

Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives: Amplifying Unheard Voices

Session 3: Designing an Achievable, Sustainable Digitization Plan March 20, 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 4, April 3](#)
- [Webinar Survey](#)

Questions and Answers

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 20, 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 hiddencollections@clir.org.

Q: If we choose to utilize digitization equipment from a neighboring peer institution (e.g., another university library digitization lab), would we handle that much like we would any other vendor? What if there is no charge for the usage of this equipment? Would we just include that information in the project narrative? We're exploring our options for procuring a large-format scanner without purchasing one or shipping our materials to a vendor. Thank you!

A: (Emily Galgano): Yeah, I think that would be a really good option. If you have a neighboring institution that has equipment already, I would just make sure that you have a formalized agreement or contract with them. To make sure that you're not messed over down the road if they end up not having the time or the equipment breaks, and they don't have it, and you don't have a backup option. So, make sure you have a formal contract written, and probably a letter of commitment that you can attach to your narrative as well.

A: (Program Officer): If it is more beneficial for your project due to logistics, materials, digitization needs and/or costs to utilize a nearby digitization lab, that is allowable. You can handle that like any other vendor services, especially if they are charging your organization. You will obtain a quote and upload and include this information in your project budget detail and budget narrative. If they are providing this service in kind or cost share, I would include that in your budget narrative and project narrative, so the reviewers have a better understanding of this expense and time effort. Another option some organizations utilize is leasing the equipment during the project timeline.

Q: Do you have a list of digitizing vendors that we can refer to?

A: (Emily Galgano): I don't necessarily have a list of digitizing vendors. I can tell you why we chose some of the folks that we've worked with in the past. We have a company in Anchorage that we work with that is local in proximity to us and we also have a vendor that we work with in Kentucky. The vendor in Kentucky has done other Recordings at Risk grants. So they're familiar with CLIR in their processes, which is why we've worked with them in the past partially but they also prioritize older formats, which has been really helpful. They are the ones that did our beta cam and beta Max tapes, which is a lot harder to find vendors who can do those. We've also found local vendors on radio stations are actually able to do some of the newer formats. So if it's on a Vhs or cassette tape they have the ability to do that type of work. So that's in town, and there's less shipping. I think these next 2 might be more CLIR staff questions.

A: (Program Officer): To adhere to ethical compliance, we do not endorse any digitization vendors. The selection of a vendor will vary from project to project based on the materials selected, the current state of the physical materials, geographic location and overall project needs. The Digital Library Federation (DLF) created a list of external vendor resources to assist organizations in planning projects that involved the digitization of rare and unique materials. You can find this document on our Apply for an Award page.

https://wiki.diglib.org/Digitizing_Special_Formats

Q: Thanks for this webinar! This might be more of a CLIR staff question -- we're considering contracting a project archivist to work on the project in house. Are there any requirements for contractors (vs. vendors)?

A:(Program Officer): This is contingent upon your specific project needs and organizational policies regarding consultants. Some projects it may make more sense to create a job ad and hire an archivist. Staffing is an allowable expense that you include in your budget detail and narrative. If this is a new hire for this project only, upload a job description or ad, including hours, salary and fringe benefits to your budget information(detail and narrative). For some organizations and projects, it may make more sense to hire this person as a consultant. This is allowable and you include in the budget detail and narrative of your application. We have a [Guidelines for Grant Proposals Involving Subcontractors or Contractors](#) on our [Apply for an Award](#) page.

Q: Are internal server upgrades for master/preservation copies an allowable digitization expense for a CLIR grant?

A: (Program Officer): This is a frequent question that will also be covered in more detail during our applicant support webinar on budgeting. Dedicated software necessary for digitization and the production of metadata (e.g storage media) are allowable. Items in this category should be one-time purchases and applicants may request partial funding for items and contribute the remaining funds as shared costs. Keep in mind, there is a maximum amount of \$10,000 in the equipment, supplies and materials budget category. The reviewers will want to see that your organization is able to sustain this server after the grant period. You can always email us at hidencollections@clir.org if you want additional information.

Q: Are letters of commitment the same as letters of support?

A: (Program Officer): 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. Letters of support must come from individuals, research experts, and/or community members knowledgeable about the source materials nominated for digitization. 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 our [Guidelines for the Authors of Letters of Support](#)

Q: Is it an option to digitize half our materials with a flatbed scanner we would purchase (art works mainly) and continue to use and outsource the remaining materials (sound, papers, files, organizational archival materials)?

A: (Emily Galgano): I would say from the perspective of doing projects, we have done that before I am unsure if CLIR allows it. If there are some vendors that only work with some materials, you will sometimes need to work with multiple vendors.

Q: We do not have a deed of gift for the collection we are proposing to digitize, only a newspaper article from the local paper stating that she donated her collection to us upon her death, which was in 1991. Is it a requirement that we have a signed deed of gift? If so, I will track down next of kin and see if they will sign one.

A: (Emily Galgano): I would say if you can get a signed deed of gift it's always better. I hesitate sometimes with digitizing materials that we don't have very firm ownership of because you don't want to go through all this work and someone asks you to take it down.

A:(Program Officer): This is going to be a great plug for our upcoming rights, ethics, and re-use applicant support webinar. Make sure you clarify as much information as you can regarding the ownership of materials to reviewers. The reviewers will be looking to see that you do have a great understanding of your rights, that for the most part you own and hold them, and, secondly, that you do have a takedown policy in place in case something should arise.

Q: Do you have any vendor recommendations for a large scale photo digitization project?

A: (Emily Galgano): I would recommend reaching out to any digitization vendor with a focus in scanning either photos or papers, they will all have the equipment needed. It can also be helpful to think outside of the box, there was a local group here doing a newspaper digitization project so we have worked with them on photo projects because they have these amazing high speed scanners that have huge beds, it's great for oversized photographs too. We also have worked with a local photographer who happens to have several decades of experience with photographs, scanning, digitization, etc. We're lucky with him because he also is very knowledgeable about Southeast Alaska and Tlingit culture, so he sometimes helps us with identifications as well. All this to say that it can be helpful to really dig into your networks, not only for large vendors but also smaller contractors to find the perfect fit for your project.

Q: Emily, how did you feel about your own capacity/expertise to do your project while applying to the grant? Did you find it was a learn as you go experience?

A: (Emily Galgano): Some of my earliest grants I wrote, I didn't understand what capacity meant. It has been a learning experience. Now I feel like when evaluating projects, I can tell pretty easily when something is out of the realm of me working. I can see and I know what my day to day looks like, what are my areas of expertise, when I need to hire a vendor and/or temporary staff to join the team.

Q: What is the expected reporting schedule for CLIR?

A: (Program Officer): We require a report every 12 months. Recipients are required to submit reports, both narrative and financial, through our online system on or before the dates outlined in each of your award letters. Reports are always due on the last day of the month. Your first interim report is due **a year and one month** after the start date of your project. Each interim report after that is due exactly one year after the previous one. Your final report is then due 3 months after your **project end date**. For example, project start date is January 1, 2025, the first interim report is due no later than Feb 28, 2026, the second interim is due February 28, 2026 and final report is due March 31, 2026. This means we should be receiving one report from you each year. If your project is only 12 months, you will just submit your final report 3 months after the end date of your project. An email reminder from CLIR will be sent to the PIs and additional contacts that we have on file around a month prior the due date for each of your annual interim reports and around three months prior to your project's end date.

Q: Working with a tribal association we have proposed sorting, arranging, digitizing and describing textual materials. Many of these are original fieldnotes, logs, translations and transcriptions. We would like to include metadata/records updates that relate these textual materials to audio, video and images. Just want to make sure we can include this record linking and record updating as part of the digitization costs.

A: (Program Officer): This would probably be an allowable cost dependent upon how you design your work plan if this is part of processing the digital materials. As long as it is part of the preparation of the digitization of the nominated materials and not an extensive percentage of your budget.