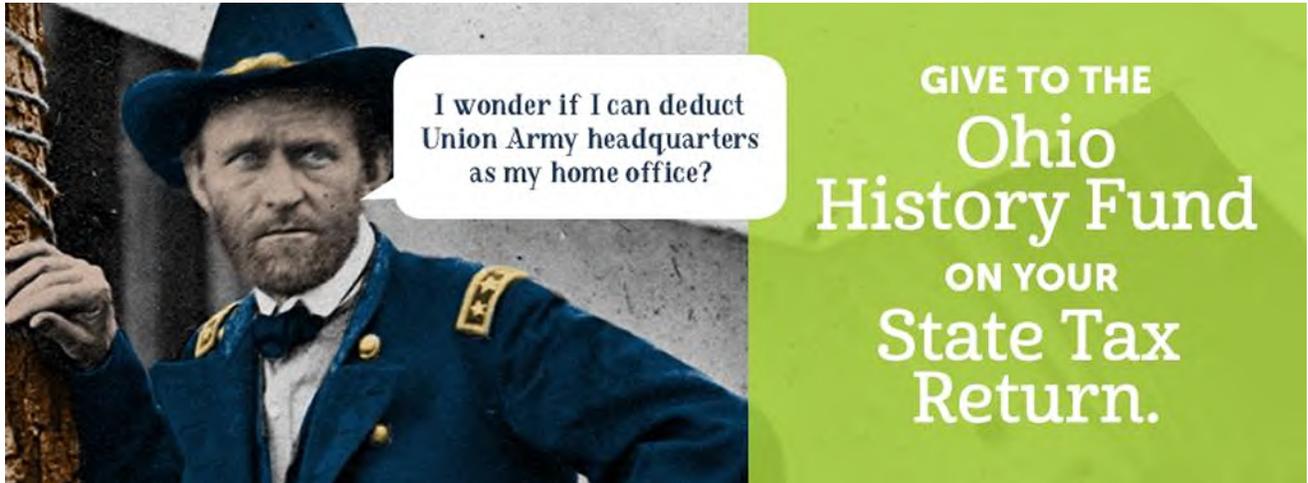


# Ohio Digitization Interest Group

## Ohio History Fund & Digitization Projects

March 22, 2021



### Grant Seeker Stratagems

Each of the programs here today make grants for digitization and related projects. *Weigh the odds* of getting a grant from each funder. Prioritize the funder with the best odds.

*Good questions to ask:* how many applications do you receive per year? How many do you fund? The Ohio History Fund funds an average of one of five applications annually. Given that we receive an average of 50 applications per year, we give more grants when more of you contribute.

*Also:* the Ohio History Fund supports projects in a wide range of areas: digitization, museum and archives collections care, historic preservation, exhibits, oral history, archaeology, public programs. Your application will compete against all other kinds of history projects for support (and it can!).

### Ohio History Fund

The [Ohio History Fund](#) is a competitive matching grant program of the [Ohio History Connection](#) that funds local history, pre-history, and historic preservation projects in Ohio.

Money for Ohio History Fund grants comes from the voluntary contributions by you. You can donate to the program in three ways:

- 1) Contribute part of your state income tax refund to "Ohio History Fund," [line 26a](#), on your 2020 state tax return. Average donation is \$9-10.
- 2) Purchase Ohio History "mastodon" [license plates](#). \$20 per sale goes to the Ohio History Fund.
- 3) Make a tax-deductible [donation](#) to the Ohio History Connection for the Ohio History Fund.

***The more the Ohio History Fund receives in donations this year, the more grants it makes next year.*** During tax season – ***now*** – we make about 85% of the total we use for grants in a year. Consider a contribution on your state tax form – and ***THANK YOU*** if you already have.

## Who can apply for an Ohio History Fund grant?

- Ohio-based, nonprofit organizations.
- Public entities in Ohio: units of local government, public libraries, and educational institutions.
- Independent non-profits operating Ohio History Connection sites under “site management agreements.” *Functions assigned to the Ohio History Connection per management agreements are not eligible for History Fund grants.*

**Eligible applicants** include museums, public libraries, genealogical societies, university archives and special collections, historic preservation groups, archeological societies, county records management offices, “friends” groups, and others.

**Ineligible applicants** include for-profit businesses, private individuals, and the Ohio History Connection.

## What activities are eligible?

History projects that fall under one of three categories:

1. Programs & Collections
2. Bricks & Mortar
3. Organizational Development

Grants for digitization project fall under Programs & Collections. So far, we’ve made 14 grants for digitization projects since the Ohio History Fund started almost ten years ago (of 94 total).

Elements of successful applications:

- Describes the historical significance of the items to be digitized.
- Spells out why you want to digitize these particular records now.
- Quantifies the number of items to be digitized, and outlines a realistic schedule for completing the project.
- Describes how professional standards will apply to the project.
- Explains that qualified staff will execute the project.
- Matching grant: we pay up to 60% of the total project cost, the applicant matches a minimum of 40%. Match can take many forms: be staff and volunteer time, donated goods

and services, cost of equipment, etc. Applications that succeed clearly delineate what the grant would pay for and what the applicant will “pay for” in match.

- Explains how you will make the records available to the public once they are digitized – and how you will tell your audiences the materials are available.
- Characterizes who and how many will use the records once digitized – we need to know that the project will have a good impact on the organization and its larger communities.

## How Much Can We Request? What’s the Match Requirement?

Grants for digitization projects can range from \$2,000 - \$20,000. The amount of matching support required is a minimum of 40% of the total project’s cost.

Match for a History Fund grant can take many forms: cash, donated goods and services, and volunteer and/or staff time.

## Deadlines

Application deadline is around Labor Day (late August—early September).

Grant review period is September—February. Applicants notified of award status in mid-February. Grant recipients publically announced at Statehood Day (last week February-first week March).

## How to Apply / More Information

Visit [www.ohiohistory.org/historyfund](http://www.ohiohistory.org/historyfund), the Ohio History Fund’s website for an online application, a list of funded projects, and more information. Applications are accepted online only, but the online application system is easy to use and help is a phone call away

*Finally:* the Ohio History Fund is now under the management of the [State Historic Preservation Office](#) of the Ohio History Connection, so expect some changes. We’ll continue support a wide range of history projects and applicants, including digitization, special collections, and libraries.

## Questions? Contact:

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## Grant Writing Tips – Tried, Tested, and True

- Answer this question convincingly: Why *THIS* project at *THIS* time?
- Read and understand grant guidelines and application instructions before you start writing.
  - Contact the grant-maker with questions.
- Follow the directions.
  - Contact the grant-maker with questions.
- Attend trainings the grant-maker offers.
  - Ohio History Fund webinars: <https://www.ohiohistory.org/preserve/local-history-services/history-fund/history-fund-help>
- Give yourself plenty of time to write the grant application – deadline are deadlines.
  - Set smaller internal deadlines to keep grant writing on track.
- Assemble the materials you need to support your application.
  - What materials? See handout, “**Keep these handy when writing grants**”
- Directly and concisely answer questions posed by the grant application – no tangents, no rhetorical flights of fancy.
- Recruit a proofreader to review your application.
  - Identify typos
  - Narrative and budget make sense?
  - If the proofreader were the grant maker, would they fund it – why or why not? Turn the “why nots” into “whys”
- Assume that the review panelists evaluating your application know little about your organization but A LOT about the type of project.
- One of the first sentences in your narrative should concisely describe what you plan to do.
  - “With a grant of \$3,000 from the History Fund, the XYZ Historical Society will digitize five historic county atlases and publish them on the Society’s website...”
- Explain how the project addresses standards and best practices for projects of this type.
- Every sentence should convince the reviewer that this project deserves support.

## ***Things we hear from reviewers that could mean trouble...***

- “This schedule is very ambitious”
- “I don’t understand this project. What exactly do they want to do?”
- “Why do they need to do this project now?”
- “Why is this in the budget? It’s not mentioned in the project narrative.”
- “Why is this in project narrative? It’s not listed in the budget.”
- “Did anybody proofread this before submitting it?”

*So...*

- Be crystal clear about what you are asking for and why you need it
- Be clear about how you will accomplish the project
- Tell us whose doing the work and why they’re qualified
- Set a realistic schedule for the completion of the project
- Make sure the items you want to pay for in the budget are mentioned in the narrative. Make sure the items you describe in the narrative are included in the budget.
- Proofread! Check your math!

## Keep these handy when writing grants

\*\*required for Ohio History Fund application

- Calculator
- Mission statement of museum or its governing organization\*\*
- State of Ohio Non-profit Entity Number and assurance that you are classed as an “Active” organization by the Ohio Secretary of State’s Office\*\*
- Tax exempt letter from IRS\*\*
- Most recent 990 Form – Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax\*\*
- Most recent budget, approved by the board of trustees and against which you measure your organization’s actual income / expenses for the current year
- Information about your state and federal legislators:\*\*
  - Ohio House District Number and Representative Name
  - Ohio Senate District Number and Representative Name
  - Congressional District Number and Name of Member of Congress
  - U.S. Senator’s Names for Ohio
- Year organization was founded and list of 3 – 5 of the organization’s greatest accomplishments in the past 5 or so years\*\*
- Case Statement
  - How does this organization help people?
  - Who do we help?
  - What vital services do we offer?
  - What is our organization’s track record?
  - What are our plans for the future?
  - How do we use our money?
  - Why do we deserve support?

### **In summary, a competitive grant proposal:**

- Outlines a problem and why it needs to be addressed now
- Describes your solution to that problem and why your solution is the best one
- Explains how that solution will benefit your organization and community
- Describes how support from the Ohio History Fund will enable you to implement that solution, according to the Fund’s guidelines