

## **Diversifying the Digital Historical Record: Integrating Community Archives in National Strategies for Access to Digital Cultural Heritage**

The Amistad Research Center, in collaboration with the Shorefront Legacy Center, the South Asian American Digital Archive, Mukurtu, and the Inland Empire Memories Project of the University of California- Riverside, requests \$100,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services National (IMLS) Forum Grants program to host a series of forums that will focus on community archives integration in a National Digital Platform. The goal of *Diversifying the Historical Record* is to address the potential impact for increased representation of marginalized communities and people in our digital cultural heritage. This project wholly embodies IMLS championing of diversity and inclusion in their publication IMLS Focus: The National Digital Platform and its finding that “Significant portions of the conversation focused on diversity and inclusion in the national digital platform, acknowledging that this is both a challenge and a priority area.”

Community archives are independent, grassroots alternatives to mainstream repositories through which communities make collective decisions about what is of enduring value to them, shape collective memory of their own pasts, and control the means through which stories about their past are constructed. Such organizations are often created in response to minoritized communities being shut out of dominant historical narratives created by mainstream memory institutions. Although community archives are thriving, they have so far been left out of national projects to bring more access to digital collections. Ongoing conversations about documenting and providing access to a shared past through a National Digital Platform should include community archives because they are an effective means of diversifying digital collections in cultural heritage spaces to more accurately represent the diversity of the United States. Holding inclusive and broadly accessible conversations on the topic of community archives will inform this IMLS priority by gathering community archives curators and practitioners, community members, scholars and digital collections leaders to discuss broader inclusion of these types of materials in national efforts that seek to represent U.S. cultural heritage in digital spaces.

The 18-month project, from June 1, 2016, to November 30, 2017, is proposed by a consortium of community archives representing the geographic, organizational, ethnic, and cultural diversity. Christopher Harter (Amistad), Dr. Michelle Caswell (UCLA) and Bergis Jules (UCR) will serve as Project Directors, while Dr. Kara Olidge (Amistad) will serve as Project Administrator. Participants for the four forums will be recruited through the partner organizations’ informal network of community archives practitioners, and through established networks such as the LA as Subject consortium and the Society of American Archivists. Representatives from national organizations such as DPLA, HathiTrust, the Library of Congress, and Digital Preservation Network will also be invited. Additionally, representatives from organizations supporting community archives work like the Black Metropolis Research Consortium, the D.C. Africana Archives Project and Inland Empire Memories will be invited. In order to ensure the widest possible participation, the proceedings will be livestreamed and social media participation will be encouraged. Project participants will produce a publicly-accessible white paper that both summarizes the conversations and proposes concrete recommendations that could contribute to a more inclusive National Digital Platform.

By engaging and listening to the voices of marginalized communities in national conversations around the materials they collect, IMLS can ensure that traditionally-absent voices will be represented as a National Digital Platform continues to be developed. IMLS states that two key themes moving forward for the National Digital Platform will be inclusivity and radical collaborations. The *Diversifying the Digital Historical Record* project will address these themes in a series of four community-centered, critically-engaging and solutions-based conversations. The project has direct relevance to IMLS priorities for building a National Digital Platform that champions diversity and inclusion while actively engaging communities.

**Diversifying the Digital Historical Record:  
Integrating Community Archives in National Strategies  
for Access to Digital Cultural Heritage**

**Statement of Need**

The Amistad Research Center, in collaboration with the Shorefront Legacy Center, the South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA), Mukurtu, and Inland Empire Memories at the University of California- Riverside, requests \$100,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services National Forum Grants program to host a series of public forums that will focus on community archives integration in a National Digital Platform with the goal of increasing representation of marginalized communities and people in our national digital cultural heritage. The project, *Diversifying the Digital Historical Record: Integrating Community Archives in National Strategies for Access to Digital Cultural Heritage*, will be a first of its kind series of public forums designed to critically engage in solutions based conversations around the future of community archives and digital cultural heritage.

Some of the most valuable collections documenting the lives of marginalized people in the United States reside in spaces outside traditional academic and government institutions. They exist throughout the country as independently curated, highly valuable sites for remembering, and owned by the communities they document. Recent research in archival studies notes a growth in community-based archives.<sup>1</sup> These archives are independent, grassroots alternatives to mainstream repositories through which communities make collective decisions about what is of enduring value to them, shape collective memory of their own pasts, and control the means through which stories about their past are constructed. Such organizations are often created in response to minoritized communities being shut out of dominant historical narratives created by mainstream memory institutions.

Although much of the scholarship documenting these community archives has been based in the U.K., a growing body of literature in the U.S. addresses the trajectories of such organizations and projects in the U.S.<sup>2</sup> While definitions of community are contextual and

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<sup>1</sup> Jeannette Bastian and Ben Alexander, "Introduction: Communities and Archives- A Symbiotic Relationship," *Community Archives: The Shaping of Memory* (London: Facet, 2009); Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd, "Whose Memories, Whose Archives? Independent Community Archives, Autonomy, and the Mainstream," *Archival Science* 9 (2009), 71-86; Dominique Daniel, "Documenting the Immigrant and Ethnic Experience in American Archives," *American Archivist* 73:1 (2010): 82-104; Terry Cook, "Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms," *Archival Science* 13 (2013): 95-120.

<sup>2</sup> For a historical perspective on the differences between community archives in the U.S. and the U.K., see: Gilliland, Anne J. and Andrew Flinn. "The Wonderful and Frightening World of Community Archives: What Are We Really Talking About?" Keynote address, Nexus, Confluence, and Difference: Community Archives meets Community Informatics: Prato CIRN Conference Oct 28-30 2013, Centre for Social Informatics, Monash University. ISBN 978-0-9874652-1-4,

shifting, Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd define community as “any manner of people who come together and present themselves as such, and a ‘community archive’ is the product of their attempts to document the history of their commonality.”<sup>3</sup> Archival communities can materialize around ethnic, racial, or religious identities,<sup>4</sup> gender and sexual orientation,<sup>5</sup> economic status,<sup>6</sup> and physical locations.<sup>7</sup> As U.K.-based archival scholars Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd note, independent grassroots archival efforts first sprung up in response to the political and social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Flinn and Stevens position community archives as parts of larger social and political movements whereby groups who have been ignored, misrepresented or marginalized by mainstream archival repositories launch their own archival projects as means of self-representation, identity construction, and empowerment.<sup>8</sup>

In the American context, the majority of the staff and volunteers of these community archives are usually members of underrepresented groups. In maintaining independence and encouraging participation, these archives strive to provide a platform in which previously marginalized groups are empowered to make decisions about archival collecting on their own terms. Flinn, Stevens and Shepherd found that political activism, community empowerment, and social change were prime motivating factors undergirding these fiercely independent archival efforts.<sup>9</sup> In this light, the creation of community archives can be seen as a form of political protest in that it is an attempt to seize the means by which history is written and correct or amend dominant stories about the past. Flinn and Stevens assert: “...The endeavor by individuals and social groups to document their history, particularly if that history has been generally subordinated or marginalized, is political and subversive. These ‘recast’ histories and their making challenge and seek to undermine both the distortions and omissions of orthodox historical narratives, as well as the archive and heritage collections that sustain them.”<sup>10</sup> In this way, community archives are responses not only to the omissions of history as the official story written by a guild of professional historians, but the omissions of memory institutions writ large, and can thus be read as a direct challenge to the failure of mainstream repositories to collect a more diverse representation of society.

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[http://www.ccnr.infotech.monash.edu.au/assets/docs/prato2013\\_papers/gilliland\\_flinn\\_keynote.pdf](http://www.ccnr.infotech.monash.edu.au/assets/docs/prato2013_papers/gilliland_flinn_keynote.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd, p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Kaplan, “We Are What We Collect, We Collect What We Are: Archives and the Construction of Identity,” *American Archivist* 63 (2000): 126-151; Dominique Daniel, “Documenting the Immigrant and Ethnic Experience in American Archives”; Michelle Caswell, “Seeing Yourself in History: Community Archives in the Fight Against Symbolic Annihilation,” *The Public Historian* 36(4) November 2014: 26-37.

<sup>5</sup> Marcel Barriault, “Archiving the Queer and Queering the Archives: A Case Study of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives,” *Community Archives: The Shaping of Memory*. London: Facet, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Flinn and Stevens, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Flinn and Stevens, 2009, p. 3-4.

It is important to note here that the term “community archives” is a general umbrella term under which a host of different types of projects may fit. Community archives can range from entirely independent, permanent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations dedicated solely to archival endeavors, to archival projects within larger community organizations, to informal, loosely defined, temporary configurations of community members dedicated to shaping collective memory of a community’s past. As such, the term “community archives” can be seen an external imposition by archival studies scholars rather than emerging organically from within such community efforts.

The archives profession in the U.S. is only now coming to terms with this burgeoning community archives movement. In the realm of practice, the rise of community archives has meant a reframing of the functions of appraisal, description and access to align with community-specific priorities, reflect contingent cultural values, and allow for greater participation in archival decision-making.<sup>11</sup> Community input into archives has also led to conceptual shifts, as Chris Hurley developed the notion of “parallel provenance” to better accommodate Indigenous Australian perspectives on record creation, Joel Wurl advocated for ethnicity as a form of provenance, and Jeannette Bastian echoed calls to expand the core archival concept of provenance to include descendants of the subjects of records.<sup>12</sup> Terry Cook has even declared that the recent emphasis on community constitutes a paradigm shift in the field, akin to previous conceptual guideposts like evidence and memory.<sup>13</sup>

Although community archives are thriving, they have largely been left out of national projects to bring more access to digital collections. Ongoing conversations about documenting and providing access to a shared past through a National Digital Platform should include community archives because they are an effective means of diversifying digital collections in cultural heritage spaces to more accurately represent the diversity of the United States. In a recent report<sup>14</sup> on the National Digital Platform, IMLS acknowledged that including content that represents the full diversity of the United States will be a priority. Holding inclusive and broadly accessible conversations on the topic of community archives will inform this IMLS priority by gathering community archives curators and practitioners, community members, scholars and digital collections leaders to discuss broader inclusion of these types of materials in national efforts that seek to represent U.S. cultural heritage in digital spaces. By engaging and listening to the voices of marginalized communities in national conversations around the materials they collect, IMLS can help ensure that traditionally absent voices will be represented as a National Digital Platform continues to be developed.

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<sup>11</sup> Katie Shilton and Ramesh Srinivasan, “Participatory Appraisal and Arrangement for Multicultural Archival Collections,” *Archivaria* 63 (2007): 87-101.

<sup>12</sup> Chris Hurley, “Parallel Provenance: What If Anything is Archival Description?” *Archives and Manuscripts* 33, no. 1, 2005: 110-145; Joel Wurl, “Ethnicity as Provenance: In Search of Values and Principles for Documenting the Immigrant Experience,” *Archival Issues* 29 (2005): 65-76; Jeannette Bastian, *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost its Archives and Found its History*, Libraries Unlimited, Westport, CT, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Terry Cook, 2013

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.imls.gov/sites/default/files/publications/documents/2015imlsfocusndpreport.pdf>

IMLS states that two key themes moving forward for the National Digital Platform will be inclusivity and radical collaborations. The Diversifying the Digital Historical Record project will address these themes in a series of four community centered, critically engaging and solutions based conversations. The project has direct relevance to IMLS priorities for building a National Digital Platform that champions diversity and inclusion while actively engaging communities.

There are currently no other formal projects that bring together community archives practitioners as such. In fact, in recent research conducted at wide range of community archives in Southern California, Michelle Caswell found that very few community archives practitioners even knew of each other's institutions, let alone actively collaborate or share best practices, despite the success of more formal professional networks such as LA as Subject<sup>15</sup> or Los Angeles Archivists Collective<sup>16</sup>, for example. Similarly, there are no formal mechanisms in place for local community archives to dialogue with national organizations that are building wide-reaching platforms. The proposed project fills this gap by placing community archives in dialogue with each other and with decision makers informing the development of a National Digital Platform and other national efforts to increase access to and knowledge of our digital cultural heritage.

### **Impact**

The Diversifying the Digital Historical Record project will have three major goals that will be significant for the future development of community archives and their impact on our national digital cultural heritage. In addition to being a launching point for critical conversations around the materials that make up our national digital cultural heritage and exploring challenges and opportunities for making those materials more representative, the goals of the project will also be centered around developing effective and sustainable networks of community archives and increasing collaboration between community archives and large-scale digital cultural heritage projects. We hope to achieve these goals through four open and collaborative community archives forums and a white paper summarizing the conversations and proposing future directions for community archives continued development and collaboration with national digital initiatives.

### ***Goal 1: Creating a Space for Critical Conversations***

The Diversifying the Digital Historical Record project will provide a public space for critical conversations about the makeup of our cultural heritage, including the digital, with the goal of addressing representation and the lack of diversity in those collections. Community archives are an effective means of diversifying the materials in our cultural heritage spaces and the opportunity to hold conversations in a public forum with representatives from community archives, traditional cultural heritage organizations and institutions, national digital initiatives and funders, will provide an opportunity for open and honest conversations that can lead to effective and sustainable solutions. The conversations will critically address, among other issues, the current state of diversity in the profession, and diversity and inclusion in relation to collections appraisal, collection development, community engagement, and funding. These activities largely define what cultural heritage materials are seen as legitimate, are collected and are then held in our traditional collecting spaces. These traditional collecting spaces then

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.laassubject.org>

<sup>16</sup> <https://laacollective.wordpress.com>

become the primary partners to national digital cultural heritage initiatives such as a National Digital Platform or well-funded and technologically rich digital library projects such as the Digital Public Library of America. In addition to questioning many of our traditionally accepted practices for building cultural heritage collections, we believe these conversations can help position community archives to be more effective partners with these types initiatives and projects. These new partnerships will have a tremendous impact on our traditional processes and practices for legitimizing cultural heritage and in turn radically redefine collections in our digital spaces leading to a more diversified collective cultural memory.

### ***Goal 2: Developing Effective and Sustainable Networks***

As community archives collections, projects and consortiums continue to grow in the United States, it will be vitally important that they define themselves, connect with each other and connect with larger, more traditional collecting initiatives, especially digital, as a way to increase knowledge of their holdings, share resources to support future growth and programming, and to introduce the cultural heritage materials they hold to a wider audience. While many community archives grew out of the necessity to include their stories in the national collective memory, a siloed existence does not support goals of diversifying the historical record. Developing a community of community archives, if you will, is a key step in realizing the power of community collection building. Traditional collecting spaces such as university libraries understand the strength of collaboration for garnering resources, even though their collections are not representative of the rich cultural heritage of the United States. Community archives have the opportunity to truly realize their potential if they can develop a network to advance their goals. The Diversifying the Digital Historical Record project will create an opportunity for the important conversations leading to these effective types of networks to be developed. These networks can be local, regional or national in scope and have several goals including securing funding, building digital collections spaces, collaborating with existing national digital projects, and collaborative collecting. Developing effective and sustainable networks of community archives will have a significant impact on what they can accomplish in terms of resources, programming and collections access. A strong network of community archives also increases the power of those voices to influence national digital initiatives addressing cultural heritage.

### ***Goal 3: Increasing Collaboration with National Digital Initiatives***

An important goal of the Diversifying the Digital Historical Record project will be to design strategies for increased collaboration with inclusion in national digital initiatives such as the National Digital Platform. In the past three years, organizations like the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA), HathiTrust and the Digital Preservation Network have developed incredibly robust and connected models for sharing cultural heritage materials. Other projects such as Social Networks and Archival Contexts (SNAC) are developing exciting news ways to digitally represent relationships between collections and people to provide deeper context for research. It's vitally important for community archives to be included in these innovative digital collections spaces. Representatives from these exciting initiatives will be invited to participate in the Diversifying the Digital Cultural Heritage forums and will engage directly with community archives practitioners and organizations to discuss effective means for future collaboration. Since these national digital efforts are always leaders in developing technology for increased access and description of

collections, it will be a tremendous benefit for community archives, which are generally under resourced and technology deficient, to share in these vital resources through effective collaborative partnerships. We believe collaborations between community archives and national digital projects will have significant impact on what materials are represented in national digital library efforts and what communities are included in future conversations on national digital initiatives.

### **Project Design**

Diversifying the Digital Historical Record will be an 18-month project from June 1st, 2016 to November 30th, 2017, to host four national forums on integrating community archives with national digital initiatives. We believe it is vital to host four separate meetings to allow for focused, deep dives into each forum topic. The project will be planned and implemented by a core group of community archives organizations and initiatives representing the geographic, organizational, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the United States. The planning organizations are the South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA), Inland Empire Memories at the University of California at Riverside, the Shorefront Legacy Center, the Amistad Research Center and Mukurtu. In addition to the organizations and initiatives planning and implementing the project, several other community archives will be invited to participate in the forums either as presenters invited guests. *[Please see the appended list of potential community archives participants.]*

The Project Directors will be Dr. Kara Olidge, Executive Director of Amistad Research Center, Christopher Harter, Director of Library and Reference Services at the Amistad Research Center, Dr. Michelle Caswell, Professor at the UCLA Department of Information Studies and co-founder of South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA) and Bergis Jules, University Archivist at University of California at Riverside and Project Coordinator of Inland Empire Memories. Participants for the four forums will be recruited through several channels including the planning organizations' informal network of community archives practitioners, and through established networks such as the LA as Subject consortium and the Society of American Archivists, the Association of African American Museums, etc. Representatives from the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA), HathiTrust, and Historypin have seen this proposal are excited to participate in the forums. Representatives from the Library of Congress, the Digital Preservation Network, the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI), and the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) will also be invited and we anticipate strong support from them. Additionally, representatives from community archives organizations and initiatives such as the Puerto Rican Community Archives, the Black Metropolis Research Consortium, the D.C. Africana Archives Project, Inland Empire Memories, and the Gerber/Hart Library and Archives have also seen the proposal and are eager to participate.

In order to ensure the widest possible participation, the proceedings will be livestreamed and social media participation will be encouraged. Project participants will produce a publicly accessible white paper that both summarizes the conversations and proposes concrete recommendations related to the goals of the project, which could contribute to a more inclusive national digital cultural heritage.

The Diversifying the Digital Historical Record project will include four forums addressing different topics related to integrating community archives with national digital initiatives. Each forum will be a full day from 9AM-5PM and will include 5 panels of three to five presenters lasting an hour each. Panelists will be chosen by the project directors. Each day will also include built-in ten to fifteen minute breaks, an hour and a half for lunch and half an hour for closing remarks and feedback. Each forum will be held in a different city to allow for geographic diversity as much as possible. Because of budget restrictions only three of the five panels will be livestreamed. All the panel presentations will be recorded and those recordings will be made available in a reasonable amount of time after the conclusion of each forum.

***Forum 1: Definition, Commonalities and Divergences: What are community archives?***

***City: Los Angeles, CA***

***Host Institution: UCLA in conjunction with University of California Riverside***

This forum will focus on defining community archives and specifically on the ways community archives define themselves. Community archives are diverse in several ways including the ethnic, racial, cultural and gender communities they represent, size, independent organizations or collaborative efforts. This forum will be an opportunity to introduce the public to the diverse types of community archives that exist in the United States and to learn about their history, the work they do and types of collections they hold. The forum will be an opportunity to gain deeper understanding of the community archives, their challenges and opportunities, and it will be a vital first step in laying the groundwork for developing effective, collaborative and sustainable networks. Presenters for this forum will largely consist of people who manage community archives and community archives consortia or partnerships, archivists, and scholars whose work focuses primarily on community archives.

***Forum 2: Technology: Benefits and Barriers for Community Archives for Providing Wider Access to Digital Content.***

***City: Chicago, IL***

***Host Organization: Shorefront Legacy Center***

This forum will focus on the technological infrastructure needs of community archives in terms of addressing collection building, collections access, interoperability, outreach and programming. This forum fits well with IMLS' priority to enhance and build interoperable tools and services. Community archives are traditionally under resourced and technology deficient efforts, that, while fully connected to the communities they serve, remain disconnected from innovative, well-funded, and technologically rich digital initiatives. Furthermore, community archive efforts don't typically have access to the technological resources in staffing and tools to that can make their collections, programs and services more accessible to a wider audience. The forum will provide an opportunity to explore the current landscape of technology use by community archives, discuss new innovations in digital collections technology that community archives can take advantage of, and begin to develop a plan for potential implementation of effective actions that can lead to more innovative use of technology for advancing accessibility of digital collections held by community archives. Presenters for this forum will consist of a mix of community archives practitioners, scholars and archivists, and also leading technologists in libraries and archives with expertise in digital cultural heritage.



***Forum 3: Collaboration and Networks: Benefits for Community Archives & Libraries, Archives, Museums.***

***City: New Orleans, LA***

***Host Institution: Amistad Research Center***

In “IMLS Focus: The National Digital platform”, IMLS calls for radical and systemic collaboration to support the national digital platform stating, “IMLS and others will need to work effectively and simultaneously with local institutions, with state and national service providers, and with global initiatives. Collaborations must then be bound together, forming a mutually reinforcing environment that provides support for core, centralized functions yet allows for innovative, decentralized breakthroughs at the boundaries.”<sup>17</sup> IMLS’ priority to support collaborative efforts for accessibility to digital cultural heritage presents a significant opportunity for community archives to explore collaborative partnerships both within and outside of their own communities. Building strong networks of community archives locally, regionally and nationally also paves the way for deeper, more meaningful involvement with collaborative digital collections projects. The future digital collections preservation and access will be defined around interoperability and if community archives are to take advantage of these innovations to benefit their collections, they should invest time and effort developing community archives networks and joining national, technologically innovative collaborations. Presenters for this forum will include projects that have attempted to build community archives networks such as the Black Metropolis Research Consortium, Inland Empire Memories and the DC Africana Archives Project. Presenters for this forum will also include leaders driving current conversations around interoperability, linked data and digital collections preservation and access.

***Forum 4: Integration: Why and how to address integration with national digital collections initiatives?***

***City: New York***

***Host Institution: El Museo del barrio***

This forum will focus strategies and recommended practices for community archives to integrate with national digital initiatives. Community archives are traditionally and understandably very independent entities, generally serving single communities and growing out of necessity because of exclusion. How do we begin to think about integrating community archives collections, organizations, and projects with national digital initiatives while allowing for the individuality and independence of those entities to continue to flourish? These are critical conversations that will require sensitivity to cultural protocols, traditional practices and local conditions governing collection, preservation and access to community archives materials. The forum will provide a safe space for those conversations to take place. As funding agencies such as IMLS, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and national digital cultural heritage projects like DPLA and the HathiTrust move toward more collaborative approaches to providing access to digital cultural heritage, it’s the ideal time to community archives to begin to strategize ways to integrate with these efforts. Presenters for this forum will consist of representatives from funding agencies, national digital collections initiatives, traditional libraries and archives and community archives.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.ims.gov/sites/default/files/publications/documents/2015imlsfocusndpreport.pdf>

### **Diversity Plan**

This project is diverse in several ways including encompassing IMLS' Definition of National Digital Platform and its call for diversity in people, platforms and collections: "The National Digital Platform for libraries, archives, and museums is the combination of software applications, social and technical infrastructure, and staff expertise that provides content and services to all users in the United States." The archival organizations involved in planning the project represent African American, Asian American, and Native American communities. Attendees will also include representatives from Latino archives in the U.S. These populations were chosen because they have been historically left out of the collecting priorities of predominantly white institutions. To date, they have also been left out of conversations about a National Digital Platform. This project also wholly embody IMLS' call for championing diversity and inclusion in their publication IMLS Focus: The National Digital Platform. IMLS calls for "Significant portions of the conversation focused on diversity and inclusion in the national digital platform, acknowledging that this is both a challenge and a priority area. How can we ensure that content across distributed collections represents the diversity of the United States? How can we ensure that the national digital platform serves all Americans? Another aspect is connecting the full range of small institutions, in a wide range of communities to national digital platform efforts."

### **Project Resources: Personnel, Time, Budget**

The Project Administrator and Project Co-Directors will work together to ensure successful planning, coordination, and implementation of the forum series. Dr. Kara Olidge will serve as Project Administrator and will manage all finances and reports associated with the project. Christopher Harter will serve as Project Co-Director and will manage the project's programs within each region to ensure successful completion and coordination of all forums, as well as organizing and hosting the fourth forum in New Orleans. Co-Directors Dr. Michelle Caswell and Bergis Jules will organize and host the first forum at UCLA. In addition Dr. Caswell will be responsible for writing the white paper that results from the project. Mr. Jules will also be responsible for developing the list of participants for the forums and will work closely with the Amistad Research Center in selecting individual participants.

As the fiscal agent for this project, the Amistad Research Center will manage the project's finances. Dr. Kara Olidge serves as the Executive Director of the Amistad Research Center, where she provides overall leadership in the areas of strategy and planning, fiscal management, fundraising, program management, and collections development. As an arts and education administrator, she has over 20 years of experience in managing collaborative and multi-site projects. As the Director of Library and Reference Services of the Amistad Research Center, Christopher Harter oversees reference services, educational programs, and community outreach, including digitization projects, exhibitions, and bibliographic instruction, as well as the collection management of the Amistad's library collections.

As co-directors of this project Dr. Caswell and Mr. Jules will devote 2.5% of their time to planning activities and hosting the initial forum in Los Angeles. As co-director and executive director of the fiscal agent, Dr. Olidge will devote 5% of her time to coordination of the various forums, while Mr. Harter will devote 5% of his time to assisting with the coordination and reporting to IMLS. The sharing of these responsibilities will ensure that each participant will be able to balance their project responsibilities with other professional activities and duties.

The major component of this 18-month project is comprised of the successful planning and hosting of the four informational forums. The forums are currently scheduled to take place on a quarterly basis in September 2016 (Los Angeles, CA), January 2017 (Chicago, IL), May 2017 (New Orleans, LA) and September 2017 (New York, NY). Planning for venues and potential participants for each forum has begun as part of this application process. Finalization of the venue and participants for the initial forum will begin immediately upon receipt of the grant award, with such activities for the three additional forums being carried out beginning five months before each forum. The compilation of notes from each forum will occur immediately after each, allowing for an ongoing compilation of the project's white paper. This document will be finalized and published within a month of the final forum. Submission of project reports will be submitted to IMLS in June 2017 and November 2017.

Facilities in each city hosting one of the designated forums will be selected based on the following criteria: 1. Physical capacity for panel presentations to 30-35 participants, 2. Technology capacity for public presentations and viewing (laptops/projectors/screens), 3. Internet wireless capability for presentations and live streaming of forums, and 4. Physical and technology capacity for video and recording of forums.

It is anticipated that benefits to the partner organizations undertaking this grant, as well as participants from the various community archives, will be wide-ranging and sustainable. Greater diversity within the National Digital Platform, which is the overarching goal of this project, will benefit the partner institutions, who will emerge as leaders in calling for this change and will allow the partners to build upon their communications and work together to continue toward that goal. More importantly, however, they view the project's work to assist community archives and their efforts toward digitization and inclusion as the ultimate benefit for all participants in this project, including the community archives, scholars, the general public, funding agencies, and others.

### **Communications Plan**

We will publicize the forums in several ways including a project website that includes information about the project, participants, forum dates, registration and attendance information. Each Diversifying the Digital Historical Record forum will also be livestreamed and promoted on Twitter and Facebook since these are two heavily used social media platforms by cultural heritage organizations. Since hashtags are an effective means of including the public in conversations, we will also encourage Twitter participation during the livestreamed forums through use of hashtags such as *#CommunityArchives16* and *#CommunityArchives17* or *#DDHR2016* and *#DDHR17* (Diversifying the Digital Historical Record). Twitter participants will be able to ask questions and offer comments to the presenters during the forums. Finally, the white paper that will be developed for the project will be made publicly available through the project website, social media and other public channels. All the panel presentations during the forums will be recorded and will be made available on the project website in a reasonable amount of time after the conclusion of each forum. Results of the four forums and information gathered for the white paper will be presented at several conferences including the Society of American Archivists, DPLAFest and RBMS in the year immediately following the completion of the four forums.



## DIGITAL STEWARDSHIP SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FORM

### Introduction

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is committed to expanding public access to federally funded research, data, software, and other digital products. The assets you create with IMLS funding require careful stewardship to protect and enhance their value, and they should be freely and readily available for use and re-use by libraries, archives, museums, and the public. However, applying these principles to the development and management of digital products is not always straightforward. Because technology is dynamic and because we do not want to inhibit innovation, we do not want to prescribe set standards and best practices that could become quickly outdated. Instead, we ask that you answer a series of questions that address specific aspects of creating and managing digital assets. Your answers will be used by IMLS staff and by expert peer reviewers to evaluate your application, and they will be important in determining whether your project will be funded.

### Instructions

If you propose to create any type of digital product as part of your project, complete this form. We define digital products very broadly. If you are developing anything through the use of information technology (e.g., digital collections, web resources, metadata, software, or data), you should complete this form.

**Please indicate which of the following digital products you will create or collect during your project**  
(Check all that apply):

	<b>Every proposal creating a digital product should complete ...</b>	<b>Part I</b>
	<b>If your project will create or collect ...</b>	<b>Then you should complete ...</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Digital content	Part II
<input type="checkbox"/>	Software (systems, tools, apps, etc.)	Part III
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dataset	Part IV

## PART I.

### A. Intellectual Property Rights and Permissions

We expect applicants to make federally funded work products widely available and usable through strategies such as publishing in open-access journals, depositing works in institutional or discipline-based repositories, and using non-restrictive licenses such as a Creative Commons license.

**A.1** What will be the intellectual property status of the content, software, or datasets you intend to create? Who will hold the copyright? Will you assign a Creative Commons license (<http://us.creativecommons.org>) to the content? If so, which license will it be? If it is software, what open source license will you use (e.g., BSD, GNU, MIT)? Explain and justify your licensing selections.

**A.2** What ownership rights will your organization assert over the new digital content, software, or datasets and what conditions will you impose on access and use? Explain any terms of access and conditions of use, why they are justifiable, and how you will notify potential users about relevant terms or conditions.

**A.3** Will you create any content or products which may involve privacy concerns, require obtaining permissions or rights, or raise any cultural sensitivities? If so, please describe the issues and how you plan to address them.

## **Part II: Projects Creating or Collecting Digital Content**

### **A. Creating New Digital Content**

**A.1** Describe the digital content you will create and/or collect, the quantities of each type, and format you will use.

**A.2** List the equipment, software, and supplies that you will use to create the content or the name of the service provider who will perform the work.

**A.3** List all the digital file formats (e.g., XML, TIFF, MPEG) you plan to create, along with the relevant information on the appropriate quality standards (e.g., resolution, sampling rate, or pixel dimensions).

## **B. Digital Workflow and Asset Maintenance/Preservation**

**B.1** Describe your quality control plan (i.e., how you will monitor and evaluate your workflow and products).

**B.2** Describe your plan for preserving and maintaining digital assets during and after the award period of performance (e.g., storage systems, shared repositories, technical documentation, migration planning, commitment of organizational funding for these purposes). Please note: You may charge the Federal award before closeout for the costs of publication or sharing of research results if the costs are not incurred during the period of performance of the Federal award. (See 2 CFR 200.461).

## **C. Metadata**

**C.1** Describe how you will produce metadata (e.g., technical, descriptive, administrative, or preservation). Specify which standards you will use for the metadata structure (e.g., MARC, Dublin Core, Encoded Archival Description, PBCore, or PREMIS) and metadata content (e.g., thesauri).

**C.2** Explain your strategy for preserving and maintaining metadata created and/or collected during and after the award period of performance.

**C.3** Explain what metadata sharing and/or other strategies you will use to facilitate widespread discovery and use of digital content created during your project (e.g., an API (Application Programming Interface), contributions to the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) or other digital platform, or other support to allow batch queries and retrieval of metadata).

#### **D. Access and Use**

**D.1** Describe how you will make the digital content available to the public. Include details such as the delivery strategy (e.g., openly available online, available to specified audiences) and underlying hardware/software platforms and infrastructure (e.g., specific digital repository software or leased services, accessibility via standard web browsers, requirements for special software tools in order to use the content).

**D.2** Provide the name and URL(s) (Uniform Resource Locator) for any examples of previous digital collections or content your organization has created.

### **Part III. Projects Creating Software (systems, tools, apps, etc.)**

#### **A. General Information**

**A.1** Describe the software you intend to create, including a summary of the major functions it will perform and the intended primary audience(s) this software will serve.



**A.2** List other existing software that wholly or partially perform the same functions, and explain how the tool or system you will create is different.

**B. Technical Information**

**B.1** List the programming languages, platforms, software, or other applications you will use to create your software (systems, tools, apps, etc.) and explain why you chose them.

**B.2** Describe how the intended software will extend or interoperate with other existing software.

**B.3** Describe any underlying additional software or system dependencies necessary to run the new software you will create.

**B.4** Describe the processes you will use for development documentation and for maintaining and updating technical documentation for users of the software.

**B.5** Provide the name and URL(s) for examples of any previous software tools or systems your organization has created.

### **C. Access and Use**

**C.1** We expect applicants seeking federal funds for software to develop and release these products under an open-source license to maximize access and promote reuse. What ownership rights will your organization assert over the software created, and what conditions will you impose on the access and use of this product? Identify and explain the license under which you will release source code for the software you develop (e.g., BSD, GNU, or MIT software licenses). Explain any prohibitive terms or conditions of use or access, explain why these terms or conditions are justifiable, and explain how you will notify potential users of the software or system.

**C.2** Describe how you will make the software and source code available to the public and/or its intended users.

**C.3** Identify where you will be publicly depositing source code for the software developed:

Name of publicly accessible source code repository:

URL:

### **Part IV. Projects Creating a Dataset**

1. Summarize the intended purpose of this data, the type of data to be collected or generated, the method for collection or generation, the approximate dates or frequency when the data will be generated or collected, and the intended use of the data collected.
2. Does the proposed data collection or research activity require approval by any internal review panel or institutional review board (IRB)? If so, has the proposed research activity been approved? If not, what is your plan for securing approval?

3. Will you collect any personally identifiable information (PII), confidential information (e.g., trade secrets), or proprietary information? If so, detail the specific steps you will take to protect such information while you prepare the data files for public release (e.g., data anonymization, data suppression PII, or synthetic data).
  
4. If you will collect additional documentation such as consent agreements along with the data, describe plans for preserving the documentation and ensuring that its relationship to the collected data is maintained.
  
5. What will you use to collect or generate the data? Provide details about any technical requirements or dependencies that would be necessary for understanding, retrieving, displaying, or processing the dataset(s).
  
6. What documentation (e.g., data documentation, codebooks, etc.) will you capture or create along with the dataset(s)? Where will the documentation be stored, and in what format(s)? How will you permanently associate and manage the documentation with the dataset(s) it describes?
  
7. What is the plan for archiving, managing, and disseminating data after the completion of the award-funded project?
  
8. Identify where you will be publicly depositing dataset(s):  
  
Name of repository:  
URL:
  
9. When and how frequently will you review this data management plan? How will the implementation be monitored?

# Original Preliminary Proposal

## **Diversifying the Digital Historical Record: Integrating Community Archives in National Strategies for Access to Digital Cultural Heritage**

### **Statement of Need**

The Amistad Research Center, in collaboration with the Shorefront Legacy Center, the South Asian American Digital Archive, Mukurtu, and the Inland Empire Memories Project of the University of California- Riverside, requests \$100,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services National (IMLS) Forum Grants program to host a series of forums that will focus on community archives integration in a National Digital Platform and the potential impact for increased representation of marginalized communities and people in our digital cultural heritage. Many of the most valuable collections documenting the lives of marginalized people in the United States, reside in spaces outside traditional academic and government institutions. They exist throughout the country as independently curated, highly valuable sites for remembering, owned by the communities they document. Recent research in archival studies notes a growth in community-based archives.<sup>1</sup> These archives are independent, grassroots alternatives to mainstream repositories through which communities make collective decisions about what is of enduring value to them, shape collective memory of their own pasts, and control the means through which stories about their past are constructed. Such organizations are often created in response to minoritized communities being shut out of dominant historical narratives created by mainstream memory institutions. Although community archives are thriving, they have so far been left out of national projects to bring more access to digital collections. Ongoing conversations about documenting and providing access to a shared past through a National Digital Platform should include community archives because they are an effective means of diversifying digital collections in cultural heritage spaces to more accurately represent the diversity of the United States. In a recent report<sup>2</sup> on the National Digital Platform, IMLS acknowledged that including content that represents the full diversity of the United States will be a priority. Holding inclusive and broadly accessible conversations on the topic of community archives will inform this IMLS priority by gathering community archives curators and practitioners, community members, scholars and digital collections leaders to discuss broader inclusion of these types of materials in national efforts that seek to represent U.S. cultural heritage in digital spaces. By engaging and listening to the voices of marginalized communities in national conversations around the materials they collect, IMLS can ensure that traditionally absent voices will be represented as a National Digital Platform continues to be developed. IMLS states that two key themes moving forward for the National Digital Platform will be inclusivity and radical collaborations. The Diversifying the Digital Historical Record project will address these themes in a series of four community centered, critically engaging and solutions based conversations. The project has direct relevance to IMLS priorities for

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<sup>1</sup> Jeannette Bastian and Ben Alexander, "Introduction: Communities and Archives- A Symbiotic Relationship," *Community Archives: The Shaping of Memory* (London: Facet, 2009); Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens, and Elizabeth Shepherd, "Whose Memories, Whose Archives? Independent Community Archives, Autonomy, and the Mainstream," *Archival Science* 9 (2009), 71-86; Dominique Daniel, "Documenting the Immigrant and Ethnic Experience in American Archives," *American Archivist* 73:1 (2010): 82-104; Terry Cook, "Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms," *Archival Science* 13 (2013): 95-120.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ims.gov/sites/default/files/publications/documents/2015imlsfocusndpreport.pdf>

building a National Digital Platform that champions diversity and inclusion while actively engaging communities.

### **Project Description**

The 18-month project, from June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 to November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017 is proposed by a consortium of community archives representing the geographic, organizational, ethnic, and cultural diversity. Dr. Kara Olidge (Amistad), Dr. Michelle Caswell (UCLA) and Bergis Jules (UCR) will serve as Project Directors. Participants for the four forums will be recruited through the applicant organization and partner organizations' informal network of community archives practitioners, and through established networks such as the LA as Subject consortium and the Society of American Archivists. Representatives from national organizations such as DPLA, HathiTrust, the Library of Congress, and Digital Preservation Network will also be invited. Additionally, representatives from organizations supporting community archives work like the Black Metropolis Research Consortium, the D.C. Africana Archives Project and Inland Empire Memories will be invited. In order to ensure the widest possible participation, the proceedings will be livestreamed and social media participation will be encouraged. Project participants will produce a publicly accessible white paper that both summarizes the conversations proposes concrete recommendations that could contribute to a more inclusive National Digital Platform.

**Forum 1:** Definition, Commonalities and Divergences: What are community archives?

**Forum 2:** Technology: What are technology benefits and barriers for community archives for providing wider access to their digital content?

**Forum 3:** Collaboration: What are benefits for community archives & Libraries, Archives, Museums?

**Forum 4:** Integration: Why and how to address integration with national digital collections initiatives?

### **Estimated Budget**

The project team requests \$100,000 to host four meetings. Funding for each meeting will include support for project staff time, travel, lodging and food for a combination of up to 35 invited guest, local community participants and project partners. Funding will also support live streaming service, marketing and outreach, meeting space rental, web design, web and media hosting.

### **Potential Impact**

1. Inform development of a national digital strategy for community archives.
2. Inform the work of the National Digital Platform to achieve its diversity inclusion and community engagement priorities.
3. Inform national efforts to support cultural heritage organizations in addressing inclusivity and diversity in the digital historical record.
4. Help spotlight challenges and propose effective solutions, with respect to diversity, when developing technology strategies for national, large-scale and integrated cultural heritage projects.

### **Performance Goals and Outcomes**

1. Four nationally engaged, livestreamed forums addressing key issues for future of community archives.
2. A White paper proposing solutions for integrating community archives in national digital strategies.
3. Webpage for meeting proceedings including session recordings, the white paper.
4. Connect libraries, archives, museums, funders and digital collections experts with community archives practitioners, curators, and scholars.