

# **CLIR's Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives Applicant Informational Webinar January 28, 2020**

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SLIDE 1  
KRISTEN

Intro:

Hello everyone. We'll be starting our webinar soon. While we wait for everyone to arrive, feel free to introduce yourself in the chat box. If a chat box isn't already displaying on your Zoom screen, you can hover your mouse toward the bottom of the screen and open it manually. If you would like to send a message to everyone, just change the default from "To All Panelists" to "To all panelists and attendees". We'll be using the Q&A box for questions today. If you already have a question in mind, you can use this time to start submitting. We'll be back on in a few minutes.

We're going to go ahead and get started and begin recording this session.

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Hello and welcome to the applicant webinar for the 2020 Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives program. My name is Kristen Blair, I'm Program Administrator at CLIR, and I'll be your moderator today. I'm here with my colleagues, who will introduce themselves:

Joy Banks, Program Officer  
Sharon Burney, Program Assistant  
Becca Quon, Program Officer

Thank you everyone for joining us today. In our time together today, we'll be giving you an introduction to our organization, the Council on Library and Information Resources (or CLIR), and a quick overview of our Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives initiative, now in its 6th year.

Just some housekeeping regarding the Zoom platform we are using today. If a chat box isn't already displaying on your Zoom screen, you can hover your mouse toward the bottom of the screen and open it manually. Feel free to introduce yourself in this space. If you would like to send a message to everyone, just change the default from "All Panelists" to "All panelists and attendees". We'll be using the Q&A box for questions today, and you can open that the same way as the chat box. Use the Q&A box at any time to submit questions. We've enabled the "upvote" feature in Zoom which should allow you to promote questions. If you see a question from someone else that also interests you, click the thumbs up button. We'll be monitoring on our end to combine like-questions together and answer all unanswered questions at the end of the session. As a reminder, this session is being recorded and will be made available on the Applicant Resources page of our website for future viewing, along with the slides and transcript. And now Becca will start our presentation.

## SLIDE 2: INTRODUCTION TO CLIR

### BECCA

Thank you, Kristen. We'd like to start with a brief introduction to CLIR as an organization.

## SLIDE 3

### BECCA

For those of you new to CLIR, we're an independent, nonprofit organization that supports the works of libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural institutions through promotion, publication, and programs.

Although we're talking about a funding opportunity today, it's important to understand that CLIR is not actually a funding agency. For the Digitizing Hidden Collections program, we receive our funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and CLIR acts as the regranting agency. Just as we receive proposals and reports from institutions, we also send proposals and reports to Mellon and other funding organizations.

You may also be familiar with our Digital Library Federation and its working groups, or our publication series, which is available for free on our website at [CLIR.org/pubs](https://clir.org/pubs).

## SLIDE 4

### BECCA

Our work is accomplished by a relatively small staff of about 20 geographically distributed individuals with the greatest concentration living in the DC area, where our headquarters are located. Joy, Sharon, Kristen, and I make up the grants team, administering our two active regranting programs. Our team supports the entire grant cycle--from application to final report.

## SLIDE 5: ABOUT DIGITIZING HIDDEN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES

BECCA

Now, I'll hand things over to Joy, who'll talk more specifically about the Digitizing Hidden Collections program.

SLIDE 6

JOY

Thanks, Becca!

### PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives program was built upon the model of a previous funding competition, Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives, which CLIR operated from 2008 to 2014. The purpose of both programs is to make highly significant rare and unique content widely available for the purposes of research, teaching, and learning. Over the first five cycles of the digitization program, we've received on average 128 proposals per year, with an average funding rate of about 13%.

All of the funded projects for the program are listed on our Funded Projects webpage. A total of 84 projects have received funding in the first five competitions of the program, representing about 190 unique institutions.

The Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives program is wholly supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. 2020 is the last year of guaranteed funding from the multi-year award CLIR received in 2018. We are in conversation with the Foundation about the program's future, but don't expect to know more until this Fall.

SLIDE 7

JOY

### OVERVIEW

More detailed program information can be found on our main program webpage as well as the Applicant Resources page, both of which we'll go over later. As in previous years, we anticipate awarding \$4 million in 2020. Single institutions can apply for between \$50K and \$250K, proposing projects that last between 12 and 24 months and beginning between January and June, 2021.

Collaborative or multi-institution projects can apply for between \$50K and \$500K and propose projects that last between 12 and 36 months. New this year, our guidelines now required that multi-institution projects must select a start date between February and June, 2021.

In just a moment, we'll take a look at our program websites to give an overview of all the information available to you.

## SLIDE 8

### JOY

#### RESUBMISSIONS

For those of you who have previously applied to this or other CLIR regrating programs, you have an opportunity to note in your application if your nominated collections have been included in a previous proposal to Recordings at Risk, Cataloging Hidden Collections, or Digitizing Hidden Collections.

CLIR does not limit the number of times an applicant can re-apply for funding, and the act of reapplying will not hurt your chances for funding. Our standing review panel notices and appreciates when repeat applicants address previous reviewers' comments or questions, so be open about how you've responded to feedback in your revised submission.

## SLIDE 9

### JOY

#### CHANGES FOR 2020

We want to cover four of the most significant changes that have been made to our guidelines and application form in the 2020 cycle.

As noted a bit ago, we are now requiring that multi-institutional collaborative projects must select a project start date between February and June, 2021. This is in response to the sometimes complex process of acquiring signatures on the required IP agreement from all participating institutions once projects have been recommended for funding. We've also made suggestions in the guidelines that you consider a later start date for any projects that will need to hire key project staff since hiring can often take significant time, causing delays in project work.

Related to staffing, we've reassessed the requirements in Section 6: Project Design and divided the requirements for the principal investigators (or PIs) and key project staff that will have salaries or wages covered by grant funds. This new requirement will allow our reviewers the opportunity to better assess whether or not applicants have realistic expectations about what they can require and who they can attract to positions in the given time frame, salary range, and geographic locations. We understand that in many cases, an official job description may not be possible to upload, so providing a draft is acceptable.

Responding to recent feedback from our review panelists, we've embedded the questions about Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in several places in the application and guidelines. This better reflects the fact that reviewers expect to see a holistic approach to these values, thinking not just about hiring practices or institutional policies, but rather how all aspects of the proposed project may support EDI.

Finally, we've updated and revised any area in the Application & Guidelines that included mention of staff or hiring to encourage equitable employment and retention practices. We

encourage anyone interested in the impetus for these updates to read the open letter on DoBetterLabor.com offering practical guidelines for the creation of ethical contingent labor positions.

If you have any questions about these changes, we can address them later in the presentation. You can also reach program staff at our email [hiddecollections@clir.org](mailto:hiddecollections@clir.org).

SLIDE 10

JOY

One of our most common frequently asked questions is: “So what do you mean by ‘hidden’?” Partly, this title is to keep the ties to our program’s history and brand: it is built upon our earlier Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives initiative. The aim of both programs has been to make an ever broader array of rare and unique materials accessible and useful for the creation of new knowledge. For the purposes of Digitizing Hidden Collections, nominated collections must be “Hidden” in the sense that digitization--and not just description--is critical to accessibility and use of the materials by the people who need them.

In other words, proposals must convincingly argue that their collections aren’t sufficiently usable until they are fully digitized.

Some examples of the ways materials might be considered “Hidden” enough to justify digitization through this program include:

The collaboration of geographically dispersed scholars would become possible once materials are digitized.

The aggregation of closely related but geographically dispersed materials would become possible.

The use of computationally intensive methods of search, discovery, and analysis would become possible.

On our Applicant Resources page we link to several blog posts composed by CLIR staff to further explore the idea of hiddenness as it relates to this program. I’ll pass the mic back to Becca to continue our presentation.

SLIDE 11: Program Organization: Review Process, Key Dates, & more

BECCA

Now, we’ll spend a little time familiarizing everyone with our review process and timeline.

SLIDE 12

BECCA

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

The program is directed by an independent Review Panel of between 14 and 17 individuals who gather together in person to make the funding recommendations for the program. We maintain a list of each cycle's panelists on our program website. The 2020 panel is still being finalized, but confirmed reviewers are now posted online. Panelists include scholars with expertise in using digitized collections for research, teaching, and learning; cultural heritage professionals; experts in digitization; and experts in intellectual property.

SLIDE 13

BECCA

Our panel undertakes a 2-step review process that involves the submission of initial proposals for reviewer feedback and an invitation-only final application round for proposals deemed by our review panel as the most competitive for awards in the current year.

Our initial proposal deadline is March 31. Comments will be issued to all applicants and the application system will reopen to those approved to advance by July 15. Final proposals are due on September 4, and final notifications go out December 4. The 2020 awards will be announced to the public in the first half of January, 2021.

SLIDE 14

BECCA

Because our staff is small, we can't offer some of the same services that other funders might provide, like reviewing proposals and offering feedback on drafts prior to application deadlines. However, we do address applicants' questions by email. Our address is easy to remember, [hidencollections@clir.org](mailto:hidencollections@clir.org); we'll keep reminding you of that as we continue.

SLIDE 15: Resource Tours: Program Website and Application Guidelines

BECCA

Next, we'll take a look at a couple of really important resources that you'll need to complete your application.

SLIDE 16

BECCA

[Begin Tour of the Website, start at main program site: <https://www.clir.org/hidencollections>]

Our program website contains a variety of information and resources to assist your grant writing process. For the next bit of our presentation, we thought we would give you a live tour of some of those resources.

The primary two pages you'll be working with on our website are the program Landing Page and our Applicant Resources page. You can think about these two pages this way: the Landing Page is intended for individuals that are learning about the program and trying to decide

whether it's the right fit for them; the Applicant Resources page is a one-stop shop for people who have decided to apply for the program.

We'll begin with the Landing Page page:

In the first block of text, you'll be able to find links to our review panel list, information on deadlines, our program email account address, and a link to sign up for occasional updates about program information for both the Hidden Collections and Recordings at Risk programs.

The next section of this main page details the program's 6 core values: Scholarship, Comprehensiveness, Connectedness, Collaboration, Sustainability, and Openness. These six values inform how reviewers assess each proposal. Rather than hard-and-fast rules for eligibility, these statements are designed to help applicants make choices of the kinds of projects that will likely be most competitive.

Below the program timeline, the landing page provides an overview of the award limits which we have already covered. This section provides information for both single and multi-institution projects so you can see how they compare.

Next, we supply all of the information regarding institutional and collection Eligibility. Collections proposed for digitization may be in any format or relevant to any subject. Any standards, technologies, or tools may be applied, so long as they lead to the creation of digitized content and web-accessible metadata. Note that this program is specifically for creating digital copies of rare and unique physical materials. Requests for software, web, or app development, for the description of already digitized materials, or for reformatting born-digital or previously digitized content, are likely to be deemed ineligible, or, if deemed eligible, may not be competitive. CLIR does appreciate the importance of these other kinds of work; however, the parent grant which governs this program's guidelines requires that CLIR insure that the funds it awards be spent on digitization and directly related activities only.

Collections nominated for digitization must be owned and held by eligible institutions in the United States or Canada, and the materials must also be located in the United States or Canada. It's important to note that Canadian institutions may apply as collaborators on projects with a lead applicant from the US. We funded our first US/Canadian collaborative project in 2019, and we hope to see more in 2020. We encourage everyone to think about whether such a partnership might work for your project.

Generally speaking, to be eligible for this program, applicants must be recognized by the IRS, or its Canadian equivalent, as tax exempt organization.

CLIR does make grants to government institutions and their agencies, provided that cultural heritage is the primary function of the unit and that grant funds will be used for charitable purposes within the scope of the Digitizing Hidden Collections program. We recommend that

government units wishing to apply for the program contact us at [hidencollections@clir.org](mailto:hidencollections@clir.org) to confirm their eligibility.

This page ends with information about Award Terms. These are important reminders to anyone interested in submitting a proposal to understand the full expectations of CLIR and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation should funds be awarded. One notable requirement is that metadata created through funded projects be dedicated to the public domain under a CC0 license. Digitized content must be made as easily available for scholarly purposes as possible within legal and ethical limits. Another key requirement is the IP Agreement all recipients are required to sign and execute. The agreement templates are provided on the website for your review; we recommend applicants share it with their institutional counsel while deciding whether to apply. If you have any questions about eligibility or award requirements, email us at [hidencollections@clir.org](mailto:hidencollections@clir.org)

After you've determined that your institution is eligible and that your project idea fits within the values of the program, the resources of the Applicant Resources page become your guide to drafting a competitive proposal.

[Second stop on Tour of the Website, the Applicant Resources page:  
<https://www.clir.org/hidencollections/applicant-resources/>]

At the top, we provide links to some of the most used resources:

The 2020 Application Guidelines & Template which provide additional detail and description of each element of the application

The link to the online application system, SM Apply

And a link to the Frequently Asked Question section further down on the Applicant Resources page.

We'll revisit the Application Guidelines document later, but first I want to provide an overview of the rest of the page.

The Proposal Planning Resources section includes a few important documents such as a GoogleDoc version of the Application Guidelines & Template which is a convenient tool for collaborative proposal drafting. Bear in mind that you will still need to submit your application through the online application system linked at the top of the applicant resources page. The Digitizing Special Formats wiki, put together by our Digital Library Federation (or DLF) colleagues, contains a number of external resources on planning successful digitization projects. This section is also where we post all of our recordings and transcriptions for our applicant webinars. You can use the links here to sign up for our next two Q&A sessions, if you haven't already.

The Document Library contains several of the templates necessary for your application including the Budget Detail and the List of Collections to be Digitized. Template IP agreements



are also posted here. The Blog posts listed help provide additional context for the program, and the Additional Links provide further documents including instructions for the application system, CLIR's Indirect Cost Policy, and the questions that CLIR asks reviewers when they assess proposals.

The Applicant Toolkit Videos are a series of four short videos and associated resources that were made in collaboration with DLF, CLIR staff, members of our review panel, and grant recipients to help address some common questions and concerns of applicants to this program. We hope that you'll take advantage of the insights provided in these brief presentations to help you develop the most competitive proposals.

To provide even more insight, we've included a number of sample proposals from previous years. The sample applications from the 2019 cycle should be uploaded soon. The proposals in this section have been recommended by our review panelists as good models to follow; they represent a variety of institutions types, collection materials, and approaches to digitization.

The Frequently Asked Questions section of this page has been compiled from applicant questions over the years. If you don't see a response to your particular inquiry, program staff are always available via email at [hidencollections@clir.org](mailto:hidencollections@clir.org).

Since we know that not all those who find our program will be eligible or have a project idea that fits within the program guidelines, we've provided links to several other funding opportunities from Related National Funders.

SLIDE 17

JOY

[Third stop on Tour of the Website, the Application Guidelines:

[https://www.clir.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2016/09/2020-CLIR-DHC\\_-\\_Application-Guidelines-and-Template.pdf](https://www.clir.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/6/2016/09/2020-CLIR-DHC_-_Application-Guidelines-and-Template.pdf)]

We'll now return to the top of the page for a brief introduction to the Application Guidelines and Template. The 2020 document now combines what used to be separate guidelines with the Application Template, allowing applicants to draft responses alongside the instructions. The Application Guidelines and Template supplement the application itself and walk applicants through each question, providing information on what should be covered in the response and the rationale behind most questions. The differences between the order of the Guidelines and the application system are explained throughout, hopefully to help applicants understand how all of the pieces of your proposal fit together.

We won't spend a large amount of time reviewing the guidelines, but we did want to be sure to point out several things:

Introduction sections provides some answers to how to use the guidelines and template as well as some Notes on Icons explaining elements of the application that are public information and those details which we may post to our Hidden Collections Registry.

The format of the document aligns with the structure you'll find in the online application system, with most of the application content found in the "Initial Proposal Phase" section. As you look at the questions, anything above the box will be what you'll see in the online environment. Some questions may be marked with a list icon indicating that information may be included in the Hidden Collections Registry. Others will be marked with an upload icon indicating you'll upload that document later. Following some question, you'll also see "Guidelines" which provide additional instructions to complete the application prompt and "Why We Ask" sections, which provide additional explanation about the question. Questions for the final round are marked throughout.

The next major section is the Application uploads. This mirrors the order of the uploads in our online application system and provides some general information on page limits, file size limits, and file format requirements. The uploads are clearly marked between the initial and final rounds.

There are two appendices: Budget, Application Checklist. The checklists are provided for your convenience as you prepare your proposals. The budget appendices provides all the information on allowable and disallowed costs for the program. We'll switch back to our slide presentation now to cover some of those elements. We encourage careful reading of this budget document as you develop your proposals.

[Switch back to slides]

SLIDE 18: Additional Guidance

BECCA

Some additional guidance about the guidelines to keep in mind as you start writing:

SLIDE 19

BECCA

The program funds digitization and description and directly related expenses only. Disallowed costs include collection assessment, conservation, or preservation costs (except for rehousing supplies as described in the Application Guidelines). Salaries, benefits, and outsourced services will comprise the major portion of Digitizing Hidden Collections project budgets.

All costs should be strongly justified in the budget narrative section of the proposal. We also must emphasize that the bulk of all requests should be for funds that will be used directly toward the labor of performing digitization (whether in-house or through a vendor) and creating metadata for access. Reviewers can look unfavorably toward projects with excessive allocations elsewhere.

SLIDE 20

BECCA

The next two slides contain information on allowable costs which are also covered in more detail in Appendix A of the Application Guidelines. On this first slide, I want to note again that archival supplies for rehousing are now allowed but they must fit within the cap as outlined for equipment, supplies, and materials.

#### SLIDE 21

##### BECCA

This slide continues the list of allowable costs. As you review the Budget information in the Application Guidelines, pay attention to any line-item restrictions and note especially whether the restriction or limit is for single or multi-institution projects.

#### SLIDE 22

##### BECCA

Our next slide outlines the disallowed costs, also covered in great detail in the Application Guidelines. We want to note especially that Indirect Costs are disallowed in this and all CLIR programs. CLIR's Indirect Policy is available on our Applicant Resources webpage.

These lists of possible costs and their categories may change in future iterations of this program, so be mindful that you should always look at the most recent guidelines.

#### SLIDE 23

##### JOY

We want to end with some tips for submitting a successful application for our program:

#### SLIDE 24

##### JOY

- Take the scholarly significance requirement very seriously, and keep program value statements in mind.
- Consider the potential value of collaboration. When pursuing collaborations think about working with an institution with collections that complement yours, or a different kind of institution - a larger or smaller organizations, a community group with archival collections, and remember the allowance for Canadian collaborating partners.
- Be aware of the changes to the application in the second round, in case you are selected to advance. You'll need to add letters of support from scholars and from an institutional administrator; you'll also need to provide vendor quotes and a vendor selection rationale, if applicable. For letters of scholarly support, be sure to recruit the strongest possible advocates for your collections far in advance of the application deadline. At least 2 of the scholar writers should come from outside your institution(s).

#### SLIDE 25

##### JOY

Study the guidelines and website carefully. We've curated a lot of information on the site to help you draft the most competitive proposal possible. And if you can't find an answer, email us. Frame your project around a coherent subject.

Budget carefully, specifically, and within program guidelines; use your common sense to align your budget to your project goals and our program values.

Build your projects with people in mind. Sometimes better projects cost more, and that's because you're taking care of your staff. Reviewers understand this and often look for evidence that grant workers are being fairly compensated and provided with opportunities to learn.

SLIDE 26

KRISTEN

Thank you for participating in this presentation. We'll now use the remaining time to answer questions. If you'd like to pose a question, type it into the Q&A box which, if it isn't displaying already, can be found by hovering your mouse at the bottom of your Zoom screen. You can also upvote questions if someone else asked a similar question already. Sharon will help post answers as we go along.

SLIDE 27

KRISTEN

I see that there are no more questions. This last slide gives you an overview of our team and reminders on how to connect with us. Thank you everyone for joining us today to learn more about applying to the Digitizing Hidden Collections program. Be sure to review all the materials available on our Applicant Resources page. If you have additional questions, you can always reach the CLIR Grants Team at [hiddencollections@clir.org](mailto:hiddencollections@clir.org). We'll be hosting two Q&A webinars, one at 3:00 pm Eastern time on Thursday February 14 and a second at 3:00 pm Eastern time on Wednesday February 27. As a reminder, applications are due April 3, 2019. Have a great afternoon and happy grant writing!