

WHAT ARE COMMUNITY ARCHIVES?

Community archives are created by members of a specific group with the intention of documenting their shared and lived experiences. Community archives are created to add and preserve marginalized voices that have been excluded from the historical record. Contrary to traditional archives, community members are involved in every step of the creation of the archive, from defining the scope to describing materials, to providing access. When radical or experimental in form, archives can act as sites of resistance to further advance movement-building and solidarity. This can happen by preserving, and working with our communities to actively document the histories and stories of our own groups of affinity or place. **Our communities are the true knowledge-holders.**

HOW TO START A COMMUNITY ARCHIVE

1 SET OUT YOUR ARCHIVE'S MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

1. Whose stories do you want to preserve and/or amplify?
2. Decide on what kind of formats you want/can save
3. Define the period of time, scope and geographical area
4. Who do you want to tell that story/stories to? Why should it be YOU making this project and what's your relationship to this content
5. Establish the resources that each objective will need - people, partners, premises, equipment?
6. Define your budgetary needs - how much money will this project need to succeed?

2 DECIDE HOW YOU'LL ORGANIZE THE COLLECTIONS

It's important to keep track of all your materials as you add to your archive. A way of doing this is by organizing your materials in categories and subcategories that go from broad to specific. One way is to develop a clear and descriptive file naming convention will help you easily store, locate, identify, and retrieve your files. For example: 20190724_Archivo_Medios_my-great-movie.mov

3 DECIDE HOW YOU'LL PRESERVE YOUR ARCHIVE

Before you start collecting, it's important to know how you will preserve your archive (flip to get some info on preserving different types of materials). If you have digital files, be sure to make copies. For example, you can have one copy on your laptop; another on an external hard drive and another on a cloud service or server.

4 START COLLECTING!



THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Be transparent, share your goals, grant details, process, etc with your community.
- Decentralize information. Don't replicate the same structures that excluded your community in the first place.
- Make a good faith effort to secure permission to use contributors' materials.
- Let people know if you plan on making your archive available online and add a takedown policy for sensitive, harmful or copyrighted content.
- Incorporating a community advisory board to collectively establish themes, priorities and advocate for the archive for the long-term.
- Transitions in stewardship happen and as such, it is important to keep records of your inventory and workflow systems used to manage the archive in the event that you need to hand it over to someone else.
- How will you protect the privacy of your contributors? Will there be any kind of access restrictions to the archive?

Check out bit.ly/CommunityArchives for more resources on collecting and preserving your community's history.

HOW TO PRESERVE YOUR MATERIALS

PAPER

- If you can, use acid-free folders and boxes.
- Remove metal clips and staples. Do not fold, glue or laminate.
- Wash your hands before handling any originals.
- Store papers away from light, moisture and heat.

VIDEO (VHS, MINI DV, HI8)

- Avoid touching the tape
- Store fully rewound and vertically
- Keep away from magnetic forces (electrical appliances)
- Label your tapes with dates and identifying information. Use archival-quality adhesive labels.
- Ensure future access by digitizing your collection

FILM

- Handle by the center of the hub (reel to reel), only touch the sides and keep fingers away from the image.
- Wear cotton gloves if you need to clean and repair
- Store in low-humidity, low-light, and consistent temperature (preferably low temp)
- Don't store plastic bags, you may use cardboard boxes or original metal/plastic containers.

PHOTOGRAPHS

- Handle photographs and negatives with gloves. Fingerprints can cause permanent stains on photographs and negatives.
- Protect from light
- Place photos in acid free boxes or sleeves
- Avoid laminated photo albums
- Glue attracts pests and insects
- Store in low temperatures

DIGITAL MEDIA

- Migrate data on formats that are obsolete or near-obsolete (i.e. floppys or CDs)
- Access your files and/or storage every 6 months.
- Apply the 3-2-1 rule: Make three copies, use two different types of media for storing your copies, store one copy offsite.
- Make access copies.
- Note that life expectancy of digital storage varies:
 - DVD/CDs ~10 yrs
 - Hard drives, memory cards ~5-10 yrs
 - Cloud storage depends on the company's terms of service (!).

