

Recordings at Risk

Cycle 12 Q&A Webinar
February 26, 2025



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 - [Recordings At Risk Home Page](#)
 - [Apply for an Award Page](#)
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Questions and Answers

The following questions and answers are grouped based on general headings to better assist you in navigating the document. Consider using this document's "Find" feature 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. Any questions answered live may include additional references or clarification. If you have any other questions, email the CLIR Grants team at recordingsatrisk@clir.org.

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General

Q: How much funding is available this round? How many applications do you expect? How many applications do you typically receive?

A: We have approximately \$750,000 to award for this round. The funding rate is dependent on the size of the request and the size of the applicant pool. Applicants can request between

\$10,000 - \$50,000. We anticipate possibly receiving a larger number of applications this year. In the past, we've gotten between 50-100 applications.

Q: I would like to ensure that I can submit an application on behalf of our organization.

How do I ensure that I can do this? Do I just simply need to register on your site?

A: You can go to the program's [Apply for an Award](#) page and you'll find the direct link to both the program's [Application Guidelines](#), which give you an outline of what the application will ask for, and a direct link to our online application through [SMAppl](#)y. If you're curious about your eligibility, the program is open to U.S.-based cultural heritage nonprofits. You can contact us at recordingsatrisk@clir.org if you have specific questions regarding your organization's eligibility.

Q: Is the funding for CLIR at risk going forward?

A: We are in conversation now with the Mellon Foundation about future calls for the *Recording at Risk* program. We encourage you to sign up for the [CLIR Grants and Programs newsletter](#) for upcoming call for proposal announcements.

Q: Is this program funded with federal money? If so, is there any confidence the program will continue to exist?

A: This program is funded by the Mellon Foundation and not subject to federal funding restrictions.

Q: Is it possible to apply for a Recordings at Risk grant to continue the work of a Hidden Collections grant (that I hope will be funded)? This would be for additional materials not worked on in the Hidden Collections proposal.

A: Yes, you can have a *Recordings at Risk* grant and a *Digitizing Hidden Collections* grant at the same time. We often have applications that are a continuation of a previous grant or from a different program. As you addressed in your question, you cannot nominate the same materials for both proposals.

Q: And, related to this, is there any capacity to amend a grant application if new information comes to light after the proposal has been approved and invited to the application stage?

A: For Recordings at Risk, there is only one application stage. If the proposal is selected, you would receive funding. We do allow for grant modifications related to changes in PI, extensions, changes in deliverables. We do sometimes see projects where they've requested an over-estimated amount of digitization funds and they have funds left over and will add additional materials to be digitized to use up those excess funds.

Q: I am wondering if this would be appropriate to ask, however, given the current federal government policy change, are there any concerns in terms of language or terms used in application content?

A: We have two regranting programs. Hidden Collections has a thematic focus called *Amplifying Unheard Voices*, which in a way has a distinct DEI lens. This is not a concern for our funders. If it becomes a concern for our applicants due to their own funding restrictions, particularly publicly

funded entities, we will address that as a program team. We are not a federal agency. We are a nonprofit and this is a regranting program funded by the Mellon Foundation.

Q: My project does not seem to meet the minimum \$10,000. Are there other similar opportunities under CLIR?

A: Our only other similar opportunity is larger in scope, so likely not a good fit if you're looking for a sub-\$10,000 grant. If you go to our [Apply for an Award](#) page we do have information about additional similar funding opportunities. Another option would be to increase the scope of materials you're looking to digitize with this project to bring it up to \$10,000.

Q: Does future planned public programming make for a stronger application or is that irrelevant here?

A: The *Recordings at Risk* has four assessment criteria. One is the scholarly and public impact of the program, so you could include that here. We want it to have broad appeal for scholars, not just locally but national and sometimes transnational. Urgency is the second criteria, which relates to how and why it is urgent to reformat these materials, such as the condition of the nominated materials. Potential for preservation is the third criteria. Applications should have a work plan that makes the deliverables and preserves content over time. The fourth criteria is approach to legal and ethical concerns that might affect access. Those are the most important criteria. It doesn't hurt to include what your public programming will be, but it's not a primary focus.

Q: Apologies, I believe you mentioned this but you can apply for this grant and Hidden Collections in the same year?

A: Yes, the programs are run separately and you can apply to both and receive a grant from each program at the same time. However, you cannot have more than one active grant from the same program with the same principal investigator.

Collections

Q: Is it beneficial to choose a select collection out of our holdings, or just whatever we feel is most at risk?

A: It depends on the nature of your holdings and your project. You'll want to put forward a competitive proposal, which usually includes building a narrative around your story and your materials. Usually the more cohesive a collection you have, the easier it is to communicate to the panel why the collection is important and broadly impactful. It's not necessarily wrong to focus on the risk, but it may be easier thematically to put forward a compelling proposal if you have a cohesive collection.

Rights, Ethics, and Re-use

Q: What type of proof do you need that the ownership of the materials has been transferred from the production company to the nonprofit applying for the grant?

A: We will need to know more information to answer this question fully. You do need to own and hold the materials being nominated for digitization. One requirement of this program is to make

the metadata free and accessible. Sometimes people will share a deed of gift to demonstrate ownership. We do have an IP specialist who will review every application from a rights, ethics, and re-use standpoint. The application does have space in the rights, ethics, and re-use section to add supplemental material, which is where we typically see deeds of gift or MOUs related to rights around these materials.

Q: Production company is just a single owner, a filmmaker (her partner has passed so it's just her) - the materials are betacam. She has been working with the nonprofit for digitizing and public programming of the materials for years. She's an elder, but is willing to hand over ownership for this collection to get them digitized.

A: This is a good strategy. Explain all of this in your rights, ethics, and re-use statement and upload the deed of gift in the upload section. The organization that is applying should be the one holding the collection— that is a requirement. We don't allow collaborative projects in *Recordings at Risk*. If there are materials she doesn't want to be made publicly available, explain that in your application. It's just the metadata that must be made publicly available for this program. A file manifest will need to be submitted at the end of your project with your final report.

Q: For embargoed materials do you require a metadata record to be published? We have culturally sensitive materials with mixed rights that we would not want to publish online.

A: There is a place in the rights, ethics, and re-use section to explain if there are culturally sensitive reasons you cannot make that metadata public available. The intellectual property (IP) reviewer/review panel will understand if the reasoning is justified. Please explain this in as much detail as possible. You may also want to consider a takedown policy.

Q: What type of documentation do you need if a collection is donated to a library and the person donating it is still alive.

A: We don't need anything particularly different for a living person who is donating a collection. Typically, they will produce a deed of gift for donations. We would need documentation to share with the intellectual property (IP) reviewers. Nothing more strenuous is required.

Budget and Finance

Q: Would the repair of glass recordings be considered as something that could be funded by this grant?

A: The primary focus of the program is digitization. If you have glass recordings (such as lantern slides) that you want to **digitize** and they need to be repaired in order to be digitized, that would be an allowable expense within the program.

Q: What percentage of the proposed budget can be used for fair compensation for community partners/collaborators that may serve as cultural knowledge experts to help with informing captioning and translation?

A: The goal of the program is digitization so we want to see a minimum of 50% of the budget going to digitization and/or the digitization vendor. If it is less than that, we want to see justification as to why it is needed for the unique materials you are proposing to digitize. You can

use the other 50% of your budget to address metadata processing, captioning, translation, etc. within the parameters of the overall award budget.

Q: Would you discourage applicants from requesting funding to help pay for a buyout of staff time?

A: That is not discouraged. I do want to make a distinction between our two programs. Unlike *Digitizing Hidden Collections*, *Recordings at Risk* requires you to use a digitization vendor and so digitization must be done out of house. The maximum grant is \$50,000 so you can make a request for buyout of staff time with the other 50% (not dedicated to digitization) if they are going to be working on the project. You will need to make a strong justification as to what this staff person is doing with their time since they are not doing the digitization. While it is not discouraged, and while we do see projects with staff pay, it is a lot more limited than *Digitizing Hidden Collections* because the digitization is done externally.

Review Process

Q: Do you all provide feedback if an application is not accepted?

A: There are no instances when an application is not accepted. If you have a large enough technical error, you could be disqualified (DQ'd) and you will be told why. For example, if you request \$70,000 when the limit is \$50,000. If you do not get DQ'd, which a majority of our applications are not, your application will be passed along to our independent review panel. They will score your applications and make funding decisions. There are three reviewers assigned to each application, along with an intellectual property reviewer. Every applicant will get a PDF with specific feedback on your application, whether your project is awarded funding or not. The review panel will provide comments to strengthen your application if you were going to resubmit to our program or submit to a different program.

Q: How do you select panelists?

A: We have a [CLIR Reviewer Expression of Interest Form](#) online. If you're interested in being a reviewer for either program, you can fill out that form. We make a database of people who have submitted the forms. We speak at events and conferences and often meet people with technical and subject expertise that we are looking for when we consider review panelists. Some are also prior grantees.

Q: Are the panel reviews conducted online or in person?

A: For *Recordings at Risk*, this is a virtual panel review, which is conducted over two days in June online.

Q: *Regarding amendments to a proposal, I guess this regards Hidden Collections more, so feel free to pass, but I'm finding more material than originally identified in the proposal stage, so was wondering if I can actually add additional materials, which would also increase the costs and request amount. Also, I had included student employee costs for 15 hours and 15 weeks in the proposal, but I feel it would be more efficient to bring in an NYU MIAP student for a summer, which would also change the amount.

A: *Recordings at Risk* grant is for smaller projects and designed to help organizations that may be constrained due to staffing and lack of equipment. For both *Recordings at Risk* and *Digitizing Hidden Collections* applications, your application is reviewed by an independent review panel who makes decisions based on a lot of factors. It's difficult to make drastic changes to a proposal once it has been funded because your application has been evaluated based on what you initially proposed. Deliverables changing in terms of materials happens frequently. Within *Recordings at Risk* there is only one application stage and we expect your funded proposal to be executed as promised. If you resubmit an application in a new cycle, we welcome and even expect to see changes that reflect the feedback provided by the review panel.

For *Digitizing Hidden Collections* program only: If you've been invited to the second round of the *Digitizing Hidden Collections* program, you are allowed to change your application between stages.

*Question is referring to our other regranting program, *Digitizing Hidden Collections: Amplifying Unheard Voices*.