

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
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Chicago, Illinois**

**Task Force to Revise Best Practices on Accessibility
(Prepared by Co-chairs Kathy Marquis and Sara White)**

Interim Review of Work

Task Force Members: Krystal Appiah, Daria D'Arienzo, Alan Lefever, Donna McCrea, Kathy Marquis, Lydia Tang, Sara White, Sammy Cook (Intern).

The Task Force to Revise Best Practices for Working with Archives Employees and Archives Researchers with Physical Disabilities is responsible for reviewing both of the current Best Practices documents and exploring expansion of the Best Practices to include neuro-disability, temporary physical disabilities, and any other topics that should be considered within the scope of the document.

We are further charged to:

- Share draft Best Practices with selected individuals for comment and review;
- Share draft Best Practices with appropriate Sections, such as Archives Management and Records Management; and
- Seek member comment on a draft and revise accordingly prior to submitting a final draft to the Council.

Our final draft is due in November 2018.

The task force has met monthly by conference call to update each other, and we have also used SAA Connect to good effect, sharing resources we find and querying each other on questions as they arise. We have kept notes of our calls – and were delighted when Felicia Owens of the SAA staff offered to take minutes for us! Thanks to Donna McCrea, we have a timeline for our remaining work, including drafting our sections, getting feedback from SAA members, and submitting our final draft to the Council.

Early on we established that our charge is strictly to update the existing best practices, including adding the new categories of neuro/cognitive disabilities (also called hidden disabilities) and accessibility of electronic materials, including web-based information. We didn't want to become overwhelmed with creating guidelines from scratch. And, we are aware that many other organizations have created basic guidelines; we will be directing archivists to those resources where they exist.

Several of us were also offered the opportunity to comment on a book proposal under consideration by the SAA Publications Board. We were delighted to welcome to our ranks one of the co-authors of this proposal, Dr. Lydia Tang. She will join the physical disability subgroup but contribute overall from her research on these topics.

We have divided our work into three basic groups:

Physical Disabilities

Daria D'Arienzo and Alan Lefever will make any updates necessary to this existing section of the best practices. They also plan to create a resource for technological and other tools from the general field that will specifically serve physical challenges unique to archival work.

Neurological or Cognitive Disabilities

We are still considering the most appropriate name for this category. Terminology, such as invisible or hidden disabilities, can provide a better umbrella when including disabilities outside physical, audio, and visual impairments. Sara is also developing, with the aid of intern Samantha Cook from the UT Austin archives program, a survey of archival users with disabilities, a component that was not present in the 2008 survey by our predecessor working group. She is partnering with the Disability History Association to survey their members as a major user group.

Access to Electronic Information

Donna McCrea and Kathy Marquis are researching useful web-based (and other) information from the American Library Association, Disability.gov, WCAG Guidelines, The WebAIM WAVE tool for evaluating website accessibility, and others. We have also asked Samantha Cook to work with us in discovering the capabilities of the SAA website software. This will be particularly useful in accomplishing one of our long-term aims, to ensure that our additional resources list remains updated.