STAFF AND VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT FOR COLLECTIONS CARE

Physical risks to collections come from many quarters:
- Exhibition
- Theft
- Research
- Education programs
- Staff, volunteers, and the public can cause unintentional damage when handling collections objects

Assessing Skills
- Good for both staff and volunteers.
- Base assessment of staff on strategic plan
- Combat inadequacy and upset with good communication
- Surveys or questionnaires

Assessing Skills
- Examples:
  - reCollections Caring for Collections Across Australia, Chapter 5: Managing People (Collections Australia Network)
  - Sample Volunteer Application (Yale Peabody Museum)
Volunteers

Attracting, Retaining, and Managing Volunteers (or Interns)
- Remember, volunteers are free

Attracting, Retaining, and Managing Volunteers (or Interns)
- Why do people volunteer?
- What benefits do you offer for volunteers?
- Do you require volunteers to fill out an application?

Attracting, Retaining, and Managing Volunteers (or Interns)
- Can you take on volunteers?
- Do you have the right environment for it?
- Do you have appropriate projects for volunteers to work on?
- Volunteering is done by choice and volunteers will be selective of the where’s, when’s, and what’s.

Attracting, Retaining, and Managing Volunteers (or Interns)
- Managing volunteers
  - Written policy
  - Staff supervision
  - Defined projects and expectations
  - Ownership
  - Evaluate

Training
Training Staff and Volunteers

- Plan
  - Who is this training for – staff or volunteers – or both?
  - Is there an existing baseline of knowledge or do you need to start from scratch?
  - Who will perform the training (and are they a good choice)?
  - When training, focus on three main messages – and repeat them

- Activities
  - When training in-person, don’t try to cram too much information into a session – get people up and active!
  - Be sure everyone involved in a session gets a chance to DO the work and not just watch and listen
  - Be sure to build in some form of assessment

- Resources
  - Support materials for any training session
  - Keep them simple and direct – think the quick references we get with new electronics
  - Depending on your audience, provide further readings

- Mentor
  - Don’t train and abandon!
  - Regularly communicate with staff or volunteers on how things are going, inspect work, plan new training

- You don’t need to reinvent the wheel!
  - Taking Care (articles on collections care topics) (Museum Conservation Institute, Smithsonian Institution)
  - Wyoming State Museum Collections Care Manual (Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources)
  - In Safe Hands? (webinars) (The British Library)
  - Saving Your Treasures (videos and articles) (NET Nebraska PBS and Nebraska State Historical Society)
Collections Management
- Who? – Staff only preferably, experienced volunteers if needed
- Different labeling methods (video) (South Australian Community History)

Handling Collections
- Who? – everyone!
- Hands-on training important
- Museums
  - Handling Museum Objects (article) (Heritage & Libraries Branch, Ontario Ministry of Culture)
  - The Care and Handling of Objects (article) New Bedford Whaling Museum
  - Artifact and Rare Book Handling: To Glove or Not to Glove? (video) (Minnesota Historical Society)
  - Saving Your Treasures (videos and articles) (NET Nebraska PBS and Nebraska State Historical Society)
  - Volunteer Training Bank (articles and presentations) (Museum of London)

Storage
- Who? – Staff and supervised volunteers/interns
  - Who will depend on what and in what condition
  - What supplies, materials, and space will you need?
  - Hands-on training important
- Storage Containers, Supports, and Mounts (article) (Minnesota Historical Society)
- Storage Furniture (article) (Minnesota Historical Society)

Handling Collections
- Libraries
  - Care and Handling of Books (video) (Yale University Library)
  - The FUNdamentals of Book Care in Five Easy Lessons (video) (George Mason University Libraries)
  - Conservation and Collections Care (video) (Cadbury Research Library)
  - Handling Harvard’s Special Collections (video) (Harvard College Library)
  - Murder in the Stacks (Library Preservation) (video) (Columbia University)

Security
- Who? – everyone!
- Test Your Awareness: Take the Test (video) (Transport for London)
- Test Your Awareness: Whodunnit? (video) (Transport for London)
Monitoring and Housekeeping

- **Who?**
  - Monitoring – Volunteers
  - Housekeeping – Staff and experienced volunteers

- Sustainable Preservation Practices for Managing Storage Environments (register for free webinars) (Image Permanence Institute)
- Housekeeping Schedule (article) (South Australian Community History)

Health and Safety

- **Who? – everyone!**

- Retrieval of collections
- PPEs for disaster recovery
- Gloves
- Chemical usage
- First Aid

Training Providers

- **Heritage Groups**
  - Heritage Preservation, IPI, AAM, SAA, regional groups
- **Regional Conservation Centers…**
  - BACC, Gerald Ford Center, MACC, NEDCC, CCAHA, Lyrasis, Amigos…
- **State Agencies**
  - State Archives, State Library, State Museum, State Historic Records Advisory Board (SHRAB)…

Questions?

**Homework**

- Read or watch one of the collections care training resources shared in this webinar (posted at http://www.connectingtocollections.org/courses/collections-care-basics/). Briefly describe how you will use this information to train staff and/or volunteers at your institution.