



NATIONAL LEADERSHIP GRANTS FOR LIBRARIES

Sample Application LG-259601-OLS-26
Project Category: National Implementation

Indiana University

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$246,730
Amount of cost share:	\$0

Indiana University will process, preserve, and provide national access to the papers and research archive of Ray Bradbury, whose work shaped science fiction, film, and popular culture. The project will conduct a comprehensive survey, arrangement, and description of the collection; stabilize and rehouse archival materials; and create standardized metadata and publicly accessible finding aids. These activities will transform an inaccessible research archive into a sustainable scholarly resource. By making the collection discoverable and usable for research, the project will expand access to primary source materials that document Bradbury's creative process and influence on American literary and cultural history. The core purpose of this project will allow the Ray Bradbury Center to hire a full-time archivist to complete the processing of 186 linear feet of Ray Bradbury's manuscripts; it will support the creation of finding aids for the manuscript collection; and it will allow the center to complete the process of transferring manuscripts to archival quality storage.

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.

Narrative

Introduction

The Ray Bradbury Center at Indiana University Indianapolis is a research center, museum, library, and archive dedicated to preserving the legacy of American author Ray Bradbury (1920–2012). It was created in 2007 to facilitate research on one of the twentieth century's most important fiction writers and is the only public archive dedicated exclusively to him. At the time it was founded, the Center held a small archival collection and served as the home of the online scholarly journal *The New Ray Bradbury Review*. When Bradbury died in 2012, his family and Donn Albright, the author's principal bibliographer, donated an extensive collection of manuscripts and correspondence, along with Bradbury's working library, memorabilia, awards, drawings, paintings, and multimedia materials to Indiana University Indianapolis.

The Ray Bradbury Center contains the entirety of Bradbury's basement office—from his office chair, typewriter, and pencils to his photographs, posters, and filing cabinets—which has been recreated for tours for students, researchers, and visitors since 2018. The collection includes more than 150,000 pages of published and unpublished literary works stored in 31 of the author's original filing cabinets; four decades of personal and professional correspondence; remnants of Bradbury's author's stock of books; an extensive array of foreign language editions; and his working library of nearly 4,000 volumes. The broader assortment of documents includes manuscripts, typescripts, story concepts, photographs, screenplay and teleplay drafts, video and film recordings, drawings, vestiges of Bradbury's early literacy development—including scrapbooks from his youth in which he glued newspaper comic strips in an effort to create his own books—and hundreds of keepsakes collected during his travels. At the time of donation, the collection was valued at nearly \$7.8 million, and subsequent discoveries have further underscored its significance.

Recognizing the importance of the collection to scholarship in literature, history, science studies, and cultural studies, Indiana University is investing in a new purpose-built reference library, reading room, and archival storage facility for the Ray Bradbury Center, scheduled to open in October 2026. The new space will provide secure storage, a dedicated preservation workspace, and a public reading room designed specifically for archival research.

Since 2018, the Center has made substantial progress toward establishing intellectual control over the archive. With support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Center developed a processing framework and metadata structure for the archive. Approximately 60 linear feet of manuscript material have been processed, primarily through the work of a professional volunteer archivist. Nearly all audiovisual materials have been digitized and preserved through Indiana University's Media Digitization and Preservation Initiative and are maintained in IU's Scholarly Data Archive.

However, 186 linear feet of manuscript materials—including drafts of major works, correspondence, lectures, business records, and unpublished writings—remain unprocessed and largely inaccessible. Without standardized arrangement and description, these materials cannot be reliably discovered or used within national archival systems.

The core purpose of this project is threefold: 1) it will allow the Ray Bradbury Center to hire a full-time archivist to complete the processing of 186 linear feet of Ray Bradbury's manuscripts; 2) it will support the creation of finding aids for the manuscript collection; and 3) it will allow the center to complete the process of transferring manuscripts to archival quality storage.

IMLS funding will support the completion of processing and public description of these remaining

manuscript materials, ensuring that the collection is fully discoverable, described in accordance with professional standards, and integrated into national research infrastructures.

Project Justification

Ray Bradbury's life and work are deeply entangled in the cultural history of the United States. John Steinbeck read Bradbury's books annually to his children. Individuals from Steven Spielberg to Margaret Atwood to Colson Whitehead have commented on his influence on their own work. Bradbury was a leader among a generation of writers who established science fiction, weird fiction, and comic books as works of literature.

While Bradbury is most often remembered as a science fiction writer, his work extended far beyond the parameters of genre. In addition to film adaptations such as François Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451* (1966) and Jack Clayton's *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1983), he wrote and co-wrote scripts for films including John Huston's *Moby Dick* (1956). After writing scripts for *The Twilight Zone* and *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, he hosted his own television series, *The Ray Bradbury Theater*. Bradbury maintained a close working relationship with Walt Disney and developed the concept and original script for Spaceship Earth at Epcot Center.

Through his writing and advocacy, Bradbury shaped late twentieth-century popular culture, particularly attitudes toward technology and censorship. His work emphasized the importance of free speech, the freedom to read, and the value of historical knowledge to a well-functioning democracy. Through fiction and essays on the American space program for *Time* and *Life*, he became known as the poet of the space age. The Apollo 15 crew named Dandelion Crater on the Moon after his novel *Dandelion Wine*. NASA and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory named the landing site for the Mars Curiosity rover "Bradbury Landing."

The collection preserves this history in manuscript form. Drafts reveal revisions across multiple stages of composition. Letters document intellectual exchanges with figures such as Bertrand Russell, Bernard Berenson, Helen Bevington, Federico Fellini, Anaïs Nin, John Huston, and Stephen King. Minor works and scattered correspondence—including a 1952 letter to *Variety* in which Bradbury wrote, "let us send McCarthy and his friends back to Salem and the seventeenth century"—reveal the scope of his engagement with American civic debates.

Despite this importance, scholars cannot access most of Bradbury's manuscripts because they remain uncatalogued. Without DACS-compliant arrangement and EAD-encoded finding aids, materials cannot be reliably located. Researchers cannot systematically trace revisions across drafts, map correspondence networks, or reconstruct the development of Bradbury's ideas.

The archive presents distinctive challenges. As confirmed by multiple scholars and consultants, Bradbury's filing practices were anarchic. Papers were haphazardly piled, placed into reused folders with titles unrelated to their contents, and grouped associatively rather than chronologically or by subject. Processing therefore requires careful evaluation of original groupings and sustained archival judgment.

As the United States approaches the 250th anniversary of its founding, renewed attention to debates about freedom of speech, censorship, technological change, and democratic culture underscores the importance of making such archival records fully available. Completing arrangement and description ensures that the documentary record of one of America's most influential twentieth-century writers becomes fully accessible for sustained scholarly and public engagement.



Project Work Plan

The project will hire a full-time professional archivist to complete the processing of 186 linear feet of manuscript materials. The archivist will report to the Director of the Ray Bradbury Center and collaborate with IU Libraries and University Collections staff to ensure adherence to professional standards. The Director will meet weekly with the archivist to review processing decisions, discuss complex arrangement questions, and monitor progress toward established benchmarks. Quarterly internal reviews will assess footage processed and description completed.

Processing will follow the Center's 5,600-word Processing Guide and align with the Archives of American Art Processing Guidelines. Two core concepts guide the work: Respect des Fonds and Original Order.

Respect des Fonds requires that materials created or accumulated by Ray Bradbury be maintained as a coherent collection (MSS001), separate from materials created by other individuals. Photocopies deriving from other collections, research files, and materials not owned by Bradbury are accessioned separately. Any newly identified materials acquired from external sources are treated as distinct accessions.

Original Order presumes that a creator's filing system may illuminate intellectual processes. However, extended review of Bradbury's papers has demonstrated that his filing practices lack consistent chronological or subject-based organization. Papers were frequently placed into reused folders with titles unrelated to their contents and grouped associatively rather than systematically. The processor must therefore evaluate each folder individually, determine whether original groupings convey meaningful intellectual relationships, and decide when reorganization is necessary to facilitate findability.

The deed of gift governing the Bradbury papers stipulates that no materials may be discarded unless they are exact duplicates. Annotations render items unique. As a result, traditional appraisal practices are constrained, and processing focuses on arrangement, preservation, and description rather than reduction of material.

Folder-Level Review and Arrangement

Processing will proceed drawer-by-drawer through the remaining unprocessed materials. For each folder, the archivist will:

- Assess the intellectual coherence of its contents.
- Compare contents with original labeling and document discrepancies.
- Identify potential series placement within the established framework.
- Preserve original annotations and contextual information when relevant.
- Reassign materials where necessary to ensure clarity and access.

The current series list is as follows. Funding from the IMLS will be used to process only manuscript material. However, given the nature of Bradbury's collecting habits, folders may include photos, clippings, and other ephemera, which will need to be cataloged at the same time.

I. Works by Bradbury: Manuscripts/Typescripts and Printed Material

- a. Books
- b. Stories
- c. Poems and Verse
- d. Articles and Essays
- e. Stage Plays
- f. Motion Pictures
- g. Television
- h. Radio
- i. Introductions, Prefaces, Forewords, and Afterwords
- j. Reviews
- k. Speeches
- l. Shows and Exhibits
- m. Adaptations
- n. Music and Musical Adaptations
- o. Audiobooks and Recordings
- p. Comics
- q. Translations

II. Secondary Materials

- a. Works about Bradbury
 - i. Articles and essays
 - ii. Interviews
 - iii. Reviews
 - iv. Graduate work
- b. Works by other authors: Collected by Bradbury
- c. Newspaper and magazine clippings
- d. Periodicals

III. Correspondence

IV. Events

- a. Conferences and workshops
- b. Bookstores
- c. Libraries
- d. Schools
- e. Award ceremonies
- f. Performances

V. Business Records

- a. Contracts
- b. Publishing
- c. Financial
- d. Awards
- e. Memberships
- f. Science and the space program
- g. Rapid transit
- h. Art and architecture
- i. Music

VI. Personal Records

VII. Photographs

VIII. Art and Graphics

- a. Posters
- b. Prints and drawings
- c. Scrapbooks

IX. Audiovisual

X. Folders

The existing series framework will guide arrangement, but archival judgment may require refinement of subseries boundaries. Subseries will be used sparingly to avoid overcomplicating the finding aid.

Rehousing and Preservation Protocol

All manuscript materials will be transferred from non-archival folders into acid-free archival folders and housed in protective boxes. Bradbury's original colored folders—many bearing handwritten notes and drawings—will be preserved separately in archival enclosures so that their intellectual value is retained without risking long-term deterioration of manuscripts .

Preservation actions will include removal of metal fasteners; removal of rubber bands and unstable bindings; interleaving of photographs; enclosure of fragile paper; photocopying thermofax documents when necessary; relocation of audiovisual materials to appropriate storage; and proper housing of oversize materials .

Sensitive materials containing financial, medical, or personally identifiable information will be identified during processing. Such materials will be restricted, redacted on access copies where appropriate, or returned to donors in consultation with the Director, following documented procedures .

Metadata Migration and Finding Aid Production

Existing Excel-based metadata developed during prior processing phases will be imported into ArchiveSpace using CSV templates. Records will be reviewed and standardized in accordance with Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS). Date fields will follow established formatting conventions (e.g., single dates, date ranges, approximate dates, bulk dates) to ensure consistency and machine readability .

The finding aid will include collection overview, biographical note, scope and content notes, conditions governing access, preferred citation, extent statement, and a detailed folder list consistent with professional standards . ArchiveSpace exports in EAD and MARCXML will ensure interoperability with IU Archives Online and broader research discovery systems.

Timeline and Benchmarks

The project will proceed over a two-year period. During the first year, the archivist will complete a comprehensive survey of the remaining materials, conduct intensive folder-level review, rehouse manuscripts in archival-quality folders and boxes, and begin series-level arrangement. Legacy metadata recorded in Excel will be imported and normalized within ArchiveSpace, and draft finding aids will be constructed concurrently with processing.

During the second year, the archivist will complete arrangement and description across all remaining series, conduct internal quality control review of finding aids, finalize metadata normalization, and prepare the completed collection for publication through IU Archives Online. The grant period will conclude with the preparation of a scholarly article and the convening of a national symposium introducing scholars and archivists to the newly accessible archive.

Progress will be assessed through linear footage processed, number of folders described, and the successful publication of interoperable finding aids.

Institutional Capacity and Staff Qualifications

Indiana University Indianapolis has demonstrated sustained institutional commitment to the stewardship of the Ray Bradbury Center since the collection's arrival in 2012. The Center operates within the School of Liberal Arts and in coordination with IU Libraries and University Collections. The university maintains institutional support for ArchiveSpace, digital preservation systems, and archival storage infrastructure. Nearly all of Bradbury's audiovisual materials have already been digitized and preserved through Indiana University's Media Digitization and Preservation Initiative.

The Ray Bradbury Center currently employs one full-time and two part-time staff members and is supported by a team of volunteers, including a professional archivist who has guided earlier phases of processing. Earlier processing work resulted in a completed preliminary survey, an established series framework, and the development of a detailed Processing Guide. The existence of this guide demonstrates that the Center is extending a documented and tested methodology rather than initiating a new processing strategy.

The Project Director, Jason Aukerman, has served as the Director of the Ray Bradbury Center since 2021. Prior to that he served as Managing Director from 2017-2021. As Director, he oversees all facets of curation and preservation for the collection. Under his leadership, the Center has launched multiple public programs aimed at advancing adult literacy. He manages partnerships with a range of educational and cultural institutions, positioning the Bradbury Center as a national resource for literacy advocacy and

public engagement. Dr. Aukerman has extensive experience in grant management, including securing federal and private grants to support preservation planning, collection development, and educational outreach. Dr. Aukerman will serve as Project Director, overseeing all administrative aspects of the project and ensuring alignment with broader literacy advancement goals.

Jason M. Kelly, Professor of History and Director of the IU Indianapolis Arts and Humanities Institute (IAHI), has managed multiple federal grants, including an NEA Our Town grant and an NEH Dialogues on Justice and War grant. He is currently a co-PI on two NSF grants. Dr. Kelly was on the project leadership team for the *Journal of the Plague Year: A COVID-19 Archive*, where he worked with archivists and museum professionals from across the country. He has written on archival practice for *Collections: A Journal for Museum and Archives Professionals* and the *American Historical Review*. Dr. Kelly will work with Dr. Aukerman to oversee administrative elements of the project, including budgeting, strategic decision making, publicity, and developing the research community around the project.

The professional archivist to be hired will hold an ALA-accredited master's degree in library or information science or an equivalent degree in a related field, with demonstrated experience processing archival collections and working with EAD and ArchiveSpace. The archivist will be responsible for implementing the Processing Guide, completing arrangement and description, supervising preservation actions, migrating metadata, and preparing materials for publication.

An active Advisory Board composed of professionals with experience in grant writing, museum curation, statewide humanities programming, library cataloging, and archival management provides additional guidance regarding long-term stewardship and scholarly engagement.

Project Results

The principal result of this project will be the completion of intellectual control over 186 linear feet of manuscript materials. Upon completion, the collection will be fully arranged, described, and publicly discoverable. *Beyond improving access to this major literary collection, the project will contribute to broader professional knowledge about processing complex single-author archives whose original order reflects creative rather than administrative organization. Documentation of the project's processing framework and decision-making will provide a model that other libraries and archives can adapt when working with similarly complex literary and cultural collections.*

This project will result in a publicly accessible catalog and a series of DACS-compliant, EAD-encoded finding aids, hosted in ArchiveSpace and made available through IU Archives Online. The Ray Bradbury Center, like many of the collections at Indiana University, uses the open source ArchivesSpace (<https://archivesspace.org>) software to catalog its collections. The university maintains a subscription, which provides staff with user support. Once complete, the university will add the catalog (and its finding aids) to the IU Archives Online discovery portal (<https://archives.iu.edu>). This is where major collections in the university archives are housed. One of the benefits of using ArchivesSpace is that the program supports the import and export of metadata standards, including EAD, EAC-CPF, MARCXML, METS, MODS and Dublin Core. In fact, the IU Archives Online automatically provides a downloadable EAD file for all its collections. Further, because ArchiveSpace supports export in interoperable formats, the completed catalog will integrate into broader research discovery systems relied upon by scholars nationwide.

Scholars in literature, history, media studies, science studies, and American studies will gain direct access to the documentary record of Bradbury's creative process and civic engagement. Writers and educators will benefit from access to drafts, lectures, and correspondence that illuminate the intellectual labor behind his published works.

The public release of the completed catalog will be accompanied by a national symposium developed in partnership with the IU Indianapolis Arts and Humanities Institute (IAHI). This "grand opening" symposium will invite prominent scholars from American Studies, Literature, History, and Cultural Studies to speak at a symposium on "Ray Bradbury and the Meaning of Free Speech." Faculty members and graduate students from local universities and colleges, as well as regional academic societies and research centers will be invited, and the symposium will include guided tours of the archive and a discussion of how the manuscript materials can support research projects. The symposium will introduce scholars, librarians, archivists, and cultural heritage professionals to the newly accessible archive and will include discussion of the archival methods developed during the project. The theme of the symposium will be to explore the ways in which the work of Bradbury encourages to understand the freedom of speech and the freedom to read in the context of a rapidly shifting technological landscape. This symposium will be the "kick-off" for the release of the new catalog and serve as an invitation for scholars and writers to begin using the archive. Proceedings will be recorded and shared digitally to extend access beyond in-person participants.

The processing of this highly idiosyncratic collection has produced documented decisions and will continue to generate sustained reflection on the stewardship and description of complex literary archives. These reflections will be synthesized into a scholarly article suitable for submission to venues such as *American Archivist* and shared through professional archival networks including the Society of American Archivists.

Indiana University maintains institutional support for ArchiveSpace and long-term stewardship of the Ray Bradbury Center through University Libraries and University Collections. Following completion of the grant period, maintenance of metadata, updates to finding aids, and supervised research access will remain embedded within regular operations.

The long-term result of this project is that the Ray Bradbury Center's manuscript collection will be fully discoverable, usable, and integrated into national research infrastructures, strengthening public access to a major archive of American literary and civic history.

Project Publicity

With the completed processing of the Ray Bradbury collection and the creation of an online catalog and finding aids, the Ray Bradbury Center will work with the IU Indianapolis Arts and Humanities Institute and the IU School of Liberal arts to publicize the collection to academic researchers (especially scholars in fields such as literature, cultural studies, science fiction studies, and history) and emerging writers who seek to use the archive for inspiration, study writing processes, or engage with Ray Bradbury's work. Marketing will highlight the unique nature of the collection; emphasize the potential for new discoveries that can reshape scholarly understanding of modern history and literature; and showcase the archive as a space for creative engagement, offering emerging writers the chance to immerse themselves in the work of Ray Bradbury. With assistance from IU Communications and Marketing, the center expects to be able to get coverage from both local and national media. Because the Ray Bradbury Center already partners with science fiction conventions, such as WorldCon, and literary festivals—and has a strong social media presence—the center will use these platforms to publicize the archive. The center also publishes the *New Ray Bradbury Review*, a journal devoted to English literature, popular culture, and American studies that focuses on the works and life of American author Ray Bradbury (1920-2012) and on subject areas related to Bradbury. We will use this as yet another way to reach scholars who may be interested in using the newly accessible archives.

Schedule of Completion

Year 1: September 2026 – August 2027

Period	Project Activities and Benchmarks
July–August 2026 (pre-award)	National search for project archivist initiated. Position advertised nationally and candidate pool developed prior to grant start date.
August–September 2026	Interviews conducted and candidate selected. Archivist hired.
October 2026	Archivist onboarding and project orientation. Workspace established and archival supplies procured.
October–November 2026	Verification survey of entire collection (186 linear feet) and confirmation of processing priorities.
October–November 2026	Initial processing phase completed (10 linear feet processed).
December 2026 – February 2027	Continued arrangement and description of manuscript materials (additional 24 linear feet processed; cumulative total: 34 linear feet).
March – May 2027	Ongoing archival processing and description (additional 30 linear feet processed; cumulative total: 64 linear feet).
June – August 2027	Continued processing and description (additional 32 linear feet processed; cumulative total: 96 linear feet).
December 2026 – August 2027	Creation of descriptive records and draft finding aids for processed collections.
April – August 2027	Planning for national scholarly symposium: theme development, planning committee formation, and invitation of participants.
Year 1 Benchmark: 96 linear feet processed	

Schedule of Completion

Year 2: September 2027 – August 2028

Period	Project Activities and Benchmarks
September – November 2027	Continued arrangement and description (additional 28 linear feet processed;

Period	Project Activities and Benchmarks
December 2027 – February 2028	cumulative total: 124 linear feet). Continued archival processing (additional 22 linear feet processed; cumulative total: 146 linear feet).
March – May 2028	Continued arrangement and description (additional 20 linear feet processed; cumulative total: 166 linear feet).
June – August 2028	Final processing phase completed (additional 20 linear feet processed; cumulative total: 186 linear feet).
October 2027 – April 2028	Normalization of legacy metadata and authority control across processed collections.
January – May 2028	Quality control review and validation of archival descriptions and finding aids.
April – June 2028	Publication of completed finding aids and release of newly processed collections through institutional discovery systems.
November 2027 – May 2028	Finalization of symposium program, logistics, and promotion.
June 2028	National scholarly symposium introducing the archive and newly accessible collections.
March – August 2028	Preparation and submission of scholarly article and professional dissemination.
June – August 2028	Project evaluation and final reporting.
Final Project Benchmark: 186 linear feet processed	