

Things to comment on as you read:

Feel free to use google's comment function in the body of the document, or type your comments directly under the following bulleted prompts:

- Number of institutions involved
- Best ways of distributing funds among partner institutions - different models of regranting or FTE support
- Components of an advocacy toolkit
- Audiences for advocacy
- Key questions and prompts
- Ways to ensure that the organizations involved are representative of a range of information maintenance contexts
- Other/similar work to cite
- Volunteers to participate in the project - people who think their organization might consider participating

Ex. grant and its requirements

Funding Category: Research-in-Practice Grant

Project Category: Lifelong Learning

Investigating questions related to how library services, resources, and programs impact patron learning that are informed by current library and archival practice. They should develop mutually beneficial relationships between researchers and practitioners and communicate findings in ways that will lead to demonstrable improvements in library services.

Required Sections of Preliminary Proposal Narrative:

- statement of broad need: the broad need for the project and its relevance to a project category
- project design: lay out the project's proposed work plan and projected impact, including specific performance goals and outcomes
- diversity plan
- broad impact
- budget summary. The budget summary must include the total anticipated costs of the project, cost share amount (if required), and a breakdown of how funds would be allocated.

InfoMaintainer - Advocacy Toolkit - Funding Prospectus - SHARED

Introduction: Partners seek \$xxxxx from IMLS to study and advance the crucial and under-appreciated work that “information maintainers” do, while building better and stronger connections within and across different groups of maintainers. We propose to study three broad research questions:

- How does the framing of cultural stewardship in libraries and archives as “information maintenance” help us to identify, measure, and tighten the correlation between organizations’ missions and values, and the economic/emotional well-being of their staff?
 - What labor/compensation/equity issues are the most pressing for information maintainers?
- In what ways does the undervaluing of maintenance labor in cultural stewardship organizations impact equitable access to resources downstream from stewardship work such as description, preservation, curation, and conservation?
- What would an assessment framework that measures the “maintenance score” of cultural stewardship organizations look like? How might such a framework be constructed in a way that reveals areas of improvement for internal management and human resource practices, as well as downstream end-user access to resources?

Background and current significance: This proposal builds on and extends substantial collaborative effort in recent years within a broad community of information maintainers. We define information maintainers as “those who manage, maintain, and preserve information systems”, from metadata creators and database managers to cataloguers and circulation staff, working within and beyond GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives and museums) institutions. We are inspired by, and propose to build upon, several collaborative efforts including two recent white papers on [information maintainers](#) and [labor in libraries, archives, and museums](#), as well as a variety of reports from the [DLF Working Group on Labor in Digital Libraries, Archives, and Museums](#). This proposal takes its agenda specifically from discussions within the Information Maintainers community, a multi-disciplinary group convened around articulating an Ethic of Care surrounding information maintenance. With the publication of our aforementioned white paper in April 2019, we identified a number of questions that deserve further research and discussion. What power structures influence imbalances in diversity, equity, and inclusion in information maintenance workplaces, and how can these be addressed from within? How can the lived experiences of information maintainers can be documented, transmitted, and used for advocacy responsibly, so as to correct imbalances in compensation and job stability at micro and macro scales?

We will answer the above questions using a mix of theoretically-informed methods. These include semi-structured interviews and focus groups that foreground the voices and experiences of information maintainers; documentation analysis; and workplace observation that allows co-investigators to document the activities that information maintainers actually do in context.

We approach this work through theoretical and analytical frameworks of care ethics, community-based research, and participatory action research. Findings and their implications for library and archival practice and services should be shared broadly, and not be limited to publishing scholarly journal articles and presenting at academic conferences.

Individual information maintainers need a socially meaningful way to measure their own experiences and see them as a part of a larger context. This research will result in the development of an advocacy toolkit that will empower maintainers with a shared language, exemplars, and an assessment framework to be used in communication with other maintainers, their own administrators, and professionals from other disciplines. These resources will be distributed in multiple formats on outlets without paywalls including The Maintainers' website, our respective institutional and appropriate subject-specific repositories, as well as in the Maintainers Podcast updates, webinars, and listserv.

Project Design, Methods & Timeline

In Year 1, co-investigators will secure IRB approval; recruit and hire a project coordinator and research assistants; design protocols for semi-structured interviews, a series of focus groups, and workplace observation for three to five site visits; and recruit participants for interviews. The goal is to invite a subset of interviewees to participate in focus groups and to request their participation for potential site visits. Organizations/Individuals willing to host site visits will receive compensation for their participation in initial data gathering and subsequent review of the advocacy toolkit. Site visits will be preceded by requests for and review of documentation that is critical to information maintainers' activities (manuals, communication tools). This body of qualitative data will be coded initially with themes derived from literature and iteratively based on emergent themes in the data itself.

In Year 2, the findings from Year 1 research will be applied towards the development of an information maintenance advocacy toolkit containing working definitions, templates for activities and communications, and an assessment framework. Site visit hosts will be included in the iterative development of these resources. At the end of Year 2, co-investigators will issue a call for participation for ten organizations/staff teams willing to pilot the toolkit. These teams will receive financial support for their participation.

In Year 3, co-investigators will monitor the pilot testing, with regular virtual calls with each of the pilot teams. After the first six months, co-investigators will determine any major changes to be made to the advocacy toolkit and dissemination of project outputs will begin. Outputs of the project will include the advocacy toolkit, publication of findings in open access scholarly journals and peer-reviewed conference proceedings; regular field reports to be published on the project blog; and a final report to IMLS.

Estimated Budget:

Estimated Budget: The overall budget of \$xxxx for the project includes project staff salaries (\$xxxx); support for subcontractor salaries (\$xxxxx); support for Research Assistants (\$xxxx); meeting hosting and travel costs for project team and advisory members (\$xxxx); toolkit piloting awards (\$xxxxx); site host awards (\$xxxxx); supplies and tools (\$xxxxx); website development (\$xxxxx); and open access publication costs (\$xxxxx), plus \$xxxxx (10%) in IDC.

