



NATIONAL LEADERSHIP GRANTS FOR LIBRARIES

Sample Application LG-259131-OLS-25
Project Category: Community-Centered Implementation

Medina County District Library

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$100,000

Medina County District Library, in collaboration with local historical societies, will increase staff hours, enhance its Digitization Lab, and embed library staff in local societies to inventory collections, develop digitization plans, and execute the digitization process. To improve access to historical records, the project will follow best practices in archival description and digitization, while using AI tools to streamline efforts. Community engagement will be encouraged through social media, scan-a-thons, and educational programs. All digitized content will be made available to the public through the "Medina County Memory Project" website.

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.

Applicant Name: Medina County District Library

Project Title: Preserving Medina County, Ohio: Medina County District Library and Local Historical Societies Collaborate to Digitize the Community's Legacy

Narrative

Introduction

Medina County District Library (MCDL), in partnership with Medina County, Ohio historical societies including, but not limited to, Medina County Historical Society, Brunswick Area Historical Society, Chippewa Lake Historical Society, and Lodi Harrisville Historical Society, are grateful for the opportunity to apply for funding for a two-year Community-Centered Implementation Project. Many historical societies/museums in Medina County, Ohio are unable to digitize their unique collections and make them accessible to the public, due to a lack of staff/volunteers, expertise, equipment, digital infrastructure, and funding. MCDL, in partnership with and support of Medina County, Ohio historical societies/museums, will address these challenges by embedding library staff in the societies, making digitization resources available, and hosting digital collections. With a grant of \$100,000, MCDL will increase staff hours and expand the capabilities of MCDL's existing Digitization Lab to achieve the following project results: 1) aid county societies and museums in the creation of collection inventory and digitization plan; 2) implement digitization plans with staff, society, and community volunteer time, while following best practices for digitization and archival description; and, 3) make digitized content accessible to the public through the "Medina County Memory Project." With its emphasis on increasing access to community memory through digital preservation, the proposed "Preserving Medina County, Ohio" project directly aligns with NLG-L Objective 1.3 to "Provide broad access to and preservation of information and collections through libraries and archives."

Project Justification

Medina County, Ohio has 21 historical societies/museums. Each of these volunteer-led organizations holds unique historical records documenting Medina County's past. These societies' collections are valuable resources for local and family history researchers, but two challenges negatively impact collection access by the public. These challenges have been identified by MCDL through conversations with leaders in the county's societies and direct observation.

Challenge #1 – Decreased funding. Either through county budget cuts or through fewer membership dues, decreased funds have resulted in reduced access to the societies' physical collections by the public. For example, Medina County Historical Society (MCHS) previously had a paid curator; this employee would open the society to the public multiple days each week. However, following the Great Recession of 2008, funding for a curator was cut from the county budget. Since that time, MCHS has had to rely on volunteers; this has resulted in fewer hours for their historic homes and collections to be open to the public. While digitization could increase public access, with fewer funds available, the purchase of digitization equipment and software is cost prohibitive. These societies also lack funds to purchase the necessary digital infrastructure to store and disseminate digital assets.

Challenge #2 – Declining volunteerism. Unlike MCHS, most of the counties' historical societies/museums have never had a paid staff member and have had to rely on volunteers. Engagement in these organizations has followed the downward trend observed by researcher Robert D. Putnam in his book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* – and more recently articulated in *Join or Die*, a documentary about Putnam's research. Twenty-five years after Putnam's seminal study, most Medina County societies now rely heavily on a core group of a few volunteers who are responsible for all society operations. These individuals – while interested and enthusiastic – often have limited experience with best practices for maintaining archival collections, describing collections for discoverability, and digitization. With limited time available, these

volunteers must prioritize tasks essential for day-to-day operations; as a result, they do not have the time to gain familiarity, expertise, and comfort with digitization standards, software, and equipment.

Together, these two challenges have complicated the efforts of these societies to preserve and share their unique historical materials and, ultimately, created barriers to public engagement and historical discovery.

The current proposed project meets these challenges in the following ways:

1. Capitalizes upon established community relationships and prior digitization successes. Over the past decade, MCDL has built relationships with these historical societies and museums. In 2015, MCDL held the first “Medina County Local History Fair” in which all local historical/genealogical societies, museums, and associations were invited to present table displays to the public. Now an annual event in its tenth year, the 2025 “Medina County Local History Fair” grew to 16 participating societies and 200 attendees – the most ever. Recognizing that the societies held unique collections – from which the public would benefit from improved access – in 2019, MCDL spearheaded efforts to outsource digitization of local historic newspapers and company newsletters. To this end, MCDL solicited loans of historic newspapers and newsletters from MCHS and the Lodi Harrisville Historical Society for digitization. The partnership was a win-win-win: it filled gaps in the MCDL local history collection, it provided publicity for the loaning institutions, and it made materials accessible to the public for research. Since then, MCDL has partnered with the Brunswick Area Historical Society, the Granger Township Historical Society, the Liverpool Township Historical Society, and the Seville Historical Society in the same way. Beginning in 2021, MCDL connected with these same historical societies, as well as the Weymouth Preservation Society, the Chatham Township Historical Society, Wadsworth Historical Society, and the Litchfield Township Historical Society to digitize rare yearbooks that were otherwise difficult to access by the public. This proposed project continues these collaborative relationships in a specific, directed manner, by now embedding MCDL staff in societies to train and assist volunteers with digitization planning, selection, and description.
2. Utilizes – and grows – MCDL’s existing digitization equipment, infrastructure, and knowledge. Concurrent to these collaborations, MCDL has built a strong digitization program. Since December 2019, MCDL’s Digitization Lab has grown to include two Epson Expression Archival Scanners for digitizing photographs, slides, and negatives, plus the equipment and software to support the conversion of vinyl records, audio cassette tapes, VHS/VHS-C/MiniDV/Hi8 video tapes, 8mm/Super8 film, and 16mm film. While assembling this range of digitization equipment, MCDL has also built our technical infrastructure. After outsourcing digitization of yearbooks with Internet Archive and digitization of historic newspapers with Advantage Archives, in 2024, MCDL launched the Medina County Memory Project using CONTENTdm with our first in-house digitization efforts, with a collection of aerial photographs and a collection of letters written during Civil War by members of a Medina County Family. With an eye towards continued growth, MCDL staff are currently digitizing four additional collections and have recently completed the agreement to become a contributor to the Ohio Digital Network (ODN) and Digital Public Library of America (DPLA). The proposed project expands MCDL’s current digitization capabilities by funding the purchase of a CopiBook OS A2 scanner. The proposed project differs from MCDL’s past collaborative efforts as all digitization would be completed “in-house” using MCDL’s digitization lab. In-house digitization is preferred in this project, as items likely selected for digitization are among societies’ most singularly unique items. In-house digitization also improves preservation by eliminating the need to ship delicate, fragile items across the United States. Conducting the work in-house also enables the project to attract volunteers locally, including individuals looking for short-term service work, with community scan-a-thons.
3. Draws inspiration for existing collaborative digitization models. These models include:
 - The “Digitize New York” initiative. Developed by the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, this initiative directly addresses the challenges of decreased funding and declining volunteerism by providing digitization equipment and/or digitization staff for

repositories across New York. While the “Digitize New York” initiative depends upon societies to independently select records for digitization, MCDL's proposed project differs from it by introducing support one step earlier, with MCDL staff offering guidance to societies in their digitization planning and selection.

- The “Creating a Model for Community Digitization” initiative. Developed by the Western Michigan University Libraries, Kalamazoo, Michigan, this initiative sought to address the challenges societies face with digitization projects, specifically insufficient funds for equipment and insufficient expertise by volunteers. However, Western Michigan University Libraries’ staff acknowledged that their initiative encountered challenges with societies’ selections for digitization and challenges with having sufficient time for trainers to impart knowledge to volunteers. This proposed project differs in its approach, by involving MCDL staff in the selection planning and by having staff connect with volunteers on a weekly basis for several weeks.

In summary, this proposed project differs from MCDL’s prior collaborative successes and differs from the models that have served as inspiration in three specific ways:

1. The proposed project includes MCDL staff time onsite at societies, to support, guide, and collaborate with their volunteers on digitization planning, selection, metadata creation, and scanning.
2. Utilizes and expands the MCDL Digitization Lab to enable digitization to occur locally, better preserving collections and attracting local individuals seeking short-term volunteer opportunities with scan-a-thons.
3. Broadens the scope of digitization. Previous collaborative efforts have focused on specific, finite collections of newspapers and yearbooks. This proposed project seeks collections including:
 - written narratives of personal experiences in Medina County (diaries, journals, letters) and oral histories
 - photos, postcards, and maps of historic Medina County
 - Medina County business, church, and local government records

MCDL has identified two target groups for the project:

1. The volunteer staff of local historical societies and museums. Leadership for these organizations totals approximately 50 individuals. Many members of this group have expressed concerns about their organizations’ collections. While some organizations have invested in “PastPerfect Museum Software” to catalog their collections, others have expressed concern about either not knowing what collections their organization owns and/or not knowing who in the organization will know the collection materials when current volunteer staff are either no longer able to volunteer or are deceased. This project immediately and positively affects this group by helping volunteers understand levels of cataloging (collection level to item level), recording collection inventory information in a shareable format, while identifying rare and at-risk collections for digitization.
2. Medina County District Library patrons. MCDL served more than half a million patrons in 2024. Patrons clearly have an interest in exploring their county’s history: in the past five years, patrons have accessed more than 350,000 pages of digitized content about Medina County’s history. This target group will be immediately and positively affected by this project, as digitization will improve their access to unique records from across the county.

The ultimate beneficiaries of this project are any individuals interested in history. These beneficiaries may include history buffs, students and scholars, family historians, as well as the individuals identified in our target groups. While the subject matter will be primarily Medina County history, the historic value of these collections extends beyond the county: in the 1940s, the city of Medina was twice selected by national publications as representative of typical small American communities. The materials are illustrative of other communities in the Connecticut Western Reserve, in Northeast Ohio, and the rural Midwest. The digitized materials created in this project will be made available to these beneficiaries, free of charge, and accessible anywhere with the internet.

This project will address NLG-L Objective 1.3 by building upon existing relationships between MCDL and these societies. Since 2020, MCDL has partnered with 10 of the 21 societies to digitize portions of their collections and make them freely accessible to the public. This project would expand upon those efforts by supplementing societies' volunteers with library staff time. Library staff would work alongside and train society members in assessing and prioritizing collections for digitization and digitization best practices. MCDL would make available and assist with a variety of professional-grade scanners, image editing software, the digital asset management software CONTENTdm, and digital collection hosting. All digital content produced during the project would be made available to researchers free of charge via MCDL's "Medina County Memory Project."

Project Work Plan

The project "Preserving Medina County, Ohio" is planned for a two-year period.

The first two months of the grant would be devoted to two preparatory tasks, both executed by the Project Director:

1. Stakeholder meeting. The Project Director will invite all leaders of the historical societies/museums to attend a stakeholder meeting. Meeting goals will include review of project goals and distribution of a scheduling survey. The survey is designed to capture information about each societies' upcoming exhibits and events, any planned society closures, volunteer availability, typical workdays, and any other information relevant to scheduling. The survey is also designed to capture known information about each societies' collections and any existing digitization priorities.
2. Purchase a CopiBook OS A2 scanner. MCDL plans to purchase the scanner from Image Retrieval, Inc., a CopiBook vendor in the United States, whom other local libraries have used and spoken about favorably. The Epson Expression Archival scanners currently in the MCDL Digitization Lab are not capable of scanning books or photographic materials larger than 12x17 inches. The addition of a CopiBook OS A2 scanner makes it possible to digitize journals, ledgers, and other books (up to 25x17.3 inches in size) in the collections of local historical societies. For digitization of fragile texts, the purchase would include accessories, such as the book holder that opens only to 100 degrees. The CopiBook OS A2 scanner also increases the Digitization Lab's capabilities by being able to scan flat materials up to 20x28.3 inches. While not the largest scan area of available CopiBook scanners, this model is preferred for this project as it has the fastest scan and cycle time, has earned a 3-star FADGI rating, and, if needed, is possible to move onsite to historical societies. Purchase of the scanner is among the earliest tasks in the grant period, as it takes four to eight weeks for the scanner to be shipped and installed. Purchasing early in the grant cycle ensures the scanner's installation prior to the period of staff training.

Following the stakeholder meeting and purchase of the scanner, the next two months of the project will be dedicated to two additional preparatory tasks, also executed by the Project Director:

1. Training project staff. Through the proposed project, current and planned staff in the Family History & Learning Center will dedicate approximately 30 hours/week to onsite visits to societies, as well as digitization. In this preparatory period, to ensure these activities are successful, the Project Director will train staff on project goals, project standards, and project equipment and software. Project goals include creating a collection-level inventory and digitization plan for all participating societies, more detailed finding aids created for approximately three collections per society, and digitization of selected collections. Project standards include Society of American Archivists "Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS)" for archival description; the Northeast Document Conservation Center's recommendations for selecting items for digitization; Dublin Core Metadata Element Set, modified for Metadata Application Profile (MAP) for metadata; and, Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative (FADGI) standards for scanning. Project equipment and software will include existing resources in

MCDL's Digitization Lab, as well as the CopiBook OS A2 scanner. It should be noted that project staff currently work at MCDL and are well-versed in digitization standards, equipment, and software. The majority of this training will focus on the CopiBook OS A2 scanner and software.

2. Scheduling onsite visits. The Project Director, with the assistance of project staff, will collate data collected from the stakeholder survey. Every effort will be made to accommodate the preferred schedules of participating societies. If requests are in conflict with each other, societies may be scheduled via random drawing.

Following all preparatory tasks, the remaining 20 months of the grant will be divided into four 5-month cycles. In each cycle, project staff will dedicate approximately 120 hours to each society scheduled in the cycle, with a maximum of five societies per cycle. Depending on the number of societies participating and the scope of some collections and digitization plans, some societies may be selected for additional hours. Each 5-month cycle will be split into two phases: Phase 1 will focus on collection assessment; Phase 2 will focus on collection digitization. Each 5-month cycle will include a minimum of two stakeholder meetings for ongoing communication, one scan-a-thon and one public program promoting new collections.

During Phase 1, one MCDL staff member and a minimum of one society volunteer will meet onsite at the society to assess and organize their collections into subcollections of defined record sets. Each staff member will be assigned a society to visit approximately 6 hours per week. The first visit will begin with a tour of the society for the staff member, focusing on archival collections and their current level of cataloging. Staff and volunteer(s) will examine the collection in the context of the proposed project's priorities including written narratives of personal experiences in Medina County (diaries, journals, letters) and oral histories, plus collections that document life in historic Medina County, such as photos, postcards, and maps, as well as business, church, and local government records. Simultaneously, staff and volunteer(s) will assess the collection, applying criteria for selecting materials to be digitized following the Northeast Document Conservation Center's recommendations, with their "Should you? May you? Can you?" model.

- When evaluating if a collection *should* be digitized, project staff/volunteers will consider its rarity, fragility, content value, and audience.
- When evaluating if a collection *may* be digitized, project staff/volunteers will consider if the item is under copyright and if the content poses privacy concerns.
- When evaluating if a collection *can* be digitized, project staff/volunteers will consider if the item is an allowable format, supported by MCDL digitization equipment and the time necessary to digitize the item. Allowable formats include photos, slides, negatives, 8mm/Super8 film, 16mm film, VHS, VHS-C, MiniDV, Hi8 video tapes, vinyl records (33, 45, and 78 rpm), audio cassette tapes, books, maps, and newspapers. For this project, three-dimensional items (including, but not limited to, clothing, dolls, furniture, and household goods) will not be considered for digitization.

During this process, staff and volunteer(s) will begin a collection level inventory, recording their observation of details relevant to collection priorities and digitization selection criteria. Based on this document, staff and volunteer(s) will determine the collection(s) of highest priority for digitization. For the final four weeks of Phase 1, staff and volunteers will work together to create a finding aid for each selected collection. Finding aids will be created with the guidance of the Society of American Archivists "Describing Archives: A Content Standard" (DACS). The selected, arranged, and described collections will then be transported to MCDL for digitization in the Digitization Lab.

In Phase 2, the Digitization Plan will be executed, with staff and volunteers operating out of the MCDL Digitization Lab. In each of the three cycles, Phase 2 will consist of the following tasks, informed by FADGI's recommended workflow:

- Develop metadata for collections. With a basis on descriptions created during Phase 1, MCDL staff and volunteers will work together to create metadata for each item selected for digitization. Since digitized items will be uploaded to CONTENTdm and have the long-term goal of being shared with the Ohio

Digital Network (ODN) and the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA), metadata for this project will be based on the Dublin Core Metadata Element Set, modified to follow ODN's requirements for a Metadata Application Profile (MAP). Prior to publication, staff and volunteers will record descriptive metadata for each item in a spreadsheet, enabling communication and progress tracking across the project. As appropriate, staff and volunteers apply Artificial Intelligence tools to expedite archival description. In the past, MCDL has utilized the A.I. Handwritten Text Recognition (HTR) tool Transkribus to generate full-text transcriptions of handwritten letters. The tool, which provides options for creating a handwriting model for specific authors, is best suited for use when transcribing large collections of text written by the same individual. This tool may be used for transcribing handwritten diaries, government documents, ledgers, and letters owned by historical societies. Similarly, Mark Thompson's Historical Photo Analyzer – a custom Generative Pre-Trained Transformer (GPT) available through OpenAI – is designed to provide observations tied to specific features in photographs. This tool is best suited to generate descriptive language about images and may be used for prompting, generating, or enhancing staff/volunteer-created descriptions of negatives and photographic prints owned by historical societies.

- Digitize collections/items selected from historical societies. Currently, the MCDL's Digitization Lab includes two Epson Expression Archival Scanners for digitizing photographs, slides, and negatives, plus the equipment and software to support the conversion of vinyl records, audio cassette tapes, VHS/VHS-C/MiniDV/Hi8 video tapes, and 8mm/Super8 film and 16mm film; a CopiBook OS A2 scanner is sought with funds through this project. Using this equipment and software...
 - for still images and texts such as letters, an Archival Master TIFF File will be created for each item. The Archival Master TIFF will be edited to create a Production Master Tiff file. To facilitate end-user access and make efficient use of digital storage, staff will save a copy of the Production Master as a JPEG to serve as an Access File.
 - for books and bound records or manuscripts, individual pages will be scanned as Archival Master TIFFs, then converted to PDFs for access.
 - for audio files, recordings will be captured and shared as WAV files
 - for moving images, recordings will be captured and shared as MPEG files

These files will be created to meet or exceed FADGI's three-star standards for file format, resolution/color, and/or sample rate. All files will be stored on the MCDL server, with backups saved to the State of Ohio Computer Center. While digitizing, as needed, collections will be rehoused into archival storage that has passed the Photographic Activity Test. The goal for rehousing items is to reduce handling of the originals and thus aid in preservation of the originals.

- To facilitate efficient scanning of collections and stimulate community interest, early in Phase 2, during each cycle, MCDL will host a Community Scan-a-thon. These scan-a-thons will be patterned after best practices identified in the Roadmap for Participatory Archiving and community history events held by the Queens Memory project team. Following the Queens Memory Event Planning Checklist for Community Scanning Events – while integrating it into existing MCDL marketing schedules – scan-a-thons will be scheduled approximately 3 to 6 months in advance. Events will be promoted as short-term volunteer opportunities during which attendees can contribute to the digitization of local historical materials. Scan-a-thons will be marketed to MCDL patrons, Medina County community organizations, and the general public using the MCDL Library Live newsletter, traditional media, and social media. A month before the event promotional materials will be distributed to project partners and staff will reach out to relevant community groups, while creating a staffing plan for the event. Before the event, interested participants will register for one-hour time slots. During their time, staff will guide the volunteer on equipment, while maintaining digitization standards throughout the process. Attendees will have the option to be recognized by name on the digital collection landing pages.
- When metadata creation and scanning is complete, collections will be published to the “Medina County Memory Project” utilizing CONTENTdm software. CONTENTdm was selected to meet NISO's recommended practices. The software makes the collection broadly accessible to patrons and enables

MCDL to share the patrons' usage rights. The use of CONTENTdm positions MCDL to market the collection widely in the future, with presentation options available through CONTENTdm's support of the International Image Interoperability Framework and through networking options through Ohio Digital Network and the Digital Public Library of America. Once content is published, staff will collect usage data via CONTENTdm's "Reports" monthly, to track growth and trends.

- Host a program promoting new collections to the public. Phase 2 of each cycle will conclude with a public program highlighting the new collections on the "Medina County Memory Project" digitized from the historical societies. These programs will be held at the Medina Library branch of MCDL. This location is centrally located in the county, has a meeting room that that can accommodate up to 120 attendees, and has equipment to share the program virtually. Programs will be offered in a hybrid format, to reach individuals interested in Medina County history but not residing locally. Based on past programs of a similar nature, attendance of 40 to 80 attendees is expected.

To supervise this proposed project, MCDL's Family History & Learning Center Manager, Lauren Kuntzman, will serve as Project Director. Kuntzman has previously contributed to digitization projects like St. Joseph County (Indiana) Public Library's Michiana Memory Project. In her current role at MCDL, she has led her team in outsourced and in-house digitization projects including expanding the collection of MCDL's digitized, off-copyright yearbooks, launching MCDL's digital archive of historical newspapers, and digitizing the fragile "Medina Landmarks / About the Past" collection. In 2024, with a grant from the Ohio History Fund, Kuntzman led her team at MCDL in launching the "Medina County Memory Project," using CONTENTdm software. In addition to her experience, she holds master's degrees in both Art History & Museum Studies and Library & Information Science and has a 20-year career in cultural heritage organizations.

To carry out the day-to-day project tasks within each of the four cycles, MCDL's Family History & Learning Center staff will serve as Project Staff. Presently, these staff members include four library associates, including Miranda Fein, Rachel Gamin, Lisa Riennerth, and Madison Thomas. All four hold bachelor's degrees. Thomas has completed her MLIS degree, with an emphasis in museum studies, while Fein and Gamin both plan to pursue their MLIS beginning this fall, likely with specializations in archival studies. Riennerth has 20+ years of experience working with local and family history collections, both as a professional genealogist and as an MCDL staff member. All four have extensive experience with digitization, using MCDL's Digitization Lab equipment and software for library projects, while instructing patrons. All four have built relationships with volunteers at local societies, by periodically attending meetings, offering programming, and supporting MCDL's previous collaborative digitization efforts.

Also contributing to the completion of the day-to-day project tasks, MCDL has already planned to add a Family History & Learning Center Librarian position. This hiring will occur prior to the start of the proposed project. The following described qualifications lend themselves to supporting this project.

- Required qualifications include: MLIS from an ALA accredited school; prior experience with digitization projects; experience with Microsoft Office Suite; ability to work independently, as well as with a team, including volunteers; patient, conscientious, and detail-oriented, with a threshold for tedious, routine tasks; and, excellent interpersonal, oral, and written communication skills.
- Preferred Qualifications include prior experience with archival theory and practice; familiarity with a wide range of scanners and digital cameras; experience with image, audio, and video editing software, including but not limited to Adobe Photoshop, GNU Image Manipulation Program, Audacity, GarageBand, PowerDirector, and iMovie; and, experience using Transkribus, an A.I. Handwritten Text Recognition tool, PastPerfect Museum Software, and/or CONTENTdm.

Key stakeholders in this project include leaders of the county's historical societies and museums. MCDL's Family History & Learning Center Manager routinely meets with these stakeholders at quarterly Historical Council meetings, as well as the annual MCDL-sponsored Local History Fair. Throughout the planning and development Preserving Medina County, Ohio

of this project, the manager has asked for stakeholders' input regarding their societies' needs and how MCDL can support them. The proposed project was designed to mitigate the challenges societies face. Ongoing communication is planned for the duration of this project. A stakeholder meeting is planned as an initial task for launching the proposed project. During each cycle of the project, the Project Director will meet with stakeholders on three occasions to solicit opinions about the project meeting their expectations. This feedback will be used to refine the project, especially in subsequent cycles.

To evaluate the proposed "Preserving Medina County, Ohio" project, success will be measured against the following targets:

- Participation by 75% of historical societies/museums in Medina County, Ohio
- Dedicate an average of 30 hours per week of MCDL staff time
- Write 15 inventories and 15 digitization plans (approximately 1 per participating organization)
- Produce 50 finding aids for collections at historical societies (approximately 3 per participating organization)
- Create 17 collections in the "Medina County Memory Project" (1 per township)
- Digitize of 600 still images (approximately 40 per participant), 300 texts (approximately 20 per participant), 15 audio files (approximately 1 per participant), and 30 moving images (approximately 2 per participant)
- Host a minimum of 4 scan-a-thons, with 20 volunteers participating in each event
- Host a minimum of 4 hybrid programs, with at least 40 attendees per program
- 300 items accessed on "Medina County Memory Project" per month

MCDL staff will use various quantitative measures to track progress on project goals. These measures will be collected monthly.

- Staff hours will be tracked via timecards.
- Volunteer hours will be tracked via spreadsheets.
- The number of finding aids produced and digitization plans written, will be tracked via spreadsheets.
- The number of collections created and items digitized will be tracked via reports in CONTENTdm.
- The number of community members participating in scan-a-thons and attending informational programs will be tracked via event registration software.
- The number of digital items accessed on the "Medina County Memory Project," will be tracked via reports in CONTENTdm.

MCDL staff will use various qualitative measures to track participants' experiences. Throughout the project, MCDL will solicit feedback from: 1) participating societies; 2) MCDL staff; and, 3) individuals attending project events and programs. Check-in conversations will be held between the Project Director, society leadership, and MCDL staff at least three-times during each five-month cycle. Surveys soliciting feedback will be distributed to event volunteers and program attendees following each event/program.

Data collected by quantitative and qualitative measures will be used to refine practices through the proposed "Preserving Medina County, Ohio" project.

Project Results

As identified earlier in this proposal, local historical societies/museums face two challenges (decreased funding and declining volunteerism) which have impeded their efforts to make collections available for public access, either in the original or digitized format. The proposed "Preserving Medina County, Ohio" project meets these challenges by providing the time and expertise of MCDL staff, while utilizing the equipment in MCDL's Digitization Lab, to make digitized versions of these collections available to the public.

In the approximately 120 hours of MCDL staff time dedicated to each participating local society the intended deliverables include 1) a high-level inventory of a society's collections; 2) a prioritized plan for digitizing their collections; 3) a finding aid for subcollections selected for digitization; 4) at least one digital collection added to the "Medina County Memory Project;" and, 5) educational public programs promoting the new digital content. These results address the challenges of societies lacking staffing and funding, to make unique archival collections more accessible to the public.

Project deliverables will be made readily available and useable to the general public (the ultimate beneficiaries), as well as interested institutions and communities, via MCDL's website and the "Medina County Memory Project." To expand the reach of the project, MCDL will partner with the Ohio Digital Network to have collections harvested and shared via DPLA.

Other communities may adapt this model of partnership between public libraries and historical societies/museums. The project design will be shared with other interested parties via panel discussion, conference presentation, and/or scholarly article. MCDL will submit a presentation proposal for consideration to at least one of the following organizations:

- Ohio Local History Alliance Regional Meetings. Various historical organizations throughout the state host Regional Meetings. Meetings include programs discussing a variety of local history topics, such as partnerships and digitization.
- American Library Association Conference. ALA conference proposals on the topics of collections, access, and technical services, as well as outreach and engagement are welcome. This project would be appropriate to share as part of these categories.
- National Genealogical Society's SLAM! Idea Showcase. A part of the NGS's annual conference, the SLAM! Idea Showcase, highlights projects by societies, libraries, archives, and museums that serve local/family history researchers, by delivering information to the community, that could be replicated or adapted by other organizations.

The proposed "Preserving Medina County, Ohio" project will have a long-term impact for our immediate community, and may be replicated by others. While embedded in the societies, MCDL staff will model the best practices for archival arrangement and description, digitization selection and planning, metadata creation, and digitization. Through these examples, society volunteers will gain experience with and be able to apply these standards in the future. These practices – which all have a defined scope – may help societies develop more achievable goals, tailored to their available volunteer time. The project also provides historical society volunteers with experience with locally available digitization equipment, as well as provides the scan-a-thon model in which societies may better capitalize on individuals looking for short-term volunteer opportunities. It is the goal of this project that the historical societies and museums will learn and be able to apply more sustainable, standards-based strategies for making their collections accessible to the public.

Applicant Name: Medina County District Library

Project Title: Preserving Medina County, Ohio: Medina County District Library and Local Historical Societies Collaborate to Digitize the Community's Legacy

Schedule of Completion

[illegible]

[illegible]