WHO DO WE WANT TO HIRE? ARCHIVAL PROCESSING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

AS THE ARCHIVAL PROFESSION BECOMES MORE CONCERNED ABOUT BOTH CONTINGENT LABOR PRACTICES AND ETHICAL STEWARDSHIP OF COLLECTION MATERIALS, ARE THOSE CONCERNS REFLECTED IN CURRENT HIRING PRACTICES?

METHODS
 Reviewed processing job descriptions from December 2022-May 2023 found through SAA & regional listservs, social media, on Archivesig, and ACA website for U.S.- and Canada-based jobs.

JOBS POSTINGS
 180 positions posted over 6 months that included Processing in primary tasks; 40 explicitly had “Processing” in job title.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Institution types

- Academic: 86
- Nonprofit: 12
- Museum: 19
- Gov’t: 28

Job types

- Full-time: 68
- Part-time: 18
- Unclear: 94

Geographic distribution of jobs:

- 28 jobs in Canada

Demographic distribution:

- 64 jobs specifically noted as temporary—ranging from 3 months to 5 years.
- 27 jobs specifically stated “permanent” or “regular” employment.

REQUIREMENTS

114 JOBS LISTED AN EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENT—RANGING FROM "SOME" TO 8 YEARS FOR A DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTOR POSITION. MOST WANTED 1-2 YEARS EXPERIENCE.

Primary job task

- 20 jobs strictly listed processing tasks in job description—most jobs had at least 2 primary tasks. 10 jobs had up to 7 primary tasks delineated.

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Graduate degree: 120
- Bachelors: 25
- High school diploma: 5
- Associates: 1
- None listed: 0

Further research: Analyze salary information; compare processing-specific jobs to other jobs for essential archives functions.