**2017 CLIR Hidden Collections Application Webinar**

**February 2, 2017**

**Q&A Transcript**

* Note: the transcript for the accompanying presentation is available in the webinar slides.

**Can this opportunity be used to support the cost of a cataloger?**

Metadata creation is considered to be part of the digitization project. If it makes sense to handle some additional, original cataloging within the workflow of your digitization project, you may request a limited amount of support for cataloging, but you should be careful to justify why those extra funds are needed and cannot be absorbed into the normal work of the organization. The majority of funds should be for the labor of digitization.

**If so, will their work be restricted to those items digitized with this funding?**

Yes, absolutely.

**Could their work include other items in the same collection that will be digitized outside of the grant period?**

No.

**CVs: Should these be 2-page or full-length?**

CVs or resumes may be of any length. Only 3 CVs or resumes may be included in each proposal, and applicants must include the CV/resume for each PI.

**Budget Form: Should Reporting Period columns (Budgeted, Actual) be added for each additional year requested?**

Yes.

**Institutional letter of support: is this for the second phase?**

Yes, it is for the second phase but it never hurts to start thinking about this from the beginning.

**Letters of Scholarly Support: is this for the second phase?**

Yes, these are required only if you are invited to submit a final proposal, but it is a good idea to identify and consult with scholars who would use your digitized collections as you construct your case for funding in your initial proposal.

**Can an institution participate in Hidden Collections grants first as a single institution to do digitizing and then be a collaborator institution of a Hidden Collections grant for the following cycle?**

An institution may participate in multiple grants but no person can serve as a Principal Investigator on more than one application or active grant simultaneously. Institutions submitting multiple grants during the same cycle should be aware that reviewers may be reluctant to fund multiple grants from the same institution and this could be a factor in decision-making.

**Are 2017 funds targeted for withdrawal in the new political climate?**

Since we are not a federal organization and are funded privately, our funds are not subject to congressional control. We apply for funds to support the program on an annual basis and determine each year whether there are sufficient resources and interest to continue.

**Does this year's program goals include digitizing?**

Yes, this is the main goal of the program.

**This is the third competition of this specific program?**

Yes.

**Is the funding just for the digitization process, or does it also include metadata/cataloging and paying for space to house masters and also display in an online public access, etc.?**

Metadata creation is generally considered to be part of the digitization workflow. Additional description of original materials may be justifiable in some cases if it makes sense to do this work within the context of the digitization project, but you should be cautious about including any expenses not directly related to the process of digitization your materials and making them accessible.

Expenses for some storage media necessary to undertake project work are allowable, but requests for costs that will be ongoing annual expenses for the institution should be made only when strongly justified, because reviewers may be concerned about the institution’s ability to sustain these costs beyond the term of the grant.

You cannot ask for funding to support space beyond the project term.

**Would CLIR consider a proposal to digitize a collection that is not owned by the applicant institution but rather technically on long-term deposit?**

Under current guidelines, the applicant institutions and partners must own the collections nominated for digitization.

**Can you define digitization? In order to make items more easily searchable, discoverable, and available for analysis we may propose to transcribe portions or all of the documents. Is this an acceptable activity? For the purposes of the program digitization means creating digital files from non-digital special collections and archives.**

The majority of funds should be allocated for digitization. Usually reviewers don’t respond well to applications requesting large amounts of funds to support transcription efforts. It’s not out of the question but shouldn’t be a bit part of your request. If transcription is necessary for accessibility reasons to reach a known user base, you can try to make the case for funding.

**Can an institution that has received funding for a Hidden Collection project apply for additional funding the following cycle to complete the digitization of a large collection?**

Yes, but you should make a fresh case for value and significance for each proposal. Each proposal will go through the full application process, and even if the first phase receives funding, it is no guarantee that future phases will.

**Would it be possible to use a portion of the funding to create preservation standard copies, i.e., b&w or color microform, of the originals?**

Yes in some circumstances if it makes sense in creating an efficient digitization workflow.

**Would the entire project have to be digitized within the one year period?**

Single-institution projects can last up to 24 months, and collaborative partnerships can last up to 36 months. All work should be completed within those limits.

**Is it collaboration if you are sending materials of project to another institution for digitization?**

Possibly, if the collaboration makes sense in ways other than a simple fee-for-service transaction. Applicants are asked specifically to address why reviewers should consider their project to be collaborative as described in the guidelines.

**If an institution is involved in a current CLIR grant can they be part of an application for another?**

Yes.

**If we partner with a consortium to help with the digitization and then host on their server, does that count as a collaboration?**

Likely yes, if you successfully make the case that all partners benefit in non-financial ways as well and the project makes sense.

**Are the proposal examples from first round or final proposals?**

Sample proposals are examples of final proposals, with some information redacted (e.g. budget information).

**You said for more info on creative commons, get a copy of the Mellon Something Something. Can you please write this title?**

Here is the Intellectual Property Agreement which recipients are required to sign. You should check with your institutional counsel about its terms as you develop your project. <https://www.clir.org/hiddencollections/applicants/applicant-documents/model-ip-agreement>

Here too is a link directly to the Creative Commons site with information about their license: https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/public-domain/cc0/

**Can the grant award be put toward hiring people to do the digitization work?**

Yes, this is often the major part of project budgets.

**Does the grant pay indirect cost assessed by the institution?**

No. See [CLIR’s indirect cost policy](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjJ26XMpfTRAhXs6IMKHZC3D9QQFggcMAA&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.clir.org%2Fforms%2Findirect-costs&usg=AFQjCNGe6YgWRC_f9V9JY5rJEuCUTZOSCQ&sig2=q1p04qrKQ-sJ2J5MSETqDQ). The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation [prohibits funding indirect costs](https://mellon.org/programs/scholarly-communications/inquiries-and-guidelines/).

**Can funds be used toward cataloging materials that are digitized in the course of the proposed project?**

In some cases, when it makes sense to do this work within an overall digitization project workflow but the main focus of the program is on digitization and creating access to digital copies through metadata creation.

**"Eligible collections any format, or relevant to any subject"; but still must be "cultural heritage"? Would historical technology or engineering collections be eligible?**

Yes, absolutely.

**Does it cover the initial deposit of digital files into a digital preservation repository?**

Yes, if you can justify why the institution needs the funds now and still convince reviewers you will be able to afford the ongoing costs later.

**Can a collection on long term deposit at our institution be eligible if the owners agree to the CC licensing?**

There is no precedent for this--please write to hiddencollections@clir.org and explain in more detail. The current guidelines stipulate that collections must be “owned and held” by applicant institutions and/or their partners.

**If something can't be digitized without first being conserved (the folds in the parchment are detrimental), is this forbidden?**

The conservation work can be built into the project plan but you shouldn’t include expenses for it in the project budget, since the purpose of the program is digitization rather than conservation.

**Are there particular types of assets/media that are a priority for CLIR and the Mellon Foundation?**

Documenting under-represented groups is a high priority, but there are not specific formats or other types of content that are prioritized over others.

**Can institutions apply for both the Hidden Collections grant program and the Recordings at Risk grant program?**

Yes. They are separate programs with separate application and review processes but just like with any grant program no applicant is ever permitted to accept funding from two funding sources to support the same project work.

**Regarding Collaboration: Can you elaborate or give an example of what you meant by "demonstrate collaborative spirit" for single institution applications?**

Collaboration across multiple departments on the same campus could be one example. Sharing your metadata widely with others who can make use of it, developing plans to coordinate with other institutions on outreach or educational projects such as online exhibit projects after the conclusion of a grant, modeling your project workflow to take advantage of the lessons learned by others, or working closely with scholarly advisors on the project could all be examples of “collaborative spirit” that do not involve working with a separate entity.

**When will the eligibility of the proposal as collaborative be decided, i.e., which stage in the process? Can those that go to the second stage change from a collaborative project to a single institution project if necessary, for example?**

That is possible, but there would be hesitation about passing through a proposal with a very thin argument for collaboration, especially if it would require a lot of changes to fund it at under $250,000. We’re trying to let applicants define what collaboration means to them, but it is best to proceed with planning a collaborative project only when you’re confident that all partners will be contributing substantially and receiving benefits beyond just a financial fee-for-service exchange.

**I missed this - does Mellon do the reviews?**

No, there is an independent review panel managed by CLIR.

**In terms of "national significance," if a collection is narrow in geographic scope (like say a single US city), but broad in scholarly interest, will that be a negative in evaluation?**

No, the broad scholarly interest is the key factor.

**My collection has hand-written letters. Will CLIR fund transcription of these letters?**

This must be strongly justified. Reviewers have been reluctant to support large amounts for transcription, because the purpose of the program is to fund digitization.

**Hello, we are interested in a digitization project that involves converting historical maps into a Geographic Information System (GIS). The historical maps already exist in scanned format, however given the quantity and complexity of the maps the only way to be able to access the data in aggregate form would be to convert the maps into a spatial GIS format. We intend to develop a web mapping portal where the public can access and view the “GIS digitized” landscape maps.**

No, this is outside the program’s current scope.

**Does the funding /allowable costs include the cost of digitization software, website development and student workers/helpers?**

Yes. Student workers or helpers are absolutely allowed and a very common request. Digitization software and website development costs should be minimized and strongly justified.

**Should a proposal include other sources of funding that have been secured for the project?**

Yes, if applicable. This demonstrates that your project is a priority, and is usually viewed favorably by the reviewers. But this is not required.

**Can you please highlight areas of the 2017 application that have changed from last year? Thanks!**

* The collaboration statement is new for folks applying as collaborations or partnerships.
* There is a new question about diversity.
* The question about outreach and other parts have been rewritten slightly to encourage applicants to demonstrate how well they know their user communities. What was “outreach and marketing” is now “outreach and community engagement.”
* The Rights, Ethics, and Re-Use statement allowance is longer and permits including supporting documentation (4 pages instead of 3 pages max).
* The budget template is new because it will make reporting easier for those who receive grants and will help us in our reporting to the Foundation.
* The word length has been shortened on many questions.

**Question regarding collaboration: can two institutions (e.g. a library and a research center) who want to collaborate, belong to the same University? - to be eligible**

This is a great example of “collaborative spirit” and would be well received but it is not enough to be considered a collaborative proposal. No.

**How likely is it that an archive with a single staff member could receive funding?**

A collaborative approach could be better for the purposes of this program. Many such institutions have participated as collaborating partners on projects funded through Digitizing Hidden Collections. Reviewers would likely be concerned about the archive’s ability to sustain access to the files.

**Do you fund support for development of scholarly methods that may be used to analyze collections, where digitization greatly increases the potential for large scale data or scholarly collaboration from distributed locations?**

These activities are greatly encouraged but asking for large amounts of funding could make your proposal less competitive since it doesn’t align to the core purposes of the program.

**Would it be possible to send in a selection of proposals for digitization grant projects and receive feedback on which would be most competitive before the April deadline?**

You can send us an email describing these collections briefly but we don’t have the capacity to review draft proposals. You know your collections best and thus will be more qualified to make this determination than project staff are.

**What is the monetary cap on on outsourcing the digitization process?**

Sometimes outsourcing is the only expense in project budgets. You should justify your approach as the most efficient and appropriate for your collection.

**How likely is it that you would support a project centered on digitizing and sharing a single artist's work? We have fragile works on paper.**

This could be a great project if you can demonstrate scholarly interest and need. Linking it to other related collections is something to think about. A figure whose work has been recognized on a national scale is necessary, or the proposal would not be competitive.

**Can you tell us what is the percentage of projects funded for digitization vs description (metadata)?**

Digitization should be the core focus on all projects and consume the major portion of the budget, because it is the purpose of the program. We are unable to give an exact percentage of how much of the proposed budget may go to cataloging/description, but it should be less than the portion going toward digitization.

**Can you define your meaning of urgency with regard to digitizing a collection?**

Scholarly need, risk of deterioration, and risk of obsolescence are considerations. Topical urgency and relevance/timeliness of supporting the study of a particular subject are also considered, but not required. The project just funded about California water resources is an example. Sometimes an approaching anniversary can help justify the urgency of a project, such as the Museum of Flight’s proposal to digitize World War I material.

**For organizations that are not technologically advanced, are there particular digitization equipment you recommend?**

We are not experts but work with colleagues to collect information on the DLF wiki, [Digitizing Special Formats](https://wiki.diglib.org/Digitizing_Special_Formats), that should be helpful to non-experts. This isn’t a program for building up digitization infrastructure at institutions, especially those who cannot maintain it, so in most cases we recommend that organizations lacking the expertise internally look to either collaborate with another institution who can provide it or work with a vendor/service provider.

**If you become a grant recipient, how does the annual review work/happen?**

Annual reports are required, as well as a final report. We do occasional site visits. You can visit the [“For Recipients”](https://www.clir.org/hiddencollections/recipients/recipients.html#report) page on the website for more information. CLIR submits program reports to the Foundation on an annual basis.

**Just before losing audio you mentioned a monetary valuation of collections. Any guidance on how to apply value to them? We have a few hundred hours of recordings and that many more of audiovisual material.**

It’s possible the questioner misheard--the monetary value of the collections is not considered. Scholarly value is what is most important for the purposes of this program. How will the digitization of these collections improve scholarship and teaching? There’s no need for you to make your case based upon the monetary value of your collections.

**Cost share is allowed. Is it encouraged or discouraged?**

We don’t actively track it. Some reviewers find it more important than others, but they consider its significance on a case by case basis. It’s definitely not discouraged for institutions that can afford it, but it is not a deciding factor in which proposals receive funding.