



COUNCIL ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

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Guidelines for Letter Writers for CLIR Grant Applications

[Digitizing Hidden Collections: Amplifying Unheard Voices](#) and [Recordings at Risk](#)

Good letters from outside perspectives are essential components of any application for Digitizing Hidden Collections: Amplifying Unheard Voices or Recordings at Risk.

Letter(s) of support must come from individuals knowledgeable about the source materials nominated for digitization but may not come from those who are directly affiliated with a proposed project.

For [Digitizing Hidden Collections: Amplifying Unheard Voices](#), applicants who are invited to submit final proposals are required to include at least one and up to four **letters of support**. For [Recordings at Risk](#), all applicants are required to submit at least one, and at most three, letters of support. Applicants may share the following tips with letter authors:

- **Format:** If applicable, prepare your letter on organizational letterhead and save it in PDF format. Insert an electronic copy of your signature above your name and title at the end. CLIR does not have set requirements for font type or size, so long as the letters are easily legible.
- **Length:** Good letters are usually a minimum of one full page and a maximum of three pages.
- **Personal information:** Be sure to include personal details (such as your name, title, and, if it's not on letterhead, your affiliation) somewhere in the document, to ensure our reviewers have that important information.
- **Address:** You may address your letter to “Members of the Review Committee” or something similar.
- **Content:** Your letter will be most helpful to the applicant and our reviewers if it answers at least some of the following questions:

- How are you familiar with the applicant organizations(s) and the collections they have nominated for digitization?
- Once the collections have been made available in digital form, in what ways will you or others be able to use them for public programming, research, teaching, learning, or other journalistic or creative work?
- How will access to the collections expand or change public understanding about the individuals, organizations, events, or other phenomena represented by the collections, and why would that expansion or change be important?
- Are there other ways the project will positively impact local, national, or international communities?
- If you're familiar with the unique qualifications of the applicants to implement their project or technical plans in the proposal, why are you confident they will complete the project successfully and on time?
- If you're familiar with the unique qualifications of the applicants to engage relevant communities, scholars, students, and other members of the public in conversations about their collections, why are you confident they will promote their newly available collections in meaningful ways?
- Why is this project uniquely suited to CLIR's national funding program?
- Why do you feel that reviewers should make this project a priority for funding?

Both programs also require at least one **letter of commitment**. The purpose of these letters are to confirm that head administrators at the applicant organization—as well as administrators at any collaborating organizations—understand the commitments they will be making if the proposal is funded. Each program's guidelines specify what information should be included in these letters. Generally speaking, letters of commitment should

affirm:

- the organization's enthusiasm for and readiness to fully participate in the project,
- the organization's acceptance of the responsibility to perform activities as described in the proposal, both during and after the grant term, and
- the organization's recognition that the project fulfills the organization's mission and current strategic goals.