



Museums for America

Sample Application MA-249871-OMS-21
Project Category: Collections Stewardship

Barnes Foundation

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$200,000
Amount of cost share:	\$704,494

The project description can be viewed in the IMLS Awarded Grants Search:
<https://www.ims.gov/grants/awarded/ma-249871-oms-21>

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.



THE BARNES FOUNDATION

Project Justification

Dear Dr. Barnes: Digitizing, Interpreting, and Disseminating the Albert C. Barnes Correspondence will digitize a key segment of the Barnes Foundation’s archival records to preserve and enable public access to significant primary source material. The Albert C. Barnes Correspondence documents the creation of a world-renowned art collection and a progressive educational program that led to the establishment of the Barnes Foundation in Merion, Pennsylvania in 1922. Spanning almost 50 years (1902-1951), the Correspondence is vital to the history of art and to histories of museums and collecting, as it contains copious exchanges with prominent artists, dealers and critics. The value of this archival collection extends well beyond these disciplines, however. Dr. Barnes’s Correspondence is filled with lively exchanges with some of the leading philosophers and thinkers of the early 20th century—including Alain Locke, John Dewey, and Leo Stein—as they debated the relationship between art, education and democracy. The material therefore encompasses a major chapter in American intellectual and cultural history. This project aims to make this important resource available all over the world, for scholars and general public alike, by presenting the entire Correspondence on the Barnes website in a thoughtful and easily navigable way; moreover, with the newly digitized materials stored in the Foundation’s newly-created Digital Asset Management System (DAMS), it ensures the long-term preservation of this important content for generations to come.

The proposed project would run for three years. Its scope can be thought of in three major pieces: scanning the entire Albert C. Barnes Correspondence (approximately 375,000 - 400,000 documents); ingesting the digitized assets into the DAMS; and presenting this content on our website in a manner that is both engaging and easy to use. During the first year of the project, the materials will be digitized and the second and third years focus on the creation of portals which provide the public with access to the materials. Many of the proposed project’s activities will be performed concurrently in order to complete the ambitious goals set forth and to best utilize staff time and resources. After the completion of the project, the visibility of the Albert C. Barnes Correspondence on the website will only increase as objects from the art collection continue to be linked with specific documents. The archives department will continue to produce curated online exhibitions annually (examples of which may be found under Project Results).

For researchers with the express purpose of consulting the material, the Correspondence will be presented on the Barnes *Archives* page in two arrangements: chronologically and by major correspondent/theme. For other users browsing, the archival material might be encountered on the *Exhibitions* page, where we will present a series of curated archival shows focusing on different themes. Users exploring the art collection will discover archival material on the individual object pages, where documents pertaining to that particular object will be viewable.

Improving public access to the institution’s archival holdings has been a priority since 2001, when the Barnes launched a major initiative funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation called The Collections Assessment Project (CAP). Focused on both the art and archival collections, CAP enabled the first scholarly examination of the Barnes’s art collection and marked the first time that the archival holdings were given serious attention by professional archivists. Prior to 2001, the Barnes’s archival collections were scarcely used. The material was badly organized and lacked proper climate-controlled storage (Index Fig. 1). Moreover, none of it was catalogued, making it impossible for scholars to consult the material in an efficient way—a problem that sometimes resulted in the circulation of inaccurate information about the institution and its founder.

After identifying the Albert C. Barnes Correspondence as its top priority, the newly-established archives department processed and catalogued that entire corpus of material—a six-year project (2002 - 2008) that enabled, for the first time, comprehensive study of Barnes’s letters. This resulted in a flurry of publications, including a series of major catalogues about the art collection—volumes on Renoir, Matisse, American

paintings, and African sculpture—as well as important publications by outside scholars such as Jeremy Braddock’s *Collecting as Modernist Practice* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013).

These activities demonstrate the institution's firm commitment to resuscitating this important piece of American culture. Moreover, this project’s long history—especially the multi-year task of cataloguing the Albert C. Barnes Correspondence—has prepared us well to carry out an endeavor on the scale that we are proposing. In other words, this is not uncharted territory for the Barnes: we have proven our ability to manage ambitious projects in the past, and we have thought through every stage of what this new one will require in terms of planning, resources, and staff, which have been detailed in the work plan. Digitization is the next logical step in preserving this primary source material and increasing public access to it.

Discussions about digitizing this body of material began in 2013 when then President and CEO Derek Gillman and other key staff traveled to the Getty Museum to consult with industry colleagues about how to undertake such a project. Following the Getty visit, and after much internal discussion, Barnes senior staff determined that the Foundation lacked the infrastructure and resources to initiate such a large-scale project at that time. In 2015, under the leadership of Neubauer Family Executive Director and President Thom Collins, the Barnes articulated our ambition to digitize the archives in a five-year strategic plan (2015-2020). Senior staff and key programmatic stakeholders meet monthly with Mr. Collins to measure progress against the stated goals. Next steps for enhancing access to the Barnes’s archival material are currently being articulated for the 2021-2026 strategic plan (see supporting document).

In 2016, Barnes senior leadership determined that the archives and special collections, which were still housed in Merion, should move to the Parkway location so they could be more fully integrated into the life and work of the institution. In the new space, a former library storage room was retrofitted with new shelving for the archival material, which is now housed in the climate-controlled secure storage room (Index Fig. 2). The Albert C. Barnes Correspondence is in very good condition, with the most fragile materials housed in mylar. The mylar will not be removed during the scanning process.

The Albert C. Barnes Correspondence collection holds materials dated between 1902 and 1951, and consists of 126.5 linear feet of letters, cards, notes, telegrams, and enclosures such as mailing lists, invoices, lecture notes, song sheets, postcards, invitations, exhibition catalogues, drawings, pamphlets, legal papers, news clippings, recipes, and photographs. There are approximately 375,000 to 400,000 items in total. The Correspondence is arranged chronologically and alphabetically within each year. As the goal of this project is to make the Albert C. Barnes Correspondence easily accessible to the international scholarly community as well as to the general public, this collection will have four different access points on the Barnes website where users can discover the material. Each access point presents the material in a different way, and each is strategically positioned so that the archival holdings will be encountered both by users who are specifically seeking out the material, and by people who are browsing the website for other reasons. These four access points are: Chronological Presentation on the *Archives* Page; Presentation by Major Correspondents and Themes on the *Archives* Page; Archival Documents Embedded into the *Art Collection* Pages; and Curated Archival Shows on the *Barnes Exhibitions* Page. These access points are described in detail in the supporting documentation.

Within the Barnes Foundation archives, there are currently 19 processed collections with finding aids posted on the website. They include: early education records; financial records; papers relating to the Arboretum and Arboretum School; architectural plans and blueprints; sound recordings; manuscripts of the books written by Dr. Barnes and staff; and a photograph collection. Of all 19 collections, the Albert C. Barnes Correspondence

is by far the most utilized by staff and by external visitors: 82% of researchers who consulted the Barnes archives between 2017 and 2019 requested material from this particular collection. It is for these reasons—the heavy use of the material, and its research value to so many academic disciplines—that we identified the Albert C. Barnes Correspondence as having the most pressing need for digitization.

While this project aims to make the entirety of the Albert C. Barnes Correspondence publicly available on the website, we believe it is also important to foreground certain areas that have the most research value to help users navigate the material. We have therefore identified seven “highest priority” areas that will be highlighted in the website presentation, which are detailed further in the supporting documentation of this application. These subjects include the correspondence of Leo Stein, John Dewey, Henri Matisse, Georgia O’Keeffe, and Paul Guillaume; correspondence on the topic of African American culture and social justice; and exchanges with dealers and galleries.

The primary audience served by this collection will be the international scholarly community in the fields of art history, social history, philosophy, African American studies, museum studies, and the history of medicine. Previous research conducted in the archives reflects its broad interest to scholars in these disciplines. We anticipate a dramatic increase in the use of the Albert C. Barnes Correspondence once it is available and searchable online, which is discussed further within Project Results. Additionally, making this material available for Barnes staff to examine on their own, at any time of day, would exponentially increase the presence of archival material in academia as well as every part of the Barnes’s public offerings. We have already demonstrated our commitment to bringing attention to this incredible resource through the production of several large-scale programs in which the archival holdings figured prominently, and will continue to do so once the material is more easily accessed.

General museum-goers should be another significant audience for this project. Because the unusual display of the Barnes’s collection is so directly tied to our founder’s vision—his presence is felt in every gallery—there is a great deal of public curiosity about Dr. Barnes and his famously-combative personality. Just in the past few decades his life story has inspired several books, a play, and numerous films. We therefore expect a big appetite for diving directly into Barnes’s letters and his exchanges with notable artists and celebrities, particularly when these sources are presented on our website in a curated way. We have already seen strong public interest in this material: the 2012 exhibition *Ensemble*, which told the story of the Barnes through archival documents, drew over 100,000 visitors. The archives department regularly receives inquiries from the public on an array of topics, from the history of the education program to the architectural plans for the original building.

With the digitization of the archival holdings now articulated as a central institutional goal, another crucial step towards realizing this project is the institutional financial investment in solid technological infrastructure. In 2019, Barnes senior leadership put together a core team charged with identifying and implementing a Digital Asset Management System (DAMS) that will enable proper storage and intellectual control over the institution’s images, as well as ensuring the longevity of the digitization project. After a review period, the DAMS core team led by Amanda McKnight, Manager of the Archives, Library, and Special Collections, selected the system NetX, concluding that it most-strongly aligned with the Foundation’s project goals. The NetX system can serve as the repository for the newly-created digital assets and provides a platform (portals) for delivering the materials on the website. Moreover, it is widely used by museums, meaning there is an excellent network of colleagues with knowledge that can easily be consulted. In November 2019, the Barnes Foundation solicited proposals from scanning vendors and selected The Crowley Company. The onboarding

process to determine the configuration of the folder structure, metadata, user groups, permissions, portals, data source sync, administration and training concluded in July 2020.

Project Work Plan

The activities as described in the attached schedule of completion and as summarized below will begin immediately in September 2021 if awarded funding. The Barnes's carefully examined schedule is realistic, achievable and appropriate to the size, scale and scope of the project.

The Barnes Foundation will follow best practices and standards for all aspects of the proposed project, from handling the materials to image capture, and with regard to the metadata and file formats as well as storage and user accessibility. The Barnes has chosen a trusted scanning vendor. The Crowley Company, a respected vendor in digitization services that has been in business for more than 40 years, is an industry leader in the digital and analog film technology industry. The Crowley Company ensures Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative (FADGI) rated images, a critical standard in archival document digitization.

An initial assessment estimates the total number of scans will be between 375,000-400,000 individual digital images. Crowley's method of scanning is non-destructive via an overhead book scanner. All scanning will be done at 300dpi as uncompressed TIFF with a slight border around the edge to ensure no data is cut off. Digital assets will be named according to the Object Number followed by an underscore and numbered sequentially. Digital assets will be loaded to an external hard drive and sent to The Crowley Company. The quality control process will validate data integrity by running an automated script that ensures TIFF tags, DPI, and that the digital file names are formatted correctly. The hard drive will then be given to the Barnes for review and approval. Each item will be scanned as a TIFF, which will serve as the master file, but the content will be delivered to the public at the folder level by creating a derivative PDF of all the TIFFs in a given file. A PDF will reinforce the context of a dialogue conversation more than simply displaying the materials at an item level. The derivative PDFs will be subject to quality control checks. As described under Project Justification, the DAMS (created with NetX) will serve as the repository for the newly-created digital assets and provides a platform (portals) for delivering the materials on the website.

The Albert C. Barnes Correspondence is processed and fully cataloged in the collection management system The Museum System (TMS), with a publicly accessible finding aid on the Foundation's website. The Correspondence is arranged by year and within each year by correspondent alphabetically. It contains not only letters, invoices, telegrams, and other materials received by Dr. Barnes but carbon copies of his letters. This forms a wonderful dialogue for the reader. The Correspondence is mostly letter and legal-sized paper in good condition, with mimeograph/carbon copies on onion skin paper. The records are cataloged utilizing the controlled vocabularies, the Getty's Union List of Artists Names, and Library of Congress subject headings.

The Barnes Foundation's archives have been cataloging into TMS since 2003. Internally, records for the Correspondence can be accessed by qualified staff in TMS. These records contain the descriptive metadata which will be paired with the images in the DAMS and displayed with the PDF when it is opened in a portal. The metadata for each archival file will be pushed from TMS to the DAMS through a data source sync. The DAMS is a key part of managing these assets and ensuring their long-term preservation. Upon ingestion and following the creation of derivatives, quality control checks will be conducted and over time holdings maintenance will be performed. By periodically running checks, we will be able to identify any corrupted files.

In September 2021, the Barnes Foundation will open the search for a Project Assistant and formally enter into contract with The Crowley Company. The Project Director will convene the first meeting of a working group to discuss copyright issues; the group will meet regularly throughout the grant period and includes the Barnes General Counsel and the Deputy Director for Research, Interpretation and Education. From September to November, Barnes archives staff will prepare materials for scanning. Scanning will begin in November 2021. The Crowley Company estimates that it will take seven to eight months to scan the entire collection. In March 2022, the Project Director, working with IT, will set up the NetX portals and configure them to display the Correspondence and the curated archival exhibitions on the website. (This involves creating the portals and inputting the information about permissions, folder structure, metadata displayed, contact information, images, informative text, external links, branding, watermarks, separate pages, download capabilities, and the menu.) Ingestion of the scanned material (TIFFs) into the DAMS begins as soon as the scanning is complete, in August 2022, with quality checks conducted regularly by the Project Assistant and other archives staff. Derivative PDFs will be created from the TIFFs throughout the ingestion period.

At the beginning of year 2, with ingestion into the DAMS still ongoing, the Project Manager will convene a second working group comprised of curatorial, education and public programs staff to discuss portal display and user interface. This group will also develop strategies for integrating the newly available materials into public programs and educational activities. In October 2022, Barnes archives staff in collaboration with the Deputy Director for Research, Interpretation, and Education will prepare the John Dewey and Leo Stein material for presentation on the Barnes website with the goal of having it live by January 2023. For the next 18 months, into year 3, Barnes staff will continue working in batches, publishing two high priority correspondents (or themes) at a time, until all seven high priority areas are available on the website in May 2024.

Work on the curated archival exhibitions begins in year 2, with the first ready for release in July 2023. These are cross-departmental collaborations involving staff from archives, curatorial, research, education, and editorial. The project of linking specific artworks to the relevant archival material (with the goal of having archival documents viewable from the art collection pages) also begins in year 2 and extends through the remainder of the grant period. The work is broken into 4 chunks so that content can be released as we go rather than in bulk at the project's completion.

In year 3, the final project of displaying all the Albert C. Barnes Correspondence will be completed in the NetX portal. As this is a much larger set of assets, we will benefit from the experience and knowledge gained from working on the prioritized materials projects first and implementing anything we have learned during that process. The staff will track the progress against the work plan for the duration of the project, with quality control checks built into multiple steps of the proposed project. Over time, holdings maintenance will be performed, and evaluation of the portals and a user survey will occur after launch of the project. The Barnes plans to offer four different access points for exploring the Correspondence: channels strategically positioned on the Barnes website so that the material is discoverable both by users who are seeking it out and by users who were not aware it existed. Access points are described more fully in the supporting documentation.

While the Barnes Foundation has ownership of the correspondence written by its founder, so there are no rights issues associated with materials authored by him, the areas of potential risk with the proposed project are related to the materials not authored by Dr. Barnes. Correspondence is regarded as unpublished work, and as such, we will endeavor to make non-Albert Barnes-authored material available under fair use, as in most cases it has been more than 70 years since the correspondents' deaths. A committee that includes our General Counsel and our Deputy Director for Research, Interpretation, & Education will meet to discuss those cases where there may be

image rights conflicts associated with the author and to explore whether there will be any issues publishing such material online. To mitigate the risks associated with copyright issues, the committee will also draft a takedown policy should the Barnes Foundation be contacted by copyright owners of particular materials. Another major task for this group will be developing a statement about politically-incorrect language used in some of the correspondence, as well as a plan for how this material should be contextualized for users.

There are highly experienced technical and content staff overseeing all areas of project, as illustrated in the resumes included with this application. Amanda McKnight will serve as Project Director and will oversee progress on all fronts, ensuring that deadlines are adhered to and goals are reached. Ms. McKnight will oversee the ingestion of the materials into the DAMS, create and configure the portal or access, and oversee the Project Assistant, who be trained in conducting quality control, creating derivatives, linking, and preparation measures for making the materials web-ready. Bertha Adams, Associate Archivist, will prepare the materials for scanning, assist in preparing derivatives for the web, conduct quality control checks after receiving the external hard drives from The Crowley Company, and review materials once they are ingested into the DAMS.

Dr. Martha Lucy, Deputy Director for Research, Interpretation, & Education, will lead the effort to integrate archival material more fully into our educational offerings, including publications about the art collection (both online and in print), adult classes, gallery talks, and in K-12 programs. Dr. Lucy will write didactics for the archival exhibitions in collaboration with the Barnes's archives team, and Kelly Borgeson, our Lead Editor, will review all text. Kathleen Greene, Curator of Public Programs, will collaborate with staff to design programs that bring forth some of the themes in the Correspondence for lively public discussion. Dr. Nancy Ireson, Deputy Director for Collections and Exhibitions & Gund Family Chief Curator, and Dr. Cindy Kang, Associate Curator, plan to integrate original archival material into upcoming exhibitions. Sara Geelan, Deputy Director, General Counsel and Assistant Secretary, will oversee copyright issues. Steven Brady, Chief Technology Officer, will be consulted regarding the DAMS and TMS data source sync and any issues that are encountered when the digital assets are ingested into the DAMS. The Web Developer will be assisting with display of the archival materials alongside the artwork in the collection search. Robin Craren, Collections Research Coordinator, will assist in linking the archival materials to the appropriate works of art.

The work plan illustrated in the schedule of completion positions milestones as overlapping activities to ensure momentum continues and content is quickly disseminated, and includes meetings of the committee to discuss copyright and other potential issues. The total cost of this project for personnel, equipment, other direct and indirect costs are projected at \$904,494 (over 3 years), of which we are respectfully requesting \$200,000 from IMLS. This is realistic and appropriate based on the scale of the project to digitize the Albert C. Barnes Correspondence, to preserve and make more accessible this important historical resource.

Project Results

We anticipate a dramatic increase in the use of the Albert C. Barnes Correspondence once it is available and searchable online. Currently, the primary way of viewing the material is in person by appointment. Although the archives department makes every effort to assist scholars who are unable to travel to Philadelphia, there is a limit to the amount of material staff can provide through piecemeal scanning of documents. Moreover, sending requested documents via email requires the researcher to know exactly what they want – the current system does not allow for the browsing that could occur, and the research topics that might emerge, if the collection were digitally available in its entirety.

Improved access to this material would greatly benefit Barnes staff as well, allowing educators, curators, and program designers to integrate our institution's history more fully into our public offerings and exhibitions, extending the impact of this digitization project beyond the website. While many Barnes staff members consult the archives regularly – especially our team of writers producing interpretive content about the art collection – the archival materials remain largely under-utilized due to the current need to schedule appointments. We have already demonstrated our commitment to bringing attention to this incredible resource: the Barnes has produced several large-scale programs in which the archival holdings figured prominently, such as the 2015 exhibition *The Order of Things*, which featured an art installation by Fred Wilson inspired by Barnes's correspondence.

At the completion of this project, when the Albert C. Barnes Correspondence is fully accessible on the website, the Barnes will launch a full year of programming that further highlights this important archival collection. We will present a lecture series featuring authors whose publications came out of research conducted in the archives, including that of Alison Boyd, Jeremy Braddock and Kazuyo Nakamura. We will also convene panel discussions and lecture activities, addressing topics such as education, democracy, and museums in early 20th-century America. The Barnes will publicize this digitization project through press outreach, e-blasts to universities, on listservs and social media, through our College and University Advisory Committee, and via features about the archives in the *Barnes Monthly* e-newsletter. An announcement regarding the digitization project will be sent to professional archival and library organizations, and user surveys will be implemented.

The Barnes also anticipates future online archival exhibitions – topics already planned include *Before the Barnes Foundation (1902 – 1922)*, presenting some of the oldest material in the collection to tell the story of Barnes's life up to the chartering of the Foundation; *World War II*, exploring Barnes's correspondence between 1939 and 1945; and *Fidèle*, chronicling the amusing story of Barnes's dog Fidèle, who "authored" many of the rejection letters Barnes sent to celebrities wanting access to his collection.

The Barnes Foundation is committed to the sustainability of its newly digitized materials. The digitized assets will be stored in the DAMS. NetX maintains backups of the metadata and assets on their systems, and the Foundation will also maintain a secondary backup of digital assets in an additional AWS S3 repository, located in a separate geographic region with both Versioning and MFA Delete enabled, providing for a highly stable, immediately available, and fault-tolerant backup. Along with having the materials ingested and stored in the DAMS, the Foundation will also retain the external hard drives with the master TIFFs. Software products and research data are not within the scope of this digitization project, but the Barnes has committed to the long-term annual cost of the DAMS as critical to our information infrastructure and as a web property that will not be abdicated. The Foundation is aware of the future maintenance and upgrades that this may require and will continue to perform these tasks as needed. As with nearly all of the Barnes Foundation's digital projects, the source code for the web properties will be posted for the public and maintained on GitHub [<https://github.com/BarnesFoundation/dams-sync>].

In closing, the Barnes Foundation is grateful to the Institute for Museum and Library Services and its Museums for America program for considering a grant to support this initiative that is a central ambition in the Barnes's strategic plan. Bringing to light this vast corpus of primary source documents – and ensuring their accessibility and preservation for future generations – will not only paint a fuller picture of early 20th-century American culture, but will enable new scholarship and education across disciplines for years to come.

