

**Society of American Archivists Foundation  
Board of Directors Meeting  
November 2 – 3, 2023  
Chicago, IL (Hybrid)**

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Report: Grant Review Committee (GRC)**

(Prepared by: Elizabeth Joffrion, Chair & Astoria Edwards, Foundation Assistant Director)

**Meetings**

In the first quarter of FY24, the GRC (Grant Review Committee) held two meetings to welcome new committee members and to review past achievements. The committee also discussed challenges associated with the growing number of applications to SAAF grant opportunities. The second meeting focused on a deeper review of Strategic Growth Grant procedures and clarification of grant application criteria.

To facilitate the work of the committee, GRC has adopted Microsoft SharePoint. This tool allows improved access to the committee's current and historical files. This effort is in the pilot phase, and the committee is actively exploring the most effective ways to use this collaborative tool.

Elizabeth and Astoria have collaboratively created an onboarding guide designed to aid new committee members in understanding their roles and familiarizing themselves with the committee's initiatives. The guide is appended to the end of the report for reference.

**Revision of Letter of Inquiry Application**

The committee conducted a comprehensive review and thorough discussion of the inquiry application process and criteria for the 2024 cycle. The committee unanimously agreed to the following revisions, now available on the SAA website. These revisions encompass the following key elements:

- Describe the mission and structure of the organization that would receive SAAF grant funds and its capacity to implement and sustain the grant project as proposed.
- List the name of the project lead, their qualifications, and the qualifications of other project participants or collaborative partners.
- Provide a brief abstract of the project's goals, including key activities, anticipated product(s) and/or outcome(s), the intended impact, and plans for disseminating the results of the grant project. (Max 500 words.)

- Precisely indicate how the proposal connects to SAA Foundation's priorities and SAA's strategic plan and how the project would advance the archival profession overall. \*( [SAA Foundation Strategic Plan](#)) (Max 300 words.)
- Provide an estimate of the total project costs and the nature of any additional funding from other sources.
- Provide the funding amount requested from the SAA Foundation and how the funds will be utilized in support of project activities. (training, stipends, rentals, etc.)

## **FY24 Timeline**

November 15 – Letter of Inquiry Due  
 December 31 – Grant Review Committee Feedback  
 February 1 – Grant Applications Due  
 May – Final Decisions Made by the Board

## **Final Reports**

During FY23, several recipients of the Strategic Growth Grant requested and were granted extensions for their proposals.

The committee received a final report entitled "Improving Metadata for Better Accessibility to Scholarly Archives for Disabled and Sensory Sensitive People," submitted Dene Grigar, Ph.D., and Richard Snyder, Ph.D., Co-PI from the Electronic Literature Lab.

This report was posted on the SAA Foundation Board discussion board (SAA Connect) in preparation for the November board meeting.

The committee is currently discussing the assessment and use of SAAF final grant reports to promote and share positive grant outcomes with the SAA community, potential donors, and other interested stakeholders.

## **2023-2024 Grant Review Committee**

Elizabeth Joffrion, Chair  
 Nicolette Lodico, Member  
 Gerri Schaad, Member  
 Karen Meyer-Roux, Member  
 Cynthia Gehring, Member  
 Jacqueline Price Osafo, Ex Officio (SAA Chief Executive Officer)  
 Astoria Edwards, Staff Liaison (SAA Foundation, Assistant Director)

## **Communications**

- Posting October 30<sup>th</sup>



## Applications Open for SAA Foundation Strategic Growth Grant Program

Are you passionate about advancing the field of archives? Do you have an innovative project in mind that could make a real impact? The Society of American Archivists Foundation is excited to announce that applications for our Strategic Growth Grant Program are now open, and we invite your ideas!

[Learn More and Apply](#)

### About the Program

The Inquiry application window is open until **November 15, 2023**. This initial step in the application process is designed to provide a quick answer to a fundamental question: Does your proposal align with the funding priorities of the SAA Foundation?

Here's what you need to include in your Letter of Inquiry:

1. **About Your Organization:** Describe your organization's mission, structure, and its capacity to implement and sustain the proposed project with SAA Foundation grant funds.
2. **Project Leadership:** Introduce the project lead, their qualifications, and the expertise of other project participants or collaborative partners.
3. **Project Snapshot:** Provide a brief abstract of your project's goals, highlighting key activities, expected outcomes, intended impact, and plans for sharing your project's results.
4. **Connection to SAA Foundation's Priorities:** Clearly indicate how your proposal aligns with the SAA Foundation's priorities and SAA's strategic plan, and how it contributes to the advancement of the archival profession.
5. **Budget Details:** Share estimated total project costs and the nature of any additional funding from other sources. Specify the funding amount requested from the SAA Foundation and how these funds will support project activities (e.g., training, stipends, rentals).

### Who can Apply?

Individuals, groups, and organizations are all eligible to apply for an SAA Foundation grant. We particularly encourage practicing archivists, SAA component groups, other organizations of archivists, and allied professionals to submit their inquiries.

### Funding Levels

The SAA Foundation typically considers grant requests ranging from \$500 to \$5,000, although we're open to larger funding requests that could have a profound impact on the profession. Please note that the SAA Foundation does not cover indirect costs.

Ready to take your project to the next level? [Learn more](#) or [apply today!](#)

Join us in shaping the future field of archives and preserving our shared history!

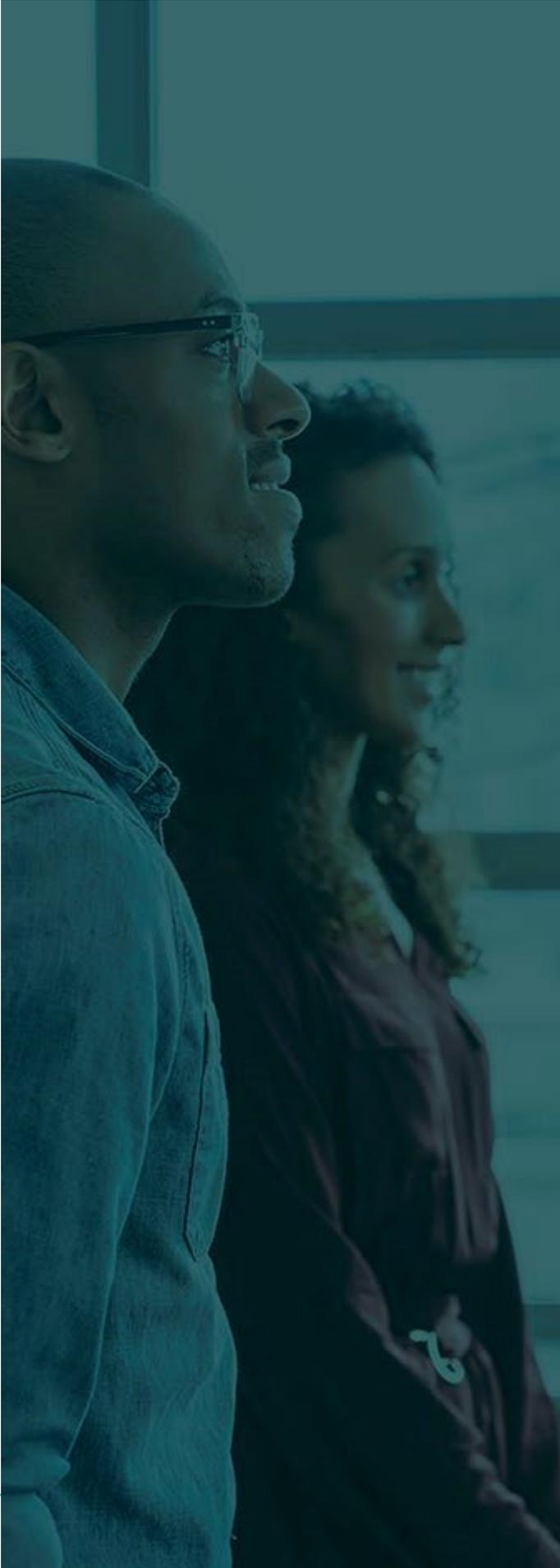
  [#SAAFoundation](#) [#StrategicGrowthGrant](#) [#EmpowerTheFuture](#)

Elizabeth Joffron  
SAA Foundation Board Director  
Chair, Grant Review Committee

The background of the cover is a teal-tinted photograph of two business professionals, a man and a woman, in a meeting. The woman in the foreground is smiling and looking towards the man. The overall aesthetic is professional and collaborative.

# PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

*Onboarding  
Guide*



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# GRANT REVIEW COMMITTEE BYLAWS

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## I. Purpose

The Grant Review Committee is responsible for receiving and evaluating grant applications according to the [SAA Grant Application Evaluation Procedures](#), and recommending to the Board which applications should receive grant funding.

## II. Committee Selection, Size, and Length of Term

The Grant Review Committee is an appointed body of the SAA Foundation Board. The Committee consists of the SAAF President (who serves as Chair) and no fewer than three additional members, one of whom may be appointed from outside the Board. Members of the committee are appointed by the President no later than the close of the Board's annual meeting and subject to approval by the Board. The Executive Director serves *ex officio* with voice, but without vote.

## III. Reporting Procedures

The Grant Review Committee reports to each full meeting of the Foundation Board of Directors and at other times as requested by the Board. For grant reviews, the Committee will consider applications (due February 1), conduct its review, and report its recommendations to the Board by March 30.

## IV. Duties and Responsibilities

- Annually review and recommend revisions (as needed) to ensure that the Foundation's Grant Evaluation Criteria (including the strategic initiatives identified in the Development Plan), Requirements Checklist, and Evaluation Form remain relevant and appropriate.
- Solicit from the Foundation Board the annual grant funding allocation.
- Solicit from the Foundation Board any special program priorities that support the SAAF or SAA missions and strategic plans.
- Assist the Executive Director in issuing the Call for Proposals before December 1 each year.
- Assist the Executive Director in assessing initial letters of inquiry.
- Work individually and collectively to analyze and evaluate grant applications submitted to the Foundation. Seek appropriate outside expertise and/or

consultation when the content of a proposal requires special knowledge (e.g., with regard to technologies, methodologies, or unfamiliar domains).

- Evaluate and make a recommendation to the Board on each grant application received. Recommendations not to fund a proposal must include a rationale that may be incorporated into communications with proposers.
- Monitor the submission of impact statements and follow-up reports from grant awardees.
- Comply with the Foundation’s conflict-of-interest policy when performing grant review work.

## **V. Meetings**

The Committee meets via conference call periodically and may meet in person provided that 1) there is a compelling need and 2) the Board approves the necessary resources.

*Approved by the SAA Foundation Board of Directors: November 2016. Revisions approved by the Board: July 2018.*

# **1. ORIENTATION & ROLES**

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- **Roles of the chair, member, ex officio, staff**
- **Calendar of deliverables**
- **First Kick-off Meeting Orientation**
- **Frequency of Meetings**

## 2. GRANT FUNDING POLICY

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Each year the SAA Foundation may make available for awarding of competitive grants a portion of its income from interest and dividends from, investment gains from, and contributions to its unrestricted funds. Income from restricted funds is not available for distribution as part of the Foundation's grants program.

The SAA Foundation Board of Directors will determine annually the percentage of income, or payout rate, to be distributed. The annual payout rate will be clearly stated for the benefit of Board members and donors.

Given the importance of maintaining an appropriate balance between growing the Foundation's principal and sponsoring a robust grants program, the Board may choose to designate the use of funds from principal to meet extraordinary requests or circumstances and/or to accrue the available funding in one fiscal year to be made available to applicants in a succeeding grant period.

## 3. APPLICATION AND PROCESS

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### Funding Priorities

The SAA Foundation Board awards grants that meet the mission and goals of the Foundation and/or the strategic planning priorities of the Society of American Archivists. Applicants must make direct and substantive reference to the way(s) in which an award of funds will advance one or more of the strategic goals of the SAA Foundation and/or the Society of American Archivists. To set reasonable expectations for applicants, the Board endeavors to publicize special concerns within the SAA Foundation funding priorities and invite applications in those areas.

The SAA Foundation does not fund the following:

Indirect or overhead costs;

General internships and fellowships that are not related to a specific Foundation-funded project;  
Travel, registration, or other costs associated with attending a professional conference; Scholarships or tuition;  
Costs associated with attending trainings; or  
Projects that benefit one institution, rather than also the profession at large.

### Funds Available

The Board encourages grant requests in amounts ranging from \$500 to \$5,000, although the SAA Foundation will consider larger funding requests that could have an unusual impact on the profession. The SAA Foundation does not pay for indirect costs.

### Eligibility

Individuals, groups, and organizations are eligible to apply for an SAA Foundation grant. Among the categories of applicants who are encouraged to apply are practicing archivists, SAA component groups, other organizations of archivists, and allied professionals.

### Grant Timing

The SAA Foundation follows a July 1 to June 30 fiscal year cycle. To be fairly considered by the Board, initial Letters of Inquiry should be received no later than November 15. All formal Grant Applications must be submitted by February 1. The Board reserves the right to consider a proposal at any time for unusual or special circumstances, and for similar reasons may streamline the grant request process to address an urgent need.

## 4. EVALUATION

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1. **Grant Review Committee.** The [Grant Review Committee](#) is an appointed body of the SAA Foundation Board. It comprises the Foundation President, no fewer than three additional members (one of whom maybe appointed from outside the Board), and the Executive Director (who serves in an *ex officio* role). The Review Committee is responsible for the following:

- Review the evaluative criteria (including strategic initiatives identified in the Development Plan) for new grant proposals.
- Receive and solicit direction from the Foundation Board on the annual funding allocation and any special program priorities that support the Foundation or SAA mission and strategic plan.
- Assist the Executive Director in issuing the Call for Proposals no later than October 1.
- Be prepared to meet as a group and to work individually to analyze, evaluate and, if necessary, contact others to gather information for a recommendation on grant applications received.
- Report to the Board and make recommendations for awarding of grants, including providing a list of proposals that are not recommended for funding and the reason(s) why.
- Monitor the submission of impact statements or reports from previous grant recipients.
- Review as needed the [Grant Application Process and Guidelines](#) and the [Application Evaluation Procedures](#).

**2. Schedule.** The letter of inquiry deadline is November 15. The Review Committee will consider the letters and respond to applicants with potential suggestions within four weeks of the deadline. The grant application deadline is February 1. The Review Committee will consider applications, conduct its review, and report its recommendations to the Board by March 30. The Board will consider and vote on the Committee's recommendations before May 1. The President will notify the applicants of the Board's decision by May 15.

**3. Initial Letter of Inquiry.** Applicants are encouraged to inquire about the suitability of their proposals with the requirements of the Foundation's grant program. An initial letter of inquiry may be a one-page, 750-word statement of interest that provides at a minimum the following five pieces of information:

- Applicant's identifying information (acting as an individual or for an institution).
- Description of project or activity and product.
- Specific reason(s) for applying with reference to the Foundation's funding priorities.
- Amount requested and expected expenses.
- Other relevant information.

**4. First-Pass Review.** The Executive Director and/or the Grant Review Committee will conduct an initial review of each letter of inquiry. Included in that review will be a determination of any apparent conflict of interest, as outlined in paragraph 6. The Executive Director will distribute inquiries as soon as possible with a recommendation to proceed or decline further consideration of the proposal based on her/his/their first-pass

review. The Committee will consider the Executive Director's recommendation and respond with an "up or down" decision on the appropriateness of the proposal. The key criteria to be considered at this stage are:

- The proposal requests funding within the award guidelines (e.g., \$500-\$5,000). If not, the Committee may consider the proposal if a compelling reason exists to exceed the funding guidelines.
- Unambiguous evidence has been provided to identify the individual and/or the entity that will be the recipient of the funds and who will conduct the work.
- The proposal addresses the overall mission and priorities of Foundation and/or SAA.
- The applicant pointedly addresses how the proposal implements or advances at least one of the goals or activities of the SAA strategic plan.
- The activity being funded does not replicate established Foundation activities (e.g., scholarships, travel to Annual Meeting, etc.) nor does it ask for funds that are excluded by the Foundation Board (such as travel and internships).

The Executive Director will inform the proposer(s) of the Review Committee's decision to receive a full proposal, to decline the proposal, or, in some cases, to encourage reapplication following revision.

**5. Application.** Upon receipt of an application, the Committee chair will assign a member to be the key contact to solicit from the proposer any additional information that may be needed to clarify the work/activity under review (methods, product, sponsor, budget use, qualifications, impact, etc.). The key contact will provide an overall assessment to the Review Committee on the basis of any additional findings that bear on the grant proposal. The key contact and the Review Committee may agree that no additional information is needed, in which case the Committee's assessment may proceed immediately.

**6. Conflict of Interest Reminder. Grant Review** Committee and Foundation Board members are expected to announce a potential conflict of interest and to recuse themselves from any decision-making role or vote on a grant inquiry or proposal that originates from or benefits an entity with which the member has a personal or other association. (Such association is one that a reasonable person could perceive as leading to favorable or unfavorable treatment on any basis other than a strictly professional and unbiased evaluation.)

No current Grant Review Committee or Foundation Board member may be the direct recipient of Foundation grant funds or be reimbursed or paid with Foundation funds for serving, in any capacity, an entity receiving a Foundation grant. No Grant Review Committee member may serve as a key contact if that member is familiar with the applicant or could be perceived as having a conflict of interest in fairly assessing or representing the applicant's proposal.

**7. Expert Review.** The Committee, in consultation with Board members, may consider the input of individuals who can lend expertise to the review process for proposals that involve a specialist's knowledge, technical skills, methodologies, and/or similar unfamiliar domains. The key contact will gather this input in those cases in which it is deemed necessary. The Review Committee is not required to seek outside opinion if the substance of the proposal is within their professional competence to evaluate.

Consulted experts should make every attempt to: (1) evaluate statements of fact and declarative statements made by the proposer/proposal, and (2) assess the overall value of the proposed activity to the profession. Such inquiries should protect the confidentiality of the application process for both the applicant and reviewer.

**8. Funding Priorities.** The SAA Foundation Board awards grants that meet the mission and goals of the Foundation and/or the strategic planning priorities of the Society of American Archivists. Applicants must make direct and substantive reference to the way(s) in which an award of funds will advance one or more of the strategic goals of the SAA Foundation and/or the Society of American Archivists. To set reasonable expectations for applicants, the Board endeavors to publicize special concerns within the SAA Foundation funding priorities and invite applications in those areas.

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- Travel, registration, or other costs associated with attending a professional conference;
- Scholarships or tuition;
- Costs associated with attending trainings; or
- Projects that benefit one institution, rather than also the profession at large.

**9. Committee Review.** The Review Committee will evaluate and make a recommendation to the Board on every grant application that it receives after an invitation to apply. The Review Committee shall consider, but not be limited by, the following criteria in making its recommendations:

- Appropriateness of the methods (reliability, validity, population, etc.);
- Overall impact of the project on the profession or a segment thereof;
- Uniqueness of the activity and/or project (has it been done before);
- Availability of other equally useful routes to achieving a similarly valuable outcome; and

- Soundness of the work plan, techniques, tools, and human resources.

During the evaluation, Review Committee members will review the full applications for any potential conflict of interest, as outlined in paragraph 6. If a conflict of interest is found or suspected, the Executive Director and the Board will be notified and asked to review the matter of a potential conflict of interest before the Review Committee puts forward its final recommendation.

**10. Formal Evaluation.** The Evaluation Form is the formal written tool used by the Review Committee to record its assessment of each application and prepare a recommendation to the Board. The formal evaluation should not precede an assessment report from the key contact if the Review Committee has requested additional information.

All evaluations are anonymous and confidential in source beyond the Review Committee; however, the Executive Director may share the contents of the reviews with the applicant upon request.

**11. Committee Recommendations.** The Review Committee will confer in real time (via phone conference or in person) at least once to review and vote on all pending grant proposals, to reconcile differences in evaluations of individual proposals, and to prepare final recommendations to the Board. A final decision about how to allocate the available funds in the annual distribution should not occur until all proposals have been received and evaluated in the annual grant cycle. An exception to this rule may be an expedited request from the Foundation Board, SAA Council or Executive Committee to meet an extraordinary contingency situation. All votes of the Grant Review Committee to recommend (or not to recommend) a grant to the Foundation Board shall be by secret ballot. All voting members of the committee are required to vote unless they have an acknowledged conflict of interest.

**12. Post-Award Accountability.** In consultation with the Executive Director, it is the duty of the Grant Review Committee to prepare a brief report to the Board on the work of the Committee, including its recommendations for improving the grant application and review process and other useful observations that will assist the next Review Committee.

The Review Committee will work with the Executive Director to examine and monitor previous grant awards for expected outcomes and measures. If deemed necessary, the Review Committee (or the Executive Director) will report to the Board on the recipients' grant activity within 12 months of the conclusion of the grant cycle.

*Adopted by the SAAF Board, August 2016. Revisions approved November 2018; August 2021.*

## 5. COMMUNICATION

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## 6. REPORTS

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## 7. GRANT EXTENSIONS

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