

Strategic Plan for the Texas State Archives 2021-2025



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Introduction

Every day the state of Texas creates and collects records that document the rights of its citizens and the actions of the government that serves them. Many of these records are considered to have enduring value and must be retained permanently. The Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) plays a critical role in preserving the state's history and the rights of its citizens. Through cost-effective practices, the agency has efficiently provided careful stewardship of these resources and made them available for public inspection for more than 110 years.

TSLAC has outstanding collections and dedicated personnel, but limited resources. To fulfill its goals, TSLAC must prioritize its needs, make the best use of existing resources, and create strategic partnerships both inside and outside of state government. The agency's reauthorization legislation HB 1962 directed TSLAC to develop a strategic plan for managing the state archives, with targets for processing the backlog, analyzing staffing needs, and regularly reporting on progress no later than September 1, 2020.

Statutory Authority

Texas Government Code, Chapter 441, Subchapter L. Preservation and Management of State Records and Other Historical Resources

Background

TSLAC's Archives and Information Services Division (ARIS) preserves and documents the shared heritage and culture of Texas by identifying, collecting, and making available for research the permanently valuable official archival records of Texas government dating back to the 18th century, as well as newspapers, journals, books, manuscripts, photographs, historical maps, artifacts and other significant historical resources. From treasures such as the first Texas Constitution to government digital records, ARIS maintains and provides access to more than 200 million pages of archival documents in the State Archives. Taken together, the holdings of the Texas State Archives provide a historical foundation for present-day governmental actions and are an important resource for Texas studies.

TSLAC maintains approximately 70,000 cubic feet (or 200 million pages) of records for the people of Texas. Approximately half are stored in a secure, climate-controlled environment at the Lorenzo de Zavala State Archives and Library Building. Due to limited storage, the other half of our collection, including records of the Supreme Court and Attorney General, are stored in non-archival conditions at the State Records Center (SRC) on Shoal Creek.

An additional area of responsibility for the division is the Regional Historical Resource Depository program (or RHRDs), which began in the early 1970s for the purpose of collecting, preserving, and making available for use historical records of local governments in Texas. The depositories were set up throughout the state in academic libraries and other institutions to house permanent/archival local government records the local agencies could no longer maintain. These records were transferred to the legal custody of TSLAC but managed by the local institutions, some of which are private entities. There are currently 23 depositories in Texas. The volume and number of records series vary at each location, since the transfer of records is voluntary on the part of local government, and each depository has its own space limitations.

The only Regional Historical Resource Depository operated by the agency is the Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center in Liberty. It is the official RHRD for 10 counties in Southeast Texas and houses over 12,000 cubic feet of historical materials. It includes a museum, classroom, research library, and offices. The artifact collection maintained at the Sam Houston Center is valued at more than \$1 million.

The agency also operates a book and paper conservation lab at its headquarters in Austin. Because of age, composition, years of use, or previous storage conditions, many of the items in our paper-based collections require physical repair or stabilization. These items are treated by a professionally trained conservator. Treatments may include rebinding, deacidification, paper mending or the creation of specialty housing. Once items are conserved, they can be digitized for inclusion in the Texas Digital Archive and/or made available to researchers in our reading room.

In the 2016-2017 biennium, with a special appropriation from the Legislature, TSLAC introduced the Texas Digital Archive (TDA), a central repository of state government archives in electronic format and crucial resource for Texans and state government. Preserving digital material presents a different set of technological challenges than those found with paper. The TDA manages, preserves, and provides access to electronic records transferred by state agencies or digitized by the State Archives. The TDA began with the ingest or intake of about seven terabytes of records from Governor Rick Perry's administration in 2015 and now holds over 55 terabytes of digital records.

TSLAC's public service staff – librarians, archivists, and library assistants – provide research assistance to the public, legislators, historians, genealogists, students, and others seeking information. Telephone, mail, email, and in-person requests for information are handled by our reference staff. Reference archivists assist and monitor the use of original documents in the State Archives Reading Room. In the last fiscal year, we provided nearly 7 million assists with information resources and achieved a 97% customer satisfaction rate.

Our education and outreach efforts include lobby and online exhibits, tours, workshops, and the development of primary source instruction materials for educators and students. Between 2016 and 2020, the outreach program has successfully created programming in partnerships with the following institutions and organizations: Texas State Historical Association, General Land Office,

Austin History Center, Carver Genealogy Center, Austin Independent School District, and Austin Museum Partnership.

Vision

The Texas State Archives will build its contributions to the well-being of the state and its people through its leadership and work:

- Documenting and preserving the history of Texas government and its impact on its residents
- Supporting government effectiveness and transparency
- Providing our customers with ready access to authentic, reliable primary source information
- Collaborating with other Texas state agencies, the private sector, and the public to preserve and improve online access to essential information

GOAL 1: Safeguard and Preserve Informational and Historical Assets

1.1 Secure appropriations needed to ensure that the historical holdings of the agency are preserved and maintained for future generations.

A lack of adequate storage space at the State Archives is an acute problem. Currently, over 33,000 cubic feet of archival materials are being stored in substandard conditions in the State Records Center, placing them at risk of accelerated deterioration and eventual loss.

- Request state funding for a 25-year solution for adequate storage and preservation of public records and sure ongoing government transparency.

1.2 Review and assess operations of the Regional Historical Resource Depositories (RHRD).

Legislation approved in 1971 created the Regional Historical Resource Depository (RHRD) Program that expanded the commission's responsibilities to include the acquisition, management, and preservation of permanently valuable local government records. There are 23 depositories located throughout the state in academic libraries and other institutions. Effective September 1, 2020, Texas Government Code, §441.153(g), permits a depository to apply to the commission to transfer title to local historical resources placed in the depository by the commission.

- Adopt rules providing an application process and standards for the transfer of title to local historical resources by September 1, 2020.
- Review and revise all RHRD agreements and reporting requirements with depositories by September 1, 2023.
- Provide annual, web-based training for the RHRD staff in program requirements and procedures beginning in 2021.
- Improve access to the RHRD holdings, by requiring institutions to create basic finding aids and catalog records for TSLAC-owned records by August 31, 2025.
- Facilitate the digitization of TSLAC-owned records with approved digitization partners.
- Strengthen internal controls over the acceptance of archived records at the RHRDs and perform periodic inventories.

1.3 Ensure all accessioned collections are inventoried and properly managed.

TSLAC is the custodian of over 70,000 cubic feet (or 200 million pages) of records in Austin and the contents of 23 RHRDs around the state. Over the years TSLAC has maintained various databases to document and track its collections. In 2017 the agency began transitioning to one consolidated system, ArchivesSpace, to provide oversight and accountability, and ensure the value, as reported in SPA (State Property Accounting system), can be supported by a detailed fixed assets inventory listing.

- As collections are added into the database, staff will confirm locations through physical examination. A field will be added to the database to track this action.
- Complete physical inventory of Sam Houston Center collections and inclusion in ArchivesSpace by September 1, 2023.
- Require all RHRDs to complete physical inventories of TSLAC owned records and submit data by September 1, 2023.
- Consolidate essential information on all archived records into one centralized database system, ArchivesSpace, by September 1, 2024.

GOAL 2: Provide Texans with Access to Essential Records and Information

2.1 Prioritize the appraisal of backlog records.

Prior to 2012 and due to a shortage of staff, the agency routinely accepted records transfers without first determining the archival value of the records. This practice resulted in a ballooning backlog and increased storage needs at the SRC. As of July 2020, the current backlog stands

at 8,106 cubic feet of unappraised records, including 2,900 cubic feet of Office of the Attorney General litigation case files.

- Reduce the current backlog by 4,000 cubic feet by 2023 with present staff.
- Seek appropriations or other funds to add two additional staff and eliminate the appraisal backlog by 2023.
- Work with the Office of the Attorney General to renew effort to review and implement selection criteria for litigation case files to reduce the quantity needing appraisal by the archives.

2.2 Address processing backlog to enable discovery and access by the public.

Archival processing refers to those actions staff must take in order to provide efficient access for research, including: performing basic holdings maintenance; describing the records in finding aids and the online catalog so that the public knows the records are available for research; and entering the records into ArchivesSpace, our collections management system, so that staff can retrieve and serve those records when requested. TSLAC has unprocessed records going back to the Republic era, with the bulk dating from the late 19th century to mid-20th century. In FY 2020 the backlog of unprocessed records is approximately 16,084 cubic feet.¹

TSLAC must accelerate archival processing in order to increase the total percent of records that are available for research, even as the total volume of records grows every year. Given the size of TSLAC's holdings, this means a significant number of records have not been processed and are not available for public access. Additionally, without descriptive entries in research catalogs like WorldCat, the collections are essentially hidden from potential users.

- Fully deploy standardized processing procedures and internal controls, including ArchivesSpace by September 1, 2021.
- Explore new applications for processing electronic archival records in the Texas Digital Archive.
- Staff will devote at least 20 percent of their time (3,328 hours) to processing backlog holdings to minimal access standards beginning September 1, 2021.
- Utilize student and volunteer help to process non-restricted records.
- Apply for grants as a way to maximize resources.
- Prioritize adding basic catalog records for archival materials to WorldCat and the Texas Archival Resources Online (TARO) catalogs.

¹ Recent changes in the custody of legislative records has resulted in 7,897 cubic feet of unprocessed records being removed from the backlog. Records in the appraisal backlog will be added to the processing backlog if they are deemed to have archival value.

2.3 Manage existing and incoming records efficiently.

Our archivists work with state agencies and elected officials (outside of the legislative branch) to identify records that document important decisions and actions. Those documents are sent to the State Archives for permanent safekeeping, where they are accessioned, organized, and described in order to facilitate access. The volume of records transferred to TSLAC varies significantly from year to year.² Most new accessions are accretions to existing record series. If the older accessions have been appraised, processed, and have a standards compliant finding aid, the processing time for the new accession will be far less than for records that do not.

- Integrate archival standards into appraisal and processing policies, procedures, and workflows to ensure that all formats are addressed, increase productivity, and better project outcomes.
- Fully implement ArchivesSpace by 2024. This will include full inventory and location information on accessioned records in Austin, Liberty and RHRDs.
- Adopt administrative rules for records transfer to facilitate expedited access and Public Information Act (PIA) review by September 1, 2021.
- Prioritize processing of incoming accessions based on use patterns and PIA review requirements.
- Staff will devote five percent of their time (832 hours) to processing incoming accessions beginning September 1, 2020.
- Utilize students, volunteers, and temp workers to process and rehouse non-restricted records and code finding aids.
- In 2021, engage Governor Greg Abbott's office to plan for transfer of his gubernatorial records.

2.4 Provide remote users with access to a growing number of resources through digitization efforts.

Funded with federal Library Services and Technology Act funds, TSLAC's robust digitization program has generated over 300,000 digital files and included the conversion of approximately 25,000 audio cassette tapes from the Texas Senate dating to the early 1970s and the digitization of more than 60,000 pages of Supreme Court case files. Our archivists are currently working on multiple long-term projects including the transfer of deteriorating film reels that date from the 1950s to digital files for preservation and online access.

² Over the past decade the annual volume of incoming archival records in traditional (analog) formats has ranged from 745 to 8,608 cubic feet. With legislative records now under the LRL, TSLAC projects an average of 1,080 cubic feet of new records each year. The volume of new electronic averages 2.5 terabytes a year.

Since 2009, TSLAC has also partnered with Ancestry and FamilySearch to provide digital online access to significant collections of records.

- Provide access to 2 million digitized items online through the Texas Digital Archive by August 31, 2025.
- Prioritize audio and visual digitization efforts to address at-risk formats and items with significant research value.
- Prioritize the digitization of paper and photographic collections based on preservation needs and research requests.
- Utilize students and volunteers to assist with digitizing collections and creating metadata.
- Integrate digitization into the responsibilities of the archival staff at the Sam Houston Center by January 2021.
- Utilize grant funds to acquire necessary digitization equipment and software.
- Continue public-private partnerships to increase digitization and expand access to collections.

2.5 Continue to grow the Texas Digital Archive (TDA) as the official repository of state agency digital archives and publications.

Ensuring that digital material is accessible for the long term is essential to TSLAC fulfilling its mission. The Texas Digital Archive provides a way for persons across the state of Texas to remotely access the historical record of the state. At the time of writing, the TDA contains over 5,506,855 records; of which 2,136,030 are images, 102,857 are audio files, 329 are videos, 1,371,841 are documents, 76,404 are emails, 372 are databases, and 3,117 are presentations.

The Texas State Library and Archives is now one of the leaders in Texas in the areas of digitization and electronic records preservation/access.

- Secure adequate funding for preservation, management, security, and storage digital assets through increased legislative appropriations and federal funding.
- Work with members of the Records Management Interagency Coordinating Committee (RMICC) to encourage agencies to transfer archival electronic records to the TDA.
- By August 31, 2025, the TDA will include records from all state agencies.
- By August 31, 2025, the TDA will include over 10 million records.
- Build capabilities in design and user experience to better understand and serve the public and stakeholders.

GOAL 3: Engage Our Customers

3.1 Use TSLAC's public programs, exhibits, online exhibits and social media to attract and engage new audiences.

Following the renovation of the TSLAC building in downtown Austin in 2009, seven new, state of the art exhibit cases were installed in the lobby and the lobby exhibit program was launched. An education outreach coordinator was hired in 2015 to oversee our outreach initiatives of exhibits, events (community and special), education, and social media. The Sam Houston Center's museum was renovated in 2018 to professional standards and its exhibits are more representative of the history of the area and its inhabitants.

- Ensure that programming and exhibits are representative of and responsive to the diverse cultures and communities in Texas.
- Develop online content and tools to support K-12 education.
- Create a series of videos to introduce users to the work of the archives and the research value of specific collections.
- Increase public programming events and social media posts to attract younger and under-represented groups in Austin and Liberty.
- Utilize current feedback channels to prioritize areas for improvement and growth in access.
- Increase loans of historical items to other repositories for exhibition purposes.

3.2 Increase the use of online platforms and applications, including the archives website presence as well as social media, to reach customers.

- Implement a web form to gather public input on key areas of historical interest by November 1, 2020.
- Expand use of social media to target key groups, such as students, teachers, researchers, historians, authors, and allied professionals by creating targeted campaigns beginning January 1, 2021.
- Provide interactive tools for learning (such as sample curricula, exercises, and student projects) related to the study of Texas history, with an emphasis on discovery resources for K-12 students by January 31, 2021.
- Assess website information by completing a review of the user experience in navigating, searching, and retrieving online collections and resources by September 1, 2021.

- Engage video and remote presentation applications to develop and deploy training and educational programs beginning by December 31, 2021.
- Implement a crowdsourcing program to add metadata to digitized records by June 30, 2021.
- Based on the review of online access, prioritize collection areas to highlight and identify at least three interactive educational activities to design and implement by March 1, 2022.
- Investigate the potential for using social media to gather oral histories or other forms of primary documentation from participants in state policy making activities by January 2, 2023.

3.3 Actively solicit the donation of collection materials related to Texas government and its impact on the citizenry.

Since its primary mission is to acquire, preserve and manage archivally valuable state government records, in recent decades TSLAC has not actively sought the acquisition of historical manuscript materials. When offered, TSLAC has however, accepted private manuscript collections and non-governmental records in the following areas: private papers of public officials whose public records are in the State Archives; and private papers and records that complement existing private records or public records in the State Archives; those private papers that fill in gaps caused by the destruction, loss or lack of information in the holdings of state government records. This passive approach has resulted in key collections of government related records being acquired by other repositories.

- Adopt an active approach to the acquisition of records related to Texas government and Texans.
- Review collection policy and holdings inventory to identify gaps in the State Archives collections and develop strategies to address those areas.
- Educate other Texas repositories, historical organizations, and other stakeholders of TSLAC's acquisition scope.
- Utilize social media, programs, and tours to engage members of the public who have items, such as family diaries, letters, and photographs reflecting people and events in Texas history, for donation to the State Archives.
- Develop a webpage with helpful information for potential donors, including topics of interests, sample deeds of gift, copyright provisions, and potential tax benefits.

GOAL 4: Engage Our Partners

4.1 Strengthen relationships with staff at other state agencies.

Due to the nature of our work, TSLAC staff develop close ties to the records officers in many state agencies. As staff turnover occurs it can create gaps that impede efficient communication.

Beginning in 2021, the state archives will employ additional methods to establish regular communication channels and methods for agencies to provide feedback.

- Conduct a survey of key staff in each state agency to determine their knowledge of the state archives role, transfer procedures, and customer satisfaction in 2021.
- Establish a working group to improve the transfer of analog and digital records to the state archives and streamline the archival review process by September 1, 2021.
- Host biannual online meetings of key agency staff, including records officers and legal counsel, beginning in 2022.
- Provide online training modules on key issues and procedures by September 1, 2022.

4.2 Work with manuscript dealers, the public and the Attorney General to recover Texas history.

In the 1960s and 1970s Texas archives were targeted by thieves searching for documents by and about individuals and events significant to Texas history. Among the items stolen were thousands of government records, particularly from the Colonial, Republic, and early Statehood periods. Many have ended up in private collections, depriving the public of access to important, often unique, information about the history of our state. TSLAC maintains lists of known alienated records as well as information on how to identify them on its webpage at <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/arc/missingintro.html>. In the past decade, with the assistance of auction houses, individuals, and the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), TSLAC has successfully recovered 168 documents from its “missing lists” — including 152 Supreme Court case files and seven Republic-era records. TSLAC will continue its efforts to recover known Texas records and documents illegally held in private hands and restore them to the citizens of Texas.

- Provide the national Manuscript Society and document dealers in Texas with information on TSLAC’s replevin efforts and solicit their assistance in identifying and returning Texas records.
- Create a series of videos to raise awareness of these missing records and solicit public assistance in their return.
- Achieve a 90% success rate in recovering records that are physically located within the state.

4.3 Continue supporting existing partners.

Over the years TSLAC has developed strong partnerships with organizations like the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA) and the Texas Historical Foundation. Additionally, TSLAC works collaboratively with local, state, regional and national institutions including the Carver Genealogy Center, Austin Museum Partnership, Bullock Texas State History Museum, RHRDs, Smithsonian Institution, and institutions of higher education, including the University of Texas at Austin's School of Information, and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. TSLAC also serves as the administrative body for the Texas Historical Records Advisory Board (THRAB) which promotes the awareness and preservation of historically significant records, supports public access to records, and reviews grant requests submitted to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission for funding.

- Support the Texas History Day program by providing research support and primary source materials for teachers and students and staff expertise as judges.
- Provide at least two Texas History research fellowships through TSHA each year.
- Solicit input from graduate archival training programs, student interns, and volunteers on ways to improve training and experience.

4.4 Renew partnerships with RHRDs.

The agreements establishing RHRDs date back to the mid-1970s and do not reflect current provisions of Texas Government Code, §441.153 or address issues related to the ongoing management of government records, including compliance with the Texas Public Information Act, the acquisition of electronic records, or enhanced access through online catalogs and digitization. TSLAC and RHRD institutions will benefit from a review of ongoing operations, requirements and expectations, and renewed commitment.

- Meet with representatives of all RHRDs to discuss revision and renewal of the RHRD agreements.
- Revised agreements will be in place with all RHRDs by September 1, 2022 with a timeline for renewals.
- Ensure that RHRD produced inventories and finding aids for TSLAC owned records are represented on the agency's website and included in online catalogs.
- Facilitate digitization and preservation of TSLAC owned records.

4.5 Utilize public-private partnerships to increase digitization and expand access to collections.

In the past decade TSLAC has collaborated with Ancestry and FamilySearch to provide online access to significant collections of Texas records. TSLAC will continue to seek opportunities to

expand access to its holdings while ensuring archival standards are met before entering into collaborative agreements with interested persons regarding the state archives.

- Seek multiple partners to digitize different materials.
- Employ standard template for digitization partnership agreements with a period of exclusivity for the digitization partner, followed by a transfer or donation of the digitized records to TSLAC with full and unrestricted rights.
- Expand the number of digital replicas of TSLAC’s documents, images, maps, and prints available for purchase through the State Preservation Board’s “Art on Demand” catalog.

GOAL 5: Attract and Retain Talent

5.1 To effectively discharge the agency’s duties we must recruit and retain a diverse and experienced workforce with specialized skill in archives, conservation, digitization, and electronic records preservation.

- Complete a succession plan for those positions responsible for critical systems and functions.
- Recruit more student interns, especially minorities, with a goal of creating new archival and conservation professionals.
- Participate in agency strategies to seek a diverse and inclusive workforce.
- Continue to provide professional development opportunities, including conference attendance, workshops, online learning, and in-house training.
- Promote internal training and “brown bag lunch” presentations by staff as a means for developing presentation skills and educating coworkers on their work.
- Prioritize uninterrupted, focused work time to achieve outcomes and benchmarks.
- Promote participation in professional organizations in order to remain abreast of new trends and developments and foster leadership potential.

Implementing this Plan and Needed Resources to Achieve State Goals

TSLAC is committed to its critical work safeguarding the state archives, as it has done for over a century. Making the most of limited resources, the agency has provided public access and supported education and research throughout the state. With additional state investment, the

archives program can make large strides to increase support to the people and government of Texas.

House Bill 1962 directed TSLAC to include a detailed discussion on key elements needed to fully realize state goals for the archives program. These items include:

- An assessment of the current archives backlog (Appendix A)
- A prioritized list of projects (Appendix B)
- Evaluation of resources needed, impact that different amounts of those resources are expected to have on the commission's ability to achieve those goals (Appendix C)
- Performance Measures, Targets, and Timeframes (Appendix D)
- Reporting Mechanism (Appendix E)
- Opportunities and Standards for Collaborative Agreements (Appendix F)

The agency solicited input and comments on this strategic plan from the following stakeholders:

Angelo State University, Special Collections

Austin History Center

Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin

William Bush, professor, Texas A&M San Antonio

City of Dallas Archives

Light Cummins, professor, Austin Community College

Frank de la Teja, executive director, Texas State Historical Association, and former state historian

Department of Agriculture

Department of Parks and Wildlife

East Texas Research Center, Stephen F. Austin State University

George Washington Carver Center

David B. Gracy II, retired, University of Texas at Austin and former state archivist

History Center, Diboll

Monte Monroe, State Historian

Office of the Governor

Office of the Secretary of State

Scott Sosbee, professor, Stephen F. Austin State University
State Preservation Board, Bullock Texas State Museum
Texas Historical Commission
Travis County Archives
University of North Texas
University of Texas at Austin, School of Information
University of Texas, El Paso, Special Collections

And members of the Texas Historical Records Advisory Board:

Linda Barrett, Fort Worth Public Library, Local History Collections
Malinda Cowen, retired, Governor's appointee
Phyllis Earles, Prairie View A&M University
Teri Flack, Texas Genealogical Society
Melissa Gonzales, Houston Community College
Kristy Sorensen, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Leslie Stapleton, Texas A&M University San Antonio, Special Collections

APPENDIX A – Assessment of the current archives backlog

In July 2020, the current backlog stands at 8,106 cubic feet of unappraised records and 16,084 cubic feet of unprocessed records.

Prior to 2012, the agency accepted records transfers without first determining the archival value of the records. This practice resulted in a ballooning appraisal and processing backlog and increased storage needs at the SRC. In FY 2012, the processing backlog was estimated at 22,635 cubic feet. Archives staff have been working to address specific aspects of the backlog since FY 2014 in addition to undertaking several other large-scale projects, including the creation of the Texas Digital Archive and the ingest of Governor Rick Perry's records.

Recent changes in the custody of legislative records has resulted in 7,897 cubic feet of unprocessed records being removed from the backlog.

In July 2020, the current backlog feet of unappraised records stands at 8,106 cubic feet. The majority of these records are stored at the State Records Center. The records consist of the following:

- Office of the Attorney General – litigation case files, (appraisal in progress) – approximately 2,930 cubic feet. These records date from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s.
- Texas Department of Agriculture – litigation case files – 115 cubic feet.
- Department of Health and Human Services – building plans – 135 cubic feet.
- Department of Human Services/Human Resources, multiple series, will need multiple appraisal reports – 2,504 cubic feet.
- Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation- building project files- 145 cubic feet (appraisal in progress).
- Texas Ethics Commission (appraisal in progress) – 506 cubic feet.
- State Board of Insurance, administrative correspondence with companies – 276 cubic feet.
- State Board of Insurance, Commissioner's subject files – 338 cubic feet.
- Other agencies – approximately 900 cubic feet.

The plan to address the appraisal backlog includes scheduling dedicated appraisal times for each archivist and will employ sampling techniques as appropriate, specifically in regard to large record groups. With present staff, TSLAC anticipates reducing the backlog by 5,328 cubic feet by 2025. If in 2022, the legislature provides funding for two additional staff, the agency can eliminate the appraisal backlog in 2023. The staff time applied to the appraisal backlog will then be allocated to the processing backlog.

In July 2020, the current processing backlog stands at 16,084 cubic feet of records.

TSLAC has unprocessed records going back to the Republic era, with the bulk dating from the late 19th century to mid-20th century (treasurer, comptroller, attorney general, supreme court, education). Note that records from the appraisal backlog identified as archival are then added to the processing backlog.

Processing includes both the physical (arrangement) and intellectual (description) collection management work required to make the records accessible to users both in-person and online. Each archivist has been assigned at least one large component of the backlog; most have two large backlog projects assigned in priority order. TSLAC will utilize student/volunteer help when possible on processing series of non-restricted records. Staff are employing minimal processing standards and best practices for most series of backlog records, which includes the creation of basic catalog records and finding aids.

Major series in the processing backlog include:

- Attorney General litigation case files – about 230 cubic feet.
- Department of Agriculture – multiple series – about 115 cubic feet, 2,000 videos.
- Education records – multiple series – about 650 cubic feet, 1000 microfilm reels.
- Railroad Commission – multiple series – about 430 cubic feet.
- Secretary of State- about 282 cubic feet, 440 volumes.
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality/Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission- hearing examiners files (about 2/3's done)- 233 cubic feet.
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality – Reclamation Engineer records (in progress) – 270 cubic feet, 19 volumes.
- Treasury- multiple series – about 250 cubic feet, 500 volumes.
- Texas Historical Commission – multiple series, about 63 cubic feet.
- Texas National Research Lab records – 294 cubic feet.

Staff may also consider other ways to change the formula and devote more time to appraisal and processing. However, all archival staff have numerous other duties, including providing public service and responding to public information requests. Reassigning staff from those tasks to archival processing will impact those services as well as the TSLAC customer satisfaction rating.

APPENDIX B – Prioritized list of projects and goals

Priority 1 – Goal 2.1 Appraisal of backlog records

In July 2020 the current backlog stands at 8,106 cubic feet of unappraised records. The majority of these records are stored at the State Records Center.

- Office of the Attorney General – litigation case files (appraisal in progress), approximately 2,930 cubic feet. These records date from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s.
- Texas Ethics Commission (appraisal in progress) – 506 cubic feet.
- Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation – building project files – 145 cubic feet (appraisal in progress).
- Department of Health and Human Services – building plans – 135 cubic feet.
- Texas Department of Agriculture – litigation case files – 115 cubic feet.
- State Board of Insurance, Commissioner’s subject files – 338 cubic feet.
- State Board of Insurance, administrative correspondence with companies – 276 cubic feet.
- Department of Human Services/Human Resources, multiple series, will need multiple appraisal reports – 2,504 cubic feet.
- Other agencies- approximately 900 cubic feet.

Priority 2 – Goal 2.2 Processing backlog to enable discovery and access by the public

Processing includes both the physical (arrangement) and intellectual (description) collection management work required to make the records accessible to users. In FY 2020 the current backlog of unprocessed records is approximately 16,084 cubic feet.

Physical processing priorities based on past and projected use and preservation needs (collection assessments are being conducted now through FY 2021, so priorities could change):

- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality/Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission – hearing examiners files (about 2/3’s done) – 280 cubic feet.
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality- Reclamation Engineer records (in progress) – 270 cubic feet, 19 volumes.
- Education records – multiple series – approximately 650 cubic feet, 1000 microfilm reels.

- Treasury – multiple series – approximately 250 cubic feet, 500 volumes.
- Attorney General litigation case files – approximately 230 cubic feet.
- Texas Department of Agriculture – multiple series – approximately 115 cubic feet, 2,000 videos.
- Railroad Commission – multiple series – approximately 430 cubic feet.
- Texas Historical Commission – multiple series, approximately 63 cubic feet.
- Texas National Research Lab records – 294 cubic feet.
- Secretary of State – approximately 282 cubic feet, 440 volumes.

The addition of archival holdings information and description into the ArchivesSpace archival collection management system is an essential component of the backlog work. Tasks associated with the descriptive work include importing databases/spreadsheets and importing/exporting finding aids.

Priority 3 – Goal 2.3 Manage existing and incoming records efficiently

Most of the new accessions are accretions to existing record series. If the older accessions have been appraised, processed, and have a standards compliant finding aid, the processing time for the new accession typically will be far less than for records that do not. The assistant director will review incoming accessions of unassigned agencies and works with the archivists to determine a priority list for processing. Each archivist will spend five percent of their time processing incoming accessions, using minimal processing techniques and sampling techniques for larger record groups. TSLAC will also continue to utilize students, volunteers, and temp workers to process and rehouse non-restricted records and code finding aids.

The agency also contemplates recommending administrative rules that would allow TSLAC to decline to accept transfers if agencies had not conducted reviews prior to transfer. The archivist assigned as the primary contact for each agency will coordinate appraisal reviews, records transfers, and address any questions or concerns with the records officer/creator.

APPENDIX C – Evaluation of the resources needed, and the impact that different amounts of those resources are expected to have on the commission’s ability to achieve those goals

Storage Needs

A lack of adequate storage space at the State Archives is an acute problem. The Lorenzo de Zavala Building, which was renovated in 2009, provided only a marginal increase in archival storage capacity, which is now near capacity with no option to expand. Currently, over 33,000 cubic feet of archival materials are stored at the State Records Center, a space designed for warehousing noncurrent records without the environmental controls necessary for the preservation of unique historical documents. The archives pays approximately \$140,000 per year to SRC in storage and retrieval fees.

Over the past decade the annual volume of incoming archival records in traditional (analog) formats has ranged from 745 to 8,608 cubic feet. While the creation of the Texas Digital Archive in 2015 will help reduce the quantity of analog records transferred to TSLAC, the agency still projects an average of 1,030 cubic feet of new records each year.

In its FY 2020-2021 Legislative Appropriation Request TSLAC requested \$26.4 million to construct an addition of 60,000 square feet¹ of records storage and archival space at the existing State Records Center on Shoal Creek. The Legislature did not approve that request, but added a rider to the TSLAC budget in the General Appropriations Act as follows:

“Out of available funds appropriated above, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission shall research alternative locations for facilities used for the purpose of storing state records and archived materials to ensure that funds for storage are being expended in a cost-effective manner. The Commission shall report its findings to the Governor and the Legislative Budget Board no later than December 1, 2019.”

TSLAC contracted with the Texas Facilities Commission, which in turn engaged HOK Architects to analyze the cost of building the addition as requested and the cost of replacing the existing facility with a new facility in another part of Austin. The study concluded that the option of “adding 60,000 SF to the existing storage facility, is the most cost-effective approach.” Further, the study concluded that the cost of the project would be only slightly more than the \$26.4 million that was requested in the TSLAC 2020-2021 Legislative Appropriations Request.

¹ Of the total, 28,000 square feet is for storage of archival records.

This project aligns with recommendations in the 2011 Texas State Government Effectiveness and Efficiency Report and the Texas Facilities Commission's 2009 analysis for archival storage. The proposed expansion would provide 28,000 square feet of archival space (enough for approximately 100,000 cubic feet of records), be temperature and climate (humidity) controlled, include cold storage needed for special formats, include archival storage shelving, and security. TSLAC projects this space would ensure adequate archival storage for over 20 years. Cost savings for moving archival items to suitable storage and ensuring long-term preservation and availability for public access and inspection is immeasurable. Failure to address these needs will jeopardize not only the documentary history of Texas, but Texans' right to an open and accountable government.

Staff Expertise

Archival work is both labor intensive and heavily dependent on technology for the digitization and cataloging of information about collections. Any change in funding to ensure adequate staffing levels and resources relate directly to the outcomes outlined in this plan.

TSLAC currently has eight archivists with the requisite appraisal and processing skills. TSLAC anticipates that each archivist will devote thirty-one percent (645 hours) of their time to appraisal and processing (four percent- backlog appraisal, twenty percent- backlog processing, two percent- incoming appraisal, and five percent- processing new accessions) each year of the Strategic Plan, for a total of 5,160 staff hours .

All archival staff have numerous other duties, including providing public service, digitizing records, and responding to public information requests. Reassigning staff from those tasks to archival processing will impact those services and the TSLAC customer satisfaction rating. Any change in the number of archival staff due to separations or budget reductions would negatively impact the agency's ability to meet its projected targets.

By adding two additional archivists in FY 2022, TSLAC projects the backlog appraisal could be completed by the end of FY 2023. In addition, a total of twenty-five percent of combined staff time (5,200 hours) would be allocated to backlog processing in FY 2022 and FY 2023, and twenty-eight percent (5,824 hours) beginning in FY 2024.

Any reductions in support for staff will result in slower progress on addressing the archives backlog and may cause lag time in dealing with incoming, new accessions. As the state has expressed an interest in processing archival materials (a needed component for increased public access), ensuring appropriate staffing levels is imperative, particularly with regard to professional archivist positions. The addition of key staff is fundamental to both meeting processing goals but, more generally, for expanding public access and meeting commission and state goals set out in this plan.

Digitization Equipment

TSLAC has leveraged federal Library Services and Technology Act funds to expand its digitization efforts over the past decade. Over the course of the strategic plan, the agency intends to utilize available grant funds to replace aging document and photographic scanners, computers, and hard drive storage. We will also be upgrading our motion picture scanning equipment and software to improve resolution and imaging stability.

APPENDIX D – Performance Measures, Targets, and Timeframes

The agency has included performance measures, targets and timeframes for specific action items within the narrative of each goal in the strategic plan. The following tables provide data on appraisal and processing activities for the three most recent fiscal years (2018-2020) and projections for reducing the appraisal and processing backlog between FY 2021 and FY 2025.

Table 1 assumes appraisal and processing of backlog and incoming records will continue with no additional staff. Each of the eight archivists will devote 645 hours (31%) of their time to appraisal and processing annually. TSLAC estimates with the combined staff time of 5,160 hours each year staff will:

- Appraise approximately 1,330 cubic feet of backlog records.
 - o Identify approximately 133 cubic feet of records as archival (added to the processing backlog).
 - o Identify approximately 1,200 cubic feet of records as non-archival (records that can be destroyed).
- Process approximately 800 cubic feet of backlog records.
- Accession/appraise approximately 1,000 cubic feet of new records.
- Process approximately 300 cubic feet of newly accessioned records.

Between FY 2021 and FY 2025

- Decrease the appraisal backlog by approximately 4,000 cubic feet.
 - o Identify approximately 400 cubic feet of records as archival (added to the processing backlog).
 - o Identify approximately 3,600 cubic feet of records as non-archival.
- Process approximately 2,400 cubic feet of backlog records.
- Accession/appraise approximately 3,750 cubic feet of new records.
- Process approximately 830 cubic feet of newly accessioned records.

Table 2 demonstrates the impact of two additional staff archivists dedicated to the backlog project. With a total 6,240 hours of combined staff time in FY 2022 and FY 2023, and 7,904 hours beginning in FY 2024, TSLAC estimates staff will:

- Complete appraisal of all backlog records in FY 2023.
 - o Identify approximately 820 cubic feet of records as archival (added to the processing backlog).
 - o Identify approximately 7,300 cubic feet as non-archival.
- Process approximately 5,200 cubic feet of backlog records (1,300 cubic feet annually).
- Accession/appraise approximately 3,750 cubic feet of new records.
- Process approximately 2,900 cubic feet of newly accessioned records.

APPENDIX E – Reporting Mechanism

- The state archivist will provide summary updates on key activities and metrics for inclusion in the Director’s Report to the Commission.
- The state archivist will provide the Commission’s Archives and Records Committee with a written and oral report at each meeting. The written report will include a narrative, timeline and metrics. At the Committee Chair’s request, the state archivist will provide a summary and take questions at the next Commission meeting.
- The state archivist will provide an annual report on the agency’s progress at the first Commission meeting of the new fiscal year.
- The state archivist will present a revised strategic plan for Commission approval no later than June 1, 2025.

TABLE 1
Projected appraisal and processing backlog with no additional staffing

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
APPRAISAL	(Actual)		(Estimated)	(Projected)				
Pre-2011 cubic feet of materials needing appraisal	13,500	12,610	9,223	8,106	6,774	5,442	4,110	2,778
Cubic feet appraised as archival	-81	-112	-150	-133	-133	-133	-133	-133
Cubic feet identified as non-archival	-809	-3,275	-967	-1,199	-1,199	-1,199	-1,199	-1,199
Total Cubic feet appraised	-890	-3,387	-1,117	-1,332	-1,332	-1,332	-1,332	-1,332
Estimated annual hours in appraisal	406	606	663	666	666	666	666	666
PROCESSING								
Backlog requiring processing	25,978	25,436	24,755	16,084	15,617	14,950	14,283	13,616
Legislative records (transferred to LRL in 2020)			-7,897					
Estimated cubic feet of appraised records needing processing	81	112	150	133	133	133	133	133
Cubic Feet processed	-623	-793	-924	-600	-800	-800	-800	-800
Total processing backlog remaining	25,436	24,755	16,084	15,617	14,950	14,283	13,616	12,949
Estimated gigabytes of electronic records processed			81	50	30	30	30	10
Estimated annual hours in processing	3,000	3,189	2,828	2,496	3,328	3,328	3,328	3,328
INCOMING RECORDS								
New records arriving	1,752	841	250	1,250	1,100	1,000	900	900
Estimated cf new paper records processed	-244	-249	-177	-138	-277	-325	-350	375
Total cubic feet remaining to be processed	1,508	2,100	2,173	3,285	4,108	4,783	5,333	6,608
Estimated gigabytes of electronic records processed		105	2,398	3,000	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Estimated annual hours in processing	888	527	413	832	832	832	832	832
Estimate annual hours in appraisal/retention schedule review	635	355	291	333	333	333	333	333

Assumptions*

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
FTE archivists:	8	7.5	7	8	8	8	8	8
Average % of time devoted to backlog appraisal:	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Average % of time devoted to backlog processing backlog:	18%	20%	20%	15%	20%	20%	20%	20%
Average % of time devoted to incoming appraisal	4%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Average % of time devoted to processing new material:	5%	3%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Average appraisal time hrs/cf:	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Average processing time hrs/cf full processing:	5.5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Average time at hrs/cf minimal processing	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

* Assumptions for FYs 2020 and 2021 include the impact of COVID-19 on operations.

TABLE 2
Projected appraisal and processing backlog with 2 additional staff starting in FY 2022

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
APPRAISAL								
	(Actual)		(Estimated)	(Projected)				
Pre-2011 cubic feet of materials needing appraisal	13,500	12,610	9,223	8,106	6,774	3,446	0	0
Cubic feet appraised as archival	-81	-112	-150	-133	-333	-350	0	0
Cubic feet identified as non-archival	-809	-3,275	-967	-1,199	-2,995	-3,096	0	0
Total Cubic feet appraised	-890	-3,387	-1,117	-1,332	-3,328	-3,446	0	0
Estimated annual hours in appraisal	406	606	663	666	1,664	1,664	0	0
PROCESSING								
Backlog requiring processing	25,978	25,436	24,755	16,084	15,617	14,540	13,590	12,290
Legislative records (transferred to LRL in 2020)			-7,897					
Estimated cubic feet of appraised records needing processing	81	112	150	133	333	350	0	0
Cubic Feet processed	-623	-793	-924	-600	-1,300	-1,300	-1,300	-1,300
Total processing backlog remaining	25,436	24,755	16,084	15,617	14,650	13,590	12,290	10,990
Estimated gigabytes of electronic records processed			81	50	30	30	30	10
Estimated annual hours in processing	3,000	3,189	2,828	2,496	5,200	5,200	5,824	5,824
INCOMING RECORDS								
New records arriving	1,752	841	250	1,250	1,100	1,000	900	900
Estimated cf new paper records processed	-244	-249	-177	-138	-485	-485	-970	-970
Total cubic feet remaining to be processed	1,508	2,100	2,173	3,285	3,900	4,415	4,345	4,275
Estimated gigabytes of electronic records processed		105	2,398	3,000	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Estimated annual hours in processing	888	527	413	832	1,040	1,040	2,080	2,080
Estimate annual hours in appraisal/retention schedule review	635	355	291	333	416	416	416	416
Assumptions*								
FTE archivists:	8	7.5	7	8	10	10	10	10
Average % of time devoted to backlog appraisal:	3%	4%	4%	4%	8%	8%	0%	0%
Average % of time devoted to backlog processing backlog:	18%	20%	20%	15%	25%	25%	28%	28%
Average % of time devoted to incoming appraisal	4%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Average % of time devoted to processing new material:	5%	3%	5%	5%	5%	5%	10%	10%
Average appraisal time hrs/cf:	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Average processing time hrs/cf full processing:	5.5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Average time at hrs/cf minimal processing	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

* Assumptions for FYs 2020 and 2021 include the impact of COVID-19 on operations.

APPENDIX F – Opportunities and Standards for Collaborative Agreements

Digitization

TSLAC will continue to seek opportunities to expand access to significant collections of Texas records through collaborations with entities such as Ancestry and FamilySearch. TSLAC has adopted the following standards for considering collaborative agreements, based on best practices in use by the National Archives and Records Administration:

- Employ a standard template for digitization partnership agreements, subject to final agreement of both parties.
- Agreements should be non-exclusive – TSLAC will consider agreements with multiple partners for different materials, though original archival materials will only be digitized by one party.
- Agreements should include a period of exclusivity for the digitization partner, followed by a transfer or donation of the digitized records to TSLAC with full and unrestricted rights.
- Agreements should ensure TSLAC authority over original records and determination as to whether an archival record is too fragile for digitization; specify minimum image quality; and ensure partners indicate where the original record may be found when viewed via partner websites.

Loan of archival material

TSLAC periodically receives loan requests from a variety of entities to borrow archival records and artifacts for the purpose of offsite display and exhibition. The Texas State Preservation Board and its two exhibit venues, the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, and the Capitol Visitors Center have preferred borrower status. The preferred status is based on TSPB's shared mission, location in the Capitol Complex, long partnership, and good working relationship with TSLAC, and its successful history as a borrower and exhibitor. Archives, museums, and similar public institutions in Texas that meet all the minimum exhibition requirements will have preferred loan evaluation consideration over non-Texas and private entities. In 2011 TSLAC developed guidelines to assist the Commission in evaluating exhibition loan requests. The minimum expectation with any approved loan is that there will be substantial benefit to TSLAC in regard to public education, outreach, publicity, and promotion of the agency's mission.

- Since FY 2011, TSLAC has loaned 337 items to the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum.

- Other borrowers have included the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, Star of the Republic Museum, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library and Museum, Texas Supreme Court, and Texas General Land Office.
- TSLAC has agreed to loan two items to the Smithsonian Institutions' National Museum of African American History and Culture in 2021.

Other opportunities

TSLAC will consider and weigh the merits and risks of other collaborative proposals based on a variety of factors including but not limited to:

- Condition assessment of specific items.
- Expectation of substantial benefit to TSLAC in regard to public education, outreach, publicity, and promotion of the agency's mission.
- TSLAC's right to approve the presentation and interpretation of the item.
- Security, environmental controls, illumination, fire monitoring and suppression, transportation, and insurance considerations.
- Staff time required and other competing requests or priorities.

Attachments: NARA Principles for Partnerships to Digitize Archival Materials

Guidelines for Evaluating Requests to Exhibit Archival Materials

NARA Principles for Partnerships to Digitize Archival Materials

1. Agreements with partners to digitize archival materials will be nonexclusive. We will be open to multiple digitizing partners for different sets of materials, but a group of original archival materials will be digitized by only one party.
2. After an agreed-upon period of time, otherwise known as an embargo period, NARA gains unrestricted rights to the digital copies and the associated metadata transmitted to NARA by the partner, including the right to give or sell digital copies in whole or part to other entities, if NARA so chooses. If resources permit, we will try to make the digital materials available in our online catalog within the same year they are no longer in the embargo period.
3. Partnerships will support the goals of increased access and enhanced preservation of archival materials. NARA considers its partnerships to be one component in pursuit of these goals because partnering will accelerate the digitization of our physical records. However, we will continue to pursue digitization of records by other means, such as grants to provide funding for digitization.
4. To further the goal of full access and to achieve preservation benefits, partners will digitize full series or cohesive, substantial file segments of records, not just selected documents. This practice will allow for the removal of the original records from research room use. NARA may permit the digitization of selected archival materials, when a partnership primarily intends to support the development of educational materials, online exhibits, and other thematic presentations—or when partial digitization may otherwise support NARA's access and preservation goals.
5. Public access to publicly owned resources will remain free. Partners may develop and charge for value-added features, but access to the digital copies ultimately should be readily accessible and free. NARA acknowledges partners' potential proprietary interest in the digital copies and to value-added features. We also emphasize our own need to maintain and provide an "archival view" of the materials that allows us to understand the actions of Government (e.g., Who created the records? Why? How were the records used? What is their original order? What is their hierarchical arrangement? How do they relate to other records of the same person or organization?).
 - Access to the products of the partnership will be free to the public in all NARA's research rooms.
 - Partners will provide NARA without charge a full set of the digital copies produced by the partnership. These copies shall adhere to NARA's technical specifications. Ultimately, NARA will have unrestricted ownership of these copies, including the right to make these copies freely available online for download.
 - Partners will provide NARA without charge a set of metadata generated by the project sufficient to make the digitized copies usable by NARA; it must adhere to NARA's

descriptive standards. Ultimately, NARA will have unrestricted ownership of this metadata, including the right to make this metadata freely available online.

6. NARA will structure partnerships to balance the interests of the American public with the partner's financial investment in the project. There is no single required partnership model.
7. NARA currently cannot guarantee the authenticity of the digital copies. NARA requires the partner to take reasonable measures to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the digital copy, including assurances to protect against hacking or other security violation of converted materials. However, NARA cannot endorse the authenticity of archival materials hosted on a digitizing partner's website. Although NARA will guarantee that our digital copies have not been altered after we take possession, copies for users requiring certification will be made from the original documents or NARA-created microfilm.
8. No partnership agreement to digitize restricted-access materials shall permit the release of these materials before an agreed-upon date or specific contingency, nor shall it delay timely public access.
9. The safety and accessibility of original records will be maintained at all times during the digitizing process.

Archival materials will be handled according to NARA's preservation and security standards at all times.

- NARA makes the final determination whether archival materials are too fragile for digitization through a partnership.
 - To minimize handling wear-and-tear, original materials normally will only be digitized once.
 - Digitization will take place at a NARA facility or at another facility that NARA has approved.
 - NARA and its partners will seek to minimize the amount of time archival materials will be removed from public access for digitizing.
10. While respecting the interests of our users and our partners, NARA makes the final determination whether materials may be digitized.
 - Any use of the NARA brand must be approved in writing by NARA.
 - In posting images of NARA records in digital format, a partner will clearly indicate that the original records are in a National Archives facility.
 - A partner may be responsible for costs associated with the digitizing partnerships, to include project management, document identification, collections security (including Federally required staff, contractor, and volunteer background investigations), document preparation (including access review and preservation activities), metadata collection and quality control, data management, digital conversion, and partner's delivery, marketing, and maintenance. NARA may also seek partner assistance in defraying NARA's own delivery, marketing, and maintenance costs. All costs to be borne by the partner will be outlined in a project plan. Any costs not outlined in a project plan or in the partnership agreement will be considered waived.

- The partner may not claim copyright in the digital copy.
11. NARA will publicize and seek written comment on proposed partnerships when there is an embargo period before the agreements are signed.

The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

1-86-NARA-NARA or 1-866-272-6272

Texas State Library and Archives Commission
Archives and Information Services Division

Guidelines for Evaluating Requests to Exhibit Archival Materials

March 29, 2011

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission is responsible for preserving the archival record of Texas and at the same time making that information accessible to all Texans, government, researchers, and the wider public. While the safest place for the archives is generally in the agency's repository buildings, the Commission periodically receives loan requests from a variety of entities to borrow documents, volumes, artifacts and other archival items in the custody of the Archives and Information Services Division for the purpose of offsite display and exhibition.

These assessment guidelines are intended to assist the agency and specifically the seven-member Texas State Library and Archives Commission in evaluating exhibition loan requests. In the guidelines the Archives and Information Services Division is called "Archives," the agency is called "TSLAC," and the seven-member governing body is called the "Commission."

These guidelines do not necessarily apply to the routine transportation and handling of archival materials for the purpose of appraisal, replevin, digitization, duplication, reproduction, forensic examination, conservation study or treatment, or disaster recovery when deemed to be in the best interest of the Archives and TSLAC. These activities and procedures may be covered by one or more separate policies or agreements.

Loan Categories

For the purpose evaluating potential exhibition loans two categories of items are assigned – Texas Treasures and other, less iconic items

The Texas Treasures traditionally have been identified as:

- 1) "The Travis Letter" - William B. Travis' "Victory or Death" Letter from the Alamo, February 24, 1836.
- 2) "The Declaration" - twelve-page, manuscript, signed, Texas Declaration of Independence, March 2, 1836.
- 3) "The Broadside Declaration" - single page, printed handbill version.
- 4) "The Constitution" – the original manuscript 1876 document, as well as original drafts of the 1836 and others
- 5) Various treaties.

The Archives, TSLAC or the Commission may upgrade the status of an archival item to Texas Treasure status as deemed appropriate.

Commission Approval

Lending items in the collection other than Texas Treasures is done with the approval of the Director and Librarian based on the recommendation of the State Archivist. The Archivist's recommendation will customarily be informed by input from the Assistant Directors, Preservation Officer, Conservator, and Archivists.

Requests for removal from the Lorenzo de Zavala State Archives and Library Building of items identified as Texas Treasures for the purpose of loan, and / or display or exhibition, whether for public or private viewing, will always require the majority approval of the seven-member Commission. The Archivist and staff will prepare fact sheets and recommendations to accompany Texas Treasures requests presented to the Commission.

Benefits of Loan

The minimum expectation with any approved loan is that there will be substantial benefit to TSLAC in regards to public education, outreach, publicity, and promotion of the agency's mission. The borrowing venue will cooperate with TSLAC to accurately label, credit, interpret, and promote the exhibition. TSLAC reserves the right to approve the presentation and interpretation of the item.

Minimum Requirements and Loan Request Evaluation

Requests should conform to the parameters outlined in the **Borrower Category**, **Loan Category**, **Loan Period**, and **Request Deadline** definitions.

Additionally, prospective borrowers must meet the minimum requirements for each of the categories of **Security**, **Environmental Controls**, **Illumination**, **Fire Monitoring and Suppression**, **Exhibit Structure**, **Transportation**, and **Insurance**. Borrowers are expected to provide evidence of compliance with the minimum requirements. At its discretion TSLAC may require additional supporting documentation, and / or make a visit to the exhibit site to insure proper conditions.

Requests may also be evaluated by other criteria including the location of the exhibit venue and the perceived benefits of the loan to the Archives and TSLAC. The recommendations of Archives staff regarding the minimum requirements and other criteria will be provided to the Commission for action when required.

Borrower Categories

The Texas State Preservation Board, referred to as TSPB, and its two exhibit venues, The Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, and The Capitol Visitors Center, have preferred borrower status. The preferred status is based on TSPB's shared mission, location in the Capitol Complex, long partnership and good working relationship with TSLAC, and its successful history as a borrower and exhibitor.

Archives, museums and similar public institutions in Texas that meet all the minimum exhibition requirements will have preferred loan evaluation consideration over non-Texas and private entities.

Request Deadlines

Requests for loans of items other than Texas Treasures must be received in writing a minimum of 45 days prior to expected loan receipt. These loans will generally be to the two TSPB venues and do not require Commission approval. Requests by entities other than the TSPB will generally require additional study, evaluation, and turnaround time.

Requests for loans of Texas Treasures must be received in writing a minimum of 12 months prior to expected loan receipt. A one-year advance request time is necessary in order to complete several critical steps:

- prioritize the use of the item for in-house TSLAC exhibits
- study and evaluate unfamiliar venues
- perform a conservation study and possible treatment of the item
- arrange for security and transportation
- create a recommendation, fact sheet, and agenda item for the Commission meeting

Requests for loans of any item by a non-Texas venue must be received in writing a minimum of 12 months prior to expected loan receipt. Loans outside of Texas will always be considered on an individual basis, and generally only for nationally significant exhibitions sponsored by major institutions, such as National Archives and Records Administration, Library of Congress, or the Smithsonian Institution.

Please Note: Loan requests that have been submitted and /or approved prior to the implementation of these guidelines are exempted from defined deadlines.

Loan Periods

The loan period for items other than Texas Treasures is 6 months or shorter.

The loan period for textiles, flags, artworks, photographic materials, or any other especially light sensitive or fragile items is 3 months or shorter.

The loan period for a Texas Treasure is 30 days or shorter. An exception may be studied for an exhibit deemed to be of special state or national significance, or benefit to TSLAC.

The loan periods may also be limited to less than standard terms for reasons of security, transportation, scheduling or to accommodate the Archives program

Security

The minimum requirement for Texas Treasures and other items is continuous 24-hour onsite guard by a Licensed Texas Peace Officer, Texas Department of Public Safety security officer, or licensed Texas security guard. Alternatively, consideration may be given to 24-hour electronic and video surveillance system monitored by nearby officers or guards.

Onsite security staff combined with electronic and video surveillance will be given preferred consideration, as will the implementation of enhanced screening and control of visitors entering a controlled exhibit area.

See also security provisions included in **Transportation**.

Environmental Conditions

The exhibit environment must be maintained at a temperature between 65 and 72 degrees Fahrenheit, and a relative humidity between 45 and 55 percent.

Additional loan evaluation consideration will be given for venues that have electronic environmental monitoring and data logging programs in place.

Illumination

The minimum requirement for display of a Texas Treasure is an intensity of illumination of 5 Foot Candles or less, measured at the surface of the exhibited item, where a smaller numerical reading is desirable. Exhibits with adjustable fiber optic illumination are preferred. The allowable range of illumination for items other than Texas Treasures is 5 – 7 Foot Candles, where a smaller numerical reading is desirable.

Fire Monitoring and Suppression

The minimum requirement is a networked fire monitoring and alarm system and automatic aqueous suppression, with preference for non-aqueous clean agent fire suppressions systems.

Exhibit Enclosure

The minimum requirement for any item is for an exhibit case set into or affixed to a permanent wall, anchored to the floor or foundation, or of such substantial construction as to be immovable without special equipment. The enclosure should have multiple fastening or locking points, preferably hidden.

Possible exemptions to a required case may be for especially large framed or un-framed items such as flags or other textiles that may be secured by mechanical and / or electronic means other than an actual enclosure.

Exhibit venue must be a stationary weather-tight structure with permanent foundation. Display in portable or temporary buildings, or in vehicles is not acceptable.

Transportation

Transportation to and from borrowers will generally require the services of a DPS escort, armored security contractor, or bonded security courier. The type and level of security will depend on the loan category, location of the borrower, and other particulars. The borrower will be responsible for costs associated with transportation and security.

The location of the venue and distance from the Archives, as well as and modes of transportation required to deliver the loan item will be considered in evaluating the request.

Insurance Coverage and Valuations

TSLAC may assign insurance values for loan items at its discretion, based on a new, previous or similar appraisal or estimate, adjusted if necessary. Borrowers must present evidence of insurance adequate to cover the assigned values.

If an appraised or estimated insurance value is not available, the borrower may be required to pay for an appraisal by a qualified, reputable, and mutually agreed upon appraiser.