



LAURA BUSH 21st CENTURY LIBRARIAN PROGRAM

Sample Application RE-259019-OLS-25
Project Category: National Implementation

University of North Texas (Department of Information
Science, College of Information)

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$249,998

The University of North Texas Department of Information Science and Department of History will partner with Baylor University, Queens Public Library, Oklahoma State University, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and University of Texas at Austin to establish a community oral history/storytelling curatorial fellowship program to empower community oral history practitioners with the skills needed to successfully capture, document, and preserve their community history, memory, and stories. The team will recruit fifteen fellows, including archivists, librarians, museum curators, oral historians, and community memory workers, to participate in the program. The fellows will complete a series of online learning modules, attend an intensive two-day workshop coordinated by the project leadership team, complete a capstone project guided by fellowship mentors, and present their capstone projects. After the fellowship program concludes, the learning modules will be made publicly available as an online curriculum. This project will play a pivotal role in strengthening the library and archival workforce by providing targeted training and mentorship programs that cultivate expertise in curating oral history.

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.

Community Oral History/Storytelling Curatorial Fellowship Program

The University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Information Science and Department of History seek \$249,998 from the **Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program**. This **two-year implementation project** will establish a community oral history/storytelling curatorial fellowship program designed to empower community oral history practitioners by equipping them with the hard and soft skills needed to successfully capture, document, and preserve their community history, memory, and stories. Fifteen fellows, including archivists, librarians, museum curators, oral historians, and community memory workers, will be recruited to participate in the program. After the fellowship program concludes, the learning modules developed will be packaged and made publicly available as an online curriculum. The project will bring together partners from Baylor University, Queens Public Library, Oklahoma State University, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and University of Texas at Austin. This project will play a pivotal role in strengthening the library and archival workforce by providing targeted training and mentorship programs that cultivate expertise in curating oral history. By equipping professionals with the necessary skills and knowledge, it ensures the preservation and accessibility of our community's voices and stories for future generations.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Community Oral History: Scope, Growth, and Trends

Every community is shaped by the stories it tells. Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd (2009) described community memory work as “a manifestation of a shared enthusiasm for the history of a place, occupation or interest. The study of family history, local history and community history can be very closely connected” (p. 74). Since the 1970s, oral history has been crucial in interpreting community heritage by filling gaps in these communities’ historical records, including their public and private memories, events, and commemorations. With the onset of the pandemic, community storytelling and oral history projects have increased, serving as a valuable complement to traditional archival methods for documenting historical events and narratives.¹

Typically, a project focused on gathering stories from a community pertains to a specific geographic area, where interviews are conducted with individuals who reside there. However, community can also encompass a shared social identity, or any group united by common experiences, values, or goals. In fact, community-based oral history or storytelling initiatives frequently merge the two interpretations of the term “community” by concentrating on the experiences of a particular group in a specific location (Shopes, 2002). These projects aim to offer in-depth and personal narratives from a diverse range of individuals, providing unique perspectives and prioritizing personal stories in the documentation of history.

Numerous memory institutions have taken the lead in oral history initiatives, focusing on collecting and preserving the narratives of such communities.² Additionally, communities themselves develop many community-based oral history archives as stand-alone projects or in partnership with other institutions, such as public and private libraries, archives, museums, and nonprofit organizations. Community-based archives, often supported by small, independent, or informal organizations, are regarded as the least equipped to carry out digital curation tasks. They have challenges with limited funding, personnel, and access to other resources (Zavala et al., 2017) and often seek opportunities for collaboration with larger institutional archives or libraries to receive direct support for infrastructure and resources (Jules, 2019). Whether operated independently or in partnership with larger institutions, community oral history projects, which are not easily funded, require much coordination and

¹ Examples include: <https://www.latam.ufl.edu/blog/2023/storytelling-collaboration-between-libraries-and-farmworkers.html>; <https://wmich.edu/library/updates/2022/02/impact-report-capturing-community>; <https://news.virginia.edu/content/more-words-oral-storytelling-project-brings-black-history-life>; and more.

² Examples include: <https://www.nypl.org/help/community-outreach/oral-history>; <https://blogs.umb.edu/archives/collections/community-collections/>

management work as they often involve several community members, volunteers, and interns who need training and instruction on how to conduct interviews, record/process audio or video materials, create metadata for those materials, use equipment, and take care of ethical issues.

Community Oral History Practitioners: Roles, Challenges, and Training Needs

Individuals engaged in the direct documentation of community stories, which we refer to as “community oral history practitioners,” can be found in various settings, including academic libraries, historical museums, public libraries, historical societies, and local community organizations. Their primary responsibility is to develop, preserve, and provide access to oral history within their perspective communities. Additionally, they are often tasked with organizing community outreach and engagement initiatives designed to foster connections with their community partners and implementing volunteer or community training programs. This observation was confirmed by our previous planning project, *Oral History Forum: Connecting Communities with Libraries, Archives, and Historians through Oral Histories* (LG-252370-OLS-22),³ which involved interviews with community oral history practitioners from various institutions and settings; those practitioners often take full responsibility for coordinating the entire project process and team. They acknowledged that oral history curation is time-consuming, mentally demanding, and requires ongoing learning. As noted by Rowan and Gonzalez (2022), practitioners, particularly those in smaller institutions, often lack training, expertise, and access to experts. Our interviewees echoed this concern, emphasizing the need for best practice resources, hands-on training, and practical examples relevant to their under-resourced organizational setting (Kim et al., 2024). Even those with formal archival education working in larger institutions will often seek proper training, as oral history collections require specialized care and expertise in stewardship. Along the way, they frequently encounter challenges that can be difficult to navigate alone. Being a solo archivist, they often lack immediate access to colleagues for guidance or support in tackling the complexities of oral history curation.

Given the uniqueness of each oral history project and collection, individual practitioners and institutions have exercised local practices and workflows (Craft, 2018). Additionally, there have been efforts to identify evidence-based strategies and compile standards for oral history practitioners. For instance, the Oral History Association (OHA) has worked to establish its *Principles and Best Practices* to help those engaged in the various stages of the oral history process since 1968. These principles and guidelines define basic oral history practitioner standards and have been revised several times, with the most recent revisions in 2018.⁴ Another notable example is the IMLS-funded *Oral History in the Digital Age* project, conducted between 2009 and 2011.⁵ In response to new challenges posed by the digital environment, the project aimed to provide up-to-date information about technology for oral histories, including information on preserving oral histories and post-production methods.

Developing oral history resources has been necessary to support the varied needs of oral history practitioners. However, many resources focus on specific aspects of oral history rather than its entire lifecycle. As a result, there are prominent gaps in holistic guidance that connect all stages, from project planning and interviewing to preservation, public access, and reuse. Additionally, as static documents, existing resources often fail to address the dynamic and evolving nature of oral history curation, including adapting to new technologies, shifting cultural contexts, and ongoing community engagement. Findings from our previous planning project (LG-252370-OLS-22) further highlight these challenges. Our research revealed that practitioners often struggle with fragmented guidance, making it difficult to navigate transitions between the different phases of oral history curation work (Kim et al., 2024). Additionally, we found a strong demand for adaptable, practice-based resources that offer empirical insights into the principles, methods, and techniques most effective at different stages of the process. These parameters indicate a need for comprehensive and empirical guidance on principles, methods, and techniques derived from practical experience and advising when each is most relevant or effective.

³ <https://ohforum.ci.unt.edu>

⁴ <https://www.oralhistory.org/principles-and-best-practices-revised-2018/>

⁵ <http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/>

Curation itself is a challenging field with a high barrier to entry, and mastering it requires dedication, creativity, and a deep understanding of the collection being curated. Specialized training is essential to cultivate the skills and expertise necessary to excel in this dynamic field. However, beyond formal education, mentoring plays a critical role in professional development, along with networking, providing guidance, and real-world insights that help practitioners navigate its complexities, particularly for early-career archivists (Poole, 2017).⁶ Continuous learning, coupled with mentorship, is vital for staying abreast of evolving trends and best practices. Embracing new technologies and methodologies is also crucial to adapt to the ever-changing landscape of curation. **Through training and mentorship, oral history practitioners can enhance the visibility and accessibility of their community narratives and ensure their preservation for future generations.**

Given this context, this project proposes a community oral history/storytelling curatorial fellowship program designed to foster lifelong learning and cultivate the next generation of community oral history/storytelling leaders. **Our target group for program participants is community oral history practitioners, particularly focusing on archivists, librarians, museum curators, oral historians, and community memory workers who manage archival programs with limited resources or institutional support.** This includes individuals working in small rural and tribal libraries/archives, historical societies, community college libraries, K-12 schools, and other community organizations.

This project builds directly upon the findings and insights from **our previous planning project (LG-252370-OLS-22)**, which focused on identifying and synthesizing best practices and strategies for addressing challenges in building, implementing, preserving, and accessing community oral history projects. While the previous project provided a critical knowledge base, this fellowship program takes the next step by offering structured training and mentorship to practitioners. By equipping fellows with the skills and guidance needed to apply these best practices in real-world contexts, the program transforms research into action, fostering a new generation of oral history curators who can sustain and expand ethical and effective community oral history initiatives.

This project supports the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian program goals and objectives, specifically **Goal 2 and Objective 2.1**. This project includes equipping library/archive professionals with the necessary skills to collect, organize, and preserve oral histories, ensuring that valuable cultural and historical narratives are safeguarded for future generations. Through targeted training initiatives, this project fosters the development of a proficient and knowledgeable library and archival workforce adept at curating oral history collections with care and expertise. By developing the skills and expertise needed to document, preserve, and provide access to invaluable voices and stories, community oral history practitioners will help enrich the nation's collective memory and foster deeper public engagement with its past.

PROJECT WORKPLAN

The proposed fellowship program will involve 15 fellows. The fellows will complete a series of online learning modules to be developed by the project leadership team and refined by curriculum consultants, attend an intensive two-day workshop coordinated by the project leadership team, complete a capstone project guided by fellowship mentors, and present their capstone projects at a virtual showcase. The project intends to:

- **Goal 1:** Provide high-quality training opportunities to oral history practitioners, covering the entire range of oral history curation through a scalable and robust online learning platform;
- **Goal 2:** Establish a virtual community to support durable and lasting interactions among fellows and mentors who will serve as a valuable resource for the fellows and their communities; and
- **Goal 3:** Empower and support fellows to pursue employment and leadership roles in memory institutions, academia, and in their own communities.

⁶ For instance, National Digital Stewardship Residency is an initiative that introduced mentoring programs for archive professionals.

Project Team

Leadership Team: This team will oversee the development and implementation of the fellowship program. Team members will bring together the extensive teaching, research, and practical expertise needed for the project, particularly oral history theory and methods, digital preservation strategies and standards, and archives principles and practices; please refer to “Resumes” for a comprehensive overview of each leader’s expertise and qualifications.

- Jeonghyun (Annie) Kim, Professor of Information Science at UNT, will serve as the PI for this project. Since 2015, Kim has directed and coordinated the Digital Curation and Data Management Graduate Academic Certificate program,⁷ which was developed through an IMLS-funded project where she served as a co-PI. She is the recipient of the ASIS&T 2020 Outstanding Information Science Teacher Award.
- Co-PI Todd Moye is the Fenton Wayne Robnett Professor of American History and a University Distinguished Teaching Professor at UNT. He also serves as Director of the UNT Oral History Program,⁸ which records, transcribes, and archives oral history interviews covering a wide variety of subject matter to preserve local, state, and U.S. history.
- Co-PI Ana Roeschley is an Assistant Professor and Director of Archival Studies in the Department of Information Science at UNT. She is also the founder and co-director of the Archives Learning Lab,⁹ which investigates the relationships between people and archives. She is currently the PI for her IMLS-funded early career development project, *Records of refuge: Supporting refugee communities’ archival needs*.
- A research assistant, a doctoral student recruited from UNT's Information Science PhD program, will support project management and curriculum development.

Fellowship Mentors: Fellowship mentors will direct and guide the capstone project for the fellowship program. They will also help fellows navigate professional growth in the field by providing networking opportunities, career support, and guidance in developing essential skills. They will be committed to building long-lasting professional connections with fellows, ensuring continued support beyond the duration of the fellowship.

- Adrienne Cain is Assistant Director of the Baylor Institute for Oral History and Secretary-Treasurer of the Texas Oral History Association. Though much of her recent work is in academia, she has extensive experience as a public librarian responsible for oral history archives.
- Natalie Milbrodt is University Archivist at the City University of New York and former Director of the Queens Memory Project at Queens Public Library and has been overseeing staff, students, and volunteers to collect oral history on local history topics of Queens, a borough in New York City, for over a decade.
- Carla Alvarez is the U.S. Latina/o Archivist at the University of Texas at Austin Libraries, where she is responsible for the Voces Oral History collection. In her work, Alvarez leads processing activities and preservation of Latinx archival collections, provides reference services, and participates in collection development, donor relations, and outreach.
- Troy Reeves is the oral historian at the University of Wisconsin at Madison Archives & Records Management, having served in that role since June 2007. He has managed dozens of oral history projects, including “Madison LGBTQ Community, 1960s-Present,” “Women@UW/Women Inspire,” and “African American Athletes at UW.”

⁷ <https://informationscience.unt.edu/programs/gacs/digital-curation-and-data-management.html>

⁸ <https://oralhistory.unt.edu/>

⁹ <https://all.ci.unt.edu/>

- Sarah Milligan is an Associate Professor at Oklahoma State University and Head of the Oklahoma Oral History Research Program, where she oversees the production, access, and preservation of the over 17,000 interviews in the collection.

Curriculum Consultants: These consultants will evaluate the content of the learning modules developed by the leadership team and provide feedback and suggestions to ensure accuracy, clarity, and alignment with professional standards and best practices. These consultants will be recruited from the Society of American Archivists (SAA) Oral History Section¹⁰ and we anticipate having at least six experts contributing their expertise. The project leadership team already had a conversation with the Oral History Section Steering Committee, who conveyed their willingness to assist in recruiting consultants. Their support will help strengthen the project's impact by bringing in expertise to enhance the quality and effectiveness of the curriculum for the program.

Project Advisory Board: The advisory board will provide strategic guidance and oversight throughout the fellowship program's development, implementation, and evaluation. Additionally, they will assist the project leadership team with recruiting prospective fellows and promoting the fellowship program through their connections with their respective communities, professional organizations, and networking connections.

- Lauren Kata is an Archivist and Academic Librarian for NYUAD Library in Archives and Special Collections. Since 1999, she has worked with oral history archives, analog and digital, in diverse repository types and archival institutions.
- Steven Sielaff is Senior Editor & Collections Manager at the Baylor University Institute for Oral History in Waco, Texas. He is also currently Editor-in-Chief of the *Texas Oral History Association* annual journal, Managing Editor for *H-OralHist*, a community of over 4,000 scholars on the H-Net platform, and Associate Director of the OHA.
- Jamie A. Lee is an Associate Professor in the School of Information at the University of Arizona and the Founder/Director of the Arizona Queer Archives. She directs the Digital Storytelling & Oral History Lab and co-directs the Climate Alliance Mapping project.
- Mark Phillips is Associate Dean for Digital Libraries at UNT Libraries. He is the architect of the UNT Libraries' digital libraries' infrastructure, including the Portal to Texas History.

The project leadership team will communicate with fellowship mentors, curriculum consultants, and project advisory board via various communication channels, including Zoom meetings, throughout the course of the project. For the specific meeting schedule, please refer to the **Project Activities** section and the **Schedule of Completion** document. Additionally, periodic updates on project progress will be shared through an online newsletter crafted by the PI twice a year.

Project Activities

The proposed program will include the following elements and activities:

1) Activity 1: Curriculum Development (Fall 2025 – Spring 2026)

In Fall 2025, the project leadership team will develop a self-paced online learning module series covering the entire oral history curation lifecycle, which will be offered as a credit bearing course at UNT in Fall 2026. Drawn from existing oral history resources and guides compiled, curated, and annotated by our previous planning project, the newly developed content will include: best practices and strategies for oral history curation; ethical considerations in oral history; strategies for engaging diverse audiences; and the latest technologies and tools, such as AI transcription software, data visualization, and interactive tools, for transcribing, indexing, analyzing, and presenting interviews.

¹⁰ <https://www2.archivists.org/groups/oral-history-section>

The list of potential learning modules to be developed is provided below. It should be noted that they are subject to change based on feedback from curriculum consultants.

Module title	Learning outcome	Topics to be covered
Module 1: Introduction to Oral History Curation	Students will gain a comprehensive understanding of oral history's role in preserving historical and cultural narratives	Nature and purpose of oral history; overview of the oral history curation lifecycle; the importance of oral history best practices; oral history as a tool for historical and cultural preservation
Module 2: Planning Oral History Projects	Students will plan oral history projects by defining goals, assessing community needs, and leveraging resources and partnerships	Determining project scope and goal; knowing your community and community stakeholders; utilizing existing community resources and fundraising; understanding the value of community partnerships; documenting workflow
Module 3: Conducting Interviews	Students will develop interview questions and conduct interviews using proper recording techniques	Developing interview questions; identifying/recruiting interviewers/interviewees; sample release form/consent form; operating recording equipment; recording interviews and quality control; remote interviewing
Module 4: Processing Interviews	Students will process post-interview records, including editing recordings and transcribing interviews	Post-interviews: following up with interviewees; basic audio/video editing principles; using editing software; transcribing interviews; reviewing and editing transcripts for accuracy; documentation
Module 5: Preserving and Making Interviews Accessible	Students will manage, archive, and publish interview files and supplementary materials	File formats and standards; organizing and naming interview files; documenting interview files and creating metadata; publishing interviews via platforms; choosing long-term storage devices and media; licensing interviews and rights management
Module 6: Making Interviews Usable	Students will integrate oral history in various contexts and use it	Designing oral history-based lesson plans and assignments; using oral history as primary sources in research; analyzing and visualizing oral history interviews; developing public programs; producing documentaries, podcasts, and social media content
Module 7: Ethics of Oral History Curation	Students will understand and apply ethical principles in oral history curation	Consent; confidentiality and privacy; cultural sensitivity; ownership and intellectual property; bias and representation; trauma-informed interviewing; accessibility and inclusive practices
Module 8: Community Oral History Project	Students will utilize additional resources to design, implement, and sustain their own oral history projects	Case studies of successful oral history initiatives; evaluating and assessing oral history projects; key organizations and networks; other useful resources for further exploration

Once the initial versions of the learning modules are developed by the end of Fall 2025, curriculum consultants recruited from the SAA Oral History Section will be invited to review the content for accuracy, relevance, clarity, engagement, and effectiveness in Spring 2026. A two-phase feedback process that combines asynchronous collaboration and live discussion sessions via Zoom will be conducted to ensure a thorough and effective review. The first phase is an independent review, where each consultant will be given access to the learning modules through a collaborative review platform to enable consultants to add comments, highlight sections, and suggest improvements. Consultants will receive clear guidelines and a structured feedback framework to ensure their input is specific and actionable and will have three weeks to complete their review. Once this phase is complete, the leadership team will prepare a summary report that compiles the feedback, categorizes common themes, and lists action items. In the second phase, a live Zoom session will be conducted to discuss the review in detail. Before the session, all consultants will receive the summary report, allowing them to come prepared with additional thoughts

or clarifications. During the session, the leadership team and curriculum consultants will address any major concerns or conflicting feedback identified during the first phase and discuss alternative solutions.

After the two-phase feedback process, the learning modules will be updated and implemented through Canvas, UNT's learning management system, by the end of Spring 2026. The modules will have articulated learning objectives and measurable outcomes developed in conjunction with the UNT Center for Learning Experimentation, Application and Research (CLEAR).¹¹ As the modules will be delivered online, various media and interactive learning tools that support the performance expected of the learner and are easy for learners to use will be integrated to enhance engagement.

Additionally, a manual for the capstone project will be developed in Spring 2025. The development of this manual will involve collaboration with fellowship mentors to ensure it guides fellows through all aspects of conducting successful community oral history and storytelling projects that align with best practices in the field. By modeling the capstone project developed and implemented in other IMLS-funded projects, such as RE-17-19-0032-19, it will be designed to consolidate students' learning with valuable hands-on experience, aiding in their development into well-prepared and well-rounded professionals. Through the project, fellows will distill the knowledge and skills acquired in the self-paced learning modules and apply that information to a real-world project.

Activity 2: Fellows Recruitment (Spring 2026 – Summer 2026)

When recruiting fellows for the program, we will specifically target individuals working in under-resourced memory institutions, including small, rural, or tribal archives and libraries, county historical societies, history museums, community college libraries, K-12 school libraries, Historically Black Colleges, and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). We will also target early-career professionals who may have limited opportunities in the field due to their experience level but who are eager to advance their professional development.

For this project, a total of 15 fellows will be recruited. Fellows must:

- 1) Be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States;¹²
- 2) Hold a bachelor's or associate degree in any subject; and
- 3) Have a demonstrated interest in completing an oral history/storytelling project.

The project leadership team will develop recruitment materials in January 2026 and post an open call for applications in early March 2026. An open call for applications will be posted on various professional organizations' listservs or forums, such as *OHA Archives Interest Group*; *SAA's Email Discussion List*; *American Folklore Society's listserv*; *Storytelling listserv*, one of the National Storytelling Network's listservs; *H-Oralhist*, a listserv for scholars and professionals active in studies related to oral history; *American Historical Association's Communities*, a platform for historians from all specializations and professions; *Community Archives Collaborative Email List*, a resource for US-based community archives; and more. Additionally, tribal libraries, archives, and museums as well as historical societies/preservation offices in the United States¹³ will be contacted. More targeted outreach will be conducted to ensure we have representation from different institutions, experiences, and backgrounds; with the support of the project advisory board members and fellowship mentors, the project leadership team will reach out to individuals and organizations within diverse communities.

Fellowship applications will be accepted from early March 2026 through early May 2026. Applications will consist of a resume, a 250-word proposal for their community oral history/storytelling project, and one reference letter from a responsible individual who can attest to the applicant's professional behavior and personal character. These applications will help ensure the applicant appreciates the value of their community's stories/histories and

¹¹ <https://clear.unt.edu/>

¹² This project will restrict their target fellows to citizens or permanent residents of the United States, as the UNT has distinct requirements regarding academic credentials and English language proficiency for student admission.

¹³ <https://www.preservationdirectory.com/PreservationOrganizationsResources/OrganizationCategories.aspx>

demonstrates a willingness to devote a significant amount of work and time to the project. The project leadership team will review applications and choose 15 fellows to participate in a year-long training program for the academic year 2026-2027. The evaluation criteria for selection may include the applicant's qualifications, demonstrated passion for oral history/storytelling, and the feasibility and impact of the proposed project. The final criteria will be determined by the team. It will be tested through a "norming" process, which allows the leadership team to evaluate a subset of applications and then convene to discuss how they will apply the evaluation criteria in their deliberations before they complete the entire process. This will create uniformity in evaluating each application, though an element of subjectivity will always remain. The final list of selected fellows will be announced in late June 2025.

Activity 3: Fellows Training (Fall 2026 – Spring 2027)

In August 2026, accepted fellows will participate in a training program orientation offered via Zoom. It will include a brief introduction to the program featuring project leaders and mentors and a Q&A session. Fellows will also have the opportunity to meet each other during orientation, enhancing the formation of close relationships among fellows, making it easier for the group to connect and socialize online during their training journey.

After the orientation, each fellow will be paired with a mentor. For the matching process, fellows will be asked to complete a short form including their geographical location, educational/professional background, areas of interest for their current and future positions, and the communities they are targeting for their capstone project. Their mentor will be assigned based on compatibility and expertise to ensure effective guidance and support. Additionally, each fellow will be assigned a faculty advisor among the PI and Co-PIs who will provide academic consultation throughout the program.

During the Fall 2026 semester, fellows will enroll in a credit-bearing course at UNT, where learning modules developed earlier will be integrated into the curriculum. This course provides fellows access to UNT's extensive infrastructure and resources, which will support and enhance their online learning experience. While fellows are completing the learning modules, the PI will conduct hour-long meetings via Zoom every other week to ensure fellows remain engaged with the learning module material. Guest speakers with extensive expertise and experience in oral history projects and initiatives will be invited to these meetings. The project leadership team already identified potential guest speakers from interviewees in the previous planning project who expressed interest and enthusiasm in sharing their knowledge. Topics to be presented by speakers include community outreach, the ethics of oral history, and grant writing, among others.

After completing this series of learning modules, fellows will attend an intensive two-day online workshop in Winter 2026. The workshop's first day will offer hands-on oral history curation training. Using a sample oral history interview done by the UNT Oral History Program, fellows will have the opportunity to transcribe recorded audio using audio transcription tools, such as Express Scribe;¹⁴ timestamp/edit the transcript; create documentation; develop different levels of metadata, including descriptive and technical metadata, and use Oral History Metadata Synchronizer;¹⁵ and explore various presentation platforms, including Omeka.¹⁶ The second day of the workshop will focus on developing and designing community oral history/storytelling projects. Fellows will present their goals/scope and proposed capstone project work plan. The project leadership team will provide feedback on their capstone project. Following the workshop, each fellow will have a one-on-one meeting with their mentor to discuss the details of their capstone project. This workshop will be livestreamed through Zoom.

In the Spring 2027 semester, fellows will conduct their capstone projects (community oral history/storytelling projects for their target communities) under the guidance of their mentor. This includes deciding on the scope and theme of their project, doing background research on the community, developing interview questions, conducting interviews, processing recorded interviews for access, and publishing interviews online. To support the fellows'

¹⁴ <https://www.nch.com.au/scribe/index.html>

¹⁵ <https://www.oralhistoryonline.org/>

¹⁶ <https://www.omeka.net/>

capstone project journey, a stipend will be provided for their purchase of necessary supplies, equipment, or resources essential for their project development and implementation.

Our project's mentoring program will include:

- Quarterly structured sessions on select topics with the leadership team, mentors, and fellows in a group setting (Fall 2026-Spring 2027), allowing both mentors and fellows to expand their knowledge and networks; and
- Monthly group mentoring sessions (Spring 2027) where each mentor meets with their three assigned fellows to discuss the progress of their capstone project and explore professional career development opportunities related to oral history and the broader archives/public history field.

Although fellowship mentors will directly supervise fellows' capstone projects, the assigned faculty advisor (PI or Co-PI) will also have regular monthly meetings with fellows to ensure that they receive additional support, guidance, and oversight throughout the duration of their projects.

The fellowship training will be conducted online, with the project team implementing a virtual teaching environment to facilitate active experimentation and discovery learning. The project leadership team already has the necessary infrastructure¹⁷ to support a virtual lab that provides students with access to specialized software, computing resources, and tools. This existing infrastructure will be leveraged to offer fellows a suite of tools and applications essential for their learning activities throughout the project.

Activity 4: Module Publishing (Spring 2027-Summer 2027)

The project leadership team will host a project advisory board meeting in Spring 2027 to present the learning modules series developed for their review and comments. This meeting aims to ensure the modules meet the highest standards of quality and effectiveness before they are finalized and implemented for a wider audience. By incorporating feedback from the advisory board and insights from the students' course evaluations, the project leadership team will refine and enhance the content before its official publication.

In Summer 2027, the final learning modules will be made publicly available via Canvas Network,¹⁸ an open online platform offering free access to high-quality educational content. By making the modules accessible on this platform, the project aims to reach a broader audience to promote lifelong learning. The project team will work with the SAA Oral History Section to promote the modules through professional networks, conferences, webinars, and social media channels. Additionally, the team will engage with practitioners, educators, and institutions to encourage the adoption and integration of the materials into training programs and archival practices.

Activity 5: Project Showcase (Summer 2027)

Once fellows complete their capstone projects, their projects will be showcased during a virtual symposium delivered via Zoom. The primary aim of the symposium is to provide an opportunity for dynamic student research learning experiences to be showcased through their projects. Each fellow will deliver an approximately 15- to 20-minute presentation summarizing the significance and uniqueness of their project and share lessons learned and future plans. A live Q&A session will follow each presentation. Fellowship mentors and project advisory board members are invited to join the symposium, and all UNT students, faculty, staff, and the general public are welcome to attend. Event information will be posted on the project website and disseminated on various social media platforms. Additionally, promotional efforts will include targeted email campaigns, announcements through professional networks and organizations, such as SAA and OHA, digital flyers, and outreach to community partners. The entire symposium will be recorded and archived, then posted on the project website for later viewing.

¹⁷ <https://datainnovationlab.unt.edu/>

¹⁸ <https://www.canvas.net/>

The project team will also organize a special focus session for the SAA Annual Meeting, scheduled for Summer 2027. The PI, Co-PIs, fellowship mentors, and five selected fellows will participate in this session to discuss the outcomes of the fellowship program, share insights gained from these endeavors, and engage in discussions about the implications for the field of oral history and archives and the necessary next steps.

PROJECT RESULTS

This project strives to expand opportunities for memory institution professionals, educators, and community memory workers to cultivate the necessary skills and expertise required to excel in the evolving field of oral history curation. It aims to strengthen the capacity of community oral history practitioners by providing clearer guidance and instruction to address the practical challenges and obstacles. By enhancing access to and utilization of best practices for community oral histories, the project will ultimately help unify and connect members of communities to construct and amplify community history and identity.

Through the structured training and mentoring, fellows will catalyze their career advancement and contribute to the field through enhanced competency, expanded networks, and innovative projects. This project will develop a supportive community within the field by fostering enduring and sustainable connections among fellows and mentors. This ecosystem will facilitate knowledge sharing, personal growth, and professional development for fellows and mentors. The project will implement structured follow-up mechanisms to sustain these relationships over time by creating an online community, such as a LinkedIn group, where mentors and fellows can continue engaging, sharing resources, and supporting each other. Additionally, fellows will be encouraged to expand their professional networks within professional organizations like OHA and SAA. To foster continued interaction, periodic virtual meetups and networking events will be organized, including gatherings at SAA and OHA conferences. Further, by publishing their capstone projects, fellows will have their own scholarship added to the broader cultural and historical record. This project will act as an inciting opportunity for fellows to participate in the broader dialogue that shapes the field. To ensure the long-term preservation and accessibility of these contributions, the project team will collaborate with the UNT Digital Libraries, archiving the collections produced from the capstone projects for future researchers, practitioners, and the wider community.

By making a final learning module publicly available via the Canvas Network, the project aims to provide widespread access to high-quality educational resources on oral history curation. Accessible and easy-to-use modules on oral history curation will benefit several learning constituencies, including but not limited to emerging professionals in under-resourced local history museums, lone arrangers in community-based archives, public librarians who are engaging their patrons in community history events, educators working to bring oral history to their students, and independent community memory workers working to ensure that the voices of their community members are preserved for the future. Going beyond guidance for the initial creation of oral histories, this curriculum will educate learners on the entire lifecycle of oral history, ensuring that community narratives are not just created but sustained into the future.

All other project outcomes, including workshop materials, will be released under CC BY-SA 4.0 and deposited into the UNT institutional repository. The link to these items will also be accessible through the project website, which can serve as a portal for invaluable resources for individuals outside of the fellowship program who are looking for rigorous training opportunities and those seeking to train their volunteers for project involvement. Further, the project team will broadly disseminate results through presentations and publications, including SAA, OHA, the PastForward National Preservation, the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE), and iConference. We will use our existing website and various social media platforms to share the project's activities and progress, fostering engagement with a wider audience in an evolving dialogue about community oral history/storytelling.

Schedule of Completion

Year 1

Activity	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Project initiation												
Develop a detailed work plan												
Hire research assistant												
Convene advisory board and mentors												
Update project website												
Module development												
Review resources compiled by previous project												
Draft initial learning modules												
Individual review by curriculum consultants												
Compile consultant feedback												
Host Zoom session with curriculum consultants												
Revise learning modules												
Implement updated learning module												
Fellow recruitment												
Develop recruitment plan												
Create marketing materials												
Open recruitment/Accept applications												
Review applications/Select fellows												
Send offers and confirm fellows												

Year 2

Activity	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Fellow training												
Host program orientation												
Fellows complete learning modules												
Fellows attend workshop												
Fellows work on capstone projects												
Host virtual showcase												
Conduct fellows' program evaluation												

Module Publishing													
Conduct evaluation meeting with advisory board													
Gather advisory board feedback													
Update and publish learning modules on Canvas Network													
Promote learning modules													
Project closure													
Organize special focus session at SAA with leadership team, mentors, and selected fellows													