

Archives
of Ontario

Archives
publiques
de l'Ontario

THE THRILL
OF DISCOVERY

LE FRISSON
DE LA DÉCOUVERTE



Archives of Ontario Strategic Plan 2010-2013

Message from the Archivist of Ontario

I am pleased to present the Archives of Ontario 2010-2013 Strategic Plan, which outlines our priorities, the actions we will take to achieve our goals, and some of the measures we will use to evaluate our progress.

In developing our 2010-2013 Strategic Plan, we examined our current situation and our organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. We surveyed staff across the organization and our customers, both within and outside the Ontario Government.

The feedback we received provided us with assurance that we have been moving in the right direction and that our unique collections, our expert staff and our new facility are well recognized strengths.

We acknowledge that there are a number of challenges that we and many other archival institutions face in today's environment. Digital records are emerging rapidly with new record media types and formats. The benefits and demands of technology are constantly changing and a sustainable archives requires modern technology. Customer expectations and demand for easy online access to archival holdings are growing. Appraising and processing new material in the digital environment will certainly pose new challenges.

Message from the Archivist of Ontario

We also recognize that our organization must remain flexible and strive to continuously improve our operational efficiency. It is also important that we continue to develop partnerships to successfully achieve our goals.

In the coming years we will continue to build on the foundation we laid in the past years as we work towards accomplishing our new strategic goals. Our achievements are a result of the inspired teamwork and collaboration of all Archives staff. We remain committed in ensuring that staff across the organization is fully engaged in their work.

Angela Forest
Archivist of Ontario (A)

About the Archives of Ontario

The Archives of Ontario has been collecting, preserving, and providing access to the province's history since 1903. The Archives is constantly striving to bring the past alive by promoting excellence in recordkeeping and custodial practices. As part of the Ontario Public Service and the Ministry of Government Services, we share in a wider mission to exercise responsible stewardship of public resources and information.

We have a broad and ever-growing group of customers who access our collections in person, online and through their local libraries: the general public, researchers, students, teachers, the arts community, journalists, genealogists, lawyers, law enforcement agencies, government officials, agencies and commissions of inquiry, among others.

Our customers have access to a unique and multi-faceted collection that includes Ontario government records; genealogical records; photographs; architectural drawings and plans; film, video, and sound recordings; the Government of Ontario Art Collection; private historical manuscripts and papers; maps, charts, drawings, and prints; newspapers; and an extensive library of publications with a strong emphasis on the social and political history of Ontario.

Our Vision

To be recognized as a model of what a modern Archives should be:

- The reliable, trusted, authoritative guardian of Ontario's documentary memory.
- A leader in customer service, dedicated to identifying and responding to the evolving needs of our customers and as a key partner in the education of Ontarians.
- A leader in promoting and facilitating effective and efficient recordkeeping for the government on behalf of the people of Ontario.

Our Mission

As the guardian and custodian of Ontario's provincial records and rich documentary heritage, our mission is to preserve and promote the province's documentary memory for the benefit of current and future generations.

We are committed towards achieving our purpose by:

- Encouraging and facilitating access to our records through ongoing strategies to meet our customers' evolving needs and to enhance the customer experience
- Fostering government accountability and transparency by promoting information management and recordkeeping excellence in the Ontario Government.
- Bringing the past alive for Ontarians by showcasing Ontario's public and private archival records as a vital resource for studying and interpreting the history, people and culture of the province and by developing innovative educational programs.

Our Organizational Values

The Archives of Ontario's strategic priorities are supported by the values we hold as an organization of the Ontario Public Service. The way we deliver service to the public and to our internal customers, and how we conduct ourselves within the organization are guided by the following values:

Diversity

To foster and promote diversity in the records we keep in our collection.
To treat everyone with dignity and respect regardless of differences.

Accountability

To be responsible stewards of public information and resources .
To support transparency and manage our operations effectively by demonstrating efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Innovation

To be creative leaders and embrace new technologies, applications and best practices in records and information management.

Competence

To deliver well informed advice to our customers, based on solid knowledge of archival and information management and recordkeeping principles and practices.

Guiding Values and Considerations

Our strategic priorities are guided by our ongoing commitment towards the achievement of our mission and vision. In addition, a number of key principles have shaped our goals for the next three years:

Customer Service

To foster a customer service culture that is reflected in all aspects of our organization – our values, our people and leadership, our structure, our processes, and our performance measurements. We strive to not only respond to, but also proactively anticipate the needs of our current and future customers.

Leadership

To be leaders and serve as a pillar and advocate for the broader archival community and system. We will continuously strive for excellence and innovation in our services and our practices.

Outreach

To be creative and engaging as we reach out to share an exciting vision of the archives of the future that plays an important role in connecting Ontarians to our ancestors, our communities and our government.

Our 2010 – 2013 Strategic Priorities

We have identified five key strategic priorities for 2010-2013:

- 1 Enhancing Service Delivery and Education Programs
- 2 Streamlining Business Processes
- 3 Building Excellence in Government Recordkeeping
- 4 Moving Forward Online and in the Digital Environment
- 5 Expanding our Reach

1 Enhancing Service Delivery and Education Programs

The Archives of Ontario is dedicated to meeting the needs of our customers. We recognize that our customers value receiving timely and expert advice in response to their requests. Over the next couple of years we will continue to maintain our service standards while improving and streamlining customer services.

2011-2013 will see the implementation of a new copyright strategy and preservation strategy. These will give customers and staff the tools to use archival materials wisely, efficiently and responsibly. We will develop new online research tools to give customers easier access to our vast collection, publish new guides to support customers in their research, and facilitate electronic transmission of files.

We will also continue our commitment to knowledge development by delivering a series of research-focused, hands-on workshops to help customers learn how to effectively conduct research in our reading room; and by continuing to support staff in their learning and development to ensure customers receive knowledgeable service.

1 Enhancing Service Delivery and Education Programs

Key Actions:

- We will make it simpler for customers to order records and request information through their preferred service channel by making ongoing enhancements to our systems, tools and processes.
- We will manage semi-active government records more effectively by improving our warehousing activities.
- We will provide clear and up to date guidelines on copyright for customers and staff.
- We will develop and deliver new innovative and engaging hands-on workshop that meet the needs of our customers
- We will establish key senior partnerships in order to develop and deliver educational programs that meet needs and expectations of Ontario teachers and students.



Success Measures

We will monitor our progress and performance through various feedback mechanisms, such as customer surveys and feedback forms, teacher and student evaluations, and staff learning session evaluations.

1 Enhancing Service Delivery and Education Programs

Key Actions

- To support the education of Ontarians we will continue to expand our online and onsite services to offer new education programs to Ontario students and teachers.
- From 2011 onwards, we will establish partnerships with the Ontario Ministry of Education and other key senior educational organizations around the province.
- We will extend our reach to more students through the development and delivery of new and enhanced services via the web as well as educational tools and technologies.

Success Measures

We will monitor our progress and performance through various feedback mechanisms, such as customer surveys and feedback forms, teacher and student evaluations, and staff learning session evaluations.

2

Streamlining Business Processes

As a public service organization, the Archives must plan carefully, use our resources wisely and strive to continuously improve our operations. We must develop and adopt sustainable and robust work practices which provide value for our customers.

In the next three years, we will focus on reexamining some of our core business processes around records scheduling and collections management to ensure we are working as efficiently as possible with defined performance targets.

We will continue to coordinate efficiently across the organization to provide consistent and seamless services to all our customers.

2 Streamlining Business Processes

Key Actions

- We will define protocols and work as one team to provide seamless and consistent advice and services to our customers.
- We will further streamline the record schedule review and approvals process.
- We will improve the efficiency of the planning and execution of accessioning and processing of records to make them available to customers as quickly as possible.



Success Measures

We will define performance targets that reflect our commitment to continuous improvement and aim to improve or exceed our benchmarks and service standards through more structured operational processes.

3 **Building Excellence in Government Recordkeeping**

The Archives of Ontario has been actively providing leadership and expertise to help Ontario government ministries and agencies to implement the *Archives and Recordkeeping Act, 2006* and manage their information and records more effectively.

In the coming years, the Archives of Ontario will continue to provide comprehensive information management and recordkeeping support to Ontario Government ministries and designated government agencies. The Archives will continue to support the implementation of the Digital Workplace Strategy across the OPS, and will continue to lead by example strategy through its own shift to digital approaches to recordkeeping..

We will continue to promote and build excellence in government recordkeeping by enabling ministries and government agencies to implement not only best practice recordkeeping programs, but effective information and recordkeeping policies, standards and practices.

Our government recordkeeping program will shift focus to support digital records and the move away from paper in the Ontario government.

3 Building Excellence in Government Recordkeeping

Key Actions

- Deliver recordkeeping training and education materials that address the specific needs of our customer groups and are consistent with legislative requirements.
- Expand our communication strategies through strategic partnerships with OPS forums, communities and professional groups to further widen our reach.
- Implement initiatives to track and monitor compliance with recordkeeping requirements.
- Position recordkeeping in the broader archives context and look for ways to better integrate with other archival services.
- Continue the work to develop guidelines, standards and supports to address the management of digital records.



Success Measures

- We will increase compliance by ensuring more ministries and designated government agencies adopt common records series and update their records schedules.
- We will see an increase in the complexity of information requests we receive, more interest and enrolment in recordkeeping education and training programs, and good customer feedback.

3 Building Excellence in Government Recordkeeping

Key Actions

- Support ministries in their development and implementation of recordkeeping programs based on effective analysis of business functions; this includes supporting the development of business classification schemes, functional classification systems and corporate recordkeeping standards.
- Support ministries, including IT Clusters, in their Enterprise Content Management implementations through the provision of best practice information management and recordkeeping advice, including policy, standards and related supports.
- Promote and work with stakeholders to deliver specific supports for the management and treatment of digital records across government.
- Seek opportunities to incorporate archival functions at the front end of service delivery.
- Continue to deliver recordkeeping supports to other public bodies under the *Archives and Recordkeeping Act*.



Success Measures

- Increased number of ministries developing business classification schemes and increased number of ministries deploying ECM within their organizations.
- Increased awareness about the need for improved management and preservation of electronic records in the workplace.

4 **Moving Forward Online and in the Digital Environment**

With the evolution of technology, the demand for online services is rapidly growing and customers want easy access to services and information anywhere, anytime.

In the next couple of years, we aim to keep up with the pace of technology and make effective use of new technologies to meet our business and customer needs. We will continue to enhance online access to information, increase the number of digital records available online and respond to the challenges of long-term digital preservation.

We are committed to preserve Ontario's digital memory by collecting, managing, preserving and providing access to authentic and reliable archival digital records through the development of a Trustworthy Digital Repository for archival digital records.

4 Moving Forward Online and in the Digital Environment

Key Actions

- We will enhance the ease of use of our website by providing customers with a single, more integrated search facility and improving our online catalogues and finding aids.
- We will provide online access to vital statistics acquired in 2009 and 2010. We will provide additional on-line content to meet our clients' needs from 2011 to 2013.
- We will continue the development of a Trustworthy Digital Repository for archival records to ensure the long-term preservation of the digital records in our collection.
- We will review our IT infrastructure and systems to ensure we can support new web and systems technologies.
- We will partner with other heritage organizations and government stakeholders to inform our digital preservation knowledge and deliver enhanced digital preservation expertise to ministries and agencies.
- By 2013, we aim to produce another version of the web site that will serve as a cutting edge portal to the AO. It will incorporate new, innovative software, interactive social media devices, engaging virtual exhibitions and many other products.



Success Measures

We will use project management methodology and best practices to monitor the completion of our projects and achieve our implementation targets.

5 Expanding our Reach

We understand that we must increase the Archives of Ontario's visibility to help make the public aware of how they can benefit from our services and resources. The move to a purpose-built facility has enabled us to preserve, promote, and showcase Archives collections like never before. But we must continue to increase the Archives' visibility and devise creative ways to make the public aware of how they can benefit from our services and resources.

In the coming years, we will continue to identify creative and engaging outreach initiatives, leveraging our facility space and the vast reach of the Internet to expand our connection to new audiences and diverse customer groups. We will also establish many more collaborative partnerships with institutions that can help us reach our goals. And finally, we will continue to institute a more centralized and planned approach, in order to ensure that all of the key participants within the Archives informed.

5 Expanding our Reach

Key Actions

- We will continue to develop and deliver new innovative and engaging hands-on workshops that meet the needs of our customers.
- We will continue utilize social media to engage with our customers online and attract new ones by featuring samples of the Archives' sound and moving image collections.
- We will continue establish partnerships with government bodies, community groups and educational institutions to promote and showcase our archival collection and reach new and diverse audiences across Ontario.
- We will open our doors, making use of our facility's spaces to develop unique and engaging exhibits, and plan and host events that showcase and bring the collections to life.



Success Measures

We will attract visitors to our social media sites, attract more visitors to our events and exhibits and build and maintain lasting relationships with our outreach partners.

5 Expanding our Reach

Key Actions

- We will develop and deliver innovative and engaging education programs that meet the needs of teachers and students, both online and onsite in the new classroom facility.
- We will continue to expand our online and onsite services to offer new education programs to Ontario students and teachers which emphasize the use of original documents and align closely to the Ontario curriculum.
- We will extend our reach to more students through the development and delivery of new and enhanced services via the web as well as educational tools and technologies.
- We will develop staff knowledge across the OPS through ongoing learning and development initiatives and knowledge transfer sessions.



Success Measures

We will attract visitors to our social media sites, attract more visitors to our events and exhibits and build and maintain lasting relationships with our outreach partners.

Engaging Our Workforce

We recognize that every staff member at the Archives of Ontario plays an important role in helping to achieve the goals we have set in support of our strategic priorities. We want to ensure that staff across the organization feel engaged in their work.

Our past initiatives aimed at employee engagement have shown us that we are moving in the right direction and we are committed to continuing these efforts.

We will:

- Improve communications at all levels of the Archives.
- Invite staff participation and feedback in defining operational objectives and plans.
- Implement strategies to enhance our learning culture and support employee career development.
- Ensure staff are aware of the opportunities for growth that are available to them
- Encourage staff to brainstorm and share their innovative ideas

Working with all staff, we have developed an Employee Engagement Action Plan that further sets out the actions we will take together to improve employee engagement.