Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives:
Amplifying Unheard Voices

Session 6: Q&A
April 17, 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
- Guidelines on Letters of Support
- Projects funded through Digitizing Hidden Collections, 2015-2020 and DHC: Amplifying Unheard Voices, 2021
- 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 April 17, 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.

Jump to a topic:

General | Collections | Rights, Ethics, and Re-use | Budget and Finance | Project Design | Collaboration | Review Process

General

Q: Do the letters of support have to come from individuals outside your institution or just outside your department? We are a large university and have at least two faculty who use the materials that we are proposing to digitize as part of this grant in their classes

and research who will write strong letters of support. Is that permissible, or do the letters have to come from outside the university?

A: There are two types of letters of support that you have to provide for the final application. One, is the institutional support letter. If you are a lone applicant without a collaborator, this letter of institutional support will come from your dean, department chair, or higher administration personnel (president etc). This is from someone who can commit on behalf of the organization that you will carry out all your financial and project deliverables.

Second, there are letters of support that will come from outside individuals. There are guidelines on letters of support on our Apply for an Award page. For competitive applications, I do recommend that some of those letters are from outside of your institution. You want to find people that are experts in this particular subject matter who can speak to the impact to the community and scholarly research because you want to demonstrate broad representation, locally, but also regionally or perhaps, internationally.

Q: Also, we are not collaborating with any other department or institution on this project, so do we only need one letter of commitment?

A: Yes, if you do not have any collaborators, you will only need one letter of commitment from your dean, department chair, or higher administration, etc.

Q: We will be hiring a part time position to implement this project. We have identified a person who is uniquely qualified for this work due to their familiarity with the collection. Is it ok to know who we intend to hire or are we required to do a search?

A: You are not required to do a search, and you are not required to make public postings of your jobs. If you already have a selected candidate internally, you would just need to include the position description in the budget narrative of your application. .

Q: Can we make changes from our initial application?

A: We expect some changes between the initial application and the final application. Make sure you are tracking all your changes and all of your changes are consistent throughout your application. Check and recheck that your work plan, digitization plan, your collections list, etc. all tell a coherent story.

Q: Related to the above question: If one of the partners in the project (an individual) is proposed to be a co-PI and to have a part time position - do we still need to propose a JD for them? Or can that be explained in the partner narrative?

A: If a co-PI is going to be paid through the project, you will want to include that in the budget detail and in the budget narrative. The budget narrative should explain all the staffing. You will want to explain what they are going to do and for how many hours. You will want to give them the title that the proposed person is going to have. You will need to upload a resume/CV for each of the named project principal investigators so you don't need to worry about generating a job description here, as well.

Q: Secondary sources: there are places where it might be good to cite a source in the application (i.e., for discussing historical context) but there is no place for a list of references. Should I just add a citation at the end of that particular section? Or just avoid any references/citations?

A: If the reference can fit into the word count in a particular section, you can cite or hyperlink the reference in each particular section. There is also an optional upload section at the end of the application. You can put all your references and citations into one document and upload it at the end of your application.

Q: It says to include only brief resumes. Would this be a 1-pager only?

A: There is no limit for CVs/resumes so you do not need to worry about truncating your resumes to one page.

Q: Is the Digitizing Hidden Collections Applicant Handbook the same thing as the Guidelines?

A: Yes, the Applicant Handbook and the Application Guidelines are referring to the same thing. We used to have a handbook in the *Digitizing Hidden Collections* program and guidelines in *Recordings at Risk* program, and we interpolated them frequently. So now, we call them the Application Guidelines in both programs, but unfortunately, at times we do inadvertently revert back to referring to them as the applicant handbook.

Q: "Proof of eligibility for applicants and any collaborating organizations will be required for projects recommended for funding." Does this mean that applicants and partners don't have to provide proof of 501(c)3 status etc. for the application, only if awarded? Just want to confirm! Thank you for answering these questions.

A: Yes, that is correct. We are not asking for your IRS determination letter or your EIN in your application at this time. We will follow up the awardees to confirm their status.

Collections

Q: The question "Original materials to be digitized during the project, by quantities and types" is proving tricky for us. For the first round of the application, we asked for page/item count estimates to create the budget and we have a sense of the overall collection size and material types. However, we did not ask partners to detail how many of which material type they have, although we have a general sense if a collection is mostly textual, photographic, etc. For this question, can we use "mixed archival

collections" and linear feet (how we are estimating the budget and digitization amount) or would CLIR reviewers be discouraged by the lack of detail in that answer?

Also, the dropdowns for this question in the google template do not work, at least not for me. Can you show an example answer to this question to demonstrate what CLIR is looking for? (Anonymous)

A: No, I think that's good. We have projects all the time that use linear feet calculations and that would be fine. The reviewers just want to know you have a sense of the size of your collection and what is in those collections. We always expect surprises to be there from duplicates or stuff that's not salvageable.

A: Below is an example of what is asked in this question and the information requested.

- **Type of Materials**: (Select architectural drawings, artifacts, artworks, audio recordings, audiovisual recordings, books, ephemera, manuscripts, maps, mixed archival collections, musical scores, photographs, posters, serials, specimens, other)
- **Other Format:** (Provide material type if "Other" is selected above)
- **Amount of Material:** (Provide a numerical value)
- **Unit of Measurement:** (Select boxes, cubic feet, items, linear feet, pages, recorded hours, or volumes)
- **Additional Information (optional):** (Provide any additional information to explain any information you have provided)

Type of Materials	*Mixed Archival Collections*
Other Format	n/a
Amount of Material	150
Unit of Measurement	Linear feet
Additional Information	n/a

Q: If the amount of items to be digitized and uploaded for public access in the initial proposal is greater than what we now know we can do within the project time frame, is it permissible to revise and reduce to what is feasible?

A: Yes, as much as it is permissible to change your project timeline, it is permissible to change your collections that you are looking to have digitized. If you have realized that the scope of your project is beyond the confines of this program, that's certainly allowed.

Rights, Ethics, and Re-Use

Q: Re: access and reuse control for material with potentially sensitive/identifying information. Would instituting a process for the potential redaction or removal of material, if/as requested by descendants of photographed person(s) be advisable?

A: Yes, you would want to include this in the rights, ethics, and re-use section of the application. Reviewers will be looking to see you have a clear understanding of the potential issues that could arise and you already have a take down plan in place regarding these materials. If you demonstrate an understanding of the issues and you have a plan, most of our IP reviewers, and reviewers as a whole, will look favorably on that.

Q: Can you elaborate on what this means? Approx. % of the nominated material may remain encumbered?

A: In the rights, ethics, and re-use section, we ask if there are any reasons for why you might have restricted access for certain portions of your collection. We want to know what percentage of the collection may be restricted. For example, if you have a collection of recording sound, and you thought there might be 10% of commercial recordings that you may end up restricting access on. The approximate percentage of nominated materials, which may remain encumbered is what is being referenced here. If you had a collection that was going to need restricted access for some portion of it, up to all of it, what percentage is that? The panel would want to know approximately what they would see available for access at the end.

Q: Is it okay to say that we won't know what percentage of materials would be redacted/restricted until we see the materials? It's hard to predict at this point, though we don't anticipate much will be restricted.

A: Once again, we are primarily looking for an estimate of the percentage of your materials that would be accessible. We understand that some of these collections are not inventory to the item level or beyond at this point, and that you are making an estimate. To the best of your ability, make an educated guess and demonstrate to the IP reviewers that you have a plan if you anticipate some of your materials may be redacted/restricted.

Q: Just to clarify: all digitized materials must be fully accessible (viewable) as an outcome, as opposed to only sharing the metadata in some cases?

A: No, all digitized materials do not have to be fully, publicly accessible. This is what we are referring to when we talk about take down notices and restricted access. For example, if you are dealing with materials with PII (Personal Identifiable Information) that you know ahead of time, you may not want to make those publicly accessible. You can identify that upfront that you intend to restrict those materials. This is where you would identify the percentage of the materials that will be encumbered. So no, it is not required that all digitized materials be fully, publicly accessible as an outcome. We understand it may not be an appropriate measure for some of these materials based on what the collections are built around.

Budget and Finance

Q: If we need certain equipment to carry out particular digitizing objects and will use the equipment beyond this specific project, can we include this on the budget?

A: Project specific equipment can be included in the budget if it is needed to complete the grant work. These include items necessary for digitization and the production of metadata including dedicated software and hardware and re-housing and storage supplies. Items in this category should be one-time purchases and have a maximum budget allowance of $10,000. For instance, if you bought a scanner with your supplies fund, we would certainly not expect you to dispose of that scanner at the end of the project. We would anticipate that item would still have life. We do limit the supplies for general-purpose items that may reasonably be expected to have a useful life after the project, such as office furniture, shelving, or archival cabinets.

Q: Thanks for this! • Re: contractors. I'm having difficulty finding a contract digital archivist to respond with an initial quote. We plan to budget greater than $5000 for their services – if we're unable to secure a quote before the application deadline, is there a place in the application to explain?

A: In the service provider section, you can explain that you have been seeking quotes for this service, but have not yet been able to obtain one. You can include a note in your budget narrative when you talk about this service as a prospective line item, as well. You can also get quotes from other vendors that you don't intend on using, but with a similar percentage amount, so the reviewers can see the average cost for that particular service.

Q: After attending these support sessions and considering reviewer comments, our project budget is larger than what we initially proposed in our initial application. Should we be concerned?

A: No, we do expect to see some fluctuations between award amounts sought between the initial application and the final application, as you refine your digitization plan. You may have come out of the staffing and budget session understanding that you are going to be looking for higher salary line amounts, and now need to request more funds. There are various reasons why you might change the amount requested between application stages. We understand. We simply want to see that each line is justified and explained in your budget narrative. As long as that is the case, it won't be a problem if the amount requested is not the same as it was in the initial application.

Q: If we have a contractor in mind, but they can't commit yet to the timeline (but they have provided an hourly rate) so will not yet produce a quote. Should I add this to the service provider and budget narrative section?

A: You should add this to the budget narrative and service provider section. Remember that we need a quote for vendor services over $5,000. If you need a quote and the contractor you have in mind is unable to provide you a quote at this time, you can find a comparable vendor and ask for a quote for the services you are requesting. This way you meet the quote requirement and reviewers have an estimate of what the services will cost, and you can state that you are planning to use a different vendor, but here are some comparable quotes.

Q: Following up on the last question, do we have to get multiple quotes, or is one quote permissible if we have a preferred vendor whom we've worked with in the past?

A: If you have a chosen vendor, you only need to upload one quote, as long as it is an actual quote. If you are having trouble getting a full quote from that particular vendor at this time because you have not reached the point in negotiation to get a quote, you can upload a secondary quote to meet the requirements and explain you are planning to use the original vendor.

Q: I'm sorry, I think I missed the answer to the following: can our budget go over the initial proposal?

A: Yes, your budget can be higher than what you submitted in the initial round, as long as it falls within the $300,000 limit. When you are thinking about adjusting your budget, you want to make sure your budget narrative and budget detail reflect and support this change. You want to make sure your budget detail, budget narrative, and total request amount are all the same. If there are discrepancies, the application will not make it through the technical review. Reviewers want to see that the budget makes sense and it aligns with the rest of your application.

Q: If you have individuals who are working remotely will the grant cover their travel to the site to do some of the work at specific times?

A: Yes, travel is an allowable cost, as long as it is essential to carry out the proposed project. You will want to check the allowed and disallowed costs in the Appendix A: Budget in the Final Application Guidelines. Here you will find maximums for certain allowable expenses and budget line items.

Q: We are located in Canada and we are drafting our budget up in Canadian dollars and once we finalized it we will 'translate' it into US dollars, before submitting. The budget detail is quite descriptive for each budget item, should we translate that into US dollars as well or could I do the following: The Budget Detail line item – heading will be in US dollars and I will include a sentence for each line item, explaining that all calculations are listed in Canadian dollars? Or should I rewrite the budget detail line items explanation into US dollars as well?

A: I would recommend using only one currency for all your documents, which I know is a bit of a hurdle for the Canadians that we're not imposing on the Americans. From a review panel perspective, it will be easier for them to analyze your documents without any room for possible misinterpretation if everything they see is in one currency. I would recommend translating all of your budget detail line items in US dollars.

Q: Re: Fringe expenses — just wanted to confirm the following: In Canada the costs of health insurance and employer contribution in pension plans is included in the salaries of employees. We just want to confirm that we can do the following:
*** We will list the cost of salaries in the budget narrative (including fringe benefits).**
*** In the Budget Narrative we will describe the percentage/value of the fringe benefits**

A: That is a perfect solution.

Q: Should we include the in-kind contribution in the budget detail as $ 0.00? In the Budget Narrative it will be shown as In-Kind and a description with dollar value added.

A: If you are including an in-kind contribution, you only want to describe that in the budget narrative. You can give it a value in your budget narrative, however, you don't want to include the value of the in-kind contribution in any of your overall tallies or in the total of your budget narrative. As a reminder, the number in the budget detail, the total of your budget narrative, and your amount requested should all match.

Q: If our org. does not offer benefits, will that count against us?

A: No, it will not count against you. We have a line item for salaries/wages and a line item for fringe benefits. Some organizations use that setup, and other organizations have their fringe encapsulated in their salary/wage line item. Most reviews are looking at whether it is an equitable wage for the area that you live in.

Project Design

Q: Is it ok to extend the timeframe for the project?

A: Yes, any changes you need to make between initial and final application is okay. You can extend the project timeframe as long as it falls between the allowable 1-3 years and the allowable project dates. We expect that there will be some changes between your initial application and your final application, as you have a better assessment of your project timeline, your collections, vendors, etc. Make sure you change the dates in your project digitization plan and work plan to match this extension in your project timeline.

Q: Might be too broad of a question to answer, but how detailed should the work plan be (eg. when particular files will be handed off)? Or, is it more about milestones?

A: This will be contingent on your project timeline. If it is a year-long project, you might want to be a little more detailed. If it is a three year project, you might want to be a bit more broad and focus more on hitting the milestones. You want to highlight the major parts of your digitization plan and your outreach plan and you want it to be consistent. Reviewers will want to see you have a handle on what is happening each quarter or each year of your project.

Collaboration

Q: Can we add collaborators?

A: You can add collaborators, but they need to qualify under the same eligibility qualifications (a nonprofit organization, within the United States or Canada). If they are an official collaborating partner they will also have to provide a letter of institutional support and if awarded funding, proof of their nonprofit status.

Q: Is it best to include all partners as co-PIs? Or can one individual be the lead?

A: If this is an official partner and you are recognizing them on your application, it can be good to have a PI listed for each collaborating organization, but it is not a requirement. However, we also know this will not always be possible. Some of the applications have upwards of 10 collaborators and you can only have a maximum of three listed PIs so it is okay to not have PIs listed for each collaborating organization.

Review Process

Q: Out of curiosity, of the 49 applicants invited to submit a final application, how many awards will be made?

A: We don't have a set number of awards, we have a set award amount. So once we have an award total that reaches our set award amount, we will have our total number of awardees. If a lot of smaller projects are funded, it could be upwards to 20-25 awards. If several larger projects are funded, it could be closer to 12-15 awards. It depends on the size of the award requests.

Q: Is the award amount "all or nothing", or do you offer a smaller amount than requested?

A: Typically the award amount is all or nothing. There are some unusual circumstances where we will ask you to adjust your award amount based on feedback from the panel. If, for instance, they look at your specs, and they think you just simply don't have enough money for your digitization they may advocate that we ask you to increase. Or in some instances, if you've submitted a real, large collection of mixed materials, maybe there are some materials that we deem ineligible by format, and those are removed from the collection to be digitized, and in that case we would slightly decrease the award to match that change. In general, however, it's an all or nothing scenario.