VERMONT HISTORICAL RECORDS PROGRAM SURVEY REPORT

SUMMER 2021

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Image courtesy Pixabay, user Erdenebayar, February 6, 2015, accessed July 19, 2021.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Vermont Historical Records Program (VHRP) Survey has its origins in work begun over twenty years ago. In 1997, a report from the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities called upon "public agencies and the private sector to support a national assessment of the nation's preservation needs and a plan to protect our cultural legacy."[1] This recommendation became a project, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and led by Heritage Preservation, to survey the condition of collections stored in America's archives, libraries, historical societies, museums, and archaeological or scientific research organizations. The Heritage Health Index (HHI-2004) report, *A Public Trust at Risk: The Heritage Health Index Report on the State of America's Collections*[2] was released in 2005 and was a startling look at the state of the nation's collections. The report found that America's cultural heritage was at risk from physical deterioration due to a lack of environmental controls, proper storage, and emergency plans. The report's findings led to the development of the Connecting to Collections program, which looked at collections needs at the state level. In 2008, the Vermont Historical Society and other partners received a grant to perform a more in-depth assessment of Vermont's collections. The Vermont Connecting to Collections (VT-C2C) survey[3] looked at the same types of institutions as the HHI-2004 and expanded to include municipal and county government, such as town clerks and court houses, as well as historic sites. Vermont's survey found that not only was Vermont's cultural heritage at risk due to the same issues found in HHI-2004, but Vermont also had a risk of loss due to a lack of intellectual control. Several years later, Heritage Preservation undertook a follow-up survey to identify what had changed in the decade since HHI-2004 was published. The Heritage Health Information Survey (HHIS-2014)[4] found that some overall improvements had taken place nationally, including a higher number of institutions with collections assessments, disaster plans, and a moderately higher percentage of staff specifically for collections care.

THE VHRP SURVEY

The VHRP started in May 2017 with initial funding from the Vermont Secretary of State and additional funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission in June 2018. It is a program of the Vermont State Historical Records Advisory Board, is based at the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration, and it serves to improve public access to and engagement with Vermont historical records and to encourage and facilitate collaboration among Vermont historical records repositories. The program has seen much growth since its inception, expanding from one part-time coordinator to two full-time employees in 2020. With expanded capacity, the VHRP team wanted to gauge the needs of their constituents to better target their services. Building on the VT-C2C and the HHI surveys, the VHRP decided to survey Vermont's historical records repositories for three outcomes:

1. Identify what technical assistance Vermont historical records repositories want and need and how to best deliver that support
2. Better publicize the VHRP and its services

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[1] *A Public Trust at Risk: The Heritage Health Index Report on the State of America's Collections,* pg. 3.
[2] The report can be accessed at: https://www.imls.gov/sites/default/files/publications/documents/hhifull_0.pdf
[3] *Vermont's Heritage at Risk: Findings and Preliminary Recommendations of the Vermont Connecting to Collections Project.* The report can be accessed at: https://vermonthistory.org/documents/digital/Vermont_Heritage_at_Risk.pdf
[4] *Protecting America's Collections: Results from the Heritage Health Information Survey.* The report can be accessed at: https://www.imls.gov/sites/default/files/publications/documents/imls-hhis-report.pdf

3. Get a snapshot of the state of Vermont's cultural heritage in 2021 to compare to the VT-C2C's 2008 data and findings

METHODOLOGY [5]

The survey instrument was based on many of the questions from the VT-C2C to allow for the comparison of data points. Some questions were stripped out, such as the questions about internet access, what professional organizations the institution is a part of, and general budgeting questions. The reason for removing some questions depends upon the question, but generally it was felt that some questions were too specific when we were trying to get a broader sense of conditions, or that the information contained in those questions was either not that important or was sufficiently conveyed through other questions. Additionally, we wanted to shorten the length of the survey; if too long, people would not be as likely to participate. Other questions were simplified; the VT-C2C environmental monitoring questions, for example, asked about the number of areas where monitoring was happening, while the VHRP survey simply asked if monitoring was happening. The simplification of questions was another strategy to encourage more participation. A few new questions were added to reflect current issues such as social media usage and engaging with marginalized groups. [6]

Before the survey launch, announcements to look out for the survey were sent out to relevant listservs such as the lists for Department of Libraries, municipal clerks, and Vermont Historical Society's list for local historical societies and museums. Next, the survey instrument was loaded into Microsoft Forms, a link to which was sent in an introductory email message to the VHRP email list.

The VHRP email list was compiled and included town clerks, historic sites, historical societies, academic libraries, public libraries, archives, and museums. These were the same types of institutions surveyed in 2008 but courts were left out, as the state's records and information management specialists decided they would like to undertake a similar survey for courts and executive offices that fall under the jurisdiction of the state's records management program. The VHRP email list was developed from existing contact information used by the VHRP and from contact lists from the Department of Libraries, Vermont Historical Society, and Office of the Secretary of State. That master list was then divided into four different groups to facilitate more targeted communications:

- Group 1: Had previous contact with VHRP AND responded to C2C survey
- Group 2: Had previous contact with VHRP, did not respond to C2C
- Group 3: NO previous contact with VHRP AND responded to C2C survey
- Group 4: NO previous contact with VHRP, did not respond to C2C

For those groups that did not have previous contact with VHRP, an email message was sent introducing the VHRP and its services. For those groups that the VHRP did have contact with, the message was tailored with information specific to the organization to help encourage a response to the survey. Groups that responded to the VT-C2C survey were sent copies of their response both to encourage a response to the VHRP survey and to provide the institution with a snapshot of their organization from thirteen years ago, since people currently involved with the organization might not have access to this information. A spreadsheet of the VT-C2C results was shared by Vermont Historical Society staff and had been imported into an Access database, making it possible to run a custom report for each respondent.

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[5] It is important to note that some of the resulting comparisons are subjective due to the differences in questions. No direct comparison can be made where questions were asked differently between the VHRP and VT-C2C surveys. Additionally, the sample size for the 2021 results is smaller than the 2008 sample size, which may affect the data and the accuracy of comparisons. And, while the VT-C2C and HHI surveys were analyzed by professional statistical analysts, the VHRP survey was analyzed by a VHRP staff member, who does not have a professional background in statistical analysis.

[6] In all, 22 questions were left out, 11 were asked differently, 22 were asked in the same manner as in 2008 (not including the contact information questions), and 3 new questions were added. Those questions that were asked in the same manner are compared directly. An attempt was made to compare the data between questions that were asked differently, and those methods are addressed in the discussion of each question. See a comparison of the two survey instruments in Appendix A.

Respondents filled out the survey online and responses were stored within the Microsoft Forms application. When all response times are averaged together the mean is 39.5 minutes, though a majority of institutions completed the survey within 8 – 20 minutes. Responding institutions were tracked in a spreadsheet and two reminders were sent to institutions that did not respond, with the VHRP director personally following up with a handful of the organizations from groups one and two. The survey was sent to 669 entities, with 154 responses representing 163 institutions, as some institutions are functionally linked together and so one respondent filled out the survey for two linked entities. This was a 23.5% response rate, lower than the target of 35%, which was based on the successful 37.6% response rate for the VT-C2C survey.

The data from the VHRP survey was first analyzed through the Microsoft Forms software, then placed in a spreadsheet alongside the numbers from the VT-C2C and HHI surveys for comparison. Rates of increase and decrease between 2008 and 2021 were calculated within the spreadsheet, which became the basis for the following narrative. Survey data will be added to the same database as the C2C data, allowing VHRP staff to continue to track change over time for individual repositories and the state as a whole. This database also serves as the VHRP master contact list for cultural heritage institutions in Vermont.

INSTITUTIONS REPRESENTED

FUNCTION

Question 10 asked what the institution's primary function or service was. Of the 2021 respondents, the biggest percentage are historical societies at 34%, a 6% increase over the respondents of the 2008 survey. The next biggest category at a quarter of respondents is municipal clerks, an 8% increase over 2008 results. Public libraries come in third at 17%, down 10% from 2008 respondents. The rest of the institution types include historic sites/buildings (8%), academic libraries (7%), archives (2%), art museums (1%), natural history museums (0.7%) and 5% of respondents fall under other, including preservation organizations, theaters, and other types of museums. While the three largest types of institutions are the same as in 2008, there seems to be more diversity in the types of institutions represented in 2021. Nationally, there was an increase in diversity of respondents between 2005 and 2014 along with an increase in responses from historical societies.

INSTITUTION TYPE - PRIMARY FUNCTION
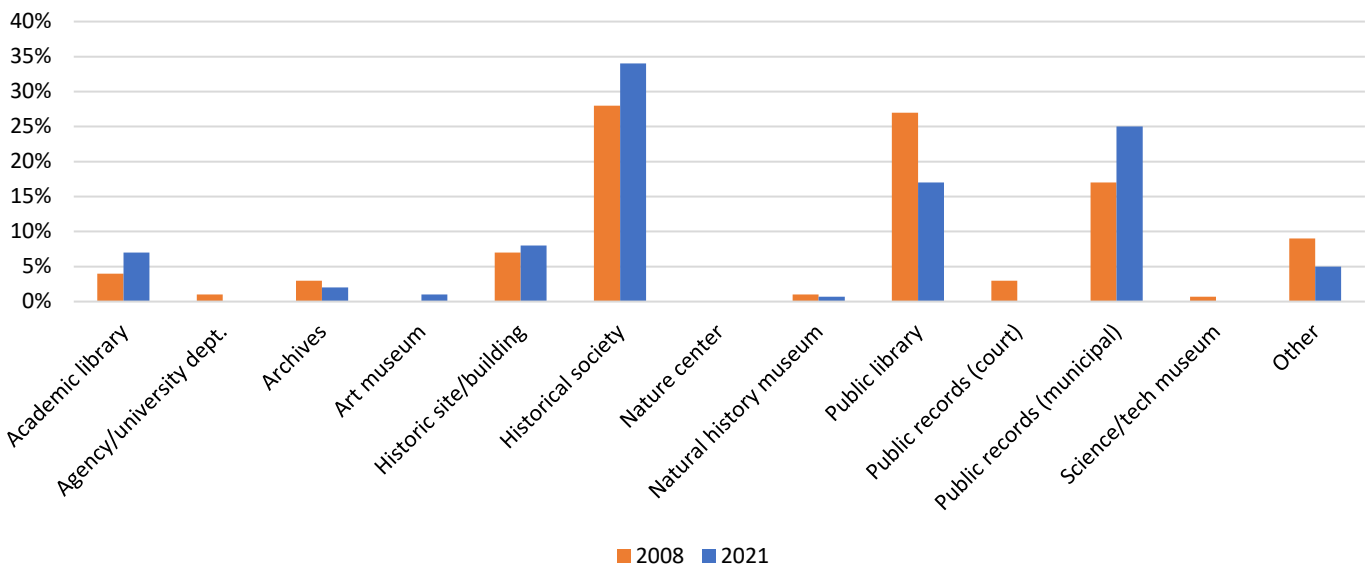
Organizations that reported no additional functions (question 11) increased by 15% from 2008 to 2021; 35% of all 2021 respondents indicated that their institution does not perform any additional functions. Vermont's current number is more on par with the national percentage in 2005 when 33% of national institutions indicated they did not have a secondary function. The average number of functions per institution that reported them has gone down from an average of 2.5 functions per institution in 2008 to 1.9 in 2021. Together, these figures might indicate that institutions are more able to specialize in what they do now than they were able to a decade ago, or there might be a lack of understanding in what functions the institution does provide. The largest secondary function for institutions with multiple functions is archives, with two-thirds (66%) of the respondents indicating that they serve that additional function, a 21% increase from 2008. The next largest category is historic sites, at 47% of institutions with multiple functions, up 26% from 2008. 14% of respondents with multiple functions indicated they also served as historical societies, down 10% from 2008. The remaining secondary functions were art museum/arts center at 11%, repository for public municipal records at 9%, science/technology museum and agency or university department with scientific,

archaeological, or artifact collections both came in at 4% of respondents with multiple functions, nature center/botanical garden came in at 2%, and natural history museum at 1% of respondents. 18% of 2021 respondents indicated that they had some other type of institutional secondary function, including town or community history museums, federal depositories, genealogical research centers, working farms, educational partnerships, concert halls or other performing arts spaces, technical or other assistance for other organizations, and storage for other organizations in their local area.

INSTITUTION TYPE - SECONDARY FUNCTIONS
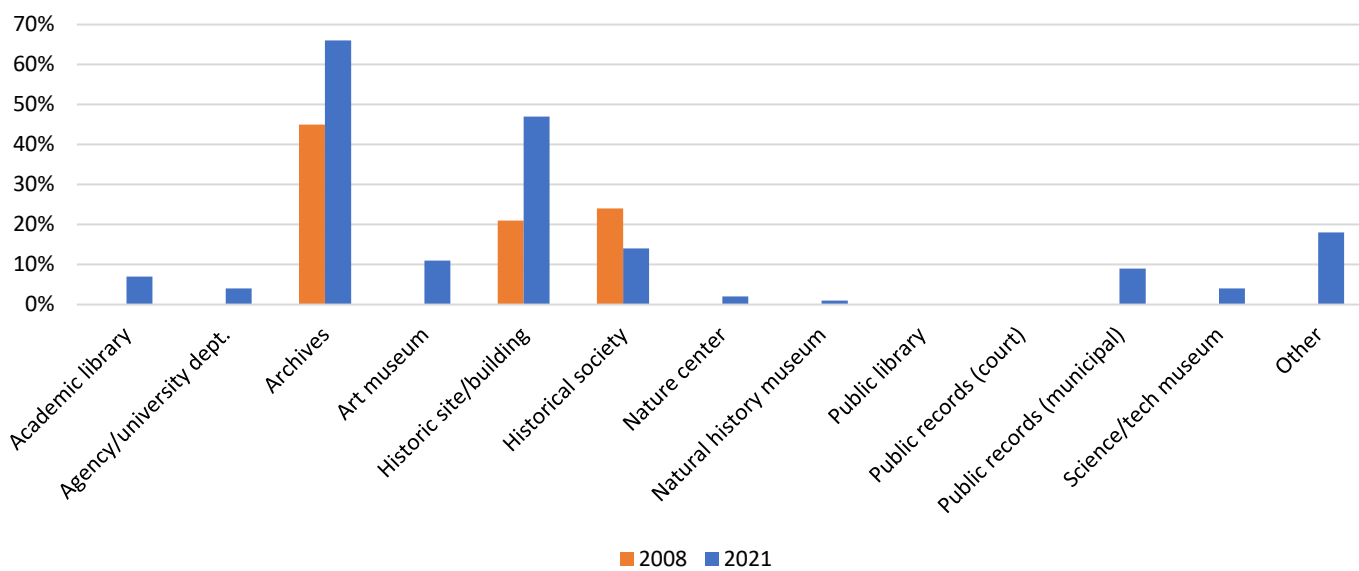
When primary and secondary functions are combined, the top function is archives. Sixty-eight percent of respondents manage archival materials, more than half (55%) have responsibility for historic sites or buildings, and just under half (48%) are historical societies. Academic libraries were the most likely (80%) type of institution to have archives; 68% of historical societies have archives. Over half (58%) of historical societies and a third (33%) of public libraries preserve historic sites or buildings. A third (33%) of institutions that identify primarily as historic sites or buildings have archives and 42% also function as an historical society.
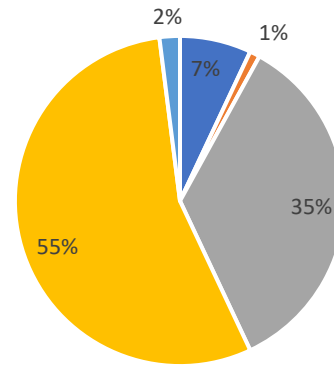
GOVERNANCE

The representation of respondents by governance type (question 12) is virtually unchanged from the 2008 survey. Non-profit, non-governmental organizations make up the majority at 55%, a slight increase from 2008, and county and municipal organizations make up the next largest category at 35%, the same percentage as 2008. College, university, or other academic organizations make up 7%, a slight increase from 2008, state governmental organizations make up 2%, down from 6% in 2008, and corporate or for-profit organizations, not represented at all in the 2008 survey, make up only 1% of the 2021 respondents.
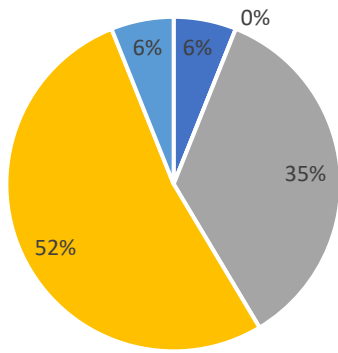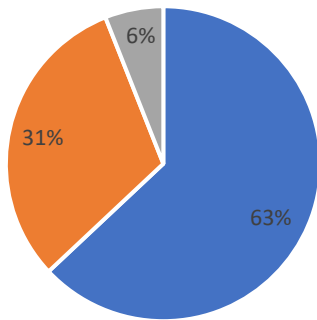
Governance type, 2008

Governance type, 2021

Staffing dedicated to collections, 2008
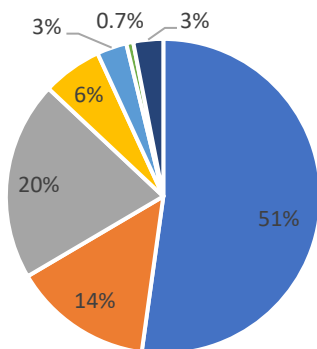
Full-time staffing, 2021

STAFFING

The 2008 survey asked specifically about staff responsible for collections care, while the 2021 survey asked about employment numbers generally for the institution, not just collections care. In 2008, 63% of institutions had no paid staff dedicated to collections, 31% had one FTE, and 6% had two or more FTE.

Breaking down the numbers for 2021, half (51%) of the current respondents have no full-time staff (question 7). 14% have 1 FTE, 20% have 2-5 FTE, 6% have 6-10 FTE, 3% have 11-15 FTE, 0.7% have 16-20 FTE, and 3% have 20 or more FTE. However, it is important to note that some survey participants included the employees of the entire parent organization, not just the department or unit with responsibility for historical records and collections. For example, an academic library may have counted all employees of the college or university, or a town clerk's office may have counted all municipal employees, not just their office. It is impossible to break out the numbers more granularly, so it must be noted that this factor may have skewed the data.

Current employment trends with part-time staff (question 8) are similar to full-time, with lower staffing being more common. 42% of respondents have no part-time staff, 14% have 1 part-time staff member, 28% have 2-5, 9% have 6-10, 4% have 11-15, 0.7% have 16-20, and 1% have over 20 part-time staff members.
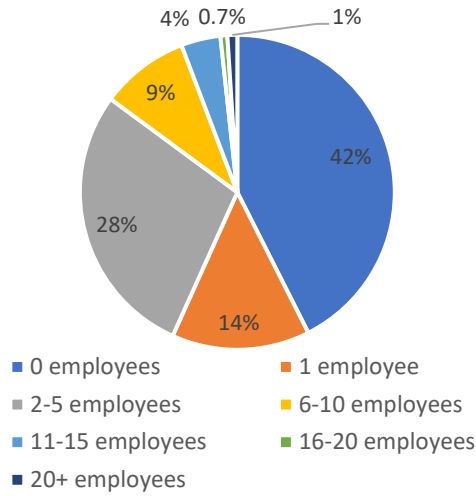
VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer numbers (question 9) range more than paid staffing. About a third (32%) of institutions do not have volunteers while a little under half (43%) have anywhere from two to ten volunteers. similar trends and caveats as the staffing numbers. Breaking it down, 32% of current respondents have no volunteers in their institutions, 4% have 1 volunteer, 24% have 2-5 volunteers, 20%

Part-time staffing, 2021

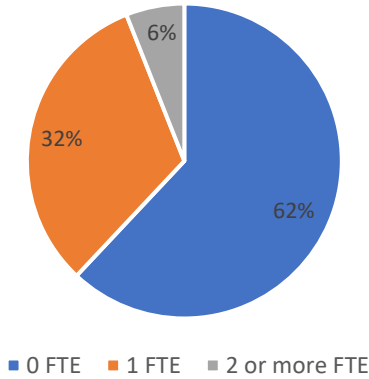*Volunteers dedicated to collections, 2008*

Total volunteers, 2021

have 6-10, 7% have 11-15, 4% have 16-20, and 8% have 20 or more volunteers.
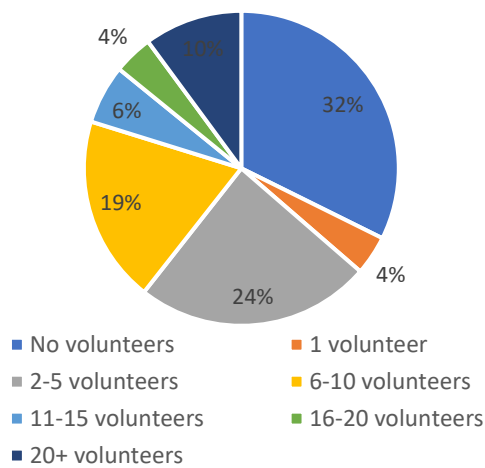
While the results between the 2008 and 2021 surveys cannot be completely and accurately compared against one another because of the differences in the framing of the questions and resultant data, there does seem to be a general upward trend in paid staff. This is true of volunteers as well, and it still holds true that volunteers are huge labor source for our cultural heritage institutions. This pattern is consistent with the changes seen nationally between the 2004 and 2014 HHI surveys – there was an increase in both paid staff (9% increase) and volunteers (12%) for volunteers devoted to collections.

COLLECTIONS INFORMATION

TYPES OF COLLECTIONS

A higher percentage of institutions in 2021 reported having collections of nearly all types (question 13), although the same types of collections remain the most common from 2008. The most common collections are books and bound volumes with 93% of institutions reporting they have these in their holdings (a 4% increase), followed closely by unbound sheets such as archives and manuscripts at 88% (an 8% increase). Photographs are now represented in 78% of institutions, an increase of 12%. Historical objects (63%), recorded sound collections (60%), arts objects (58%), and moving image collections (54%) are held by half of all institutions. Most of these are an increase from 2008, with historical objects jumping the most (by 10%) and moving image collections decreasing slightly. Digital materials are also held by just over half of the current institutions (53%), an increase of 12% from 2008. Historic buildings are also a 12% increase from 2008, with 41% of institutions having them. Nineteen percent of institutions have archaeological collections and 10% have natural science specimens, each a slight increase from 2008 by 5% and 1% respectively. Just 0.7% of institutions have live plant or animal collections, and 1% hold some other type of collection. It is not possible to compare the Vermont rate of change in cultural collections to the national rate of change because the two HHI surveys measured collections differently. The HHI-2004 measured by percentage of institutions who hold the collection types, like the two Vermont surveys, but the HHIS-2014 measured collections in number of items.

COLLECTION TYPES

Legend: ■ 2021 ■ 2008
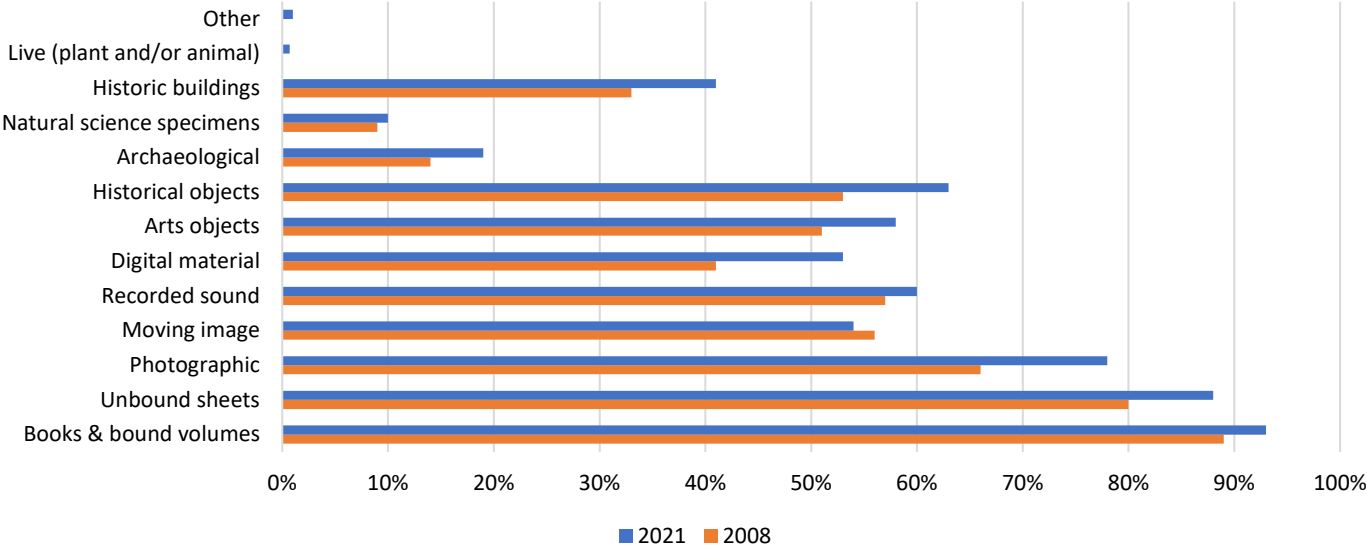
STORAGE

The places where collections are stored (question 14) has held steady in Vermont from 2008 to 2021. Seventy-three percent of institutions store collections in a building they own (increase of 3%), 14% store collections in a building they lease (down 2%). Eleven percent of 2021 respondents store collections in a donated space, down 17% from 2008. However, 11% said they store collections in some other, sometimes additional place. Most of the "other" responses

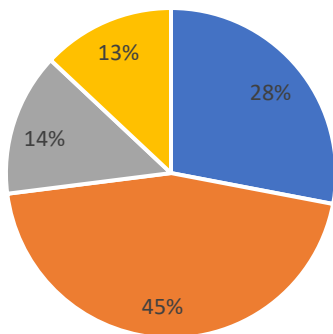listed a municipal building such as a library, town hall, or town vault. When these two categories are added together, the total amount of organizations storing collections in donated or municipal spaces is 22%, down 6% from 2008. Six percent of organizations store collections in private homes, up 1%, and it is worth noting that at least one respondent stated that they did not know all of the private homes where their collections are stored. Finally, 5% of organizations store collections outdoors, presumably those with live plant or animal collections or historic buildings. No organizations indicated in 2008 that they stored collections outdoors.
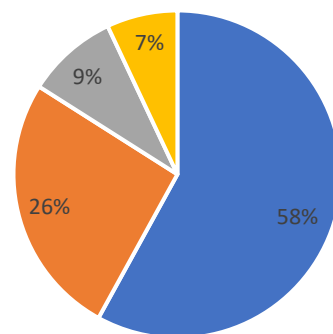
STORAGE LOCATIONS
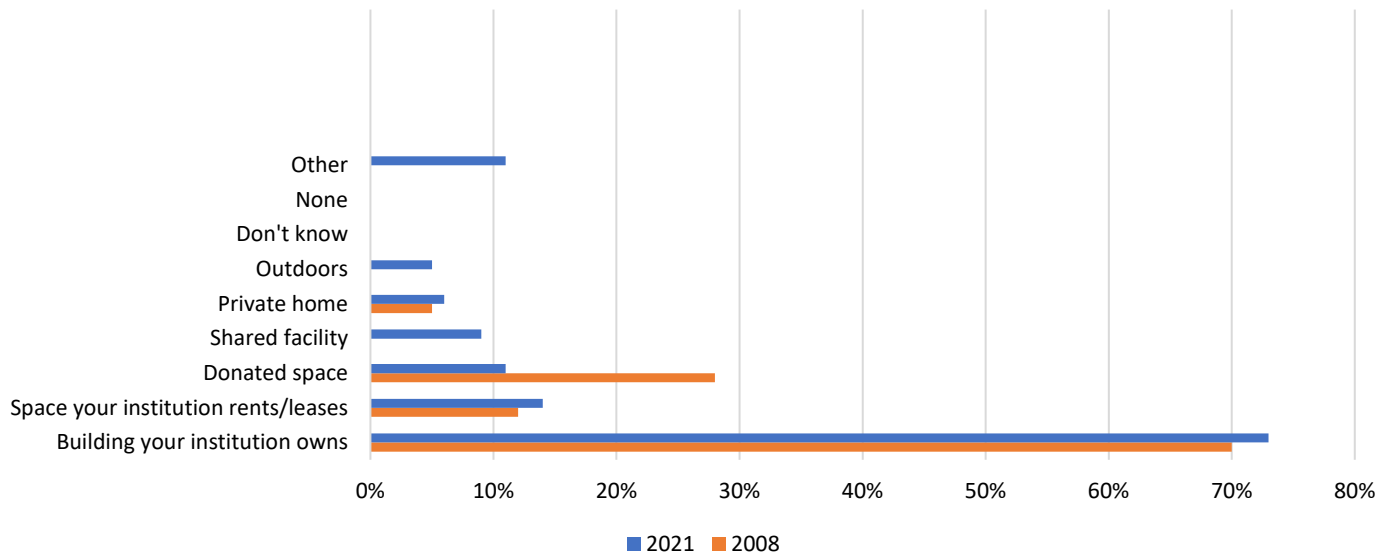
DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

One of the biggest changes between the 2008 survey and the 2021 survey is how much digital materials are a part of collections stewardship (question 15). Fifty-eight percent of 2021 respondents have the responsibility of caring for digital collections, an increase of 30%. A quarter (26%) of respondents said they did not have the responsibility to care for digital collections, a decrease of 19%. The number of institutions that said they do not know if they have that responsibility or that the question is not applicable has also decreased from 2008, with 9% saying they don't know, and 7% saying not applicable.

Responsibility for digital collections, 2008

Responsibility for digital collections, 2021

General survey of collections, 2008

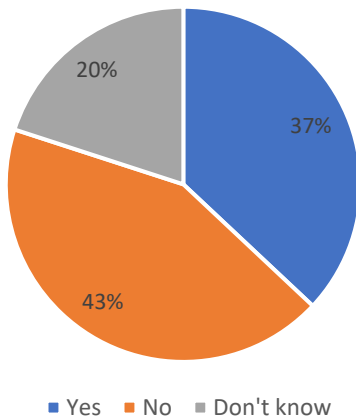*General survey of collections, 2021*

CONDITION SURVEYS

The number of institutions that have had a survey of the general condition of their collections done (question 16) has increased 15% since 2008; just over a third (37%) of institutions have had one conducted. Conversely, the number of institutions that have not had a survey done or do not know if they have had a survey done has decreased from 2008 at 43% and 20% respectively. Although the majority of institutions still have not had a survey done, the trend is increasing. Vermont is ahead of the curve here because the national trend between 2005 and 2014 went the opposite way. There was a 23% decrease in complete assessments and an 18% decrease in the existence of any assessments (partial, updated, or otherwise) between the two HHI surveys.

The percentage of institutions that did have surveys done in the past five years or as an ongoing process (question 17) has increased by 7% from 2008 to 54%, meaning that most institutions with general condition surveys of collections have recent surveys. However, the number of institutions that have not had a survey done in the past ten years has also seen a significant increase, up 9% from 2008 to 30%, and 7% of those condition surveys were performed over twenty years ago.

RISKS TO COLLECTIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS

Across the board, trends are encouraging in Vermont for mitigating risks to collections. The number of institutions that are engaged in each type of environmental control included in the survey has increased, and the survey respondents answering "no" or "don't know" has mostly decreased. It is important to note that in 2008 the questions specified whether the environmental control was happening in all areas of the institution or just some areas, whereas the 2021 survey simply asked if it was happening at all. It is possible that the numbers of institutions controlling the environment in all areas has actually decreased, but the overall trend is that environmental control has increased and there are more institutions doing it at least in some capacity.

Almost two-thirds of 2021 respondents (63%) make an effort to control temperature levels (a 6% increase from 2008) and a third (34%) do not. Three percent do not know if they control temperature (question 18).
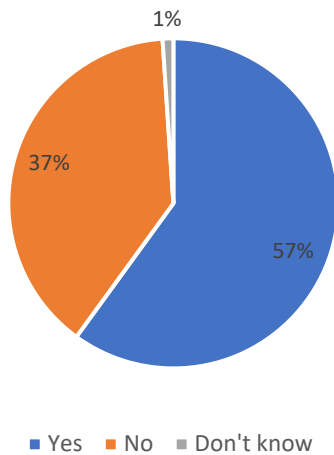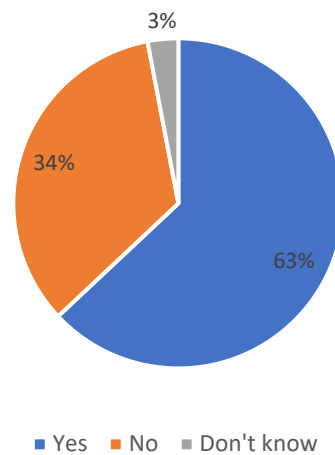
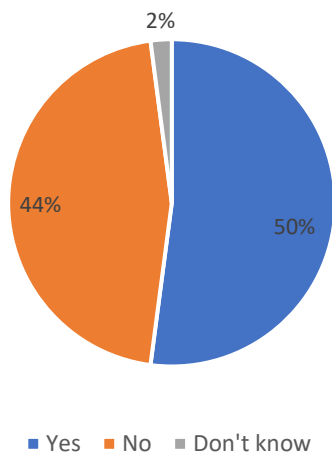|	
1% 37% 57% ■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know	3% 34% 63% ■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know
Temperature control, 2008	*Temperature control, 2021*

More than half of respondents (57%) control humidity levels (a 7% increase from 2008), and 40% do not. Again, 3% do not know if they control humidity (question 19).
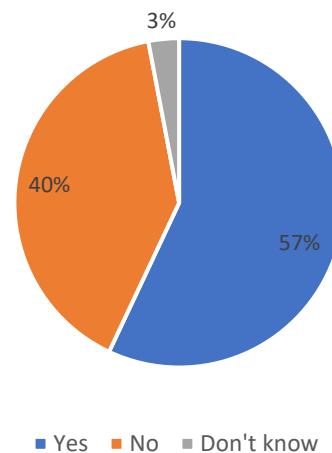
2% 44% 50% ■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know	3% 40% 57% ■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know
Humidity control, 2008	*Humidity control, 2021*

Two-thirds of respondents (66%) control light levels ([question 20](#)) while just under a third (30%) do not – a large 20% decrease from 2008. Those who do not know if they control light levels holds steady at 3%, the level it was at in 2008.
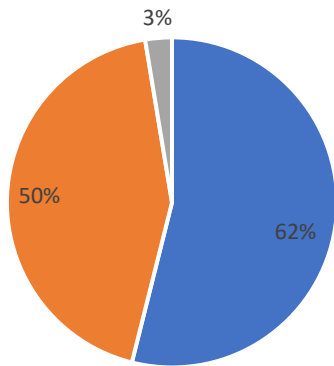
Light control, 2008
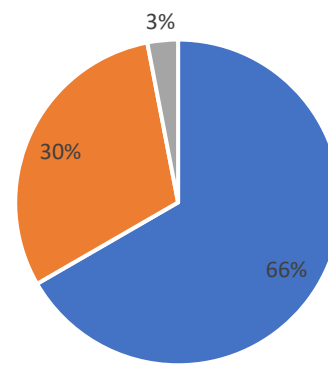
Light control, 2021

We asked a new question about monitoring for pests ([question21](#)). Nearly three-quarters (71%) of respondents do monitor, while a quarter (25%) do not. Three percent of institutions do not know if they monitor for pests.
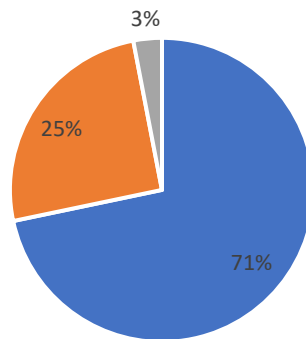
Pest monitoring, 2021

The number of institutions that have security systems to prevent theft or vandalism ([question 27](#)) has virtually stayed the same from 2008 and is evenly split; 49% do and 49% do not. One percent of respondents do not know if they have security systems (a 1% decrease from 2008).
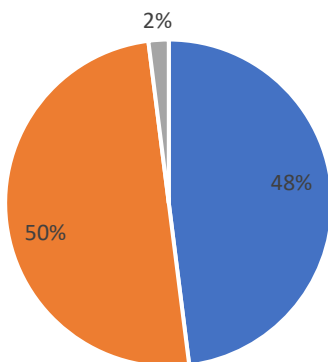
Security systems, 2008
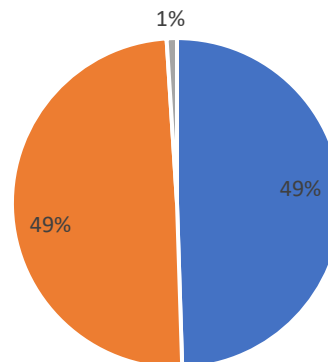
Security systems, 2021

Environmental monitoring alarm systems ([question 28](#)) are also about evenly split between the haves and have-nots, but those that do have alarms has increased dramatically since 2008. 46% of respondents have monitoring alarms (a 20% increase) and 45% do not. Ten percent of respondents do not know if they have environmental monitoring alarms.
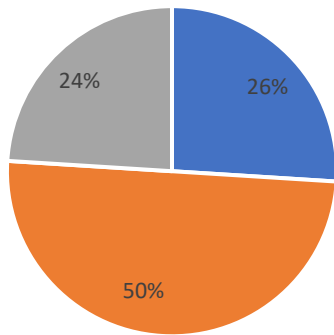
Environmental monitoring alarms, 2008
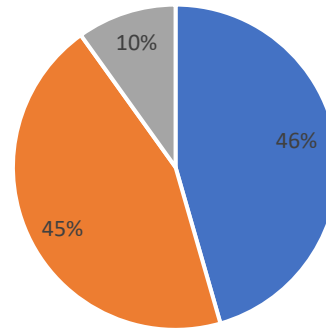
Environmental monitoring alarms, 2021

Vermont's trend of increasing environmental control is in opposition to the national trend which saw a 9% decrease in temperature controls, an 11% decrease in humidity controls, and a 13% decrease in light controls. The Vermont percentages of repositories controlling these elements is higher than the national numbers. The one control where this does not hold true is with security systems; Vermont's rate of institutions with security systems has remained virtually the same whereas the national rate increased by 25% and was comprised of a higher percentage of institutions (69%) than Vermont (49%).

PLANNING

The number of respondents that don't know if they have a long-range preservation plan for the care of collections ([question 22](#)) has dramatically decreased (29%) from 2008 to 10% of 2021 respondents. This change has allowed for the increase of those who have plans and those that do not. Just over a quarter (27%) of 2021 respondents have a plan and nearly two-thirds (63%) of respondents do not.
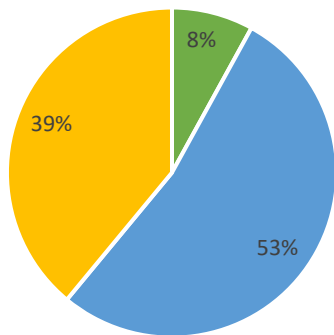
Long-range preservation plan, 2008
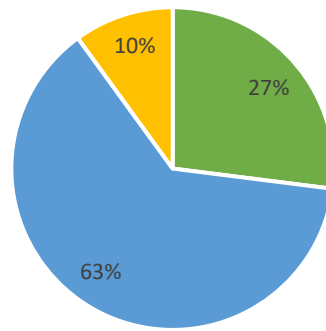
Long-range preservation plan, 2021

Nearly the same percentage (28%) have a disaster plan that includes collections ([question 23](#)), and this is also a large increase from 2008 (15%). There has been a decrease (11%) in the percentage of respondents who do not have disaster plans, which is just over half (56%). However, those who do not know if they have a plan has increased (8%) from 2008 to 15%.
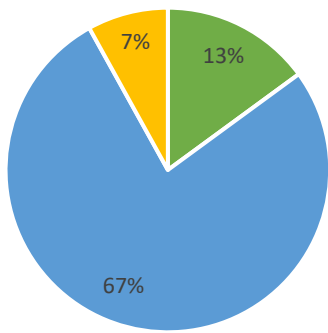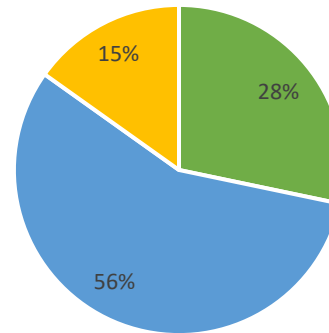
Disaster plan, 2008

Disaster plan, 2021

Of those respondents who do not have an emergency plan (question 24), "do not have the expertise to write one" and "other" were tied for the most common reasons why one has not been created, at 25% each. "Do not have the expertise to write one" is a 9% increase from 2008, whereas the other reasons "Do not have the time to write one" (22%), "Not an institutional priority" (12%) and "Was unaware of need for disaster planning" (16%) are all decreases from 2008. Some of the reasons given in the other category include "all of the above" or multiple reasons cited from the list, leadership changes, and the promising indication that a plan was being developed. However, a few respondents indicated that they have fireproof vaults or that flooding does not occur at their location and thus a disaster plan is not necessary. There were similar comments in the 2008 survey which indicates there is persistent misunderstanding of the importance of disaster planning. One 2021 respondent said that their institution was too busy recovering from previous flooding events over the years to make a disaster plan. There is an indication here that some basic education about the importance and use of disaster planning is still very necessary in Vermont.
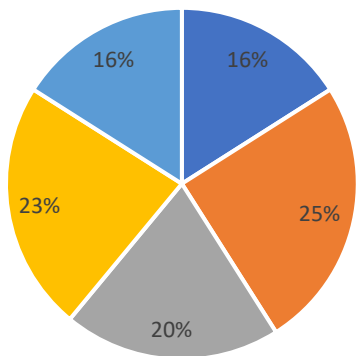
- No expertise to write one
- No time to write one
- Not institutional priority
- Unaware of need for disaster planning
- Other/Don't know

Reasons for no disaster plan, 2008
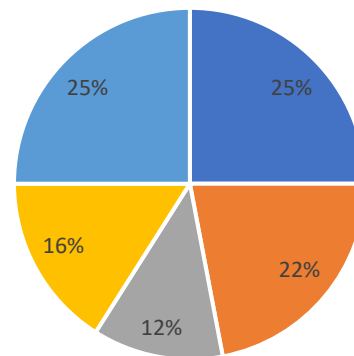
- No expertise to write one
- No time to write one
- Not institutional priority
- Unaware of need for disaster planning
- Other

Reasons for no disaster plan, 2021

Of those respondents that do have disaster plans (question 25), two-thirds (66%) have staff trained to carry out the plan, about the same as 2008 (65%). Just over a quarter (27%) do not have trained staff and 5% do not know if their staff is trained; this is also similar to the combination of no's and don't knows in 2008 (35%).
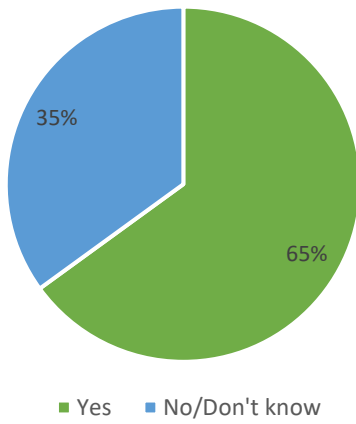
Staff training on disaster plan, 2008

Staff training on disaster plan, 2021

The number of institutions storing copies of essential collections records such as catalogs and insurance policies off-site (question 26) has decreased; 39% of respondents store copies off-site, a 16% decrease from 2008, whereas 46% do not. 15% of respondents do not know if they do, a 10% increase from 2008.

The HHIS-2014 found that 27% of national institutions have a long-range preservation plan. While that number is low, Vermont is right on par with the nation, and it is possible that more institutions, both nationally and in Vermont, are incorporating preservation planning into their strategic plans rather than developing standalone plans. Where Vermont is far below the national numbers is with disaster plans; the HHIS-2014 survey found that 42% of respondents had disaster plans compared to Vermont's 28% from the VHRP survey. However, Vermont's trends are better. The national numbers went down slightly from HHI-2004 to HHIS-2014, while Vermont's numbers increased by 15% from 2008 to 2021. At the national level, staff training on emergency plans held steady at just above half, while Vermont's rate is around two-thirds, so higher than the national rate. Nationally there was a significant increase (by 14%) in those reporting that they had not trained their staff on the plan, whereas Vermont's rate of non-trained staff has declined slightly (by 3%). Nationally, numbers also decreased for institutions storing copies of essential records off-site, but by a much bigger rate (24%) than Vermont (a 16% decrease).

Essential records stored off-ste, 2008

Essential records stored off-site, 2021

COLLECTIONS DAMAGE

The VHRP survey asked if institutions had any damage to collections from eleven different causes ([question 29](#)) whereas the VT-C2C survey split out the question to indicate levels of loss from no loss to some loss or significant loss, as well as an option to respond, "don't know." In comparing the numbers, the percentages of "some loss" and "significant loss" from 2008 were added together to create a number indicating any loss which was then compared with the 2021 figures. The calculated figures from the 2008 data does not include the percentages that answered, "don't know." The 2021 survey results indicate a decrease in damaged collections across all causes. The biggest cause of loss or damage is attributed to physical or chemical deterioration (50%), a 21% decrease from 2008. Next is improper storage or enclosure (41%), a 15% decrease; water or moisture is the next at 34% (a 15% decrease), followed by light at 31% (a 24% decrease). 24% of respondents have damaged collections due to handling (a 23% decrease); 21% have loss due to obsolescence of playback equipment or software (a 3% decrease), 16% from airborne particulates or pollutants (a 15% decrease), 14% from pests (an 8% decrease), 13% from prior treatment or restoration (a 5% decrease), 11% from theft (a 9% decrease), and fire and vandalism are tied at 3% of respondents (a 2% decrease and 5% decrease respectively).

Thirty percent of all respondents did not answer this question, which may imply that they do not know if they have any damage or loss due to these causes. However, there was not an option in the 2021 survey to answer, "don't know," only the option to choose if any damage had occurred from any of the causes. The 2008 survey broke out "don't know" answers by cause and not generally, so it is not possible to compare "don't know" answers between surveys. The "don't know" answers in 2008 ranged from 7% of institutions who did not know if they had experienced damage from fire to 28% who did not know if they had experienced damage from prior treatment or restoration.

% OF INSTITUTIONS WITH DAMAGE DUE TO FOLLOWING CAUSES:
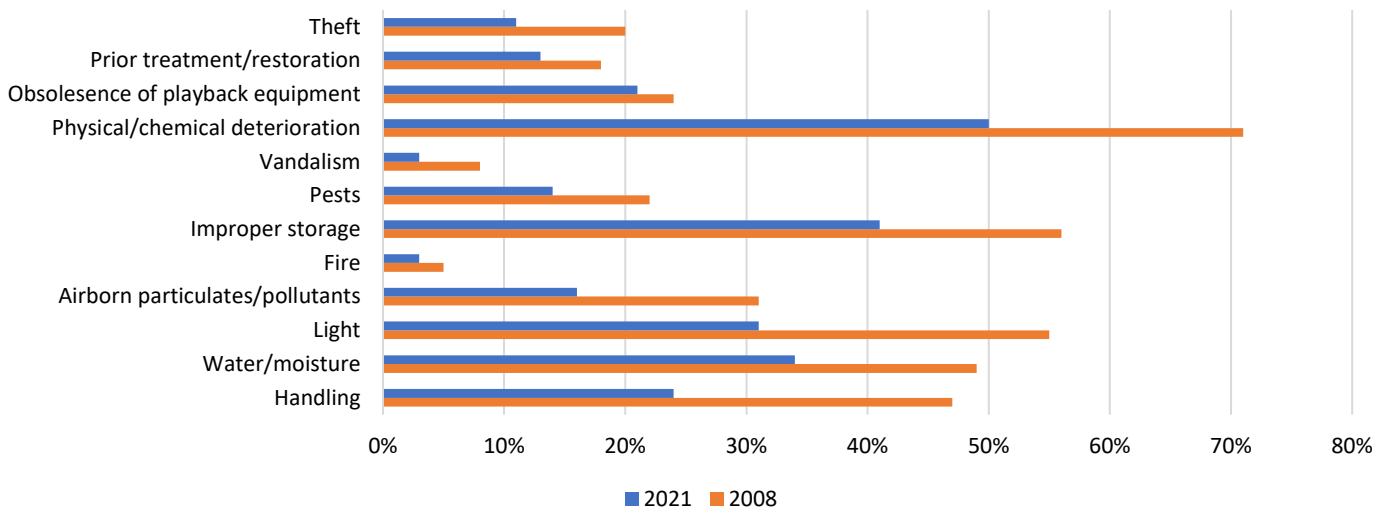
Nationally, some rates of damage or loss increased between surveys and some decreased, while Vermont's results show a marked decrease among all causes of damage. Additionally, the current percentage of Vermont institutions claiming damage in collections is almost always lower than the national percentages, the exceptions being loss or damage by fire (Vermont is 1% higher), prior treatment or restoration (Vermont is 6% higher), and physical or chemical deterioration (Vermont is 9% higher).

STAFF & VOLUNTEER TRAINING

In the past five years, half of 2021 survey participants participated in workshops, the most common type of training or service that institutions engaged in (question 30), although this is a 6% decrease from 2008 respondents. The next most common types of trainings or services are peer advice at 44% (a 9% increase) and conferences or meetings at 42% of respondents (an 8% increase). Online training, the next most popular training (31%) has unsurprisingly increased by a large percentage (26%) since 2008. Twenty-eight percent of respondents have had mentoring or site visits in the past 5 years (a 14% increase), 25% have had surveys or assessments done (a 7% increase), 20% have had conservation treatments (a 1% decrease), and 15% have consulted publications, the same percentage as 2008. 7% do not know what training programs or services their institutions have participated in (the same as 2008) and one-fifth (20%) of 2021 participants reported that they have done no training or services in the past five years, compared to 24% of the 2008 respondents. One percent of respondents participated in some other kind of training or service, generally contacting an organization for advice such as the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration or the former Vermont Museum and Gallery Alliance.

TRAINING/SERVICE PARTICIPATION IN PAST FIVE YEARS
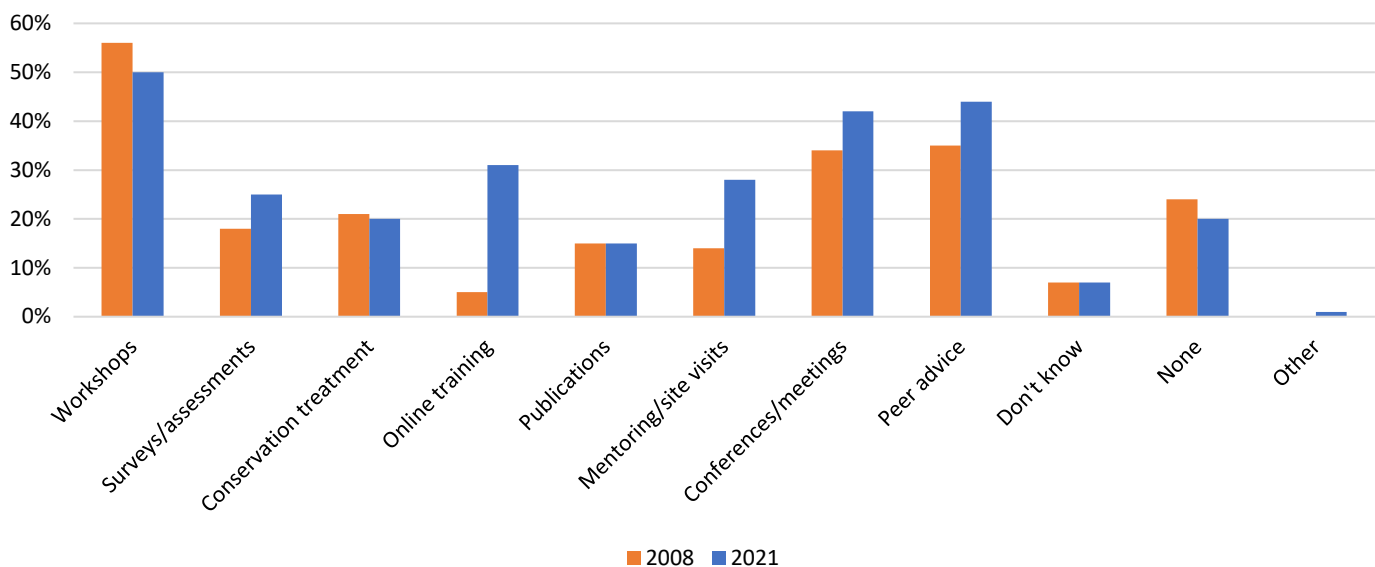
There is an increase across all training and service types that are desired (question 31). Workshops again are the most popular category; 61% of respondents want to take part in workshops, up slightly (by 2%) from 2008. However, the biggest increase from 2008 in desired training is, perhaps unsurprisingly, online training at over half (53%) of 2021 respondents, an increase of 33% from 2008. Half of respondents want to take part in mentoring or site visits (a 7% increase). The next most popular type of desired training or service is peer advice at 46%, another big increase from 2008 (by 18%) followed by conservation treatment at 41% (an 11% increase), surveys or assessments at 39% (an 11% increase), conferences or meetings at 37% (a 15% increase), and publications at 20% (an 8% increase). 13% of respondents said they did not know what they would like to participate in, a slight increase (by 2%) from 2008, and 2% said they did not want any training or services, down 4% from 2008. One percent said they would like some other kind of training or service, stating that they "need to get control over their holdings first" or that they "would like an expert to come in and do the work."

DESIRED TRAINING AND SERVICES
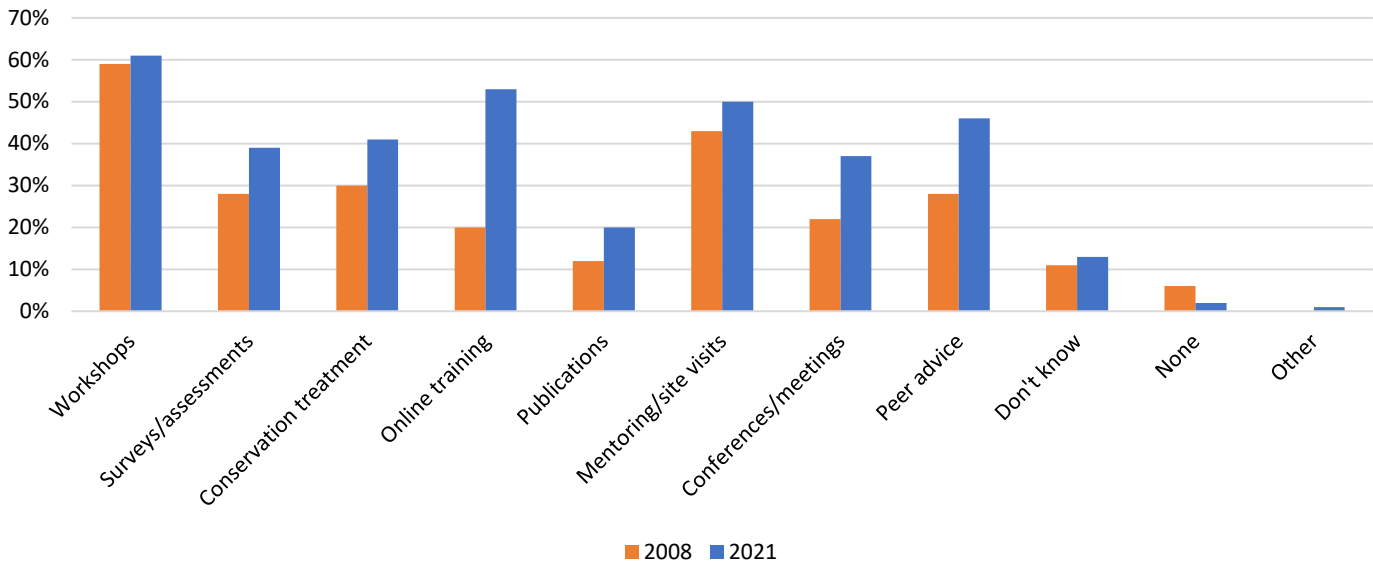
When asking about what areas of collections care that institutions would like to receive training in (question 32), the questions were designed differently in 2008 and 2021. In the VT-C2C, respondents were asked to choose the top three options that they wanted as a multiple choice, while the VHRP survey asked respondents to rank their choices. Each ranking was assigned a numerical value (first choice equaled ten points, second choice equaled nine points, and so on) and the total number of points was added to create the final ranking. The top choices in 2008 mostly remain the top choices in 2021, with collections planning, collections storage, and disaster planning remaining in the top five choices. In 2021, collections planning is the top choice, moving up from third place in 2008, but cataloging collections came in a very close second with seven less points. It's also important to note that although cataloging collections ranked second, the highest number of respondents (40%) selected it as their top choice. Cataloging collections ranked fifth in 2008; the top choice in 2008 was disaster planning which fell to fourth place in 2021.

	2008 CHOICES FOR TRAINING TOPICS *(% of institutions saying they want this choice; able to choose up to 3)*	2021 CHOICES FOR TRAINING TOPICS *(ranked)*
1	Emergency/disaster planning *(49% of respondents wanted this training)*	Collections planning, policies, and procedures *(1213 points, 16% selected as top choice)*
2	Collections storage and housekeeping (48%)	Cataloging collections *(1206 points, 40% selected as top choice)*
3	Collections planning, policies, and procedures (44%)	Collections storage and housekeeping *(1164 points, 13% selected as top choice)*
4	Preservation of a specific type of collection (40%)	Emergency/disaster planning *(1085 points, 9% selected as top choice)*
5	Cataloging collections (37%)	Environmental monitoring *(867 points, 2% selected as top choice)*
6	Environmental monitoring (29%)	Preservation/management of digital collections *(862 points, 9% selected as top choice)*

7	Preservation/management of digital collections (21%)	Preservation of a specific type of collection *(756 points, 8% selected as top choice)*
8	Integrated pest management (13%)	Integrated pest management *(660 points, 0% selected as top choice)*
9	Don't know (3%)	Don't know *(356 points, 3% as top choice)*
10	Don't need training (1%)	Don't need training *(196 points, 0.7% selected as top choice)*

% of Top Choice for Training Topics

Legend:
- Collections planning
- Cataloging collections
- Collections storage
- Disaster planning
- Environmental monitoring
- Digital collections
- Specific type of collection
- Pest management
- Don't know
- Don't need training
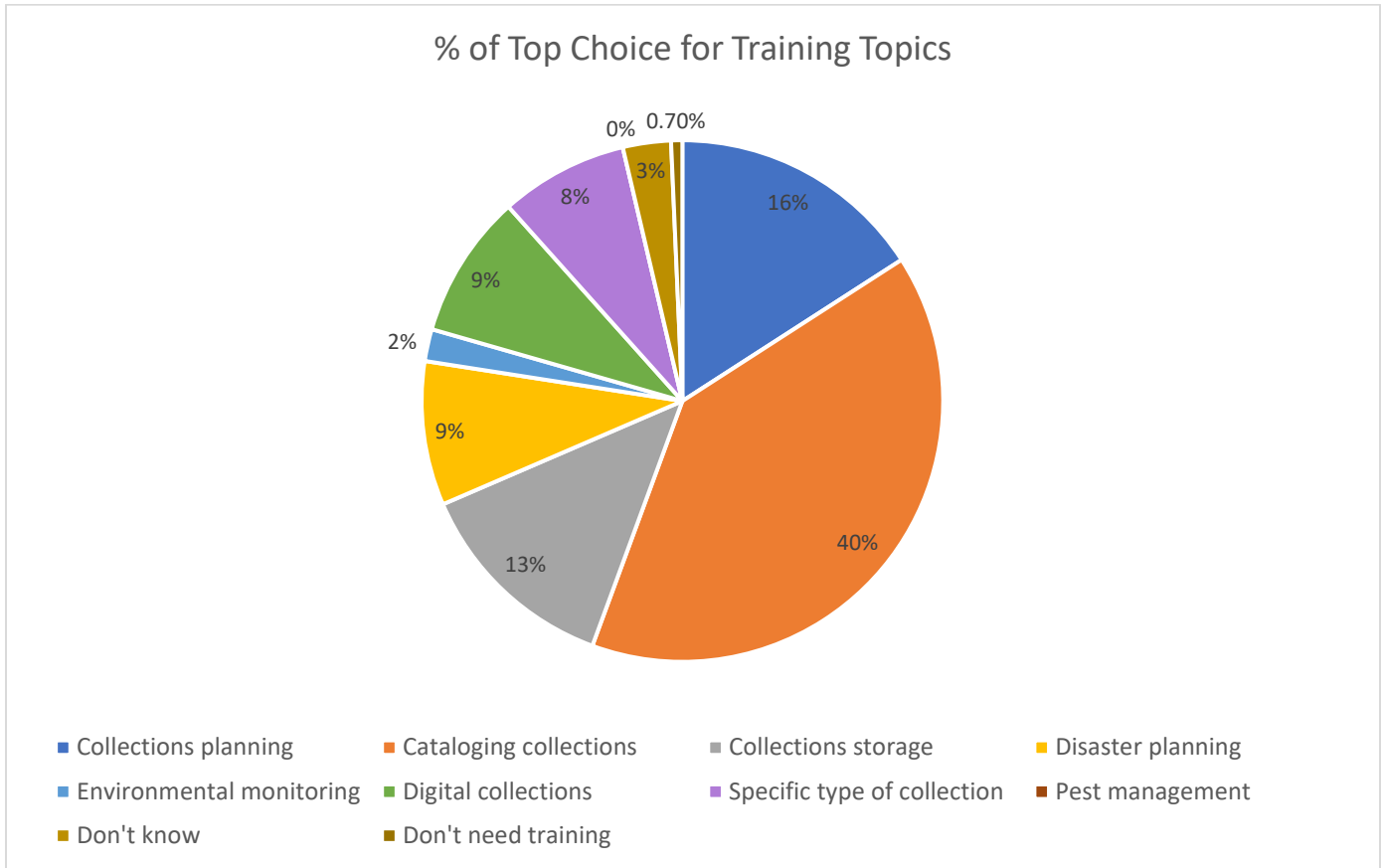
INSTITUTIONAL FUNDING

There has been a slight decrease in institutions seeking external funding for collections in the past three years (question 34). Just over a quarter (26%) of respondents have sought external funding, a 3% decrease from 2008. More than two-thirds (68%) of respondents have not sought funding, and 6% do not know if they have or not. This is a similar pattern to the HHI-2004; the more recent HHIS-2014 did not ask this question. The number of Vermont respondents that received external funding increased across all types of funding sources, which may indicate that although there are slightly fewer institutions seeking external funding, those that do are receiving funds from more diverse sources and perhaps are more successful in seeking funding.
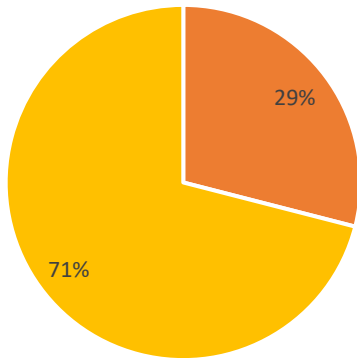
Funding sought from external sources, 2008   *Funding sought from external sources, 2021*
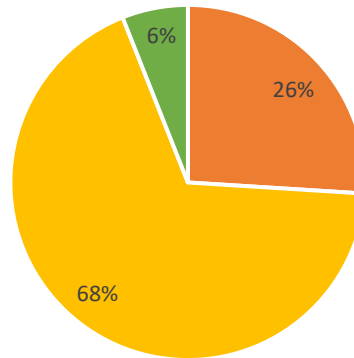
The most common and least common sources of funding (question 35) remain the same as in 2008, though there has been an increase in the percentage of awarded institutions that have received that funding. The most common source in both 2008 and 2021 are individual donor(s) at 59% in 2021 (a 15% increase), followed by foundations at 49% (a 9% increase), state funding at 43% (an 18% increase), federal funding at 35% (an 11% increase), municipal funding at 30% (a 9% increase), and corporate funding at 22% (a 16% increase). Eight percent of 2021 respondents said they did not know what source their funding came from, and 11% of respondents said their funding came from another source, half of which referenced COVID or CARES Act funding. Some institutions may view this funding as federal and others may view it as state, depending on how the funds were received. Individual donors were also the top source nationally in the first HHI survey.

SOURCES OF EXTERNAL FUNDING
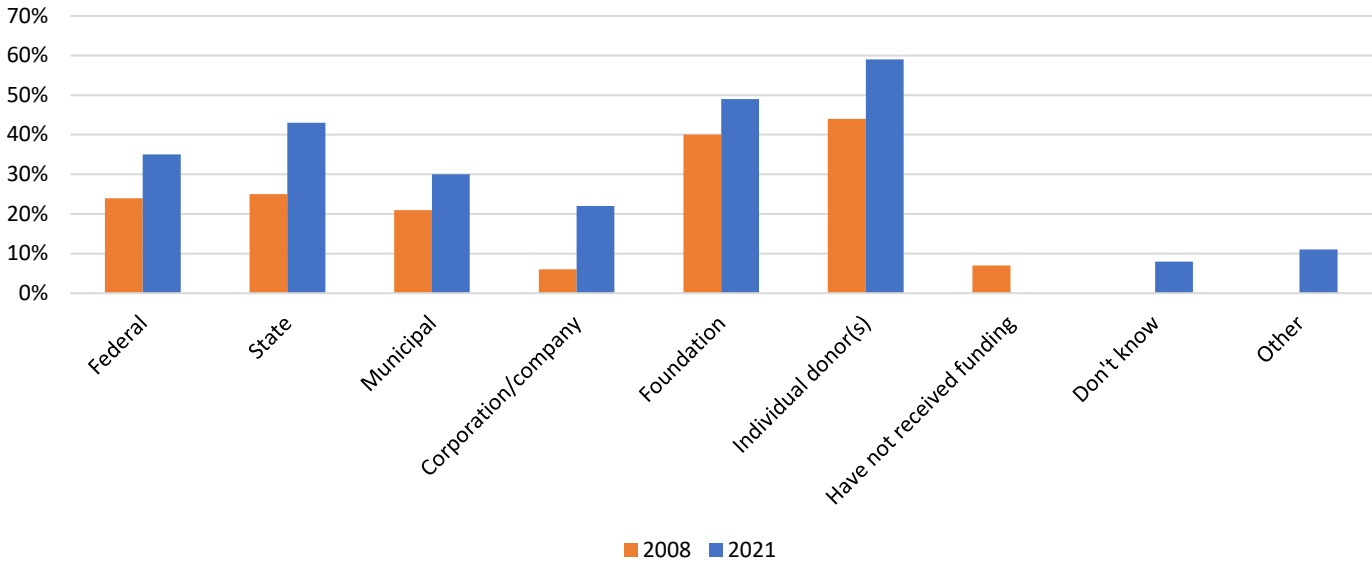
The reasons for institutions not seeking external funding (question 36) remain consistent with results from 2008, though the percentages have changed. The most common reason respondents do not seek external funding is because they lack the staff time or expertise to complete the application; over half of the VHRP respondents cited this as a reason (a 6% increase from 2008). The next reason is that 47% of institutions are not aware of appropriate funding sources (a 5% increase), 36% need more project planning and preparation before requesting funds (a 7% increase), 25% do not have sufficient curatorial information about the collection to ask for funding (a 4% decrease), 15% say preservation and conservation are not an institutional priority (a 6% decrease), and 12% say that they currently have sufficient levels of funding (a 8% increase). Five percent say that they have applied for grants in the past and have been unsuccessful (a 1% decrease), while 4% say they do not know why their institution has not applied for funding. Eight percent of respondents said there was another reason why they did not seek funding. This pattern holds true for the original HHI survey, although we cannot compare trends over time because the HHIS-2014 did not address this issue. The biggest reason that respondents nationally did not seek funding in 2005 was also because of lack of expertise, followed by a lack of awareness of appropriate sources and needing more planning or preparation, the same top three reasons as Vermont.

REASONS FOR NO EXTERNAL FUNDING
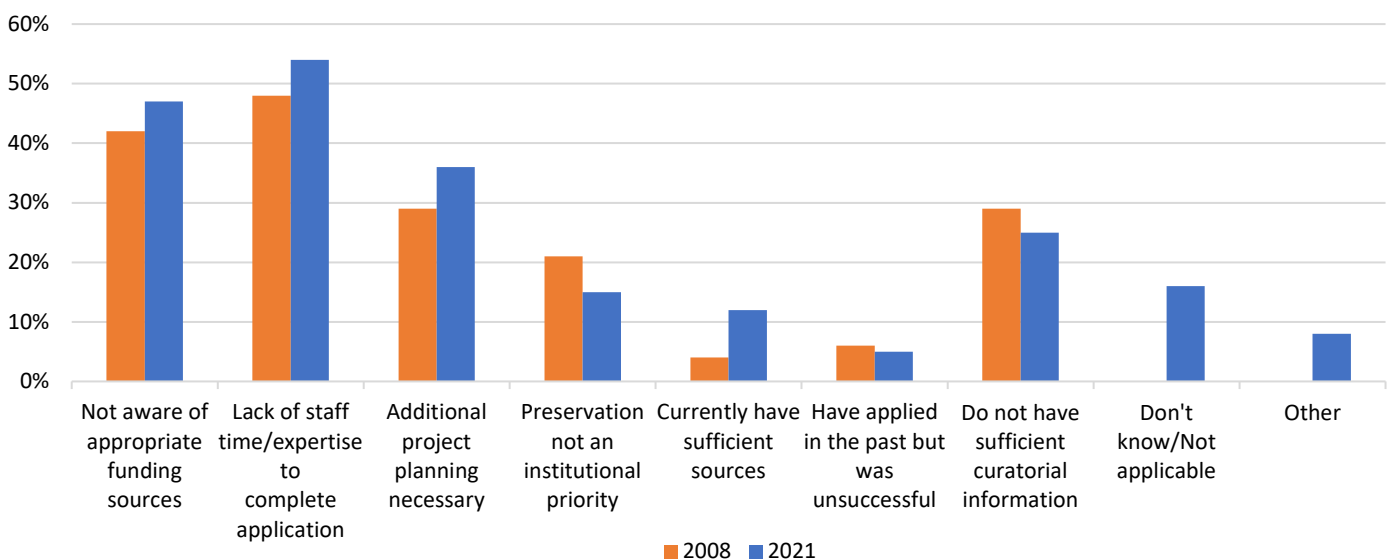
When asked what they would spend money on first if they had it ([question 37](#)), 2021 respondents had some different priorities than those articulated in 2008. Cataloging was the top choice in 2008 but it fell to sixth in 2021; while cataloging ranked second highest among the choice for training topics, 2021 respondents do not have it as their top priority for spending money. Storage space and storage supplies remain high on the list. The choice for professional consultant has risen from seventh to a close second, and environmental monitoring fell in importance from fifth to last choice. Respondents were almost split about whether permanent professional staff should be the first or last priority – 30% selected as the first choice and 29% selected as the last. This is both in line with and a complete flip from 2008 when respondents chose professional staff as their last choice. Although it ranks seventh in 2021, the largest percentage (30%) chose permanent professional staff as their first choice. Spending priorities were split across all choices, with the ranked choices all having under a third of respondents choosing each rank. Technology has stayed firmly at ninth place despite the increase in digital collections over the past decade. There is no national data for spending choices to compare Vermont's choices.

	2008 CHOICES FOR SPENDING MONEY	2021 CHOICES FOR SPENDING MONEY
1	Cataloging/inventory	Storage supplies *(939 points, 8% selected as top choice)*
2	Storage supplies and materials	Professional consultant *(936 points, 17% selected as top choice)*
3	Professional conservation treatment of objects	Storage space *(883 points, 10% selected as top choice)*
4	Storage space	Staff training *(859 points, 4% selected as top choice)*
5	Environmental monitoring and control equipment	Capital building improvements *(794 points, 10% selected as top choice)*
6	Capital building improvements	Cataloging and inventory *(760 points, 4% selected as top choice)*
7	Professional consultant	Permanent professional staff *(751 points, 30% selected as top choice)*
8	Staff training	Professional conservation treatment of objects *(680 points, 9% selected as top choice)*
9	Technology	Technology *(639 points, 5% ranked as top choice)*
10	Permanent professional staff	Environmental monitoring and control equipment *(569 points, 2% ranked as top choice)*

% of Top Choice for Spending Money
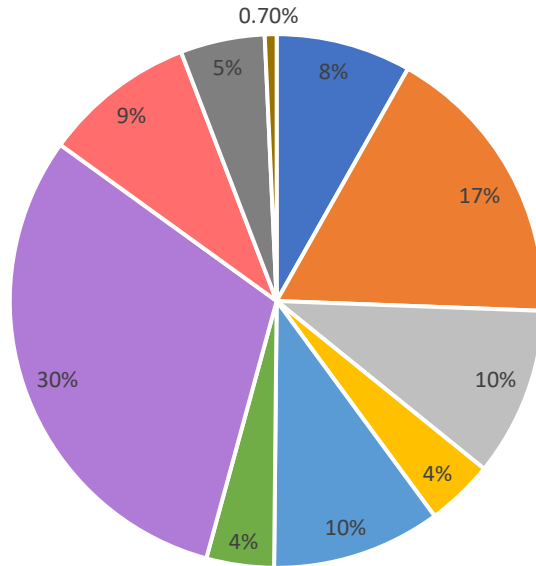
Legend:
- Storage supplies
- Professional consultant
- Storage space
- Staff training
- Building improvements
- Cataloging
- Permanent professional staff
- Conservation treatment
- Technology
- Environmental monitoring
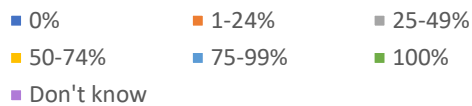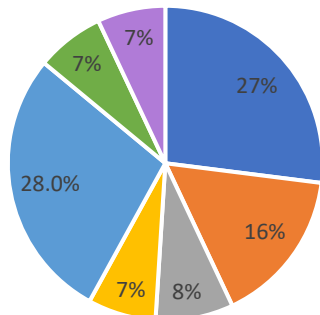
Pie chart values:
- 8%
- 17%
- 10%
- 4%
- 10%
- 4%
- 30%
- 9%
- 5%
- 0.70%
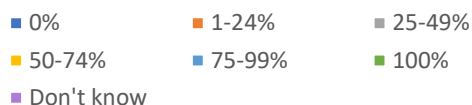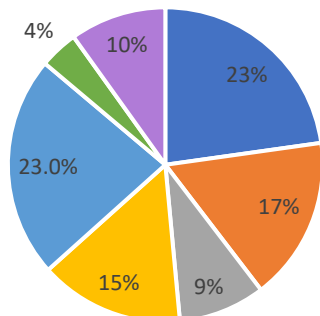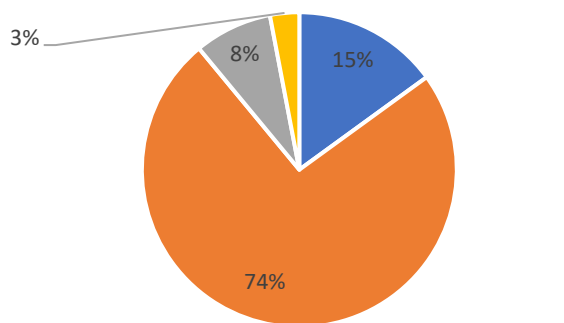
ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS

There is a tie between respondents who have 0% of their collection available through a catalog ([question 38](#)) and those who have 75-99% available (23%). In both cases, this is a 4-5% decrease from the numbers in 2008. Most of the middle options have stayed essentially the same or increased slightly since 2008: respondents with 1-24% of their collection cataloged is 17%, 25-49% cataloged is 9%, and 50-74% cataloged is 15%. Four percent of respondents have 100% of their collections cataloged (a 3% decrease from 2008) and 10% do not know how much of their collections are cataloged (a 3% increase). These numbers are quite similar to 2008, so there is not much change other than a slight improvement in the number of institutions who have nothing cataloged. There were no cataloging numbers for the HHIS-2014, but Vermont's current cataloging numbers are better than the percentages given nationally in 2005.

Just under half of respondents (47%) said that they provide online access to their collections ([question 39](#)) through online exhibits and digitized materials, a 32% increase from 2008. And, simultaneously, just under half (46%) say they do not provide online access, but this is a 28% decrease from the VT-C2C. Most institutions appear to be solidly on one side or the other of online access, but 6% said that while they do not now provide online access they plan to. However, this is a slight decrease (by 2%) from the percentage that said they planned to in 2008. One percent of respondents did not know if they provided online access. The HHI surveys did not ask this question.

There has been an increase in the number of institutions receiving visitors of all types ([question 40](#)). Ninety-five percent of 2021 respondents receive visitors on-site while 51% did in 2008. Eighteen percent of 2021 respondents receive visitors off-site through such services as traveling exhibits, educational programs and bookmobiles compared to 16% in 2008. The largest increase has been online, with 68% of 2021 respondents indicating they have online visitors, a 57% increase over 2008.

% of collection cataloged, 2008

% of collection cataloged, 2021

Online access to collection content, 2008

1%   6%

47%

46%

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ Within next year   ■ Don't know

Online access to collection content, 2021

3%   3%

34%

60%

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ We plan to   ■ Don't know

Social media engagement, 2021

20%

26%

11%

43%

■ Yes   ■ No   ■ We plan to   ■ Don't know
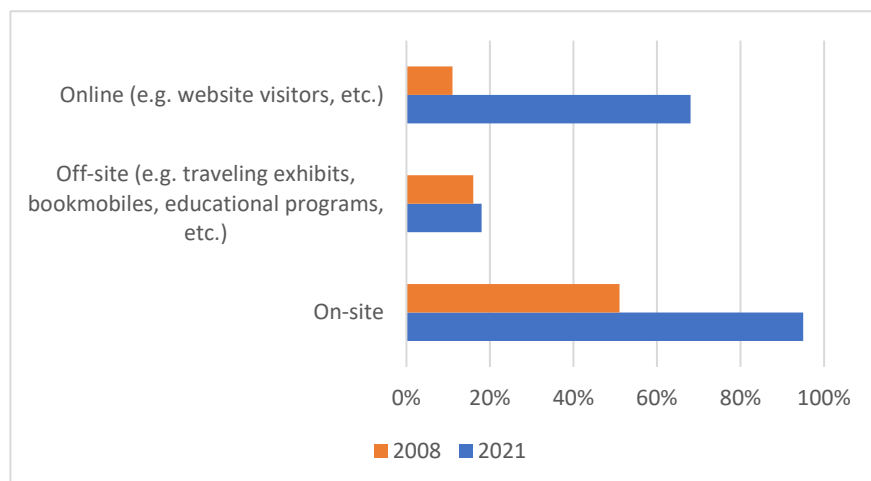
Representation of marginalized groups, 2021
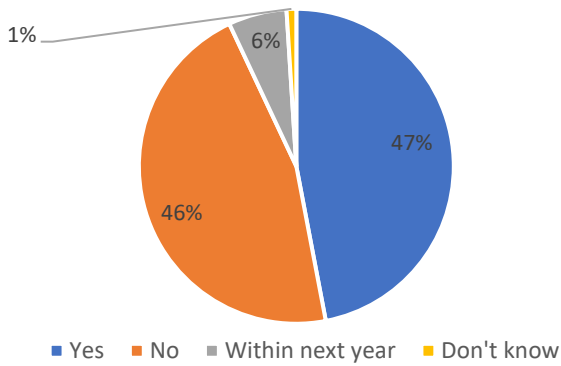
Nearly two-thirds (60%) of respondents engage with users on social media (question 41), and one-third (34%) do not. As with online access to content, respondents are clearly on one side or the other. Three percent state they do not engage with users on social media now but plan to, and another 3% state that they do not know about the institution's social media engagement. This was a new question in the VHRP survey so there is no comparison to 2008.
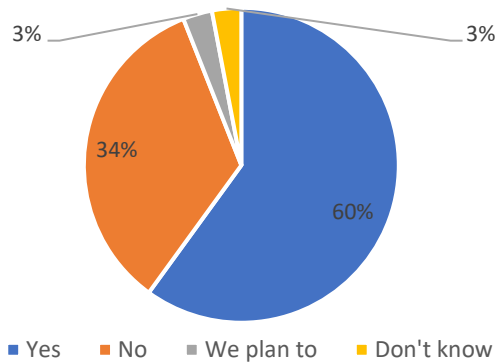
Another new question added to the VHRP survey was about whether institutions are reviewing the representation of marginalized groups in their collections, practices, or services (question 42). Just over a quarter (26%) said they are, 43% said no, 11% indicated they are not currently but plan to, and a fifth (20%) said they do not know if a review is happening.
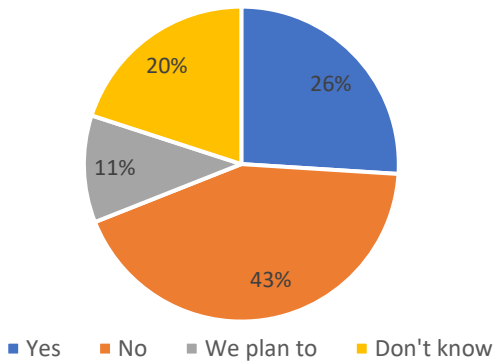
LEVELS OF NEED

The respondents in 2021 were asked to assess their level of need for eleven different areas of collections care ([questions 43-53](#)) on a scale that reflected "no need," "some need," or "urgent need." The scale also included "don't know" and "not applicable" responses. Vermont's needs are different than the national trends. In nearly all areas, the majority of 2021 respondents have a level of need, but not urgent need, which was also true of respondents in 2008. However, for nearly every area there has been an increase in the percentage of respondents saying they have an urgent need for that area, the largest increase (by 12%) being an urgent need for preservation of digital collections. Between 2005 and 2014, the national trend was the opposite. In nearly all areas, there was a significant decrease in the percentages of institutions with need or urgent need, the biggest decrease nationally being for integrated pest management (by 15%) and staff training (by 12%). In Vermont, the level of need for integrated pest management has not changed and the need for staff training has increased by 4%. The most significant changes for Vermont were an increase in the level of need for preservation of digital collections (by 19%) and conservation treatment (by 14%). Nationally, the need for conservation treatment increased slightly (by 3%) and the need for preservation of digital collections decreased by 9%.
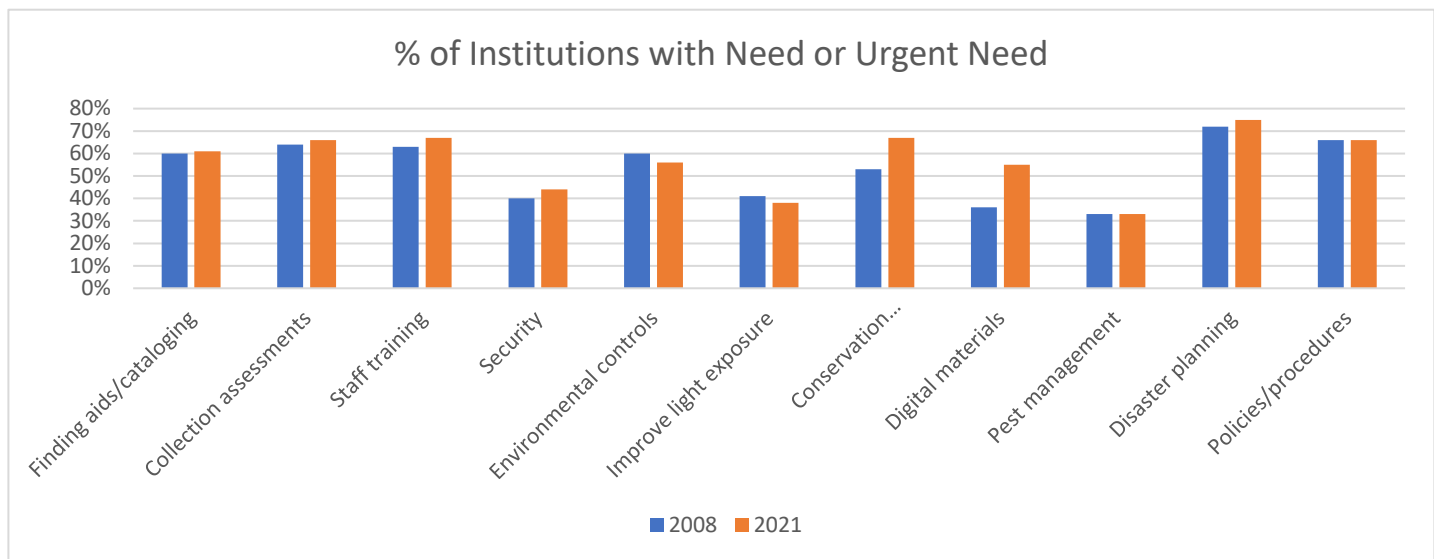
There are five ways to look at the numbers for levels of need in Vermont. First, by the percentage of the combined "some need" and "urgent need" responses in the VHRP survey, which is called "total need" in the following chart. Second, by looking at the change in the responses between 2008 and now for total need(an increase in institutions with need in that area could indicate a worsening problem). Next, by looking solely at the percentage of urgent need in 2021 and at the change in responses between 2008 and 2021 for urgent need; urgent need can indicate a higher risk of problems. The fifth method for analyzing needs is to create a numerical average based on the numbers assigned to each answer, where "no need" equaled 1, "need" equaled 2, "urgent need" equaled three, and so on. This calculation provided by the Microsoft Forms application. Each area of need is given a rank based on these five types of measurements and then those ranks are averaged into a final ranking.

The highest averaged area of need is in emergency preparedness and disaster planning, which was also true in 2008. The next highest need is for the preservation of digital collections, which ranked tenth in 2008. Conservation treatment came in third in 2021, which was much lower in 2008. Staff training and cataloging remain steady between 2008 and 2021 at fourth and fifth, respectively. Condition assessments, policy assistance, and light controls have all fallen in importance, and security and integrated pest management have held steady toward the bottom of the list.

	By percentage of total need	By change from 2008 responses (total need)	By percentage of urgent need	By change from 2008 responses (urgent need)	By average of all choices	Final ranking
1	Emergency preparedness/disaster planning (75%)	Preservation of digital collections (+19%)	Emergency preparedness/disaster planning (21%)	Preservation of digital collections (+12%)	Preservation of digital collections (2.59)	**Emergency preparedness/disaster planning**
2	Staff training (67%)	Conservation treatment (+14%)	Finding aids or cataloging of collection (19%)	Emergency preparedness/disaster planning (+8%)	Conservation treatment (2.48)	**Preservation of digital collections**
3	Conservation treatment (67%)	Staff training (+4%)	Environmental controls (15%)	Conservation treatment (+7%)	Emergency preparedness/disaster planning (2.47)	**Conservation treatment**
4	Creating/updating collections policies and procedures (66%)	Security (+4%)	Preservation of digital collections (15%)	Staff training (+5%)	Environmental controls (2.4)	**Staff training**
5	Condition surveys or assessments of collection (66%)	Emergency preparedness/disaster planning (+3%)	Condition surveys or assessments of collection (12%)	Finding aids or cataloging of collection (+4%)	Finding aids or cataloging of collection (2.38)	**Finding aids or cataloging of collection**
6	Finding aids or cataloging of collection (61%)	Condition surveys or assessments of collection (+2%)	Conservation treatment (12%)	Security (+4%)	Creating/updating collections policies and procedures (2.37)	**Condition surveys or assessments of collection**
7	Environmental controls (56%)	Finding aids or cataloging of collection (+1%)	Creating/updating collections policies and procedures (11%)	Integrated pest management (+3%)	Condition surveys or assessments of collection (2.31)	**Environmental controls**
8	Preservation of digital collections (55%)	Integrated pest management (0%)	Staff training (11%)	Environmental controls (+2%)	Staff training (2.3)	**Creating/updating collections policies and procedures**
9	Security (44%)	Creating/updating collections policies and procedures (0%)	Security (10%)	Condition surveys or assessments of collection (+1%)	Integrated pest management (2.21)	**Security**
10	Improvements to reduce collections' exposure to light (38%)	Improvements to reduce collections' exposure to light (-3%)	Integrated pest management (7%)	Creating/updating collections policies and procedures (0%)	Improvements to reduce collections' exposure to light (2.14)	**Integrated pest management**
11	Integrated pest management (33%)	Environmental controls (-4%)	Improvements to reduce collections' exposure to light (5%)	Improvements to reduce collections' exposure to light (-1%)	Security (2.14)	**Improvements to reduce collections' exposure to light**

CONCLUSION

"The biggest barrier to progress on collections work is lack of dedicated staff time and/or funding to maintain the position."

FINDINGS AND TRENDS OVER TIME

The HHI-2004 found that a quarter of surveyed institutions did not have environmental controls to protect collections, that damage to collections had occurred in almost two-thirds of institutions, and over 80% of institutions did not have an emergency plan that addressed collections. This led to the recommendation that institutions must make safe storage conditions and an emergency plan a priority for the care of collections. Ten years later, the HHIS-2014 found that institutions had reduced damage to collections from improper storage and light exposure, had conducted more collections assessments, had placed greater financial priority on collections and had engaged in more disaster planning. The awareness that came from the first national survey led to improvements across the board in collections stewardship.

Is the same true for Vermont? In 2008, the VT-C2C survey found results similar to the 2005 national results, along with an additional concern about a lack of cataloging and intellectual control. The authors of the 2008 survey report recommended that emergency preparedness needed to be the priority through disaster planning, regional storage spaces for disaster supply caches, and coordination of statewide networks. How have things changed in Vermont in the past thirteen years? Like at the national level, Vermont has seen an increase in environmental monitoring and control, along with an increase in institutions with long-range preservation plans and recent (less than five years or ongoing) collection surveys. While the numbers are still low overall –27% of respondents have preservation plans and 37% have a collection survey – it is an increase, and the trend is going in the right direction. Similarly, only 28% of Vermont institutions have an emergency plan, but this is an increase of 15% from 2008; the trend is going in the right direction. Damage to collections has decreased for nearly every cause. The top two biggest causes of damage are from physical/chemical deterioration and improper storage, which hold true from 2008.

The VT-C2C found that Vermont had an additional concern about the lack of cataloging and intellectual control over collections, also apparent in the VHRP survey. In 2008, 58% of respondents either had less than half of their holdings cataloged or did not know how much they had cataloged; this number went up by one percentage point in 2021. Cataloging or finding aids has remained in the top five needs for both surveys, with 60% having a need or urgent need in 2008; again, that number increased by one percentage point in 2021. While cataloging is currently the very close second choice for training topics, 2021 respondents ranked it their sixth priority for spending money. All of this

shows that the concerns noted in the VT-C2C findings hold true today; that the need for cataloging and intellectual control remains at the same level as thirteen years ago, with the added concern of respondents desiring more assistance while being less willing to pay for it.

It is important to note the composition of the work force in Vermont's cultural institutions. While the 2008 survey asked about staffing and volunteers specifically responsible for collections and the 2021 survey only asked about staffing and volunteers generally, there does seem to be a slight upward trend in paid staff, which is encouraging. But volunteers are the biggest source of labor for the state's cultural heritage institutions; nearly two-thirds (64%) of institutions rely on volunteers for some aspect of their functioning, whether it be governance, public relations, or collections care. This means there can be challenges finding consistent labor as well as a lack of opportunity for those looking to be gainfully employed in collections care-related work. In the open-ended comment section at the end of the VHRP survey (question 56), there were several answers that reflected a concern about how collections care work would be done in the future, including an aging workforce, the lack of engaged younger volunteers, and the lack of resources generally. One response, cited in the block quote above, concisely states that the biggest barrier to the preservation of collections is a lack of resources.

It likely comes as no surprise that the most drastic differences between 2008 and 2021 are in relation to digital materials. While just over half (58%) of Vermont institutions have the responsibility of caring for digital materials, it is a significant increase of 30% from 2008. And, by a similar increase, nearly half (47%) of institutions now offer online access to some of their content. Nearly two-thirds (60%) of respondents engage on social media, and 68% get online visitors through websites or online exhibits. The desire for online training has gone up significantly, by 33%. These factors indicate that there is not only more digital material to handle, but that there is an increased expectation of remote access from both the user side and practitioner side.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Based upon the analysis of the results of the VHRP survey (particularly the "Risks to Collections," "Training," and "Levels of Need" sections), the VHRP plans to focus training, services, and resources on the following:

Emergency preparedness and disaster planning. Less than a third of institutions have disaster plans and the most common reason for not having a plan is "do not have the expertise to write one." And a few respondents indicated in the "other" category that they have fireproof vaults, that flooding doesn't occur at their location, or that they're too busy recovering from previous flooding/disasters and do not have time to plan. There were some similar comments in the 2008 survey, which indicates there is a persistent misbelief about the importance and need for emergency preparedness. Emergency preparedness has remained among the top five choices of subjects for training and is ranked as the top area of need. Because improvements have already been made in this area since 2008, we need to

keep the momentum going and get those numbers even higher. Included in this should be the reinforcement of the importance of storing essential records off-site, since that practice has dramatically decreased since 2008.

Cataloging, inventories, and intellectual control. Cataloging collections is the top choice subject for training but is among the last choices for spending priorities. Nearly a quarter of institutions have no cataloged collections at all, another quarter have most cataloged, with everyone else falling somewhere in between. While there is a slight improvement in the number of institutions that have nothing cataloged, it shows that intellectual control remains a big risk factor for Vermont's collections.

Proper housing and storage. Storage and enclosures are the second-highest cause of damage to collections and collections storage has remained in the top three choices for training subjects.

Digital preservation. The largest increase in urgent need is in digital preservation, and it ranks as the second highest area of overall need. Combined with the large increase of digital materials cared for by institutions and the fact that technology is almost last choice for spending priorities, this shows that Vermont's digital cultural heritage is at risk and steps should be taken to mitigate this risk before it is too late.

Causes of deterioration and information about conservation. Physical and chemical deterioration are the biggest cause of collections damage, with water or moisture coming in third. A training about the causes of deterioration could raise awareness about both issues. Conservation treatment is ranked as the third highest area of need, and some general information about conservation including how to prioritize treatment and how to choose a conservator could be paired with training on causes of deterioration to help institutions identify damage and get appropriate treatment.

Workshops remain the most popular type of training desired, but the desire for online training has increased dramatically, by 33%. The VHRP should offer in-person as well as online training options, developing trainings that can operate in both modalities. The third most desired training type or service is mentoring or site visits, which the VHRP is currently working to enhance with the addition of a second full time staff member taking on much of the roving archivist duties.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Vermont Historical Records Program Survey

The Vermont Historical Records Program (VHRP) is a program at the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration that works to improve public access to and engagement with Vermont historical records and to encourage and facilitate collaborative efforts among Vermont historical records repositories.

We are surveying institutions in the state that care for historical records and other cultural heritage materials to better understand the current status of your organization's collections. The results will also help the VHRP plan its offerings and target its assistance to better meet your needs. We will also be comparing this data to the results of a similar survey, the Connecting to Collections survey, conducted in 2008, to see what has changed over time.

The survey consists of about 50 questions and will take about 30 minutes to complete. We sincerely appreciate your time and input! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at sos.vhrp@vermont.gov or 802-828-5385.

Section 1: Contact Information

1. **What is the name of your institution/organization?**
2. **What city or town are you located in?**
3. **Name of person completing survey:**
4. **Job title or position of person completing survey:**
5. **Contact phone number:**
6. **May we have permission to use your institution's name in any publications?**
   Yes
   No

Section 2: Institutional & Collection Information[7]

7. **How many full-time paid staff members does your institution have?[8]**
8. **How many part-time paid staff members does your institution have?[9]**
9. **How many volunteer staff members does your institution have?[10]**
10. **Which most closely describes your institution's primary function or service?** *(Select one)*
    Academic library

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[7] Questions that were in the 2008 VT-C2C survey that were omitted from this section include:
- What professional organizations is your institution a member of?
- Who conducted your most recent collections survey?
- How much more storage space would you need to adequately store your collections?
- Does the mission of your institution support preservation of your collection?
- What does your conservation/preservation program include?

[8] In 2008, this question asked about staff who specifically work on collections care.

[9] In 2008, this question asked about staff who specifically work on collections care.

[10] In 2008, this question asked about volunteers who specifically work on collections care.

Agency or university department with scientific, archaeological, or artifact collections
Archives
Art museum (including gallery, arts center, or arts organization)
Historic site/building
Nature center, arboretum, or botanical garden
Natural history museum
Public records – municipal
Public records – court
Science/technology museum (including planetariums)
Other:

11. **Which additional functions or services does your institution provide?** *(Select all that apply)*
    Academic library
    Agency or university department with scientific, archaeological, or artifact collections
    Archives
    Art museum (including gallery, arts center, or arts organization)
    Historic site/building
    Nature center, arboretum, or botanical garden
    Natural history museum
    Public records – municipal
    Public records – court
    Science/technology museum (including planetariums)
    Other:

12. **Which of the following most closely describes your institution's governance?** *(Select one)*
    College, university, or other academic entity
    Corporate or for-profit organization
    County
    Municipal
    Non-profit, non-governmental organization or foundation
    State

13. **Does your institution hold collections of the following types?** *(Select all that apply)*
    Books and bound volumes *(including newspapers)*
    Unbound sheets *(e.g. archival records, manuscripts, maps, ephemera, etc.)*
    Photographic collections *(e.g. prints, negatives, slides, microfilm, microfiche, etc.)*
    Moving image collections *(e.g. film, videotape, DVD, etc.)*
    Recorded sound collections *(e.g. record, cassette, CD, mp3, etc.)*
    Digital material collections *(e.g. floppy disc, CD-ROM, other data storage)*
    Arts objects *(e.g. paintings, prints, drawings, sculpture, etc.)*
    Historical objects *(e.g. textiles, furniture, domestic objects, technological or agricultural artifacts, etc.)*
    Archaeological collections
    Natural science specimens
    Historic buildings *(e.g. houses, outbuildings, etc.)*
    Live (plant and/or animal) collections
    Other:

14. **Where are your collections stored?**
    Building your institution owns
    Building/space your institution rents/leases
    Donated space
    Shared facility
    Private home

Outdoors
Don't know
None
Other:

15. **Does your institution's mission or program include the responsibility to preserve and manage digital collections (including digital documents, images, media, web sites, etc.)?**
    Yes
    No
    Don't know
    Not applicable

16. **Has a survey of the general condition of your collections been done?**
    Yes
    No
    Don't know

17. **If yes, when was the most recent survey conducted?** *(Please indicate year.)*

Section 3: Risks to Collections[11]

18. **Do you make an effort to control temperature levels to help preserve your collections?[12]**
    Yes
    No
    Don't know

19. **Do you make an effort to control humidity levels to help preserve your collections?[13]**
    Yes
    No
    Don't know

20. **Do you make an effort to control light levels to help preserve your collections?[14]**
    Yes
    No
    Don't know

21. **Do you monitor for pests like insects and rodents?[15]**
    Yes
    No
    Don't know

22. **Does your institution have a long-range preservation plan for the care of your collections?**
    Yes
    No
    Don't know

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[11] Questions that were in the 2008 VT-C2C survey that were omitted from this section include:
- What types of monitoring equipment do you use on a regular basis?
- In what format do you store the backup copies of essential records?

[12] In 2008, this question had the option to indicate more specifically between "Yes, in all areas," or "In some but not all areas."

[13] In 2008, this question had the option to indicate more specifically between "Yes, in all areas," or "In some but not all areas."

[14] In 2008, this question had the option to indicate more specifically between "Yes, in all areas," or "In some but not all areas."

[15] This was a new question for the 2021 survey.

23. **Does your institution have an emergency preparedness/disaster plan that includes the collections?**
Yes
No
Don't know

24. **If no, why hasn't an emergency plan been created for your institution?** *(Select one)*
Do not have the expertise to write one
Do not have the time to write one
Not an institutional priority
Was unaware of need for disaster planning
Other:

25. **Is your staff trained to carry out your emergency/disaster plan?**
Yes
No
Don't know
Not applicable

26. **Are copies of essential collections records, such as the catalog or insurance policies, stored off-site?**
Yes
No
Don't know

27. **Do you have security systems (e.g. security guard, staff observation, intrusion detection) to help prevent theft or vandalism of collections?**
Yes
No
Don't know

28. **Do you have adequate environmental monitoring alarm systems to help prevent fire or water damage to the collections?**
Yes
No
Don't know

29. **Do you have collections that have damage or loss due to any of these causes? (Select all that apply):[16]**
Handling *(e.g. by researchers, staff, or in shipping)*
Water or moisture *(e.g. mold, stains, warping)*
Light *(e.g. fading, discoloration)*
Airborne particulates or pollutants *(e.g. dust or soot)*
Fire
Improper storage or enclosure *(e.g. bent, creased, adhered together)*
Pests
Physical or chemical deterioration *(e.g. brittle paper, flaked paint, cracked leather, degradation of electronic media)*
Obsolescence of playback equipment, hardware, or software
Prior treatment or restoration
Theft

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[16] In 2008, this question had the option to indicate more specifically if there was "significant loss" vs. "some loss."

Section 4: Training

30. **What types of collections training programs or services has your institution participated in over the past five years?** *(Select all that apply)*
    Workshops
    Surveys or assessments
    Conservation treatment
    Online training
    Publications (including CDs)
    Mentoring or site visits
    Conferences or meetings
    Peer advice
    Don't know
    None
    Other:

31. **What types of collections training programs or services would you like to participate in?** *(Select all that apply)*[17]
    Workshops
    Surveys or assessments
    Conservation treatment
    Online training
    Publications (including CDs)
    Mentoring or site visits
    Conferences or meetings
    Peer advice
    Don't know
    None
    Other:

32. **In what areas related to collections care would you like to receive training?** *(Rank your choices)*[18]
    ___Cataloging collections
    ___Collections planning, policies, and procedures
    ___Collections storage and housekeeping
    ___Emergency/disaster planning
    ___Environmental monitoring
    ___Integrated pest management
    ___Preservation/management of digital collections
    ___Preservation of a specific type of collection (e.g. photographs, paper, textiles, etc.)
    ___Don't know
    ___Don't need training

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[17] In 2008, respondents were asked to choose only three.
[18] In 2008, respondents were asked to choose only three.

Section 5: Funding[19]

33. **How much support does your organization get from your municipality?[20]**

34. **Has your institution sought out funding specifically for collections care from any public or private source in the last three years?**
    Yes
    No
    Don't know

35. **From which external sources have you received funding?** *(Select all that apply)*
    Federal
    State
    Municipal
    Corporation or company
    Foundation
    Individual donor(s)
    Have not received funding from external sources
    Don't know
    Other:

36. **If your institution did not seek external funding for collections care, why not?** *(Select all that apply)*
    Not aware of appropriate funding sources
    Lack of staff time or expertise to complete application
    Additional project planning or preparation necessary before requesting funds
    Conservation/preservation not an institutional priority
    Currently have sufficient sources of funding
    Have applied for grant(s) from external sources in the past but have been unsuccessful
    Do not have sufficient curatorial information on the collection to ask for conservation funding
    Don't know
    Not applicable
    Other:

37. **If you had money for collections care, what would you spend it on first?** *(Rank your choices)[21]*
    ___Permanent professional staff
    ___Professional consultant
    ___Staff training
    ___Storage space
    ___Storage supplies and materials
    ___Capital building improvements (Including security)

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[19] Questions that were in the 2008 VT-C2C survey that were omitted from this section include:
- What is your total annual operating budget?
- Do you have funds specifically allocated for conservation/preservation activities in your annual budget?
- What is your annual budget for conservation/preservation?
- How much would your organization be willing to spend for a full-day workshop?
- How much would your organization be willing to spend for a collections survey or assessment?
- How much would your organization be willing to spend for conservation treatment on one object?
- What federal agency awarded you external funding?
- What statewide program awarded you external funding?
- What has been the impact of funding you've received?

[20] In 2008, this question was asked for town clerks only and asked, "Has your municipality adopted the preservation surcharge?"
[21] In 2008, respondents were asked to rank their top three choices only.

___Cataloging/inventory
___Professional conservation treatment of objects
___Technology (including hardware and software)
___Environmental monitoring and control equipment

Section 6: Access[22]

38. **What estimated percentage of the collection is accessible through a catalog?**
    0%
    1-24%
    25-49%
    50-74%
    75-99%
    100%
    Don't know

39. **Do you provide online access to the content of any or your collections or holdings *(e.g. online exhibitions, interactive resources, digitally scanned documents or artifacts)?***
    Yes
    No
    No, but will within the next year
    Don't know

40. **What types of visitors does your institution receive? *(Select all that apply)***
    On-site
    Off-site *(e.g. traveling exhibits, bookmobiles, educational programs, etc.)*
    Online *(e.g. website visitors, etc.)*

41. **Do you engage with your users on social media?[23]**
    Yes
    No
    No, but we plan to
    Don't know

42. **Is your institution reviewing the representation of marginalized groups in your collections, practices, or services?[24]**
    Yes
    No
    No, but we plan to
    Don't know

---

[22] Questions that were in the 2008 VT-C2C survey that were omitted from this section include:
- What type of internet service does your institution have?
- Is internet access available in your community?
- In what format(s) do you maintain a catalog?
- What estimated percentage of catalog is accessible online?

[23] This was a new question for the 2021 survey.

[24] This was a new question for the 2021 survey.

Section 7: Levels of Need

Q. 43-53: Please indicate your institution's level of need in the following areas related to collections care. Need (2) indicates an improvement is required to reduce risk of damage or deterioration to collections. Urgent Need (3) indicates a major improvement is required to prevent damage or deterioration to collections.

1 = No Need
2 = Need
3 = Urgent Need
4 = Don't know
5 = Not Applicable

43. **Finding aids or cataloging of collection:**
44. **Condition surveys or assessments of collection:**
45. **Staff training**
46. **Security**
47. **Environmental controls (e.g. heating, air conditioning, humidity control)**
48. **Improvements to reduce collections' exposure to light**
49. **Conservation treatment (including item-level repair and stabilization)**
50. **Preservation of digital collections**
51. **Integrated pest management**
52. **Emergency preparedness/disaster planning**
53. **Creating/updating collections policies and procedures**

Section 8: Final Thoughts

54. **The VHRP is considering the development of an internship program. Would you be interested in having an intern placed at your institution?[25]**
    Yes
    No
    Maybe

55. **The VHRP is considering the development of regional hubs to facilitate skill building and networking among organizations locally. Would your institution be interested in participating in such a program?[26]**
    Yes
    No
    Maybe

56. **THANK YOU! Please feel free to share any other comments you have with us.**

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[25] This was a new question for the 2021 survey. 41% said yes, 44% said maybe, and 15% said no.
[26] This was a new question for the 2021 survey. 50% said yes, 38% said maybe, and 12% said no.

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE REPORT OF VT-C2C RESPONSES

Collection Information

Full-time paid staff:	11	Governance:	Non-profit, non-governmental organization or foundation
Part-time paid staff:	15		

Full-time volunteers:		Primary function: Other: regional museum
Part-time volunteers:		Additional functions: Archives; Historical society; Art museum

What types of collections do you hold?

Books and bound volumes (including newspapers); Unbound sheets (e.g., archival records, manuscripts, maps, ephemera, paper items, etc.); Photographic collections (e.g., prints, negatives, slides, microfilm, microfiche); Recorded sound collections (e.g., records, cassettes, CD, mp3, etc.); Digital material collections (e.g., floppy discs, CD-R, other data storage); Arts objects (e.g., paintings, prints, drawings, sculpture); Historic objects (e.g., textiles, furniture, domestic objects, technological and agricultural artifacts, etc.); Archaeological collections; Historic buildings (e.g., houses, outbuildings, etc.)

Does your institution's mission or program include the responsibility to preserve digital collections?
No

Has a collection condition survey been done?	No
Who conducted your most recent survey?	
When was the most recent survey conducted?	

Where are your collections stored?
Building your institution owns; Outdoors

Risks to Collections

Do you make an effort to control temperature?	Yes, in all areas
Do you make an effort to control humidity levels?	In some, but not all areas
Do you make an effort to control light levels?	In some, but not all areas

Do you have adequate environmental monitoring alarms?	In some, but not all areas
Do you have security systems?	Yes

Do you have a written, long-range preservation plan?	Yes, but it is not up-to-date
Do you have a written emergency/disater plan?	Yes
If not, why hasn't an emergency plan been created?	
Is staff trained to carry out your emergency plan?	No

Do you have collections damaged/lost due to:

Handling?	Some loss	Pests?	Some loss
Water/moisture?	Some loss	Vandalism?	No loss
Light exposure?	Some loss	Phys/chem deterioratio	Some loss
Air pollution?	Some loss	Obsolete tech?	No loss
FIre?	Some loss	Prior treatment?	Some loss
Improper storage?	Some loss	Theft?	Some loss

Training and Needs

████████████

What types of collections training have you done in last 5 years?

Conservation treatment; Conferences or meetings

What types of collections training would you like to do?

Workshops; Surveys or assessments; Conservation treatment; Conferences or meetings; Peer advice

Related to preservation, what training would you like to do?

Collections planning, policies and procedures; Cataloging collections; Preservation/management of digital collections; Integrated Pest Management; Collections storage & housekeeping; Preservation of a specific type of collections (e.g.- photographs, paper, textiles)

Rate your level of need for:

Finding aids/cataloging	Urgent need	Conservation treatment	Urgent need
Condition surveys/assessment	Need	Preservation of digital collections	No need
Staff training	No need	Integrated pest management	No need
Security	No need	Emergency preparedness	No need
Environmental controls	Need	Creating/updating collections policies	No need
Reducing light exposure	No need		

Funding

Have you sought out external preservation funding in the past 3 years?   **Yes**

From which external sources have you sought funding?

Federal; Foundation

Why did you not seek funding?

Would you spend money on:
Permanent professional staff?
A professional consultant?

Staff training?
Storage space?   **First choice**
Storage supplies?   **Second choice**
Building improvements?
Cataloging and inventory?
Conservation treatment?   **Third choice**
Technology?
Environmental equipment?

Access

What % of the collection is accessible through a catalog?   **75-99%**

Do you provide online access to the content of your holdings?   **Yes**

How many visitors do you have:
On-site?
Off-site (traveling exhibits, workshops)?
Online?

Other Comments

Name of person completing survey: **████████**   Title: **██████**

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

Addison Town Historical Society
American Precision Museum
Anonymous (18 institutions requested their name not be published)
Bailey Memorial Library
Barnet Historical Society
Barre Historical Society
Belcher Memorial Library
Bellows Falls Historical Society
Bennington Historical Society and Museum
Bent Northrop Memorial Library
Billings Farm and Museum
Bixby Memorial Free Library
Brainerd Memorial Library
Brandon Museum at the Stephen A. Douglas Birthplace
Brattleboro Historical Society
Bristol Historical Society
Brookfield Historical Society
Brooks Memorial Library
Burlington City Archives
Canaan Historical Society
Cavendish Historical Society
Chimney Point State Historic Site
City of Barre
Colchester Historical Society
Corinth Historical Society
Corner School Resource Center of Granville
Cornwall Free Public Library
Dorset Historical Society
Dover Historical Society
Durick Library
Estey Organ Museum
Eureka Schoolhouse
Fair Haven Historical Society
Fairfield Historical Society
Fairlee Historical Society
Ferrisburgh Historical Society
Fletcher Memorial Library
Georgia Historical Society
Greensboro Historical Society

Hancock Historical Society
Hardwick Historical Society
Hartford Historical Society
Hartland Historical Society
Hartness Library
Haskell Free Library
Henry Sheldon Museum of Vermont History
Highgate Library and Community Center
Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home
Historical Society of Peru
Historical Society of Wilmington
Historical Society of Windham County
Hogue Library
Hubbardton Battlefield State Historic Site
Jericho Historical Society
Jeudevine Memorial Library
Justin Morrill State Historic Site
Kellogg-Hubbard Library
Kimball Public Library
Lake Champlain Maritime Museum
Londonderry Arts and Historical Society
Lydia Taft Pratt Library
Maclure Library
Marlboro Historical Society
Middlebury College Library
Middlesex Historical Society
Miller Information Commons
Moore Free Library
Morristown Historical Society/Noyes House Museum
Mount Independence State Historic Site
Mount Tabor/Danby Historical Society
North Hero Public Library
Norwich Historical Society
Orwell Free Library
Peacham Historical Association
Peacham Library
Poultney Historical Association
President Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site
President Chester Arthur State Historic Site
Richmond Historical Society

Rochester Historical Society
Rockingham Free Public Library
Russell Memorial Library
Rutland Free Library
Rutland Historical Society
Ryegate Historical Society
Saint Johnsbury History and Heritage Center
Saxtons River Historical Society
Shelburne Museum
Sherburne Historians
South Hero Bicentennial Museum
Springfield Art and Historical Society
Stockbridge/Gaysville Historical Society
Stowe Historical Society
Theron Boyd State Historic Site
Thetford Historical Society
Tinmouth Historical and Genealogical Society
Town of Andover
Town of Bolton
Town of Brandon
Town of Calais
Town of Castleton
Town of Danby
Town of Danville
Town of Duxbury
Town of Fairlee
Town of Fayston
Town of Granville
Town of Highgate
Town of Hubbardton
Town of Marlboro
Town of Marshfield
Town of Middletown Springs
Town of Pomfret
Town of Putney
Town of Ripton
Town of Rockingham
Town of Royalton
Town of Saint Johnsbury
Town of Sheldon
Town of Stowe
Town of Troy
Town of Wallingford
Town of Westfield
Town of Wilmington
Town of Windham
Underhill Historical Society
Underwater Historic Preservers
Vermont Folklife Center
Vermont Granite Museum
Vermont Historical Society
Vermont Marble Museum
Vermont National Guard Library and Museum

Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum
Vernon Historians
Wallingford Historical Society
Waterbury Historical Society
Waterford Historical Society
Weathersfield Historical Society
West Fairlee Historical Society
Whiting Library
Williamstown Historical Society
Williston Historical Society
Windsor Public Library
Winooski Memorial Library
Woodbury Community Library
Worcester Historical Society