



TAKING THE PAST INTO THE FUTURE

NEA PRESIDENT | [neapresident@newenglandarchivists.org](mailto:neapresident@newenglandarchivists.org)

## NEA Candidate Profile and Statement

**Name:**

Connor Anderson

**Office for which I am running:**

Treasurer

**Education:**

B.A.: History. Assumption College, 2015

M.A. History-Archives Concentration. UMass-Boston, 2017.

**Employment (relevant employment history):**

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. A/V Intern, 2015-2017

Town of Plymouth. Archivist/Records Access Officer, 2017-present

**Service to New England Archivists:**

Member since 2017

Roundtables: Preservica Roundtable, Records Management Roundtable, Roundtable for Early Professionals and Students

**Service to Archives Profession:**

Served on Planning team to bring the Mass. Memories Road Show to Plymouth as part of the Plymouth 400 celebration.

National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators member since 2017

**Candidate question: What are the major challenges facing archivists in New England and what is NEA's role in addressing those challenges over the next 3-5 years? (500 words or less)**

I work as a municipal archivist in Plymouth, Massachusetts, so while my response is largely geared toward that specifically I am sure it will apply to the experiences of other archivists as well. One of the biggest challenges in our community is the approach to electronic record keeping. In their most recent municipal records retention schedule, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts indicated that permanent records can be kept electronically. Prior to this, permanent records were to be kept as hard copy or in microform. This has changed the long-term planning and thought process for municipal archivists and records managers almost overnight.

This, however, has led to many new challenges for municipal archivists. Disagreements have arisen between archivists and IT professionals over who should have custody over the electronic records. The never-ending quest for departmental funding only adds fuel to this debate, with each division jockeying for control—the thought process being that with more responsibilities comes more funding.

Many municipalities do not employ an archivist in an official capacity, and the heavy usage of electronic records could jeopardize future hiring in that area. In the municipalities that employ an archivist, often it is a one-person operation. The strain of a heavy workload on one person leads to hindered production in every day duties. Many traditional institutions in the Greater Boston area rely heavily on student interns and volunteers to help with the workload. Municipalities that are further away from the Greater Boston area have a more difficult time finding qualified interns and volunteers. Many students in archival programs that I have reached out to were unable to commute such a long distance on a regular basis. This leaves most municipal archives permanently understaffed.

The NEA's continued use of roundtables and other resources will help combat these issues over the next 3-5 years. I believe that NEA should expand on this and develop a roundtable specifically geared towards municipal archivists. Whether in collaboration with the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA) or on their own, a forum for municipal archivists in New England to discuss the issues they face would be a valuable resource. While NAGARA is a national association, a localized forum would make participation in potential meetings and other events more accessible for municipal archivists in New England.

There are undoubtedly many challenges that face archivists in New England over the next 3-5 years, but with the help of NEA these challenges have the potential to become more manageable.