



# Discovery and Access to Congressional Records Collections

## FY 2025 Grant Announcement (Initial)

Through the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), the National Archives support projects that promote access to America's historical records to encourage understanding of our democracy, history, and culture.

The following grant application information is for **Discovery and Access to Congressional Records Collections**

Funding Opportunity Number: CONGRESSIONAL-202411

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 89.003

- Draft Deadline: **August 15, 2024**
- Final Deadline: **November 7, 2024**

NHPRC support begins no earlier than July 1, 2025.

### Agency Contact

Before beginning the process, applicants should contact NHPRC Deputy Executive Director Darrell Meadows (darrell.meadows@nara.gov) who may:

- Advise the applicant about the review process;
- Answer questions about what activities are eligible for support;
- Read and comment on a preliminary draft.

## Grant Program Description

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The National Historical Publications and Records Commission seeks applications involving collaborative teams of archivists and other practitioners to develop and promote models for addressing key challenges in the processing, long-term preservation, discovery, access, and research use of Congressional Records collections. In order to stimulate new models and long-

term solutions that involve a variety of stakeholders, shared responsibility and resources, and serve or address long-term needs of the broader field, we especially encourage applications involving three or more repositories, research centers, and/or other archival entities holding Congressional Records collections who are actively working to seed field-wide improvements.

Competitive proposals will focus on one or more of the following areas:

### **State of the Field and Policy Studies**

- To develop and disseminate best practices and policy objectives centered on electronic records, hybrid (mixed analog and born-digital) collections, and/or datasets derived from Congressional Records collections.

### **Education and Training**

- To provide education and training for archivists and other stakeholders on best practices, or to better understand existing processes and their purposes, and/or to discuss the historical significance and potential of Congressional Records collections for research, study, and teaching.
- To provide education and training for archivists on current electronic records systems and tools, and best practices for processing, preserving, arranging, and describing these and other born-digital Congressional records.

### **Processing and Digitization Grants**

(may include funds for essential preservation needs, such as shelving, archival furniture, equipment, and/or rehousing supplies)

- for Congressional Records Collections at underserved and under-resourced institutions
- for Congressional Records Collections of Members from underrepresented communities or groups

### **Collaborative Initiatives for Discovery, Access, and Research Use**

- To develop or expand existing model collaborative projects or consortia that support enhanced discovery, online access to, and expanded research use of Congressional Records collections housed at geographically-dispersed institutions, archives, and repositories. This could also include planning and related activities resulting in shared, long-term digital storage arrangements.

### **Hybrid Congressional Records Collections**

- Model projects that address challenges and develop replicable best practices for the preservation, management, sustainability, discovery, and responsible access to hybrid Congressional Records collections, including analog and born-digital records, and other complex digital objects.
- Model projects for sustainable, long-term preservation, discovery, access to datasets derived from Congressional Records collections.

\*\* If you have ideas for a possible application – whether involving one of the above suggested areas of focus, or another idea that advances the field of Congressional Records collections – we strongly encourage you to get in touch to discuss well before making your application. All applicants are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to submit draft materials for additional comment and feedback. (Drafts are due no later than August 15, 2024.)

## Award Information

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Discovery and Access to Congressional Records Collections grants are for up to three years and may range from \$100,000 to \$350,000. The NHPRC expects to make up to seven grants in this category for up to \$1,000,000.

Project funding begins no earlier than **July 1, 2025**.

The Commission requires that grant recipients acknowledge NHPRC grant assistance in all publications and other products that result from its support.

### Eligibility

Eligible applicants:

- US nonprofit organizations or institutions
- Colleges, universities, and other academic institutions
- State or local government agencies
- Federally-recognized or state-recognized American Indian tribes or Alaska Native entities.

**\*\* Eligible applicants may NOT "undertake an archival project centered on the papers of an appointed or elected public official who remains in major office, or is politically active, or the majority of whose papers have not yet been accessioned in a repository."**

For a comprehensive list of the Commission's limitations on funding, please see "What we do and do not fund." Applications that consist entirely of ineligible activities will not be considered.

In order to ensure eligibility, applicants should first review the rules and regulations governing NHPRC grants under the Administering an NHPRC Grant section.

### Cost Sharing

The total costs of a project are shared between the NHPRC and the applicant organization.

Cost sharing is required. The applicant's financial contribution may include both direct and indirect expenses, in-kind contributions, non-Federal third-party contributions, and any income earned directly by the project. Indirect costs must be listed under the applicant's cost sharing contribution. NHPRC grant recipients are not permitted to use grant funds for indirect costs (as indicated in 2 CFR 2600.101). Indirect costs must be listed under the applicant's cost sharing contribution.

The Commission provides no more than 75 per cent of total project costs in the Archival Projects category. For example, a grant funds request of \$150,000 will require \$50,000 from the applicant institution, for a total project cost of \$200,000.

## Other Requirements

Applicant organizations must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) prior to submitting an application, maintain SAM registration throughout the application and award process, and include a valid Unique Entity ID in their application. To register or request a Unique Entity ID, go to <https://sam.gov>.

Ensure your SAM.gov and Grants.gov registrations and passwords are current. It may take up to one month to register or reactivate your registration with SAM.gov and Grants.gov. NHPRC will not grant deadline extensions for lack of registration.

## Drafts

*Applicants should submit a draft proposal prior to making a formal application.* Draft materials should include, at minimum, the project narrative and budget, and drafts should be sent directly to NHPRC Deputy Executive Director Darrell Meadows ([darrell.meadows@nara.gov](mailto:darrell.meadows@nara.gov)), who will review and provide comments on your proposal in time for you to make changes to a final application. The deadline for drafts in this program is **August 15, 2024**.

# Application Information

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You must use Grants.gov to submit your Proposal (see the right-hand menu for a direct link to the application for this opportunity). All information necessary to apply is included in this announcement, the Application Instructions, and the forms on Grants.gov. If you need the

information supplied in an alternative format, please call the NHPRC at 202-357-5010.

In the event that Grants.gov is experiencing technical difficulties that prevent submission, applicants must first attempt to resolve the issue with the Grants.gov Contact Center (800-518-4726). If Grants.gov cannot solve the problem, applicants may request an alternative. To make use of the NHPRC backup system, applicants must contact Jeff de la Concepcion (jeff.delaconcepcion@nara.gov) no later than 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the day of the deadline with their valid Grants.gov Contact Center trouble-ticket number. Applications that fail to meet deadlines for reasons other than those noted will not be considered for funding.

## Preparing Your Application

Using the Application Instructions, fill out Standard Form 424 and the NHPRC Budget Form.

You will also prepare a Project Narrative and Supplementary Materials to attach to your Application Package.

## Project Narrative

The Project Narrative is a description of the proposal. It should be no more than 20 double-spaced pages in 12-pt type on 8.5 x 11 inch paper with standard margins and page numbers.

Please organize your narrative in sections:

**Statement of Purpose:** In one or two sentences, please state the project's purpose, the collaborating institutions involved, and the amount you are requesting from NHPRC. For example: The [Institution], working in collaboration with [Institutions/organizations] is seeking a grant of [\$ amount] to [what purposes].

**Overview:** Share your project's overall purpose, the nature of the collaboration, the potential or committed partners for the collaboration, and how it will address and/or provide and promote models for addressing key challenges in the processing, long-term preservation, discovery, access, and research use of Congressional Records collections. What are the specific needs or challenges your collaborative project seeks to address? How will your collaborative determine or select which (and how many) archivists and/or archival institutions your project may be able to serve, given available resources? How will you and your collaborative partners assess and address your own strengths and challenges in the assignment of your respective roles and responsibilities? Applicants should indicate what role they will play in the structure of the collaboration. Additionally:

- *For applications involving state of the field or policy studies*, describe the nature of the issue or policy area, its significance, and why it needs to be addressed at this time; what research methods you will employ; identify key stakeholders and how you will

ensure their involvement in this process; describe your methods and plans for dissemination of findings and other promotional outreach.

- *For applications involving education and training*, describe the curriculum or other training materials to be implemented; plans for promotional outreach; and the process and criteria to be used for participant selection. Include a more detailed description of the curriculum and/or training materials in the Supplemental Materials.
- *For applications involving processing and digitization*, describe the size, format(s), and historical significance of the collection(s) and how broad public access will advance new understandings, research, and teaching in US history, particularly histories involving under-represented communities or groups.

**Plan of Work:** Describe the plan of work for the grant period. Describe in detail the types of activities you intend to engage in and the relationships among them. Outline each stage of the planned work. Types of activities that are typical for these projects may include research (surveys, focus groups, etc), outreach, and collaborating to share best practices, tools, and techniques among member organizations; assess institutional strengths and opportunities; and develop plans and management structures for implementing a collaborative project. Activities described in your plan of work should closely align with the expenditures outlined in your budget.

Your plan of work should demonstrate how the Collaborative will develop and promote models for addressing key challenges in the processing, long-term preservation, discovery, access, and research use of Congressional Records collections.

**Project Products:** Describe the structure and content of any products you plan to produce. These may include documentation; policy papers; curriculum, training, and other educational products; websites, manuals; conference presentations; and articles; and/or brochures and pamphlets. The NHPRC expects that products will be freely and publicly available.

**Staff Qualifications:** For the people or positions outlined in the proposal, provide a narrative explanation of the qualifications of the key staff and other collaborators who will contribute to the success of this project. Demonstrate that the project staff has the skills, background, and experience appropriate to the project. Explain the roles of all staff named in the project budget, both for those already on staff and for those to be hired. Include descriptions of outside project advisors, reviewers, and evaluators. In the supplementary materials, provide a résumé of not more than two pages per person for all staff named in the project budget. For those staff or consultants to be hired for the project, provide position descriptions. List the names, titles, institutions, phone numbers, and email addresses of the Project Director and key personnel. Please ensure that the project director listed on this summary is the same person listed in Section 8 (f), of the SF-424. If your institution requires a different contact person on the SF-424, please explain in one sentence.

**Performance Objectives:** List six to eight measurable objectives which will enable NHPRC staff to assess and measure progress toward project goals through the end of the proposed grant period. In developing your list of objectives, focus on quantifiable results that reflect what you intend to complete by the end of the grant period. For example, how many institutions will form the Collaborative and what specific activities will they be undertaking (and with what frequency)—e.g., how many focus groups will be held and when? How many educational training sessions will take place? How many archivists and/or institutional partners will receive the proposed education and/or training? What measurable improvements are planned for public participation, discovery, or use of historical records? How many archives, research centers, archivists, and/or other stakeholders will be reached with outreach programming? What processes documents and/or tools developed through the project will be available for use by the broader archival and historical publishing communities, and when?

## Supplementary Materials

Prepare up to 20 pages of Supplementary Materials to your Narrative, such as:

- Résumés of named staff members. Please use only institutional addresses and phone numbers. No more than two pages per staff member (required).
- Position descriptions for staff to be hired with grant funds (required, if applicable).
- Detailed work plan charts that supplement the plan of work described in the Narrative.
- Detailed curriculum and/or training and participant selection plans (required for applicants in this category).
- Letters of commitment (required for all collaborative partners). Letters of commitment should outline each collaborative partner's understanding of their intended contributions to and responsibilities for the success of the overall project.

\*\* If any of these materials are available online, please provide the URLs.

## Project Budget

You must submit a budget on the NHPRC Budget Form available on the Application Instructions page. You may include with your application a narrative budget supplement for budget categories that require further detail. Provide specific budget figures, rounding to the nearest dollar.

## Submission Dates and Times

Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult with staff and to submit draft materials for feedback before making their final application, but drafts are not required. Draft materials should be sent by email to NHPRC Deputy Executive Darrell Meadows

(darrell.meadows@nara.gov) and should include a narrative and budget.

**Draft Deadline: August 15, 2024**

**Final Deadline:** Applications must be submitted electronically by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time **November 7, 2024.**

NHPRC support begins no earlier than **July 1, 2025.**

## Application Review

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The NHPRC staff will acknowledge receipt of the application soon after we receive it. The following evaluation criteria and weights will be used by peer reviewers and NHPRC staff:

1. Quality and extent of the potential impact in developing and promoting models that address key challenges in the processing, long-term preservation, discovery, access, and research use of Congressional Records collections. *(30 percent)*
2. Ability to complete the proposed plan, judged by the qualifications of the staff and reasonableness of the work plan and budget. *(30 percent)*
3. Quality and extent of the proposed collaboration, including its ability to enhance, build upon, and include the capacities of all participants, and to further the planning, development, and implementation of the proposed activities. *(25 percent)*
4. Effectiveness of the outreach and dissemination plans for the project's results. *(15 percent)*

### Review Process:

After submitting a proposal, do not discuss the pending application with any Member of the Commission. Commission members must ensure fair and equitable treatment of all applications and do not discuss proposals with individual applicants.

**Peer Reviewers:** We will ask 4-5 external peer reviewers to evaluate the proposal.

**The Commission:** Based on reviews and staff evaluations, Commission members deliberate on proposals and make funding recommendations to the Archivist of the United States who, as Commission Chairman, has final statutory authority and selects award recipients. Throughout this process, all members of the Commission and its staff follow conflict-of-interest rules to assure fair and equal treatment of every application.



# Award Administration Information

## Notification

Grants are contingent upon available appropriated funds. In some cases, the Commission will adjust grant amounts depending upon the number of recommended proposals and total budget. The Commission may recommend that the Archivist approve the proposal and extend an offer of a grant with applicable terms and conditions, or it may recommend rejection of the proposal.

Commission staff will notify applicants of the Archivist's decision within two weeks following the meeting and will provide anonymous copies of reviewer comments to all applicants.

Successful applicants will receive an informal offer of award and be required to verify their acceptance of general terms and conditions and complete a statement on their Financial Capability and Accounting Systems.

Once these are received, reviewed and accepted, the NHPRC will issue an official award notice.

## Administrative Requirements

In order to ensure that you can manage a grant, applicants should review the Federal Reporting grant administration rules and regulations governing grants from the NHPRC listed in the Administering an NHPRC Grant section.

## Reporting

Award recipients will report on their performance in narrative reports every six months and submit financial reports once a year.

**The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration**

1-86-NARA-NARA or 1-866-272-6272