Digitizing Hidden Collections
Applicant Q&A
September 25, 2025

Welcome! We're glad you're here.
There is no audio at the moment. Feel free to
introduce yourself in the chat box. 👋
We'll begin the session at 2pm ET.

Council on Library and
Information Resources

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Hello, and welcome to the Question and Answer session about CLIR's *Digitizing Hidden Collections: Amplifying Unheard Voices* program, generously supported by the Mellon Foundation. I'm Louisa Kwasigroch, Managing Director at CLIR.

Today we are here to answer your questions about the open call for initial applications for the program's fourth cycle.

Introduction

This is going to be a relatively informal session, so we don't have a long presentation. However, we want to share just a few slides to help you navigate this platform, get to know our team, and understand where find important information.

If you haven't yet, we'd love for you to introduce yourself in the chat; tell us who you are and where in the world you live. Remember to change the chat box setting from "Hosts and Panelists" to "Everyone".

Our Webinar Platform

○ Click 'CC Show Captions' to turn on captions
○ All attendees are muted
○ Set chat to "Everyone"
○ Submit questions any time through "Q&A"
○ Upvote questions that may be similar to your own
○ Recording in progress

zoom

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To start off, here are some notes about how you can use Zoom during this session.

- A live transcript is being generated. To turn on this feature, click the "CC Show Captions" button at the bottom of your Zoom window.
- Attendees will be muted throughout the presentation. However, you're welcome to use chat for general introductions and conversation. If a chat box isn't already displaying on your screen, you can hover your mouse toward the bottom of the Zoom window and open it manually. To send a message to everyone, remember to change the default from "Hosts and Panelists" to "Everyone."
- We ask that you use the separate Q&A box to ask questions today. This box can be opened the same way as the chat box.
- You can "upvote" questions if they're similar to your own to let us know that it would be helpful to you to have them answered live. If we don't have time to get to all the questions, we'll compose responses to the remaining ones and post all the answers along with the session transcript.
- The session recording, Q&A document, and transcript will be available on our website's "Apply for an Award" page by the end of next week.

Our Team
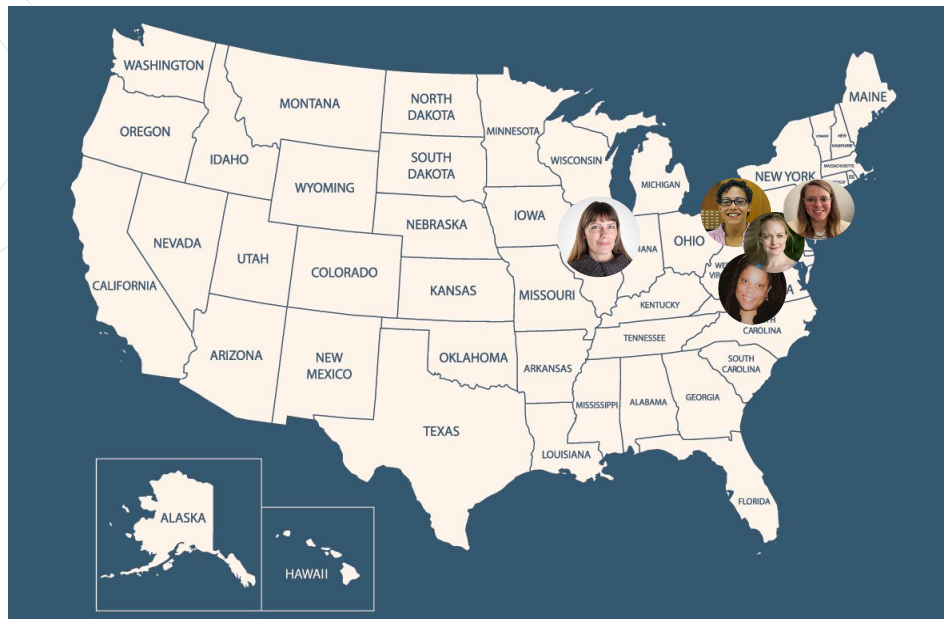
CLIR's work is accomplished by a relatively small staff of about 20 geographically distributed individuals.

Today's webinar is hosted by the CLIR Grants Team, which administers CLIR's active regranting programs, offering support for the entire grant cycle from application to final report. The DHC:AUV team is:

- Sharon Burney | Program Officer | Midlothian, VA
- Alyson Pope | Program Officer | Pittsburgh, PA
- Jane Larson | Senior Program Associate | Pittsburgh, PA
- Lizzi Albert | Community Relations Manager | Washington, D.C.
- Louisa Kwasigroch | Managing Director | Chicago, IL

Application Guidelines

**Digitizing Hidden Collections:
Amplifying Unheard Voices**

2025-2026 Application Guidelines
Version 1 - Initial Application

As you consider applying to our program, the most essential resource for you is the Application Guidelines. Combining instructions and insights into the program and its application process, the guidelines also allow you to draft responses to questions before adding them to our online grant application platform. A view-only Google Doc is linked to from the Apply for an Award program page. Users without a Google account can access this version and download the document in whatever file format they wish using the "File" menu. For those with a Google account, we've also included a link to create an editable copy of the document automatically.

An updated version of the guidelines will be shared with those invited to submit a final application to the program.

View Only - Application Guidelines
Make a Copy - Application Guidelines

Where else to find information:

Jump to a topic:

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

Review the Initial Applicant Webinar Q&A:
DHC: AUV Cohort 4 Applicant Webinar Q&A

At our August 27th Applicant Webinar, we received about 30 questions, and made sure to capture and answer all of them in writing. These are all organized by topic, and you may find some of the answers to your questions there. We'll put the link in chat, and will be doing something similar for today's session.

DHC:AUV4 Applicant Webinar Q&A

A few questions to get us started:

General:
- Are small organizations eligible for this grant? How do we know if we're eligible?
- Do the collections we want to digitize need to be about communities in the US, Canada, or North America?
- Are fiscally sponsored organizations eligible to apply?

Project Design:
- Do you require a detailed description of existing physical objects or collections to already be in place or done?
- Can we use grant funds to create materials like oral histories?

Budget:
- What pre-digitization costs can be requested?
- Can we request funding for creating programming about the digitized materials?

Timeline:
- When are applicants notified whether they'll be invited to submit a full proposal?

In the weeks since we first shared the Application Guidelines, some questions have come up on a regular basis. We're going to start by addressing a few of those, as well as things that were asked via the registration form, and then dive into the Q&A for today's session.

- **Are small organizations eligible for this grant? How do we know if we're eligible?**

To be eligible to apply, an organization must be located in the United States or Canada and fall within at least one of the non-profit categories we list on our website. If you have any questions about the eligibility of your specific organization, emailing us is the best way to be sure you're eligible. There are no restrictions on the size of an organization, and in fact, in past cycles, reviewers have been very interested in funding smaller organizations to grow capacity. Our review rubric includes a specific question about need, correlating to the question on the application: "Why do you need support from CLIR's program to undertake this project?" We thought a lot about equity during this program's design, and hope this will help reviewers make decisions with these considerations in mind.

- **Do the collections we want to digitize need to be about communities or populations in the US, Canada or North America?**

No, the materials nominated for digitization must be owned and held by eligible

organizations in the US and Canada, but there is no specific focus on collections *relating* to the US, or Canada. The program has funded projects that focus on historic maps from Japan and manuscripts going back to the 1700s in the Muslim world, and archaeological research in Honduras — a really wide variety of projects that disseminate rare and unique content about populations around the world. The requirements go back to our eligibility guidelines. As long as the collections are owned and held by an eligible organization in the US or Canada and fall within the thematic focus, they can be nominated for this program.

- **Are fiscally sponsored organizations eligible to apply?**

If your organization does not meet the program's eligibility requirements because it does not have an IRS designation or is not a governmental or tribal unit (whose purpose and normal function is collecting, preserving, and sharing rare and unique materials with the general public), your organization is not eligible to apply under a fiscal sponsor. A fiscal sponsor may be added as a collaborator, but every organization has to meet the eligibility requirements, whether they are the lead applicant or a collaborator.

- **Do you require a detailed description of existing physical objects or collections to already be in place or done?**

No, no minimum level of description is required. However, our reviewers will expect a fair level of knowledge of the size, scope, and condition of the collections so that you are able to present a compelling and competitive application to the program. If invited to submit a Final Application, there will be space for you to share completed description, if available. In the past, this has included links to library catalogs or other content management systems, findings aids, and inventories. Such links and inventories help reviewers see the depth and breadth of the materials and have a better understanding of the work that has already been accomplished.

- **Can we use grant funds to create materials like oral histories?**

No, the focus of this program is digitizing rare and unique content from existing physical collections, not the creation of new collections, original research, or intellectual works. Therefore, activities such as collecting new oral histories would be outside the scope of this grant. Digitizing already existing oral histories on physical media (such as magnetic tape) would be allowable, so

long as the recordings are not born-digital.

- **What pre-digitization costs can be requested?**

Costs related to preparing materials for digitization are allowable (like stabilization of materials' condition, packing and shipping them to send to a digitization vendor, or initial metadata creation) but costs related to deciding what to include or not include would not be allowable. Applicants need to know what materials they are going to digitize before completing an application. Grant funds may not be used for any activities undertaken prior to the project start date.

- **Can we request funding for creating programming about the digitized materials?**

Occasionally past recipients have requested and received small amounts of funding for outreach related to their newly digitized collections (building a collection guide for students, for example), but any programming requests should not be an outsized percentage of the ask and should be directly related to connecting the newly digitized materials with potential user communities. Conducting a research project based upon data in the collection would be outside the scope of the program.

- **When are applicants notified whether they'll be invited to submit a full proposal?**

We'll share the dates again on our next slide, but you'll be notified whether you're invited to submit a full proposal by mid- February 2026, and then those who do advance will have until May 5, 2026 to prepare that for submission.

Cohort 4 Timeline

Deadline for Initial Applications: **October 20, 2025**
Notification for Advancing Applications: by **Mid-February 2026**
Support for Advancing Applicants: **February -April 2026**
Deadline for Final Applications: **May 5, 2026**
Public Announcement of Funded Projects: **Oct/Nov 2026**

Initial applications must be submitted online by October 20, 2025. We anticipate that all organizations that submit an initial application will be notified if they are invited to submit a final application by mid-February 2026. We will provide support to those organizations invited to the final round to help develop initial applications into competitive final applications. We anticipate notifying applicants of award notifications in August 2026 and making the public announcement of funded projects in either late October or early November 2026.

Submit your questions!

Use the Q&A box in Zoom to submit questions.

Upvote questions from others to move something up in the queue.

Now it's time to turn to your questions. We'll do our best to get through as many as we can, and may provide some typed answers if team members have the capacity during this session. Any unanswered questions will be answered in our transcript and shared to our website along with the recording.
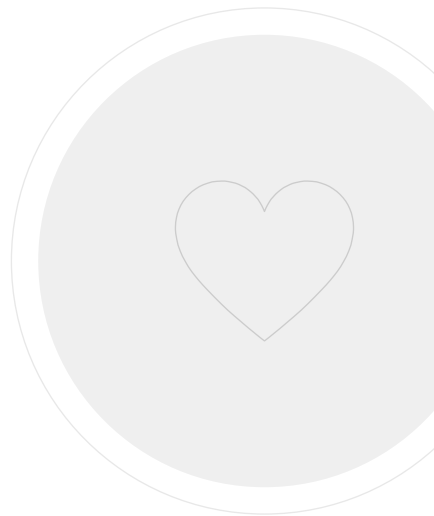
Thank you!

Contact us: hiddencollections@clir.org

Before you go, please leave your feedback:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AUV4_0925

As we wrap up, we want to make note of a super short survey about this session. Your honest feedback on the webinar will help us in our future support efforts. We'll share the link in the chat and it will also be included in a message after the event.

Contact us: hiddencollections@clir.org

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- ○ Titles: Poppins Bold
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