



Museum Grants for African American History and Culture

Sample Application MH-253357-OMS-23

Elizabeth City State University (G.R. Little Library)

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$75,639
Amount of cost share:	\$0

The G.R. Little Library at Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) will stabilize storage environments and improve storage conditions in the University Archives & Special Collections to minimize damage from unsuitable temperatures, relative humidity, and other conditions that cause deterioration of these fragile collections. The project includes installing four portable air conditioning units to regulate and manage the temperature and humidity. New and replacement shelving along with archival housing materials and improved storage containers will provide better support and protection for the collection. This project will provide a more stable environment for the historical materials and ensure their preservation and usability for the local, regional, and statewide community of educators and researchers.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the current Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

**Environmental Stabilization & Storage/Housing Improvements for Elizabeth City State University (ECSU)
University Archives & Special Collections
(November 2022)**

Proposal Narrative

I. Project Justification

Which program goal and associated objective of Museum Grants for African American History and Culture will your project address?

The program goal and associated objective addressed with the Environmental Stabilization & Storage/Housing Improvements for ECSU's University Archives & Special Collections project is "Goal 1: Build the capacity of African American museums and their ability to serve their communities" and "Objective 1.3: Improve care and conservation of museum collections and expand access to collections and associated data."

What need, problem, or challenge will your project address, and how was it identified?

Elizabeth City State University as a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) is ideally suited to provide its faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community with the rich history and traditions that have built this institution's legacy over the past 131 years. Although the ECSU history dates back to 1891, the University Archives & Special Collections was first begun in 1971. Over the years, the historical materials have been collected but not consistently and not always deliberately. Likewise, the storage and care of these materials, especially in regard to environmental conditions, were not given priority or proper space and funding. The current location for the ECSU University Archives & Special Collections is the G.R. Little Library which was built in 1966, and even though recent renovations addressed the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, the struggle to maintain consistent and ideal temperature and humidity levels in the four separate Archives' rooms throughout the building is ongoing.

Aside from the building's issues, the environmental fluctuations often coincide with the outside weather conditions. Constant monitoring of the temperature and relative humidity of these rooms has identified the connection between the exterior temperature and moisture levels with the interior temperature and humidity levels in the Archives' spaces. For instance, in early September 2022 when the outside temperatures were between 80-90 degrees Fahrenheit and humidity was 60-70%, the Special Collections room of the ECSU Archives' collections registered temperatures up to 76 degrees Fahrenheit and 65% (or more) relative humidity. These measurements have been collected using individual hygrothermograph units in each area. The book collections located in the Special Collections' room date from the mid-1800s and embody a sample of the books used during each period of ECSU's history from the State (Colored) Normal School to the Teachers' College to the State College and finally the State University, in addition to some of the books used in the Rosenwald School located on campus in use from 1921 to 1942. Geographically, the weather conditions of northeastern North Carolina bring challenges with flooding, high winds, and storms caused by tropical storms, hurricanes, and many other coastal calamities. The proposed solution of the Portable Air Conditioner units will help bring the unstable environmental conditions within more acceptable ranges to better protect ECSU's historical treasures.

Another aspect of the collections' conditions to consider is the storage and containers in which the archival materials are housed, such as non-acid free boxes, containers that are water-damaged or lack lids, materials that are rolled or loose without folders, and inadequate shelving which can cause damage to the materials inside.

This grant proposal will specifically address:

1. environmental conditions (temperature and relative humidity)
2. storage conditions (shelving and cabinets)
3. housing conditions (boxes, folders, protection)

The overall goal of this project is to provide a more stable environment for the historical materials to ensure their preservation and longevity, which will increase the visibility and usability of ECSU's University Archives & Special Collections for the local, regional, and statewide community of educators and researchers.

Who is the target group for your project and how have they been involved in the planning?

The target group for this project includes the ECSU faculty, staff, students, alumni, and other researchers. The faculty and staff number around 250 individuals, the student group is approximately 2,500, and the group of alumni and other researchers are made up of thousands of individuals. While they have not all been directly involved in the planning of this project, each request for archival materials or information helps decide how the reference and research needs for the collections are changing and growing, which then informs how to best care for the collections.

Who are the ultimate beneficiaries for this project?

The beneficiaries for this stabilization and rehousing project are the current ECSU faculty, staff, students, alumni, and other researchers, plus all those going forward into the future who will benefit from the preservation of the historical records and artifacts passed down from previous generations. As stated above for the target group(s), the number of individuals affected range from about 250 to many thousands. One of the additional advantages of protecting these materials is that any future digitization efforts will be more successful due to improved conditions now.

II. Project Work Plan

What specific activities will you carry out and in what sequence?

The activities that will be undertaken for this particular project include contacting vendors, planning and confirming purchases, scheduling deliveries for equipment, materials, and supplies. When the purchased items arrive, they will be compared to the orders to ensure we received everything and that it is all undamaged.

Reorganization will be one of the next activities to make best use of the spaces and equipment specifications. With the archival supplies and materials, we will begin rehousing materials that are in substandard storage containers or locations to better preserve and protect them from further damage. While this is started, we will also begin packing the Special Collections into boxes to move out of the current location to make room for disassembling the old, rusty shelving to be replaced with new shelving from Patterson Pope.

In light of the better storage for the collections, an initial survey will be sent out to previous researchers and users of the archival collections on their satisfaction locating items and using the collections overall. In the next phase, we will coordinate removal of old shelving, installation of the new/replacement shelving, and scheduling any other work that needs to be done during this phase. The rehousing and reorganization/shifting of materials in other areas will continue during this time also.

Another activity that will be accomplished will be quarterly reports of our progress and monthly reports of the environmental monitoring of the Archives' rooms. When the new Special Collections' room shelving is in place, the collections can then be unpacked and placed on the new archival-quality shelving that is stable and clean. As the Portable AC units make their changes to the temperature and humidity levels, adjustments in the settings can be made as needed.

Encapsulation supplies will be purchased to better protect the large format archival materials and then can be better stored in the newly purchased (horizontal) flat "map" file cabinet or vertical art storage. At this point, a second satisfaction survey will be distributed to researchers as a mid-point check during this project's progress. In the final phase of this project, reports and environmental monitoring will continue regularly until time to compile the final reports, narratives, assessments, and survey results (including a final survey at the end of the project).

What are the risks to the project and how will you mitigate them?

The primary risks to the project are delays in product deliveries or installations, increases in costs due to a new calendar year, and equipment, materials, or supplies no longer being available to purchase.

Who will plan, implement, and manage your project?

The Project Director is Paige Hendrickson who will be planning, implementing, and managing all aspects of this project. The Library staff/student workers may occasionally support Ms. Hendrickson during this project since she is new to ECSU and may have a few questions. Ms. Hendrickson has experience in Archives management, preservation management and techniques, processing Archives' collections, and executing all other archival work. She earned an ALA-Accredited Master of Science in Information Sciences from The University of Tennessee in Knoxville and has worked in Archives and Libraries for more than twenty years.

What time, financial, personnel, and other resources will you need to carry out the activities?

To purchase the necessary equipment, materials, and supplies, ECSU Archives/G.R. Little Library is requesting \$75,639. The largest portion of this funding will go to procure new and replacement shelving for the Special Collections area (\$35,000) and four Portable AC units (\$21,953) to help better control temperature and humidity levels. Other materials and supplies will be purchased through Gaylord Archival and Demco to better preserve and protect the archival materials to prevent further damage. The travel funding of \$3,000.00 will be used to fund Ms. Hendrickson's travel to IMLS meetings. Any other work or supplies will be funded through other means.

How will you track your progress toward achieving your intended results?

The method for tracking the progress of this project's intended results involves a spreadsheet with tasks, timelines, and percentages completed. Also, the daily environmental monitoring sheets that record temperature and relative humidity in each of the Archives' rooms will inform the overall desired outcome of a stable climate in each area. Furthermore, the

III. Project Results

What are your project's intended results, and how will they address the need, problem, or challenge you have identified?

The intended results of this project is to stabilize the ECSU's University Archives and Special Collections materials to preserve and protect them from ongoing deterioration caused by unsuitable temperature and humidity levels, along with inadequate storage conditions to keep the collections in good condition to be used by researchers.

How will the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the target group change as a result of your project?

The knowledge and behavior of all individuals in the target group will improve as a result of this project due to the improved conditions of the collection materials. The individuals will be able to handle and locate the materials they are seeking to complete their research and tasks more quickly, easily, and safely (for them and the materials). The initial, mid-point, and end surveys will also help gauge their satisfaction at various points of the project's progress.

If applicable, how will the care, condition, management, access to, or use of the museum collections and/or records that are the focus of your project improve?

The physical condition of the collections will improve by becoming less susceptible to the high temperatures and high humidity that causes paper-based collections especially to become more brittle and damaged. Fewer people

can handle the materials and therefore have access to the content of that material. Further digitization efforts will also be possible with a more stable collection that will not be at risk of being damaged from the techniques and handling.

What products will result from your project?

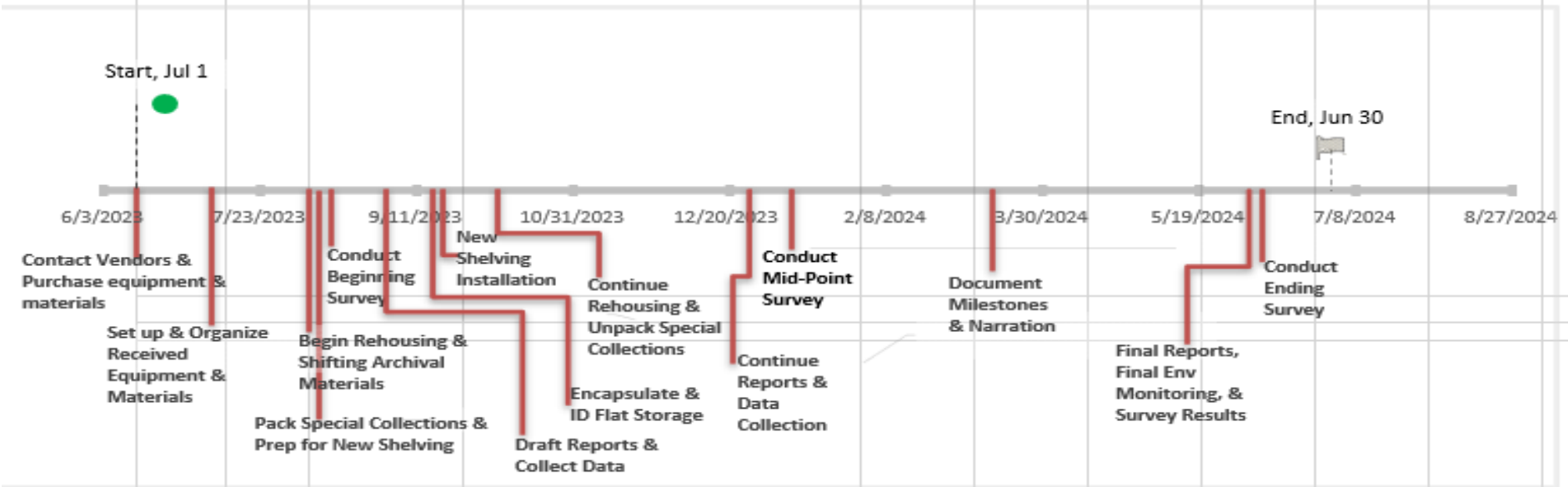
While there will not be tangible products resulting from this project, the researchers and users of the archival collections will find the stability of the historical items much improved and the physical conditions at considerable less risk of deterioration. Also, desired research items will be easier to locate and use due to better organization and storage.

How will you sustain the benefit(s) of your project beyond the conclusion of the period of performance?

Upon completion, the benefits of the project will still be applicable in the overall improved condition of the Archives' collections and improved usage by researchers. We will also continue to regularly monitor the environmental conditions to ensure more constant temperatures and humidity levels. More grant opportunities for preservation assistance will be sought also to continue the progress made with this project.

Schedule of Completion

Environmental Stabilization and Storage/Housing Improvements for ECSU's University Archives & Special Collections



Tasks

Start	End	Duration	Label
7/1/2023	9/1/2023	60	Contact Vendors & Purchase Equipment & Materials
7/15/2023	8/15/2023	30	Set up & Organize Received Equipment & Materials
8/1/2023	10/1/2023	60	Begin Rehousing & Shifting Archival Materials
8/1/2023	9/20/2023	50	Pack Special Collections & Prep for New
8/1/2023	8/15/2023	14	Conduct Beginning Survey
9/15/2023	1/15/2024	120	Encap & ID for Flat File Storage
9/15/2023	9/22/2023	7	New Shelving Installation
10/1/2023	2/1/2024	120	Continue Rehousing & Shifting & Unpack Special Collections
9/1/2023	4/1/2024	300	Draft Reports & Collect Environmental Data (Adjustments)
1/15/2024	1/30/2024	14	Conduct Mid-Point Survey
12/22/2023	1/30/2024	35	Continue Drafting Reports & Collecting Data
3/15/2024	5/15/2024	60	Document Milestones & Narration of
6/1/2024	6/15/2024	14	Conduct Ending Survey
6/1/2024	6/28/2024	28	Final Reports, Final Environmental Monitoring, & Final Survey Results

Milestones

Date	Label
7/1/2023	Start, Jul 1
6/30/2024	End, Jun 30