

RAR Cycle 10 Applicant Webinar Q&A

This document contains questions and answers from the February 15 Applicant Webinar organized by topic.

Quick Links to Presentation Resources:

[Land Acknowledgment](#)
[ARSC Guide to Audio Preservation](#)
[Recordings At Risk Home Page](#)
[Apply for an Award Page](#)
[Document Library](#)
[DLF Digitizing Special Formats Wiki](#)
[ARSC Preservation and Restoration Directory](#)
[AMIA Global Supplier Directory](#)
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[General](#)

Q: What is the September 1, 2023 to August 31, 2024 timeline related to?

A: This 12-month period is the date range during which all project work should take place for Cycle 10 recipients. Be sure you propose a project that can reasonably be completed within this 12-month timeline.

Q: In section 8 what was it that no more than 50% of total was allowed?

A: [Appendix A](#) of the guidelines provides these details: “To remain competitive, applicants are advised that costs *other* than vendor-provided digitization services, shipping, and insurance should total no more than 50% of the total request. Proposals requesting support for additional costs that will consume more than 50% of the total request will not be disqualified from the competition but will be flagged for additional scrutiny by reviewers.” Read this as a rule-of-thumb rather than as a hard-and-fast rule. Reviewers keep in mind the narrowly defined scope of the Recordings at Risk program, so it is important that funded projects are clearly centered on

reformatting analog audio and audiovisual media and creating access to digital copies of that recorded content rather than on other types of work. The project timeframe is only 12 months and for most organizations reformatting and metadata creation will consume most of that time.

Q: Is Indigenous Cultural & Intellectual Property covered under the exception for access/Discovery?

A: Yes. That is true under both programs. We make the appropriate exceptions for materials that cannot be publicly available for reasons of cultural sensitivity or other ethics concerns related to personal privacy.

Q: Can a nonprofit cultural memory organization work with a service provider that is an academic institution/library?

A: Yes, so long as they are completely distinct organizations.

Follow-up Q: Thank you. And if that academic institution/library also houses our collection as a partner organization?

A: That's more of a grey area. Please write to recordingsatrisk@clir.org so our team can consider how to advise you. It would need to be clear (1) that the library housing the collection is clearly the best choice to do the reformatting, and (2) that the library housing the collection really needs external funds from CLIR to do the work. In the past reviewers have found proposals such as this less compelling than others since there is already capacity to undertake the work on-hand and since the vendor selection is not strictly based upon the needs of the particular project.

Q: Would the success of this year's application affect our next year's application of another project?

A: Not really, although reviewers will be aware of previous success and may choose to fund an organization that has not previously received support over a repeat applicant in some cases, since funds are very limited and since the program is really designed to help organizations who are just getting started with reformatting. But organizations are not prohibited from being repeat awardees. The same Principal Investigator may not be nominated to lead two concurrent or overlapping CLIR projects within the same program, so the projects would need to have different PIs unless the first project was fully completed by the next cycle start date.

Q: Could an organization apply for/receive a Recordings at Risk grant AND a Digitizing Hidden Collections grant in the same 12-month period?

A: Yes. The programs are administered separately and being a recipient in one program does not exclude you from competing for another.

Q: Please define "Period of Performance."

A: The period of performance is the date range during which project work should occur and grant funds can be expended. Funds cannot be disbursed to pay vendors or wages before or after the start and end dates of the period of performance unless a no-cost extension modification is submitted and approved.

Q: Just want to clarify that the only application period for 2023 is January 17 through April 19, correct? And dates for 2024 and 2025 are to be determined, right?

A: That is correct, only Cycle 10 will run in 2023. Cycles 11 and 12 will have similar timelines, opening in early 2024 and 2025 respectively and closing in the spring.

[Eligibility: Organization](#)

Q: Is a fiscally sponsored "project" eligible?

A: It depends upon the specific circumstances, so it's best to write to recordingsatrisk@clir.org with details for confirmation of eligibility before getting too deep into planning. While most Recordings at Risk projects are undertaken by single nonprofit organizations working with outside commercial vendors, a more collaborative arrangement between two organizations can sometimes work. The materials being digitized do need to be held by an eligible organization, however, and cannot come from an individual's personal collection or one held by a for-profit organization.

Q: Asking for some clarification on applications from different divisions of the same organization. E.g., we are a multi-disciplinary org, and each division has its own budget. Could more than one division apply?

A: It's probably best to write with specific details to recordingsatrisk@clir.org for clarification. Recordings at Risk is designed specifically to help out smaller organizations without a lot of capacity or experience with reformatting. Accepting multiple proposals from larger organizations diminishes CLIR's chances of fulfilling this goal, so our officers are likely to request that your organization reach consensus about which project is the highest priority.

Q: Are small non-profits of Federally recognized tribes eligible to apply?

A: Yes, definitely.

[Eligibility: Materials](#)

Q: Thank you for this webinar. Among the video formats in our collection is open reel video (not audio, but video from an early portapak). Open reel VIDEO is not on the RaR list of formats, so I wanted to ask.

A: The RaR list of formats is meant to provide examples and is not a comprehensive list of all possible formats. Open reel video would be eligible, as is any time-based format that was *not* born digital.

Q: Can you review the ineligible materials again? Thank you :)

A: For allowable materials, see “What are the allowable formats?” on [our FAQ page](#). For grant budgets, allowable and disallowed costs are detailed in [Appendix A](#) of the application guidelines. We’ll also be posting the transcript and slides from the webinar to the website for your convenience if you need further clarification.

Q: Do the at risk materials need to connect by theme, provenance, etc.? Could you envision a successful application that includes materials that does not have any similarities besides being at risk and having scholarly impact - even if that impact isn't related to one type of scholarship?

A: The Recordings at Risk program utilizes an outside review panel with widely varied backgrounds, skills, and interests. In order for the reviewers to see your project as competitive it is important that the proposal be coherent, memorable, and have well-defined potential impacts. For these reasons, it is wise to, at a minimum, identify some areas of commonality—such as significance for understanding the history of a particular place or community, or significance to research in a particular field of study or practice—that reformatting the nominated materials will share. You will need to be able to articulate the potential impact of your project succinctly within the limits that the application permits, and this will be more challenging if there aren’t clear connections between the nominated recordings. For all these reasons, we would strongly recommend thematic coherence to make your project memorable and compelling.

Q: Is there also a program to help digitize original photographs and newspapers?

A: Digitizing Hidden Collections: Amplifying Unheard Voices is a program supporting digitization of all analog formats, including photos and newspapers. The materials digitized through that collection would need to have relevance to telling stories of people and communities less well represented in digital libraries. We are in conversation with the Mellon Foundation regarding the continuance of that program and should have more information about that later this year.

Q: Would CD formats be in the eligible materials?

A: Please write to recordingsatrisk@clir.org with more details about the nature of the content and the estimated amount of CDs contemplated for your project. Reformatting commercially published CDs would definitely not be eligible, but unique content not available in any other

format or medium may be under certain circumstances, if you genuinely need an external vendor to perform the reformatting work. Straightforward transfer of born-digital content from CDs or DVDs to computer hard drives doesn't fit the definition of "reformatting" in our parent grant, so we would need to look at your specific case to determine whether we think reviewers would find it consistent with the scope of the program.

Q: Have you ever had a successful application that provided support for media migration from MinDV or DVCam tapes (which you did mention are at risk like DAT)?

A: Yes, we have previously funded the digitization of both of those formats through the program.

Q: So where I am at has CD formatted language information as well as cassette, just wanted to know if the CD format would be eligible as well?

A: Please write to recordingsatrisk@clir.org with more details about the nature of the content and the estimated amount of CDs contemplated for your project. Reformatting commercially published CDs would definitely not be eligible, but unique content not available in any other format or medium may be under certain circumstances, if you genuinely need an external vendor to perform the reformatting and conversion work. Straightforward recovery of born-digital content from CDs or DVDs doesn't really fit the definition of "reformatting" in our parent grant, so we would need to look at your specific case to judge whether we think reviewers would find it consistent with the scope of the program.

Budget and Finance

Q: Are consultant/external vendor costs to support metadata creation be considered allowable costs?

A: Yes, that can be an allowable as long as it is metadata for material being reformatted. Recordings at Risk does not fund projects that just involve metadata creation, cataloging, and processing without doing any reformatting.

Q: Some items in my collection need conservation work before they are shipped to an outside vendor. Will RAR pay for the labor to cover these costs?

A: Yes, conservation/stabilization work necessary for reformatting to occur is allowable as long as strongly justified within the proposal as beyond the capacity of the applicant organization.

Q: When reaching out to a service providers, is it normal to ask for a full proposal from them from the beginning or do you ask for an estimate first and then ask for a proposal later?

A: If you have time to ask for estimates and then just solicit proposals from those you would seriously consider, vendors would probably appreciate that. Some vendors need to physically

examine materials in order to generate a really detailed proposal. Our [guidelines for working with vendors and subcontractors](#) may help you.

Q: If our organization is required to seek competitive bids, how can we identify providers in the application

A: Consult the [guidelines for the use of vendors and subcontractors](#) for details. You do need to make a provisional selection for the purposes of constructing the budget, but if a different selection is made post-award this can be handled through a modification request.

Q: In Section 7, if we secure 3 bids, should we include all 3 vendor information details? Do we need to have made the determination of vendor before submitting our proposal?

A: You need to make a provisional selection for the purposes of constructing the budget and include that selected vendor's contact details. Consult [the guidelines for the use of vendors and subcontractors](#) for more information. If a different selection is made after an award is made you would need to submit a modification request to move forward with the project, but this is a relatively simple thing to do. Be sure to explain in the proposal that institutional policy prohibits making a firm selection before the award is made. Do not simply request an average of the amounts across the bids you have solicited. CLIR has very limited funds to re-grant and reviewers make their selections with difficulty, and our staff's experience suggests that reviewers can be more reluctant to fund projects for which costs are not firmly documented and supported.

Q: Can metadata be captured in house as staffing cost?

A: Yes, metadata and other description work can be done by in-house staff and those costs may be included in the request. Only digital reformatting must be outsourced. See [Appendix A](#) of the guidelines for full details on allowable and disallowed costs.

Q: Does shipping include the cost of material I wish to conserve but needs to be shipped in from another country?

A: Please write to recordingsatrisk@clir.org with more details about your situation to confirm eligibility. Shipping of materials from the US-based holding institution to a vendor is allowable. Digitizing materials owned and held by organizations outside the U.S. is not eligible.

Q: Does funding cover the processes related to the accessibility of the digitized materials such as uploading documents to a database and cataloging?

A: Yes. Please see [Appendix A](#) of the guidelines for details of allowable and disallowed costs.

Q: Would funding cover curatorial work, e.g. hiring a subject expert or someone with language ability to make selections from a given collection for digitization?

A: No. To complete the proposal form you will need to already have selected the materials you would like to reformat. We suggest looking into the [NEH Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions](#) as an option that may be better suited to your needs.

Q: Would funding cover work to translate transcriptions into English?

A: Yes, but keep in mind the 50/50 rule of thumb described in the guidelines (“The primary costs included in proposed budgets should cover activities directly related to the preservation of at-risk recordings through digital reformatting (digitization services, shipping, and insurance). Any additional costs must be justified in the Budget Narrative as necessary given the nature of the collection, the relative limitations of organizational capacity, and the needs of the communities of users the applicants have identified. To remain competitive, applicants are advised that costs *other* than vendor-provided digitization services, shipping, and insurance should total no more than 50% of the total request. Proposals requesting support for additional costs that will consume more than 50% of the total request will not be disqualified from the competition but will be flagged for additional scrutiny by reviewers.”). This guidance is intended to help applicants put together competitive proposals clearly serving the narrowly defined scope of the Recordings at Risk program rather than being a hard-and-fast rule, so use your judgment as you plan, ensuring that your project reads to reviewers as a reformatting project rather than a translation project. See [Appendix A](#) for more details.

Q: Are cloud based digital storage allowed to be funded as part of the proposal? More specifically the process to initially upload the digital materials to the cloud storage vendor?

A: In general, software licenses and services or software development costs related to building infrastructure or capacity of the applicant organization are not allowable. This guideline is in place so that applicants can demonstrate that they are prepared to take on the ongoing annual costs of storing the digital files their project will create. If cloud storage is just for temporary use and is an itemized cost listed in a vendor proposal rather than a separate cost in the main project budget, it may be seen as directly connected to the vendor’s work during the period of performance and so be ok. Please review [Appendix A](#) of the guidelines for further information about constructing a project budget that is both compliant and competitive.

[Project Design and Application](#)

Q: Hi, thanks so much for doing this webinar. We have other funders who use SMAApply, and allow applicants to press submit, but continue editing until the deadline--is that an option here?

A: The SMAApply space is set up to allow one owner and also additional collaborators you may designate to contribute to an application, saving all contributions as the application develops over time. Only the owner of the application space is permitted to submit the final application, however. It is recommended that you save the application regularly as you work towards completion. This will allow you to make changes as necessary, and allow any added

collaborators to contribute to the application. The SMAApply application space does not have an option to allow edits after final submission, but if you submit before the application deadline (April 15) and would like to make changes email us at recordingsatrisk@clir.org and we will assist you.

Q: We were the recipients of the 8th cycle, and we plan to apply for the 10th cycle as well. The project is going to be the same. Should we provide new references? You mention that we can use our previous account to submit our application. Is that correct?

A: Presumably you will be reformatting additional recordings different from those reformatted through the earlier project. Definitely take care to make that clear, since it is not permissible to be funded multiple times for the same work. In SMAApply, you can use a previous account and you can use new letters of support in a new application, but are not required to do so as long as the old letters are still your best evidence for why your proposed new phase of the project is timely and important. Keep in mind that reviewers will be aware of your previous work and will be looking for you to acknowledge it and what you have learned from it, and they may have questions if your proposal seems to lack evidence of current reflection or awareness of the project's timeliness and potential impact. If you are building upon an existing project previously funded (e.g. proposing "phase 2" of a project), please note this in the section of the application that asks if the proposal is a resubmission. If you previously applied but weren't funded, use that space to describe the changes you made after reflecting on prior reviewer feedback.

Q: Can former presenters at an organization provide a letter of support?

A: Former recipients of Recordings at Risk grants may write letters as long as they are not connected with the proposed project.

Follow-up Q: So their presentation documentation cannot be part of the materials digitized?

A: I see, you mean presenters such as those connected with a media organization, perhaps? If the author of the letter has a personal interest in the project then reviewers may find their letter less convincing, so we strongly suggest engaging a letter writer who won't benefit either financially or reputationally/professionally from the project. If we're still misunderstanding your question, please write to us at recordingsatrisk@clir.org with a few more details. Consulting our [guidelines for authors of letters of support](#) may help.