Interview Protocols

This document summarizes the interview protocols that the assessment team used for interviews with various groups of DHC:AUV stakeholders. Interviews were conducted with five primary groups: program reviewers (group “R”), applicants to the initial round who were not invited to submit full proposals (“I”), applicants who were invited to submit full proposals (“F”), applicants who submitted full proposals but did not receive funds (“U”), and those who were awarded grants (“G:)”). We developed distinct interview protocols, or guides, for the semi-structured interviews undertaken for the full program assessment. Interviews were planned to be between thirty and sixty minutes each (i.e., up to one hour each). We shared these protocols with interviewees in advance of the interviews.

These protocols are included in this appendix are as follows:

1) Interviews with Reviewers (group “R”),

2) Interviews with Panel Co-Chairs (group “R”),

3) Interviews with Initial-Phase Applicants (group “I”),

4) Interviews with Full-Phase Applicants (group “F),

5) Interviews with Full-Phase Applicants who did not receive funds (group “U”),

6) Interviews with those who received grants, or grantees (group “G”).

## PROTOCOL 1: Interviews with Reviewers (group “R”)

**Introduction**

* Hello & confirm interview information
* Zoom working correctly?
* Goals of the conversation today:
  + Gather information for the DHC assessment project, with these aims:
  + How effectively is the program transitioning to focus on preserving and providing access to and preserving collections that sustain and amplify the voices of underrepresented groups?
  + Find out about the experiences of program stakeholders (applicants, reviewers, staff)
  + Ways to improve and/or modify aspects of the program to more effectively amplify unheard voices.

**Background and Preparation**

* Why were you interested in reviewing for this program? What was the appeal?
* Tell us about your expertise in relation to the applications and program, as you saw it, and how you drew upon it during the review.
  + Were you able to clearly and effectively able to reference and voice your expertise in the review panel?
* How would you assess the clarity and comprehensiveness of the program guidelines and information that you received to prepare your work as a reviewer?
  + What else did you need/want to know prior to the review meeting?

**Approach (Your work as a reviewer)**

* Did the proposals that you read or evaluated suggest an array of unheard voices that you expected? Were there additional voices (communities, collections, etc) that you would like to hear in the program?
* Tell us about how you approached the review task. How did you balance the program’s expressed values as you evaluated proposals?
  + If you emphasized certain values, which ones were most relevant, and why, and which were less so, and why?
  + What was your approach to the scoring rubric?
* Were there particular aspects of proposals where you (consistently) wanted more information?
  + Was there information that you needed to guess at? What questions should be added to the initial application?
* Did you find the review system easy to use, were there resources that you wished you had access to while learning the system?

**Process (Review Panel)**

*(Please note that we may not ask each question to each person - if there is any in particular that you definitely want to address, please let us know.)*

* During the review panel discussion, were different inputs and perspectives amongst the reviewers handled equitably? Were you comfortable sharing your comments and perspectives?
  + Did you have enough time to explain your reviews and/or comments? Were there sufficient chances and time to explain your perspective and evaluations?
  + Given the volume and complexity of applications, time during the meeting is scarce. What was your impression of time management during the meeting? Would you have any suggestions to the panel chairs and/or CLIR staff regarding this?
* Was there feedback on proposals that you would have liked to offer but for any reason could not? Were additional avenues for feedback (email, spreadsheet, written comments) effective?
  + Are there other ways of providing feedback that you would like to suggest, for example, ways that could be more meaningful or responsive to particular communities?
* We’d like to hear about your perspective on the role of rights & ethics (occasionally referred to as “IP”) in the review process. Were you able to understand and respond to IP-related comments during the review discussion (or afterward in written comments)?
* Was there a particular moment when you felt that you needed to articulate your values in the discussion in order to ensure that applications were evaluated or assessed fairly? Tell us about this moment.
  + What happened? How did you respond?
  + What value(s) were you thinking about (program core values, others)?
  + What would help others in the future to address this kind of situation?
* Do you have any suggestions for how the program could be made more equitable or accessible to “unheard voices”?

**Conclusion**

* Is there any advice or information that you wish you would have known prior to the process, which you would share with future reviewers?
* Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about the program or your experience reviewing for CLIR?
* Thank you for so generously sharing your time and knowledge!

## PROTOCOL 2: Interviews with Panel Co-Chairs (group “R”)

**Introduction**

* Hello & confirm interview information
* Zoom working correctly?
* Goals of the conversation today:
  + Gather information for the DHC assessment project, with these aims:
  + How effectively is the program transitioning to focus on preserving and providing access to and preserving collections that sustain and amplify the voices of underrepresented groups?
  + Find out about the experiences of program stakeholders (applicants, reviewers, staff)
  + Ways to improve and/or modify aspects of the program to more effectively amplify unheard voices.

**Background and Preparation**

* Can you tell us about your experience as the panel chair? How many times have you chaired the panel? Were you previously a reviewer?
* Broadly speaking, why were you interested in working with this program as it was revised to become “Amplifying Unheard Voices”? What was the appeal?
* How would you describe the scope and responsibilities of your role as a panel chair/co-chair?
* How often did you meet with CLIR in advance of the meeting? Do you communicate with the reviewers in advance of or after the meeting?

**Approach (Your work as a panel chair)**

* Did the proposals that you read or evaluated suggest an array of unheard voices that you expected? Were there additional voices (communities, collections, etc) that you would like to hear in the program?
* Were there particular aspects of proposals where you (consistently) wanted more information?
  + Was there information that you needed to guess at? What questions should be added to the initial application?
* Did you find the review system supportive for your work, were there resources that you wished you had access to while learning the system?

**Process (Review Panel)**

* What was your approach during the meeting to ensure that various perspectives and voices, perhaps in conflict or in tension, were given equitable access in the discussion?
  + What was your approach or technique for time management during the panel meeting?
* Were there moments where you thought additional feedback should be offered for proposals but for any reason could not be included in the discussion?
  + Are there other ways of providing feedback that you would like to suggest, for example, ways that could be more meaningful or responsive to particular communities?
* The “reader” scores often seemed less discussed, what ways could those comments and scores be made more useful in the review process?
* Will you chair the meeting again in future? Are there any changes that you’d like to consider in the way that the meetings are planned or managed?
* **Conclusion**
* Is there any advice or information that you wish you would have known prior to the process, which you would share with future reviewers?
* Is there anything else that you would like to share with us about the program or your experience reviewing for CLIR?
* Thank you for so generously sharing your time and knowledge!

## PROTOCOL 3: Interviews with Initial-Phase Applicants (“I”)

**Introduction**

* Hello & interviewer information
* This work is part of an independent assessment project with the goal of assisting, improving, and refining possible future rounds of the program “Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives: Amplifying Unheard Voices” (“the program”).
* The program is administered by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) with financial support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Although the assessment team does have a relationship with the funders, we are working independently. Responses will not have any bearing on any current or future application to CLIR. We are not collecting this information in any way to assess your work, nor to share directly with CLIR.
* We will use information from today’s interview only for purposes of the assessment project, and generally to identify themes and areas for improvement as part of the program assessment. For that work, we will transcribe the interview and take notes, materials will not be used by CLIR for other purposes, when transcribed information is shared with CLIR we will remove identifying information.

**Program Interest and Appeal**

* How did you find out about the DHC program? Why were you interested in applying to the program?
* Were there particular aspects of the program that led you and your organization or collaborators to apply to the “Amplifying Hidden Voices” program? What was your response the programs values ([outlined here](https://www.clir.org/hiddencollections/))?
* What activities were most hoping to support through this program? If the program is offered again in future, are there supported activities that would make the program more appealing or responsiveness to your needs?

**Applicant Resources**

* What was your relationship to the proposal that you were affiliated with? What was your role in strategizing, planning, and writing the application?
* How did you use the applicant resources provided by CLIR? What did you find most useful or not useful in the resources?
  + Did the program guidelines (on the website) clearly explain the expectations for writing a complete application?
  + Did you use email contact with CLIR to answer questions? What were the benefits of this mode of communication?
* The Digitizing Hidden Collections program emphasized new program values and support for collections that emphasized “unheard voices” and collections representing underrepresented groups. Was it clear to you how these program could be reflected in the application? Did the applicant resources you consulted help you to incorporate these priorities in your application?
* What additional information do you wish you had while you were preparing the application?
* Did you submit an application in collaboration with another organization? If “yes”:
  + Were there particular collaborative issues that came which you would have like more guidance from CLIR about?

**Application Process & Feedback**

* Experience using the application system (SMApply):
  + Did you have any challenges when using the system?
  + Were elements of the application clearly explained in the system?
  + Was the system easy to use?
* Did you feel like you had a good understanding of how your application would be evaluated after it was received by CLIR? Were any stages or feedback confusing? Did you wish that you had more information about the process?
* Application feedback:
  + Did the feedback that you received align with the expectations that you had from initial application support resources? Did it seem like your proposal received an equitable reading?
  + Were the reasons for CLIR’s decision explained by the feedback? What remaining questions did you have?
  + How could feedback be made more useful or more helpful to applicants?
  + What did you make of the numerical scores in the feedback?
  + Would you be able to use this feedback to revise a proposal, if there was an opportunity to apply to this program, or a similar one, in future?
* If you were to consider applying again, what additional information would you need from CLIR in order to revise your application for a future round?

**Other comments**

* Do you have questions for us?
* Is there anything else that you’d like to share with us?

**Thank you!**

* Thank you for your time and insights. We appreciate your willingness to share information with us in this endeavor.

## PROTOCOL 4: Interviews with Full-Phase Applicants (“F”)

**Introduction**

* Hello & interviewer information
* This work is part of an independent assessment project with the goal of assisting, improving, and refining possible future rounds of the program “Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives: Amplifying Unheard Voices” (“the program”).
* The program is administered by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) with financial support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Although the assessment team does have a relationship with the funders, we are working independently. Responses will not have any bearing on any current or future application to CLIR. We are not collecting this information in any way to assess your work, nor to share directly with CLIR.
* We will use information from today’s interview only for purposes of the assessment project. (Note that we will transcribe the interview and take notes; materials will not be used by CLIR for other purposes; if transcribed information is shared with CLIR we will remove identifying information.)

**Background & Applicant Resources**

* What was your relationship to the proposal that you were affiliated with? What was your role in strategizing, planning, and writing the application?
* How did you find out about the DHC program? Why were you interested in applying to the program?
* Any grant application is a significant investment of time and resources. What were the benefits to you & your organization that led you to apply to the “Amplifying Unheard Voices” of the Digitizing Hidden Collections program?
* How did you use the applicant resources provided by CLIR? What did you find most useful or not useful in the resources?
  + Did the program guidelines (on the website) clearly explain the expectations for writing a complete application?
  + To what extent did you use email contact with CLIR to answer questions? What is the benefit of this mode of communication?
* The Digitizing Hidden Collections program emphasized new program values and support for collections that emphasized “unheard voices” and collections representing underrepresented groups. Was it clear to you how these priorities and the program values were reflected in the application? Did the applicant resources you consulted help you to incorporate these priorities in your application?
* What additional information do you wish you had while you were preparing the application?
* Did you submit an application in collaboration with another organization? If “yes”:
  + What were the major challenges of organizing this sort of application?
  + Were there particular collaborative issues that came which you would have like more guidance from CLIR about?

**Application Process**

* Experience using the application system (SMApply):
  + Did you have any challenges when using the system?
  + Were elements of the application clearly explained in the system?
  + Was the system easy to use?
* The review process:
  + Was the review process clear to you while you were working on your application?
  + Were any stages or feedback during the process unclear?
* Feedback that you received from CLIR (including from staff and from the proposal reviewers):
  + Did the feedback that you received align with the information that you received from the initial application support resources?
  + Were the reasons for CLIR’s decision clearly explained? What remaining questions did you have?
  + What did you make of the numerical scores provided with the comments?
  + How do you plan to use the feedback? How could feedback be made more useful?
* After receiving feedback:
  + Did the comments that you received prepare you to revise your application?
  + Do you plan to make use of the additional resources that CLIR plans to make available to applicants for the full applications?

**Other comments**

* Do you have questions for us?
* Is there anything else that you’d like to share with us?

**Thank you!**

* Thank you for your time and insights. We appreciate your willingness to share information with us in this endeavor.

## PROTOCOL 5: Interviews with Full-Phase Applicants, unfunded (group “U”)

**Introduction**

* Hello & interviewer information
* This work is part of an independent assessment project with the goal of assisting, improving, and refining possible future rounds of the program “Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives: Amplifying Unheard Voices” (“the program”).
* The program is administered by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) with financial support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Although the assessment team does have a relationship with the funders, we are working independently. Responses will not have any bearing on any current or future application to CLIR. We are not collecting this information in any way to assess your work, nor to share directly with CLIR.
* We will use information from today’s interview only for purposes of the assessment project, and generally to identify themes and areas for improvement as part of the program assessment. For that work, we will transcribe the interview and take notes, materials will not be used by CLIR for other purposes, when transcribed information is shared with CLIR we will remove identifying information.

**Topics & Questions**

**Program Processes and Feedback**

* The process was a two-tiered process and, from the time of initial application in April 2021 until final notifications in February/March 2022, lasted around ten months. Throughout this application period, did you receive the information that you needed from CLIR? Was there any information that you wished you would have received during that time, which was not communicated?
* CLIR aims for the process to be well-explained and transparent to applicants. To what extent was CLIR successful in creating a transparent review process that was responsive to applicants?
* CLIR produced and made available a series of applicant support webinars during fall 2021. Looking back on the process, did you find these events useful for your work to complete the proposal? What topics or questions would you like to see addressed in these resources, which was not addressed in the current series?
* As a finalist, you received feedback at least twice from the review panel. Tell me about how you made use of the information that you received from the reviewers?
  + What was most useful about the feedback to you? What was least useful?
  + How would you describe the quality of the feedback from the review panel?
  + If you received feedback from both rounds of review, what was your impression of this process? Did it seem that your application was reviewed fairly and equitably? What was it about the process that helped you understand that?
  + What, if anything, would you change about the feedback or review process? What would’ve helped you to make sense of this feedback?
* As you know, there was not a sufficient amount of funds available to support all of the projects that were invited to submit full applications. In many cases, the review panel found strengths even in the unfunded proposals, and in some cases suggested to applicants that they consider “revising and resubmitting” the project again in future. If this was advice you received, is that an option that you plan to pursue, if it is available? If so, what does that process look like to you, how will you approach the revision process?

**Suggestions for Improvement**

* Whether or not you plan to reapply to the program, what changes would you make in the process if you were starting afresh? As an applicant whose proposal has gone through the entire process, what changes would you like to see?

**Thank You**

* Thank you for your time and feedback through this interview. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us, which we haven’t asked about during the interview?
* Please contact us with any concerns, at the email address or elsewhere.

## PROTOCOL 6: Interviews with Grantees (group “G”)

**Introduction**

* Hello & interviewer information
* This work is part of an independent assessment project with the goal of assisting, improving, and refining possible future rounds of the program “Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives: Amplifying Unheard Voices” (“the program”).
* The program is administered by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) with financial support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Although the assessment team does have a relationship with the funders, we are working independently. Responses will not have any bearing on any current or future application to CLIR. We are not collecting this information in any way to assess your work, nor to share directly with CLIR.
* We will use information from today’s interview only for purposes of the assessment project, including:
  + we will transcribe the interview and take notes;
  + materials will not be used by CLIR for other purposes;
  + if transcribed information is shared with CLIR we will remove identifying information.

**Topics & Questions**

**Program Processes and Feedback**

* The process was a two-tiered process and lasted more than ten months (from the time of initial application in April 2021 until notifications in February 2022). Throughout this application period, did you receive the information that you needed from CLIR? Was there any information that you wished you would have received during that time, which was not communicated?
* CLIR aims for the process to be well-explained and transparent to applicants. To what extent was CLIR successful in creating a transparent review process that was responsive to applicants?
* As a finalist, you received feedback at least twice from the review panel. We would like to know more about how you made use of the feedback and information that you received from the reviewers.
  + What changes did you make to your final application, based on the feedback you received?
  + Are you able to use the feedback that you received on the final application to shape or inform your project plan and activities as you get underway? (For example, if you received any advice regarding digital stewardship, preservation, or other technical topics, what was that advice, and how is it shaping the work?)
  + What were the most useful elements of the feedback you received?
* Each funded project was required to complete an intellectual property agreement with CLIR. What was your experience in completing this step of the process? What would you change about this process, or the IP agreement, if you could? Did the agreement pose challenges for your project or the community you’re working with?
  + How did you go about approving the document? Who reviewed it? Who signed it?
* CLIR produced and made available a series of applicant support webinars during fall 2021. Now that the process is concluded, did you find these events useful for your work to complete the proposal? What topics or questions would you like to see addressed in these resources, which was not addressed in the current series?

**Next Steps for Cohort Engagement**

* One contribution of the Digitizing Hidden Collections program has been the creation of a cohort of academic, independent, and community-based organizations in the United States and Canada that is engaged in ongoing work to digitize now-unavailable or under-utilized collections with the potential to broaden the range of racial, ethnic, and cultural representation in digital libraries and archives. What should CLIR do to capture and share lessons learned from this cohort of funded projects?
  + online presence
  + various modes of engagement, such as in-person, webinars, or other modes
  + cohort building

**Suggestions for Improvement**

* Having gone through the entire process, what if suggestions for change in the application process, program documentation, or feedback, would you hope to see implemented in future rounds of the program?

**Thank You**

* Thank you for your time and feedback through this interview. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us, which we haven’t asked about during the interview?
* Please contact us with any concerns by responding to our email.