

RAR Cycle 11 Webinar Q&A

This document contains questions and answers from the March 6, 2024 Applicant Webinar organized by topic.

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Q: How often is this grant offered?

A: In 2023, The Mellon Foundation awarded CLIR \$4,000,000 to continue its regranting program to digitize “at-risk” audio and audiovisual materials for three annual cycles to occur between 2023-2025. We are currently accepting applications for the 11th cycle of the *Recordings at Risk* program until April 17, 2024. The 12th and final cycle of this award will open for applications in January 2025.

Q: Locus has recorded interviews with science fiction writers. "Broad appeal" has been mentioned several times. Would we need to select the authors who are famous enough to be mainstream or of known historical importance in order to be considered?

A: This is a good time for us to go back over the application assessment criteria. We keep the assessment criteria in mind when choosing the independent review panel. The review panel comprises scholars of varying backgrounds whose expertise is a combination and/or focused on

specific research areas, technology, digitization, and preservation skill sets. Our reviewers are selected carefully, and assigned based on the materials nominated and/or the technical expertise required for each application. The evaluation criterias for the *Recordings at Risk* applications reviewer are assessing: Impact (the potential scholarly and public impact of the project) Urgency (the urgency of undertaking reformatting to avoid risk of loss) Potential for Preservation (the viability of the work plan and deliverables for preserving the content over time)and Approach to Access (the approach to legal and ethical concerns affecting access) When we refer to “broad appeal” we are referring primarily to the impact of the nominated materials. Is there a broad appeal to the scholarly and public impact of the nominated materials? You have to describe and justify to the reviewers why your nominated materials, or why these Science Fiction novels are important, and what is the scholarly and public impact of digitizing these collections. I hope that helps a few people.

Q: Regarding letters of support... Can they come from Board members? Can they come from individuals directly impacted by the media (ie-those served by the organization via other avenues)?

A: The application will ask for two types of support letters. One is the institutional letter of support that will come from your director, Dean, organizational President, or whomever is the head administrator who will be responsible for making decisions about allocating resources for preserving and sustaining access to the project deliverables over time. This person will write a letter confirming the institution’s commitment to maintaining the results of your work. The application also requires letters of support, which cannot come from anyone directly involved in the project. The letters of support written by experts outside of one’s own institution and region may be more persuasive, since they can help to demonstrate the project’s importance to a wider community. You can find more information in CLIR’s [Guidelines for Authors of Letters of Support](#). I would shy away from board members writing the letters of support because there might be some bias, but a variety of communities and individuals within the communities that could speak to its broad appeal and representation. If you choose to include the board member’s letter of support, I would add additional letters that complement and expand the importance to a wider audience.

Q: Are small projects considered?

A: It depends how you are defining a small project. If small included monetary requests, the minimum amount that can be requested for the grant is \$10,000 USD of the maximum allowed (\$50,000 USD). As long as your proposed project hits the four criterias (impact, urgency, potential for preservation, approach to access) that the reviewers are assessing, the project size is not a criteria. The *Recordings at Risk* is a smaller grant primarily focused to help organizations constrained with funds to digitize rare and unique materials that are at risk of being lost forever. So yes, small projects are welcome.

Q: How and where can you register to provide the AV services to the participating Non-profit organizations?

A: We do not have a list that we maintain, and we do not advocate the use of any particular AV service or vendor. It is imperative that we remain ethical and objective in the regranting process. We also want the applicants to make vendor selections that best fit their project and in such, we don't maintain a vendor list of that sort that we require our grantees to use.

Q: What's the rationale behind not allowing for “in house” digitization services?

A: We require organizations to work with an external vendor because the *Recordings at Risk* program was designed to serve the needs of organizations that don't have access to onsite facilities and don't necessarily have local expertise to support the digital reformatting of audio and audio visual recordings.

Q: Following up on your reply about in-house facilities: Our school does have in-house facilities for digitization, but we would have to pay for the use of the lab time and we would have to pay graduate students — would this be allowed?

A: We do not see this situation as qualifying as an external vendor. However, we may need some additional information and details regarding your project. Feel free to email us at recordingsatrisk@clir.org.

[Eligibility: Organization](#)

Q: Are Canadian Indigenous institutions eligible to apply?

A: The *Recordings at Risk* program is open to nonprofit cultural heritage organizations within the US and its territories (i.e., American Samoa, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico). Unfortunately, at this time, the Recording at Risk program is not open to Canadian organizations. Our Digitizing Hidden Collections: Amplifying Unheard Voices program is open to Canadian Organizations. If you are interested in learning more information inclusive of possible future calls for that program, I recommend subscribing to our [CLIR Grants and Programs Newsletter](#).

[Eligibility: Materials](#)

Q: Does the content need to be US based?

A: All eligible organizations must be located within the United States and their territories.(i.e., American Samoa, Puerto Rico) and they must own and hold the nominated materials. However, the content does not need to be US-based.

Q: Can RAR be used to aid in recording lived experiences?

A: The program's directive is to support the preservation of rare and unique at risk audio, audiovisual, and other time-based media of high scholarly value through digital reformatting. It does not permit the recording of lived experiences, or the creation of new materials

Q: Are there required file formats? We currently use mp4 due memory constraints.

A: No, there are no required file formats. We do provide the *Recordings at Risk* program [Technical Recommendations](#) guide to assist organizations in this process.

Q: Concerns with the digitization of approximately 1000 78 rpm recordings - mostly RnB, Jazz recordings - many of which have not been preserved before. Is that an eligible project?

A: From a nominated materials standpoint, the 78 rpms qualify. The only concern is related to possible copyright issues surrounding the recordings. This is an example of how you would have to reflect to the review panel that there are no known rights, ethics and reuse issues. Explain to the reviewers clearly that there are no known rights, ethics and re-use issues, or that you have some concerns and have created a plan to address any issues that may arise. Reviewers want to see you have a plan to navigate any potential rights issues as they come up.

Q: What forms of risk is CLIR comfortable with regarding collections? A set of films has been judged internally to be significant historically and culturally, however they are highly deteriorated and required conservation treatment prior to digitization may not be successful. Could CLIR be willing to support a collection with such risk?

A: This decision would primarily be in the hands of the review panel. I would advocate including extensive information about the state of the materials, and additionally, I would have a statement that you are going to be using specialized vendor services. I would assume to make the most likely case that you are able to get to a point of treatment that these materials can be digitized. So I would make sure that you're using a really good vendor so that the panel can be aware of that, and I would also include any communication from the vendor regarding the necessary extensive conservation treatment. I would explain as much as you can about the state of the collection now, and what the real level of risk is.

Q: I didn't see EIAJ 1/2" Open reel videotape, a popular 70's format, on your format list.

A: The format list on the website is not exhaustive, but any form of open reel videotape would be an acceptable format for the program.

Q: I see that DPX is the preferred file format for film. The vendor has told us about a fairly recent development of the RAWCooked program that creates lossless FFv1 that is reversible to DPX but the FFv1 are smaller files which makes the project more sustainable regarding digital preservation in the future. We have done research on this

format and it is currently used by some large institutions. Is it allowable to have a different preservation file format than what is in the technical recommendations if we can justify it.

A: It is allowable to have a different preservation file format than what is in the technical recommendations document. In this case, I would clearly explain your organization and/or the vendor's reasoning in your proposal. Our accomplished reviewers with technical expertise should be able to confirm the accuracy of that information.

Q: If you haven't already done so, can you describe what kind of substantiation is necessary for demonstrating that materials are at risk?

A: Generally we're dealing with formats that the panel is already aware of as being at risk formats. A lot of these older legacy physical media formats are just widely regarded as being at risk. So what we do include within the application is the space to talk about the collection. Make your argument for digitization. We also have representative samples that you include in the application space. That is a place where you can take some pictures of the content that you want to digitize. If you have materials that are in really poor shape, or being kept in really not adequate storage, the representative samples can be a place that you can illustrate that visually to the panel. I do want to say, and this can sound kind of, like, counterintuitive, but as much as the panel is concerned with risk, there can also be an argument made for materials that are still in decently good condition on these at-risk formats. Because you're making an argument for digitization now, and the argument can partially be that you need to do this before the condition of the materials degrades to a point that you cannot save them. So don't feel like you don't have the right kind of project, or you're not the right kind of applicant if your materials are not in horrible condition and you can't prove that they're going to crumble away tomorrow. That's not exactly what we're trying to pinpoint when we talk about at risk. Generally, if it's on one of those legacy formats that's already step one of being understood by the panel, you can talk more about the condition and show the condition. You can go either way with making the argument for why it needs to happen now.

[Budget and Finance](#)

Q: Would video editing be an allowable cost? For example we have several VHS tapes totalling 16 hours of footage, documenting a single blacksmithing workshop. An edited, shorter version would be much more accessible to most audiences.

A: There are some costs that are not digitization that are allowable, those costs should be less than half of the total grant funds requested. We understand in the cases of fragile and obsolete materials conservation/stabilization work necessary for reformatting to occur and this is allowable as long as strongly justified within the proposal as beyond the capacity of the applicant organization. Activities that will happen around the processing of materials that will create increased discovery and access are able to be included in the proposal. I recommend referring to [Appendix A](#) in the [RAR Applicant Guidelines](#) for additional information.

Q: We have an offer from a donor to match funds. So, *Recordings at Risk* funds (if received) would be used to digitize half the collection, and the funds from the donor would be used for the other half. Is this something we should mention in our proposal?

A: Yes, I would mention cost. We would basically view this as a cost share component of the budget. Cost shares show that there is a buy in from the organization and this is viewed favorably with the reviewers. The budget narrative would be an appropriate place to include information on cost share and it could be persuasive to the review panel. However, the program officers do not want any cost sharing information put within the budget detail. You should not include any line items that are not coming from your requested grant funds.

Q: Can grant funds be used for transporting recordings to a digitization vendor? For example, could recordings be loaded in the PI's vehicle and delivered by the PI to the digitization vendor (several US states away) and could grant funds be used for gas and hotel fees?

A: Shipping to the vendor is an allowable cost. The specifics of how you've described it is not necessarily the most frequently pursued option, but it can be something that you could do by the PI, archivist, or staff. You could also look into hiring a shipping service to transport the materials. Transporting materials to and from the vendor is an allowable cost within the grant. Expanding on that question, sometimes the collections are in such a fragile state that it is important for you to hand deliver the nominated materials. Be sure to explain this extra step and cost clearly and justify the necessity in your budget narrative, so that the reviewers understand why.

Q: Is it required to have more than one vendor for digitizing our 16mm film collection? We have one vendor we regularly use.

A: It is not required to use more than one vendor for digitizing your collection. You may want to seek out a couple of other quotes in order to justify the vendor that you're choosing, and explain to the panel why it was necessary to utilize your chosen vendor. Particularly if they've done previous work of the same nature for you. That could be one part of that explanation, but there isn't any. We don't require you to use specific vendors of our choosing, and we don't require you to use more than one.

Q: Can costs for descriptive cataloging for better discovery and access be included in the grant budget.

A: Yes, that could be something that could be included. If including this cost in your budget, make sure this cost is less than half the total grant funds requested.

Q: Can you define the difference between "Basic transcription" and "detailed transcription" services. With my last application there was confusion among the

reviewers whether the cost for transcription services was an allowable cost for content aside from indigenous or endangered language content. The Program officer later said that "Basic transcription" was allowable. I am interested in hiring a transcriptionist for the purposes of access for the hearing impaired for the content we would upload into a digital collections platform. Is this an allowable cost?

A: We made some changes to the program's requirements in the last cycle cycle This is the second cycle with broader permissions for this type of work that goes alongside the digitization, (i.e., processing, transcription and metadata). The balance that the review panel is looking to see applicants strike, is this the bulk of the cost? If you applied and requested the full award amount (\$50,000) the reviewers want to see that the majority of that amount going towards digitization. The processing of metadata transcription and/or translation activities covered within the maximum programmable allowed (50% of funds requested) cost (or in this case \$25k). So I think that can kind of tell you about how deep you can go into the transcription based on what the costs would be comparable to the overall proposal costs that you're asking.

Q: If awarded grant money, can we shuffle around how the money is spent if the budget allocated for preservation is unused?

A: The *Recordings at Risk* program projects are meant to be one year projects. You will submit your budget details that will account for the funding and the amount of money that you're gonna spend. Sometimes you or the vendor may realize that some of your materials, duplicate or unviable. This may lower your vendor quote and free up money in your budget. In these instances, you can submit a grant modification request, for a reallocation of grant funds. In some cases you may submit a grant modification to add additional materials to your project. This is also allowable as long as the additional materials fall within the original project scope and there are no known rights, ethics and reuse issues. We are typically always open to grant modification requests however, keep in mind any modification requests that require the reduction of staff funding, will undergo additional scrutiny.

Q: I just read that you do not cover indirect costs. Is there a form that includes what you do cover? I work on the back end. Does this grant cover indirect costs? And if yes, what is the rate? Do you cover the salary for the pi and grad students? Tuition fringe, etc. I was looking for a budget template, and there's a follow up. That indicates that someone read that you do not cover indirect costs. Is there a form that includes what you do cover?

A: CLIR does not cover indirect costs. That is our overarching arching policy for both of our regranting programs. Tuition reimbursements and tuition waivers are disallowed. If you go to our [Apply for an Award](#) page, you will find our [Application Guidelines](#) which includes an extensive budget appendix. [Appendix A](#) of the guidelines contains information on allowable and disallowed cost. Since we require the use of an outside vendor, we don't typically expect to see large salary and graduate student costs, etc., within these budgets. This is because digitization is not happening within your organization. But, we do recognize that you may need a project

manager. You may have people doing the transcription, and other forms of metadata creation that you would want to include within the budget lines; those salaries and their related fringe would be acceptable. So, if you go to the [Application Guidelines](#), you can see allowable costs, disallowed costs, and there's also a link within the application guidelines to our budget template. You can download our [budget detail template](#) and we also have a [budget narrative template](#) as well. As a reminder, you are not required to use our budget narrative template, but they kind of complement each other well, and can help further.

[Project Design](#)

Q: Can you speak to digital preservation requirements?

A: The application requires the submission of a digitization plan. The reviewers will want to identify the applicant has a comprehensive digitization plan. Identifying clearly how, when, and where preservation tasks will take place and the creation of multiple copies of digital files (i.e., master backup, file types, encoding, deep archive backup) and who will be responsible for these tasks. We are interested in identifying the creation of regularly scheduled fixity checks, anything regarding the periodic migration of data to new storage systems or media and any related metadata creation. If awarded funding, the final grant report will include a file manifest. After the project ends, we use the file manifest through IP Monitor every year as an aggregate process to see when files disappear and why they disappear. We want to see the presence of materials moving forward.

Q: Sorry if this has been covered, but does the public availability also need to be made available within the one-year grant period? As a large institution with a fairly long backlog of items that need to be processed, it normally takes months to get something into our digital collections public repository. It could be that metadata is made available first, with actual AV files made available later. What is the deadline to have at least metadata available, if that is allowable.

A: We would like to have the ingest of the files done before the end of the one year project period. There is not a deadline to have at least the metadata available. The deadline applies to all project deliverables. One thing I think we've discussed a little bit today is grant modification requests. I believe Sharon spoke about reallocation modifications. At times we have projects that need a no cost extension. The *Recordings at Risk* program can offer one 6-month, no cost extension without contacting The Mellon Foundation for additional permission. I wouldn't aim to have an eighteenth month project. We would like to see all deliverables fully completed within 12 months. However, if you have completed the digitization process, have the metadata created and you are only waiting on file ingestion, that is a reasonable request for a no cost extension. This situation would likely be approved for a no cost extension modification.

Q: Can we create metadata outside of the one-year limit if our project is very large, or does it need to be wrapped up within one year?

A: So all project deliverables and monies for this grant will need to be wrapped up in one year, so that would include the digitization and the creation of basic metadata. If you want to enhance that metadata or perform other kinds of processing after the fact that you do not include as a deliverable within the grant, that is something that you could work on once the project is finished. It is not something that could be achieved with funds from the grant award unless it happened by the project end date. So you can't use funds after the grant end date to continue to do that work. The reviewers are looking for projects that can be wrapped up within one year, and we want all deliverables that are stated in the proposal to be fully complete by the time the project is closed.

[Rights, Ethics, and Re-Use](#)

Q: Can you explain rights requirements regarding deeds of transfer, especially with respect to the transfer of "creative" rights?

A: This is a tricky question to answer without knowing the content of the proposed nominated materials. In general, if an organization has a deed of transfer for their nominated materials, they will upload the deed to the application in the other uploads portion of the application. Remember to reference the deed in the rights, ethics and re-use section of the application and justify clearly what you understand about any rights, ethics and re-use issues. State in this section that your organization has a copy of the deed attached in the other documents section. The IP reviewers will look for and review these documents. If you have a justification as to why they can't be available to the public, and have a take down plan policy in place, and a clear understanding of the potential issues, reviewers will look favorably at the application.

Q: What are the CLIR's requirements for making recordings accessible?

A: We require you to dedicate all *metadata* to the public domain under a Creative Commons waiver and to avoid imposing additional access restrictions on the reformatted recordings than what may already be in place for the source recordings. While this program does prioritize preservation over access, reviewers strongly prefer that applicants avoid creating unnecessary barriers to access, since such barriers inhibit a project's impact. Access restrictions are allowable when well-justified due to legal and/or ethical concerns. Such restrictions will not necessarily disadvantage you in the competition and may even be viewed favorably by the review panel. This includes restricting access to recordings that include personally identifiable information or culturally-sensitive material. If awarded funding, projects will be required to upload a file manifest of the metadata created from the digitized materials in their final report. We have a template for the digitization file manifest located on our [RAR Manage an Award](#) page.

Q: RE Copyright clearance or ownership, the metadata is publically available but not necessarily the digital files? Any requested future access to the files can be negotiated on a specific basis?

A: We do have a requirement that all nominated materials are owned and held by the applicant organization. The reviewers will evaluate if there are any rights, ethics and reuse concerns with nominated materials. If the applicant chooses to limit access to the nominated materials the reviewers will want to see an explanation in the rights, ethics and reuse section of the application. The access strategy should be aligned with their explanations of these issues, as well as any non-legal ethical considerations pertinent to the content. Reviewers want to see how applicants are crafting their approach to digitization and access in alignment with these issues, rather than just simply enforcing uniform institutional access policies that might be overly or less restrictive than what is legally permissible and ethically sound for the specific content to be reformatted.

Q: Can you discuss the copyright requirements? Do institutions need to have full copyright rights to be eligible?

A: We do have a requirement that all nominated materials are owned and held by the applicant organization. The reviewers will want you to have a handle on the copyright as we talked about briefly in our slides in the rights, ethics, and reuse section. The review panel consists of two IP reviewers who will be reviewing each application to know that you have an understanding of the rights, ethics, and reuse concerns that there may be with the materials that you're nominating for digitization. The reviewers will evaluate if there are any rights, ethics and reuse concerns, and if there are; that you have a takedown practice or plan in place, and can execute it. Reviewers will care about whether the legal status of the content is clear and dealt with. An important purpose of this program is to create the metadata to make it free for the public domain. If that can't happen, reviewers may not look at this application as favorably as others applicants. However, if ethical concerns are related to your rights ethics and reuse issues and you understand what the rights issues are with a plan to address them, and you could explain that carefully in your rights ethics and reuse area of the application often reviewers will see it as competitive and pass it through. If you have more specific questions about that, send us an email to recordingsatrisk@clir.org and we provide more detail.

Q: Can you please further explain, or give an example of, the publically shared metadata required if awarded?

A: If awarded funding, your project will be required to submit a final report that is due 3 months after the project end date. One of the required documents for the final report is your [digitization file manifest](#) of the nominated materials in your proposal. This file manifest helps CLIR verify the continued availability of the digital copies that were produced by your project. It is an excel spreadsheet that you will complete with information of the filenames for the unique access produced through your grant. Typically we ask for the filename, and URL to the location of the file. If you navigate to the *Recordings at Risk*, [Manage an Award](#) page can view a copy of the [file manifest](#). Keep in mind it's really more used by awardees than applicants. But, if you want to go to that page, you can look at the file manifest template and see the instructions within the template, and what particular information we're looking for there?

Q: If my organization has the rights to the recordings and we have (and continue to) monetize the collection in addition to providing public access through broadcasts and rebroadcasts, would we be required to provide public online access to digital files created?

A: Yes, you would be required to provide public online access to the digital files. But there is space for fees to be charged for commercial and or non-commercial use. I will say that the review panel tends to scrutinize those fees fairly heavily. Additionally, there can't be access restrictions on the access to the digital files that do not currently exist for the source collections, but there is no prohibition against charging commercial or non-commercial use fees as long as you fully explain that in the rights, ethics, and reuse section of the proposal and make a strong argument for why that is necessary. We do have a [Technical Recommendations Guidelines](#) for the *Recordings at Risk* program that is a great resource to view.

Q: Can you expand on the “Legal Justifications” area, regarding if any required copyright clearances must be included. While the metadata is publically available but not necessarily the digital files themselves. Any requested future access to the files can be negotiated on a specific basis?

A: What we mean by the legal justification for the project is the applicant's argument for why the activities they are proposing to undertake (both the digital copying and the creation of access) are legal. This may be because the materials are in the public domain, because they have the explicit permission of copyright holders, or it could be a justification based upon Sections 107 (fair use) and/or 108 (exceptions for libraries) of US copyright law. The access strategy should be aligned with your explanations of these issues, as well as any non-legal ethical considerations pertinent to the content. Reviewers want to see how applicants are crafting their approach to digitization and access in alignment with these issues, rather than just simply enforcing uniform institutional access policies that might be overly or less restrictive than what is legally permissible and ethically sound for the specific content to be reformatted.