



Digital Archivist

Organization: Detroit Sound Conservancy

Location: Detroit, MI

Position Type: Full-time hybrid based in Detroit

Salary Range: \$55,000–\$65,000

Reports to: Director of Collections

Contact: info@detroitsound.org

About Detroit Sound Conservancy

Detroit Sound Conservancy is a community-based archive dedicated to preserving, activating, and celebrating Detroit's singular and definitive musical heritage. Through archival preservation practices, engaged education initiatives, and intergenerational live performance programming, DSC gives access to and preserves the vivid memory of musical movements, uplifts the agency of artistic legacies, counteracts reductive representation, and puts listening at the center of community.

Position Summary

The Archivist will serve as the primary steward of Detroit Sound Conservancy's collections, managing both digital and physical materials while building meaningful relationships with donors and community members. This role requires a detail-oriented, proactive and collaborative person with exceptional organizational skills, hands-on expertise in audio-visual preservation workflows, and the ability to work sensitively and effectively with Detroit's music community—particularly elders and families who are entrusting their legacies to DSC's care. The Archivist will be responsible for the management, preservation, and access to the organization's digital assets, including born-digital materials and digitized collections, ensuring their long-term integrity, authenticity, and usability for current and future generations. The Archivist will lead the implementation of new archival management systems, refine existing and develop new workflows, conduct regular field visits to acquire and assess collections, and oversee the processing and preservation of materials across multiple platforms and physical facilities.



Key Responsibilities

Collections Management & Preservation

- Serve as the primary collections contact for all donors, building trust and clearly communicating how DSC will preserve and honor their materials and legacies
- Conduct field visits to meet with donors, assess potential acquisitions, appraise collections, and provide guidance on caring for personal archives
- Oversee the processing, cataloging, and preservation of audio-visual materials, photographs, documents, ephemera, and born-digital collections
- Develop, maintain, and refine existing archival workflows for preservation, digitization, metadata creation, and collection processing
- Assess physical and digital condition of materials and implement appropriate preservation and conservation strategies for the long-term accessibility of paper-based collections and audio-visual formats
- Manage collections storage and preservation at both WGPR facility and the developing Blue Bird Inn archive, including coordinating the movement of materials between locations
- Develop finding aids and access tools that reflect the significance and context of these foundational collections
- Prioritize ongoing processing and preservation work for DSC's core collections: United Sound, Club Heaven, Blue Bird Inn, and Graystone Jazz Museum materials

Systems Development & Implementation

- Lead the research, selection, and implementation of a new digital asset management system (DAM) and content management system to replace current Google Drive infrastructure
- Develop requirements and specifications for archival management software that meets DSC's needs for both physical and digital collections
- Work with consultants and technical partners (grant-funded) to design and implement a public-facing web portal for collection access
- Create and maintain standardized documentation for all systems, workflows, and procedures
- Ensure long-term digital preservation strategies are built into all new systems

Audio-Visual Preservation

- Develop and implement workflows for audio digitization, video preservation, and born-digital file management
- Stay current with best practices in audio-visual preservation, file format migration, and media longevity



- Make informed decisions about digitization priorities, format choices, and quality control standards
- Work with volunteers and interns to execute digitization projects while maintaining quality standards

Team Collaboration & Supervision

- Collaborate with DSC staff on exhibitions, programming, and research projects utilizing priority collections
- Collaborate with content creators on formatting and ingestion workflows
- Supervise and train volunteers and interns on archival procedures, handling protocols and digitization workflows
- Provide reference services to staff, community members and researchers

Required Qualifications

- Master's Degree in Library Science, Archival Studies, Museum Studies, or related field
- Minimum 2–3 years of professional archival experience
- Exceptional organizational skills and meticulous attention to detail
- Strong knowledge of audio-visual preservation techniques, formats, and archiving best practices
- Demonstrated experience processing mixed-format collections (physical and digital materials)
- Understanding of archival principles, arrangement and description standards (DACS), metadata creation (e.g., Dublin Core, PREMIS), digital preservation, and the ability to assess and operate a Digital Asset Management System
- Ability to work sensitively and effectively with diverse community members, particularly elders and families from Detroit's Black communities, to build trust and articulate DSC's preservation mission
- Experience conducting field archiving, oral history and donor relations work
- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to manage multiple projects simultaneously and work both independently and collaboratively
- Willingness to learn audio digitization techniques and workflows (if not already proficient)
- Physical ability to lift and move archival materials (up to 40 lbs) and work in storage environments
- Valid driver's license and reliable transportation for field visits



Preferred Qualifications

- Master's degree in Library and Information Science (MLIS) with concentration in Archives Management, or equivalent advanced degree
- Experience implementing digital asset management systems or archival management software
- Proficiency with archival databases and content management systems (ArchivesSpace, CONTENTdm, Preservica, or similar)
- Hands-on experience with audio digitization equipment and quality control
- Technical skills in coding or web development
- Deep knowledge of Detroit's music history and cultural landscape
- Experience working with music archives or audio-visual collections
- Familiarity with born-digital preservation
- Understanding of copyright and rights management for cultural heritage materials
- Experience supervising volunteers or student workers

What We Offer

- Central role in preserving Detroit's globally significant musical legacy
- Opportunity to work directly with musicians, families, and community members whose stories are shaping the archive
- Hands-on work with rare and historically significant materials from legendary Detroit venues and institutions
- Leadership in building new systems and infrastructure for a growing organization
- Collaborative, mission-driven work environment
- Comprehensive medical, dental, and vision coverage, along with generous paid time off and paid organizational holidays to support your health and well-being
- Professional development opportunities and connections within archival and music communities
- Chance to help develop the archive at the historic Blue Bird Inn

Work Environment

This is a full-time position based primarily at DSC's archival facility at WGPR on Detroit's east side, with future work taking place at the Blue Bird Inn as we develop that archive space. The role requires frequent field visits to meet with donors and assess collections throughout the Detroit area. Work involves hands-on processing of physical materials in archival storage environments and office-based digital work. Flexibility in



schedule may be required to accommodate donor availability for evening or weekend meetings. Reliable transportation is required for field visits.

Application Process

- Resume or CV
- Cover letter describing your interest in the position, relevant experience, and approach to community-based archival work
- Contact information for two professional references

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the position is filled.