



NATIONAL LEADERSHIP GRANTS FOR LIBRARIES

Sample Application LG-260263-OLS-26
Project Category: Community-Centered Implementation

Universidad Ana G. Mendez

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$100,000
Amount of cost share:	\$0

The Jesús T. Piñero Library and Center for Social Research at the Universidad Ana G. Méndez, Carolina Campus will expand a scalable, community-centered implementation model focused on hands-on training in the preservation and interpretation of personal and family collections. By using an established model of community-engaged archival education developed through its stewardship of the historical documents of Jesús T. Piñero, the first Puerto Rican governor, the project will address the need for accessible, replicable resources that strengthen public learning, promote information access, and support intergenerational engagement. The project will produce adaptable educational tools, enhance community partnerships, expand participants' archival skills, and generate a documented evaluation of the model to refine its effectiveness.

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 Jesús T. Piñero Library and Center for Social Research at the Universidad Ana G. Méndez, Carolina Campus, requests \$100,000 in IMLS funding to expand a scalable, community-centered implementation model focused on hands-on training in the preservation and interpretation of personal and family collections. *Strengthening the Jesús T. Piñero Library as a Training Center for Documentary, Photographic, and Digital Preservation* using an established model of community-engaged archival education developed through its stewardship of the historical documents of Jesús T. Piñero, the first Puerto Rican governor, the project addresses the need for accessible, replicable resources that strengthen public learning, promote information access, and support intergenerational engagement. In partnership with the Municipality of Carolina and the InGenius homeschooler group, the library has offered workshops since 2024 to diverse audiences including preschoolers, school-age children, university students, older adults, and librarians despite limited resources for coordination and educational materials. The project will produce adaptable educational tools, enhance community partnerships, expand participants' archival skills, and generate a documented evaluation of the model to refine its effectiveness and support its broader national adoption.

Project Justification

The project responds to a clearly documented community need for accessible, culturally relevant training in the preservation, organization, and interpretation of personal and family collections. This need has been repeatedly expressed by participants from schools, senior centers, homeschooling groups, and general audiences served by the Jesús T. Piñero Library and Center for Social Research, who report limited archival knowledge, lack of resources for proper care of family documents, and concern that local histories are at risk of disappearing. Challenges such as insufficient financial resources for sustained program coordination and the acquisition of educational and conservation materials further underscore the urgency of developing a structured, scalable approach that expands equitable access to preservation knowledge.

Building on over a decade of experience as custodian of the historical documents of Jesús T. Piñero, Puerto Rico's first appointed governor, the library seeks to transform its existing community workshops into a more robust and adaptable model for community-centered archival training. This project complements emerging scholarship and practice in community archiving and participatory preservation by adapting established principles to Puerto Rico's linguistic, cultural, and intergenerational context. It differs from existing models by integrating bilingual materials, hands-on learning methodologies, and partnerships with municipal and educational institutions, resulting in a replicable framework that other libraries, archives, and cultural organizations can adopt. The model builds upon the programmatic foundation developed through community workshops

implemented since 2023 but formalizes and expands it into a structured, evidence-informed training curriculum supported by guides, modules, and practical tools.

The project's results will benefit a broad range of stakeholders. Community members of all ages will gain practical skills to preserve their own historical materials and contribute to safeguarding local heritage. Libraries, archives, and cultural organizations will gain access to tested educational resources and a replicable model that strengthens their capacity to support community archiving initiatives. Partner institutions—including schools, the Municipality of Carolina, and the InGenius homeschooling group—will benefit from expanded collaborative programming that promotes intergenerational learning, fosters civic engagement, and enhances access to preservation knowledge across diverse populations.

Project Work Plan

According to the proposal, *Strengthening the Jesús T. Piñero Library as a Training Center for Documentary, Photographic, and Digital Preservation* three ongoing projects from the Jesús T. Piñero Library and Social Research Center will be continued. These are now structured and referred to as:

Component 1: Piñeritos (Designed for elementary and middle school students)

Component 2: Spores of Time (Designed for homeschool students)

Component 3: Preservation of My Family Collection (Designed for older adults)

Component 1: Piñeritos – Workshop Series for School-Age Students

The first component in the workshop series is aimed at children ages 8 to 12. This group, known as Piñeritos, will be part of the children's club at the Jesús T. Piñero Library and Social Research Center. The main goal is to foster interest in the life and legacy of Jesús T. Piñero—Puerto Rico's first Puerto Rican governor—as well as promote knowledge of Puerto Rican history and the importance of preserving historical heritage.

The proposal includes six workshops designed to introduce students to conservation, documentation, and historical appreciation concepts. See proposed schedule in Table 1.

Table 1: Schedule and Workshop Details – Component 1: Piñeritos

Workshop	Estimated Date	Objective	Content / Activities
Workshop 1: Introduction to the Library and History	March 2027	Spark children's interest in history and help them understand the importance of historical preservation	Staff introduction; basic concepts of history, libraries, and Jesús T. Piñero; tour of the Library and Research Center; tour of the exhibition hall; distribution of materials

Workshop	Estimated Date	Objective	Content / Activities
Workshop 2: Timeline Creation	March 2027	Understand chronology and historical time	Basic concepts of time and chronology; creation of Jesús T. Piñero's timeline; creation of personal timelines; assignment: bring shoebox and old objects
Workshop 3: Documentation and Archiving	April 2027	Teach the importance of documenting and preserving historical objects and events	Concepts of documents, documentation, preservation, digital archiving; creation of personal "Time Box"
Workshop 4: Historical Excursion – Jesús T. Piñero House Museum	May 2027	Providing hands-on experiences exploring local historical sites	Guided visit; excursion journal
Workshop 5: Restoration and Conservation	August 2027	Teach the importance of preserving buildings and historical artifacts	Preservation and conservation concepts; restoration simulation
Workshop 6: Final Presentation	September 2027	Children share what they learned	Final exhibition; presentation of preservation boards; reflection and feedback

Component 2: Spores of Time – Designed for Homeschool Students

Spores of Time is an interdisciplinary educational module integrating biology, microbiology, and documentary conservation. Through the study of fungi and other microorganisms—and the analysis of environmental factors like temperature and relative humidity—students develop:

- scientific skills,
- critical thinking,
- and understanding of how environmental conditions affect cultural heritage materials.

The module is designed for 6th–12th grade students and includes theoretical, experimental, and reflective activities such as fungal sampling, environmental data analysis, and the development of conservation proposals.

Learning takes place across four key activity days throughout the semester. See Table 2.

Table 2: Schedule of Activities – Component 2: Spores of Time

Day / Date	Activity	Description	Objective
Day 1 – August 2027	Activity 1.1: Introduction to Basic Biology and Microbiology	Fundamental concepts of cells, microorganisms, and domains of life; guided observation using images or prepared samples	Introducing essential biology and microbiology concepts needed for the module
	Activity 1.2: Introduction to Fungi	What fungi are; classification and main characteristics; ecological, industrial, and medicinal functions; role in biodeterioration	Understand the biological importance of fungi and their relationship to historical materials
Day 2 – September 2027	Activity 2: Introduction to Temperature and Humidity in Historical Documents and Film Archives	Relationship between environmental conditions and deterioration; ideal conservation parameters (temperature, RH, light); case studies	Recognize how the environment affects documentary preservation
	Environmental Data Collection	Use of hygrometers, thermometers, and dataloggers; recording in lab notebook	Apply environmental measurement techniques and document results
Day 3 – October 2027	Research on Historical Archives in Puerto Rico	Importance of archives; review of archival institutions in Puerto Rico	Value the role of archives in preserving documentary heritage
	Visit to an Archive	Guided tour; observation of real documents and conservation protocols; field notes	Connect theoretical concepts with actual archival practice
Day 4 – November 2027	Environmental Sampling with Petri Dishes (Sabouraud Medium)	Introduction to Sabouraud medium; plate exposure, incubation, monitoring; recording fungal growth	Understand how environmental conditions promote fungal growth and apply basic microbiology techniques
Day 5 – December 2027	Creation of Research Poster	Organizing results into graphs, tables, and notes; analysis of environmental and microbiological data; creation of scientific poster	Synthesize findings and propose evidence-based environmental conservation strategies

Component 3: Preservation of My Family Collection – Designed for Older Adults

This initiative serves older adults in the Municipality of Carolina, aiming to strengthen the preservation of family historical memory and foster pride in personal and community heritage. The program supports emotional well-being, social connection, and cultural participation.

It is currently implemented across Diamantino's Senior Centers in Sabana Abajo, Martín González, and Barrazas, where initial workshops have been enthusiastically received. Interest has been especially strong in:

- learning preservation techniques,
- sharing personal histories,
- and receiving guidance in caring for personal documents, photographs, and objects.

This engagement demonstrates the relevance of a sustained program dedicated to rescuing the personal stories that shape collective identity. See proposed schedule in Table 3.

Table 3: Schedule of Activities – Component 3: Preservation of My Family Collection

Element	Description
Main Objective	To develop in older adults the ability to recognize, value, and preserve their family memories and objects through practical and accessible workshops that promote memory, cultural identity, and community participation.
Workshop 1: Why Preserve Our Family History?	Introduction to the value of memory; reflection on meaningful objects; identification of object to work on.
Workshop 2: How to Write My Family Recipe?	Recipes as cultural documents; writing a recipe; techniques for preserving texts.
Workshop 3: How to Identify My Historical Documents and Objects	Recognizing documents and objects; creating identification cards; initial organization and storage.
Workshop 4: Oral History	Techniques for sharing and recording stories; oral recording of history linked to the chosen object.
Community Exhibition: Great Stories	Public presentation of objects, recipes, and stories; open community event; certificate ceremony.

Stakeholder Involvement

For the development of Components 1, 2, and 3, stakeholders were involved from the earliest planning stages.

Leadership: The Jesús T. Piñero Library and Social Research Center, led by Dr. Cristina Maldonado Caro, conceptualized the components.

Coordination: Educational Program Coordinator serves as liaison with community groups.

Municipality of Carolina (OSIB): Essential for logistics, planning, and participant coordination. Key staff include:

- Azlin Pérez Soto, Associate Director
- Cristina Guadalupe Vizcarrondo, Educational Projects Coordinator
- Manuel Torres Paniagua, Workshop Coordinator

Teachers, community leaders, senior center personnel, and participants contributed through meetings, pilot workshop feedback, and field observations. Their input shaped session timing, vocabulary, materials, and accessibility.

Stakeholder feedback will continue to be incorporated through surveys, interviews, and quarterly partner meetings.

Evaluation and Demonstration of Impact

The evaluation and demonstration of impact will follow a mixed-methods framework that integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches to assess changes in knowledge, engagement, and community benefit across all three components. This design allows the project team to measure not only participants' learning outcomes but also the social, intergenerational, and emotional dimensions that emerge through community-centered preservation activities.

From a quantitative perspective, the project will document measurable indicators of participation and production. Attendance records will be compiled by workshop, component, and community partner; the number and type of products created—such as timelines, conservation plans, identified objects, oral histories, preserved recipes, and scientific posters—will be tracked; and participation in the final community exhibition will be recorded. These data points will help identify trends in engagement, retention, and program reach across school-age children, homeschool students, and older adults.

Complementing this, the qualitative evaluation will provide a deeper understanding of participants' experiences and the project's broader community impact. Pre- and post-workshop surveys will be administered to measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, and confidence related to historical preservation and scientific inquiry. Structured observations by the coordination team will document participant behavior, interaction dynamics, and levels of engagement during activities. Additional verbal feedback will be collected from participants, family members, educators, and community leaders. Narratives gathered through oral history exercises within Component 3, as well as reflective journals from Components 1 and 2, will be analyzed to capture the human and contextual significance of the project's outcomes in the daily lives of the participants.

Evidence of impact will be consolidated through multiple forms of documentation. Narrative reports will include direct quotations from participants, photographs, and digitized samples of the products created throughout the workshops. Continuous records of improvements in participation, workshop refinement, and stakeholder engagement will be maintained. At the conclusion of the project, a comprehensive evaluation report will synthesize findings related to achievements, challenges, and lessons learned. This report will include recommendations for replicating or expanding the model in other communities within the municipality and beyond, ensuring sustainability, scalability, and clear pathways for future implementation by libraries and cultural institutions.

Project Results

The three proposed components—Piñeritos, Spores of Time, and Preservation of My Family Collection—will produce a comprehensive set of deliverables that strengthen community-centered learning and expand access to preservation knowledge across generations. Intended results include: (1) fully developed educational modules tailored to children, homeschooled youth, and older adults; (2) replicable curricular materials such as facilitator guides, worksheets, workflows, templates, and conservation checklists; (3) structured workshops with documented implementation steps; (4) participant-generated products including timelines, scientific posters, personal archives, recipes, and oral history recordings; and (5) a final community exhibition showcasing the learning and cultural contributions of all groups. Each component will also yield tested pedagogical resources that can be incorporated into the ongoing programming of the Jesús T. Piñero Library and the Municipality of Carolina.

These results directly address the identified need for culturally relevant, intergenerational educational initiatives on historical preservation within Puerto Rican communities. By providing age-appropriate and hands-on training, the project responds to the deterioration of family documents, the need for contextualized scientific education for youth, and the absence of inclusive preservation spaces for older adults. The components collectively strengthen scientific, historical, and cultural literacy while also fostering emotional connection, community pride, and a sense of shared heritage.

To ensure that the deliverables are adaptable, generalizable, and usable by other institutions, all materials will be designed following a modular structure that allows each workshop to function independently or as part of a sequence. The tools, activities, and templates will rely on low-cost methods suitable for libraries, schools, community centers, homeschool networks, and cultural organizations across the region. Materials will be created in bilingual, accessible formats, enabling adoption by institutions that serve diverse linguistic and cultural populations. The curriculum will be documented in a way that highlights key implementation steps, materials lists, time requirements, and recommended adaptations for varying community contexts.

Project dissemination will occur through multiple channels to maximize reach. Results will be shared through presentations at local and national conferences on preservation,

education, and community heritage; open workshops and training sessions offered to the public; and brief publications, downloadable guides, and instructional videos published through the Library's and Municipality of Carolina's websites and social media platforms. The final community exhibition will serve as both a culminating public event and a dissemination strategy, allowing participants' work to be shared broadly with families, community leaders, educators, and local institutions. Best practices and lessons learned will also be exchanged with other libraries and archives through professional networks and collaborative municipal initiatives.

Sustainability of the project will be ensured through the integration of the three components into the regular educational programming of the Jesús T. Piñero Library and Center for Social Research and through continued training for OSIB staff and educators involved in the implementation. All educational materials, workflows, and templates will remain available for future use and adaptation. The strong partnerships with schools, senior centers, and homeschool groups will support ongoing participation beyond the grant period. With established community support, documented impact, and replicable resources, the benefits of the project will continue expanding to new groups and communities within the municipality and potentially across Puerto Rico.

Schedule of Completion

[illegible]

Activities During 2nd Year	Months											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Continuation of workshops and talks for the Piñeritos component												
Exhibition of works created by the Piñeritos												
Focus groups and evaluation of the Piñeritos component												
Workshops and talks for the Spores of Time component												
Posters Presentations from the Spores of Time component												
Focus groups and evaluation of the Spores of Time component												
Analysis of data obtained during the focus group and evaluation process												

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