

The Virginia Archives Month committee expanded the intended audience for the archives month poster this year to include public libraries, historical societies, college history departments with public history programs or courses, and Richmond-area high schools with humanities and/or leadership (civics and government) specialty centers (magnet programs). We also distributed the poster to members of the Virginia legislature, the governor and cabinet, Virginia congressional delegation, Senators John Warner and Jim Webb, members of the Virginia caucus of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC), and the archival institutions that sent images for the poster. In addition, we sent posters to county courthouses with archivists on staff. Seven hundred posters were printed and distributed, with funding from a NHPRC State and National Archival Partnership Grant to the Virginia State Historical Records Advisory Board. We also posted a PDF download of the poster on the website (<http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/archivesmonth/>).

The distribution plan was intended to increase public awareness of archival resources in Virginia--what is available, and what kinds of institutions have it--and the work archivists do. We targeted members of the general public with a possible interest in history (through public libraries and historical societies), high school and history students and faculty who may be unaware of archives as a resource, and resource providers (legislators and the executive branch).

The plan was also designed to promote professional collaboration among archival institutions across the state with the collage format, which enables any interested institution to participate and promote their collections through the poster. Distribution to different kinds of information professionals, from librarians, to members of MARAC, to archives professionals who work in historical societies and may not be affiliated with archival associations, and to history teachers and professors helps to promote professional collaboration among disparate groups that work with archives. In addition, distribution of the poster, along with a letter describing the purpose of archives month and promoting archives month events, serves as a promotional tool for archives month events, and means of pointing individuals to the archives month website, which contains more information about archives month.

The theme was chosen by the MARAC Outreach Committee. This year's theme, "To Choose Our Better History," is taken from President Obama's inaugural address in January. The poster illustrates Virginians' rich history of public service, volunteerism, conservation, philanthropy, and civil protest. The images were contributed by 17 Virginia archives and manuscript collections.