



Association of
Canadian Archivists

Association canadienne
des archivistes

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STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2023-2026

Prepared by the Strategic Planning Working Group (SPWG)

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Association of Canadian Archivists’ Strategic Framework 2023-2026

Founded in 1975 and incorporated in 1978, the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) is a non-profit organization that represents the needs and interests of archives and records professionals throughout Canada.

The ACA provides members with opportunities to network with archives and records practitioners across the country, develop professional skills and expertise, and participate in national and international advocacy initiatives. It is a member-driven, volunteer-run organization that is governed by a board and supported by an Executive Director, a Membership Services Coordinator and several committees, working groups, special interest sections (SIS) and student chapters. This strategic framework applies to all of these “ACA groups”.

Background

In 2021, the ACA Board extended the ACA's strategic plan *Moving Forward Together: ACA Strategic Plan, 2018-2021* for another year to enable them to assess what was achieved and develop a plan for establishing a new strategic framework. A survey was sent to all members in the spring of 2022, which asked for feedback on how well the ACA was meeting member needs. The survey results showed an overall increase in member satisfaction, and a summary of these results were shared with members in the July 2022 *Scope and Content*. While pleased with the overall results, the Board acknowledged that there is still more work to do to improve services and member satisfaction.

In late summer of 2022, the ACA put out a call for volunteers to participate in a Strategic Plan Working Group (SPWG). The intent of the working group was to build a road map and give direction for the Board and Secretariat of the ACA. The SPWG met for the first time in October and immediately came up with a plan of action.

We decided to use a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis to assess how the ACA does and does not meet member needs. To gather input, we held virtual SWOT analysis sessions in the winter of 2022. These included all members of the ACA groups who could attend. We also created a SWOT analysis feedback form, which was made available for both members and non-members to provide their input.¹

Beginning in January 2023, we met weekly to assemble and analyse feedback data from the 2022 Membership Survey, the June 2018 Strategic Plan, and the *ACA Equity Commitments*. We

¹ It should be noted that participation in these events was limited, though the feedback that was received was broad and substantial.

used these data to undertake a Threats, Opportunities, Weaknesses, and Strengths (TOWS) analysis, through which we identified strategic priorities for the Association.

What follows summarizes both the information gathered by the Strategic Plan Working Group and the explanation of its framework of priorities for the ACA over the next three years - priorities that are meant for all ACA groups.

How to Use this Strategic Framework

We have not prescribed specific actions and tasks that are tied to the guiding principles and strategic objectives of this framework. We intend for all groups to have flexibility in how and what they plan as their work but their action plans should support these framework elements. What this framework does prescribe: regular, structured reporting on work planning and progress in relation to the guiding principles and strategic objectives, holding ourselves accountable to our members and other stakeholder communities.

Our Vision

Our work was guided by the ACA's mandate which states:

"The Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) is a non-profit organization that represents the needs and interests of archives and records professionals throughout Canada. The ACA provides members with opportunities to network with archives and records professionals across the country, develop professional skills and expertise, and participate in national and international advocacy initiatives."

Our Guiding Principles

The work of the ACA and its groups should strive to advance and support the Association in three key areas:

- Meeting the Association's *Equity Commitments*;
- Meeting our commitments to truth and reconciliation within our Association and for archival communities in Canada; and
- Holding ourselves accountable for our actions through regular reporting and two-way communications with members.

Meeting Our Equity Commitments

As stated in the Association's *Equity Commitments* (2020), "we recognize that equity is critical to developing a talented, capable and supportive profession. We are committed to creating an environment, both within the ACA and the broader archives and recordkeeping profession, that attracts, develops, and retains individuals that better reflect the communities we serve."

The Association continues to make the following commitments to providing more open, welcoming, and responsive services and environments to members:

1. The ACA will prioritize the urgent need for equity and justice for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour), people with disabilities, new Canadians, and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and communities.
2. The ACA will offer a range of professional development opportunities and resources that support members with diverse perspectives and needs.
3. The ACA will provide equitable opportunities for members to volunteer for leadership positions and fully participate in association business.
4. The ACA will actively work to make its programs and services accessible to an increasingly diverse archives and recordkeeping profession.

Meeting Our Commitments to Truth and Reconciliation

The *Reconciliation Framework* released in 2022 by the Response to the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Taskforce (TRC-TF) of the Steering Committee on Canada's Archives (SCCA) and unanimously endorsed by the ACA Board of Directors on 11 March 2022, calls on professional associations across the country to take a proactive role in integrating *Framework* objectives into association operations. Such work includes, but is not limited to, building networks, tools, and resources, integrating reconciliation visioning into long-term planning, and supporting active ACA involvement by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis archivists and heritage professionals. The operationalizing of these objectives affects and involves all work done by the ACA and its groups.

The ACA and its groups will work to support Canada's archival communities as they work to integrate strategies from the *Reconciliation Framework* into their planning activities and regular operations. The ACA and its groups will encourage members to respect First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples' intellectual sovereignty over records created by or about them, and educate members regarding Indigenous held rights to ownership, control, access, and possession of their nations' information.

Holding Ourselves to Account

The ACA commits to reporting on a more timely and consistent basis so that Association members are aware of our progress with respect to meeting our commitments to equity and truth and reconciliation, and to translating the other objectives of this strategic framework into action.

The ACA will engage in two-way communications with Association members, so that we may elicit and incorporate their feedback on what and how we are doing and build on each others' knowledge and contributions.

The ACA will continually evaluate and optimize the communication tools and methods we use, based on their effectiveness in serving the needs of members and reporting on our work based on this strategic framework.

Strategic Priorities

For the next three years, the strategic priorities for the ACA are to Advocate, Support Learning, and Engage Members, all critical to fulfilling the Association's mandate. The activities of the ACA should serve one or more of the following objectives and reflect the core principles of this framework. Following this approach will support the Association in meeting its operational requirements as well as its commitments to equity, truth and reconciliation, and accountability.

ADVOCATE

The ACA will endeavor to be a strong voice on issues of concern to members of Canada's archival communities and ensure the voices of its members are heard.

Focus areas include:

- Develop a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive community of support and engagement among and for archival practitioners across Canada.
- Represent our profession and our colleagues to kindred heritage organizations and to public institutions whose policies or decisions may have a significant impact on a members' institutional success and professional lives.

SUPPORT LEARNING

The ACA will expand opportunities for career and skill development, increase accessibility of learning opportunities, and strengthen the community support for continuing professional development.

Focus areas include:

- Deliver in person and/or online professional learning workshops throughout the year and associated programming at the annual conference.
- Provide learning opportunities for individuals who identify as archival workers or who work in tangential and related fields.

ENGAGE MEMBERS

The ACA will support all members, individual and institutional, to make meaningful contributions to the ACA and the communities they serve.

Focus areas include:

- Involve individual and institutional members in planning and delivering Association activities that meet their needs and align to their values.
- Provide all members with relevant and low-barrier opportunities to contribute to the development of the archival profession, through participation in program offerings, sharing feedback about their experiences, and/or volunteering for the Association.
- Consult existing and potential members to maintain the relevance of the Association's services.

Next Steps

The ACA Secretariat and all volunteers are responsible for incorporating the guiding principles and strategic priorities stated above into their annual work plans and long-range activities. Work plan templates will be provided to ACA groups to help keep these priorities and principles top of mind and to ensure consistency in plan development. Regular communication from ACA groups to general membership on all work being done will be facilitated via various media channels including, but not limited to, *Scope and Content*, *ACA Bulletin* and direct emails to members.