Protecting Priority Collections

**Grant Amount:**
$3,000 - $6,000

**Time Range:**
1 year

**Eligibility:**
Any

**Staff Contact:**
Evan Knight
evan.knight1@state.ma.us
1 800-952-7403 ext. 236

**Summary:**
To support preservation needs of priority collections.

---

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

This grant will support the implementation of recommendations from previous Preservation Assessments, and specific preservation needs for library and archive collections of distinction. To apply for this program, libraries must have completed a recent Preservation Assessment and/or MBLC Self-Assessment, and submitted a list of special collection management priorities (template provided upon request.)

The first aspect of this grant relates to implementing recommendations from previous Preservation Assessments. Appropriate activities can include the purchase of equipment (e.g. dehumidifiers, data loggers, etc.), increased staff hours or expert assistance. Consultants or staff can develop collections management policies, organize collections committees, and improve local holdings records and inventories.

The second aspect of this grant enhances preservation for specific collections that are known to be locally, regionally, or nationally significant. (A collection’s ‘significance’ should be described and supported in the grant application.) This aspect of the grant category will most typically support consultants or increased staff hours for any combination of collection-level investments: condition surveys, rehousing projects, and data migration for collections metadata. Ideal collections for this grant would be focused, limited in number, discrete...
by provenance, subject, or format, and demonstrably significant. Fine or decorative arts collections are not eligible, but most other types, sizes, and formats, including digital collections, are appropriate. Purchase of collections management software is not eligible.

Finally, this grant may be used to support the development of institutional knowledge for specific collections of local, regional, or national significance, through additional staff hours and subject specialist consultations. Appropriate activities can include:

- Inventorying and photographing collections objects,
- Original cataloging,
- Provenance research,
- Subject specialist consultations,
- Appraisals of contents and values.

Libraries should include significant programming and outreach components to coincide with this grant. Libraries should seek out partnerships with historical, academic, and collecting persons and institutions at the local, regional, and, where appropriate, national levels.

**BACKGROUND**

Library staffs are often tasked with managing “Special Collections” without deep understanding of the objects within the collection. In order to enhance the understanding of one’s collections, increased accessibility of these collections to their communities, and to ensure their longevity for future generations, many libraries need specialized support to plan and implement preservation projects. Massachusetts libraries often have prioritized their collections of significance but lack the specialized knowledge necessary to approach collection-level preservation projects. While Preservation Assessments address structural and organizational risks to an institution’s entire collection, they do not evaluate the condition and specific needs of particular subsets of the collection. Thus libraries with Preservation Assessments often are unable to pursue preservation activities that address their most important items that have local, regional, and national significance.