Memory Lab Network Application Instructions
Deadline: Friday, December 15, 2017

Email: Please send any questions to lorena.ramirez-lopez@dc.gov
Office hours:
   Info sessions - Tuesdays from 12pm-1pm (EST) / 9am-10am(PST)
   By phone - 202-727-2274 Mondays 12pm-3pm (EST) / 9am-12pm(PST)

Please check website for schedule: https://www.dclibrary.org/memorylabnetwork

Webinar on how to apply: November 15, 2017 at 12pm-1:30pm (EST). Register here.

This document’s sections:
   ▶ About the opportunity
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   ▶ Project information

ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY
DC Public Library (DCPL), in partnership with the Public Library Association (PLA), will distribute the Memory Lab model to seven public libraries across the nation with funding from an Institute for Museum and Library Services National Leadership Grant. The DC Public Library Memory Lab is a digitization lab and digital preservation resources created as a local response to the national needs for free public access to tools and information on caring for personal digital archives. Through an application process, seven public libraries will be identified as Memory Lab Network partners and will spend one year creating personal archiving stations and programs to for their communities following the DCPL model with training, mentoring, and financial support from DCPL.

Libraries selected as network partners will receive (1) preservation training and mentoring from qualified DCPL staff and other digital preservation experts, (2) travel funding for a five-day in-depth digital preservation boot camp in Washington D.C., (3) funding for digitization equipment and programs, and (5) technical and educational support during the year in which they build a Memory Lab program.

Memory Lab Network partners will build public knowledge and skills around the complex and paralyzing problems of personal digital archiving in their communities. They will also contribute to an emerging support network of public libraries with personal archiving and preservation programs. The project will result in reusable documentation and training materials for future implementations of the Memory Lab model.

PROJECT INFORMATION
How long is the Memory Lab Network project?
Over one year beginning April 2018 two staff members at each partner library will dedicate a combined 10 hours time weekly to building the lab and contributing to the project. The library is responsible for maintaining the lab once the project has ended.

What is the timeline for the project?

**Digital Preservation Bootcamp (April 2018)**
At the beginning of the project year, two staff members from each library will attend a five day in-depth digital preservation boot camp in Washington, D.C. The travel and trainings will be paid for by the grant and learning will include four areas of focus: the Memory Lab model, digital and physical preservation, digitization, and project planning.

**Building the Memory Lab (April 2018 - December 2018)**
Partners will:
- Build a digitization lab, including space planning and equipment selection
- Determine tools and protocols for managing the daily operations of the lab including workflows, maintenance, and scheduling
- Attend virtual cohort check-in meetings every two weeks
- Attend monthly webinars featuring presentations and Q&As with speakers
- Collect statistics on program attendees and lab users, numbers of hours, types of media transferred, common issues, and feedback from attendees/users
- Plan and teach digital preservation classes for the public
- Develop long-term management and sustainability plans for maintenance

DCPL Project manager will:
- Check in bi-weekly with each partner
- Organize monthly webinars for continued digital preservation learning
- Assist partners in selection and purchase of lab equipment
- Advise labs on programs, workflows, troubleshooting, and sustainability

**Evaluation and Sharing (January 2019 - March 2019)**
Partners will:
- Evaluate of the Memory Lab model at their libraries
- Participate in interviews about memory lab operations
- Host a site visit by the project manager
- Attend at least one local outreach event (like a regional library conference, local historical group, technology meetup) to share their project regionally
- Contribute content about their lab to the project white paper

DCPL Project manager will:
- Conduct interviews with the ambassadors and site staff
- Visit each partner library
- Observe the digitization lab and one class/program during site visit
- Gather data from the statistics from each network partner
- Draft a white paper about the project

The need for Memory Labs
Communities risk massive loss of vernacular history and culture, unless the public is equipped to sustain their digital memories. Best practices for digital preservation are well established in archival practice, but guidelines and documentation are generally written for a professional audience. Equipment for digitization and digital migration can be expensive and daunting to select and operate without guidance. Despite these challenges, in an increasingly digital world, digital preservation should not be a luxury. For equity in access to digital preservation public institutions need to create public access to digital preservation information and tools. Public libraries are already in the digital learning and literacy business—teaching, maintaining and providing access to software and hardware. Memory Labs offer free access to knowledge and tools that will allow the public to document and preserve their own histories.

What is the Memory Lab model?
DC Public Library’s Memory Lab was first established in 2015 by a year long National Digital Stewardship Residency (NDSR) resulting in a “do-it-yourself” program consisting of three key components: a digitization lab with equipment for digitizing video and audio and scanning photographs, documents, and slides in a public computing space; digital preservation class curricula and training for the public; and a website with equipment and workflow instructions and resources for long-term storage and preservation of analog and digital archival materials. The NDSR project final report and the original project proposal are both available online. The residency was funded by the Institute for Museum and Library services and administered by the Library of Congress.

What is the memory lab network?
The seven project partner libraries and DCPL will form the foundation of the Memory Lab Network, a support network of libraries that can assist, advise, and build on each other’s innovations, challenges, and growing first-hand expertise. By expanding the number of Memory Lab programs nationally, creating variation among those labs, and assessing their successes, challenges, failures, and adjustments in a white paper, the Memory Lab Network will create a model that is robust, flexible, and adoptable by public libraries across the world. Through publication and centralized project documentation, workflows, and program information, the network will lower the barriers for libraries to learn about and consider adding digital preservation tools and programs to their own public services, providing yet more opportunity for iteration, improvement, and adoption of Memory Labs.

ABOUT THE APPLICATION
Who can apply:
Public libraries as defined by the Certified Public Library Administrator Program, which we certainly believe includes tribal libraries:

“A public library is an entity that is established under state enabling laws or regulators to serve a community, district, or region, and that provides at least the following: (1) an organized collection of printed or other library materials, or a combination thereof; (2) paid staff; (3) an established schedule in which services of the staff are available to the public; (4) the facilities necessary to support such a collection, staff, and schedule; and (5) is supported in whole or in part with public funds.”

How to apply:
- Complete the online Memory Lab Network partner application form

Application requirements:
- Applicant information
- Identification of two staff members to participate as project leads
- Resumes of the staff project ambassadors
- Answers to five short essay questions about your library
- Letter of commitment signed by an administrator. Sample letter available here.

Who will select the partners?
Partners will be selected by the project advisory board. Please note, this project will prioritize the participation of public libraries that identify as either tribal or rural.

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STEP-BY-STEP APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS
Only one application per institution is required.

Section 1: Contact information
- **Name of institution**
  Write the full title of your institution.

- **Location of institution**
  Write the address of your institution.

- **Name of applicant**
  Applicant may either be one of the staff members participating in the project or a different staff member from your library.

- **Title of applicant**
  Write the applicant’s job title within your institution.

- **Email address**
  Write a valid work email address that DCPL can contact

- **Phone number**
  Write a valid work phone number that DCPL can contact

- **Identification of primary staff member (ambassador) for the project**
  This staff member can also be the “name of applicant” for this form. This ambassador must be able to commit at least 10 hours weekly combined with their colleague; travel for a five day training to Washington, D.C., help promote the program and outreach. They do not need to have professional digital preservation expertise but should have an interest in digital literacy, personal histories, and community engagement.

- **Identification of secondary staff member (ambassador) for the project**
  This staff member can also be the “name of applicant” for this form. This ambassador must be able to commit at least 10 hours weekly combined with their colleague; travel for a five day training to Washington, D.C., help promote the program and outreach. They do not need to have professional digital preservation expertise but should have an interest in digital literacy, personal histories, and community engagement.

- **Upload resumes**
  Upload PDFs only
Section 2: Statement of interest

- **Institutional Activities**

In this section outline your library’s experience with programming, community engagement, and any complementary programs around local and/or personal history, digital literacy, or digital preservation and access that might lay the groundwork for or augment the creation of a memory lab. These might include computer classes, maker spaces, workshops on A/V editing or recording, subscriptions to digital learning programs (such as Lynda), presentations on archiving or genealogy, or other initiatives.

New Ulm Public Library is the only organization in our community that maintains a subscription to Ancestry Library Edition, and the Library Director teaches an Introduction to Ancestry Library Edition class quarterly. We also have hosted a series of classes taught by a genealogist.

We are beginning the second year of a partnership with Mankato Area Adult Basic Education (ABE) that includes basic computer classes for the public. The library provides space and Internet access, and ABE provides laptops and an instructor for a seven-week series of classes.

Beginning in December 2016, New Ulm Public Library acquired wireless hotspots that are available for checkout on a first-come, first-served basis.

In 2013, the New Ulm Public Library Board authorized the purchase and installation of a $10,000 microfilm reader and scanner system. Library staff held classes for the public on its use and currently works one on one with patrons to utilize the equipment. Over the past several years, we have rounded out our collection of local newspapers on microfilm through successful grant writing. We are the only organization in the community that provides access to these resources at no cost to the end user. The microfilm/scanning equipment has been used about 800 times in 2017.

New Ulm Community Access Television (nuCAT), another City department, is located in the library building and has full-time staff trained in the use of technical equipment; part of nuCAT’s mission is public education.

- **Describe your institution (checkboxes)**

  Check all that apply. Please note, this project will prioritize the participation of public libraries that identify as either rural or tribal as defined below:

  - Rural: has a service area of 15,000 or less and is more than 25 miles from an ‘urbanized area’ (as defined by the US Census)
Tribal: Sovereign tribal governments, Indian tribes, Alaska native villages, regional corporations, and village corporations recognized and established by an Indian nation or a public library on tribal lands.

These definitions were based on qualifications and definitions established by the American Library Association\(^2\) and IMLS\(^3\) for other funding opportunities.

- **Demographics of Library Patrons**

  Please describe the community your library serves. While the project will prioritize inclusion of rural and tribal public libraries as partners, we encourage ALL public libraries to apply. The Memory Lab Network is hopes to identify and serve a diverse range of libraries from across the United States.

  New Ulm, Minnesota, is the county seat of Brown County with an estimated 2016 population of 13,342, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. It was settled in 1854 by the German Land Company of Chicago, and it continues to honor and celebrate its German heritage through festivals and active organizations such as the German Bohemian Heritage Society and the Junior Pioneers of New Ulm, Minnesota. Before white settlement, the surrounding area was home to Dakota Indians, who now live primarily in four communities in Minnesota, including the Lower Sioux Indian Community about 40 miles from New Ulm.

  New Ulm has a robust public school system as well as two parochial schools, and it is home to a bustling retail sector and several national industries, including Kraft Heinz, 3M, and Associated Milk Producers Inc. (AMPI).

  New Ulm Public Library has more than 6000 active cardholders. In 2016, there were more than 65,000 library visits with a total circulation of 146,000 items. Also in 2016, there were 251 programs for all ages with a total attendance of 5374.

- **Community needs**

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\(^2\) American Librarian Association, “Rural, small, and tribal libraries invited to apply for college and career readiness project” (June 13, 2017): “To be eligible to participate, library staff must work at a library that satisfies at least one of the following requirements: has a service area of 15,000 or less; is more than 25 miles from an ‘urbanized area’ (as defined by the US Census); or is established by an Indian nation or a public library on tribal lands”

\(^3\) Institute of Museum and Library Services, “Native American Library Services: Basic Grants” (April 17, 2017): “For purposes of funding under this program, ‘Indian tribe’ means any tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska native village, regional corporation, or village corporation (as defined in, or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. § 1601 et seq.)), which is recognized by the Secretary of the Interior as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians. A list of eligible entities is available from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, except for the recognized Alaska native villages, regional corporations, and village corporations, which should refer to applicable provisions in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, referenced above.”
In this section, outline your library’s mission and scope to serve your community. How might your library’s participation in this project address community learning needs? Describe what your library hopes to accomplish by creating a memory lab for digitization and digital preservation programs. Would the memory lab complement existing institutional activities or fill a need for digital literacy programs?

New Ulm Public Library is in the process of developing a five-year strategic plan, and our new mission statement is: We share as a community a haven for learning, imagination, discovery. Our values are: We engage with our community; are stewards of public resources; and reflect diversity in a changing world. Our vision statement is: We empower all to navigate the present, illuminate the past, and build the future.

One of the strategic plan goals is to fuel passion for reading and learning. The library’s participation in this project would provide a hub for the community to learn best practices for digitization and digital preservation. We currently are able to accommodate users who wish to digitally preserve photographs and slides, but we do not have the equipment to work with oral history projects or film conversion. We also have a need for a much larger scanner to digitally capture poster-size pieces. The memory lab would help us reach a specific strategic goal and complement the other identified goal, which is to provide a welcoming environment.

The memory lab would complement existing institutional activities in several ways. Beginning in 2015, library staff and volunteers began digitizing and describing historical and collectible items owned by the City of New Ulm. The City Council authorized funding for the development of a user-friendly, searchable website that would serve as an inventory of the collection and would be viewable by the public. Library staff has received some training, primarily on digitization of historic photographs, and, in turn, has trained volunteers to work on this project. The New Ulm Art Collection Archive is located at www.newulmartcollection.org.

The Library Director and Fire Chief have collaborated on two successful grants related to digitization and digital preservation. First, a Minnesota Historical Society Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund grant was awarded in March 2017 to fund a general conservation assessment and long-range preservation plan. The final report was received recently and supports our efforts to digitize items such as minutes, 3D objects, and photographs. Second, a New Ulm Area Foundation grant was awarded in November 2017 to fund the digitization and preservation of historic firefighter photos and frames from about 1890, 1913, 1931, 1954, and 1970.
A New Ulm Public Library volunteer has assisted community members in digitizing their archives using the equipment we currently have available. We have a demonstrated interest from community members in preserving their memories, and the memory lab would help us expand services.

- **Organizational investment**
  
The Memory Lab Network is trying to refine and inform current and future models by developing sustainability plans for each partner to address continued Memory Lab operations and programs, to include outreach, staffing, and costs of equipment maintenance and replacement. In this section, outline the organizational investment your library can offer. Can your library contribute to developing a sustainability plan? Is there another institution in your community that might be able to partner on programs and/or maintenance? Would your library be able to supply additional support beyond what DCPL provides?

New Ulm Public Library and the City of New Ulm are committed to investing in the memory lab project for the long term. Library staff will develop a sustainability plan, and it will be given time and resources to obtain continuing education in best practices and teaching methods. Library funding through the operating budget and donations/memorials fund is available to maintain and update equipment as needed. As noted previously, the Library Board has demonstrated a commitment to these efforts by authorizing the purchase and installation of a $10,000 microfilm reader and scanner system. In addition, a local granting organization already has committed financial support for the City’s early digitization efforts.

Several groups in the community are potential partners for programming and/or maintenance, including New Ulm Community Access Television (nuCAT). In addition, the Brown County Historical Society (BCHS) has been a longtime programming partner with the library; in addition, it has an extensive research library with family files. Organizations such as the New Ulm Battery and Hermann Monument Society have a significant interest in preserving their history and would be early adopters of and advocates for the memory lab.

The memory lab would offer ways to make new connections with patrons interested in New Ulm/Brown County history and help New Ulm Public Library offer continued and new vibrant local history programming as a result of those connections and the digital preservation that will take place in the memory lab.

**Section 3: Organizational commitment**
- Letter of commitment (PDF only):
  This letter should be created and signed by an upper-level administrator and should state their support for creating a memory lab within their library and commitment of space and staff time to the project and its programs. A sample letter of commitment can be found here.