Museum Grants for African American History and Culture

Sample Application MH-257648-OMS-25
Project Type: Large Project ($100,001-$500,000)

Motown Museum

Amount awarded by IMLS:	$231,313
Amount of cost share:	$233,313

The Motown Historical Museum will build capacity in the digital imaging and preservation of the Museum's physical artifacts and archival collections. The project will support the implementation of a digitization lab, including staffing, internships, and equipment. The project will result in the implementation of the Digital Jukebox, which is developed in three phases: collection management system, collections website, and interactive exhibition applications. The museum will acquire a new digital imaging system that includes an oversize digitization table measuring, automated photo columns, camera body with interchangeable lenses, LED lighting kit, film scanning kit, light box, accessories, installation, and technical support. The project's overall intended results are to enhance collections stewardship and access to Motown's rich history through digitization activities and sustainable digital preservation strategies.

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.

2025 IMLS African American History and Culture
Motown Museum Collections Stewardship and Access Project

Grant Narrative

Project Justification

Motown Historical Museum's (Museum) respectfully requests $231,313 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) African American History and Culture (AAHC) program to assist in the digital imaging and preservation of the Museum's physical artifacts and archival collections. Funding from IMLS AAHC will directly support the Collections team in the implementation of a digitization lab, including staffing, internships, and equipment. By digitizing these materials for preservation of and access to the Collection, the Museum addresses the IMLS agency-level goal 3 to advance collections stewardship and access. Under the AAHC Program Goal 1, the Museum most directly meets Objective 1.3 to improve and expand access to collections. However, the Museum aims to touch on the other objectives through this project by offering internships, enhancing museum operations, and enhancing exhibitions.

Historically, access to the Museum Collections has been limited due to offsite storage, lack of organization, staffing, and resources, minimal to no online presence, and small gallery spaces due to the historic home layout. In 2018, the Museum recognized the need for better access to Motown's history to realize its mission "to preserve, promote and celebrate the authentic Motown Story as a platform for others to flourish as thinkers, creators, neighbors and entrepreneurs." The Museum then embarked on a multi-phase $75 million expansion project; the final phase of this project is a 50,000 square foot building which will house a theater, cafe, gift shop, and over 18,000 square feet of gallery space.

Construction on the new building breaks ground in December 2024; the Museum will be closed between November 2025 and July 2026, or when construction, fabrication, and installation of the galleries is complete. The Museum anticipates the grand opening of the new campus in August or September 2026. Projects related to and surrounding the Museum's expansion include a new website, collections portal, storage facility, and first-ever public research center.

Over the past few years, the Motown Museum's Collections team has been working hard to prepare for the Museum's growth. This included the renovation of a new 40,000 square foot facility, located one block away from Hitsville USA and the Museum, at 2550 West Grand Boulevard. The building is home to the collection storage facility, a first-ever research center, staff offices, programming and events spaces. This facility was completed in October 2024 and collections were transported from an offsite storage facility located 30 minutes away in Southfield, MI. In preparation for this move, Collection staff spent the past two years inventorying, rehousing, documenting, and packing the collections.

The Museum is also developing a "Digital Jukebox", an umbrella term used to describe the various ways Museum visitors will be able to access the Museum's digital media resources. The Museum contracted Keepthinking to assist with the design and implementation of the Digital Jukebox, which is developed in three phases: 1) collection management system, 2) collections website, and 3) interactive exhibition applications. Keepthinking's software provides a collection management system and content management framework, as well as digital asset management, publishing tools, web applications, and public user interface.

The first phase of the Digital Jukebox was to design and implement a web-based Collection Management System (Qi). This phase began in January 2023 and was completed in August 2024, and Museum Collections staff are able to fully complete accessioning and catalog records, as well as create archival finding aids utilizing DACS standards. To date, there are 13,625 cataloged records in Qi, with another 3,000

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records ready for import. This does not include backlogged collections or the unprocessed archival collections.

The second phase of the Digital Jukebox is to develop a website for the Museum's Collections, which connects to the Museum's current institutional website. The Collections website will include information on ways to access the collections, including in-person visits to the Research Center, remote reference services, online exhibition content, an online gallery with metadata, and a portal to the Museum's digital media resources, such as oral histories and audio recordings. The second phase began September 2024, with a new website launch expected in August 2025. The final phase of the project targets interactive applications and immersive experiences using digital media resources within the new galleries. Work on this phase is expected to begin April 2025 with applications launching at the time of the Museum's grand opening in mid/late 2026. Combined, the Museum's concept for a "Digital Jukebox" will provide public access to key elements of the Motown archive and convey the Motown story in a creative way through a variety of access points.

In 2022, the Knight Foundation provided funding to support the digitization of the audiovisual collection, which includes 3,357 original recordings. The Museum outsourced this work to The MediaPreserve, and to date, 2,702 audiovisual recordings have been digitized. The MediaPreserve provides digital files, associated metadata, checksums, and asset photographs for all materials. The audio archival masters are 24bit/96kHz Broadcast WAV files, and the access copies are MP3 files at 192kbps. The video archival masters are 10bit uncompressed .MOV files, and access copies are H.264 MP4 files. Film archival masters are 2K DPX files with access copies at H.264 MP4 files.

A critical component to developing the Digital Jukebox includes digitization of the additional collection materials, as well as digital preservation strategies to ensure the long-term preservation of and access to the digitized and digital assets. Currently, digitization of photographs or other two-dimensional materials only happens for on-demand internal requests, and the digitized and digital assets are preserved in a network-attached storage (NAS) device, which is backed up on a cloud server. Access copies are stored in the Museum's local servers and/or Microsoft SharePoint.

To ensure the Museum employs the appropriate industry standards and improves best practices, such as the incorporation of FADGI guidelines, the Museum is hiring a Digital Preservation Specialist. The Museum is conducting interviews that are scheduled for the end of November 2024, with an anticipated start date for January 2025. This position is responsible for the digital imaging of collections as well as digital preservation and access. A top priority will be the creation of a *Digital Preservation Policy*, along with departmental procedures and workflows.

A dedicated in-house digital imaging lab is being established in the new collection storage facility, with a dedicated office within the Collections and Curatorial suite, a server room, and separate IT office for digital preservation. The lab will focus on still image photography and scanning, including photographic materials, archival records, sheet music, textiles, textual content, instruments, and other two- and three-dimensional artifacts. Imaging standards will follow the Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiatives (FADGI) Technical Guidelines for Digitizing Cultural Heritage Materials.

The Museum currently has a WideTek 25 color flatbed scanner which can scan two-dimensional objects up to 25"x18". However, the Museum does not have all the necessary equipment needed for digital imaging, photography of 3D objects, as well as the accessories and software needed to capture and preserve files. Right now, images are typically scanned at 300 dpi as a TIFF file for high-resolution preservation copies, with access copies saved at 72 dpi as JPEG files. Item-level metadata is created along with a catalog record to link the digital object in Qi.

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The Museum is requesting funds from IMLS to purchase the DT Titan digitization system from DT Heritage, an authority on digital imaging in the Museum field. The DT Titan digitization system includes an oversize digitization table measuring 40”x60”, automated photo columns, Phase One camera body with interchangeable 72- and 120-mm lenses, LED lighting kit, film scanning kit, light box, accessories, installation, and technical support.

To support the Digital Preservation Specialist’s digitization work, especially for oversize materials, assistance will be provided by the department’s Collections Technician as well as interns from local universities who are interested in gaining experience in collections stewardship and access activities.

Currently, visitors to the Motown Museum visit the birthplace of Motown Records, located at 2648 West Grand Boulevard in Detroit, which is home to Hitsville USA and the infamous Studio A, Berry Gordy’s apartment, and the Museum’s galleries. For someone who wants to learn about Motown’s story, these historic homes are the only access point. Additionally, the spaces are small, as one expects from a historic home, and with over 100,000 visitors to the Museum annually, the galleries and Studio A have received wear and tear from high traffic volume. The Museum’s current website does not feature any information or access to the Museum’s Collection, nor is there a public research center to conduct extensive research, limiting lifelong learning opportunities and overall access. Overall, the Museum has outgrown the historic houses as it has increased its staff, programming, and collection, leading to a need for expanded gallery space.

For nearly 40 years, the Museum has shared Motown’s story with over three million visitors from all over the world. It envisions that all generations will come to know, be inspired, and transformed by the legacy, sound, and unparalleled cultural and social impact of Motown. An idea born from a dream to create music for all people, regardless of social and cultural boundaries, Motown became an agent of social change through the turbulent late 20th century, a paradigm of entrepreneurial vision, and a pioneer of music technology that resonates throughout the world today. With these new galleries, research areas, and multimedia displays, the Museum can better provide lifelong learning opportunities for people worldwide.

A crown jewel for residents in Southeast Michigan, the Museum is a popular attraction for diplomats, school groups, family reunions, and conference attendees. The Museum is also a place of pilgrimage for celebrities from all music genres who pay reverence to its historical significance, witness where greatness was standard, perfection was the norm and draw upon the Motown Sound to find their muse. In addition to tours, the Museum provides authentic programs, events, and free activities to artists, and thousands of students, ages 10-18. Most of these young people are black and from low- income families living in resource-challenged communities throughout the city where access to cultural opportunities is scarce. The Museum also offers programs targeting its immediate neighborhood, Northwest Goldberg. One of the many disinvested areas endemic to Detroit, most residents identify as black, 25% are unemployed, less than 15% hold a bachelor’s degree, and 52% live at or below poverty. Nearly 40% of this once vibrant area is blighted and lacks basic amenities. The Museum is contributing to the neighborhood’s revitalization and beautification while offering residents programming and jobs.

In addition to daily tours by award-winning tour guides, the Museum serves thousands of students, iconic Motown stars, artists, and Detroit residents through authentic programs, events, and free activities. This cherished space sparks creativity and entrepreneurism in youth while energizing older adults as they relive the soundtracks of their lives. Offerings include summer camps, singing and songwriting competitions, and a series of workshops and forums to train and support future entrepreneurs. These engaging initiatives, designed to attract individuals of all ages and skill levels, often incorporate items from the Museum’s vast collections to augment the learning experience and emphasize skill-building. A dominant vehicle for community engagement and outreach, these activities directly impact some of the area’s most vulnerable

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and underserved residents, most of whom are youth ages 10-18. Participants typically come from low-income families living in resource-challenged neighborhoods throughout Detroit where access to curated cultural opportunities is scarce. For example, participants from Hitsville NEXT summer programs The Lyric Project, SPARK and IGNITE Camps are 99% African American, 50% qualify for and receive reduced-priced or free meals at school and most have no access to formal arts programming.

The Museum's activities also serve the creative community and artists on the cusp of their careers. For poets, songwriters, singers and musicians, the organization is a haven to explore their talents and a platform for live performance. Its exclusive archive of music and spoken word recordings, along with other media, are essential to their artistic development and appreciation for the role Motown played in popular culture. These participants deepen the Museum's reach and audience diversity, with most of them ranging from 18-35, 70 percent identifying as African American, ten percent identifying as Latinx, Asian, or Caucasian, and a statistically significant number being LGBTQ. Further benefiting from the Museum's cultural engagements are residents of Northwest Goldberg, the historic community the Museum calls home. Of these 2,300 residents, less than 15% hold a bachelor's degree, and school test scores are 78% lower than the U.S. average.

Furthermore, the Museum receives calls from the public on a daily basis regarding collections and donations. The Collections staff fields several hundred reference and research requests annually, and historically, has had to decline access to collections due to its past lack of organization, minimal resources and staffing. For the past two years, the Museum collection has been closed in preparation for the expansion of the Museum's campus, new exhibitions, and Research Center. As part of the Museum's strategic plans, increasing access to collections will provide opportunities for lifelong learning and ongoing discovery.

Members of the target population are engaged in planning through pre- and post-surveys that capture their experience and measure how closely the Museum's programs met their intended goals. Their responses include impressions of the quality of the facilities, equipment, and resources made available to them throughout the program. Staff integrate their feedback into program design and consider it when setting organizational priorities. Relying heavily on the sixty-year legacy of Motown, today the Museum has an opportunity to leverage this profound legacy of music and the collections which are essential to its ability to realize its mission, preserve the authentic Motown story, and provide the community engagement and public programming for which it is known.

The target group and beneficiaries are one in the same. Collections are the major draw for tourists from around the world and used by the Museum's team to develop exhibitions, contemporary workshops and interactive virtual initiatives that optimize its social media platforms. Tourists, musicians, camp participants, students, educators, historians, and researchers from around the world will be able to conduct deep dives into the Museum's archives and collections via the digital media resources in the Museum's new galleries as well as the Research Center. Web-based access to the Museum's programs and services from any location, as well as remote reference services, expand the organization's reach and broaden the number of people impacted by its collections and important historical accounts.

Project Work Plan

Prior to the project work commencing in 2026, key deliverables are necessary. First, Kubik Maltbie, the contracted exhibitions fabricator and installer will deliver a Digital Media Plan by March 2025. The Digital Media Plan addresses all Digital Jukebox applications that take place within the new exhibition galleries. Additionally, the Museum's collection website and online portal to the collections will be launched by September 2025.

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A large portion of the exhibition content and digital media includes photographs. The Motown Museum has contracted an archival researcher to select photographs for digitization and display in the gallery spaces. These photographs will be digitized and also made discoverable via the Museum's website and research center. To date, over 500 photographs from the Museum collections have been selected for digitization and reproduction for the galleries alone. There have been additional images identified outside of the Museum collection, including Getty Images, the Briscoe Center, and local photographers.

Other objects that have been selected for display include instruments and other 3D objects, archival records and paper-based ephemeral items such as posters and tickets, as well as performance gowns and uniforms. To date, fifteen uniforms have been selected for display, including gowns worn by Diana Ross and the Supremes, Michael Jackson's famous black hat and white glove, and one of Marvin Gaye's tour suits. Additional objects, from fan letters and magazines to movie posters and set drawings for films like "The Wiz" and "Lady Sings the Blues" are also being identified and selected for display. All these objects will need to be photographed before installation takes place, with images available in the Digital Jukebox.

Another big portion of the exhibition experience is the access to Motown's audiovisual resources. Between 2022 and 2024, more than 3,000 reels of audiovisual tape and film were digitized by the MediaPreserve following archival best practices to ensure long-term preservation and access to these assets. These recordings included original studio session recordings and rehearsals, alternate takes, behind-the-scenes chatter and tour footage, and Motown Records meeting conversations. This digitization work was imperative for both preservation and access purposes. Many of these recordings will be delivered via the Digital Jukebox via interactive exhibition experiences, the website's collections portal, the extended audio tour, or the Research Center. There will be an additional audio tour available for members and others interested in exploring more of the audiovisual recordings and oral histories from the collection.

The Museum aims to follow the standards and best practices outlined by the Society of American Archivists regarding access and research activities. The Research Center will provide a necessary way for the Museum to better fulfill its role as steward of the Motown story and provide access to a demographic previously underserved.

Work included during the project period will consist of the below activities.

Activities 2025 – 2026:

- Museum's Collection website is launched by September 2025.
- Maintenance and edits are made to website and online gallery based on testing and feedback.
- Director purchases DT Titan digitization station and related accessories and software.
- The digitalization lab is painted appropriate color necessary for digital imaging activities.
- Installation and training on DT Titan digitization station, accessories, and software takes place.
- The museum closes to the public in November 2025.
- Internship recruitment takes place between September and December 2025.
- Construction on the new Museum building is completed by Perkins and Will in December 2025.
- Exhibition fabrication and installation by Kubik Maltbie between January 2026 and July 2026.
- The first intern is hired for Spring 2026 semester.
- Digitization and digital preservation of physical collections throughout the year.
- Preservation files and access files created and placed in appropriate digital storage groups.
- Digital assets for Digital Jukebox interactive applications are uploaded into Qi by December 2025.
- Imaging reproductions are provided to exhibition fabricator and installer by January 2026.
- Museum grand opening expected August 2026.
- Research Center grand opening and inaugural lecture series expected August 2026.

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- Staff training and professional development is scheduled as determined by availability.

Activities 2026 – 2027:

- Project team will convene at the start of the second year to ensure all activities have been completed and will adjust schedule and work plan as necessary.
- Digitization activities for Expansion selections are completed.
- The second intern is hired for either Fall 2026 or Spring 2027 semester.
- Maintenance and troubleshooting to be completed on any equipment if necessary.
- Digitization for loans and upcoming temporary exhibitions commences and continues throughout the year.
- Digital preservation activities and routine maintenance continue throughout the year, especially for new acquisitions and new digital media resources.
- Digitization activities for external users requested through the Research Center are initiated.
- Digitization sampling from Motown Records corporate papers and other archival collections is initiated.
- Project staff to attend IMLS conference in August 2027 to present project goals and results.

Due to the delicate nature of artifacts in general, extreme care by the Collections staff will be taken as the collection is moved from storage to the digitization lab. Both are located on the same floor to minimize transportation risks.

This project is led by the Museum's Chairwoman and CEO, Robin Terry. She has a lifelong familial affiliation with the Museum, first-hand knowledge of its history, and dedication to its preservation. Terry's project team includes Alexis Peregoy, Director of Archives and Collections; Hayley Johnson, Collections Technician, and the Digital Preservation Specialist, which is anticipated to start in January 2025.

The Museum expects to complete the project goals within 24 months, although digitization activities will continue after the project as new acquisitions and loans arrive and temporary exhibitions are rotated out. Additionally, digital preservation activities require routine maintenance and support.

Financial support has been awarded from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation through 2027 to assist in the preservation of digital media, staffing, and other capital expenses; the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs granted to purchase preservation and archival grade equipment for the reorganization and cataloging of the collection; and the National Endowment for the Humanities to implement an environmental monitoring program within all collection spaces.

The project will be evaluated through a combination of qualitative and quantitative metrics. Data gathered via informal and formal methods will include feedback from staff and community discussions, advisory committees, researchers, visitors, program participants, surveys, logs, testimonials, and photographs. The following outputs will indicate success:

- The Collections team operates at full staffing capacity.
- The Museum can digitize, preserve, and provide access to the Collection's digitized and digital assets.
- The materials are properly prepared for digitization.
- The Museum incorporates and follows industry standards and best practices surrounding digital imaging and digital preservation, including FADGI guidelines.
- Digitization of materials is made available to the public, both onsite at the museum and virtually, providing greater access to Motown's collection.
- The Museum increases collaborations with educational institutions including Wayne State University.

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- A sustainable collection is available to inspire artists, students, and fans for generations to come, enabling the Museum to fulfill its role as stewards of the Motown story.

Project Results

The project's overall intended results are to enhance collections stewardship and access to Motown's rich history through digitization activities and sustainable digital preservation strategies. With numerous access points being created through the Digital Jukebox, users will have a variety of ways to engage with Motown Museum's digitized and digital resources, whether online or in-person. The additional 18,000 square foot of permanent gallery space will allow the Museum to curate and interpret more artifacts with the public, supporting the Museum's mission to preserve, promote, and celebrate the authentic Motown story as a platform for others to flourish as thinkers, creators, neighbors, and entrepreneurs.

Throughout the exhibit space, Museum visitors will have multiple opportunities to engage with the Museum's digitized and digital collections through the interactive Digital Jukebox. Many of these assets have never been heard or seen before, which will appeal to lifelong Motown fans, rising musicians, and researchers. There are Polaroid photos of the Supremes backstage, candid snapshots of Motown's artists and hitmakers at company events and traveling, as well as tour footage. For example, in the Sound of Young America gallery, there will be audio snippets of rehearsal sessions, studio chatter, alternate takes, and behind-the-scenes commentary with Motown's hitmakers. The Vinyl Lounge is an area in the Museum's expanded galleries that will allow Museum visitors to conduct a deeper dive into the collection content based on their individual interests and searches. An expanded audio tour option for Museum visitors who want the ultimate Motown Sound experience allows additional access to the audio recordings.

For those who wish to research the collections more extensively, the newly built Esther Gordy Edwards Research Center will support onsite scholars, lifelong learners, and educational class visits. The research center will provide much-needed space to help foster scholarly interaction and growth and fulfill the Museum's objective to provide lifelong learning opportunities to those who seek them, regardless of age, race, gender identity, ability, or other socially defined barrier. In 2026, the first Motown Museum lecture series will be established, inviting the public to learn about and engage with top historians, authors, educators, and alum of Motown Records. The research center activities will be managed by a full-time Research Services Archivist to ensure timely and equitable access to the Museum Collection through onsite appointments as well as remote reference services for those who cannot visit onsite.

Finally, for those who cannot visit Detroit in-person, there will be online access to the Museum's collection through a newly created website, featuring a portal to the collections, digital media resources, and curated online exhibitions. The website will have tiered levels of access to collection content, including public access, membership access, and research access. These tiered levels are managed by Motown Museum's Collections staff and will be assigned based on the user's needs. The digitized and digital assets created for the Digital Jukebox and Museum website will be preserved on a local network-attached storage (NAS) system, in addition to backed up in cloud storage, with access copies available for use. By August 2025, the Digital Preservation Specialist will have implemented a digital preservation policy and procedures following industry standards and best practices to ensure these assets are sustainably preserved.

Overall, the project will enhance the Museum's status as not only a world-class tourist destination and historical site, but also as the premier research destination for Motown history. Audience members will demonstrate a greater understanding of the cultural and historical significance of Motown as more content becomes available for public use. The museum's collection has been an untapped resource with the potential to transform how the Motown story is conveyed and understood. These primary source materials and historical assets are important for education and scholarship, as well as inspiration, allowing new generations of artists and entrepreneurs to see themselves reflected in the legendary Motown story.

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MOTOWN MUSEUM

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Motown Museum Collections Stewardship and Access
Schedule of Completion

Activities Year 1: 2025 – 2026	Sep '25	Oct '25	Nov '25	Dec' 25	Jan '26	Feb '26	Mar '26	Apr '26	May '26	Jun '26	Jul '26	Aug '26
Museum's Collection website is launched.	■											
Maintenance and edits are made to website based on testing and feedback.	■	■	■	■								
Director purchases DT Titan digitization station and related accessories and software.	■											
The digitalization lab is painted appropriate color necessary for digital imaging activities.	■	■										
Installation and training on DT Titan digitization station, accessories, and software takes place.		■										
The museum is closed to the public for construction.			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Internship recruitment takes place.		■	■	■								
Construction on the new Museum building is completed by Perkins and Will.	■	■	■	■								
Exhibition fabrication and installation by Kubik Maltbie.					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
The first intern is hired for Spring 2026 semester.					■	■	■	■	■			
Digitization of priority assets needed for Expansion galleries.		■	■	■	■							
Digitization and digital preservation of physical collections continues.		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Preservation files and access files created and stored in appropriate servers and cloud buckets.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Digital assets delivered to Keepthinking for Digital Jukebox applications.	■	■	■	■								
Imaging reproductions are provided to Kubik Maltbie for installation.					■	■						
The Museum reopens to the public with grand opening events.												■
Research Center grand opening and inaugural lecture series.												■
Staff training and professional development is scheduled as determined by availability.		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	

MOTOWN MUSEUM

2025 IMLS African American History and Culture
Motown Museum Collections Stewardship and Access
Schedule of Completion

Activities Year 2: 2026 – 2027	Sep '26	Oct '26	Nov '26	Dec' 26	Jan '27	Feb '27	Mar '27	Apr '27	May '27	Jun '27	Jul '27	Aug '27
Project team will convene at the start of the second year to ensure all activities have been completed and will adjust schedule and work plan as necessary.	■											
Digitization activities for Expansion gallery selections are completed.	■											
The second intern is hired for either Fall 2026 or Spring 2027 semester.		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Scheduled maintenance and address any troubleshooting to be completed on any equipment as necessary.	■	■	■									
Digitization for loans and upcoming temporary exhibitions commences and continues throughout the year.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Digital preservation activities and routine maintenance continue throughout the year, especially for new acquisitions and new digital media resources.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Digitization activities for external users requested through the Research Center are initiated and ongoing based on requests.		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Digitization sampling from Motown Records corporate papers and other archival collections is initiated.		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Project staff to attend IMLS conference in August 2027 to present project goals and results.												■