



ACTIVATING 21ST CENTURY LOCAL HISTORY



TRAINING PROGRAM

The Activating 21st Century Local History Training Program project will work with local historical societies (LHS) around Vermont to develop advanced skills in approaching their work from within an “Active Collections” framework (<https://www.activecollections.org/>). The goal is to help them establish collections priorities, right-size their collections, and energize their community engagement strategies to help increase organizational sustainability and ensure the continuing preservation of local history.

Project components include an Online Resource Center, workshops, and intensive work with two LHS cohorts to provide training, resources, and direct assistance on self-selected collections-based projects.

This program is funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (Grant 21MP-256386-OMS-24).

LHS Cohorts

Cohort = a group of people engaged in a shared set of experiences together.

The project will bring together two cohorts/groups of LHS, each consisting of five organizations. The cohorts will each run for roughly one year (2025, 2026). Cohort activities will emphasize learning together in a collaborative, interactive fashion.

Cohort Activities/Benefits

As a cohort organization, you will receive:

- 2 workshops over the course of the year. Cohort members will help choose the workshop topics for maximum relevance.
- 65 hours of time working directly with the Program Coordinator on your collections-based project. Work will primarily take place over the summer.
- \$250 for materials/supplies needed for your collections-based project.
- Ongoing peer-to-peer cohort interaction via virtual gatherings and an online group work space.

Cohort Commitment:

- At least 2 people actively participating in the program throughout the course of the year.

- Help define and actively work on the chosen collections project with the Program Coordinator during the summer
- Acquire any materials or supplies needed to complete the selected project beyond the \$250 provided.
- Submit evaluation and/or final report materials as requested.

Why Apply?

Being a cohort organization may be best for an organization that has started some parts of Active Collections work, such as completing a tiering chart, but needs more in-depth assistance to make it to the next step in applying the framework to their collections.

If you are overwhelmed by your collections, but have an active group of people who are ready to work towards a common vision for its future, being in a cohort can be a great next step.

If you are excited about interacting more directly with your LHS peers, and learning and sharing together, the cohorts will be a great opportunity for the exchange of ideas and new opportunities for engagement.

Not there yet? Organizations that are not ready or selected for the cohorts will still be able to take advantage of some of the project components. The Online Resource Center will be available to everyone. Workshops will be open to non-cohort attendees if space is available.

Eligibility & Selection

Local historical societies, museums, and other cultural organizations in Vermont with substantial history collections are eligible to apply. Priority will be given to organizations whose members have already completed some form of Active Collections training.

Cohort selection will be based on a number of criteria aimed at building groups that share common goals and attributes. These criteria may include:

- Organization size
- Geographic location
- Types of collections
- Areas of collections needs/issues
- Organizational commitment

Cohort Applications

The online application is available on our website at <https://vermonthistory.org/activating-local-history>. Applications for the 2025 cohort will be due by November 15, 2024.

Below are some instructions/tips for completing the application questions.

Contacts, Organization, General Description

You must provide contact information for two individuals. Your General Description is limited to 1,000 characters and should be about your organization as a whole.

Previous Active Collections training

Applicants who have participated in Active Collections training (virtual or in-person) will be prioritized.

Collections Description

Include both object and archival collections if you have them. Include information on volume of collections and storage if possible. You are limited to 1,000 characters.

Policies & Procedures

Up-to-date should be policies/procedures that have been reviewed within the last five years. In-use should mean that they are used/implemented in a standardized manner across the organization.

Collections Issues

Do not select "Big Problem" for every issue. Please try and identify your top 3 issues for that selection.

Interest & Goals

Try to be specific as possible in how you think this support and training could move your organization forward in your collections work. If you have an idea for a collections project that you could do as part of this program, please list it here.

Training Needs

We will utilize these needs to both select the cohort organizations, as well as provide a first step in identifying potential workshop topics.

Questions?

Contact Hannah Kirkpatrick, Program Coordinator, program.coordinator@vermonthistory.org, (802) 793-5664.