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# RUSA Guidelines for Establishing Local History Collections

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## INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are intended to assist librarians in establishing local history collections. In surveying the literature about the collecting of local materials it is apparent that many have already written about the use and the maintenance of the various media employed in local history.

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## GUIDELINES

- 1.0 Considerations before making a commitment to developing a local history collection
  - 1.1 Research and understand the history that is unique to the locality.
  - 1.2 Establish and maintain a dialog between local institutions (museums, academic libraries, local archives), societies (both genealogical and historical), and agencies (county, city, and state). Consider what is currently being collected, what services are needed, to what depth such collections are being developed, and what collaborative or cooperative agreements are needed. Determine the most suitable repository for particular materials with respect to use, dissemination, and preservation.
- 2.0 Scope and Services of the Collection
  - 2.1 Identify the focus and depth of the collection. Limiting factors may include geography, format, and space within the repository.
  - 2.2 Identify the range of services that will be provided, onsite and remotely.
- 3.0 Collection Development
  - 3.1 Write an acquisitions policy for collecting local history materials.
  - 3.2 State the intended geographic collection area.
  - 3.3 Describe those materials desired by the institution and the extent to which they will be collected.
  - 3.4 Describe the formats to be collected.
  - 3.5 Identify the types of materials that will not be collected by the institution. Other institutions may be better equipped to handle a given type of material. Some items may not be accepted due to preservation issues.
  - 3.6 Identify those subject areas which will be acquired only on a cooperative basis.
  - 3.7 Write a policy on acceptance of materials through

gifts and bequests. Include forms for “deeds of gift.” See the Society of American Archivists web page for detailed guidelines.

- 3.8 Write a policy on de-accessioning that is in keeping with the overall policy of the institution. Bear in mind policies already established by other professional organizations. (See <http://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/GuidelinesForReappraisalAnd-DeaccessioningDRAFT.pdf> for de-accessioning guidelines.)
- 4.0 Collection Location and Access
  - 4.1 Establish the local history collection in an identifiable place in the library, separate from other collections.
    - a. Create a separate area on the library’s web page for the local history collection.
    - b. Digitize fragile items for access on the local history webpage.
  - 4.2 Provide an environment that is conducive to the preservation of materials.
  - 4.3 Designate a secure space for the local history collection with proper provisions for monitoring materials.
  - 4.4 Provide a clear and visible access policy.
  - 4.5 Provide equipment and workspace sufficient to use the collection.
  - 4.6 Utilize professional staff to collect, process, maintain, and provide access to the local history collection. Professionals may be assisted by trained paraprofessionals and volunteers.
  - 4.7 Understand copyright implications that may affect access.
- 5.0 Fiscal Considerations
  - 5.1 Provide a budget for staffing the collection.
  - 5.2 Provide a budget sufficient to acquire, process, and preserve the local history collection.
  - 5.3 Provide a budget for physical and bibliographic access to the collection.
  - 5.4 Provide a budget for reproduction, reformatting, and/or digitization of rare and fragile materials.
  - 5.5 Provide a budget for public relations.
  - 5.6 Develop a policy for a reproduction fee schedule.

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