

Proposal for Emergency Relief Funding for CLIR Grant Recipients

Uncovering CUNY TV's Audiovisual Heritage

October 30th, 2020

Abstract:

CUNY TV's proposal to CLIR's generous COVID-19 supplementary fund for recipients in need is uncomplicated but critical to meeting project deliverables: \$7,500 to support an additional 5.5 weeks of employment for the project's technician. These additional weeks will compensate for the on-site digitization workflow adjustments necessitated by transitioning to safe working conditions amidst the COVID pandemic.

Proposal:

At the top of the 2020 school year, educational systems around the country rushed to establish policies and protocols that mitigate the spread of COVID-19. This is especially true in New York City, one of the epicenters of the outbreak. City and state officials locked down the city from mid-March until June, with a slow phasing into "normal life" that is still ongoing. At the City University of New York (CUNY), staff and faculty dropped everything to furiously establish a safe yet functioning workplace. Task forces formed, testing sites assembled, PPE was added as a line item on every budget. Plans to reopen encouraged remote work and learning for the foreseeable future. For CUNY staff who need to enter the building to perform their duties, daily health screens and pre-approval by security are required. The *Uncovering CUNY TV Audiovisual Heritage* was delayed by six months, beginning on September 1st, 2020 when the original plan was to begin in March.

But even as CUNY is more adjusted to this new normal, further delays to the *Uncovering CUNY TV Audiovisual Heritage* project are felt through the regulation of building access, a critical safety measure during the current health crisis. Now in 'Phase 2' of reopening The CUNY Graduate Center, where CUNY TV resides, only 15% capacity is allowed for staff who cannot perform work remotely (100% capacity is not expected until at least Fall 2021¹). Phase-in plans may be different for each of the 25 colleges within the CUNY university network, five of which are partnering with CUNY TV on this project² who will be unable to access the building to retrieve the materials for this project for quite some time.

¹ The Graduate Center, CUNY. (2020). Reactivation Plan. Retrieved October 30, 2020, from <https://gc.cuny.edu/News/COVID-19-and-Reactivation-Planning/Reactivation-Plan>

² The five colleges partnering with CUNY TV on this project are: Baruch College, John Jay College, Bronx Community College, College of Staten Island, and Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños at Hunter College.

Physical access to the building is required not only by collection managers of partnering institutions, but also by the project's technician, Kelly Haydon, who is tasked with managing the digitization, ingest and captioning of nearly 1300 recordings. Digitization occurs onsite where CUNY TV boasts a formidable, broadcast-quality digitization rack, and a sophisticated system of digital file ingest and storage that is not replicable in an at-home environment. Ordinarily, digitization and other work (such as metadata cleanup, reporting, and captioning) would have been done concurrently, but with the split between onsite work and remote work, some anticipated efficiencies are lost. Additionally, building access was delayed by over a month and a half due to COVID-19 regulations. Some of the blocking issues include:

- Inability to access the building until full HR onboarding for the project technician was complete
- Technical issues that caused weeks-long delays to access the Health Screen application and campus COVID-19 training video
- Evolving guidelines for communicating with security teams on building access

Due to these COVID-19 related delays, digitization began in the middle of October 2020, a month and a half after the project technician. With the generous support of CLIR's Emergency Relief Funding, we hope to extend the project technician's contract by 5.5 weeks to make up the difference of this lost time.

Explanation of Budget

The Reporting II period of our budget ends at the end of August 2021 as originally intended. In 2021 we plan to request a six-month no-cost extension that lengthens the second reporting period to February 28th, 2022. If granted the emergency relief funds, we will extend that timeline even further to April 7th, 2022.

To the Salary/Wages line for the project technician for Reporting II, we've added \$5,556. To the Fringes/Benefits, an additional \$1944 is added. This creates a closing balance of (7500) for that period; no other changes were made.