

MEAP Handbook for Applicants 2025-2026

Modern Endangered Archives Program (MEAP)

Handbook for Applicants (2024-25)

The Modern Endangered Archives Program (MEAP) is a UCLA Library granting program funded by [Arcadia](#).

We fund projects that document, digitize and make accessible endangered archival materials from the 20th and 21st centuries, including print, photographic, film, audio-visual, ephemeral, and born-digital objects. MEAP grants fund organizations, archivists, researchers, and cultural heritage specialists to document and preserve at-risk cultural heritage through digitization.

Program details and policies can be found in the [MEAP Guidelines](#).

All inquiries about application procedures or any other aspect of MEAP should be sent by email to meap@library.ucla.edu.

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1. Available Grant Funding

MEAP offers three types of grants per application cycle: Planning Grants, Project Grants, and Regional Grants. Applicants can apply for one type of grant per cycle.

PLANNING GRANTS offer up to \$20,000 for up to one year of work.

Planning Grants should be used to evaluate, survey or catalog collections for digitization and/or curation. Successful projects create survey reports or item level inventories that document collections and prepare them for digitization.

PROJECT GRANTS offer up to \$70,000 for up to two years of work.

Project Grants should be used to digitize archival content or curate already-digital assets. Grant funded projects should be ready to start digitization once funding is available and address the full lifecycle of digitization, including imaging, content description (metadata creation) and digital asset delivery.

REGIONAL GRANTS offer up to \$100,000 for up to two years of work.

Regional Grants should be used to create digital collections that include cultural heritage materials from three or more institutions, families, or archival repositories but related to one theme, community or historical event. Projects should focus on digitization and metadata creation that enables findability for materials that are not physically held in one location. Projects should also include training and community engagement that ensure representative communities and stakeholders are included in the digitization and description process.

Note: Only previous MEAP grant holders are eligible to apply for a Regional Grant. All potential Regional Grant applicants must connect with the MEAP staff to discuss their application before submission.

MEAP also offers **EMERGENCY GRANTS** of up to \$10,000 for up to 6 months of digitization work outside regular funding cycles. Applicants must be invited to submit an application.

- For more information, email meap@library.ucla.edu with a description of the endangered collection and why you cannot wait for a full review cycle.
- Emergency grant funding can be used for digitization and metadata creation. Funds cannot be used for physical preservation.

2. Eligibility

Applicant Eligibility

Projects must have one single principal applicant who takes responsibility for the planning and execution of the project. The principal applicant will also be responsible for the financial

management of the grant. Projects may have additional applicants who take responsibility for executing the project throughout its lifecycle. Applicants may be:

- Affiliated leaders of not-for-profit organizations or community organizations that hold at-risk cultural heritage materials.
- Accredited members of the teaching or research faculty at a university or similar higher education institution.
- Archivists or librarians with responsibilities for special collections in archives, a national or research library, or a similar institution.

Institutional Eligibility

Grants must be administered by organizations acting as a Host Institution. Host institutions should be a community organization, university, archive, library, research or cultural institution. MEAP cannot fund individuals directly. (See [Host Institution](#) for more detail.)

Project Eligibility

MEAP supports projects that organize, collect, convert and describe archival material, existing digital assets, or born-digital materials. Materials must fit within the following scope.

<i>Endangerment</i>	Archival content must be imminently at-risk due to environmental conditions, political uncertainty, inherently unsustainable media, inappropriate storage, and/or communal or social change.
<i>Age of Material</i>	Archival materials to be digitized or surveyed should date from the early 20th century to the present, preferably with a majority of the material dating from the 1950s or later.
<i>Content</i>	Materials should document aspects of history, society, culture, and politics, preferably with an emphasis on social justice, human rights, and under-documented communities.
<i>Geographic Focus</i>	Collections must be held outside North America, the UK, and European Union countries. We encourage applications from Africa, the Caribbean, Central America, Latin America, the Middle East, Central Asia, South and Southeast Asia, and Oceania. <i>Applicants from North America and Europe are eligible to apply only if resources are limited for preserving archival material and other avenues for funding have been exhausted. Email meap@library.ucla.edu for further insight.</i>
<i>Format</i>	Materials may be in a variety of formats, including print, audio, video, photographs, ephemera, and born-digital files (including but not limited to blogs, digital photographs, cell phone videos, website pages, 3D images, magnetic tape, and social media content).
<i>Regional Grant</i>	Regional Grants are held by one organizing Host Institution and must be managed by someone with previous experience completing a previous MEAP grant.

Regional Grant Applications should indicate how previous MEAP experience will be applied to the new project.

3. Application Process (2025-26)

MEAP invites applications for its eighth cohort of projects designed to preserve, document, and digitize collections at risk from environmental conditions, political uncertainty, inherently unsustainable media, inappropriate storage, or communal and social change. Funding is now available for Planning Grants to survey or inventory archival collections and for Project and Regional Grants to digitize and publish existing collections.

- All applications must be submitted through the MEAP application portal at <https://meap.smapply.io/>
- All Applications must be submitted in English.
- Applicants may only submit one application in each round of funding.
- Applicants should consult [MEAP Guidelines](#) and [MEAP Applicant Resources](#) for recommendations regarding hardware, software, digitization best practices, survey and inventory workflows, and more.

MEAP has a two stage application process. All applicants are required to submit a Preliminary Application through the MEAP application system. Selected applicants will then be invited to complete a Detailed Application.

- Applications open **September 16, 2025**
- **Application webinar: October 9, 2025 at 8am Pacific Time** | [Registration Required](#)
- Preliminary Applications due **November 17, 2025**
- Preliminary Application decisions communicated **December 2025**
- Detailed Applications (for invited applicants) due **February 20, 2026**
- Awards announced **Summer 2026**

4. Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated by an international panel of scholars using the following criteria:

- Urgency of the project, as reflected by the vulnerability of the materials, due to environmental conditions, political uncertainty, inherently unsustainable media, inappropriate storage, and/or communal and social change
- Scholarly significance and uniqueness of the materials proposed for digitization or surveying
- Viability of online publication based on signed rights statements, ethical rights analysis, and articulated commitment to the program's Open Access policy
- Project feasibility according to timeframe and resources requested, including physical space and personnel to conduct the activities proposed

- Expertise and experience of the applicants and project team
- Commitment and planning within the proposed project to create metadata in English and the language of the culture in which the materials were created
- Regional Grant applications will have additional evaluation criteria, including why a regional approach is right for the project. [See more details on our website >](#)

5. Archival Partner

An Archival Partner is the organization, institution, or individual(s) who currently hold and maintain an archival collection.

- If the grant applicant is not affiliated with the repository that currently holds the materials, applicants must submit an [Archival Partner Form](#) with the Detailed Application.
- The Archival Partner Form documents the confirmed participation of the archival stewards. Applicants are responsible for securing permission to survey materials (for Planning Grants) or to digitize materials (for Project Grants, Regional Grants).
- An administrative representative from the archival institution or the current collection steward should complete and sign this form to confirm collaboration on the project.
- If there is more than one archival partner, each partner must complete a separate form.

6. Host Institution

The Host Institution should be a university, research institution, archive, community organization or similar institution to which the grant will be awarded. The host institution is the administrative home for the project that will administer and account for the funds and abide by the terms and conditions of the award.

- Applicants must submit a [Host Agreement Form](#) with the Detailed Application. The form documents confirmed participation as the host institution.
- This institution may or may not be the primary applicant's home institution; it may or may not be the home of the archival materials.
- The Host Institution will be responsible for finalizing the legal grant agreement with UCLA. The Host Institution will also administer grant funds and ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant. (See [MEAP Guidelines](#) for more detail.)
- An administrative representative from the Host Institution should review the [blank MEAP Contract Terms](#) to ensure that the Host Institution will be willing to serve in this capacity.
- It is possible to change Host Institutions after the project is approved for funding, but this process may delay the project start.

7. Planning your Project

Your MEAP Application should clearly state your plan for executing the proposed project. If you plan to survey a collection, consider how much time it will take to review all materials and what scale you will use for documenting (collection level, box level, item level). If you plan to digitize a collection, what equipment will you need, how much staff time will be required, who will be responsible for metadata creation?

- The Preliminary Application asks for information about your proposed project team, equipment, software and intended deliverables. If you are invited to submit a Detailed Application, you will be required to submit a detailed work plan that lays out a quarterly or monthly plan for completing the project.
- Consider the MEAP payment schedules in planning purchases. (See [MEAP Guidelines](#).) MEAP does not distribute all funds at the start of the project.
- Build in reporting every 6 months. This will require an update on project progress and financial reporting. (See [MEAP Guidelines](#).)
- For PLANNING GRANTS, we recommend you include the following details:
 - **PROJECT SCOPE:** How much material do you anticipate working with? Be sure to include the information you know AND what you anticipate might happen once the work begins. For example, if you know there are 5 boxes of photographs to document, but there might be more materials stored in boxes or closets around the archive, you would want to tell us how the scope might change after you begin working. Or, if you have commitments from 3 collection owners, but you hope those individuals will introduce you to more collection holders, you would want to state this in the application.

In other words, we want to understand what you know about the collection at this point. And, we also recognize that the project will change once you get started.

- **DESCRIPTION GOALS:** Do you plan to create an item level inventory, providing descriptive information about each object? Or, do you plan to organize at the folder level, detailing general topics and themes and organizing for future access? If the project is at an earlier stage, you might propose to create multiple collection surveys. This scale of work can help document different parts of a future collection and work to build trust with collection holders.
 - Consider using the [MEAP Inventory Template](#) for object level description or the [MEAP Survey Template](#) for collection level assessment. Both templates can be edited to suit the specific needs of your project.

- **DELIVERABLES:** What will success look like for this project? Will you create one consistent inventory? Multiple survey documents? Or a combination of documents to assess and describe a collection and plan for future digitization?
- For PROJECT + REGIONAL GRANTS, we recommend you include the following steps in your work plan:
 - **KICK OFF CALL:** The project PI (and team where relevant) will have a kick-off conversation with MEAP to discuss beginning the project within one month of receiving MEAP funds. Initial conversations will establish file naming structures, metadata standards, and digital file expectations. We suggest you include the kick off call as part of your work plan in Month 1.
 - **SAMPLE PHASE:** We expect to receive sample files and accompanying metadata for 5-10 objects within the first two months of the project launch. The MEAP team will review your samples and provide feedback to ensure that all digital files and metadata meet the technical requirements needed for publication and preservation. This initial review will take 1 - 2 weeks.
 - Keep in mind that if your initial samples do not meet MEAP requirements, you will be asked to submit a second set of samples before continuing with your digitization, and it is likely that you will have to edit your workflow in response to our feedback.
 - If your project includes digitization of multiple media types, you will be required to submit samples of each file type. This may come at the beginning of the project or may be spread out throughout the project depending on your work plan.
 - Note: It may take a few weeks of back and forth emails or a zoom call to finalize the sample phase.
 - **BATCHES:** MEAP recommends that project teams submit digital materials and metadata for publication in batches throughout the project. What defines a “batch” varies from project to project, but we generally recommend that teams aim to send us 3–4 batches throughout their project and that batches reflect 4–6 months of work.
 - Content should be sent to the MEAP team via secure online folders using an MEAP-designated Google Shared Drive.
 - Your work plan should include information about how you will organize and sort the collection for digitization. If the collection includes different types of materials or different sub-collections, the work plan should explain which parts of the collection you will digitize first (and why). If the

collection is large, the work plan should indicate how much you plan to digitize for each part of the project (for example: Quarter 1: Digitize and describe 1,000 photographs).

- **METADATA:** MEAP requires object-level metadata for all digital objects. Your work plan should account for who will be creating metadata, when they will be creating metadata, and (when relevant) how the metadata will be translated.
 - The work plan should outline your team's approach to metadata and how you will work to create accurate, consistent, and meaningful metadata for the objects in your collection according to MEAP's metadata requirements.
 - The work plan should indicate whether you plan to create metadata before, during, or after digitization. It should also include any plans you have for metadata training, quality checks, or translation.
 - We do not recommend waiting until the end of the project to begin creating metadata and recommend that teams create metadata during the digitization phase. However, if your team plans to create metadata after digitization, you will need to indicate how this approach will work.
 - If you need to translate the metadata (into English for MEAP or into another language for the local community), please consider who will do the translations and when they will take place. Ideally, you will translate the metadata in segments corresponding to the batches of digital files you will submit to MEAP.
- **OTHER DETAILS TO CONSIDER:**
 - **Quality Checks:** Strong project plans will include time for reviewing digital files and metadata for quality and consistency.
 - **Metadata Training:** The MEAP team will provide a walkthrough of the Metadata Template, but cannot lead a training session. If your team requires training for creating metadata, who will conduct the training? Will there be subsequent training sessions or review sessions throughout the project?
 - **Software and Equipment:** If your team will be working with new software or hardware (equipment), you will want to account for the time it will take for the team to become familiar with the tools. Likewise, if your team already has experience working with the tools and equipment you plan to use, you will want to provide these details in the work plan.

Digital Media Required Format(s)	
Photographs, documents, and other flat materials	TIFF images • Uncompressed • 400 - 600 dpi • sRGB Color Profile • Target file size: 5 - 50 mb per image • Must meet MEAP quality standards: focus, orientation, cropping Read our guide for print materials for more details.
Audio materials	Broadcast Wave Format (.wav) • Uncompressed • Consistent volume and sound levels *MEAP does not require mp3 for online access. If you aim to create local access to audio files, you may choose to render mp3 files during the project. See our Audio Digitization guide for reference.
Video Materials	• Uncompressed .mov, .avi, or .mkv file for preservation • Matching mp4 or other compressed format for online access See our Video Digitization guide for reference.

8. Building your Budget

All funds provided by MEAP will be in US Dollars (\$). Applicants should consider and anticipate fluctuations in exchange rates and inflation when preparing their budgets.

MEAP can only provide funds for eligible expenses. A list of eligible and ineligible [expenses](#) is available for reference in the [MEAP Program Guidelines](#).

- The Preliminary Application asks for an estimated budget for the following categories. This preliminary budget is a reflection of the project priorities. For example, do you plan to spend most of the MEAP funds for salaries? Do you need a lot of equipment?
 - Salaries and Benefits
 - Equipment: Hardware, Software, and Consumables
 - Travel and Expenses
 - Training
 - Other Costs
- If you are invited to submit a Detailed Application, you will be required to submit a detailed budget that includes line-item estimates for each category and category-specific

justifications. This should be as detailed as possible. How many staff salaries will the grant pay? What specific equipment will you plan to purchase with grant funds? Who will you hire to complete training?

- Use the budget justification section to note where you have other available resources and funds.
 - If your team salaries will be paid by the Host Institution, please note that in the salaries justification.
 - If you have available equipment already, be sure to note that in the equipment justification. You may also include details about available equipment in the Detailed Application work plan.
 - The goal is for the MEAP team and Review Panel to understand how your project will be completed and how MEAP funds will be used to successfully complete the intended work.
- MEAP encourages project teams to build community engagement into their project plan and budget.
 - Engagement events should focus on securing rights from the community and/or documenting items in the collection (creating metadata).
 - MEAP is unlikely to fund events that are strictly promotional.
- Some additional notes to consider:
 - Digitization can be outsourced in cases where outsourcing makes the most sense. For example, teams may want to consider outsourcing digitization when equipment or training is not available locally or when audio or video content is a small part of a larger collection and the team is focused on digitizing the larger portion. Please note that MEAP expects all documentation and descriptive metadata creation to take place locally.
 - Training can be conducted virtually or in person. In either instance, trainers should be compensated.
 - MEAP recommends minimizing funds used to support travel for U.S. or European based scholars. Budgets should prioritize the team on the ground and U.S. or European based scholars should seek external funding for travel.
 - MEAP does not provide detailed training. The MEAP team will discuss metadata and digitization expectations during our kick off call and will offer robust feedback throughout the project.
 - The cost of developing a project website to host the digital collection is allowed. However, website costs should represent only a small percentage of the total grant amount and should not extend beyond the length of the grant because the UCLA Library commits to preserving and ensuring online access to digital collections funded by MEAP.
 - MEAP does not pay for indirect costs. (See [MEAP Guidelines](#).)
 - MEAP does not pay for purchasing archival materials. Some kind of notional recompense payment to owners of the material may be possible in exceptional

cases. If you are including such payments in your application, you must explain why and justify how much. (See [MEAP Guidelines](#).)

- MEAP does not fund the creation of new media, including Oral Histories, Films, Documentaries, or Exhibits.

9. Open Access

Materials digitized with MEAP funding must be made available online in an open-access repository. The program does not offer grants if unreasonable restrictions are placed on the use or access to the material either because of copyright or privacy restrictions.

- Applicants are responsible for securing permissions to publish from the copyright holder(s).
- Applicants should secure permission from each copyright holder and submit signed [Copyright Permission Agreement](#) forms with your Detailed Application.
- Applicants who are uncertain of copyright and/or privacy permissions should apply for a Planning Grant. MEAP will fund planning grants that dedicate time to evaluating copyright, obtaining necessary documentation, and permissions from other partners.
- The UCLA Library will provide open online access to all material digitized with MEAP funds. MEAP requires project teams to include item-level rights metadata.
- While MEAP requires uncompressed images and files for preservation, we publish lower resolution access files.
- Applicants should be aware of privacy and ethical concerns. When collections contain sensitive information, such as images of death and violence or personal information, the project team is responsible for securing necessary permissions for publication. In particular, project teams should develop a plan for identifying and anonymizing any potentially criminalizing information. Alternatively, project teams should develop a plan for securing communal or individual permissions as necessary. You can include any plans for securing rights or engaging with the community in your work plan.
- Applicants should consider models of shared ownership and ongoing consent if working with Indigenous or communal materials.