

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
February 16, 18, 2022
Virtual Meeting**

**Standards Committee: Proposal to Revise the Guidelines for
Accessible Archives for People with Disabilities**

(Prepared by: Kira Dietz, co-chair)

BACKGROUND

The Accessibility and Disability Section has proposed a revision to the Guidelines for Accessible Archives for People with Disabilities. This proposal was submitted to the Standards Committee, who reviewed it, requested revisions, and voted to forward the revised proposal to Council for approval.

Documentation from the Accessibility and Disability Section, as well as from Standards Committee (the proposal with comments and the revised proposal) are available in a [Google folder](#) managed by the Standards Committee; the [existing guidelines](#) are in the Standards Portal.

While this standard was only created and approved in 2019, issues around accessibility, disability, access, equity, and inclusion are rapidly evolving. Recent recommendations suggested an update to the current Guidelines for Accessible Archives for People with Disabilities.

DISCUSSION

The Standards Committee reviewed the original proposal to revise to the Guidelines for Accessible Archives for People with Disabilities (submitted in 2021), which raised several questions in our discussions. We sent questions back to section leadership, who addressed those in the subsequent, revised proposal (see the [Google folder](#)).

There are some minor concerns on the part of the Standards Committee, but we have assigned a liaison to the section and we believe that we can provide feedback through our liaison as the revision process proceeds. These concerns relate to some larger issues we also want to consider in the context of future revisions of other standards, so we did not see them as an impediment to the proposed revision of this set of guidelines going forward.

While Standards Committee is in support of the section's desire to update the guidelines on a regular basis, the timeline for both this revision and future revisions could be difficult, given the current, multi-step process as documented in the [Procedures for Review and Approval of an SAA-Developed Standard](#). In general, revision cycles last about two years, and if the section wants to update every two years, they would almost constantly be working on updates. If there is a need for updates on this frequent of a cycle, Standards Committee and the Accessibility and Disability Section may need to work with SAA Council on an alternative method of managing this revision process.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the SAA Council approve the proposal for revision of the Guidelines for Accessible Archives for People with Disabilities, as recommended by the Standards Committee.

Support Statement: The Council's support for the proposed revision plan for the Guidelines for Accessible Archives for People with Disabilities shows a commitment in keeping existing standards up to date and support for diversity, inclusion, and equity initiatives in our profession.

Impact on Strategic Priorities:

The proposal for the revision of the Guidelines for Accessible Archives for People with Disabilities would provide updated guidance on issues that are rapidly changing. These revisions would support several goals in the strategic plan:

- Goal 1 by promoting use of the guidelines by leaders in archives;
- Goal 2 by supporting career development, access to educational content, and fostering community for interaction; and
- Goal 3 by advancing the field through updated guidance and publicly accessible documentation.

In addition, updating the guidelines on a regular schedule is a direct recommendation from recent diversity discussions within SAA.

Fiscal Impact:

The Accessibility and Disability Section included a plan to request funding for working group members and reviewers.

Cost estimate from the proposal for revision:

- "To build upon growing recognition of the systemic inequity of who can afford to volunteer their labor and expertise and particularly because people with disabilities frequently struggle with obtaining full-time employment - sometimes because of their disability but even more so due to stigma - for this reason, we respectfully are asking for \$250 for each of the 8 working group members (\$2,000), \$150 for six

external reviewers each representing a range of disabilities including but not limited to blind/low vision, cognitive/learning disability, mobility, Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing, and Autism Spectrum (\$900), and \$200 for someone to help us import the Guidelines into GitHub and train us for the revision workflow using this tool. With this proposed budget, we are asking for \$2,900 total for this project.”

- In consultation with Felicia Owens, the process for this is that section will need to submit a funding request for FY2022-2023 to their Council liaison by the March 1, 2022, deadline. The Standards Committee will write a short letter/statement of support for this funding, but we acknowledge that the request will need to come from the component group.