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**DOCUMENTING GOVERNMENT**

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**PROMOTING HISTORY**

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**SECURING RIGHTS**

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## The Council of State Archivists

### Statement on Cultural Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Access

The Council of State Archivists (CoSA) is committed to examining our work and supporting our member organizations as we address societal inequities and build a diverse and inclusive future.

State and territorial archives, as well as local and federal government archives, are repositories of the permanent records of government. These records document official actions, reflect society at large, and provide a snapshot of thoughts, ideas, and perceptions of the time when the records were created. While each state and territorial archival institution reflects its state's or territory's distinctive history and holds varying types of collections and materials, all state and territorial government archival collections provide a vital window into American history and culture.

Government archives document government functions and activities, reflect the lives of our residents, and provide essential sources and services for researchers desiring to understand society through an examination of the historical record. Government records provide researchers with rich primary-source material to assist in understanding our unique and diverse culture, as well as our nation's troubling and unequal treatment of its citizens and residents. CoSA believes that access to these primary sources is a right of everyone and is essential for promoting understanding of our nation's complex past.

CoSA is committed to assisting its members as they promote diversity and eliminate bias in their policies and institutions. As part of a continuous reexamination of policies and practices, CoSA encourages its members to engage in reflective activities such as:

- Examine historical biases and the role of archives and records management programs in addressing these by reviewing mission, vision, and values statements.
- Examine finding aids, catalogs, and other descriptive materials for outdated or discriminatory language and revise as needed.
- Continue to provide equitable access to materials in archival collections.
- Make records available online to facilitate wider use.
- Identify and promote awareness of collections that uniquely document persons and communities who otherwise are underrepresented in the historical record.
- Examine appraisal approaches and decisions and revise as needed to ensure an inclusive record through collections that fully reflect the experience of all persons and communities.
- Provide inclusive outreach, publications, exhibits, and educational programs.
- Promote open and honest dialogue about the institution's past and plans for its future.
- Develop collaborations and partnerships with constituent communities to establish and improve ongoing communications and information exchange.
- Strive to develop a diverse and inclusive workforce in archives and records management programs.

CoSA reaffirms its commitment to its [Non-Discrimination Policy](#) and its [Code of Conduct Policy](#), which outline our belief in the dignity of the individual and respect for differences as we work toward our common goals of documenting government, promoting history, and securing individual rights.

Approved by the Board of Directors, October, 2020