

George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida

Planning Collaborative Practices for Archiving Farmworker Communities' Histories: The George A. Smathers Libraries at the University of Florida (UF) and the University of Miami Libraries (UM) in partnership with The Farmworker Association of Florida (FWAF) and the Rural Women's Health Project (RWHP) seek \$149,522 for one year to design, plan, and document partnerships between academic libraries and farmworker NGOs that will collaboratively produce an exemplar archive of marginalized, under- and mis-represented communities for national replicability. Activities include: 1) two oral history acquisition events; 2) a symposium with national and local advisors; and 3) a documented plan including training modules, a best practice guide, and project survey instruments for free and broad distribution. This planning project supports Goal 2: Build Capacity, and aligns with objectives 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.

Project Justification: Advocacy efforts for farmworker associations have been fundamental to supporting agricultural communities challenged by a system of oppression in which they work and live. This has been especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. These organizations like other marginalized communities have and continue to face serious obstacles to document their activities and provide access to their archives. In other words, this project seeks to investigate the best practices of marginalized communities and academic libraries to work together to create safe, collaborative spaces where engaged participants can strategize methods to preserve, organize, and provide access to the physical and electronic documents they produce. This project seeks to answer questions such as: Why does it matter to document some of the most under-privileged communities in the U.S., i.e., farmworkers? How can trust between archives' professionals, advocacy groups, and farmworker organizations be built? How can the creation of an archive empower community organizations to preserve the experiences and perspectives of their frequently under-served and under-represented community members in the historical record? What are extant strategies that other communities and institutions can follow? How can issues of safety and sensitivity be addressed? And, how can such archives contribute to a more democratic, equitable, and just nation?

The planning of an exemplar archive will lead to the development of strategies and best practices to document immigrant and other minoritized communities that otherwise do not exist in the field. Employees at farmworker organizations, tend to be mostly immigrant. In Florida, most farmworkers are Mexican, Central American, and Haitian. Some of them are undocumented and, thus, face the fear of deportation; those who are not, are mostly Black or Brown. As such, they are targets for violence. Through this planning process, the team and its collaborators will develop strategies to document the histories in ways that protect narrators from unforeseen risks and assess and develop mitigation practices related to issues of sensitivity.

Project Work Plan: One major challenge that libraries and archives have faced in documenting marginalized communities is mistrust. The proposed planning project will allow the exploration and determination of best practices to overcome such obstacles. This project is founded in new archival practices that center communities that collaborate with more traditional archives to co-develop new ways of stewardship. Through the partnership with [Pan Caribbean Sankofa](#), UF has begun exploring this type of practice. This organization of Caribbean people who document their history of living in the Panama Canal Zone has developed a sustainable model in which its members produce their own oral histories and collect documents, while UF preserves and provides digital access. UM's [Haitian Diaspora Oral History Collection](#) and [Caribbean Diaspora Oral History Collection](#) have focused on undocumented and low literacy populations, as well as documenting the intangible aspects of cultures with a strong oral tradition. The team will analyze practices of community-driven archival projects which are being implemented: Tacoma Public Library's [The Community Archives Center for Tacoma](#), History Colorado's [Stephen H. Hart Research Center's Co-Created Model for Community Collections](#), and the Texas After Violence Project's [Assessing the Affective Impact of Digital Records Creation in Community Archives](#). The team will explore practices and policies initiated and tested by the [Mukurtu](#) project and the [Documenting the Now](#) program of Archivists Helping Activists, to see if they can be adapted to the needs of farmworker advocacy groups.

The team will consult with six national advisors: three will be LIS specialists who are leaders in community-driven archives; the other three will be leaders of NGOs (well-known to the team) related to farmworkers from different regions in the US. Under consideration are Dr. Michelle Caswell (Director, UCLA Community Archives Lab), Maria Estorino (PI, The Southern Historical Collection's Community-Driven Archives), and Nancy Godoy (Director, ASU Library's Community Driven Archives Initiative). Caswell's [toolkit](#) for assessing impact of community archives indicates that her participation will be key. Estorino and Godoy lead archival projects that document marginalized communities. Estorino's initiative at UNC Chapel Hill explored partnerships with historically underrepresented communities throughout the South, while Godoy's initiative at Arizona State University because the program covers the intersection of LGBTQ and Latinx communities. For the second group, NGO leaders who work with farmworker communities will be selected. For example, Mily Treviño-Sauceda (Executive Director, [Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, California](#)) and Rosalinda Guillen (leader of [Community 2 Community](#)) work at national women farmworker associations, and thus can be a strategic advisor on the partnership with the RWHP. Other leaders who have collaborated with FWAF from well-

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established organizations that fight for farmworkers' rights such as Alma Young (Systemic Change Coordinator, [United Farmworkers](#) in Georgia and Colorado), Marge Niedda (Administrator of CATA [Comité de Apoyo a Trabajadores Agrícolas](#), New Jersey), and Jessica Maxwell (Executive Director, [Workers Center of Central New York](#), Syracuse) are being considered. Edgar Franks (Political Director, [Familias Unidas por la Justicia](#)), could provide know-how to develop respectful protocols for indigenous farmworkers is under consideration. Firm commitments will be secured if invited to submit a full proposal.

The primary protagonists of the project will be four local advisor partners from farmworker NGOs in Florida, including FWF and RWHP. They will define the project. In fact, leaders from FWF have expressed keen interest in the the project, especially oral history acquisitions that capture not only the history of their association but also their COVID experiences. Fulfilling this need will serve as an entry way into building trust. The project team proposes to assess methods for acquiring oral histories and sponsoring community educational events to test the use of collaborative spaces where the team can analyze feasibility, identify needs, and begin to develop working plans for the establishment of an archive that includes the documents, photographs, and social media content that these organizations produce. Recording oral histories of leaders and organizers of farmworker associations themselves will offer the team excellent exploratory information that will contribute to identifying solutions for safety and sensitivity of these knowledgeable narrators.

The team will hire graduate students to coordinate two community events held in the location of each farmworker organization. At each event, the team will capture 30 oral histories for uploading to UF's and UM's digital collections. The second community event will share interviews and results of the oral histories and obtain feedback, and approval from narrators. The team will utilize surveys to be completed in writing or through interviews as needed at both events for assessing the rapport created with the narrators as well as identifying experiences of stress or mistrust.

The team will meet with national and local advisors two times via zoom and once in person. The first advisors' meeting will take place before the first community event to determine possible issues and plan alternative strategies to prevent them. The second meeting will take place after the oral histories event during which the team and the advisors will analyze the data from surveys, oral histories, and experiential results with the purpose of identifying the needs of partners. Based on this information, the team will design tools such as training modules, best practices, or guides to be shared at the final community event. The team will work with community organizers to further refine these tools.

Finally, the team will organize a symposium with national advisors and local advisor partners to produce a plan for working with these community groups in the organization and the creation of points of access to their archives. We will explore the ways in which academic institutions and communities can co-develop sustainable methods to document and preserve marginalized communities' legacy, such as digitizing the community's documents, providing access to that part of the collection that is safe to share and developing strategies to preserve but restrict the content that could endanger community members. This last meeting in addition to the data analysis will contribute to the design of programs and tools geared toward the development of sustainable archives, where communities document themselves.

Diversity Plan: The composition of the partners, advisors, and other stakeholders ensures that the planning process includes diverse perspectives and addresses the needs of communities with diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, geographic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Most U.S. farmworkers are from Mexico and Latin America or from Haiti and other Caribbean islands, and these communities predominantly speak Spanish or Haitian Creole. The project will address language as a facet of equity, community identity, and civic engagement. To ensure inclusive and broad participation, the budget requests funding for travel and honoraria for participants who might otherwise lack resources.

Project Results: Deliverables include completion of two events (30 oral histories and community participant surveys) and one symposium with national and local advisors. The most important deliverables will be the external assessor's report reviewing project outcomes, deliverables, and a written plan which will include archival training modules, a best practices guide, and survey data analysis. The plan will support subsequent an IMLS implementation proposal. UF and UM will disseminate the accessible deliverables nationally through press releases, publications, social media, and presentations for the Society of American Archivists, Latin American Studies Association, and Center for Research Libraries.

Budget Summary: UF requests \$149,522 as follows: \$58,562 salary/fringe for one OPS coordinator and two student assistants (\$58,562). Other expenses include stipends of \$1,000/person for four external partner advisors (\$4,000), an external assessor stipend (\$10,000); \$1,500/person stipends for six national advisors (\$9,000). Florida travel costs to two events include \$1,200/person for nine project personnel (\$21,600); \$1,000/person for six national advisors for travel to UF symposium (\$6,000), and \$400/person for four regional advisors for travel to UF symposium (\$1,600). Rental supplies and other expenses for two events are estimated at \$2,000. Requested support includes IDC at a 32.6% rate, totals \$36,760. Contributed cost share includes effort by UF Special Collections and Area Studies curators: the PI, Margarita Vargas-Betancourt; co-PI John Nemmers; and co-PI James Cusick totals \$11,817.