

#ArchivesForBlackLives

Three years after the #BlackLivesMatter movement began, we continue to be appalled by recurring incidents where police murders of Black citizens occur with impunity. In a recent talk at the [2016 American Library Association conference](#), our colleague Jarrett Drake called on archivists to engage the issues surrounding the #BlackLivesMatter movement and to do better to promote #ArchivesForBlackLives. As a community of Philadelphia-area archivists, we come together to discuss these critical concerns and identify areas for action.

Archivists appraise, collect, preserve, organize, and provide access to archives in adherence to international standards and a [professional code of ethics](#).

Because we have the privilege of choosing what goes into the historic record, we also bear the responsibility to safeguard accurate representations of contemporaneous events. Archives exist to hold power to account; to speak truth to power. Because records serve as evidence for factual claims, it is archivists' responsibility, as stewards of records, to stand against their exploitation or abuse.

As archivists and as human beings, we are committed to anti-oppression values:

- We condemn racist violence against Black people and other people of color.
- We root out discourses which use revisionist history to justify racism and racist violence.
- We advocate for intersectional justice.
- We hold ourselves accountable as a predominantly white profession.
- We acknowledge our role in white supremacy and work to overturn it.
- We commit to educating ourselves.
- We support and reaffirm the strength of Philadelphia-area archivists and support our Black colleagues beyond the region.

As archivists and as human beings, we acknowledge our responsibility to defend these values:

- We support [policy recommendations](#) that promote entering police dashboard camera and body camera footage into the public record, with appropriate consideration given to documentation, retention, access, and citizens' privacy rights. We condemn legislation counter to these aims, such as [House Bill 97](#), a North Carolina law that was recently signed in by the Governor that makes police dashboard camera and body camera footage exempt from the public record. We condemn the selective release of correctional records to smear victims of police violence.
- As archivists, we position ourselves in solidarity and allyship with individuals facing oppression. We support community-based documentation and archiving work. Where traditional repositories collect archives from historically oppressed communities, we approach the work critically. We use our privilege as archivists to promote records retention, archival selection, and preservation decisions that affirm the importance of Black lives in the historical record.
- We actively participate in trainings or facilitated dialogues on what a concept like transformative justice is, why it is important and relevant to what we do, how we can

Commented [1]: This statement assumes that every case of a death of an African Americans at the hands of Caucasian police officers raised by BLM is simple and cut and dry. While there is no mistaking that racial injustice persists in many cases, I am not willing to accept that BLM is not itself partial and unbiased in its allegations. Perhaps not every instance is racially motivated. This is not, however, to question the need for a group such as BLM, as it has indeed helped brought this issue to the forefront.

My issue is more with the wording and assumptions contained in this document. This reads as if it were written from the perspective of white guilt, most notably "We acknowledge our role in white supremacy and work to overturn it." The statement of this mission, ...

Commented [2]: I probably won't be able to make it ...

Commented [3]: There will be an informal ...

Commented [4]: Comment received via email: "This ...

Commented [5]: Comment received via email: "This ...

Commented [6]: Should read "sexuality" or "sexual ...

Commented [7]: I agree that revisionist histories are ...

Commented [8]: Revisionist history is a loaded term ...

Commented [9]: Comment received via email: "An ...

Commented [10]: Comment received via email: "Thi ...

Commented [11]: Agree.

Commented [12]: Comment received via email: "Wh ...

Commented [13]: I'm not sure what the point of this ...

Commented [14]: Thanks for this feedback, and this ...

Commented [15]: I appreciate the straightforwardne ...

Commented [16]: Yes, this is good. Do we also wan ...

Commented [17]: I do not acknowledge that I've had ...

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Commented [20]: In response to the above two ...

Commented [21]: Could "role in white supremacy" b ...

Commented [22]: there are lot of language tweaks v ...

Commented [23]: Sarah makes great points here, ...

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Commented [25]: Agree.

Commented [26]: Not sure if this would be added to ...

Commented [27]: I also agree that partnering with ...

Commented [28]: I would advocate for expanding th ...

Commented [29]: I agree. What are some local ...

enact it in solidarity and allyship with our co-workers, colleagues, donors, patrons, and users.

Suggested reading:

Drake, Jarrett, "Expanding #ArchivesForBlackLives to Traditional Archival Repositories," *Medium*, June 27, 2016. <https://medium.com/on-archivy/expanding-archivesforblacklives-to-traditional-archival-repositories-b88641e2daf6#.fr1uexerh>

Pagowsky, Nicole and Niamh Wallace, "Black Lives Matter! Shedding library neutrality rhetoric for social justice," *College and Research Libraries News ACRL*, April 2015. <http://crln.acrl.org/content/76/4/196.full>

"Libraries 4 Black Lives," <http://libraries4blacklives.org/>

House Bill 97, North Carolina, <http://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2015/Bills/House/PDF/H97v5.pdf>