



To: SCRLC Membership  
From: Megan Biddle, President, SCRLC Board of Trustees  
Mary-Carol Lindbloom, Executive Director  
Advisory Committee on Information Technology and Services  
Subject: Grant Opportunity – 2026-2027 Digitization Grants  
Date: December 12, 2025

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South Central Regional Library Council’s (SCRLC) 2026-2027 budget will include funding for grants for regional digitization projects. **Funded projects must start after July 1, 2026 and conclude by June 30, 2027.**

SCRLC members are encouraged to submit projects that allow materials to be accessed regionally through New York Heritage, New York State Historic Newspapers, the Empire Archival Discovery Cooperative, or the Empire State Immersive Experience (ESIE).

For 2026-2027, applications are especially encouraged for:

- community partnership projects that increase representation of and with communities that have been historically and systematically oppressed;
- geographically underrepresented communities in the SCRLC region;
- creative approaches to availing digitized collections and making them more discoverable, e.g., holding or co-organizing a Wikipedia edit-a-thon to add links to New York Heritage collections, developing walking tours, virtual tours (e.g. participation in the 360-degree Empire State Immersive Experience project), and HistoryForge participation.

Proposals should be submitted to the SCRLC office according to the attached instructions.

All proposals received will be presented to a review panel composed of experts from outside the SCRLC region for evaluation and funding recommendations. **Individual applications are limited to \$5,000; partnership applications, to \$8,000.**

Please read and follow all instructions carefully. Applications must be completed and submitted electronically to the SCRLC office by **Friday, April 10, 2026**; send to Claire Lovell at [clovell@scrlc.org](mailto:clovell@scrlc.org).

This application packet is also available at our website, <https://scrlc.org/Grant-Information>. Is this your first time applying? Please contact Claire with any questions.

**IMPORTANT!!! DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION:**

**Friday, April 10, 2026**  
send to: [clovell@scrlc.org](mailto:clovell@scrlc.org)



## SOUTH CENTRAL REGIONAL LIBRARY COUNCIL

### 2026-2027 Digitization Grant Project Application

#### Grant Information

**Introduction.** In 2026-2027, South Central Regional Library Council expects to continue offering grant-funded opportunities for member digitization projects that will increase access to digitized objects and promote the sharing of resources and knowledge. Additionally, such projects can provide leadership opportunities for library and museum workers, community members, and students, while meeting the priorities identified by the Board, the Advisory Committee on Information Technology and Services (ACITS), and SCRLC's *Plan of Service*, which is located at [https://scrlc.org/data/planOfService\\_2021-2026FINAL.pdf](https://scrlc.org/data/planOfService_2021-2026FINAL.pdf).

**Funding Levels.** Individual applications are limited to **\$5,000**; partnership applications between eligible SCRLC members are limited to **\$8,000**. If too few qualifying applications are received, the caps may be lifted or funds may be reallocated for other eligible programs or projects. There is also the possibility for exceptions to this funding structure depending on the merit and scope of the project.

**All funds must be expended by June 30, 2027.**

**Award Process.** Proposals received are forwarded to an independent review panel composed minimally of three qualified readers from outside the SCRLC region. The review panel members are librarians who work or have worked in a variety of library settings and have extensive experience with digitization and information technologies/services. Based on the applications received, the review panel may consult with additional experts. ACITS receives the panel's recommendations, reviews, and refers them to the Board of Trustees for approval. Committee and Board members whose institutions have an application under consideration are recused from all aspects of the review processes.

Recently funded grant projects are described at <https://scrlc.org/Grant-information>.

**Criteria.** The outside review panel uses a scoring system as part of their decision-making process. A copy of the Criteria is attached to this application. Please note that it is a guideline and one component that the panel will use to reach consensus on their funding recommendations.

All projects under consideration must meet the criteria of SCRLC's digitization program (see <https://scrlc.org/services/digitization-program>).

All digitized materials funded through SCRLC must be added to New York Heritage Digital Collections (<https://nyheritage.org/>), NYS Historic Newspapers (<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org>), or Empire State Immersive Experience (<https://esie.space/>).

Finding aids created as part of funded projects must be added to the Empire Archival Discovery Cooperative (<http://www.empireadc.org>). Applications may include the cost of a yearly membership in EmpireADC.

Digitized materials made possible by SCRLC must be available for future cooperative SCRLC projects.

## Timetable

Applications must be completed and sent by email to Claire Lovell at [clovell@scrlc.org](mailto:clovell@scrlc.org) by **Friday, April 10, 2026**. Confirmation of receipt emails will be sent. Late applications cannot be considered.

Grant awards will be announced in May of 2026 after being approved for funding by the SCRLC Board of Trustees. Grant recipients must sign a grant agreement letter before receiving 90% of the funds in July of 2026. Grant recipients must submit a brief interim report by December 31, 2026 before receiving the final 10% of the award (and their SCRLC membership must be in good standing).

**All funds must be expended by June 30, 2027. Final reports are due by August 1, 2027.**

## Organization Information

Name of Institution:	
Address:	
Contact Phone:	
Contact Email:	
Project Director and Title:	
Library Director (or authorized person), with title:	

Amount requested:		Date:	
Project Title:			

If this is a collaborative project with another SCRLC member, include a letter of support from the director of that member organization. Collaborative projects that enhance the benefits to the region or achieve greater efficiency in use of grant funds may be given priority.

## **Project Narrative**

All questions and components must be addressed.

1. Briefly describe the project:
2. How will the project benefit the region?
3. What value or rarity do the records or objects have, and to what audience?
4. Could this material be used in an educational setting? Please suggest how.
5. Who owns the copyright to the items or records?  
For newspaper projects, a copyright form will need to be included in your application.
6. What kinds of objects are there, and approximately how many are there of each kind?
7. What needs assessment or use or assessment data have been gathered?
8. What equipment is needed for the project?
9. What training is needed to successfully carry out the project?
10. What are the roles of each partner or staff member?

11. What is the timetable for the project?

12. How will the material be made available to the region?

13. How will you promote the collection or project?

**14. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Components. An application without this component will not be considered for funding.** Diversity, equity and inclusion mean different things to different libraries and library systems, depending on the communities served and how “community” is defined. Please address some aspect of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

It may be a discussion of the strides made to provide services to members of underrepresented groups and how they would be included in the proposed project, e.g. through outreach, marketing, programming, team membership, etc. Diversity might be reflected in the digitization of items pertaining to historically marginalized and oppressed groups. It might include a description of your efforts to serve people of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds; persons with disabilities; underserved urban and rural communities; and children from families with incomes below the poverty level. This could also be reflected in strategies to improve access to collections and information. It might be the construction of inclusive research teams, advisory panels, or leadership/project management teams. Contact [Claire Lovell](#) if you need help with this element.

**Note:** When working with projects associated with a community that has been historically and systematically oppressed, it is essential to partner with members of the impacted community to ensure that projects are equitable, appropriate, and respectful.

15. **Goals and outcomes.** List the goals and outcomes of the project.

16. **Evaluation and continuation.** Describe the methods that will be used to evaluate the results of the project. How will you determine whether this project has met its goals and produced the desired outcomes? How will your organization continue to support the project at the end of the funding period?

17. **Budget and funding.** Describe any other support for this project. Explain why this project cannot be funded from your regular operating funds.

Would you accept partial funding for this project if it is offered? If so, what percentage of funds requested would be the minimum acceptable? Describe how partial funding would impact the project.

Category	Request (\$)
Personnel	
Supplies	
Equipment	
Contracts	
Other (Describe):	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

Describe any in-kind contribution, including the personnel hours that it will take to complete the project, overhead, equipment that you are buying on your own to use during it, etc.

## Priority and Criteria for Funding

Projects with broad, regional benefits will be considered a priority for funding. Collaborative projects having broad, regional benefits are especially encouraged. If all other considerations are equal, priority for funding may be extended to new or less recently funded applicants, as well as to those applicants with a solid track record for completion of other funded projects.

Criteria	Scoring
Application completeness 0 – 10 points	10: all questions in the narrative are addressed, such as budget, copyright, and scope information 0: application is missing significant sections or information
Relationship to SCRLC's Plan of Service 0 – 6 points	5: material is strongly linked to several strategic directions in SCRLC's Plan of Service (see page 7: <a href="https://shorturl.at/Ex42F">https://shorturl.at/Ex42F</a> ) 0: application does not address any of SCRLCs' strategic directions
Historically marginalized representation (DEI) 0 – 10 points	10: material is reflective of the experiences of historically marginalized people and the project includes their input 0: material reflects the dominant story only and adds no element of diversity to the digital historical record
Wide-ranging representation 0 – 10 points	10: material is reflective of an entire community or region, such as city directories or public school yearbooks 0: material has very limited representation of people, places, or experiences
Educational use 0 – 10 points	10: material is directly linked to part of the standard NYS curriculum and the application describes how 0: material is inappropriate for any classroom use
Geographic representation 0 – 5 points	With consideration to our existing digital collections (2025): 5 extra points for materials reflecting Broome, Tioga or Yates counties 3 extra points for Allegany, Chemung, Delaware, Otsego, Seneca or Steuben counties 0 extra points for Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Schuyler, or Tompkins
Unique or Creative 0 – 5 points	5: project is unique or creative 0: project is routine
Outcomes and promotion 0 – 5 points	5: outcomes are achievable and sustainable, including a realistic plan for promoting the collection into the future 0: outcomes are not realistic and promotion is not addressed
New or infrequent contributors 0 – 5 points	5 extra points for members who have not received a grant since 2016 3 extra points for members who have not received a grant since 2021
Collaboration 0 – 3 points	3 extra points for partnerships with other organizations (whether SCRLC members or not)