

Council of State Archivists: Archives Working Across Remote Environments

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July 23, 2025

Society of American Archivists Research Forum

The goals of CoSA AWARE: overview

Archives Working Across Remote Environments (AWARE): Connecting the Government Archives of the U.S. Territories, Hawai'i, and Alaska

The Council of State Archivists (CoSA) received a 24-month Institute of Museum and Library Services planning grant to investigate and articulate the needs of territorial and non-contiguous state archives, produce guidance documents, and develop a plan for their support.

Using a series of data-gathering assessment methods, CoSA representatives and project partners will identify unique and shared agency needs and collaborative opportunities to address both individual and overarching challenges facing these institutions and the communities they serve.



Reviewing the goals of CoSA AWARE: partners and consultants

Project partners will include one or more representatives from the participating archives (Alaska, Hawai'i, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands).

Investing the time for the consultants to travel to these locations demonstrates respect for the institutions and the communities they serve and draws attention to the importance of the project.

The work of the consultants is not to dictate external solutions but rather to listen to the project partners and articulate their needs and ideas to create a roadmap for implementation.



Archivo General de Puerto Rico

Reviewing the goals of CoSA AWARE: outcomes

Centering the project partners in this proposal and unifying their efforts through a community of practice amplifies their voices in the outcomes, increasing the likelihood of sustainable solutions that truly meet the needs of their institutions and the communities they serve.

The intended results of this project are a stable community of practice between the seven project partners, articulated plans to address the primary concerns identified through data collection, and public facing reports and templates to share recommendations and replicable tools for implementation.

The development of public facing resources will be done in close coordination with the project partners and center their voices and priorities.



Guam Museum

Project Timeline

- May-June 2024: Schedule conversations between territorial archivists and consultant team
- June-July 2024: Follow up survey to gather additional information
- August 2024: Preliminary planning for site visits
- September 2024: CoSA conference in St. Louis
- Autumn 2024-Spring 2025: Conduct site visits
- Spring 2025: Develop site reports
- Summer 2025: Develop final project white paper and webinars



CNMI Archives at Northern
Marianas College

Site visit schedule

<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
Puerto Rico	November 21-23, 2024
Guam	February 2-4, 2025
Northern Mariana Islands	February 6-7, 2025
American Samoa	March 18-20, 2025
Alaska	March 25-26, 2025
US Virgin Islands	April 22-25, 2025
Washington, DC	April 28-29, 2025

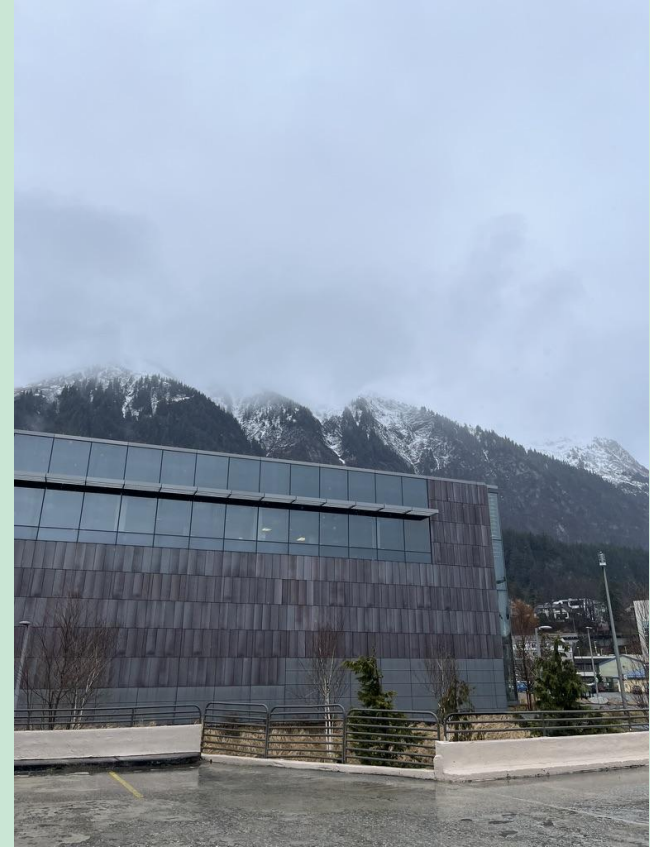


American Samoa Office of Archives
and Records Management



Major findings: Procurement

- Challenges were almost always exacerbated by site partners' distance from the contiguous United States, leading to higher costs, shipping delays (ranging from weeks to months), and complex bureaucratic processes.
- Vendors may not offer shipping to territories or consider them international destinations. Some territories are limited to local vendors.
- Federal procurement regulations like the Jones Act or Build America Buy America present additional restrictions on purchasing supplies and equipment.
- Territorial governments may not have complete control over their budgets.



Alaska Division of Libraries, Archives,
and Museums

Major findings: Disaster Infrastructure

- Most of the CoSA AWARE site partners had recent experience with significant natural disasters. These disasters, typically in the form of hurricanes, typhoons, earthquakes and other major storm events, are becoming more frequent and severe due to climate change.
- Compromised infrastructure creates long-term problems, i.e. mold outbreaks
- A missing resource common among most of the partners is an pre-approved emergency/disaster service vendor, i.e. Belfor, specializing in cultural heritage. Qualified service providers for temporary environmental systems, i.e. dehumidifiers and chillers, are rarely available or securing them is problematic due to procurement requirements or FEMA rules.



US Virgin Islands Division of
Libraries, Archives, and Museums
(Florence Williams Library)

Final recommendations

- Increase awareness of archival functions and facilities requirements to decision makers.
 - Funding and qualifications of dedicated archivist
 - Physical conditions of facilities
- Increase engagement with and between AWARE partners
- Address obstacles to securing off-shore shipments and services.
 - Educate bureaucracies, both internal and external, of need for procurement timeline flexibility.
- Increase Congressional awareness of AWARE partners' challenges.



Washington, DC Office of Public Records and Archives

Thank you!



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