

Tracking the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on archival workers with the Archival Workers Emergency Fund Organizing Committee

COURTNEY DEAN, CARA DESIMONE, BRIDGET MALLEY AND LYDIA TANG

Abstract:

Alongside fundraising efforts to aid archival workers impacted by COVID-19, the Archival Workers Emergency Fund Organizing Committee has issued three surveys--one informal, two formal-- quantifying and tracking the impact of the pandemic on the archival field, with an eye towards identifying trends which may indicate greater inequity and precarity. Questions were aimed at gathering demographic data (such as age, gender, and race/ethnicity), data on repository responses to COVID (closures, expected reopenings, budget), changes in job duties and responsibilities, and qualitative data on respondents' perception of their current work situations as well as their expectations for the future. Research methods included using Chi Square Analysis and Word Clouds to explore correlations and analyze qualitative responses. The AWE Fund Organizing Committee plans to continue to periodically issue surveys to track the repercussions of the pandemic, allowing for longitudinal exploration of its effect on archival workers.

About the authors:

The Archival Workers Emergency Fund (AWE Fund) Organizing Committee is a grassroots volunteer collective who propelled the creation of the Archival Workers Emergency Fund in March 2020, administered by the Society of American Archivists Foundation. The Organizing Committee meets regularly to advise and support the AWEF evaluation committee, fundraise, research, and organize programming that advances issues centering on archival worker precarity and mutual aid. Subscribe to our [google group](#) to join future meetings or contact us at awefund@gmail.com.

Courtney Dean is the Head of the [Center for Primary Research and Training \(CFPRT\)](#) in UCLA Library Special Collections. In 2014, she co-founded the [Los Angeles Archivists Collective](#) and is currently an editor for the group's online magazine, *Acid Free*.

Cara DeSimone is an emerging archival professional currently on contract with the National Parks Service to support the Southeast Archeology Center. A career-change archivist, she leverages prior experience to support and advise other new professionals through SAA and the Society of Florida Archivists.

Bridget Malley volunteers on committees for the Accessibility & Disability Section, the Archival Workers Emergency Fund, and the Western Pennsylvania Disability History & Action Consortium. She is a records specialist with the U.S. EPA.

Dr. *Lydia Tang* is a LYRISIS Outreach and Engagement Coordinator. In 2020, she was awarded the Mark A. Greene Emerging Leader Award and three Society of American Archivists Council resolutions recognizing her work on the Archival Workers Emergency Fund, the Accessibility & Disability Section, and the Guidelines for Accessible Archives for People with Disabilities.