

Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives: Amplifying Unheard Voices

Session 1: Applicant Webinar
March 7, 2024



Links mentioned:

- [Program Homepage](#)
- [Core Values](#)
- [Apply for an Award](#)
- [Native land](#)
- [Application Guidelines \(view only\)](#)
- [Application Guidelines \(make a copy, Google account required\)](#)
- [DLF's Digitizing Special Formats wiki](#)
- [Projects funded through Digitizing Hidden Collections, 2015-2020 and DHC: Amplifying Unheard Voices, 2021](#)
- [Registration for the Applicant Support Series Session 2, March 13](#)
- [Webinar Survey](#)

Questions and Answers

The following questions and answers are grouped based on general headings to better assist you in navigating the document. Consider using the “Find” feature in this document to search for a word or phrase to find a more specific question topic.

All questions asked in chat and via the Q&A box during the live webinar are copied below. Some questions were answered live during the March 7, 2024 webinar and are marked. Any questions answered live may include additional references or clarification. If you have any other questions, email the CLIR Grants team at hidencollections@clir.org.

Jump to a topic:

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General

Q: Apologies if this was already covered -- but when can applicants expect to hear final decisions?

A: The review panel will convene in July 2024. Final decisions on awardees will be before September 1, 2024.

Q: How many letters of support?

A: The application will ask for two types of support letters. The application will require one letter of institutional support (if applicable, also from each officially named collaborating organization) and up to four letters of support for your proposed project. The institutional letter of support should come from your Director, Dean, Organizational President, or whomever is the head administrator who will be responsible for making decisions about allocating resources for preserving and sustaining access to the project deliverables over time. This person will write a letter confirming the institution's commitment to maintaining the results of your work. The letters of support should not come from anyone directly involved in the project. Letters of support written by experts outside of one's own institution and region may be more persuasive, since they can help to demonstrate the project's importance to a wider community. You can find more information in CLIR's [Guidelines for Authors of Letters of Support](#).

Q: Can letters of support come from a member of the advisory board if they are not paid? For example, we have a professor that is not connected to the project partners but we would like to have them on the advisory board because they are an interested researcher.

A: The application will ask for two types of support letters. One is the institutional letter of support that will come from your director, Dean, organizational President, or whomever is the head administrator who will be responsible for making decisions about allocating resources for preserving and sustaining access to the project deliverables over time. This person will write a letter confirming the institution's commitment to maintaining the results of your work. The application also requires letters of support, which cannot come from anyone directly involved in the project. The letters of support written by experts outside of one's own institution and region may be more persuasive, since they can help to demonstrate the project's importance to a wider community. You can find more information in CLIR's [Guidelines for Authors of Letters of Support](#). I would shy away from board members writing the letters of support because there might be some bias, but a variety of communities and individuals within the communities that could speak to its broad appeal and representation. If you choose to include the board member's letter of support, I would add additional letters that complement and expand the importance to a wider audience.

Q: Thanks for this! Would it be okay to have a letter of support from someone involved in one of the platform portals?

A: If they are not part of the project team and you're not paying any fees to the portal service provider as part of the grant, that may be permissible. However, letters of support written by experts outside of one's own institution and region may be more persuasive, since they can help to demonstrate the project's importance to a wider community. If you choose to include this letter of support, I would add additional letters that complement and expand the importance to a wider audience.

Q: Apologies for going back to Letters of Support. Our project is meant to digitize records for seven different nations, but you mentioned that there is a cap of 4. Do you have any advice for how we can show the support of all the Nations?

A: The application will ask for two types of support letters. One is the institutional letter of support, which should come from the head administrator of the applicant organization. If the application has added collaborating organizations, each collaborating organization can also submit an institutional support letter. Keep in mind that the letters of commitment are unlimited. The letters of support are limited to four and are from people external to the project and should address the impact of the project as a whole. There is also space to upload extra materials at the end of the application. You can use that space for additional letters if you like but there is no guarantee that reviewers will read all of them carefully, since the application is very long.

Q: Do we need letters of commitment from vendors, in addition to quotes?

A: You do not need letters of commitment from vendors. However, I do recommend viewing CLIR's [Guidelines for Grant Proposals Involving Subcontractors and Consultants](#).

Q: What happens if a co-pi moves to another institution during the granting period. Can they still remain as a co-pi and how do they inform CLIR of this.

A: Sometimes an awarded project's Co-PI moves to another institution. If the PI will remain working on the project in the same capacity, it is not necessarily an issue. An email sent to the program officers to update the new contact information will be sufficient. However, if that PI is no longer going to be involved with the project, the process will require a grant modification request to replace them.

Q: After submitting our original application, another organization asked if we could include their materials-- a small amount that we are happy to support but they were not included in our initial application. Can we include their materials? It should not make a significant change to our budget and we are happy to include their materials

A: *The Digitizing Hidden Collections: Amplifying Unheard Voices* program does require all applicants (including official collaborating organizations) to own and hold the materials nominated. Will they be named as an official collaborating organization, or will they be a community partnership? If you are adding them as an official collaborating organization, ensure they qualify as an eligible collaborating partner and own and hold the added materials. Ensure the added materials fit the scope of the originally proposed project. Ensure the added materials complement the cohesive theme of the original proposal. These requirements are equally vital to competitive proposals as the cost factor.

Q: On the slide for Project Details: Capacity, you mentioned a new upload of Board/Trustee List(s). I do see that on page 5 of the Final Application Guidelines, but I don't see it farther down in the guidelines under that section. Can you let us know if there are additional details about this upload?

A: This was an error. We have changed some of the requirements for this cohort. Thank you for catching this detail in our guidelines. The Board/Trustee list is no longer required.

Collections

Q: Two questions: 1) We have links to samples of digitized resources from the collection. I believe these are acceptable for the application along with providing written context (100 word limit). Is this accurate? 2) While the collection being digitized under the grant will be 100% publically accessible, the samples will be password protected. We plan to include the login credentials along with the database link in the samples document. Is this acceptable?

A: This is allowable, but try not to make it too elaborate. Sometimes, projects submit cell phone photos of the original nominated materials. This assists reviewers in evaluating the condition of the materials and speaks to the urgency of the project.

Q: I have two questions: 1) We have samples via links to similar documents digitized from the collection and have written context related to each sample as well. I believe this is allowable. Is this correct? 2) Also, while the digitized portion of the collection under the grant will be 100% publically accessible, the samples are password protected. We plan to include the database link and the sign in credentials on the samples document. Is this appropriate?

A: This is a subjective decision, best determined by the applicant. Try not to make it too complicated for reviewers. Sometimes, applicants will take cell phone pictures of the nominated materials. This will give the reviewers a view of the materials and provide them a better image of the collection.

Rights, Ethics, & Re-use

Q: A colleague is very concerned that all digitized materials will need to be publicly available online, while my interpretation is that the descriptive metadata for all digitized materials needs to be publicly available and it is okay for some digital files to be for on-site access only. Can you please confirm or clarify?

A: Yes, your understanding is correct. It is okay for some portions of digital files to be restricted. However, it is very important that reviewers understand why you intend to restrict access, how you will provide access, and what proportion of materials are affected. We require you to dedicate all *metadata* to the public domain under a Creative Commons waiver and to avoid imposing additional access restrictions on the materials than what may already be in place. Reviewers strongly prefer that applicants avoid creating unnecessary barriers to access, since such barriers inhibit a project's impact. Access restrictions are allowable when well-justified due to legal and/or ethical concerns. Such restrictions will not necessarily disadvantage you in the competition and may even be viewed favorably by the review panel. This includes restricting

access to materials that include personally identifiable information or culturally-sensitive material.

Q: Are there any thoughts about the redaction of personal names/addresses in some materials (not all)? We have zines and newsletters created by lgbtq+ groups at a time when these materials circulated only within these groups. We want to be respectful of privacy when these are made accessible online and this is a small enough collection that we are prepared to do this work prior to upload. We did something similar with another collection. The unaltered collections are fully accessible for research in person.

A: We understand that there may be some culturally sensitive materials nominated for digitization that might need to be redacted. The important thing is that you have a plan in place and that you communicate and justify that plan to the reviewers in your application. We require you to dedicate all *metadata* to the public domain under a Creative Commons waiver and to avoid imposing additional access restrictions than what may already be in place for the source materials. Reviewers strongly prefer that applicants avoid creating unnecessary barriers to access, since such barriers inhibit a project's impact. Access restrictions are allowable when well-justified due to legal and/or ethical concerns. Such restrictions will not necessarily disadvantage you in the competition and may even be viewed favorably by the review panel. This includes restricting access to materials that include personally identifiable information or culturally-sensitive material

Budget and Finance

Q: Is there a budget template?

A: Yes, you will be required to utilize the budget detail provided on page 47 of our [DHC Applicant Guidelines](#). You will find links to one, two, and three-year templates in the guidelines. You can find a copy of the budget detail and budget narrative template on our [Apply for an Award page](#). The sample budget detail spreadsheet is available [here](#) and the budget narrative template is available [here](#).

Q: Is there a maximum or cap for community consultant fees? In what capacity can they serve? Digitization, metadata creation? the outreach part?

A: If a service contractor is being paid over \$5,000 dollars we will require a quote submitted with the proposal. We typically have a variety of consultant types and fees in these projects. It will vary based on your definition of "community consultants" and the capacity they are serving within your project. For some projects the consultants are elders in the community related to the materials, sometimes they are community or technical experts, and/or community partners. The consultants can be used in outreach for community programming created from the collections being digitized, or as a best ethical practices guidance consultant. It is up to your organization to determine the use of consultants and to justify why it is important in your proposal. Reviewers are concerned that you are providing equitable pay for the services they render. I recommend viewing our [Guide for Grant Proposals Involving Subcontractors or Consultants](#) for additional

information. If you have additional questions don't hesitate to email us at hidddedcollections@clir.org.

Q: We are a Canadian institute. The budget would be in USD. Is there a certain guideline about which exchange rate to use?

A: If a Canadian organization is awarded funding, CLIR will use an exchange rate that reflects the current rate at the time of the disbursement of grant funds. CLIR will also look at the exchange rate at the close of the funded project, if there are remaining unspent funds.

Q: I've heard some grant organizations discourage the use of GAs in favor of project archivists because they are more expensive. What is CLIR's stance on that?

A: We have seen the use of graduate students in staffing for projects. This will be contingent upon how you intend to use the graduate students and the balance of the expertise required for the job duties they will be involved in completing. Some reviewers are excited to see graduate students gaining experience with the guidance of experienced archivists. As always, CLIR is an advocate for equitable pay. However, keep in mind that tuition remission, waivers, etc., are not an allowable cost. For more information on disallowed costs please refer to [Appendix A](#) in the [Application Guidelines](#).

Q: If we are planning to hire an archivist who was affiliated with our org as a consultant, can we include transportation and other expenses for her travel?

A: Yes, you can include travel expenses to your budget. As a reminder, there is a maximum allowance of \$7,500 for travel expenses in budgets. Including this information in the budget narrative and detail of your application inclusive of justifications will assist in a competitive application. For more information on allowable and disallowable costs, inclusive of maximums refer to [Appendix A](#) in the [Application Guidelines](#).

Q: You responded to a similar question before. Can we please have clarification on the percentage of the budget that we can allocate for digitization, metadata creation, community outreach and engagement, and travel, etc?

A: We don't prescribe a specific percentage of the budget for each category, because projects funded through this program really vary from one another. The budget you determine for your project should reflect the needs of your project. Some of the varying categories of expenses have maximums and disallowed costs. For example, we don't allow indirect costs, there are limits to what you can request for travel, technology, and administrative support (for collaborative projects). Keep in mind your budget narrative should support and expand on your budget detail worksheet. I recommend viewing [Appendix A](#) in the [Application Guidelines](#) for more information on the allowable and disallowable costs, inclusive of maximums per category.

Q: allowable cost questions:

-Are we able to include stipends for PIs?

-Can we use modest funds to design/create marketing flyers for the digitized collections?

A: Yes, you are allowed to include stipends for PIs in the form of consultant fees, staffing or salary, to cover the work required to execute your project. Remember to explain and justify the expenses added in your budget detail in your budget narrative (i.e., job duties, FTE, fringe, etc.). You can hire a vendor/consultant for marketing and outreach activities connected to the collections. However, keep in mind photocopying is not an allowable expense. I recommend viewing [Appendix A](#) in the [Application Guidelines](#) for more information on the allowable and disallowable costs.

Q: Could the cost of metadata creation (through staffing) be part of the budget? Is there a limit on the percentage that we should allocate for digitization vs metadata creation and community engagement, etc?

A: Yes, metadata creation is part of creating access to the project deliverables, so this is an allowable cost. There is no limit per se on the allocation for digitization vs metadata creation and community engagement. The reviewers will be evaluating the budget detail and narrative and if they substantiate the needs outlined in the project. This will vary from project to project depending on the size of the collections, state of the nominated materials, project outreach and community engagement plans. A competitive proposal will utilize the budget detail to provide more nuanced context to the expenditures listed in the budget detail worksheet.

Q: I see that there is a \$10,000 cap on equipment. The scanner we need for this project to protect oversized materials far exceeds this cap. How would you recommend we proceed in our budget narrative?

A: Keep in mind the grant program is more focused on supporting labor costs rather than big equipment purchases. There is a limit of \$10,000 USD for equipment. In the past, some projects have used a vendor to outsource some of the digitization services, and others have leased the equipment necessary for digitization during the project period. Using a vendor or leasing the equipment may be an alternative approach. You could also have your organization cover the remaining equipment expenses over the \$10,000 as a cost share. This however, would limit your expenses outside of the purchase of this particular equipment.

Project Design

Q: When digitizing certain media, it's not always certain if interventions will be successful for materials. How much should that influence what we nominate as material?

A: The *Digitizing Hidden Collections: Amplifying Unheard Voices* program coheres around five core values: Public Knowledge, Broad Representation, Authentic Partnerships, Sustainable Infrastructures, and Community Centered Access. For this program, it is important that reviewers are confident that your project will have a meaningful impact, so selecting only

materials that are in very poor condition may create doubts about the potential impact of the work and its alignment with the core values. This may render your application less competitive.