

Are Archivists Essential Workers? Documenting the Effects of  
COVID-19 on Funded Archival Institutions

2022 SAA Research Forum

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**Humanities organizations continue to seek support after the start of the global pandemic.**



**In reflecting  
on the year  
2020, the  
only way to  
tell the  
stories of  
America's  
Archives is  
through  
communica-  
ting with  
the  
Archivists  
themselves.**



# Background

1. The American Library Association (ALA) spotlight the resilience, determination, and innovations of library workers in unprecedented circumstances.
2. Their publication *The State of American Libraries: Special Report: COVID-19* provides a closer look at the vitality our libraries provide to our nation, our people, and community.
3. Librarians were quickly reassigned and went from disseminating information to becoming our community's "second responders."



**Can this be said about Archivists working in repositories? Preservation institutions? What happened to collections and services?**



# Our Research Objectives



- In the pilot study, we aim to explore what archivists have done during COVID-19 lockdowns to understand better how archives were essential to communities during this time.
- This pilot study will also contribute to our research to understand if archivists are essential workers.

# Study Aims



**This study aims to use the Society of American Archivists (SAA) Statement of Core Values to address the following questions:**

- **Who decided that archives should remain closed during COVID-19?**
- **What happened to jobs and most importantly, what happened to the collections?**

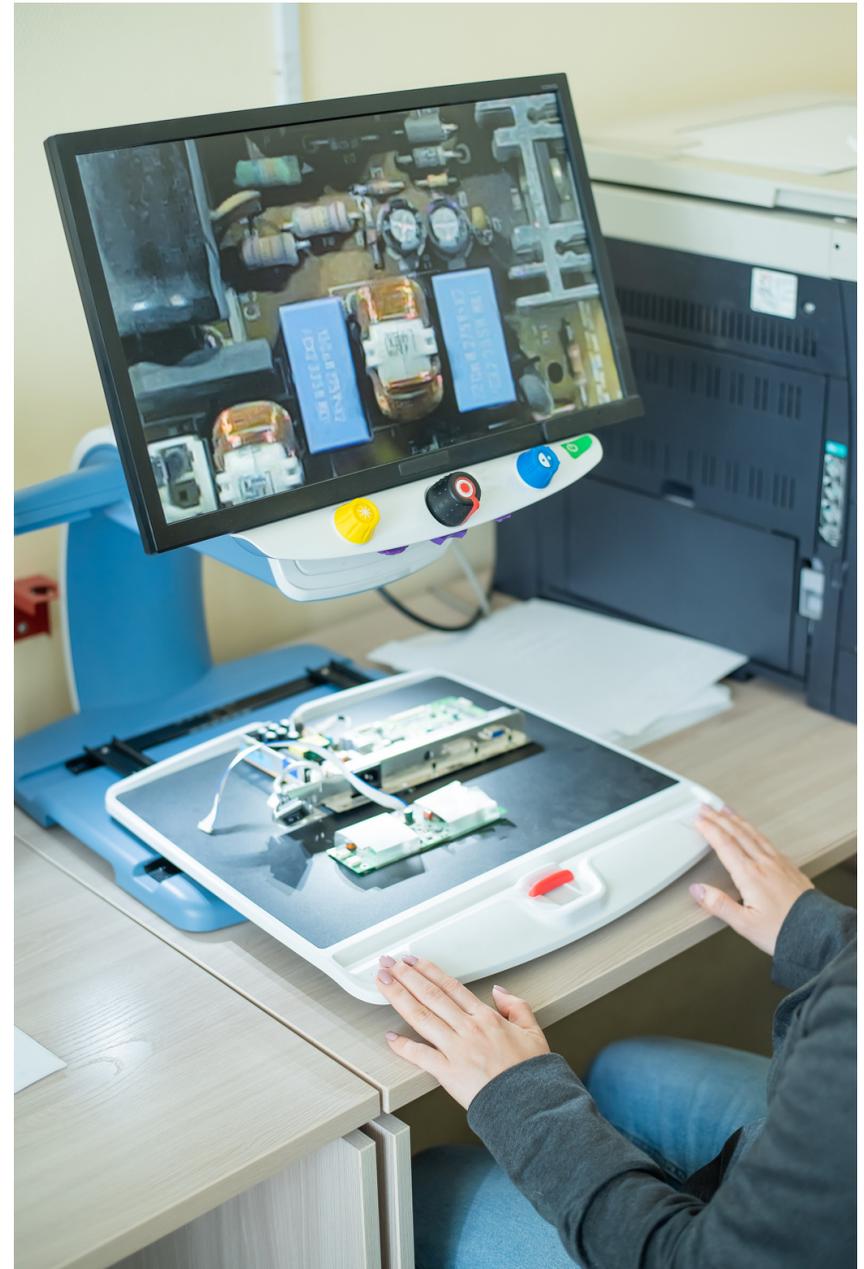
# Methodology



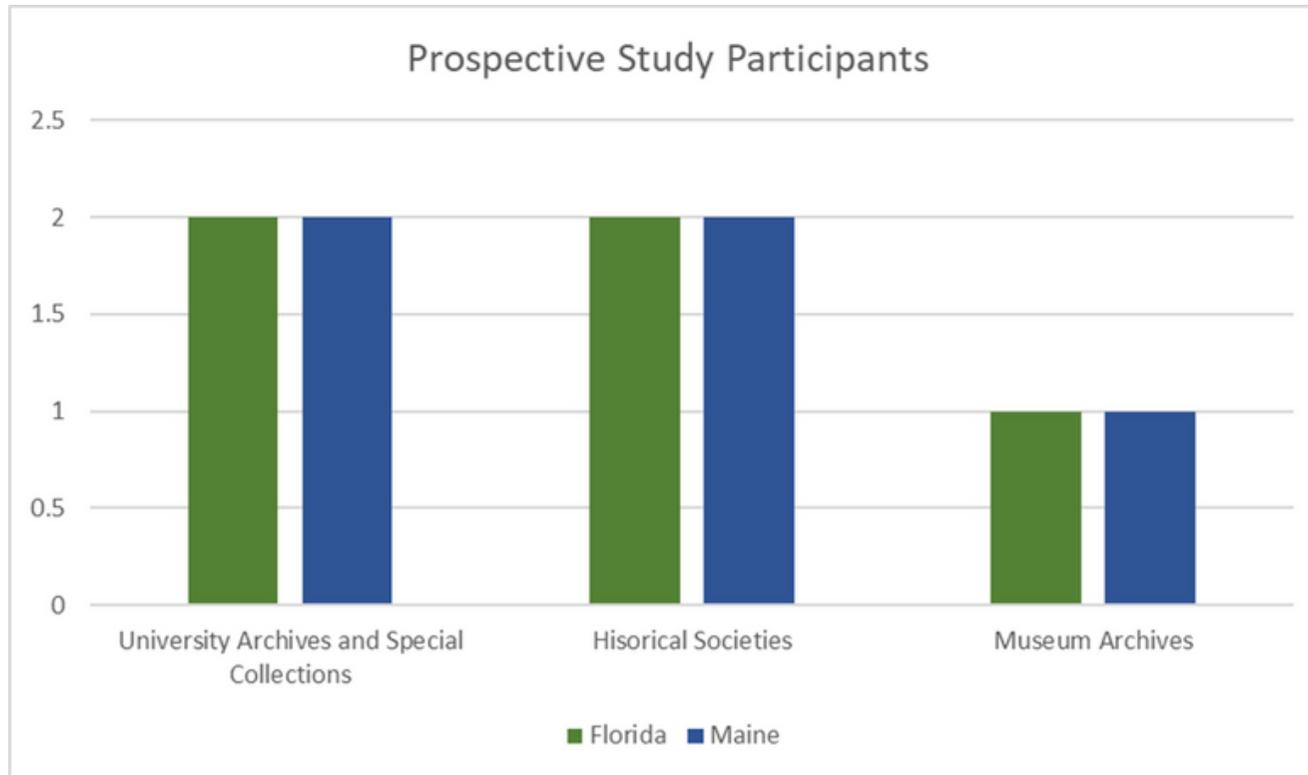
- **Mixed Methods approach.**
- **Recruitment will take place online via purposive sampling.**
- **This non-probability sampling relies on our judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in our survey.**
- **Participants will be picked from a pool of repositories that meet the study criteria**
- **The repositories that will be contacted are either from an academic and or college institution, city and state funded repositories.**

# Research Instrument

1. We will use a survey instrument to post questions about acquisition, preservation, access and diversity and inclusion practices.
2. This data will allow us to address our research questions and feedback information about the state of archival collections in a post-pandemic context.



# Prospective Participants



**Table 1. Prospective study Participants.** The table documents the institutional types that will be surveyed in this pilot study. These are University Archives and special collections, historical societies, and museum archives. We hope that there will be 5 participating archives per state, a total of 10 participants in the study.

# Project Timeline



**Table 2. Project Timeline. Our project timeline will ensure we meet our deadlines. This will help us track our progress and make any necessary adjustment if required.**

# Conclusions



The pilot-study aims to use the Society of American Archivists (SAA) Statement of Core Values to address the following questions:

- Who decided that archives should remain closed during COVID-19?
- What happened to jobs and most importantly, what happened to the collections?
- We will use a survey instrument to post questions about acquisition, preservation, access and diversity and inclusion practices.
- This data will allow us to address our research questions and feedback information about the state of archival collections in a post-pandemic context.



# References

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**Thank you!**



**Contact Us**

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