Funding the Digitization of Primary Source Materials

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NYBG Source Materials Digitization

Motivations

- Intrinsic interest of the material
- Increase efficiency of the specimen digitization process
- Add value to the collections
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Project Development Strategies

- Digitization is stand alone project, justified on intrinsic interest of the source materials alone

- Digitization is part of a larger project in which source material enhances value of one or multiple collections

- Digitization of source material enhances multiple collections, has aesthetic and content appeal, and can be part of an environmental educational initiative for an under-served community
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Government Funders- National Science Foundation

• Directorate for Biological Sciences
  – Division of Biological Infrastructure (DBI)
    • Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU), Collections in Support of Biological Research (CSBR)
  – Division of Environmental Biology (DEB)
    • Systematics and Biodiversity Science Cluster
    • Genealogy of Life

• Emerging Frontiers
  – Advancing Digitization of Biodiversity Collections
  – Dimensions of Biodiversity
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Institute of Museum and Library Services

- Museums for America
- National Leadership Grants for Libraries, Museums
- Museum Grants for African American History and Culture
- Native American/Hawaiian Museum Services
- Sparks! Ignition Grants for Library, Museums
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CLIR

Funding Sources

Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives

About the Program

The application period for the 2014 cycle is now open. Applications are due by 5:00 pm Eastern time on March 21, 2014. For more information, including application guidelines and the link to the online application system, please visit the For Applicants page.

An online Q&A session for applicants will be held on Wednesday, March 12, at 2PM Eastern time.

Libraries, archives, and cultural institutions hold millions of items that have never been adequately described. This represents a staggering volume of items of potentially substantive intellectual value that are unknown and inaccessible to scholars. This program seeks to address this problem by awarding grants for supporting innovative, efficient description of large volumes of material of high value to scholars.

The Council on Library and Information Resources administers this national effort with the generous support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Since the program began in 2008, 109 grants totaling over $23.5M have been made to a variety of

Amistad Research Center
Increasing Access to Africana Collections

This three-year project focuses on two organizational collections devoted to the decolonization of Africa. The American Committee on Africa (1953–2001) and The Africa Fund (1968–2001) worked to educate the American public and American policymakers on the legitimacy of African liberation movements and to provide assistance to liberation movements and the victims of colonial oppression in Africa.

More funded projects
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National Endowment for the Arts
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State Agencies
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Non-Governmental Sources

Foundations

Corporations

Individuals

Cautions:

• Talk with your institutional development office before contacting

• Develop a short, non-technical proposal and/or demonstration

• Be willing to take the time to develop a relationship
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Foundations

Mellon Foundation
*No longer funding Natural History projects*

National/International Biodiversity Foundations, e.g.
- Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
- Blue Moon Foundation
- JRS Foundation
*Largely focused on conservation/sustainability/capacity building*

Local Foundations that support Science, e.g.
- Arcus Foundation (Michigan)
- Bechtel Foundation (SF Bay Area)
- Bellwether Foundation (St. Louis)
- 3M Foundation (New Mexico)
- Lyndhurst Foundation (Chattanooga)

More Information:
Foundation Directory online: [fconline.foundationcenter.org](http://fconline.foundationcenter.org)
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Corporations and Philanthropists

• Often difficult to get a foot in the door

• Relatively easy to get the money, once you get their attention – no proposal, or only a cursory one.

• May want their logo or slogan plastered on everything

• Individual donors require a lot of care and feeding
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Other Ideas

- Alumni
- Descendants of important scientists, curators, collectors
- Licensing of images for products
- Kickstarter, GoFundMe
Plan B—If None of These Ideas Work

• Re-direct existing funds, at least enough to do a prototype; Use prototyping results to build or strengthen collaboration

• Piggyback on another project?

• Use volunteers, building supervision into workload of existing employees

Crowdsourcing, “blitzes,” corporate volunteer programs
Getting to Yes

• Make a compelling case for the need for digitization
• Design the project to be scalable to maximize the funding possibilities
• Look for linkages that make the project timely
• Be aware of data and procedural standards
• Educational component has to be meaningful and practical
Looking Forward

– Include an explicit educational or empowering component in source materials digitization projects; consider an exhibition component to all project

– Explore collaborative projects, especially ones that help address sustainability issues

– Focus more on born digital source material