

**Society of American Archivists Foundation
Board of Directors Meeting
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**Caregiving Travel Fund: Discussion Paper for
SAA Foundation Board Consideration**

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BACKGROUND

Over the course of the last 18 months, we have participated in two professional panels related to caregiving and its impact on professional engagement, advancement, and inclusivity within the profession.¹ As a result of these sessions, where additional panelists and audience members alike shared their experiences and stories, we have learned more about the experiences of many types of caregivers. After much research and thought, we recently submitted a journal article about the impact of caregiving on the archival profession.

Many of the impacts of caregiving that are specific to the archival profession are anecdotal or can only be inferred based on broader studies of society at large or allied professions. However, the 2017 WArS/SAA Salary Survey—the only survey to capture demographic information about SAA members who serve in caregiving roles—allows us to establish a baseline number of caregivers within our profession: 12.7% of 2,170 respondents report that they serve as the primary caregiver for children, 0.8% as the primary caregiver for another adult (younger than 65 years old), and 2.2% as the primary caregiver for an elderly person (over 65 years of age).² Some respondents may serve in multiple caregiving roles, but these numbers indicate that approximately 15% of archival professionals also serve as caregivers. Trends in life expectancy, incidence of chronic conditions, and disability in old age (on the rise), coupled with trends in family demographics (smaller families with fewer children to provide care, increasing numbers of childless older women), and a shortage of direct-care workers to help families who desire

¹ “Leaning In: Strategies for Balancing Caregiving and Professional Careers and Reframing Definitions of Success” (panel discussion, Session 101, annual meeting of the Midwest Archives Conference, Omaha, NE, April 6, 2017). This session was not recorded. “Plan B: How Archivists Navigate Caregiving Responsibilities and Work/Life Balance” (panel discussion, Session 407, annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists Annual Meeting, Portland, OR, July 28, 2017). This session was not recorded. Panel participants and audience members tweeted about the session using the Twitter hashtags #saa17 #s407.

² Robin H. Israel and Jodi R. Eyre, *The 2017 WArS/SAA Salary Survey: Initial Results and Analysis* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, Women Archivists Section, 2017), 9, <https://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/WArS-SAA-Salary-Survey-Report.pdf> (accessed June 29, 2018).

assistance, indicate that there are likely to be even more individuals within our profession who are engaged in caregiving relationships in the future.³

Providing care to others is a responsibility that has very tangible costs. While situations vary, the financial burden of care can have a significant impact on the budgets of those caring for children, partners, spouses, close friends or neighbors, extended family members, and elder loved ones. Consider these statistics:

- In 2017, “nearly one in three families (32 percent) reported spending 20 percent or more of their annual household income on child care.”⁴
- Costs for adult care range widely, depending on the intensity of care required and availability of services. Genworth’s *Cost of Care Survey 2017* puts national median annual costs for these services anywhere from \$18,200 for adult day care services to \$97,455 for a private room in a nursing home, with compound annual growth of 3-4%.⁵
- Caregivers themselves often bear costs as a result of their caring role. A 2007 Evercare / National Alliance for Caregiving study of family caregivers (those caring for a relative or friend over the age of 50 during the month prior to the study) finds that respondents have an average annual out-of-pocket expense of \$5,531, more than 10% of the median income of the group.⁶

The cost to attend the Society of American Archivists’ Annual meeting is not insignificant; a number of reports indicate that funds available for professional development support have stagnated or declined over the past decade.⁷ This year’s *Membership Committee Survey on Professional Development Support among SAA Membership* found that “for 71% of respondents, attendance at the Annual Meeting alone would exhaust their entire annual professional development allocation.”⁸ In order to participate in the Annual Meeting’s continuing education

³ Lynn Feinberg, Susan C. Reinhard, Ari Houser, and Rita Choula, “Valuing the Invaluable: 2011 Update The Growing Contributions and Costs of Family Caregiving” *Insight on the Issues* 51 (Washington, DC: AARP Public Policy Institute, June 2011): 10, <https://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/ppi/lrc/i51-caregiving.pdf> (accessed June 29, 2018).

⁴ Care.com, “How Much Does Child Care Cost?” 2017, <https://www.care.com/c/stories/2423/how-much-does-child-care-cost/> (accessed June 29, 2018).

⁵ Genworth, “Compare Long Term Care Costs Across the United States” *Cost of Care Survey 2017*, <https://www.genworth.com/aging-and-you/finances/cost-of-care.html> (accessed June 29, 2018).

⁶ Evercare and NAC, *Family Caregivers—What They Spend, What They Sacrifice; The Personal Financial Toll of Caring for a Loved One* (Minnetonka, MN: Evercare, and Bethesda, MD: NAC, November 2007), 7, http://www.caregiving.org/data/Evercare_NAC_CaregiverCostStudyFINAL20111907.pdf (accessed June 29, 2018).

⁷ See, for example Nancy Zimmelman, “Part 5. A*Census: A Report on Continuing Education” *The American Archivist* 69, no. 2 (2006): 382; Jackie M. Dooley and Katherine Luce, *Taking Our Pulse: The OCLC Research Survey of Special Collections and Archives* (Dublin, OH: OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc., 2010), 23, <https://www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/publications/library/2010/2010-11.pdf> (accessed June 29, 2018); and Matt Gorzalski and Michelle Sweetser, “Guest Post: Matt Gorzalski and Michelle Sweetser, SAA Membership Committee,” Off the Record Blog, entry posted January 16, 2018, <https://offtherecord.archivists.org/2018/01/16/guest-post-matt-gorzalski-and-michelle-sweetser-saa-membership-committee/> (accessed June 29, 2018).

⁸ Society of American Archivists, Council Meeting, Agenda Item V.B., May 7-9, 2018, *Membership Committee Survey on Professional Development Support among SAA Membership*, prepared by Matt Gorzalski, Michelle

and professional development activities—which are necessary for staying current with the profession and gaining experience needed for advancement—many archivists must therefore pay these expenses out of pocket. For those who are caregivers, this additional expense may be impossible due to budgets already strained by the cost of care.

In addition to the direct costs of conference fees, lodging, and travel, caregivers frequently must arrange alternate care situations, sometimes at an added expense. For those who are the sole care provider either as a single parent or caring for a spouse, finding alternatives to care can be even more challenging and may prevent individuals from attending professional meetings.

Recognizing the expense of and need for child care services among its members, SAA began allocating resources from the annual meeting budget to support child care over three decades ago. However, the plan adopted by the organization is limited specifically to child care expenses, assumes that registrants bring their child to the annual meeting, and requires the registrant to select an unknown child care service provider in an unknown city.

PROPOSAL

We believe that our profession can do more to support the annual meeting attendance of our colleagues who serve in caregiving roles. At the very least, eligibility for “Child Care Services for Registrants at SAA Annual Meetings” should be expanded to include anyone who serves in a caregiving role, not just those who care for children. In the course of our research, we have encountered a number of professional organizations who offer travel scholarships for caregivers.⁹ These travel scholarship models take a number of forms and include a variety of considerations, including:

- Providing allowances for applicants who are presenting at the conference.
- Allowing recipients to select from a variety of approved caregiving scenarios, including on-site care at the meeting hotel, having a provider travel to the attendee’s home, sending child(ren) to an alternate care provider’s home outside of their community, and having a care provider travel to the meeting location to provide care.
- Limiting eligibility to members.
- Demonstrating financial need by the applicant.

With at least 15% of archival professionals serving in a caregiving role, a designated travel scholarship for caregivers could provide welcome relief to this demographic and allow them to

Sweetser, and Gabrielle Spiers, 2, <https://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/0518-V-B-ProfDevSupportSurvey.pdf> (accessed July 13, 2018).

⁹ See, for example, the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology’s Child Care Grant (<https://www.asbmb.org/meeting2018/travelawards/childcare/>), the Special Interest Group on Software Engineering within the Association for Computing Machinery’s CAPS Funds for Childcare Support (<https://www.sigsoft.org/resources/caps.html#childcare>) and the American Physical Society’s Division of Chemical Physics’ Child Care Awards (<https://www.aps.org/units/dcp/awards/dcca.cfm>) (all accessed June 29, 2018).

more fully participate in the life of the Society. The Society would also benefit from the diverse perspectives that these caregivers bring to onsite participation in the Annual Meeting. It is our belief that the SAA Foundation would be a natural steward for such a scholarship program, which would parallel established travel awards (such as the Harold T. Pinkett Minority Student Award and the Donald Peterson Student Scholarship Award) and the availability of the Travel Awards program (which we understand is new and under review).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Would a travel scholarship for caregivers be a good fit for the Foundation's fundraising efforts?
- As the Foundation considers potential renewal of the Travel Award program, might caregiving status be made a consideration for eligibility in future rounds?