

Backgrounder

Important change is underway at the Royal BC Museum and Archives as we embark on collaboratively envisioning the museum and provincial archive's future. With your help, we are looking to the future, committed to creating community connections, educational programs, and inclusive, thought provoking experiences for all people in British Columbia and the world.

History

- The Royal BC Museum was founded in 1886.
- The provincial government has collected archival records since 1894. In 1908 the Provincial Archives was established, mandated to collect material of provincial significance.
- The current museum building opened in 1969.
- The Museum precinct in downtown Victoria is home to Thunderbird Park, which features many Indigenous poles and Wawadit'la (Mungo Martin House). Wawadit'la was the site of the first legal public potlatch, in 1953, after the Federal Potlatch Ban ended.

Today

- The Royal BC Museum takes care of approx. 7 million artifacts in the human and natural history collections.
- The BC Archives collection includes 31 linear km of textual records, 181,000 maps and architectural records and 5,500,000 photographs.
- Pre-COVID-19, the Royal BC Museum welcomed over 800,000 visitors each year and annually provides free access to 25,000 school children. The Royal BC Museum provides curriculum support for students and teachers, including developing and crowd-sourcing online resources through the Learning Portal, and for teacher workshops, school tours, school partner projects and digital field trips.
- The BC Archives welcomes approx. 3,000 onsite visitors every year and 86,000 visitors remotely (visitors to BC Archives web pages and collections databases).
- Staff retrieve over 5,000 containers of records for researchers per year, respond to approx. 5,000 inquiries and copy in excess of 13,000 pages of records for reproduction requests.
- Meet our staff at <https://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/>

Future

- The BC Archives will be moving to a new archives, research and collections building in Colwood, scheduled to open in 2026.
- BC Archives staff and reference facilities are all moving to the new building.

BC Archives Engagement

Please join staff from the BC Archives for a Dialogue Session where, together, we will explore four key themes that will help determine the future of the archives. These themes include access, services, learning and engagement, and Indigenous reconciliation and UNDRIP Implementation.

Ways to Participate

- Attend a Dialogue Session online or in-person
- Complete the online survey

- Email us your feedback at engage@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca

Learn more at [BC Archives Engagement | Royal BC Museum and Archives](#)

UNDRIP: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is a document that outlines the collective and individual rights of Indigenous peoples worldwide. It emphasizes principles such as self-determination, cultural integrity, and the right to participate in decision-making processes that affect Indigenous communities.

