

A person wearing a white lab coat is leaning over a table, examining a large document. The background shows a laboratory or office environment with various equipment and a poster on the wall. The poster has the text "WHO SAYS THE AGE OUT" visible. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

VISITING THE SEATTLE MUNICIPAL ARCHIVES



CAN I USE
THE
RECORDS
IN THE
ARCHIVES?

Yes! The Seattle Municipal Archives (SMA) is open to everyone. Our research room is open 8:00-4:45 Monday through Friday.

This course will help you prepare for your visit and let you know what to expect at the archives.

WHAT WE'LL COVER:



How to prepare for
your visit



What to expect in the
research room



How archives staff can
help

DO I NEED TO COME TO THE ARCHIVES?

Many (but not all of our photos, maps, moving images, and audio recordings are digitized and accessible from anywhere.

If your interest is in these types of materials, check our [Digital Collections](#) first. Moving image and audio records that are not yet digitized cannot be reviewed on site, but you can request a digital copy.



HOW DO I ACCESS RECORDS THAT AREN'T ONLINE?

Materials must be used in SMA's research room – they do not circulate and cannot be checked out.

Unlike a library, the records vault is not open for browsing. Instead, users search our databases and guides to find records.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR VISIT



Appointments are helpful
but not required



If you contact SMA ahead
of time, we can have
records ready for you in
the research room



Search our online
databases to make a list of
the records you'd like to
look at

TWO MAIN STARTING POINTS FOR YOUR RESEARCH

See our "Searching for Records" e-learning for more information, or ask us for help!

Finding Aids

[Search here](#) for descriptions of records, especially textual records. This database can help you find boxes and folders you'd like to look at in the research room.

Digital Collections

[Search here](#) for maps, photos, drawings, audio, and video. Many of these have digital copies available online, which may save you a trip to the archives.

RESEARCH GUIDES

Research guides include background information, search strategies, links to records, and information about materials held by other archives. Guides are available on a variety of topics.

- [Property History](#)
- [Legislative History](#)
- [Genealogy](#)
- [Land Use and Zoning](#)
- [City Parks](#)
- [Comprehensive Plan](#)

SMA STAFF CAN
HELP YOU
PREPARE FOR
YOUR VISIT

Archivists can assist you
with:

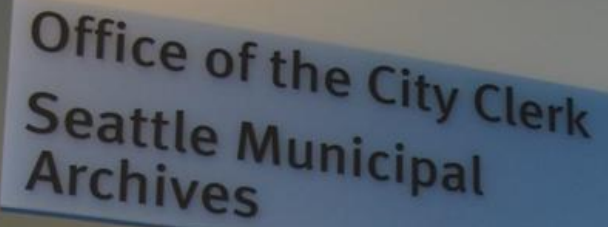
- Searching the databases
- Identifying records most likely to help you answer your research question
- Referring you to other archives and libraries that may have related materials

Email archives@seattle.gov
for assistance!

FINDING SMA

- SMA is part of the Office of the City Clerk, located on the third floor of Seattle City Hall at 600 Fourth Avenue in downtown Seattle.
- The building is between Fourth and Fifth Avenues and James and Cherry Streets, and the building's main entrance is on Fifth Avenue.





Office of the City Clerk
Seattle Municipal
Archives

WHEN YOU ARRIVE

Welcome! Please sign in when you enter the research room.

An archivist will bring your requested records to you. If you have made an appointment, the records you requested will be waiting.

RESEARCH ROOM RULES

Since the materials are unique, SMA has rules to protect them and ensure their preservation:



No food or drink



Use one box at a time



Keep records in order



Flag items for copying



Pencils only, no pens



No bags on tables



Archives staff will be available during your visit to answer questions or retrieve additional records.

Feel free to browse the reference library in the research room, which includes city budgets, books on Seattle history, city directories, and other materials.

HOW CAN I GET COPIES?



Archives staff will make photocopies for you for 15¢/page. Depending on the volume of requests, we may be able to make copies on the spot, but larger requests may take a day or two.



Taking photos of the records is allowed, as long as you don't use a flash.



If you're viewing microfiche or electronic records, you can save copies to your USB thumb drive.

AFTER YOUR VISIT

Feel free to contact us with follow-up questions or to arrange a return visit if you discover more records you'd like to see.

We are always interested in how our records get used. Let us know if you publish a book or article based on your research, use our photos in an art project, or include SMA footage in a film.

WE WELCOME QUESTIONS!



Contact archives@seattle.gov
with questions about how to use
our records or to make an
appointment.



Check out our other e-learning
courses to learn more about
SMA, how to use our search
tools, and more.