in between conferences

The 2025 LAMNS Conference was highly successful and demonstrated the value of collaboration among Nova Scotia's archival, library, and museum sectors. The strength of the program, the level of engagement, and the overwhelmingly positive feedback confirm the importance of continuing this initiative. Moreover, the insights gathered from this conference provide a strong foundation for planning LAMNS 2030 and beyond.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Murray, Conference Co-Chair

On behalf of the 2025 LAMNS Conference Planning Committee



Archives Advisor's Annual Report 2025–2026

This past year was an eventful one, with more than its fair share of ups and downs!

Serving as one of the Co-Chairs of the 2025 Libraries, Archives, and Museums Nova Scotia (LAMNS) Conference required significantly more time and energy than I anticipated, and the demands of that work meant that some of my regular activities were more limited than usual. However, on the whole Co-Chairing the conference was an incredibly rewarding experience.

Also unanticipated were changes to the administration of the CNSA's core funding and, more recently, the elimination of PADP with the 2026–2027 provincial budget.

Despite these unexpected demands, I continued to deliver educational programming, provide advisory services to members, advance some major projects, and help represent and advocate on behalf of Nova Scotia's archival community.

As we face further challenges as a sector, I want to reiterate my commitment and dedication to supporting our members through thick and thin. The Executive and I care deeply about the archival community in Nova Scotia, and we want to advocate for, and help, our members in any way we can. We are stronger together!

Education

Core Courses: Between May 2025 and March 2026, I taught three of the CNSA's Core Courses in archival practice, including one of them twice:

- *Acquisition, Appraisal, and Accessioning* (May 2025): 13 registrations
- *Introduction to Archives* (October 2025 and January 2026): 25 registrations total
- *Arrangement & Description* (February–March 2026): 20 registrations

I also helped with the administrative end of *Learning RAD with MemoryNS*, taught by Lisa Snider in November 2025, which had 14 registrations.

While we offered fewer courses than usual this past year, there were still a **total of 72 registrations**, serving a broad mix of emerging archival professionals, museum staff and volunteers, as well as students. Revenue from our Core Courses totaled \$8,405 in 2025-2026.



The **Archival Certificate Program** continues to be an important pathway for professional development for young and emerging professionals, plus staff, volunteers, and summer students at our member institutions. Between April 1, 2025, and March 31, 2026, six CNSA members successfully completed the Archival Certificate Program. Program participation remains robust, with 47 members currently enrolled.

Advisory & Member Services

Providing direct support and professional guidance to members remains my primary responsibility – and one that I love dearly!

From April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026, I responded to **133 advisory and member service requests**. Of these:

- 113 involved archival advising
- 24 involved member services
- 21 were from non-members
- 16 involved guidance on education and training
- 1 resulted in a site visit

Requests covered a wide range of topics, including preservation, digitization and digital preservation, arrangement and description, copyright and privacy, guidance on hiring or job seeking, assistance with grant applications or funding possibilities, policy development, disaster preparedness, and connecting with other members of the CNSA network.

This total does not include the many inquiries related to course registration, the Archival Certificate Program, and general administrative matters.

Site Visits

Due to the heavy workload of the LAMNS Conference, the bulk of which was in the summer and early fall, I conducted far fewer site visits than usual – only one to Scott Manor House, in which I met with the lovely members of the Board of the Fort Sackville Foundation. Hopefully this year I can hit the road and visit many members in a few regions of the province – folks in the northwest and southwest, I'm coming for you!

PADP Support

In the Spring of 2025, I helped facilitate the PADP application-writing workshop offered by the Provincial Archivist, Patti Bannister; assisted 4 members with their



applications and budgets; served as secretary and administrative support for the PADP Adjudication Committee; and helped two members tweak their project proposals, so they would fit within the total funding envelope.

The loss of PADP is a significant blow to the archival community in Nova Scotia, and I'm very sad that we will no longer be able to foster and support archival initiatives through this program.

Membership Renewals

As per the [Membership Annual Report](#), I oversaw the annual renewal process for approximately 100 institutional members, including updating their information in our bookkeeping software, issuing invoices, processing payments, maintaining the membership list, and subscribing new members to our listserv. I also welcomed the 25 returning and new Individual and Student/Underemployed members.

Membership fees continued to generate just over \$10,000 in annual revenue, providing an important source of operational funding for the CNSA.

Preservation Equipment Loans

The CNSA's Preservation Equipment Loan Program continued to support members in monitoring and improving storage environments. In 2025-2026, I processed 4 loans and returns of HOBO data loggers and/or our light and UV meters.

Executive Committee Administrative Assistance

Throughout the past year, I remained in close contact with President Catherine Fancy, and other members of the Executive regarding operational matters, advocacy, grant reporting, and budgeting.

I attended all regular and special meetings of the Executive Committee, serving as their 'administrative assistant' by circulating calendar invites, reminders, and Zoom meeting information; drafting agendas, reports, and documentation; and following-up on action items.

Special Projects

Archival Workshop for Mi'kmaq

As per the [report from the project's Steering Committee](#), I provided administrative assistance towards the successful delivery of the pilot workshop. My responsibilities included administrative support for the Committee, financial administration of



project funds, liaising with the team from The Wikuom, and drafting and submitting of the final report for CCTH.

The final report for the project was accepted and approved earlier this year, formally closing this phase of the project. Planning has already begun for a second phase, supported by funding from Cape Breton University.

2025 LAMNS Conference

As mentioned above, a significant portion of my time between June and October 2025 was devoted to planning and delivering the Libraries, Archives, and Museums Nova Scotia (LAMNS) 2025 joint conference, co-organized by the Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM), the Nova Scotia Library Association (NSLA), and the CNSA. Please see the [LAMNS Conference Report](#) for full details about the conference.

In addition to serving as one of three Conference Co-Chairs, I led the Programming Sub-Committee and acted as the primary liaison for all presenters and keynote speakers. I also presented on the CNSA's and ANSM's feasibility study for NS HERN, introduced presenters and keynote speakers, and gave the conference closing remarks.

The conference was an enormous success and very well received by those who attended, plus it generated substantial net revenue for the CNSA – far more than our conferences do each year. A win-win!

Governance Review

I participated in the Governance Review Working Group, acting as their administrative assistant like I do with the Executive Committee – scheduling meetings, drafting brainstorming docs, drafting new Executive Committee role descriptions based on the Group's discussions, and updating the Operations Roadmap for the group to present to the Executive for approval.

This was a very productive, team effort, and I feel that the results will improve the distribution of labour at the Executive level as well as with some aspects of CNSA operations. Thank you to Catherine, Hansel, and Michelle for all the work you did to see this project through to completion!

Advocacy & Outreach

This past year was a significant one for advocacy, with several developments requiring close attention from the Executive and me.



Following the transfer of the Nova Scotia Archives to Service Nova Scotia, I supported the Executive as they worked to navigate the future of our Anchor Grant administration. My role was primarily to provide administrative support, where appropriate, as they worked to ensure our core operating funding remained aligned with the CNSA's mandate and long-term stability.

The 2026 provincial budget brought unexpected challenges for our community with the elimination of PADP and cuts to many other funding programs, including CMAP. Recognizing the impact this has on so many of our member institutions, I worked closely with the Executive to develop member communications and share information as the situation unfolded. Supporting our members through these funding changes has been a priority, and I remain committed to helping the community navigate this new environment.

Other outreach activities this past year included:

- Attending the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) Conference in Ottawa from June 9-12, 2025
- Participating in regular Archives Advisors Working Group meetings
- Attending Regional Heritage Group meetings across Nova Scotia
- Serving as adjudicator at the Nova Scotia Provincial Heritage Fair
- Participating in national discussions about the future of Archives Canada
- Meeting with archival colleagues in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island to discuss establishing Heritage Emergency Response Networks
- Supporting students and emerging professionals through one-on-one meetings and networking opportunities

Administration & Communications

As the CNSA's sole, full-time staff person, my job involves a healthy amount of administrative, financial, and communications responsibilities. These include:

- Day-to-day financial administration and monthly coordination with our Bookkeeper
- Membership renewals and invoicing
- Setting-up and overseeing course registrations
- Drafting grant applications and final reports
- Administering Professional Development & Training Bursaries and Travel Reimbursements for members
- Website maintenance and troubleshooting



- Social media and member communications
- Records management and Shared Drive access
- Insurance procurement and policy administration
- Coordinating and assembling AGM package and supporting documents

I want to express **special thanks to Heidi Schiller** for her support with member communications, especially for taking the reins with the **12 Days of MemoryNS** social media series this past Christmas!

Acknowledgements

This past year brought both many accomplishments and significant challenges. I am deeply grateful to the Executive Committee for their steady leadership and commitment to the CNSA and our members, and for being so supportive of me. Their kindness and generosity both as individuals and as leaders, are remarkable. I feel very fortunate to work with and for such a wonderful group of people!

I would like to give a special shout-out to Catherine Fancy, who is completing her term as President at this AGM. Catherine has been a courageous and steadfast leader during a particularly rocky time. While I know the challenges of this past year have taken a toll, she met them with grace, clarity, and determination – especially considering the Presidency is a volunteer role. The countless hours she devoted to the CNSA over the past year should be noted.

So, Catherine, thank you for consistently giving more than was asked of you and, at times, taking “one for the team” in order to do what was best for the CNSA. I will miss our regular chats, but I’m certain we will stay in touch.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you, our members, for being the wonderful people you are, especially during difficult times. It is a privilege to serve such a kind, thoughtful, and resilient community!

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Murray
Archives Advisor



MemoryNS Support Specialist's Annual Report 2025–2026

This is a summary of the work I have done as MemoryNS Support Specialist from April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026. I want to thank CNSA members for supporting MemoryNS. I am available to help members and non-members with anything AtoM or MemoryNS until July 31, 2026. I also taught the *Learning RAD with MemoryNS course*. Note that due to health and personal circumstances beyond my control, my work hours for this period were much less than in previous years.

On a personal note, my time with CNSA will end on July 31st. I want to thank everyone from the CNSA Executive that I worked with over the years. Also, a big thank you to all the members, non-members, students, and committee members I have worked with over the years in my various positions in the Council.

MemoryNS Administration

In the past year, I had a few email exchanges with Artefactual to fix issues that arose, such as the loss of the hints tags, loss of the Google Analytics tag, and video links not showing. We also got upgraded to AtoM 2.92 and then 2.10 in December 2025. They provided quick service, and we thank them.

I attended most Executive Committee meetings as well as the 2025 Annual General Meeting. I also attended some of the national Archives Advisor Working Group meetings.

MemoryNS Support & Training

I once again taught the *Learning RAD with MemoryNS course* in November 2025. I want to thank my students, who showed creativity and passion in the course, and asked many thought provoking questions.

I provided the following institutions with support, which included multiple email chains, and some Zoom sessions. The topics of questions focused on descriptions, authority records, digital object space, Place names, updating profiles, etc.

A special thank you to Acadia University Archives for being the first to be part of the bulk upload project in MemoryNS. We really appreciate your support for this work.

- St. Mary's Genealogy Research Centre at Sherbrooke Village
- Argyle Township Court House & Archives
- Pier 21



- Oak Island
- Clements Historical Society
- Ottawa House By-the-Sea Museum
- Eastern Shore Archives
- Kings County Museum

I had a phone call with Healey Innovations Inc., who is not a member about digitization and access through portals like MemoryNS. I also contacted many members about their MemoryNS profiles.

MemoryNS Committee Work

This past year, I sent out one request for feedback to the MemoryNS Committee. I want to thank our Chair, Alina Ruiz from Mount Saint Vincent University, Sharon, the Archives Advisor, and members of the Committee for their passion and commitment to helping CNSA make MemoryNS even better!

**Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Snider
MemoryNS Support Specialist**



Governance Review Working Group Final Report

February–May 2026

This year, the CNSA Executive established a Governance Review Working Group to review the Council’s current governance structure, clarify roles and responsibilities, and identify ways to better support the work of the Executive, Committees, and staff. The Working Group was chaired by Catherine Fancy and included Michelle Connick, Hansel Cook, and Sharon Murray (ex officio). The Working Group met approximately every three weeks between February and May.

The group began by reviewing the CNSA’s existing governance documentation, current Executive structure, and the practical distribution of work across Officers, Members-at-Large, Committees, and staff. A survey was circulated to current and former Executive members to gather feedback on the strengths and pressure points of the existing governance model, as well as possible directions for change. This feedback helped guide the Working Group’s discussions and informed the development of revised role descriptions and governance procedures.

The Working Group’s two main deliverables were a revised CNSA Governance Manual and a new Governance Code of Conduct.

The Governance Manual brings together key information about CNSA’s purpose, structure, annual activities, Executive roles, Committee structures, staff, external representation, and related policies in one accessible reference document. It also includes updated Executive role descriptions that clarify responsibilities for the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, and three Members-at-Large, with attention to succession planning, connections with committees, financial oversight, staff support, and accountability to members.

The Governance Code of Conduct complements the manual by setting out shared expectations for ethical, respectful, and accountable governance, including confidentiality, conflicts of interest, communications, use of authority, and processes for addressing concerns.

The Executive will use the coming year as a **pilot year** to test the revised role descriptions in the Governance Manual. Of note are changes to the duties of the three Members-at-Large, who will now act as liaisons for our three standing committees: Education, MemoryNS, and Preservation. The other significant change is to the Vice President’s duties, whose primary responsibility was chairing the PADP Adjudication Committee. Now, the VP will work closely with the President on advocacy and outreach and lead the Executive recruitment and nominations processes, effectively building their team for their term as President.



Role	2019+	2026-2027 Pilot
President	Provides overall leadership, chairs meetings, supervises staff, and represents the CNSA to external partners and stakeholders.	Provides overall leadership, chairs meetings, supervises staff, and represents the CNSA to external partners and stakeholders.
Vice President	Supports the President, assumes presidential duties when needed, and chairs the PADP Adjudication Committee.	Supports the President, assumes presidential duties when needed; leads Executive recruitment and nominations; serves as secondary supervisor for staff.
Treasurer	Maintains the CNSA's financial records, budgeting, payroll, and reporting; oversees bookkeeping and annual financial review.	Provides financial oversight, risk management, and long-term financial planning; oversees annual financial review.
Secretary	Records and distributes Executive and AGM meeting minutes; maintains governance files.	Records and distributes Executive and AGM meeting minutes; maintains governance files.
MAL, Membership/ Nominations	Oversees membership renewals, lists, and records; leads nominations and elections.	Serves as Executive liaison to a standing committee and supports its planning and alignment with strategic goals.
MAL, Comms/ Awards	Chairs the Awards Committee and coordinates the CNSA's History Fair award.	Serves as Executive liaison to a standing committee and supports its planning and alignment with strategic goals.
MAL, Emerging Professional	Provides the Executive with the perspective of emerging professionals and supports outreach, networking, and student placement opportunities.	Serves as the Executive liaison to a standing committee; brings emerging professional perspective to the Executive and outreach.

This pilot year will allow the Executive to assess whether responsibilities are more clearly and sustainably distributed, identify any practical challenges, and determine whether further refinements or formal recommendations should be brought forward to the membership at the 2027 AGM.

The Governance Review Working Group is grateful to the members of the Executive, past and present, who contributed feedback to this process. The coming year will provide an important opportunity to evaluate the revised structure in practice and continue strengthening the CNSA's governance practices in support of the Council's members, staff, and provincial archival community.

Respectfully submitted,
 Catherine Fancy
 Governance Review Working Group Chair, 2026



Archival Workshop for Mi'kmaq Project Report

2025–2026

Project Objectives

In 2023, the CNSA received a generous grant from the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage (CCTH) to support the development and delivery of workshops on archives for Mi'kmaq.

After unsuccessful attempts to find a Mi'kmaq partner for the project, the Executive created a project Steering Committee to develop and issue a Request for Proposals for the development and delivery of a pilot workshop on archives for a Mi'kmaq community in the province.

Steering Committee Members

- Jane Arnold, Beaton Institute Archives
- Hansel Cook, Saint Mary's University Archives
- Patti Bannister, Nova Scotia Archives
- Sharon Murray, Council of Nova Scotia Archives (ex-officio)

Project Team

In response to the RFP, the Steering Committee received proposals from two groups, one of which was successful – the Lnuwey Dêbludaqan Wiguom (also known as the Wiguom) from Dalhousie University's Schulich of Law.

The Wiguom team was led by two recent graduates of Dalhousie University's Master of Information program, one of whom is from Glooscap First Nation. The team also included advisors from the Wiguom and the Faculty of Information Science. Using CNSA course materials as a starting point, the team developed and delivered a pilot workshop on archives for Glooscap in 2025. Please see their final report [here](#).

Looking Forward

In December 2024, we received a generous grant of \$20,000 from Cape Breton University to continue this project beyond the pilot stage. We are now seeking new members for the Project Steering Committee to move forward with the next phase of the project. We look forward to seeing how this important and meaningful project unfolds!

Respectfully submitted,
Hansel Cook
Project Steering Committee

Update From Nova Scotia Archives May 2026

In response to the change in reporting relationship between Nova Scotia Archives (NSA) and the Council of Nova Scotia Archives (CNSA), NSA wishes to provide the following update to the membership of the CNSA as clarification of the role and responsibilities of NSA.

NSA is the archive of the Government of NS and the Provincial Archivist is Nova Scotia's representative at the Federal, Provincial and Territorial level. NSA is mandated to be the repository for the records of the Government of NS over time and for records of Provincial scope and significance from the private sector.

As the Archives Act states, one of the "objects and functions" of the Archives is to "support, encourage and assist archival activities and the archival community; and promote the usability, visibility and relevance of archives in the Province" Archives Act 5A (e); (f).

The "Anchor Grant" was a discretionary grant from NSA issued under annual contract to the CNSA as the vehicle for addressing 5A (e); (f) of the Archives Act.

In 2025, oversight of the discretionary grant moved to the Museums and Libraries Division of the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage. The CNSA, as an organization, now falls under the operational plan of the Museums and Libraries Division of CCTH.

NSA continues to fulfill section 5A (e); (f) through partnered projects with individual archival repositories and communities (notable examples in 2025-26 were activities with the Korean Missionary Church records project and receipt of a UNESCO Memory of the World Inscription in partnership with the Black Loyalist Heritage Center, the Shelburn County Museum and the Provincial Archives of NB), and ongoing operations of the Atlantic Media Preservation Lab and the Film Preservation Cold Vault. See [Nova Scotia Archives - Services for Archives in Nova Scotia](#)

In Government's most recent budget, adjustments were made to numerous programs across all government departments to help manage fiscal pressures. Among these programs was the Provincial Archival Development Program. Administered by NSA to individual archival repositories across the Province, we acknowledge the impact of the loss of this funding program.

NSA continues to look for innovative partnerships and collaborations that will bring cost effective supports and projects to archival repositories across Nova Scotia.



Patti Bannister, Provincial Archivist & Director



Appendix A: Financial Summary of Fiscal Year 2025-2026

Generated Revenue	Budget	Actual	Administrative Expense	Budget	Actual
Membership Fees	11,000	10,135	Gifts, Donations, Honoraria	100	75
Core Course Revenue	12,200	8,405	Memberships & Licensing	900	897
Advanced Workshop Revenue	1,000	-	Communications Platforms	800	983
Conference Revenue	6,000	11,000	Bank and Credit Card fees	750	438
Interest	2,000	1,555	Office & Postage Expenses	100	247
Total Generated Revenue	32,200	31,095	General Liability Insurance	-	1,500
			Bookkeeping	4,140	3,273
			Accounting fees (year-end review)	3,000	3,490
Grant Funding & Sponsorships			Total Administrative Expense	9,790	10,902
CCTH Anchor Grant	75,000	82,500			
Deferred CCTH Project Funding	9,825	9,825	Governance & Committee Expense		
Deferred NSA Special Project Grant	4,500	4,500	Executive Committee	1,300	-
Deferred CBU Special Project Grant	20,000	20,000	Awards Committee	800	767
Conference Sponsorships	-	-	Total Governance & Committee Expense	2,100	767
Total Grants & Sponsorships	109,325	116,825			
			Member Services & Programs		
GROSS REVENUE	141,525	147,919	Core Course Delivery Expenses	1,690	1,741
			Advanced Workshop Expenses	2,000	-
			Conference Expenses	2,000	100
			Professional Dev. & Travel Bursaries	1,500	590
			MemoryNS Hosting Fees	2,752	2,739
			Archives Advisor Salary & Benefits	68,006	68,375
			Advisor Travel & Prof. Development	3,000	1,537
			Member Services Assistant	-	326



Memory Nova Scotia Support Specialist	12,900	6,791
Total Member Services & Programs	93,848	82,200

Special Projects

Archival Workshop for Mi'kmaq	15,757	15,670
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TOTAL EXPENSE	121,495	109,539
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NET REVENUE	20,030	38,380
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Deferred to FY2026-2027



Appendix B: Budget Summary for Fiscal Year 2026-2027

Generated Revenue	Budget	Administrative Expense	Budget
Membership Fees	10,000	Gifts, Donations, Honoraria	100
Core Course Registrations	10,000	Memberships & Licensing	1,000
Advanced Workshop Registrations	1,000	Communications Platforms	1,000
Interest	1,500	Bank, Stripe, and QBO fees	640
Total Generated Revenue	22,500	Office & Postage Expenses	200
		Bookkeeping	3,500
		Insurance	1,500
Grant Funding & Sponsorships		Total Administrative Expense	7,940
CCTH Anchor Grant	75,000		
HRM Contribution Agreement	20,000	Governance & Committee Expense	
Deferred NSA Project Grant	4,500	Executive Committee	1,700
Deferred CBU Project Grant	20,000	Awards Committee	1,000
Total Grants & Sponsorships	119,500	Total Governance & Committee Expense	2,700
TOTAL REVENUE	<u>142,000</u>		
		Member Services & Programs	
		Core Course Delivery Expenses	1,800
		Advanced Workshop Expenses	1,500
		Professional Dev. & Training Bursaries	1,500
		MemoryNS Hosting & Support Specialist	7,131
		Archives Advisor Salary & Benefits	70,700
		Digital Archives Coordinator Salary & MERCs	22,460
		Advisory Travel & Prof. Development	3,000
		Total Member Services & Programs	105,091
		Special Projects	
		Archival Workshop for Mi'kmaq	20,000
		Digital Preservation CC Module	3,000
		TOTAL EXPENSE	<u>141,731</u>
		NET REVENUE	<u>269</u>



Appendix C: Balance Sheet as of May 14, 2026

	Total
Assets	
Current Assets	
Cash and Cash Equivalent	
Credit Union Chequing	13,021.56
Credit Union Savings Acct.	81,835.24
Due from PayPal	0.00
Petty Cash	0.00
Payment (Conversion)	0.00
Total Cash and Cash Equivalent	\$ 94,856.80
Accounts Receivable (A/R)	
Accounts Receivable	9,120.12
Total Accounts Receivable (A/R)	\$ 9,120.12
Accrued Receivables	0.00
Bookkeeper Suspense	0.00
Credit Union Term deposit (3 yrs)	8,920.44
Credit Union Term Deposit (5 yrs)	10,000.00
CUA Equity Shares	5.00
Due from Woo Commerce	0.00
Holdbacks Receivable	0.00
HST Receivable (1/2 HST)	2,290.76
Prepaid Expenses	0.00
Stripe Receivables	1,184.88
Total Current Assets	\$ 126,378.00
Non-current Assets	
Property, plant and equipment	
Books	6,380.00
Books - Accum. Deprec.	-6,380.00
Computer Hardware	46,889.16
Computer Hardware - Accum. Deprec.	-44,501.02
Computer Software	1,456.13
Computer Software - Accum. Deprec.	-1,371.13
Equipment	23,221.05
Equipment - Accum. Deprec.	-22,811.11
Total Property, plant and equipment	\$ 2,883.08



	Total
Total Non Current Assets	\$ 2,883.08
Total Assets	\$ 129,261.08
Liabilities and Equity	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable (A/P)	
Accounts Payable	2,325.79
Total Accounts Payable (A/P)	\$ 2,325.79
Collabria Visa ***4221	415.11
Total Credit Card	\$ 415.11
Accrued Liabilities	0.00
Blue Cross	0.00
CPP Payable	0.00
Deferred Revenue	48,037.52
Direct Deposit Payable	0.00
E.I. Payable	0.00
GST/HST Payable	0.00
Income Tax Payable	0.00
Payroll Liabilities	0.00
Federal Taxes	0.00
Vacation Pay	0.00
Total Payroll Liabilities	\$ 0.00
Unearned Revenue	0.00
Vacation Payable	0.00
WCB Payable	0.00
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 50,778.42
Total Liabilities	\$ 50,778.42
Equity	
Retained Earnings	48,264.32
Profit for the year	30,218.34
Total Equity	\$ 78,482.66
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$ 129,261.08

LISTENING FORWARD PROJECT BRIEF

PROJECT NAME: Pilot Mi'kmaw Archival Workshop

Facilitators: Kristan Belanger, Carolyn Smith **Supported by:** The Lnuwey Tplutaqan Wikuom

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In alignment with the Council of Nova Scotia Archives' commitment to truth and reconciliation, this pilot workshop was developed to strengthen engagement with Mi'kmaw communities and support their archival goals. Working closely with Glooscap First Nation, the project team co-designed an educational experience rooted in community needs and cultural protocols. Through engagement sessions, local research, and ongoing collaboration, the workshop offered an accessible introduction to archival practice and supported the development of a community-led archive.

GLOOSCAP FIRST NATION

Glooscap First Nation was established in 1907 as Horton 35 under Annapolis Valley First Nation before becoming independent in 1984. Renamed in 2001 to honour the Mi'kmaq hero Glooscap, the community spans 423 acres and is led by Chief Sidney Peters and a three-member council. Recognized nationally with the 2017 CANDO Indigenous Community Economic Developer of the Year award, Glooscap First Nation continues to blend cultural heritage with innovation to build a resilient and prosperous future.

OBJECTIVES

- 1. Building a Path Forward: Creating a Pilot Workshop**
The purpose of the pilot workshop is to assess methods and delivery of training, education and access to archives and archival studies across Mi'kmaw communities.
- 2. Archives Built on Community: Working with Glooscap**
The project team prioritized the development of an educational experience that would align with community needs and protocols.

DESIGN APPROACH

The project team prioritized ongoing consultation and dialogue with Glooscap First Nation leadership, staff, and community members to ensure that every stage of the workshop reflected community priorities and values.

OBJECTIVES

- Action Steps for Developing a Community Archive
- Increased Knowledge and Awareness for the Archival Field
- Developing a Support Network and Increased Resource Awareness

CONCLUSION

This project has successfully achieved its objectives to build a pilot archival workshop built on the goals, values and culture of Glooscap First Nation. The outcomes provide a strong foundation for future work providing archival training to Mi'kmaw communities. It is recommended by the project facilitators that any work moving forward continue direct engagement with Mi'kmaw peoples to ensure respectful and sustainable relationships between the CNSA and Mi'kmaw communities.



This project is funded by the Council of Nova Scotia Archives



And supported by the Lnuwey Tplutaqan Wikuom



This project is funded by the Council
of Nova Scotia Archives



And supported by the Lnuwey
Tplutaqan Wikuom

Listening Forward:

Pilot Mi'kmaw Community Archival Workshop

Final Report



October 2025

Message from Facilitators

On behalf of the Project Team, we are pleased to share our reflections on the recent “Listening Forward: Pilot Mi’kmaw Community Archival Workshop.” We sincerely appreciate the enthusiasm and active participation of Glooscap First Nation, all attendees, and the support of the Council of Nova Scotia Archives (CNSA) in making this project possible.

We hope that the knowledge and skills gained during this experience will empower Glooscap First Nation to continue developing a community archive. At the same time, we hope this workshop has provided a foundation of understanding and connection for the CNSA to strengthen relationships with Mi’kmaw communities.

It has been a privilege to contribute to this important initiative, and we look forward to future engagements and the ongoing journey of learning together.





Table of Contents

Executive Summary 04

Project Team 05

Objectives 08

Workshop Design 15

Outcomes 16

Final Reflections 21

Executive Summary

In alignment with the Council of Nova Scotia Archives' (CNSA) commitment to advancing truth and reconciliation, this pilot workshop was developed to strengthen the CNSA's engagement with Mi'kmaw communities and support their archival goals.

A central focus of the initiative was meaningful community involvement. The project team worked closely with Glooscap First Nation to design an educational experience that reflected community needs and cultural protocols through engagement sessions, research into local practices, and ongoing collaboration with community representatives. The workshop provided an accessible and engaging introduction to archival practice while fostering the development of a community-led archive.

Through this engagement, Glooscap First Nation expressed a strong interest in gaining practical tools and guidance for designing, developing, and implementing their own archive. In response, the pilot emphasized the creation of tangible, actionable steps tailored to the community's priorities and long-term goals.



Project Team

Kristan Belanger - Project Coordinator

Kristan is a Mi'kmaw woman from Glooscap First Nation. She holds a Bachelor of Arts, a Juris Doctor, and a Master of Information, all from Dalhousie University. Kristan has worked with the Lnuwey Tplutaqan Wikuom (Indigenous Law Lodge) ("Wikuom") for 3 years. She also works as an Instruction and Public Service Librarian at the Sir James Dunn Law Library.

Kristan served as the primary community liaison, supporting the project's alignment with Mi'kmaw principles and Glooscap First Nation's distinct community priorities.



Carolyn Smith - Program Developer

Carolyn Smith has completed her Master of Information (MI) at Dalhousie University with the completion of the programs Archives Certificate and holds a BA in History with a minor in English from Vancouver Island University. Following her undergraduate degree Carolyn started her professional career working for qathet Museum & Archives, a regional community-led organization within the Coast Salish territories of BC which has inspired her work towards reconciliation in the archive.

Carolyn led the development of workshop programs and structuring archival materials, drawing from her expertise in archives and community-led initiatives.



The Lnuwey Tplutaqan Wikuom

The Lnuwey Tplutaqan Wikuom is an interdisciplinary research and training unit housed within Dalhousie University's Faculties of Law and Management. Its mission is to support ongoing efforts to revitalize Indigenous laws and governance systems and empower Indigenous communities across Atlantic Canada in the areas of legal revitalization, governance, information management and cultural heritage. To this end, the Wikuom collaborates with Mi'kmaw communities and organizations to address legal, governance, and economic challenges. Through educational programs, research initiatives, and community engagement, we work to bridge the gap between Indigenous knowledge and contemporary legal systems, offering a path for communities to reclaim and implement their traditional governance models in modern contexts.

Our organization and team members have a longstanding history of engaging with Mi'kmaw communities throughout Atlantic Canada. Our own deep personal experiences as well as our many professional engagements have fostered a strong organizational understanding of Mi'kmaw culture, history, and the unique protocols that guide how knowledge is shared, respected, and preserved within these communities. We are committed to centering these protocols in every aspect of our work. Our team approaches projects by facilitating discussions and providing methodological support, allowing Mi'kmaw communities or organizations to lead the way in defining and applying their goals. This approach is not only aligned with the Mi'kmaw worldview but also promotes the legitimacy and sustainability of work, ensuring that it is community-driven and resonates with the principles of self-determination.

This project received guidance from Dr. Jamila Ghaddar and Professor Naiomi Metallic, who brought complementary expertise in archival practice and Indigenous law. Dr. Ghaddar's knowledge of decolonial archival theory ensured the project's methods reflected community-led and ethically grounded approaches, while Professor Metallic's insight into Mi'kmaw legal orderstraditions guided its respect for Indigenous self-determination.

Glooscap First Nation

Glooscap First Nation is located halfway between the towns of Wolfville and Windsor, not far from Blomidon Provincial Park, the ancestral home of Glooscap, a central figure in Mi'kmaq legend and the community's namesake. Created in 1907 as Horton 35, an administrative region led by Annapolis Valley First Nation, the reserve encompasses some 423 acres of rolling, mainly forested land.

In 1984 Horton separated from Annapolis Valley First Nation and became its own independent First Nation community. The community was co-founded by five families: Smith, Peters, Francis, Labrador, and Pictou. In 2001, Horton changed its name to Glooscap First Nation.

The community is represented by a Chief and a three-person council. Glooscap's current Chief is Sidney Peters, who is a fifth-generation Chief within the Peters family. The current council includes Amanda Francis, Gail Tupper, and Charlotte Warrington.

In 2013, the band formed an independently run corporation that has the responsibility of improving Glooscap's economy and sustainability. The corporation rebranded to become Glooscap Ventures in 2015, and has since spearheaded various initiatives that align with both environmental stewardship and economic growth, including renewable energy projects and the development of a seafood enterprise. These projects not only provide economic opportunities but also reflect the community's commitment to sustainable and culturally resonant industries.

Glooscap First Nation's efforts in economic development have earned them national recognition. In 2017, they received the prestigious CANDO Indigenous Community Economic Developer of the Year award.

Today, Glooscap First Nation continues to build on its rich heritage and forward-thinking vision, blending cultural pride with innovative initiatives to ensure a prosperous future for generations to come.





Objective #1

Building a Path Forward: Creating a Pilot Workshop

Aligning with the Council of Nova Scotia Archives' objective to support truth and reconciliation within memory keeping institutions across Canada, this workshop serves as a pilot initiative designed to identify and assess ways in which the CNSA can strengthen its engagement with Mi'kmaw communities and its support for their archival goals. The purpose of the pilot workshop is to assess methods and delivery of training, education and access to archives and archival studies across Mi'kmaw communities. The purpose of creating a pilot workshop was to test and refine an approach for delivering archival training within a community context. The pilot served as an opportunity to explore effective methods for introducing foundational archival concepts, building participant confidence, and identifying the specific needs and priorities of the community. By implementing the workshop on a smaller scale, facilitators were able to gather feedback, evaluate learning outcomes, and develop strategies for improving future workshops and long-term community archival initiatives.

Specifically, the pilot was designed to understand how the CNSA and third party educators can work with a specific community to adapt the foundation of archival education and its services to meet the needs of the community.

The objective of the workshop was not to develop a completed archival program/workshop but to gather information and refine methods of delivery for future educational and training resources developed by the CNSA for Mi'kmaw communities.

In partnership with the Glooscap First Nation, the project team was able to deliver a pilot workshop that prioritized participant involvement to understand how archival education and training can be provided within the specific context of a community. The knowledge gained from this experience will be provided in later sections of this report.

Objective #2

Archives Built on Community: Working with Glooscap

A fundamental component of the pilot workshop was community involvement. The project team prioritized the development of an educational experience that would align with community needs and protocols. As such the work plan included community engagement sessions, research into community cultural protocols and active communication with community representatives.



Community Protocols

In developing this workshop, the Project Team based workshop materials and delivery on community protocols and culture. The objective was to intertwine community protocols, governance, and culture throughout the workshop experience.

Workshop materials and activities were shaped around Glooscap's governance structures, community goals, and everyday priorities, so that the workshop reflected the rhythms and values of the community.

The intent was to create an experience that respected both professional archival principles and the cultural protocols that guide how knowledge is handled and shared among Glooscap members.

The Glooscap First Nation Comprehensive Community Plan ("CCP") provided the foundation for this work. Developed through community-wide participation, the CCP expresses the Nation's collective priorities, hopes, and responsibilities for future generations. It identifies, among other items, key "passions", which informed the workshop's emphasis on protecting materials, maintaining local control, and passing knowledge forward in ways that honour both community authority and cultural continuity.

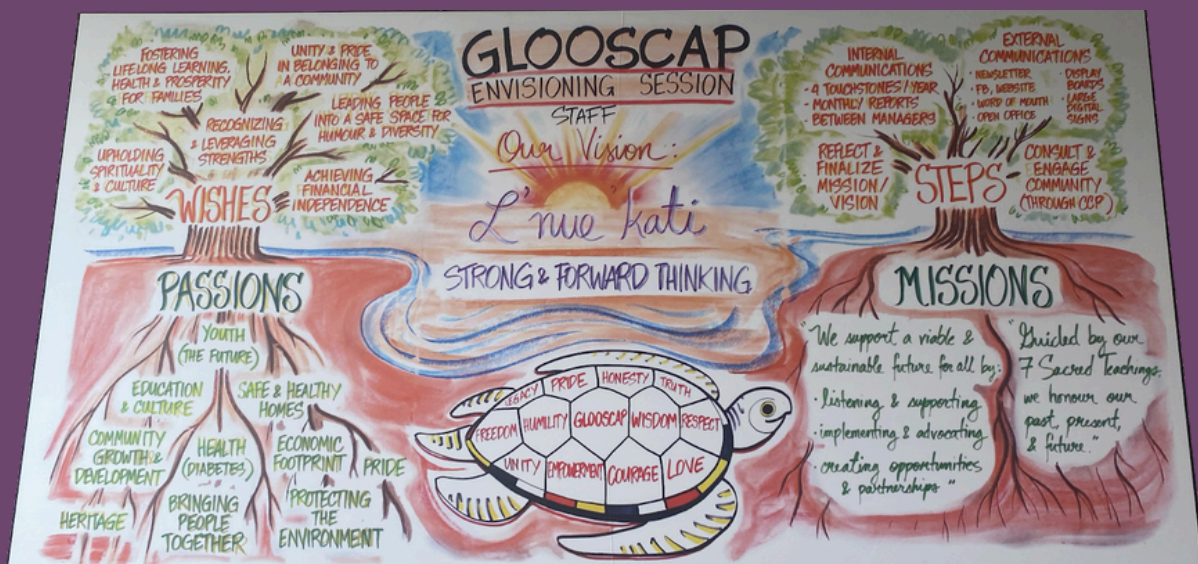


Image 2: Visual of Community Goals Created During the Glooscap Staff Envisioning Session

The workshop also reflected the “wishes” articulated in the CCP, including strengthening unity, pride, and a shared sense of belonging. Participants explored how personal and family collections contribute to the broader story of Glooscap, and how managing those materials within the community allows individuals to speak for their own histories. Conversations focused on the value of being able to tell one’s story, safeguard sensitive materials, and represent heritage in a manner consistent with community values.

It was also reflected in the workshop dialogue, which emphasized the need to safeguard community knowledge from damage, loss, or removal, and to ensure that it remains accessible and meaningful to Glooscap community members.

Spiritual and cultural life formed a central thread in the workshop’s design. In keeping with the CCP’s focus on honouring spirituality and culture, activities included discussions about documenting Glooscap’s distinct history, artistry, and leadership.

The workshop encouraged participants to view archives as tools for teaching and continuity, as bridges between generations. Participants discussed how preserving oral histories, photographs, and cultural materials contributes to community identity and ensures that future generations can learn from the experiences, language, and teachings of their ancestors.

This emphasis reflected Mi'kmaw legal principles that knowledge carries obligations: it must be cared for and passed forward, not simply stored.

The concept of netukulimk, the Mi'kmaq principle of balance and sustainability (which is often applied in the context of natural resource protection), was also central to the workshop's discussions of archival management. Participants reflected on how netukulimk applies to archives as much as to the natural world: taking only what is needed, ensuring that materials are preserved responsibly, and maintaining equilibrium between accessibility and protection. This perspective shaped conversation around collection development and weeding, demonstrating that archival holdings should reflect living community values and not accumulate materials disconnected from purpose or consent.

The principle of Etuaptmumk, or “Two-Eyed Seeing,” as articulated by Elders Albert and Murdena Marshall, informed the workshop's overall structure.¹ By combining Mi'kmaw and Western archival perspectives, the sessions encouraged participants to draw strength from both knowledge systems, exploring the preservation methods of Western archival practice while grounding decisions in Mi'kmaw protocols and ethics. This approach allowed the group to envision archives that respect community control and incorporate Indigenous modes of knowing, naming, and storytelling.

Finally, the protection of sensitive materials was addressed through guided discussions rooted in Mi'kmaw law. Participants explored how Lnuwey tplutaqan defines responsibilities regarding sacred, personal, or ceremonial knowledge, and how these responsibilities translate into practical archival policies. These conversations affirmed that safeguarding knowledge is not an act of withholding but one of care and relational accountability.

¹Bartlett, C., Marshall, M., & Marshall, A. (2012). Two-Eyed Seeing and other lessons learned within a co-learning journey of bringing together Indigenous and mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing. *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*, 2(4), 331-340.

Community Engagement

As outlined in the Council of Nova Scotia Archives Request for Proposals (2024), a central objective of this pilot workshop was engaging with a Mi'kmaw community or organization and working with them to create a workshop that suits their needs.” Guided by this principle, the project team prioritized ongoing consultation and dialogue with Glooscap First Nation leadership, staff, and community members to ensure that every stage of the workshop reflected community priorities and values.

Chief and Council Engagement

Initial discussions were held with Glooscap's Chief and Council, where the team received direction on how the workshop could best serve the community's interests. Key recommendations included emphasizing community events, highlighting local figures, and maintaining active engagement with individuals who play significant roles in Glooscap's governance and cultural life. These conversations helped to define the tone and focus of the workshop.

Engagement Session

An in-person engagement session was later held to gather direct feedback from community members. Although attendance was small, the discussions with Band Office staff and councillors were meaningful and productive. Participants emphasized the importance of creating a sustainable framework for preserving community history and recognized the value of developing an archive that supports Glooscap's ongoing cultural and governance goals. These targeted conversations helped refine the workshop content to better align with local capacity and interest.

Individual and Bilateral Discussions

Beyond formal sessions, individual and bilateral meetings took place with community members and external partners, including representatives from Mi'kmawey Debert and Glooscap First Nation community historian Mercedes Peters. These conversations allowed for deeper exploration of best practices in Indigenous archival work and provided insight into shared challenges, such as managing sensitive materials and ensuring cultural protocols are upheld.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The AGM provided an opportunity to connect with a broader audience of community members. Here, discussions expanded to include priorities such as intergenerational knowledge sharing, the preservation of family collections, and the role of archives in strengthening collective identity. Community members expressed enthusiasm for having a locally governed archive that celebrates Glooscap's recent growth and its history of strong leadership.



Workshop Design

The design process for the pilot workshop centered on creating an accessible and engaging learning experience that introduced participants to the foundations of archival practice while supporting the development of a community-led archive. The workshop structure balanced theoretical and professional knowledge with hands-on activities and community-centered approaches that respected local culture and ways of knowing.

Fundamental to this design process was active engagement with Glooscap First Nation through a range of outreach practices. This engagement involved ongoing communication and consultation with community representatives to ensure the workshop's content and delivery aligned with local priorities and cultural values. By prioritizing collaboration and mutual learning, the design process fostered trust and respect between facilitators and participants, ensuring the workshop reflected the specific needs, goals, and identity of the Glooscap community.

Outreach

Outreach for the workshop was designed to reach a wide cross-section of the Glooscap First Nation community through methods that reflected local communication practices and priorities. Recognizing the vital role that social media (particularly community Facebook pages) plays in Indigenous community organizing, several posts were shared through Glooscap's Facebook platform to promote the workshop and invite participation. These posts served as both an information source and an informal space for discussion.

In addition to online outreach, a community drop-in session was hosted to provide an open and welcoming space for anyone interested in learning more about the project. While attendance was modest, the conversations that did occur offered valuable insights into how the workshop could better reflect community interests and capacities.

Word of mouth also played a significant role in outreach. Because Kristan is a Glooscap community member and was embedded in daily community life, many informal discussions took place through personal networks and everyday encounters. This relational approach to engagement fostered trust and encouraged participation, ensuring that community awareness of the project extended beyond formal communications.

Outcomes

The outcomes section presents the key results and achievements of the project, highlighting how the objectives set at the initial project development were met. It summarizes the tangible deliverables, the impact of the project activities on both the CNSA and Glooscap First Nation, and the lessons learned throughout the process. Based on the development process and delivery of the workshop the core outcomes include; action steps for developing a community archive, increased knowledge and awareness for the archival field, idea generation and co-development, and genealogical research skills.

Action Steps for Developing a Community Archive

Developing a community archive involves intentional planning, collaboration, and sustainability to ensure continuous success. Through engagement with the community, it was clear Glooscap Nation was interested in a workshop that would provide them with tangible action steps to design, develop and implement an archive within the community. As such, the pilot workshop prioritized the inclusion of action steps, tangible planning for the development of an archive within the Glooscap First Nation community. These action steps were influenced by two purposes; (1) the development of action steps that are based on core archival concepts and (2) action steps that are applicable and reflective of the Glooscap Nation's community needs and their current state of cultural heritage management. The workshop was structured around tangible action steps, incorporating activities that encouraged participants to actively collaborate with instructors in brainstorming concepts and ideas for their own archives.

Core Ideas of Discussion

- Define Purpose and Vision
- Development of Policies
- Access Needs and Resources

Defined Purpose and Vision

Action steps for defining purpose and vision included the clarifying of goals, identifying scope, and articulating values. Using brainstorming activities, the group shared their values which included community connection, protection of culture, generational connection, access and promotion of language and the development of research skills. To clarify the goals and scope of the archive, the facilitators structured an activity that helped to develop the mandate and mission of the archive, two core components to the development of an institution.



Development of Policies

As an introductory workshop to community archiving, the facilitators introduced the different policies that are core to the development of an archive including both Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations/communities. Additionally, the group discussed the development of policies that aligned with current cultural protocols within Glooscap First Nation and the management of sacred materials.

Access Needs and Resources

To plan intentionally and develop a sustainable path towards the development of an archive within Glooscap First Nation, it is first important to understand the types of materials they are interested in preserving (material and topic), what materials currently exist, who would be potential donors to the archive, and what procedures would be in place to collect materials. A discussion led by the facilitators using brainstorming questions, the participants identified a wide range of donors and materials they were interested in collecting and making accessible to current and future generations.

Potential Donors of Materials:

- Glooscap First Nation Band Council
- Glooscap Ventures
- School Systems
- Individual Donors
- Cultural Materials from Events
(Community-Based/Organizations)

Increased Knowledge and Awareness for the Archival Field

A clear understanding of archival concepts and foundations is integral to creating a community archive. The workshop was therefore designed to equip participants with essential knowledge and practical guidance for building and implementing their own archives. The workshop featured two sections focused on archival foundations: (1) Introduction to Archives and (2) Building a Collection.

Introduction to Archives

What is an Archive?



Types of Archives



Indigenous Archives



Role of an Archivist



What is a Record?



Collections and Fonds

Building a Collection

Conservation vs. Preservation



Preservation of Indigenous Materials



Core Archival Functions

Awareness of Indigenous Archives

Netukulimk in Archives

Netukulimk is a Mi'kmaq concept for living in harmony with the environment through respectful and sustainable use of natural resources to ensure and honour sustainability and prosperity for the ancestor, present and future generations.¹

- Can remind archivists that community archives shouldn't hoard or over-collect.
- Intergenerational care: ensuring that stories, languages, songs, and histories are available for descendants.
- This responsibility includes creating conditions so that future generations inherit not only the records, but also the right relationships with them.

Topics of Discussion

- Preservation of Indigenous Materials
- Indigenous Knowledge
- Knowledge Keeper
- Indigenous Archives

¹ Prosper, K. , McMillan, L. J. , Davis, A. A. , Moffitt, M. (2011). Returning to Netukulimk: Mi'kmaq cultural and spiritual connections with resource stewardship and self-governance. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*,2(4)

Developing a Support Network and Increased Resource Awareness

Supported by the Council of Nova Scotia Archives—an organization dedicated to assisting archival institutions across the province—the workshop provided participants with both a supportive network and greater awareness of available resources. As Glooscap First Nation continues to integrate archival practices within the community, access to this established network will help ensure a smooth and well-resourced transition.

Resources

1**Membership to the CNSA****2****Access to Training and Archival Education****3****Grant Application Support****4****Policy Writing Support****5****Resources for Archival Research****6****National and International Organizations**

Genealogical Research

At the beginning of the workshop, participants brought and presented materials from their personal archives, primarily consisting of genealogical research. This activity encouraged participants to share family histories, discuss methods of preservation, and reflect on how personal collections contribute to the broader story of the community. Through these reflections, participants recognized that individual documents, photographs, and family records not only preserve personal memories but also reveal interconnected narratives of migration, kinship, and cultural resilience that shape the community's shared history.

Through this informal discussion, the facilitators were able to comment on and respond to participants' questions related to genealogical research, including concerns about inaccessibility, systemic barriers, resource limitations, and the lasting impacts of colonial disruptions.

Participants shared experiences of how historical processes—such as the forced displacement of families, the imposition of colonial naming systems, and the erasure of traditional kinship structures—have made tracing ancestry challenging.

These disruptions not only fragmented family connections but also altered community records and impaired cultural continuity. Because of this, participants positioned genealogical research as a process of both recovery and healing.

These issues reflect deeper legacies of colonial control over identity and information, and addressing them requires culturally grounded, community-led approaches that restore autonomy, rebuild trust in recordkeeping practices, and acknowledge the emotional and historical weight carried by Indigenous family research.

The subject of genealogical research was further discussed towards the end of the workshop, the facilitators providing tips for finding family and community histories.

Final Reflections

The pilot workshop was designed to test and refine an approach for delivering archival training within a Mi'kmaw community. It provided an opportunity to explore effective ways of introducing archival concepts while aligning with Mi'kmaw culture and values.

Key Insights: Building Relationships

Community-Embedded Facilitators

A community-embedded facilitator can act as a bridge between institutional partners and the lived experiences of the community, helping ground the workshop in trust, cultural protocols, and local priorities. Such facilitators bring lived experience, relational credibility, and fluency in community protocols that external partners often lack, allowing projects to move at a respectful pace and reflect local priorities.

Community-Led Development: Framing the Workshop

The workshop was framed around the idea that archival skills are most meaningful when they are directly connected to the lived experiences and existing practices of the community. The framing also emphasized that there is no single “correct” way to create or manage archives; instead, it encouraged participants to adapt methods to the needs and values of their community.

Community-Led Development: Demonstration of Community Records

To make the workshop more grounded and participatory, demonstration materials were drawn from records already held by the community and workshop participants. This included embedding the history and culture of Glooscap First Nation throughout the entirety of the workshop. By centering the workshop on these materials, participants could directly see how archival principles apply to their own collections and contexts.

The Role of Food

Food holds deep cultural, social, and spiritual importance in Mi'kmaw gatherings as an expression of respect, reciprocity, and hospitality. Including food in archival workshops is not merely a gesture of courtesy but a foundational practice that signals care and belonging, and fosters openness and mutual understanding. Future projects should therefore view the inclusion of food as an essential component of ethical engagement.

Key Insights: Protocols

Community protocols are not uniform, nor should they be. Each Indigenous community maintains distinct traditions and ways of sharing and protecting knowledge that reflect their histories, kinship networks, and lands. What is considered appropriate practice in one context may not translate to another; as such, there is a need for flexibility, humility, and ongoing relationship-building when developing and facilitating archival workshops.

Future initiatives must therefore begin with, and continually return to, deep engagement with the community. This includes time spent “visiting” in the Mi'kmaw sense: listening, learning, and building trust before any formal work begins. Protocols must evolve from within the relationships established through this process, rather than being externally prescribed.

Workshops must be designed to support the governance principles articulated by the community itself, drawing guidance from local policy documents and the values expressed by leadership, Elders, youth, knowledge holders, and other community members. This approach ensures that each workshop is grounded in community authority and conducted in a good way.

Challenges

While engagement was meaningful, there were areas identified for growth. Future projects would benefit from more time to embed Mi'kmaq “visiting” protocols, which is an approach that prioritizes relationship-building before formal consultation begins. Longer timelines would allow for greater participation and trust-building, ensuring that community voices guide each stage of development. Strengthening these relationships through extended engagement would deepen the cultural and ethical grounding of future workshops.

Next Steps

To build on the outcomes of this project, several next steps have been identified to support continued learning, future implementation, and continued community engagement.

1

Based on participant feedback, the workshop model should be refined to reduce the volume of information delivered in a single session. To support deeper engagement and retention, the content could be distributed across multiple sessions. These sessions might be scheduled over two consecutive days, several weekends or evenings, or offered online to accommodate accessibility and participant needs.

2

Ongoing collaboration and communication between the CNSA and Glooscap First Nation will be vital to sustaining relationships and supporting the continued development of a community archive. This partnership will also help maintain awareness of available resources and strengthen the professional network established through the pilot workshop.

3

Future iterations of the workshop should incorporate a built-in evaluation component to assess effectiveness, capture lessons learned, and guide ongoing improvement.



Closing Statement

This project has successfully achieved its objectives to build a pilot archival workshop built on the goals, values and culture of Glooscap First Nation. The outcomes provide a strong foundation for future work providing archival training to Mi'kmaw communities. It is recommended by the project facilitators that any work moving forward continue direct engagement with Mi'kmaw peoples so as to support respectful and sustainable relationships between the CNSA and Mi'kmaw communities.



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Tplutaqan Wikuom