

Project Summary

All applicants must complete a project summary. Do not exceed the two pages allotted (use only one side per page) and do not refer to “see inside” or “see attached,” except in the case of references to vitae and similar supporting information found elsewhere in the application.

The private papers of individual members of the United States Congress offer important documentation on the history of Congress not found in the official records maintained by the National Archives and Records Administration. Contemporary congressional collections span gender, race, party affiliation, geographical distribution, and media format. The records are at once local, regional, and national in scope. Congressional collections are ubiquitous, yet each collection is valued uniquely. They also epitomize every management problem associated with voluminous contemporary records. They are historically important, yet often remain under-utilized and poorly understood by their donors, researchers, and repositories. *Guidelines for Managing Congressional Papers* culminates a 28-year effort by archivists, librarians, and administrators to improve the management and use of these significant resources. The guidelines will serve donors who need assistance in selecting appropriate archival repositories for their papers and will heed the call from scholars for better access to these rich collections.

1. Purpose and Goals of Project

- Presents archival management best practices endorsed by the Congressional Papers Roundtable and distributed by the Society of American Archivists
- Provides guidelines as a decision-making tool for administrators, practicing archivists, and prospective donors
- Bridges the gap between records management initiatives within the U.S. Congress and the readiness of repositories throughout the U.S. to accept congressional collections
- Includes practical information on the management of congressional papers from donor relations, deed of gift, and transfer to appraisal, processing, arrangement, description, access, privacy and confidentiality, classified documents and restrictions, and outreach initiatives
- Addresses common problems faced by any repository with budget, space, and personnel limitations
- Provides minimum standards and overviews of options to support informed decision-making
- Serves as an educational tool for archivists new to congressional collections and for students in archival education programs
- Fulfills the call for action detailed in the 1986 *Congressional Papers Project Report* sponsored by the NHPRC (see Chronology)

2. Significance and Relationship to NHPRC Goals and Objectives

This project to write *Guidelines for Managing Congressional Papers* directly fulfills several goals of the NHPRC and indirectly fulfills all the larger NHPRC objectives.

- The Guidelines will advance the work of archivists and records managers by defining management best practices, by creating a repository-donor tool for use from negotiation to delivery, and by providing options to assist the decision-making process during appraisal and processing
- The Guidelines will facilitate the use of historical records found in congressional collections held by numerous archives and repositories
- The Guidelines will help assure the long-term preservation of historical records found in congressional collections by providing standards for effective archival management
- The Guidelines will offer a decision-making tool for managing congressional collections that may be used by the archival profession as a model for other collection types
- The Guidelines will support professional education activities by contributing an important management paradigm to the professional literature
- The Guidelines will improve access to historically important but difficult to navigate collections
- The Guidelines will disseminate information about the specialized resources available to archivists working with congressional collections

3. Plan of Work for Grant period (including references to techniques)

June 1 - August 24, 2007 (240 hours)

- Develop format for publication and draft of text; circulate to task force members before SAA when the group meets for review and discussion

August 27 - September 1, 2007 (16 hours)

- Author, task force, and SAA publications representatives meet at SAA annual meeting in Chicago to review planned format and draft of text

September 3 – through end of December 2007 (110 hours)

- Address changes discussed by task force and SAA; prepare final draft of text; prepare final draft of appendices
- Submit to committee for review
- Submit to SAA for publication

2008 – Publication date

4. Products and Publications to Be Completed During Grant Period

Proposed Format:

- 60 pages plus appendices
- Executive summary format
- Easy-to-use design and layout, allowing for quick reference
- Expert typographic design for effective presentation and readability.
- Clear headers and section titles, generous space, use of bullets and lists.
- Expanded narratives to allow an overview of options and best practices in order to make informed practical decisions
- High portability
- Available electronically

Proposed Table of Contents:

- Introduction and Overview
- Guidelines/checklist for the Repository
- Guidelines/checklist for the Donor
- Acquisition & Access Policy
- Deed of Gift

- Planning for Transfer
- Calculating Costs, Space, Personnel, Budget
- Timelines/Benchmarks
- Sustainability and Outside Funding Sources
- Setting Priorities / Understanding Options
- Physical and Intellectual Control
- Processing
- Appraisal Decisions
- Description Practices and Access Tools
- Classification, De-Classification and Re-Classification
- Electronic Records
- Artifacts
- Ongoing Donor Relations
- Reference Services and Supporting Research
- Exhibitions, Outreach, and Promoting the Collection
- Professional Networks and Support (CPR, House & Senate & CLA, ACSC)
- Bibliography

5. Key Personnel

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