

## Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives: Amplifying Unheard Voices

**Session 3: Assessing Collections & Designing a  
Digitization Plan  
March 19, 2025**



Links mentioned:

- [Program Homepage](#)
- [Core Values](#)
- [Apply for an Award](#)
- [Native land](#)
- [Application Guidelines \(view only\)](#)
- [Application Guidelines \(make a copy. Google account required\)](#)
- [Projects funded through Digitizing Hidden Collections, 2015-2020 and DHC: Amplifying Unheard Voices, 2022-2024](#)
- [Registration for the Applicant Support Series Session 4, April 2](#)
- [Webinar Survey](#)

## Questions and Answers

All questions asked in chat and via the Q&A box during the live webinar are copied below. Questions were answered live during the March 19, 2025 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](mailto:hiddencollections@clir.org).

**Q: I'm currently going through the process of refining and focusing which film elements to include in the digitization grant application. As Mr. Barber mentioned, using old finding aids aren't always accurate and I'm finding that many of the picture and sound elements for individual reels are jumbled. We have no film scanner on site to view and listen to each element in order to try to match parts of one item with the corresponding part of another so that access files can be created which have the picture and sound synchronized for each reel. Can we include a request for funds to have a vendor match these up and synchronize after digitizing? Sorry if that is unclear.**

A (Program Officers): This is mostly a budget question. We do see various types of post-digitization processing requests in these applications. Yes, you can add these as a vendor service if it is necessary to make these materials available and accessible. Any service that would cost over \$5,000 requires a vendor quote to be included in your application. You will clearly explain what this service is for in your budget narrative.

**Q: For artifacts, please compare digitization vs. photography.**

A (Timothy Barber): If you mean scanning when you say digitization, I do often use a Sony A7 camera when working with artifacts. The technology has advanced significantly with 3D scanning, etc. However, I typically use photography to capture several images while rotating the object.

**Q: I'd love to hear feedback on using Omeka. I gather that Omeka is great for providing access/use by researchers, but I do wonder about its limits when it comes to creating something super interactive and accessible for public audiences. Any thoughts?**

A (Timothy Barber): Yes. I initially started with Omeka. When I first uploaded it I put the Rosewood papers on there and it was cumbersome. I decided to switch to using AtoM (access to memory) for paper collections. However, I found Omeka to be good for artifacts. You are able to create unique presentations and videos that allow the viewer to look at the object in 360 degrees with their cursor. These work well on Omeka's platform.

**Q: For prioritizing items for digitization, there are some collections we have that we know are priority, but within that collection what do you usually look for when "starting" as you said**

A (Timothy Barber): I start from the beginning. The finding aids are very important because they will put things in order for your institution. If it is a grant for a number of collections, you may prioritize 30% of one collection and 20% of another. You want to be able to identify the 30% you will want to digitize. Everything follows after starting with the finding aid.

**Q: Tim, do you have a process to clear each item for rights and permissions before you publish the files and metadata on the internet? Do you have restricted items for ethical reasons (e.g., culturally sensitive material)?**

A (Timothy Barber): Yes, this is very important. This is why we went back to the accession records. That is the first document we created and when we receive particular items, this will document whether you have those items free and clear or not. What I found here at Florida A&M is that a lot of the items were on loan. If the items are on loan, I can't include any in the grant work that I do. So it is important to go back to the accession records. Of course, when you are processing information, you may find personal identifiable information. With the Rosewood collection, there were social security numbers and death certificates, and these needed to be blacked out and restricted from being available on the internet. I do try to restrict the publishing of any sensitive material that could be used against someone publicly.

**Q: Just a comment, we've gone to the use of barcodes for unique IDs in order to avoid any changes in locations (Box # etc) might bring up. A unique, agnostic, and unchanging UID**

A (Timothy Barber): We did use barcodes in Miami. Barcodes worked really well once everything was plugged into the system. It's not equipment everyone has access to, but if you do, it is a great way to use unique IDs, as well.

**Q: Do you have any advice on how the work plan should be designed? I know there is a template, but what seems to work best in terms of design and presenting the information?**

A (Timothy Barber): For me, it's based on my needs and trying to make sure I'm able to deliver what I say I'm delivering. I like to go from A to Z– plan out each step, design it, visualize it from beginning to end, then make changes as needed as I go. I try to anticipate obstacles and address them in my work plan, so I don't panic if they come up along the way.

A (Program Officers): The reviewers will want to see that you have a work plan that includes sufficient time for any unanticipated obstacles and circumstances that may arise. Ensure that your work plan is reflected accurately in comparison to your project activities (digitization, outreach, etc.).