

Archivist

Decide what records survive and make them findable. Quiet work with long consequences.

TYPICAL PAY

\$82,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$42k to \$113k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

6 to 8 years

after high school

DEMAND

Moderate

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Government archives, universities, museums, hospitals, companies

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
History, English and computer studies. Reading old handwriting comes later.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
History is the usual choice, but law, science, art history and Indigenous studies all lead into specialized archives.
- 3 Master's in archival studies** About 2 years
For example the Master of Archival Studies at the University of British Columbia, which is built from 18 credits of required core courses plus 30 elective credits and offers a dual option combined with library and information studies.
- 4 Co-op, internship or practicum** During the master's
Hands-on time in a working archive. Programs build this in, and it is how you get hired.
- 5 Project work, then a permanent post** 1 to 5 years
Contracts on specific collections first, then a permanent job at a government, university or corporate archive.

Pros and cons

- + Stable, pensioned jobs in a field full of contract work
- + Normal weekday hours and low physical strain
- + You handle original records nobody else sees
- Two degrees before you start, with real debt
- Few openings, and you may have to move provinces
- Backlogs are enormous and never end

Optional boosts

Digital preservation. Records management for companies. Audiovisual archives. Indigenous archives work.

Good to know

Throwing things out is the skill

Only a small share of the records an organization creates is kept permanently. Deciding what that share is, and defending the decision, is the part of the job that takes a master's degree to learn.

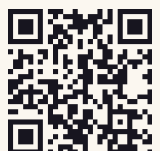
Canada keeps a national memory

Library and Archives Canada describes itself as the continuing memory of the federal government. It holds census records, First World War personnel files and Indigenous documentary heritage, and...

Where these numbers come from

Job Bank: Archivist in Canada, wages (updated Nov 2025)
Association of Canadian Archivists
University of British Columbia: Master of Archival Studies
Library and Archives Canada

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in Canadian dollars, based on Government of Canada Job Bank wage data and published salary grids. They vary by province, employer and experience. Tuition is for domestic students. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/ca/careers/archivist>



Scan for the full clicker