

Kansas Humanities Council 2009 Grant Guidelines for Photographs

The Photograph Grant guidelines are a supplement to the Heritage Grant guidelines. In preparing a grant application, follow the deadlines and instructions for a Heritage Grant, plus the additional information found below.

Appraisal

Most photograph projects begin with a review of what you have. Knowing what you have, and how much, will help determine the scope of the grant.

1) How many and what kinds of photographs are involved? If your photos are in boxes and have never been surveyed, you might start by counting the photographs in a sample box and estimating the size of the collection based on the number of boxes. Discussing the types of photographs in the collection is also important. Slides, glass negatives, photo albums, and other unusual formats may require special attention.

2) What is the significance of the collection? When you prepare your application, it's important to convey the importance of your collection to local history. What stories do your collection of photographs help to tell? What time periods(s) and subjects are represented? Is it the only public collection of historic photographs in your town or county? If not, what makes it distinct from other collections? What are the collection's strengths and weaknesses? Describe some of the photographs (or include photocopies with your application).

3) Do copy prints and / or negatives of photographs exist for part or all of the collection?

Most Heritage Grant Care of Collections projects involve the protection of original photographs. The purpose of making copy prints and/or photocopies is primarily to preserve the original photos and protect them from frequent handling. This can be accomplished by:

- Making photocopies of photographs that patrons can handle and view in lieu of the originals, (which will be stored);
- Scanning photographs and making them available digitally for patrons in lieu of the originals, (which will be stored);
- Creating copy prints of photographs or printing images from negatives where no print exists;
- Creating negatives from original photographs where no negative exists.

Making copy prints is relatively expensive and usually needs to be done selectively. Your grant consultant can help prioritize need. Copy prints can be made:

- a) In-house by staff and volunteers,
- b) By a professional photographer or
- c) By another museum or archive such as the Kansas Historical Society.

Things to consider when copying prints:

- Compare prices and consider the security of the collection if it needs to be removed from the premises.
- Be sure that the copy prints you obtain will be archival quality — not all photographers have this capability.
- Develop criteria to determine which images are of greater historical value and interest to the public. Producing copy negatives from original prints can help to make the collection more available to the public, but it can be costly and time-consuming. (Once the project is completed, patrons can still obtain copies of those prints of lesser historical value by paying for the cost of creating the negatives when they order a copy print. The institution retains the negative.)

Arrangement and Description of the Collection

Most photograph projects also include ways to organize and maintain the collection.

Is there a cataloging system in place?

Are photographs numbered and labeled according to subject headings and classifications?

Explain what system of cataloging and subject headings you are currently using in your grant application and in discussions with your consultant. If photographs have never been cataloged, you should discuss how the photographs will be identified and labeled as part of the project. This will help keep photographs and negatives linked and the entire collection organized and accessible in the future. Often, care of collections projects are combined with cataloging projects, or a cataloging project is anticipated upon the completion of the care of collections project.

Providing Access to the Collection

In addition, most photograph projects create easy-to-use systems for patrons to gain access the collection.

1) **Creating displays.** Heritage grant funds may be requested to make copy prints of selected photographs in a large format size for a display that interprets the collection for the public.

However, the creation or refurbishing of entire photograph exhibits, especially those that involve the display of the entire collection on multiple panels, is beyond the scope of this grant and should be done with local cost share funds.

2) **Digitizing images.** Many organizations plan to make portions of their photograph collections available to their patrons via Internet sites that feature digitized (scanned) images and/or an online catalog of the collection. These are excellent ways of sharing your collection with a wider public. However, the digitizing of images should not be viewed as a preservation method, since technology becomes obsolete rather quickly. Projects that involve a large-scale digitization of photographs are generally beyond the scope and purpose of this grant. For details about digitizing images, please contact Michael Church, Kansas Historical Society, www.kshs.org.

Preservation Issues

A priority for all photograph projects is to preserve the collection.

1) **Prioritize your holdings.** This grant may not be able to preserve all of the photographs in the collection. Which photographs will be preserved? Why?

2) **Storage of photos.** The conditions under which the collection will be stored at the end of the project are important to care of collections projects. The sponsoring organization should strive to provide housing for photographs which:

- Has basic climate-controls (protected from moisture, heated in winter and cooled in summer)
- Makes use of wire shelving (for boxes) or enamel-coated file cabinets (for files)
- Stores photographs and negatives in separate locations (preferably separate building) to ensure against disasters such as fire, flood, and tornado. Ideally, negatives should be stored off-site in a fireproof cabinet.
- All photographs should be stored inside archival quality folders, boxes, and/or sleeves, at the end of the project.

Grant funds may be used to purchase archival folders, boxes, and sleeves. The improvement of climate controls and purchase of file cabinets and shelving is the responsibility of the sponsoring organization.

Working With Your Consultant

The consultant may be involved in the project at varying levels, depending on distance and the training needs of your organization's staff. This could include:

- An on-site visit before the grant is submitted to review the collection;
- An on-site visit after the grant is awarded to provide training for staff and volunteers on handling, storage, and identification of photographs. *
- For experienced organizations, the consultant can provide ongoing advice and evaluation of the project results.

**As part of the project training, written guidelines for handling, storage, and identification of photographs should be developed by the consultant and the sponsoring organization. These written guidelines can serve as a reference for cataloguers both during and after the project.*

Access to the Project Materials

At the end of the project, photographs cataloged and preserved with KHC Heritage Program funds must be housed in a public archive such as a library or museum that is accessible to researchers during regular hours. In general, grants are not awarded for the care of collections that are privately held (i.e. families or for-profit businesses). In addition, the Heritage Program requires you to contact a statewide archive and offer them the option of copying selected photographs for their own collection. Choose one of the archives from the list below, and contact the archivist to talk about the project as early as possible. The cost of copying photographs will sometimes be borne by the archive. In other cases, funds may be added to the KHC grant award for this purpose. Contact KHC staff for more details and for exceptions to this requirement.

Farrell Library, Kansas State University, Manhattan KS 66506

Archivist: Anthony Crawford, 785-532-7466

Kansas Collection, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, Lawrence KS 66045

Archivist: Sheryl Williams, 785-864-4284

Kansas State Historical Society, 6425 SW 6th, Topeka KS 66615

Archivist: Patricia Michaelis, 785-272-8681, ext. 270

Special Collections, Ablah Library, Wichita State University, Box 68,

Wichita KS 67260

Archivist: Lorraine Madway, 316-978-3590

**Special Collections & University Archives, Leonard H. Axe Library, Pittsburg
State University, Pittsburg KS 66762**
Archivist: Randy Roberts, 620-235-4883

Recommendations for Your Final Grant Application

Remember to discuss in your final application:

- The approximate number of **photographs** and a discussion of their condition.
- The **historical significance** of the photographs.
- A discussion of your **cataloging system** (existing or future).
- **Housing and storage of the collection** when the project is done.
- The **name of the archives** that will be offered the opportunity to copy photographs at the close of the project.