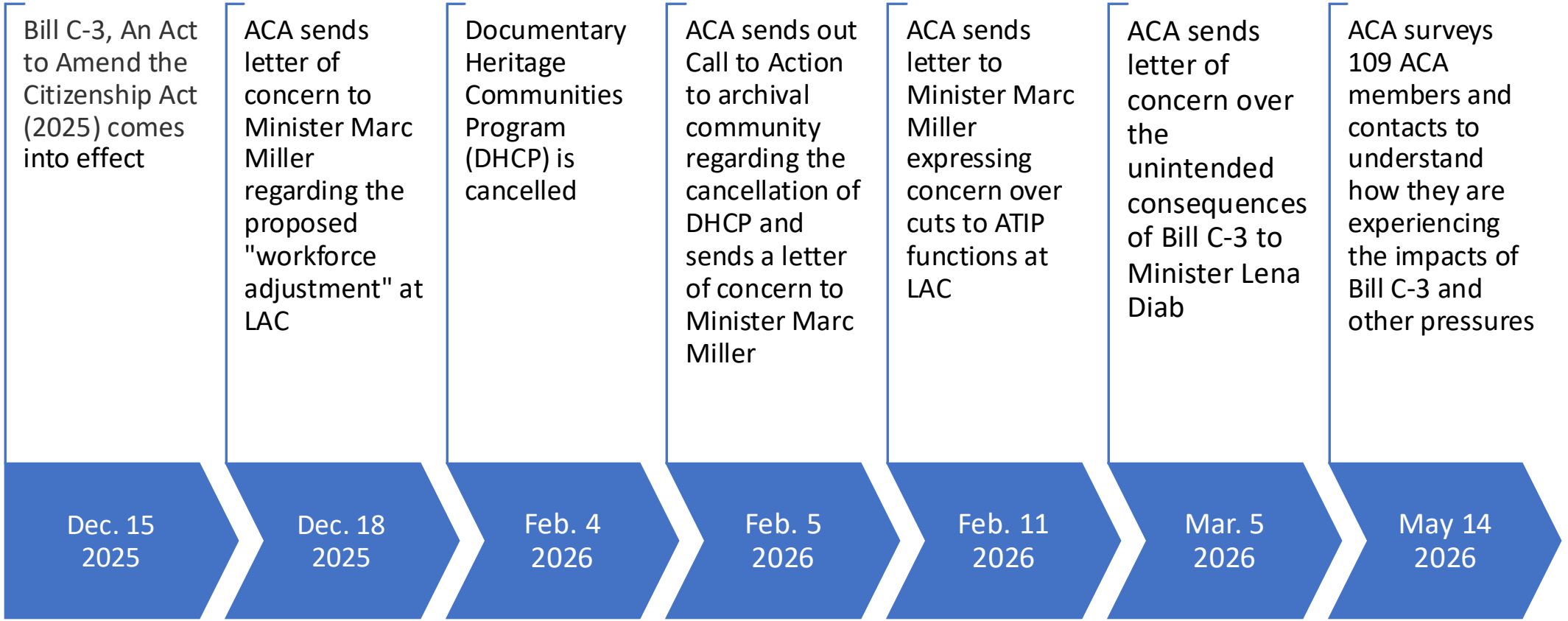
Association of Canadian Archivists

Archives Under Pressure: Key Developments

May 2026



Survey findings

Survey findings on Bill C-3, DHCP cuts, workload, and resourcing needs

109

responses from archivists across Canada

83%

report workload has increased since Dec. 2025

74

Respondents report the highest rise in reference or research requests

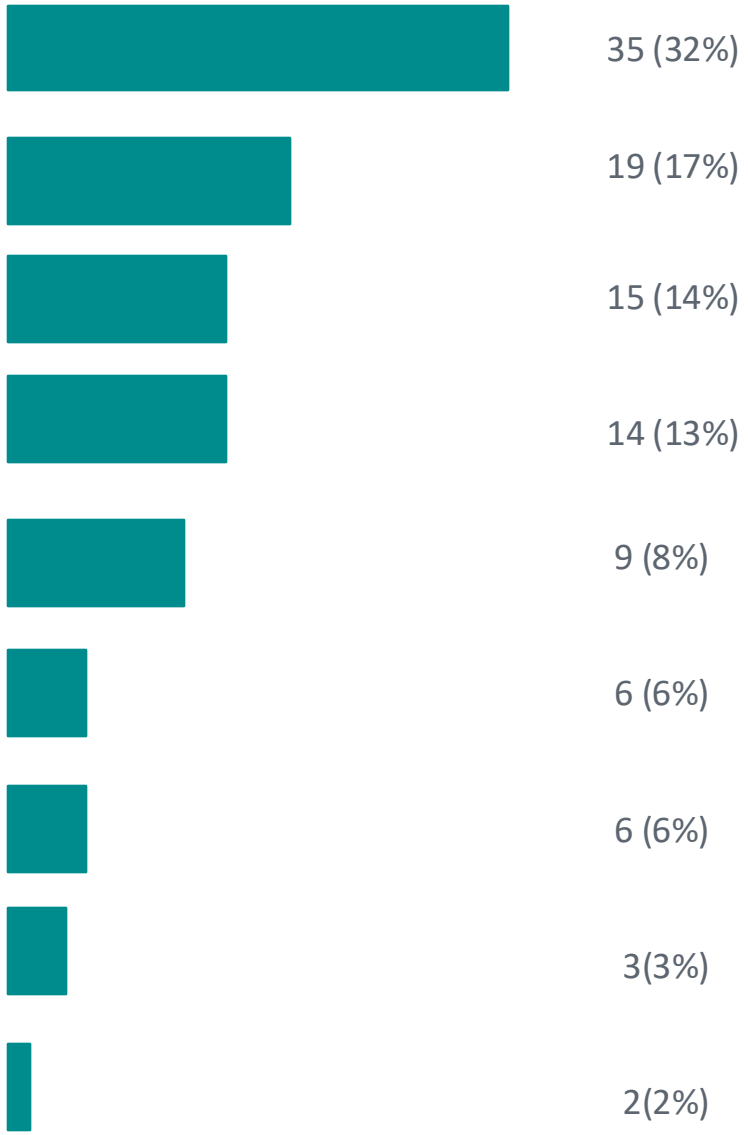
72

Respondents report staffing shortages

“We are overwhelmed by the demand and core functions have been significantly impacted. We are struggling to deliver on our mandate.”

"We have been forced to decrease our staff by 10% with another 10% cut impending, but we have tripled our requests from the Bill C-3 change."

Who responded



32%
Government archives

17%
Academic archives

13%
Community archives

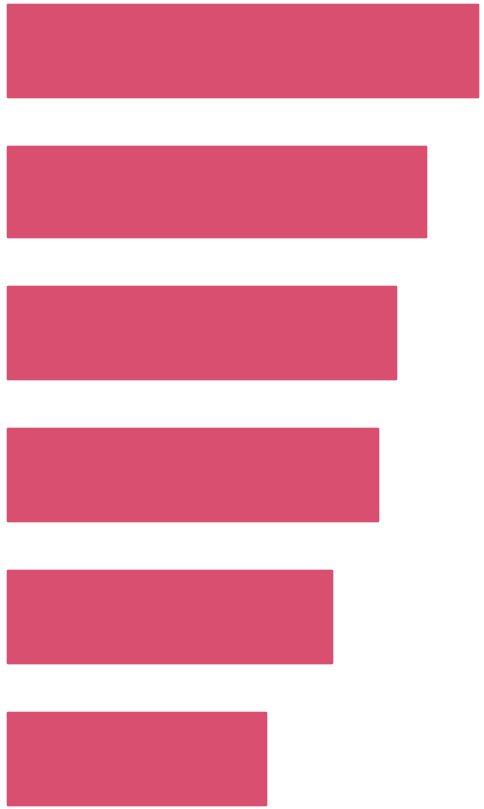
8%
Religious archives

Takeaway:

- **the pressures are not isolated to one setting**
- **they are showing up across public, academic, community, religious, and heritage contexts.**

Pressures facing archivists

Association of Canadian Archivists



55 respondents

reported Bill C-3 impacts

45 respondents

reported DHCP cuts as a pressure

63 respondents

reported budget cuts

The introduction of Bill C-3, program cuts, budget pressure, and staffing shortages are converging at the same time.

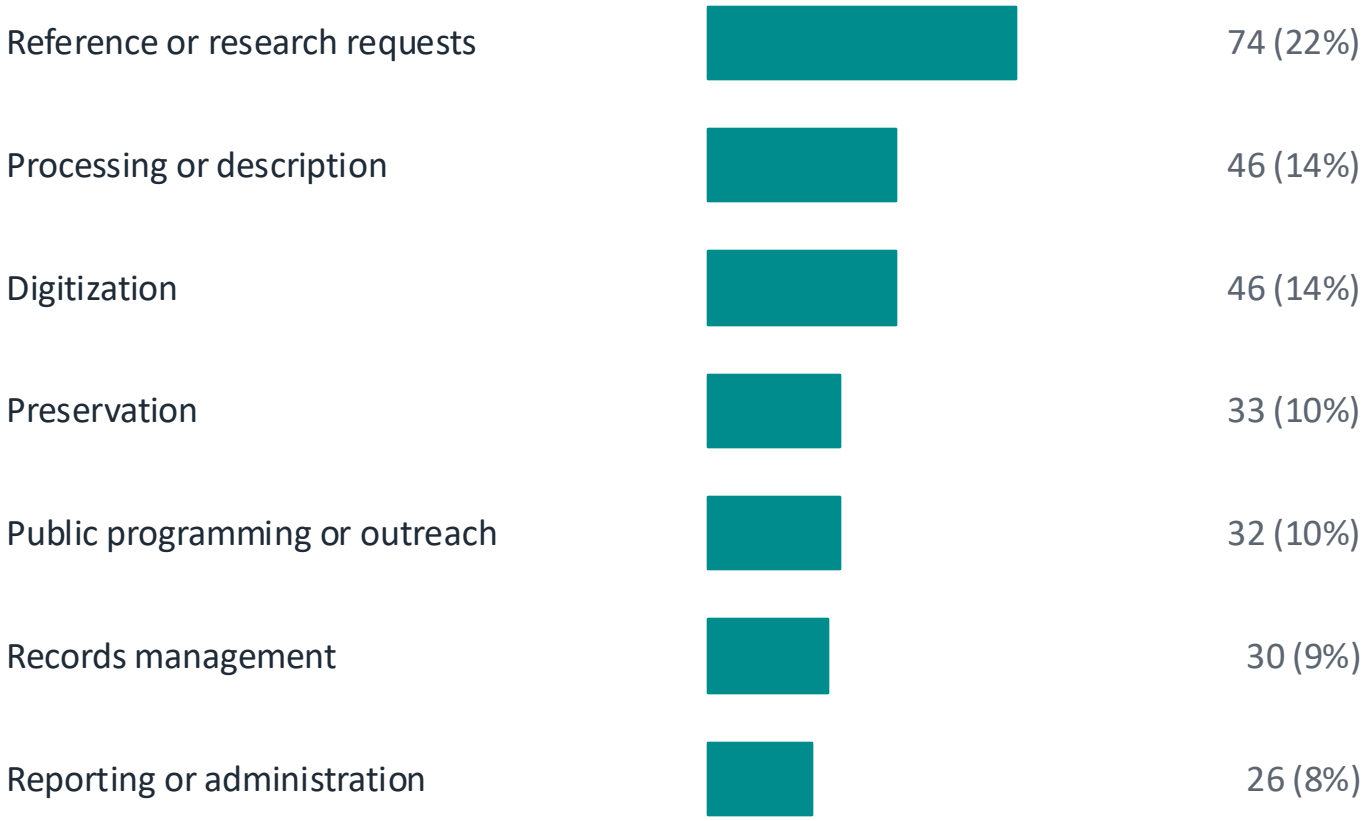
Rising workload and service demand

Association of Canadian Archivists

83%

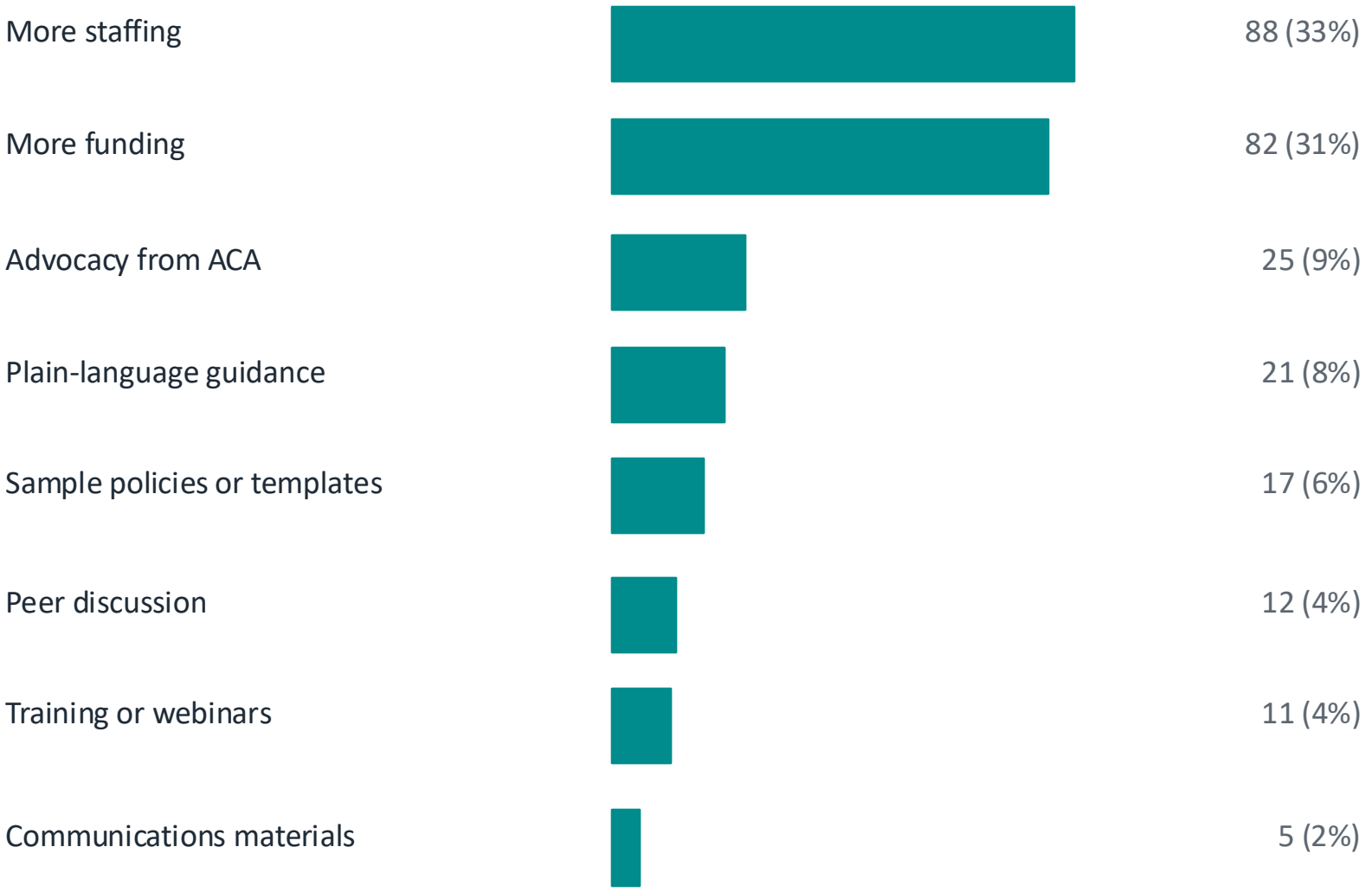
of respondents report increased workload since December 2025

"Due to loss of support staff and funding insecurity, we are barely keeping up with demand. It is frustrating and demoralizing to know we are not doing our jobs as efficiently and innovatively as we could because we don't have the resources."



Core archival functions are being squeezed: service delivery is rising while processing, digitization, preservation, and outreach still need attention.

Staffing and funding needs



88 respondents

selected more staffing

82 respondents

selected more funding

"Staff are experiencing burn out. If further cuts happen, we likely will not be meeting our mandate even at a minimal level."

In respondents' words: capacity and burnout

Association of Canadian Archivists

"We have received a truly overwhelming number of research requests. We did more research requests between January and April of this year than in all of 2024."

— Anonymous survey respondent

"The influx of citizenship requests is eating up all the time of an already understaffed, overworked reference team."

— Anonymous survey respondent

"It is reducing the work done on everything else as all hands are on deck just to stay afloat with answering inquiries."

— Anonymous survey respondent

"The main impact is having to do more, with less, but still being expected to perform at the same levels prior to the cuts."

— Anonymous survey respondent

Rising demand is displacing core archival work, increasing burnout, and weakening service capacity.

In respondents' words: resources and public value

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"We rely on community for operational funding. Losing DHCP means the last grant available to us is gone."

— Anonymous survey respondent

"Increased requests combined with cuts to available grants and funding are a source of discouragement for archives staff and contract workers. The message the government is sending appears to be that archival work is both misunderstood and undervalued."

— Anonymous survey respondent

"Researchers for citizenship are coming to us with minimal information. The government needs to be clear on what they need for proof, how much it actually helps their application, and the proper way to research this information."

— Anonymous survey respondent

"Archives are vital sources of information and government accountability. We need more staff and a more accessible profession."

— Anonymous survey respondent

Archives need sustainable funding, staffing, and government guidance to protect public access and accountability.

In the media

"In January 2025, we had 32 requests for certified copies of vital records and this year in January 2026, we've had over 1,000," she said, adding most of those requests were made by Americans.



Sarah Hanahem, an archivist at the BAnQ, said original registers can be old and need to be handled with care. (Alexandre Silberman/CBC News)

Millions of Americans can now claim Canadian citizenship by descent. But they have to prove it, CBC.ca, Mar 8, 2026

Why this Toronto man is being flooded with requests from Americans about their Canadian ancestors, Toronto Star, May 8, 2026

Why this Toronto man is being flooded with requests from Americans about their Canadian ancestors

The Canadian Citizenship Act has opened doors to foreign nationals who want to reclaim citizenship by descent. Archivists are suddenly in demand.

May 8, 2026 | 4 min read



Kyle Pugh at the United Church of Canada Archives in Toronto on May 5. The Ontario regional councils archivist is seeing a surge of genealogy requests, including from almost all U.S. states.

Sophie Bouquillon/Toronto Star

Association of Canadian Archivists

View the ACA's Living Update on Media Coverage here:

What can we do next?

Association of Canadian Archivists

1 Use the data in advocacy

Share the survey findings to show workload and capacity impacts.

2 Support ACA member messaging

Develop plain-language materials members can adapt for their own use.

3 Build peer and practical supports

Offer targeted discussions, templates, and webinars on navigating Bill C-3 requests.

4 Keep collecting evidence

Follow up with consenting respondents and repeat a short pulse survey.

Survey respondents are asking for staffing and funding first, but also for coordinated advocacy and practical tools that help them respond now.