

Collective Responsibility:

National Forum on Labor Practices for Grant-Funded Digital Positions

A team led by the Penn State University Libraries, in collaboration with the University of Missouri—Kansas City University Libraries, requests \$99,429 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) National Forum Grants program to host two meetings exploring labor issues centered on the experiences of grant-funded digital laborers in the libraries, archives, and museums (LAM) community; and subsequently, informing the development of ethical labor practices for grant-funded positions. By engaging representatives and stakeholders from the three primary groups involved—workers, funders, and management (to include administrators)—our team aims to develop a systematic understanding of the labor conditions created by grants and determine actionable outcomes which funders and institutions can adopt toward the development and evaluation of proposed positions.

As the nature and understanding of digital work continues to evolve, there is little to no systematic understanding of these experiences as a collective concern within LAM. This project seeks to create productive understandings, guidelines, and outcomes. In choosing the scope of grant-funded labor, we recognize that contingency and precarity in LAM are a far more extensive problem than positions created by grant funds. Grants provide an opportunity, as they already operate within a framework of assessment guidelines, rules, and regulations which affect both the applicant and the funder. The development of appropriate benchmarks for labor, informed by an understanding of worker experiences, of funder opportunities and barriers, and of the roles of institutions in this process will enable us to learn from those already doing such work, challenge barriers, and create appropriate outcomes, which may vary by institution and funder type.

The project will run from October 1, 2018, to March 30, 2020, hosting two 1.5 day meetings of up to forty participants. The first meeting *Experience* will focus on the development of a systematic understanding of the experiences of grant-funded laborers, preceded by a broad survey and resulting in a white paper. *Practices*, the second meeting, will provide an opportunity for funder and institutional participants to share and reflect on current practices and collaborate with each other and workers on developing actionable outcomes, which may vary by institution and funder type, and publishing more generalized best practices. Funding will primarily cover the costs of the meetings — including travel for worker participants, co-Investigators, travel and stipend for one keynote speaker at each meeting, and on-site or nearby childcare accommodations at each meeting in order to facilitate participation of attendees whose attendance might otherwise be unfeasible.

In this project, we seek to frame contingency in digital libraries, archives, and museums as a collective, not individual, concern. As we collaboratively improve our understanding of this concern, we will have the grounding to develop actionable outcomes, in the form of best practices. Through these, we will identify opportunities to enact change or improve current practices at both funding and LAM institutions. The forum aims to spark a national discourse into broader visions for worker equity and inclusion within this collective framework of concern and to model how such partnerships may respectfully engage all parties involved toward effecting change.

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Statement of National Need

A team led by the Penn State University Libraries, in collaboration with the University of Missouri—Kansas City University Libraries, requests \$99,429 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) National Forum Grants program to host two forum meetings exploring labor issues centered on the experiences of grant-funded digital laborers in the libraries, archives, and museums (LAM) community; and subsequently, informing the development of ethical labor practices for grant-funded positions. By engaging representatives and stakeholders from the three primary groups involved—workers, funders, and management (to include administrators)—our team will develop a systematic understanding of the labor conditions created by grants and collaboratively determine actionable outcomes in the form of suggested attributes which funders and institutions can adopt toward the development and evaluation of proposed positions.

In 2017, the Digital Library Federation Working Group on Labor in Digital Libraries, Archives, and Museums (DLF Labor Working Group) began to draft a set of guidelines for more ethical development of contingent positions. The aim was to influence grant funders and institutional management create reciprocal benefits for contingent employees; and to set norms accordingly. The 2017 project revealed the need to bring stakeholders from LAM communities into a community-wide discussion: workers representing their experiences working together with agency representatives and management, to create guidelines and best practices for grant-funded positions. That effort also revealed broad interest across LAM sectors to address discrepancies and include more ethical practices within contingent grant labor practices. The co-PIs are the leaders of the DLF Labor Working Group’s effort, although these forums will not require involvement in the working group.

This project seeks to address the specific problems of precarity created and reproduced by grant-funded positions,¹ and how those impact the lives and careers of the workers,² particularly workers from marginalized and underrepresented populations.³ This is essential for understanding how the effect of

¹ Davis, Rosemary K. J., Rachel Mattson, Elliot McNally, and Alison Reynolds. “Grant Cycles, Deadlines, and Labor Advocacy: The Changing Work of Project Archivists.” Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference Spring 2016, Pittsburgh, PA, April 2016. <http://hdl.handle.net/1903/18102>; Rodriguez, Sandy, Ruth Kitchin Tillman, and Amy Wickner. “Reproducing Contingency: Grant-Funded Labor in Digital Libraries.” *Libraries in the Context of Capitalism*, New York, NY, February 2018.

² Kerslake, Evelyn, and Anne Goulding. “Current Practice in Training Flexible Information Workers.” *Library Management* 18, no. 3 (1997): 135-47. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1108/01435129710166455>; Falk, Patricia, and Bonna Boettcher. “Grant-Funded Temporary Employees in Libraries.” *Technical Services Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (2001): 35-46; Wilkinson, Zara T. “A Human Resources Dilemma? Emergent Themes in the Experiences of Part-Time Librarians.” *Journal of Library Administration* 55, no. 5 (2015): 343–361. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2015.1047253>; Adena Brons, Chloe Riley, Crystal Yin, & Ean Henninger, “Catalog Cards from the Edge: Precarity in Libraries,” BC Library Conference, Vancouver, BC, May 2018. <https://osf.io/sqvcv/>.

³ Galvan, Angela. 2015. “Soliciting Performance, Hiding Bias: Whiteness and Librarianship.” *In the Library With the Lead Pipe*. <http://inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2015/soliciting-performance-hiding-bias-whiteness-and-librarianship/>; Vinopal,

investments made in national digital library, archival, and museum infrastructures and services.⁴ As the nature and understanding of digital work continues to evolve through the development of such infrastructures as the National Digital Platform, there is little to no systematic understanding of these experiences as a collective concern and its impact within LAM. Although #precarityis⁵ a problem throughout LAM and beyond,⁶ our team has chosen to scope the forum specifically to digital labor in grant-funded contexts. In using the term “digital,” we also recognize the digital intersections of work within LAM communities of practice. We attempt to acknowledge both LAM workers not usually considered to be doing digital work, and also those performing digital work who may not always be included in conceptions of LAM workers. Grant-funded projects often engage the efforts of all of these.

In choosing the scope of grant-funded labor, we recognize that contingency and precarity in LAM are a far more extensive problem than positions created by grant funds. We have chosen grant funded position as a focus to include a wide variety of participating workers and institutions while limiting the scope sufficiently that strategic outcomes may be applied. We intend for the understandings of labor conditions and recommendations from these meetings to inform the broader conversation around labor in LAM and grants, which are often seen as a place of innovation to also lead in this space.⁷ Grants operate within a framework of assessment guidelines, rules, and regulations which affect both the applicant and the funder. Frameworks around labor, or the lack thereof, also affect the workers employed to complete the grant. Just as funders may require that a grant include a preservation plan or prioritize the work of making diverse collections available, they should also aim for appropriate benchmarks in the positions they support. Developing such benchmarks—informed by an understanding of worker experiences, of funder opportunities and barriers, and of the roles of institutions in this process—will enable us to learn from those already doing such work, challenge barriers, and create appropriate outcomes, which may vary by institution and funder type and be subject to local labor regulations.

Jennifer. 2016. “The Quest for Diversity in Library Staffing: From Awareness to Action.” *In the Library With the Lead Pipe*. <http://inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2016/quest-for-diversity/>; Israel, Robin H., & Jodi Reeves Eyre. 2017. *The 2017 WArS/SAA Salary Survey: Initial Results and Analysis*. Society of American Archivists. https://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/WArS_Salary_Survey_Report.pdf.

⁴ Mink, Meridith Beck. *An Assessment of the National Digital Stewardship Residencies, 2013-2016*. Washington, DC: Council on Library and Information Resources, 2016. <https://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub173/>; Cifor, Marika, & Jamie A. Lee. 2017. “Towards an Archival Critique: Opening Possibilities for Addressing Neoliberalism in the Archival Field,” *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 1(1). DOI:10.24242/jclis.v1i1.10.

⁵ Groover, Myron. “On Precarity,” *Bibliocracy* (blog), January 6, 2014, <http://bibliocracy-now.tumblr.com/post/72506786815/on-precarity>. Groover, Myron. “Why Library Precarity is a Problem: A 30-Second Rundown.” *Bibliocracy* (blog), January 4, 2014. <http://bibliocracy-now.tumblr.com/post/72239662059/why-library-precarity-is-a-problem-a-30-second>. Unrau, J Jack. “#precarityis what happens to the best minds of my generation.” *Librarianaut*, January 3, 2014. <https://librarianaut.com/2014/01/03/precarityis-what-happens-to-the-best-minds-of-my-generation/>.

⁶ Tarak, Barkawi. “The Neoliberal Assault on Academia.” *Al Jazeera*, April 25, 2013. www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/04/20134238284530760.html

⁷ Limiting the conversation to adjunctification would exclude non-academic participants. Focusing it on the problem of developing ethical labor practices as state and local cultural heritage funds are slashed would again restrict participation.

In this project, we frame contingency in digital libraries, archives, and museums as a collective, not individual, concern. Such conversations must occur in intentional spaces which recognize the risks that lead workers to self-silence for safety and which engage both funders and institutions in a discourse valuing productive understandings over an assignment of blame for harms which have occurred. From such understandings, we will collaboratively develop actionable outcomes: best practices for grant-funded contingent positions. The forum aims to spark a national discourse into broader visions for worker equity and inclusion within this collective framework of concern, bring awareness of those most affected, and to model how partnerships can respectfully engage all parties involved toward effecting change.

Project Design

Collective Responsibility will be an 18-month project from October 1, 2018, to March 30, 2020, to host two 1.5-day meetings of up to 40 participants. The second meeting will be held preceding or following the annual DLF Forum, providing subsidized participants the opportunity to participate in the Forum at a lower cost and reducing costs for those already attending the DLF Forum. Like the DLF Labor Working Group’s activities to date, the forums will iterate through a process of information gathering through survey and focus group, engaging with critical social theory, into the creation of guidelines and re-evaluation of practices.

Participant roles

Forum participants will represent three key groups: workers, funders, and management. Grant funds will subsidize attendance for 14 worker participants who have recently held or currently hold grant-funded positions. To ensure diverse representation—particularly of those who hold precarious, grant-funded positions—worker participants will be recruited through the applicants’ existing DLF-sponsored Labor Working Group, contact with similar groups including Museum Workers Speak, and an open application process which will be publicized via disciplinary listservs and social media.

The first forum will center the concerns and experiences of workers to identify shared threads and developing a collective understanding of the contingent grant-funded worker experience and how it affects the worker’s life, the success of the project, and the profession. In anticipation of broad interest in the subject and limited opportunity to attend the forums, we will conduct a survey of workers’ experiences on grant-funded projects. We will synthesize survey findings as preparatory material for the first meeting. Meetings will utilize the code of conduct referenced below and sessions will be designed to accommodate the need for current and formerly precarious workers to engage with funders and each other in a space with less risk of repercussion.

Funders’ participation in these forums is critical to produce results effecting real world change. The need to understand how governance and regulations shape what different funders can and cannot build into requirements is a key motivation for holding forums. The first meeting will provide an opportunity for funders to hear and reflect on the shared needs of workers on the projects they fund. At the second

meeting, the funders may share their current practices and aspirations, identifying areas where their standards, guidelines, or other protocols can support the creation of better positions. Recommendations created in the second meeting must reflect the ways governance and flexibility vary across the public and private sectors, and must be informed by funders. By sending representatives to participate, organizations will not commit to implementing the recommendations. However, by the end of the second forum, each organization should have an actionable understanding of how it can improve its practices. Representatives from national funders such as Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), National Historical Publication and Records Commission (NHPRC), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Mellon Foundation, Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR), and the J. Paul Getty Trust will be invited to participate.

The third group to be represented at the forum will be participants involved in management at LAM institutions. As those responsible for writing grants or committing administrative resources to grant-funded projects, these managers, administrators, and other workers will speak to the type of guidance from funding institutions which would assist them in developing equitable positions. The second meeting will also offer library managers and administrators an opportunity to reflect upon institutional constraints and local regulations to consider what actions would advance worker equity. Concerns raised during the DLF Labor Working Group's guidelines project range from the need to understand equity to fear that, without a commitment to equitable positions, a funder may prefer a less equitable but low-cost grant; and uncertainty over how requirements might affect smaller institutions. Participants in the group of managers will be invited from large research libraries, public libraries, small museums, and historical societies to represent a broad range of perspectives in guiding recommendations.

Meeting 1: Experience: What are the lived realities of grant-funded laborers?

As revealed by a 2017 literature review conducted by the DLF Labor Working Group, at present there is no systematic understanding of the lived realities of grant-funded laborers and its impact on the LAM profession. This meeting will provide an opportunity for the participatory development of an improved understanding grounded in data gathered from a broad range of grant-funded workers. In preparation for this meeting, the project team will conduct a survey of attendees and, through LAM community listservs, current and former grant-funded workers to solicit qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data covered will include years spent in grant-funded positions, whether worker left before the conclusion of a project, position FTE, whether the position required moves and provided funding, and whether it included raises and support for professional development. It will also explore differences in impact to workers collecting demographics, particularly of marginalized and underrepresented groups, such as how placement into relative position classification to others in the organization, salary information, and experiences with microaggressions. This survey will undergo Institutional Review Board review at Penn State during the summer of 2018. The co-PIs will develop a report exploring intersections of position type and both quantitative (did you leave before the end of the grant period? If so, how many months before?) and qualitative effects, along with exemplar position descriptions collected from disciplinary listservs, into material which attendees will use to prepare for the meeting.

The meeting, modeled in part on the 2017 NDSR Symposium, will include context for trends in contingency, shared experiences of attendees, perspectives on issues which arise from term positions (such as knowledge management), and opportunities for small group discussion of topics which arise. Session time will also be dedicated to developing collective understanding of these experiences toward a white paper, authored by the project team and engaged participants, reflecting themes which surface during the meeting and inform guidelines for practice.

Meeting 2: Practices: How can funders and LAM partners mitigate harm in necessarily-precarious positions?

Attendees will prepare by reading scholarly and community-driven literature on the structural aspects of labor from the DLF Labor Working Group’s research agenda for valuing labor; labor guidelines, governance, and strategic plans contributed by engaged funders and institutions; and the draft white paper synthesizing understandings from the first meeting. Select participants will present on regulation, mission, and legal frameworks, to focus on or expand from preparatory reading materials. The forum will engage in design thinking and interactive opportunities for organizations to develop strategies for their existing and aspirational goals into broader best practices for the development of grant-funded positions. Actionable and concrete guidelines tailored for each funder and institution types will be direct outcomes.

Project Evaluation

This project supports communities of practice by providing a forum for learning about the lived experiences of working on grant-funded projects, understanding the needs and priorities of funding institutions, and collaboratively developing recommendations for improving the working conditions of those in grant-funded positions. Evaluation methods for the meeting will consist of qualitative surveys through which forum participants evaluate how well each meeting met its individual goals. We will use these evaluations for internal evaluation and development of the final report, rather than publication in their own right. Should either evaluation reveal an oversight in forum design with significant consequences for outputs (white paper or guidelines), we may add context about the oversight and how it was identified to the material output.

We will develop surveys which assess participants’ understandings and growth through the course of the forum. For the first meeting, *Experience*, we will issue a pre-survey which assesses both participants’ understandings of the concerns and confidence in their ability to develop appropriate responses. Following the meeting, a survey will seek how understandings and confidence have improved and ask participants to evaluate:

- A. Our success in ensuring diverse representation from current and recently-contingent workers, particularly from marginalized and underrepresented groups in libraries;
- B. And whether the meeting design and logistics provided sufficient balance for learning through presentations and group discussion.

For the second forum, *Practices*, the survey will focus on evaluating:

- A. How well we balanced funder and institutional aspirations and priorities with centering worker needs;
- B. Whether the recommendations for the guidelines deliverable sufficiently address areas of concern and need identified through both meetings;
- C. And suggestions of communities, institutions, or channels through which these guidelines may be disseminated and promoted.

Communication Strategy

Our communication strategy is designed to inform the audiences identified above of the background, timeline, opportunities to participate, and outcomes of the project. Project updates, notes, outcomes, outputs, meeting agendas, participation information, and other announcements will be published at <https://laborforum.diglib.org>, a Wordpress instance hosted on a subdomain of the Digital Library Federation’s website. Publishing with Wordpress will allow project Co-PIs and Co-Is to easily add updates on project progress. An outline of the project site organization and contents is available in our supporting documents (Supportingdoc3.pdf)

The project team will be responsible for the majority of site content, and at least two project team members will review informational posts as author and editor, or as co-authors. Posts will include tags and categories that speak to their purpose and contents. We will solicit brief posts from forum participants, responding to and reflecting on their experiences. Guest authors will be selected in advance of each forum – based on travel award, invited attendance, or an open call for contributors – or we will reach out at or following an event. Where community members are invited to contribute blog posts, one project member will support as copy editor. Community contributors are welcome to include content notes or warnings as part of their blog posts, and will be explicitly credited with an attribution of their choice. All post authors retain the rights to their words. To avoid the burden of spam moderation and lessen opportunities for harassment, comments on the site will be turned off.

While informational blog posts will appear regularly on the project site, the following announcements will also be shared via the DLF-Announce email list and other outlets specific to audiences of library, archives, and museum workers:

- Closing dates for survey and forum participation and information about additional opportunities to share stories and data;
- Closing dates for survey participation leading into Forum 1;
- Major roll-outs of forum logistics, including ways to follow open portions of events through social media;
- And major grant outputs, including white paper and guidelines.

In order to expand the scope of participation beyond in-person attendance at each forum, the project team will designate a hashtag for communicating about the project and provide online spaces for

community notes at each forum. Additional information about these communication channels is available in our supporting documents (Digitalproduct.pdf).

The co-PIs will also write a summary brief announcing the white papers for submission to major disciplinary publications including C&RL News, Code4Lib listserv, SAA In the Loop, and Future of Museums blog.

Project Resources (personnel, time, budget)

Budget

Our request for \$99,429 includes subsidies for travel for 14 currently and recently contingent worker participants, three co-Investigators, travel and stipend for one keynote speaker at each meeting, and on-site or nearby childcare accommodations at each meeting in order to facilitate participation of attendees whose attendance might otherwise be unfeasible. The majority of the logistical work of event coordination, participant identification, meeting note synthesis, and conference proposal coordination will be done by the Co-Principal Investigators using their 5% allotted time. The remainder of the budget is devoted to the costs of event planning (facilities rental and food) and institutional overhead.

Personnel

The core team of Investigators and advisory board consist of managers, activists, unionized workers, and current and formerly-contingent workers representing complementary labor experiences.

Co-Principal Investigator (5% time, 18 months): Ruth Kitchin Tillman is the founder and a co-facilitator of the Digital Library Federation's Working Group on Labor in Digital Libraries, Archives, and Museums and Cataloging Systems and Linked Data Strategist at the Penn State University Libraries. She has held precarious positions and supported a precarious, academic spouse. Her research and service agendas focus on improving the working experiences of new professionals, from technical onboarding to labor conditions.

Co-Principal Investigator (5% time, 18 months): Sandy Rodriguez, a co-facilitator of the Digital Library Federation's Working Group on Labor in Digital Libraries, Archives, and Museums, is the Head of Digital Archives & Stewardship at the University of Missouri--Kansas City. She has held consecutive grant-funded positions for almost 5 years, as a contingent project manager supervising other contingent workers. Her experiences have led her to speak on the challenges of managing grant-funded projects, particularly focused on labor concerns with position design and the role of identity in these contexts.

Advisory Board

Our core advisory board consists of three co-Investigators: Emily Drabinski, Amy Wickner, and Stacie Williams (see Projectstaff.pdf). These co-Investigators, along with the co-PIs will collaborate on session design, host forum sessions, write for the forum blog, distribute communications, and contribute to white paper and grant best practice outcomes. Along with the core advisory board, we will be supported

by a broader group of advisors with whom we will engage in discussion and feedback to ensure that the forum’s design, in terms of the sessions we hold and the participants we invite, leads to a productive outcome. We intend to engage with all advisors as we set initial context for the grant, midway through designing each meeting, and as we prepare a final report of the grant’s work. We intend their participation as we envision the continuation of work beyond the grant period. This broader group may also be participants in the meetings, however, their participation does not require attending either of the meetings. Members will include representatives from funding organizations; workers from libraries (including public), archives, and museums; and former grant-PIs. The PIs have already begun the process of conversation with prospective advisors, though a list is not yet final.

Diversity Plan

The work of addressing labor conditions must necessarily consider how, in the United States and elsewhere, hiring, salary, promotion, and workplace equity are affected by intersecting inequities including racism, ableism, sexism, and homophobia. Conditions such as the racial wealth gap⁸ erect additional barriers for the entry of workers of color into the profession and intensify the effects of precarious positions (c.f. footnote 3). Workers from marginalized and underrepresented groups who are in grant-funded positions face additional challenges of contingency that include issues of identity and status in the workplace. Therefore, the inclusion of participants from racially and ethnically minoritized backgrounds, disabled participants, LGBTQ and transgender/genderqueer/nonbinary participants, and women must be an intentional aspect of ensuring that conversations and outcomes represent a fuller spectrum of the LAM worker experience.

Our work is informed by demographic inequities as uncovered in the *WARS Salary Survey Initial Results and Analysis*, the Aorta Collective’s *Anti-Oppressive Facilitation for Democratic Process*,⁹ as well as the project team’s experiences as library and archives workers with diverse overlapping identities. In addition to invitations within the DLF Labor Working Group, we plan for our public application process to recruit intentionally from networks already comprised of persons whose voices are underrepresented in decision-making within LAM. These networks include the DLF Fellows, HBCU Library Alliance, Knowledge River, and Museums Speak. Our application will allow prospective participants space in which they may choose to disclose their varying identities.

Inclusion is not the same as equity. Adapting the DLF Code of Conduct, under which the Labor Working Group operates,¹⁰ we intend to create a welcoming space which will support participants’ dignity and respect their privacy by creating safe spaces for constructive conversations. The advisory

⁸ Jones, Janelle. 2017. “The racial wealth gap: How African-Americans have been shortchanged out of the materials to build wealth.” *Working Economics Blog*. February 13, 2017. <https://www.epi.org/blog/the-racial-wealth-gap-how-african-americans-have-been-shortchanged-out-of-the-materials-to-build-wealth/>. Accessed May 21, 2018.

⁹ AORTA Collective. 2017. *Anti-Oppressive Facilitation for Democratic Process*. http://aorta.coop/portfolio_page/anti-oppressive-facilitation/. Accessed May 21, 2018.

¹⁰ Digital Library Federation. 2018. *DLF Code of Conduct*. <https://www.diglib.org/about/code-of-conduct/>. Accessed May 21, 2018.

group which will review our meeting designs and outcomes is also comprised of diverse representatives who bring particular experiences as workers, funders, or administration as well as a wide variety of backgrounds.

National Impact

Collective Responsibility will have two major outcomes designed to empower communities of practice throughout LAM with a fuller understanding of the status quo and recommendations to spark an actionable agenda around changing it to improve both the conditions for employees and support broader growth and development of LAM professions. As previously mentioned, we lack a systematic understanding of the experiences of grant-funded contingent workers. The white paper developed from both the initial survey results and the first forum’s conversations will not only inform the second forum’s work but also serve the broader community in grounding conversations with quantitative and qualitative data. Discussions during the second forum will focus on identifying strategic solutions that could transform the experiences of grant-funded laborers, resulting in guidelines or best practices for individual funders and institutions to adopt. These deliverables will address both a gap in our understanding of the challenges in the working conditions of grant-funded digital laborers and also provide concrete, actionable solutions to address these challenges.

Focusing on grant-funded workers provides a scope of work where change can be measured while also providing a model that can scale. Approaching these labor issues collectively, rather than dismissing these concerns as those of individual outliers, recognizes them as a systemic issue. By identifying primary actors in the system (workers, funders, and management), we provide an opportunity to engage in critical dialogue. We bring these actors to the table in order to interrogate the system of contingent and precarious grant-funded labor: naming the responsibilities and assumptions from which each actor operates; studying how the system’s behavior reflects its purpose; and identifying rules that perpetuate the system. Through this examination, we will identify leverage points, or places of power in which to intervene, for changing system behavior and transforming outcomes for grant-funded laborers.¹¹

While contingency and precarity in LAM is a far more extensive problem than grants alone, the ubiquity of grant-funded work in LAM institutions (academic, public, private) and its easily identifiable structures as described above translate across systems. We intend for findings and recommendations from these meetings not only to inform the broader conversation around labor in LAM, but also to transform practices that contribute to systemic issues. To gauge the success of these forums and their outputs, we have identified the following short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes and measures of success.

Forum participants understand the challenges faced by grant-funded digital LAM workers.

We hope to engage forum participants in productive dialogue that improves their understanding of the challenges faced by digital LAM workers in grant-funded positions; specifically how contingency and

¹¹ Meadows, Donna, *Thinking in Systems: a Primer*. London : Sterling, VA : Earthscan 2009.

precarity impact workers, how the participant may be contributing to these impacts, and how collective action can mitigate them. Evaluative surveys for each forum will include questions designed to measure new understandings and knowledge gained from forum discussions.

Start a national conversation and agenda around contingent and temporary positions in digital LAM.

In addition to the efforts of the DLF Labor Working Group and other groups concerned with labor issues in LAM, we intend for the forums to provide the necessary momentum to both elevate these issues and also engage in more coordinated and organized initiatives to transform our practices. The project team will disseminate outcomes of the forums by presenting the white paper and guidelines at a number of conferences, including Code4Lib, the DLF Forum, Museums and the Web, and the Society of American Archivists' Annual Meeting. An increase in conference presentations centered on labor issues, the development of related initiatives, and the creation of additional guidance would demonstrate success for this outcome.

Change labor practices for grant-funded workers.

Increased understanding of the challenges (Forum 1) and the creation of guidelines to meet those challenges (Forum 2) should spur changes in labor practices, as funding institutions establish documented expectations in the areas of requirements, trainings, recommendations, and reviewer guidance. Grant-seeking LAM institutions will endorse the guidelines and incorporating them into position designs. The project team commits to measuring this outcome by conducting a follow-up survey beyond the grant period.

Create a framework through which institutions may evaluate the holistic effect of contingent positions on employees, institutional outcomes, and the profession as a whole.

We envision a future in which our work establishes infrastructures that recognize the connection between negative effects of contingent positions and institutional outcomes, providing balancing frameworks that minimize creation of such positions for more sustainable futures in digital LAM. This long-term outcome is difficult to measure as it exists on an expanded time horizon; nevertheless, it is a worthy and valuable pursuit.

Project team key:

R&T = Rodriguez & Tillman

All = Rodriguez, Tillman, Drabinski, Wickner, & Williams

Year 1: Oct. 2018 - Sept. 2019

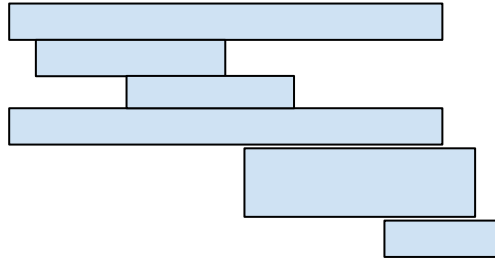
Year 2: Oct. 2019 - Mar. 2020

Activities **Project Staff**

Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar

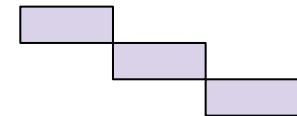
Forum 1 - April 2019

Finalize venue arrangements	R&T
Recruit funded attendees	R&T
Distribute survey	R&T
Finalize keynote and session design	All
Secure travel arrangements for keynoter and funded attendees	R&T
Publicize and host forum	All



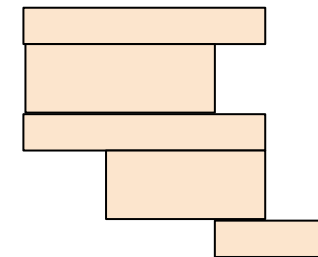
White Paper - August 2019

Compile Forum 1 notes & outline	All
Write white paper	R&T
Review, revise, publish, distribute	All



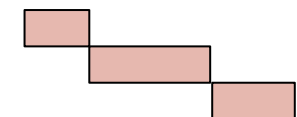
Forum 2 - October 2019

Finalize venue arrangements	R&T
Confirm funded attendees, recruit any replacements	R&T
Finalize keynote and session design	All
Secure travel arrangements for keynoter and funded attendees	R&T
Publicize and host forum	All



Best Practices - February 2020

Compile Forum 2 notes	All
Write best practices	R&T
Review, revise, publish, distribute	All



Final Report - March 2020

Write and submit final report to IMLS	R&T
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Digital Product Form for *Collective Responsibility*

Introduction The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is committed to expanding public access to federally funded digital products (i.e., digital content, resources, assets, software, and datasets). The products you create with IMLS funding require careful stewardship to protect and enhance their value, and they should be freely and readily available for use and reuse by libraries, archives, museums, and the public. However, applying these principles to the development and management of digital products can be challenging. Because technology is dynamic and because we do not want to inhibit innovation, we do not want to prescribe set standards and practices that could become quickly outdated. Instead, we ask that you answer questions that address specific aspects of creating and managing digital products. Like all components of your IMLS application, your answers will be used by IMLS staff and by expert peer reviewers to evaluate your application, and they will be important in determining whether your project will be funded.

Instructions

- Please check here if you have reviewed Parts I, II, III, and IV below and you have determined that your proposal does NOT involve the creation of digital products (i.e., digital content, resources, assets, software, or datasets). You must still submit this Digital Product Form with your proposal even if you check this box, because this Digital Product Form is a Required Document.

If you ARE creating digital products, you must provide answers to the questions in Part I. In addition, you must also complete at least one of the subsequent sections. If you intend to create or collect digital content, resources, or assets, complete Part II. If you intend to develop software, complete Part III. If you intend to create a dataset, complete Part IV.

Part I: Intellectual Property Rights and Permissions

A.1 What will be the intellectual property status of the digital products (content, resources, assets, software, or datasets) you intend to create? Who will hold the copyright(s)? How will you explain property rights and permissions to potential users (for example, by assigning a non-restrictive license such as BSD, GNU, MIT, or Creative Commons to the product)? Explain and justify your licensing selections.

In keeping with precedents established by the Penn State University Libraries (<https://libraries.psu.edu/policies/ul-ad30>) and the University of Missouri Library Systems (<https://mospace.umsystem.edu/xmlui/handle/10355/59594>), content creators will retain rights to their words. Our web content will include both individual and collaborative work, and copyright will follow accordingly. We will distribute digital content created by the project team – including project site contents, code of conduct, white paper, and guidelines – under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License](#) to support widespread dissemination and reuse of our work with attribution.

A.2 What ownership rights will your organization assert over the new digital products and what conditions will you impose on access and use? Explain and justify any terms of access and conditions of use and detail how you will notify potential users about relevant terms or conditions.

Access to work products will follow a policy for open access to scholarly articles established by the Faculty of the Penn State University Libraries. The project site will be publicly accessible for

the duration of the project and beyond, remaining available for long-term access via static site hosted on DigLib.org, and site pages contributed to the Internet Archive. We will deposit project documentation and all other digital outputs to institutional repositories for Penn State University (ScholarSphere) and the University of Missouri-Kansas City (MOspace), as well as to an Open Science Framework repository managed by the Digital Library Federation. Conditions of use will be derived from the selected Creative Commons license. We will notify potential users by posting licensing, access, and use information in prominent locations on the project site, and by including this information in any documents that may be distributed independently of their original publication context.

A.3 If you will create any products that may involve privacy concerns, require obtaining permissions or rights, or raise any cultural sensitivities, describe the issues and how you plan to address them.

Our project design anticipates and responds to several privacy concerns stemming from digital products and systems. Recognizing that exposure may have different implications for participants, we will ask forum attendees' permission to circulate their names and/or contact information to other participants.

In designing, distributing, and analyzing responses to our Forum 1 survey, we will minimize the potential for privacy violations by limiting survey responses to the project team. We will share the resulting quantitative data in both separate and aggregate forms, then code for themes within qualitative responses and only share coded outcomes and aggregations, rather than full responses. Aggregated responses will be shared with forum members and will be posted on the project site, along with the full survey instrument. Isolated quotes may be used within the forums, when their inclusion is judged not to create additional privacy threats. This plan for communicating survey results will be reviewed with the Penn State IRB and communicated to survey respondents.

In all secure online forms used to collect and manage data for this project, we will ask for and require minimal information from participants. Data collected through forms and surveys will be stored in Qualtrics secure system. Exports may be used to create mailing lists for forums, which will be sent via blind-copy or a restricted list. Forum attendees may be asked whether they would like to share their names and contact information with other attendees. Contact information will be retained by PIs post-forum, although attendees will be given the option to ask to have their information removed and not receive updates on the outcomes, but other data will be deleted from Qualtrics.

Digital content documenting each forum – such as social media, community notes, and reflective blog posts – may present additional privacy concerns. Forum attendees may not wish to be tied to their contributions to group notes, and may not be comfortable with the project team capturing and preserving the social media posts they produce about the events. Our choice of collaborative note-taking platform affords participants the chance to contribute anonymously if they wish. We will clearly state our intentions in documenting social media conversations around the project (as described in section B.2). In order to avoid unwanted exposure for forum participants, we will also ask participants to respect the project Code of Conduct and follow the Chatham House Rule on social media and in community notes: reporting information presented or arguments made without revealing the identity or affiliation of the speaker. Members of the project team will actively participate in digital spaces to ensure respect for these guidelines.

We will describe these plans for protecting and respecting privacy in a prominent location on the project site and remain open to comments and concerns from the community of forum participants.

Part II: Projects Creating or Collecting Digital Content, Resources, or Assets

A. Creating or Collecting New Digital Content, Resources, or Assets

A.1 Describe the digital content, resources, or assets you will create or collect, the quantities of each type, and format you will use.

Key materials and major outputs of this project will be distributed in digital form. These include:

1. An online survey soliciting qualitative and quantitative data from forum attendees who have worked in grant-funded positions and current and former grant-funded workers throughout the LAM community;
2. A white paper documenting and systematizing the experiences of workers in grant-funded positions;
3. A set of best practices guidelines for funders and grant writers which address concerns raised and synthesize outcomes of the second meeting;
4. Presentations on outcomes at libraries, archives, and museums conferences including Code4Lib, the DLF Forum, Museums and the Web, and the Society of American Archivists' Annual Meeting.

Project updates, notes, outcomes, outputs, meeting agendas, participation information, and other announcements will be published at <https://laborforum.diglib.org>, a Wordpress instance hosted on a subdomain of the Digital Library Federation (DLF) website. Publishing with Wordpress will allow project Co-PIs and Co-Is to easily add updates on project progress. An outline of the project site organization and contents is available in our supporting documents (Supportingdoc3.pdf).

The project team will be responsible for the majority of site content, and at least two project team members will review informational posts as author and editor, or as co-authors. Posts will include tags and categories that speak to their purpose and contents. We may solicit brief posts from forum participants, responding to and reflecting on their experiences. Guest authors may be selected in advance of each forum – based on travel award, invited attendance, or an open call for contributors – or we may reach out at or following an event. Where community members are invited to contribute blog posts, one project member will support as copy editor. Community contributors are welcome to include content notes or warnings as part of their blog posts, and will be explicitly credited with an attribution of their choice. All post authors retain the rights to their words.

In order to expand the scope of participation beyond in-person attendance at each forum, the project team will designate a hashtag for communicating about the project and provide online spaces for community notes at each forum. During each session of each forum, participants will be invited to contribute to community notes hosted on a widely accessible collaborative writing platform such as Google Docs/Drive. The project site will link to community notes, which will remain open and editable for the duration of each forum.

A.2 List the equipment, software, and supplies that you will use to create the content, resources, or assets, or the name of the service provider that will perform the work.

The survey will be hosted in and distributed using the Qualtrics platform.

DLF staff will support the establishment of a Wordpress instance hosted on a DLF subdomain (<https://laborforum.diglib.org>). The project team includes an experienced Wordpress developer (Ruth Kitchin Tillman), who will collaborate closely with DLF staff to ensure site performance. The entire project team will contribute site content through writing, editing, scheduling, and publishing.

We will encourage social media-based engagement with the forums and their respective topics primarily through Twitter.

We plan to host community notes on a widely accessible collaborative writing platform such as Google Docs/Drive, and finalize them as static PDF documents.

A.3 List all the digital file formats (e.g., XML, TIFF, MPEG) you plan to use, along with the relevant information about the appropriate quality standards (e.g., resolution, sampling rate, or pixel dimensions).

PDF, HTML, json, WARC

B. Workflow and Asset Maintenance/Preservation

B.1 Describe your quality control plan (i.e., how you will monitor and evaluate your workflow and products).

The project team will be responsible for the majority of site content, and at least two project team members will review informational posts as author and editor, or as co-authors. Posts will include tags and categories that speak to their purpose and contents. We may solicit brief posts from forum participants, responding to and reflecting on their experiences. Guest authors may be selected in advance of each forum – based on travel award, invited attendance, or an open call for contributors – or we may reach out at or following an event. Where community members are invited to contribute blog posts, one project member will support as copy editor. Community contributors are welcome to include content notes or warnings as part of their blog posts, and will be explicitly credited with an attribution of their choice.

The project team will also actively monitor and participate in community notes and social media conversations related to each forum to ensure that the Code of Conduct remains in force, and to be available to in-person and remote participants who may have concerns related to the Code.

B.2 Describe your plan for preserving and maintaining digital assets during and after the award period of performance. Your plan may address storage systems, shared repositories, technical documentation, migration planning, and commitment of organizational funding for these purposes. Please note: You may charge the federal award before closeout for the costs of publication or sharing of research results if the costs are not incurred during the period of performance of the federal award (see 2 C.F.R. § 200.461).

The team will employ our expertise in digital stewardship to manage preservation and documentation of digital materials created throughout this project. At project's close, a static version of the project site will remain available for long-term access via DigLib.org. We will crawl the site on a one-time basis using Archive-It, an Internet Archive subscription service for managing web archives collections. In addition to the ability to control web crawls, Archive-It offers capacity for multiple levels of descriptive metadata, which will help contextualize the material and support discovery in the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine.

Copies of digital outputs (updates, announcements, agendas, community notes, and reports) will be deposited to institutional repositories for Penn State University (ScholarSphere) and the University of Missouri-Kansas City (MOspace), as well as to an Open Science Framework repository managed by the Digital Library Federation. ScholarSphere is built on open source software including Sufia, a front-end for the Samvera digital asset management system. Samvera in turn comprises a Fedora repository, Solr indexes, and Blacklight search (built on Ruby). MOspace is built on the open-source application DSpace. OSF is an open-source collaboration and project management system designed to integrate with existing digital scholarship tools and services. Contributing to institutional repositories allows us to preserve and distribute project materials according to an open license of our choice, and to clearly designate rights. We are mindful of the benefits of open access scholarship to all aspects of libraries, including labor. In choosing to also deposit copies of works with the DLF's OSF repository, we reflect our affiliation with the DLF as both organization and community, and provide the security of a third storage location for project materials.

While community notes will remain open and editable for the duration of each forum, at project's close we will export static copies of each document to deposit with other project outputs. Documents created in Google Drive/Docs present preservation challenges, as it can be difficult to capture appearance, contributions, change history, and other information, even using the platform API. In addition to exporting static documents without change history, we will use API calls to capture lists of contributors to each notes document, for acknowledgement in repository metadata. Our approach balances preservation challenges, a desire to credit contributors for their work, and a need to preserve their privacy.

We anticipate an active and ongoing social media conversation related to these forums and the topics they raise, primarily on Twitter, and plan a multi-faceted approach to documenting this conversation. Using the social media appraisal tool DocNow (<https://demo.docnow.io/>), we will capture public tweets (those not published from locked accounts) using the project hashtag, project site URL, and other keywords, going forward from the initial announcement of the project launch. DocNow allows users to collect URLs mentioned in, and images used in tweets, in addition to text and extensive tweet metadata. We will export lists of these URLs and of tweet IDs – unique identifiers that Twitter assigns to each message – to deposit with other project materials in institutional and OSF repositories. We will also list the URI for tweet data sets in the DocNow catalog (<https://www.docnow.io/catalog/>). Depositing tweet IDs rather than full tweet metadata respects Twitter's Terms of Service for developers, while providing potential users of this data with a means to retrieve tweet contents. To capture social media conversations in a more human-readable form, we plan to use the web archiving tool WebRecorder (<https://webrecorder.io/>) to capture images, video, and social media-based conversations related to the grant project. These captures will be exported from WebRecorder as WARC (web archive) files and deposited with project material in institutional and OSF repositories. We will also make use of Archive-It's WARC Uploader feature to add WebRecorder captures to a collection of project-related materials in Archive-It.

The project team will post these preservation plans in a prominent location on the project site and remain open to comments and concerns from the community of forum participants.

C. Metadata

C.1 Describe how you will produce any and all technical, descriptive, administrative, or preservation metadata. Specify which standards you will use for the metadata structure

(e.g., MARC, Dublin Core, Encoded Archival Description, PBCore, PREMIS) and metadata content (e.g., thesauri).

This project does not intend to produce metadata as a standalone outcome. However, the digital objects produced will have descriptive, administrative, and technical metadata associated with them. This metadata is intended primarily to promote discovery and understanding of the materials (descriptive), provide means to manage them (administrative), and capture checksums in order to detect any errors or changes (technical).

Descriptive metadata for material deposited in ScholarSphere, MOspace, and OSF will follow established requirements and descriptive conventions for each repository (Dublin Core and Schema.org). The project team will aim to create flexible and accessible language that is consistent across repositories. Descriptive metadata for web-based material will use modified Dublin Core following recommendations of the OCLC Web Archives Metadata Working Group. Metadata fields for the DocNow Tweet ID Catalog are evolving based on community needs; we will follow conventions in use at the time of registering with the catalog. To support usability of deposited materials, particularly social media and web archives data sets, descriptive metadata will include links to stable versions of documentation for each capture tool used.

Administrative metadata will indicate that the outcomes should be freely available to viewers without creation of special accounts. It should give modification and deletion rights to project team members who may need to replace or update content.

ScholarSphere uses a File Information Tool Set (FITS) integration to capture and store technical metadata such as file formats, MIME types, and creation and modification dates; it also generates a SHA-1 checksum for each file. MOspace captures files' names, sizes, and formats. OSF tracks versions and generates MD5 and SHA-2 checksums for each file. Archive-It and DocNow capture technical metadata about web crawls and tweets, respectively. ScholarSphere, MOspace, OSF, and Archive-It automatically generate administrative and preservation metadata.

C.2 Explain your strategy for preserving and maintaining metadata created or collected during and after the award period of performance.

Repository software will support metadata preservation and maintenance.

C.3 Explain what metadata sharing and/or other strategies you will use to facilitate widespread discovery and use of the digital content, resources, or assets created during your project (e.g., an API [Application Programming Interface], contributions to a digital platform, or other ways you might enable batch queries and retrieval of metadata).

Because this project will create a limited number of digital products, we do not anticipate the need for batch metadata reuse. Google and other major search engines index contents of ScholarSphere, MOspace, and OSF for discovery.

D. Access and Use

D.1 Describe how you will make the digital content, resources, or assets available to the public. Include details such as the delivery strategy (e.g., openly available online, available to specified audiences) and underlying hardware/software platforms and infrastructure (e.g., specific digital repository software or leased services, accessibility via standard web browsers, requirements for special software tools in order to use the content).

The project site and community notes will be publicly available through standard web browsers. Project outputs distributed as PDF files will be readable in standard browsers and PDF readers.

D.2 Provide the name(s) and URL(s) (Uniform Resource Locator) for any examples of previous digital content, resources, or assets your organization has created.

n/a

Part III. Projects Developing Software

A. General Information

A.1 Describe the software you intend to create, including a summary of the major functions it will perform and the intended primary audience(s) it will serve.

n/a

A.2 List other existing software that wholly or partially performs the same functions, and explain how the software you intend to create is different, and justify why those differences are significant and necessary.

n/a

B. Technical Information

B.1 List the programming languages, platforms, software, or other applications you will use to create your software and explain why you chose them.

n/a

B.2 Describe how the software you intend to create will extend or interoperate with relevant existing software.

n/a

B.3 Describe any underlying additional software or system dependencies necessary to run the software you intend to create.

n/a

B.4 Describe the processes you will use for development, documentation, and for maintaining and updating documentation for users of the software.

n/a

B.5 Provide the name(s) and URL(s) for examples of any previous software your organization has created.

n/a

C. Access and Use

C.1 We expect applicants seeking federal funds for software to develop and release these products under open-source licenses to maximize access and promote reuse. What ownership rights will your organization assert over the software you intend to create, and what conditions will you impose on its access and use? Identify and explain the license under which you will release source code for the software you develop (e.g., BSD, GNU, or MIT software licenses).

Explain and justify any prohibitive terms or conditions of use or access and detail how you will notify potential users about relevant terms and conditions.

C.2 Describe how you will make the software and source code available to the public and/or its intended users.

n/a

C.3 Identify where you will deposit the source code for the software you intend to develop:

n/a

Name of publicly accessible source code repository:

URL:

Part IV: Projects Creating Datasets

A.1 Identify the type of data you plan to collect or generate, and the purpose or intended use to which you expect it to be put. Describe the method(s) you will use and the approximate dates or intervals at which you will collect or generate it.

n/a

A.2 Does the proposed data collection or research activity require approval by any internal review panel or institutional review board (IRB)? If so, has the proposed research activity been approved? If not, what is your plan for securing approval?

n/a

A.3 Will you collect any personally identifiable information (PII), confidential information (e.g., trade secrets), or proprietary information? If so, detail the specific steps you will take to protect such information while you prepare the data files for public release (e.g., data anonymization, data suppression PII, or synthetic data).

n/a

A.4 If you will collect additional documentation, such as consent agreements, along with the data, describe plans for preserving the documentation and ensuring that its relationship to the collected data is maintained.

n/a

A.5 What methods will you use to collect or generate the data? Provide details about any technical requirements or dependencies that would be necessary for understanding, retrieving, displaying, or processing the dataset(s).

n/a

A.6 What documentation (e.g., data documentation, codebooks) will you capture or create along with the dataset(s)? Where will the documentation be stored and in what format(s)? How will you permanently associate and manage the documentation with the dataset(s) it describes?

n/a

A.7 What is your plan for archiving, managing, and disseminating data after the completion of the award-funded project?

n/a

A.8 Identify where you will deposit the dataset(s):

n/a

Name of repository:

URL:

A.9 When and how frequently will you review this data management plan? How will the implementation be monitored?

n/a