Mixed Media: Working with Audio and Visual Materials—

Heather Fox, Assistant Editor, University of Louisville

MACers interested in writing a column for Mixed Media are encouraged to contact Heather Fox at heather.fox@louisville.edu.

Funding Audiovisual Projects

By Heather Fox, University of Louisville, and Paul Eisloeffel, Nebraska State Historical Society

Many of us hold audiovisuals in our collections. Whether sound recordings or moving images (or both), small caches or large, audiovisuals demand special care and offer challenges to access. Yet many repositories lack the equipment and the staff know-how to work properly with audiovisuals. Moreover, they lack the funds—audiovisuals are notoriously expensive to house and reformat, and complicated to describe. How can you afford to provide for their unique needs?

A mere few decades ago it was difficult to find funding for audiovisual projects. But fortunately for us, several funders now understand the historical and cultural value of audiovisuals and the commitment they require. The following list offers some ideas, and we end with some further thoughts on funding for audiovisuals.

Grammy Foundation

The Grammy Foundation (www.grammy.org/grammy-foundation/grants) offers two types of preservation grants: one focused on implementation and the other on preservation assistance; both target the preservation of collections that "embody the recorded sound heritage of the Americas." Implementation grants are available to large institutions (annual budgets over $500,000) that have the necessary infrastructure, project plan, and in-house expertise. Preservation assistance grants are available to small to mid-sized institutions (budgets less than $500,000) that do not have in-house expertise to deal with recorded sound materials.

Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) offers three types of grants that would potentially support AV projects: National Leadership Grants, Museums for America Grants, and Save America's Treasures Grants. Visit www.imls.gov for specific criteria. These grants support projects related to preservation/digitization and library/museum collaboration. Save America's Treasures focuses on preserving "the nation's most significant and endangered cultural treasures."

International Federation of Television Archives

The International Federation of Television Archives (FIAT/IFTA) is specifically devoted to audiovisual archives and targets organizations with holdings such as "newsreels, broadcast material, production rushes and sound recordings." The website offers guidelines and an application template at www.fiatifta.org/save-your-archive.

National Endowment for the Arts

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) offers a number of grants for the discipline of "media arts," including film, radio, and television, which can be used to support audiovisual preservation. It invites applications for funding both small and large projects at arts.gov/grants.

National Endowment for the Humanities

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has three categories into which funding for audiovisuals may fit. Preservation Assistance Grants help institutions improve their ability to preserve and care for their collections through conservation assessments, purchase of preservation supplies, purchase of environmental monitoring equipment, and attendance at preservation training programs. The grants are for $6,000 and do not require institutions to provide matching funds. The Humanities Collections and Reference Resources grant category supports projects that combine or include cataloging moving image collections, reformatting, digitizing collections, preserving or improving access to born-digital resources, as well as many other activities. Finally, Challenge Grants are intended to help institutions secure long-term improvements and support for humanities programs. Grants may be used to establish or enhance endowments that support ongoing program activities, or for one-time capital expenditures that bring long-term benefits to the institution. Visit www.neh.gov/grants for more information.

National Film Preservation Foundation

The National Film Preservation Foundation (NFPF) offers three types of grants: Basic Preservation Grants, Matching Grants, and Avant-garde Masters Grants. Basic Preservation Grants provide cash and/or lab services to reformat "historically significant film materials." Matching Grants support "complex, large scale preservation, reconstruction or restoration projects" that can be done in-house. As the name suggests, this grant requires a match equal to

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one-fifth the grant award. Avant-garde Masters Grants are cash and self-explanatory. Find out more at www.filmpreservation.org/nfpf-grants.

National Historical Publications and Records Commission

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) offers several grants applicable to audiovisual materials. The two main categories are Documenting Democracy and Digitizing the Historic Record. The aim of both of these is "facilitating and enhancing access to primary source materials." These grants require registration and application through the grants.gov website. Visit www.archives.gov/nhprc/apply/program.html.

National Parks Service—Save America's Treasures

Save America's Treasures grants fund preservation projects of nationally significant collections. Significance is determined by an outside agency (NEA, NEH, or IMLS). Examples of funded projects include reel-to-reel reformatting, photograph conservation, acetate and vinyl transcription, and more. Find more information at www.nps.gov/history/hps/treasures.

Women's Film Preservation Fund

Sponsored by New York Women in Film and Television (NYWFT), these grants preserve films in which women played a significant artistic or technical role. These awards are generally under $10,000. Only nonprofits are eligible. Visit www.nywift.org/article.aspx?id=FPF.

Four other sources worth exploring are the **American Library Association (ALA)** (www.ala.org/awardsgrants/awards/browse/grnt?showfilter=no), the opportunities provided by the **Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)** (www.ala.org/advocacy/advleg/federallegislation/lsta), the **National Science Foundation** (www.nsf.gov/funding), and the National Park Service's **Preservation Technology and Training** grants (ncptt.nps.gov/grants).

Although the above-listed sources can (and do) fund large projects, the process can be very competitive, and the results long in coming. But they aren't your only hope. Sometimes it pays to do some further research, consider a smaller scope, and even to think locally.

- State humanities councils will often fund work on audiovisuals, but it is generally contingent on ultimately creating an educational product like an exhibit, website, publication, or public program. Find your state's council at www.neh.gov/about/state-humanities-councils.
- State Historical Records Advisory Boards (SHRABs) sometimes have the discretion to fund local projects, if doing so fits their individual master plans. In any case, making contact with your state's SHRAB is usually the first step in applying for an NHPRC grant from the National Archives. Look up your state's contacts at www.statearchivists.org/shrabs.htm.
- The content of your audiovisuals might be of interest to other government agencies. The website grants.gov provides a searchable directory of government funding opportunities.
- Private and local foundations might have an interest in the content of audiovisuals in your collections. The Foundation Center (foundationcenter.org) offers both free and paid access to hundreds of thousands of funders through its website. And though it is a few years old, a particularly useful resource is the 2010 guide *Foundation Grants for Preservation in Libraries, Archives and Museums*. The result of collaboration by the Foundation Center and the Library of Congress, it's available as a PDF at www.loc.gov/preservation/about/foundtn-grants.pdf.
- Also by virtue of their content, audiovisuals may be of interest to businesses, organizations, private individuals, or even other archives—all of which may be willing to share any burden of preservation and reformatting costs in exchange for usable copies.
- Donors of the audiovisuals themselves may be persuaded to help defray preservation and reformatting costs, if it means better and quicker public access to their donations.
- Internal programs that target audiovisuals (and the needs of other holdings, for that matter) are often helpful. Programs like "Adopt-a-Film" may be relatively slow and time-consuming but are proactive, and they engage the public in your mission.

You may find that audiovisuals are useful to your institution as both a marketing tool and part of a revenue stream. The effectiveness of moving images and sound

recordings for exhibit and promotional purposes cannot be understated. And audiovisuals may pique the interest of a media producer or researcher, who can fund work on them, all or in part, through special access and use fees.

Audiovisuals are unique and complicated documents, on many levels. Working with them can be quite costly, and the search for funding sources almost always comes into play. But don't lose hope. Financial help is available for those willing to seek it.

Digital Tour of Kansas City

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Kansas City residents are crazy about basketball and James Naismith, the creator of the game and the first basketball coach at the University of Kansas (KU). The University Archives section of the **KU Digital Collections**, lib.ku.edu/ku-digital-collections, provides a glimpse into the life and work of Dr. Naismith. Photographs, newspaper articles, and publications about the creation of basketball are searchable through the University Archives digital collection. KU Digital Collections also offers Kansas City aerial photographs, taken in 2002 and showing recent development of the area, which can be compared to many of the historical photographs of Kansas City.

The variety of online content available through the cultural institutions in the Kansas City area is as diverse as the history of the two states it shares. I hope these online resources spark your interest in Kansas City and reveal why it is an exciting location for the 2014 MAC Annual Meeting!