



NATIONAL LEADERSHIP GRANTS FOR LIBRARIES

Sample Application LG-259083-OLS-25
Project Category: Planning

Louisiana State University, A&M (Louisiana State University,
School of Information Studies)

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$91,430

The Louisiana State University School of Information Studies, in collaboration with Kent State University, will assist Vietnam-era veterans in documenting their military service records. This project will develop a sustainable program for libraries, archives, and Veteran Service Organizations to support Vietnam-era veterans in creating, locating, and preserving their personal and official service records. The project will culminate in a collaborative planning meeting with key stakeholders to design an accessible framework for libraries and archives to host Vietnam-era veterans specific documentation events. The final program will include training materials, event guidelines, and preservation strategies to ensure long-term accessibility of veterans' records. The project will serve as a model for broader veteran documentation efforts and contribute to making libraries and archives more veteran-inclusive spaces. Findings and resources will be disseminated through professional conferences, academic publications, and digital platforms to maximize impact and reach.

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 most recent Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program to which you are applying.

Virtual Footlocker Project 2: Supporting Vietnam-Era Veterans' Documentation of Their Military Record

Project Justification

The Louisiana State University School of Information Studies requests \$91,430 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services National Leadership Grants for Libraries as a planning grant under Goal 2 (Objective 2.2: Develop or enhance collaborations between libraries and stakeholders to address community needs) and NLG-L Objective 1.2 (Improve community well-being through libraries and archives). For Virtual Footlocker Project 2 (VFP 2), Dr. Edward Benoit, III (Louisiana State University) and Dr. Heather Soyka (Kent State University) will serve as PIs.

The VFP 2 project is a two-year planning project (August 2025- July 2027) that will develop an implementable program for LIS practitioners and Veteran Service Organizations to support Vietnam-era veterans (VeV) by creating, locating, and collecting records that document their time in service. While contemporary servicemembers have been encouraged to keep their own service records, previous generations did not have this same guidance. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, VeVs are defined as those who served in the Republic of Vietnam between November 1, 1955, and May 7, 1975, and those who served outside the Republic of Vietnam between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975.¹

Grounded in the results of a previously funded study, the project will do the following:

- Survey and analyze rich ethnographic data from Vietnam-era veterans about their service records and existing records-related needs.
- Develop and enhance collaborations around access and support across the spectrum of veterans records, such as personal, service, and medical records, between libraries, archives, veterans, and veteran service organizations.
- Identify new opportunities to connect VeVs with support, including community, library, and veteran-specific services.

For veterans, personal and official records documenting their time in the military and civil service support three broad areas that contribute to wellness. These are: legacy and memory, access to care and benefits, and community building and support. This planning project intends to identify how the needs of Vietnam-era veterans have been met through these three areas of wellness, to analyze actionable data from focus groups and interviews, and to develop and enhance opportunities and connections that serve the needs of this group and their families through the triangulation and cooperation of libraries, archives, and veteran service organizations. Finally, while active-duty military, veterans, and family members make up a small percentage of our population, the impact of their service and legacy remains vital to our nation and society. Supporting veterans and their personal and official recordkeeping needs is an important service that raises visibility and pride within the community. Libraries and archives serve as a trusted information resource, as well as a tangible place for the community to coalesce around shared values. Developing new and supporting existing library and archival activities that bring together communities, veterans, and families around records that provide memory and legacy, benefits, and build community support, is the key goal of this project.

The Virtual Footlocker Project (VFP) analyzed survey and focus group data from over 300 active-duty military and recent veterans with the goal of creating a curriculum to support the preservation of the personal

¹"Eligibility for Veterans Pension," U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accessed March 1, 2025, <https://www.va.gov/pension/eligibility/>.

communication and documentary record of the modern soldier.² The data analysis identified a significant theme, with nearly half of all participants naming a collection of service records as a “love-me wall, love-me book, and love-me binder.”³ These Love-Me Binders (LMBs) are most commonly found with enlisted personnel who served after 2010. LMBs were not created by accident. Soldiers have been instructed by their commanding officers to keep track of their own records. These include copies of official service records, medical records and awards, and non-official records such as calendars and journals. According to the VFP findings, LMBs serve three main purposes, “(1) to secure promotions while still in service, (2) to demonstrate their eligibility for benefits, and (3) to leave a legacy for their loved ones.”⁴

Love-Me-Binders (LMBs) are used by post-Global War on Terror veterans to access benefits as they are often more complete than the service records housed by the VA or the Department of Defense. They can also be vital links for the families of veterans as documentary evidence of their loved one’s service. Veterans explained how they relied on LMBs as sources of information for practical and emotional reasons. Not only does the information in Love-Me binders allow veterans to access benefits through the VA, but their binders also serve as documentary proof of an intangible heritage that some veterans hope to pass down to their children. As a participant noted, “I’d like to keep just so when my son gets older, he can see it and be like, ‘Wow, my mom’s a badass.’ I mean, I’m gonna remind him as long as I live that I’m a badass but just so he can see all the stuff we have. My husband’s grandpa, he still has stuff from when he was in, and he actually went through it with him not too long. So, it’s just kinda nice to go back and look and see what you’ve been through and all the experiences you had while you served.”

This story underscores the pride that veterans place in their service. Part of the veterans’ quest to give meaning to their lives is to pass on the memories of their time of service as a legacy to their children. LMBs are thus an important tool for veterans to realize this meaning-making goal, or “intangible heritage.”⁵ As Martell and Benoit note, “At the time of our study, we found that LMBs represent a genre of records that supported the centuries-old rhetorical function of demonstrating eligibility for benefits as well as those of assisting active service members in supporting applications for promotions in rank and building a symbolic heritage for veterans’ families.”⁶

Lost and destroyed operational records and personnel records have major consequences for veterans and service members. Soyka and Wilczek discussed the importance of official or operational records for “protecting veterans’ rights to health care and other benefits.”⁷ Lost and destroyed operational records and personnel records have major consequences for veterans and service members. The systemic deficiencies of military record-keeping practices make it vital that veterans and service members compile and preserve records related to their military service.

“History is cheated when front-line records are lost. And without them, veterans can face delays securing benefits for combat-related disabilities.”⁸ For example, litigation and federal legislation have resulted in the

² Allan A. Martell and Edward Benoit, III, “An Opportunity to Stay Connected: Documenting Personal Communication Records of Military Personnel,” *Archival Science* 24 (2024): 351-385. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-024-09445-x>.

³ Allan A. Martell, Edward Benoit, III, and Gillian A. Brownlee, “The Genre of Love-Me Binders: US Military Veterans Documenting Their Service,” *Archivaria* 95 (Spring 2023): 42-66. <https://archivaria.ca/index.php/archivaria/article/view/13899>.

⁴ Martell and Benoit, 61.

⁵ Martell and Benoit, 62.

⁶ Martell and Benoit, 63.

⁷ Heather Soyka and Eliot Wilczek, “Documenting the American Military Experience in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars,” *American Archivist* 77.1 (Spring/Summer 2014): 175–200.

⁸ Peter Sleeth, “A Son Lost in Iraq, but Where Is the Casualty Report?,” *ProPublica* (2012), <https://www.propublica.org/article/a-son-lost-in-iraq-but-where-is-the-casualty-report>; Peter Sleeth and Hal Bernton, “Lost to History: Missing War Records Complicate

establishment of disability compensation with service connection for diseases related to herbicide exposure (Agent Orange).⁹ The PACT Act expands health care and benefits for veterans who experienced Agent Orange in Vietnam and Cambodia, burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan, and other toxic substances like radiation and chemical warfare during their time in service¹⁰. However, these claims require veterans and their survivors to provide evidence of military service during specific times and locations. The PACT Act includes veterans who served in the Vietnam War, Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, and any deployment after 9/11 for the Global War on Terror (GWOT), as well as any service-related exposure to toxic substances. With their inclusion of both personal and official records, LMBs can substantially help veterans address the systemic deficiencies of military record-keeping practices.

Because LMBs are a recent phenomenon within the US military, previous generations of veterans were not directed to create their own collection of records (LMBs) during their service. According to a 2023 study, 5.6 million living veterans served during the Vietnam War era (1950-1973), approximately 30% of all living veterans, with a median age of 73.¹¹ Understanding and helping pre-2010 veterans to collect, create, and connect their records is both understudied and necessary. VeVs are the oldest of this group, and their personal and collective memory is the most endangered.

The proposed planning project seeks to adopt the VFP's findings and curricula to create an implementable program that LIS practitioners and Veteran Service Organizations can use to support VeVs in creating their own LMBs. Of the three main uses of LMBs by veterans, the proposed project will focus on the legacy building and their use to access earned veteran benefits. Likewise, the proposed project is grounded in other existing efforts to document the Vietnam war experience, such as the Library of Congress Veterans History Project and the work of the Vietnam Center & Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University. It also addresses calls for additional support for “archivists who operate outside the military establishment” to assist veterans with their records.¹² Finally, the project will assist libraries and archives in connecting with veterans of all ages to become more veteran-friendly spaces.

Benefit Claims by Iraq, Afghanistan Veterans,” *ProPublica* (2012), <https://www.propublica.org/article/lost-to-history-missing-war-records-complicate-benefit-claims-by-veterans>.

⁹ Sidath Viranga Panangala and Daniel T. Shedd, “Veterans Exposed to Agent Orange: Legislative History, Litigation, and Current Issues,” *Congressional Research Service* report, November 18, 2014.

¹⁰ US Department of Veterans Affairs, “The PACT Act and your VA benefits,” accessed March 1, 2025, <https://www.va.gov/resources/the-pact-act-and-your-va-benefits/#am-i-eligible-for-va-health-ca>.

¹¹ Katherine Schaffer, “The Changing Face of American’s Veteran Population,” *Pew Research Center* (2023), <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/11/08/the-changing-face-of-americas-veteran-population/>.

¹² Andrew Hinton, “Using Oral History to Study the Personal Digital Archiving Practices of Modern Soldiers,” *American Archivist*, 85, 2 (2022): 511-532.

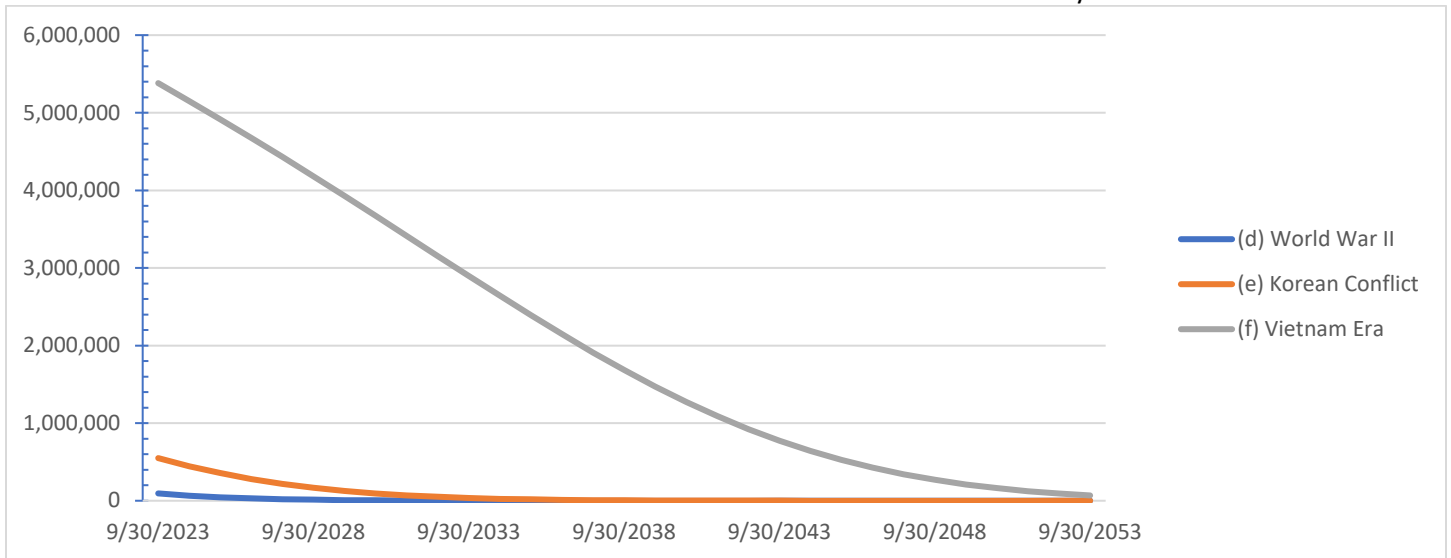


Figure 1 Living Veterans by Period of Service, 2023-2053 based on VA VetPop 2023 Study

Previous Work

The proposed project builds from the Pls' previous research, experiences as a veteran, and ongoing work with veterans. Additionally, the project is grounded in scholarly work on personal information management (PIM), VeV, and community & participatory archives. Focusing on PIM, Marshall employed the term *benign neglect* to describe how people often neglect their personal digital files until the files are needed for use or require preservation, although this may also be applied to analog materials.¹³ She noted, "In short, *benign neglect* [emphasis in original] is good enough to preserve many emotionally, intellectually, or financially important physical objects until they are wanted or needed."¹⁴ Veterans and service members compile and preserve a wide range of personal and official records to document their service experiences and careers. These records include records that they create, such as photographs, diaries, and personal correspondence; institutional documents created about them, such as medical records and personnel records; and institutional records that document activities in which they participated.¹⁵ In previous wars, these records were almost exclusively analog. More recently, veterans and service members of Iraq and Afghanistan increasingly created, compiled, and preserved digital files to record their service experiences. For example, surveys of veterans conducted by

¹³ Catherine C. Marshall, "Rethinking Personal Digital Archiving, Part 1: Four Challenges from the Field," *D-Lib Magazine*. 14:3/4 (March/April 2008). <https://www.dlib.org/dlib/march08/marshall/03marshall-pt1.html>; Catherine C. Marshall, "Rethinking Personal Digital Archiving, Part 2: Implications for Services, Applications, and Institutions," *D-Lib Magazine*. 14:3/4 (March/April 2008). <https://www.dlib.org/dlib/march08/marshall/03marshall-pt2.html>

¹⁴ Catherine C. Marshall, "Rethinking Personal Digital Archiving, Part 1: Four Challenges from the Field."

¹⁵ Robert G. Moering, "Military Service Records: Searching for the Truth," *Psychological Injury and Law* 4, no. 3-4 (2011): 217-34, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12207-011-9114-3> Moering explained how the Department of Veterans Affairs uses official military records to evaluate VA benefit claims.; Seth Shapiro, and Lee Humphreys. "Exploring Old and New Media: Comparing Military Blogs to Civil War Letters." *New Media & Society* 15.7 (2012): 1151-67.; Michael E Stevens,. "Voices from Vietnam: Building a Collection from a Controversial War." *American Archivist* 64.1 (Spring/Summer 2001): 115-20. Stevens wrote about the Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Collection which is primarily written correspondence and diaries with some analog audio tape recordings and photographs.

the Virtual Footlocker Project found that nearly 90% of respondents took digital photographs to record their experiences.¹⁶ In the case of VeV, however, the records are entirely analog.

As noted earlier, one of the main uses of LMBs is accessing veteran benefits. This has been particularly difficult for VeV. While many consider the Vietnam War as one of the most well-documented modern wars, reflections from National Archives and Records Administration staff argue significant lapses in official documentation both before and following 1965. According to Shaughnessy, "Many units appear to have either neglected to prepare such routine documents as daily journals and situation reports or else destroyed them in disregard of Army Regulations."¹⁷ Furthermore, the investigative report following the My Lai affair in 1968 found that "the records...were in most cases minimal, [and] generally unsatisfactory."¹⁸

Due to a lack of official documentation, many VeVs have been denied benefits, especially those related to what we now know as PTSD. Although Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) only became officially recognized as a diagnosis in the *Diagnostic & Statistical Manual* in 1980, the Army Board for Correction of Military Records (ABCMR) has only approved 1.4% of VeVs requesting a change of discharge status based on undiagnosed PTSD.¹⁹ Furthermore, the ABCMR requires significant documentation, both official and personal, before appeal considerations. This is one, among many, reasons VeVs have a general distrust of official systems.

Elaine Engst discusses an early attempt to establish a Vietnam War Veterans archives in 1985 and reflected that VeV were "reluctant to contribute to the collecting programs the military...initiated."²⁰ While well meaning, the initial survey attempt elicited only a 2% response rate and only two cubic feet of archival material. A more recent approach by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in 2001 stemmed from a review of their own VeV materials that revealed "meager to nonexistent," collections.²¹ They found approaching VeV from "less obvious sources proved more fruitful," than relying entirely on VSOs.²² They recommend making sure that VeV are "assured that their stories would be heard respectfully and cordial staff members who were able to listen sympathetically helped develop these relationships."²³

These recommendations are particularly true as the VeV population ages. Agha et al. explored end-of-life care best practices for VeV and identified honor and validation as key aspects. They noted that many VeV's families distrusted the VA, "For many, this final encounter with the VA system at EOL [end of life] is the culmination of a lifetime of abandonment, stigmatization, and betrayal." Assisting VeV with the creation of their own LMB could help alleviate this issue by "[making] a concerted effort to appreciate, validate, and recognize the rejections that these men and women faced at their homecoming."²⁴

¹⁶ Edward A. Benoit III, "Digital V-Mail and the 21st Century Soldier: Preliminary Findings from the Virtual Footlocker Project." *Preservation, Digital Technology & Culture*, vol. 46, no. 1, 2017, pp. 17-31. <https://doi.org/10.1515/pdte-2017-0023> ;

¹⁷ C. A. Shaughnessy, "The Vietnam Conflict: 'America's Best Documented War'?", *The History Teacher* 24, no. 2 (1991): 138.

¹⁸ Shaughnessy, 139.

¹⁹ Rebecca Izzo, "In Need of Correction: How the Army Board for Correction of Military Records Is Failing Veterans with PTSD," *Yale Law Journal* 123, no. 5 (March 2014):1587-1606.

²⁰ Elaine D. Engst, "Establishing a Vietnam War Veterans Archives," *The Midwestern Archivist* 10, no 1 (1985), 44.

²¹ Michael E. Stevens, "Voices From Vietnam: Building a Collection from a Controversial War," *American Archivist* 64 (2001), 116.

²² Stevens, 117.

²³ Stevens, 118-119.

²⁴ Aneza Agha, Ann Kutney-Lee, Daniel Kinder, Scott Shreve, and Shimrit Keddem, "'That is Care That you Just Can't Fake!': Identifying Best Practices for the Care of Vietnam Veterans at End of Life," *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management* 61, no. 5 (2021): 989.

The William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin, developed a program to use with aging veterans called “My Life, My Story” (MLMS) to connect healthcare providers with their veteran patients.²⁵ The MLMS program used a staff member as an interviewer who spent approximately 1-2 hours with each veteran. Each interview followed a semi-structured approach through ten areas, and veterans were provided a draft of the final story written by the interviewer and given permission prior to it being added to their patient record.²⁶ A subsequent analysis of 231 MLMS stories found a majority of VeV described traumatic events (71%).²⁷ This finding indicates the need for interviewers in such programs to have proper training and preparation. Additional studies introduce “later-adulthood trauma reengagement (LATR),” as a method for aging veterans to resolve previously avoided issues from their service.²⁸

Community & Participatory Archives

The proposed project also draws from the Pls’ previous research on community and participatory archives. Participatory archives are part of the larger archival postmodern movement. Through engaging users, participatory archives attempt to integrate new perspectives into their collections through the description, development of new collections, archival funding, and even outreach. Many archives since 1980 have focused on filling the gaps created by decades of adherence to outdated definitions of records and value through translating postmodernism into new archival practices such as documentation strategy and functional appraisal.²⁹ Cook describes this as the shift “from the ‘nature’ residue or passive by product of administrative activity to the consciously constructed and actively mediated ‘archivalisation’ of social memory.”³⁰

Not only can the archival understanding of a record change over time from the archivist’s perspective, but each user brings differing perspectives. The addition (and possible subtraction) of records within an open collection or a repository may add or remove context and contextualizations.³¹ Therefore, the user and potential user of archives hold an essential role within the postmodern archive. The participatory archive movement can be seen as an extension of postmodernism through an attempt to better integrate the user perspective within archival processes.

The participatory, community, and social justice movements are not mutually exclusive and often overlap – particularly community and participatory archives. Scholarly interest in community and participatory archives proliferated with the advancement of Web 2.0 technologies in the mid-2000s, although it had existed previously. There are numerous, often overlapping though sometimes contradictory, definitions of participatory and community archives.

²⁵ Thor Ringler, Eileen P. Ahearn, Meg Wise, Elliot R. Lee, and Dean Krahn, “Using Life Stories to Connect Veterans and Providers,” *Federal Practitioner* 32, no. 6 (2015), 8.

²⁶ Ringler et al., 10.

²⁷ Zachary Sager, Susan Nathan, Kelly Doherty, Anic Pless Kaiser, Katherine D. King, David R. Topor, Nicholas R. Morrison, and Jennifer Moye, “Traumatic Disclosures in the Life Stories of Older Vietnam Era Veterans,” *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 70 (2022): 2967-2972.

²⁸ Eve H. Davison, Anica Pless Kaiser, Avron Spiro, III, Jennifer Moye, Linda A. King, and Daniel W. King, “From Late-Onset Stress Symptomatology to Later-Adulthood Trauma Reengagement in Aging Combat Veterans: Taking a Broader View,” *The Gerontologist* 56, no. 1 (2016): 14-21.

²⁹ Helen W. Samuels, “Improving Our Disposition: Documentation Strategy,” *Archivaria* 33, no. 1 (1991-1992): 125-140; Helen W. Samuels, *Varsity Letters: Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1992).

³⁰ Terry Cook, “Archival Science and Postmodernism: New Formulations of Old Concepts,” *Archival Science* 1, no. 1 (2001): 4.

³¹ Verne Harris, “Claiming Less, Delivering More: A Critique of Positivist Formulations on Archives in South Africa,” *Archivaria* 44, no. 1 (1997): 136.

As the profession moves into what Canadian archival scholar Terry Cook describes as the community paradigm of archives, there is evidence of democratization of archival power.³² Gabriel and Jensen observe, “Information professionals such as librarians and archivists are no longer the sole authorities in the distribution, presentation, and retrieval of information.”³³ This is quite clear in the many iterations of participatory and community archives. Though many participatory archives include professional and institutional mediation, countless others are independent and autonomous archives run by their participants and community members.

The universe of participatory projects extends beyond transcription, description, and outreach into the grey area overlapping between community and participatory archives. While most of the projects serve specific purposes with individual characteristics, they share some common themes and approaches. Perhaps most importantly, all projects allow community members to take an active and primary role in their creation, curation, and use. This approach follows contemporary archival trends towards simultaneously limiting the archival voice and increasing marginalized communities’ representation within collections. Likewise, it reflects what British archival scholars Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd refer to as the “defining characteristic of community archives – the active participation of a community in documenting and making accessible the history of their particular group and/or locality *on their own terms*.” Additionally, Flinn et al. note the range of included possibilities “from complete autonomy from the ‘mainstream’ to the delegation of the custody and preservation of their materials to public sector archivists and a wide range of options in between.”³⁴

While community participatory archives existed well before the 20th century in more analog forms, the expansion of the Internet, social media and Web 2.0 tools hastened the expansion of such archives and communities.³⁵ Their growth and recognition by traditional archival institutions challenge the professional role of archivists.³⁶ Despite these challenges, the community and participatory models provide ample opportunities for the archival profession and the communities themselves. For communities, the projects offer a space to engage with memory-making activities and ensure the preservation of their own stories, artifacts, and records. For archivists, the projects offer partnership opportunities within post-custodial frameworks – and, as Flinn notes, a call for a re-evaluation of the profession itself:

A re-evaluation which leaves behind the idea of the archivist as a neutral, passive, reactive figure and instead embraces a much more active or proactive role, one which acknowledges the power and influence which the archivist has over framing our archival heritage and social memory. Under the terms of this shift, the profession should become more flexible and outward facing, working in partnership with, and supporting the creators and custodians of community archives and heritage materials, considering postcustodial models and relationships for these and perhaps other collections.³⁷

The use of participatory models also challenges traditional thinking of archival authority through the potential for introducing new voices that “muddy the network, reducing authority and authenticity, and perhaps,

³² Terry Cook, “Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms,” *Archival Science* 13, no. 2–3 (2013): 95–120.

³³ Lýsa Westberg Gabriel and Thessa Jensen, “Who Is the Expert in Participatory Culture?” in *Participatory Heritage*, eds. Henriette Roued-Cunliffe and Andrea Copeland (London: Facet Publishing, 2017), 87.

³⁴ Flinn, Stevens and Shepherd, “Whose Memories, Whose Archives?,” 73.

³⁵ Flinn, Community Histories, “Community Archives,” 159.

³⁶ See Flinn, “Community Histories, Community Archives.”

³⁷ Flinn, “Community Histories, Community Archives,” 168.

value.”³⁸ It is viewed as a method of decentralizing authority and moving from static to dynamic spaces.³⁹ In doing so, participatory advocates argue participants “should be treated as *peer collaborators* . . . rather than outside interlopers.”⁴⁰

Project Work Plan The planning project will incorporate three main phases: a focus group, a survey phase, and a collaborative planning phase. Table 1 provides a simplified schedule of completion (see the Supporting Documents for the more detailed Schedule of Completion).

Table 1 Simplified Schedule of Completion

Task Name	Aug -25	Sep -25	Oct -25	Nov -25	Dec -25	Jan- 26	Feb -26	Mar -26	Apr -26	May- 26	Jun -26	Jul- 26
Interview & hire GA												
Collect & Analyze material from existing VeV initiatives												
Focus groups & analysis												
Survey creation, distribution & analysis												
	Aug -26	Sep -26	Oct- 26	Nov -26	Dec -26	Jan- 27	Feb -27	Mar -27	Apr -27	May- 27	Jun -27	Jul- 27
Survey analysis, con't												
Meeting coordination & planning												
Collaborative meeting												
Drafting, editing, & distributing meeting deliverables												
Presentation of findings & preparing implementation grants												

Year One During the project's first year, the Pls will identify and analyze existing and previous VeV initiatives and projects. These projects include, but are not limited to, the Library of Congress Veterans History Project, the National Archives Citizen Archivists' Marine Corps Activities in Vietnam project, Texas Tech University's Vietnam Center & Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive, the Vietnam War Commemoration Oral History Project, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund's Wall of Faces. The Pls will conduct a content analysis of existing initiative public documents, including websites, publications, and presentations. Furthermore, the Pls will incorporate informal data collection through email, phone, and zoom conversations with workers when additional context is required.

The Pls will conduct a series of three virtual focus groups to identify the needs and concerns of Veteran Service Organizations, military-related LIS practitioners, and VeV themselves. Each focus group will include seven participants for a total of twenty-one participants. The Pls will recruit participants from the following VSOs through direct email invitations: the Vietnam Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, United Service Organizations, AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, National Veterans Association, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Service Women's Action Network, Victories for Veterans. For the military-

³⁸ Terry D. Baxter, "Going to See the Elephant: Archives, Diversity, and the Social Web," in *A Different Kind of Web* ed. Kate Theimer (Chicago: SAA, 2011): 286.

³⁹ Isto Huvila, "Participatory Archive: Towards Decentralised Curation, Radical User Orientation, and Broader Contextualisation of Records Management," *Archival Science* 8, no. 1 (2008): 25; Eric Ketelaar, "Cultivating Archives: Meanings and Identities," *Archival Science* 12, no. 1 (2012): 29; and Eric Ketelaar, "Being Digital in People's Archives," *Archives & Manuscripts* 31, no. 2 (2003): 12-13; Joy Palmer and Jane Stevenson, "Something Worth Sitting for? Some Implications of Web 2.0 for Outreach," in *A Different Kind of Web* ed. Kate Theimer (Chicago: SAA, 2011): 6.

⁴⁰ Palmer, "Archives 2.0."

related LIS practitioner focus group, the PIs will contact the leadership of the Society of American Archivists Military Archives Section, American Library Association Federal, and the Armed Forces Libraries Round Table/Interest Group and request the invitation be distributed to their membership. General recruitment emails for this focus group will also be distributed to national listservs for librarians and archivists.

Finally, the PIs will use the VSO and LIS contacts to distribute recruitment invitations for the VeV focus group and social media posts on the PIs university accounts and the Virtual Footlocker Project social media accounts. Interested participants will complete an initial screening questionnaire via Qualtrics with demographic (e.g., age, gender, etc.) and contextual information (e.g., service branch, years in service, etc.). The PIs will purposefully select a sample of participants that reflects the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Profile of Vietnam War Veterans⁴¹

The VSO and LIS focus group protocol will follow a semi-structured approach based on the previous findings of the VFP. Additionally, a preliminary analysis of these focus groups will inform the structure and questions for the VeV focus group. All three focus groups will be conducted via Zoom and adhere to the best practice guidelines developed by the Virtual Footlocker Project in conjunction with the LSU IRB. Each participant will be paid \$150 for their time, and the focus groups will last approximately 90 minutes. The focus groups will be recorded and automatically transcribed to the secured LSU server, with transcription correction completed by the project GA.

The PIs will analyze the focus group data using open coding techniques. The results will be used as the foundation for the subsequent survey of VSOs and LIS practitioners. The Qualtrics-based survey will include Likert-scale and open-ended questions. It will be distributed to VSO employees based on the DoD Directory of VSOs, and LIS practitioners using national listservs. The PIs will analyze the results of the surveys using open-coding and quantitative statistical analysis. The combined findings of the focus groups and survey analyses will serve as a foundation for the project's second phase.

Year Two The second year will focus on a collaborative planning process that brings together leadership from the [ALA Federal and Armed Forces Libraries Round Table](#) (FAFLRT), the [SAA Military Archives Section](#) (MARS), representatives from VeV-specific Veteran Service Organizations, such as Vietnam Veterans of American, and the VA social worker community. The planning will occur during a two-day meeting hosted by the National WWII Museum. The meeting will include 15 participants, with airfare and lodging, and M&IE will be covered for out-of-state participants and M&IE for in-state participants. Portions of the meeting will also include virtual participants who could not attend in person.

The participants will develop a program leveraging the Roadmap for Participatory Archiving (RoPA) and VFP structures.⁴² The RoPA model provides guiding documents, such as timelines and checklists, that will assist the participants in thoroughly addressing all aspects of the planning process. The two-day meeting will use the following preliminary agenda:

Day One

- Presentation & Discussion of Focus Group and Survey Findings
- Overview of RoPA & VFP models

⁴¹ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, "Profile of Vietnam War Veterans," July 2017, https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/Vietnam_Vet_Profile_Final.pdf.

⁴² "Roadmap for Participatory Archiving," accessed March 1, 2025, <https://ropa.umb.edu/>.

- Breakout Sessions (Creating a Timeline; Defining Community; Engagement; Logistics)

Day Two

- Reports from Breakout Sessions
- Designing Planning Deliverables
- Implementation & Funding Discussion

The deliverable will be easily implementable by cooperating with libraries or archives and partnering with Veteran Service Organizations. It will include everything necessary to run a VeV-specific LMB event. This includes planning documents, training and reference materials for organizers and volunteers on working with veterans and military-specific reference services, event marketing, logistics, participation release documents, and long-term preservation and digitization guides.

The project focuses on Vietnam-era Veterans. The PI's military background and prior work with veteran groups will help provide a shared entry point and structure for discussion during the focus groups. Finally, veterans, particularly those from underrepresented groups, will be given preference when hiring the project's graduate assistant.

Project Results The developed program will be shared via regional and national library, archival, and Veteran Service Organizations, such as the American Library Association, the Society of American Archivists, the Louisiana Library Association, the Society of Southwest Archivists, and the Vietnam Veterans of American (among others). The PIs will present the program as a workshop at conferences, such as the Texas Tech Vietnam Center & Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive's annual conference and the annual Military Social Work & Behavioral Health Conference.

Many libraries, archives, and community organizations aim to become more military-friendly, which will assist them in engaging and building relationships with the veteran community. Advocating for the importance of veterans and their records, and supporting efforts to nurture and build community connections is the broader goal of this team. The PIs will solicit future partnerships in preparation for a larger national implementation grant opportunity through funding agencies such as IMLS and the VA. The findings from the project, including developed programming protocols, will be publicly disseminated through the existing VFP website, its YouTube channel, and the LSU Scholarly Repository.

Budget Summary The proposed project costs will be \$91,430 with no cost-sharing. This includes \$10,000 in PI salary and wages, an additional \$13,000 in graduate student support, \$4,940 in tuition remission, and 5,830 in fringe benefits. The proposal includes a sub-award to Kent State University of \$17,720, which includes the co-PI's summary salary and fringe benefits. Additional costs include \$15,048 for participant travel to the meeting in year two, \$3,150 in focus group participant payments, \$2,000 in supplies, and \$5,000 in room rental. Finally, indirect costs of \$14,742 are included, using LSU's federally negotiated off-campus rate of 26% MTDC.

Schedule of Completion: August 2025-July 2026

Task Name	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26	Jul-26
Open application for GA												
Interview & hire GA												
Collect material from existing VeV initiatives												
Analyze material from existing VeV initiatives												
Create focus group protocol & submit IRB												
Recruit focus group participants												
Conduct focus groups												
Analyze focus group data & create Qualtrics survey												
Distribute survey & collect data												
Analyze survey data												

Schedule of Completion: August 2026-July 2027

Task Name	Aug-26	Sep-26	Oct-26	Nov-26	Dec-26	Jan-27	Feb-27	Mar-27	Apr-27	May-27	Jun-27	Jul-27
Analyze survey data (con't)												
Meeting coordination & planning												
Identify participants and invite to meeting												
Meet with the advisory board												
Host collaborative planning meeting												
Draft meeting deliverables and send to participants for final edits												
Prepare deliverables for online distribution												
Present findings at regional and national conferences												
Prepare applications for implementation grants												
Submit final report to IMLS												