Guidelines for the Authors of Letters of Support for CLIR Grant Applications

Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives and *Recordings at Risk*

Good letters from outside experts are essential components of any application for *Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives* or *Recordings at Risk.* Letters of support must come from individuals knowledgeable about the source materials nominated for digitization but may <u>not</u> come from those who are directly affiliated with a proposed project. Authors are typically professionals who will use the digitized material in research, teaching, or the creation of other new work.

For *Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives*, applicants who are invited to submit final proposals are required to include three letters of support. For *Recordings at Risk*, all applicants are required to submit at least one, and at most three, letters of support.

Applicants may share the following tips with letter authors:

- *Format*: If feasible, prepare your letter on institutional letterhead and save it in PDF format. Insert an electronic copy of your signature above your name and title at the end. CLIR does not have set requirements for font type or size, so long as the letters are easily legible.

- *Length*: Good letters are usually a minimum of one full page and a maximum of three pages.

- *Personal information*: Be sure to include personal details (such as your name, title, and, if it's not on letterhead, your affiliation) somewhere in the document, to ensure our reviewers have that important information.

- *Address*: You may address your letter to "Members of the Review Committee" or something similar.

- *Content*: Your letter will be most helpful to the applicant and our reviewers if it answers at least some of the following questions:

  1. How are you familiar with the applicant institution(s) and the collections they have nominated for digitization?

  2. Once the collections have been made available in digital form, in what ways will you or others be able to use them for research, teaching, learning, or other journalistic or creative work?

  3. How will access to the collections expand or change public understanding about the individuals, organizations, events, or other phenomena represented by the collections, and why would that expansion or change be important?

  4. Are there other ways the project will positively impact local, national, or international communities of interest?

  5. If you're familiar with the unique qualifications of the applicants to implement their project or technical plans in the proposal, why are you confident they will complete the project successfully and on time?

  6. If you're familiar with the unique qualifications of the applicants to engage scholars, students, and members of the public in conversations about their collections, why are you confident they will promote their newly available collections in meaningful ways?

  7. Why is this project uniquely suited to CLIR's national funding program?

  8. Why do you feel that reviewers should make this project a priority for funding?