

Photo and Document Digitization Projects: Supplemental Grant Guidelines

Digitization of photographs and documents preserves and increases accessibility to the stories of Kansas. Digitization projects are supported by **Culture Preservation Grants** up to \$3,500. Before you write your grant, consider the following best practices.

Planning a Digitization Project

The best digitization projects preserve a story—for example, images of recovery after a natural disaster, or documents that record an important community history. (*NOTE:* Archiving or digitizing of church bulletins, school yearbooks, school board minutes, county records, or newspapers are not eligible for HK funding.)

Inventory of the collection. If your items are in boxes and have never been surveyed, start by counting the items in a sample box and estimate the size of the collection based on the number of boxes. Explain the types of photographs and documents. Glass negatives, digital files, photo albums, and other unusual formats may require special attention.

Define the story. It is important that your grant application demonstrates the collection's significance. What stories do the items help tell? What time periods and subjects are represented? What makes it distinctive from other collections? In an attachment, provide details about 2–3 images or documents that are representative of the collection.

Digital images and/or print copies. The purpose of making physical or digital copies is to preserve the original and protect it from handling. This can be accomplished by:

- Scanning photographs and documents and making digital versions available to the public
- Creating print copies of photographs from negatives where no print exists

Scanning Equipment

Flatbed scanners work best. Grant funds can be used for commercial digitization services. Grant funds cannot be used exclusively for equipment purchases; however, a small portion of the grant request can be for equipment if it will enhance the overall goal of cultural preservation (cannot exceed 25% of the grant request).

The digital images you create should be of archival quality. Your project consultant can advise on resolution and format.

Cataloging and Storing the Collection

Most digital preservation projects include organization of the collection. Is there a cataloging system in place? Are items numbered and labeled according to subject headings and classifications? In your grant application, explain your system of cataloging and subject headings. Your project consultant can advise on this. Often, cataloging or indexing projects are completed prior to digitization efforts.

The conditions under which the collection will be stored at the end of the project are important. The sponsoring organization should strive to provide storage that:

- Has basic climate control year-round that protects from moisture and temperature extremes
- Keeps photographs/documents and digital copies in separate locations (preferably separate buildings) to mitigate the effects of disasters such as fire, flood, and tornado
- Uses archival folders, boxes, or sleeves
- Keeps digital copies on DVDs, CDs, or external drives

Grant funds may be used to purchase archival folders, boxes, sleeves, CDs, DVDs, or external drives. The improvement of climate controls and the purchase of file cabinets and shelving is the responsibility of the sponsor organization.

Working with Your Consultant

The consultant may be involved with the project at varying levels, depending on the training needs of your organization's staff. Involvement could include:

- Recommending formats and resolution for archival quality digitization
- A site visit to provide training for staff and volunteers on handling, digitizing, identifying, and storing photographs
- Providing ongoing advice throughout the project and an evaluation at the project's conclusion

Sharing the Results of the Project

Public Access. Organizations are encouraged to make digitized items available online. This is an excellent way to share the collection. Technology becomes obsolete, so be sure to preserve originals. Creating a website populated with digitized images can be part of this grant.

Displays and Public Events. Organizations are encouraged to create displays that highlight the project. An open house or special event is also good for informing the media and public. However, Culture Preservation grants are intended for the preservation work itself, so only a portion of the grant should be used for displays or events.

Contact a Statewide Archive. Grantees must notify a statewide archive and provide them an opportunity to copy materials produced with HK funds. A list of statewide archives is available in the Forms section of the Culture Preservation Grants page.

Grant Application: Additional Questions & Attachment

In preparing the grant application, the following questions will appear when you click "Photo/Document Digitization Project" in the Supplemental Questions. *Note that an attachment is also required:*

Additional Questions:

Describe the proposed digital formats.

How many (approximately) photographs and/or documents will be digitized?

Briefly describe their condition.

Describe your current cataloging system.

How will the collection be stored after the project is complete?

Name of the statewide archive that will be offered the opportunity to copy material.

Attachment: Provide 2–3 example images from the collection, with captions, at the end of the grant application (Word or PDF)

For More Information

Contact Leslie VonHolten, Director of Grants & Outreach, LVH@humanitieskansas.org