"Do Better" – Love(,) Us

Guidelines for Developing and Supporting Grant-Funded Positions in Digital Libraries, Archives, and Museums

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Introduction

This document is a set of guidelines for granting agencies, grant writers, and grant reviewers supporting the ethical creation of contingent positions in digital library work. We encourage granting agencies and grant reviewers to endorse and integrate these guidelines into application requirements and urge institutions creating contingent positions to consult these guidelines when developing such positions.

Grants are opportunities to request and receive funding and other support that treats workers well, moving us toward "equitable salaries" "that bridge gender, racial and living wage gaps."[1] The authors acknowledge that both funders and grant recipients range widely in size, scope, and capacity. In developing these guidelines, we aim to respect shared needs and expectations of well-resourced institutions and one-person establishments alike. We also acknowledge that contingent workers fall within a wide array of categories – from volunteers to interns to graduate students to temporary hires – that also intersect. With this document, we advocate for workers in contingent positions of all kinds that support organizational sustainability, while remaining aware that supporting contingent positions creates categories of unequal positions.[2]

These guidelines were initially drafted in 2017 by a subgroup of the Digital Library Federation Labor Working Group. The draft was opened for public comment during 2018. The group reconvened in fall of 2019 with participants from the *Collective Responsibility* forum, using recommendations from the forum's white paper[3] and outcomes of its second meeting to perform a final review and edits. In developing these guidelines, we are also informed by the Society of American Archivists' Core Values, which include "work[ing] actively to achieve a diversified and representative membership in the profession";[4] and by the American Library Association's Code of Ethics, which advises that library workers "advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions."[5]

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[1] Stacie Williams, "Implications of Archival Labor," *On Archivy*, April 11, 2016, https://medium.com/on-archivy/implications-of-archival-labor-b606d8d02014.

[2] Haley Di Pressi, Stephanie Gorman, Miriam Posner, Raphael Sasayama, and Tori Schmit, "A Student Collaborators' Bill of Rights," *UCLA Center for Digital Humanities*, accessed Nov 25, 2019, https://humtech.ucla.edu/news/a-student-collaborators-bill-of-rights/.

[3] Sandy Rodriguez, Ruth Tillman, Amy Wickner, Stacie Williams, and Emily Drabinski, "Collective Responsibility: Seeking Equity for Contingent Labor in Libraries, Archives, and Museums," accessed November 22, 2019, https://laborforum.diglib.org/white-paper/.

[4] Society of American Archivists, *Core Values of Archivists* (May 2011), accessed April 5, 2018, https://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-core-values-statement-and-code-of-ethics#core_values.

[5] American Library Association, *Code of Ethics* (2008), accessed April 5, 2018, http://www.ala.org/tools/ethics.

Guidelines

Create and support full-time, benefited positions.
In developing and evaluating staffing requirements for grant-funded projects, prioritize full-time positions with benefits over the creation of multiple part-time positions that require workers to seek additional employment and/or go without certain benefits. Carefully consider and justify the recruitment of professionals, graduate students, volunteers, and interns with respect to the expectations and needs of each.

Assign equitable classification status.
Base the classification status of grant-funded positions on the requirements for comparable positions within the organization. These may include minimum credentials (e.g., terminal degrees), types of experience, types of work performed, and/or skillsets. Contingency should not be a factor in classification. Entry-level jobs should not require years of experience.

Pay or elevate the market rate.
In calculating and evaluating appropriate levels of compensation, account for at least the following factors:
- Geographic location
- Cost of living
- Compensation for comparable work in the organization
- Compensation for comparable work in other organizations of comparable resources
- Education, training, technical skill, and experience required to fulfill position responsibilities
- Potential financial burdens of student debt associated with desired credentials and of holding term positions with possible periods of unemployment

Provide equitable benefits.
Support grant-funded workers with benefits comparable to those their colleagues enjoy, including:
- Onboarding and orientation
- Health care
- Sick leave and vacation time
- Relocation expenses
- Remote work
- Commuting allowance
- Flexible hours
- Retirement benefits
- Merit increases
- Family and caretaker leave
- Equity and participation in governance
- Qualification for union representation
- Workload distribution that accommodates contribution to research and service
- Access to Purchasing Cards or other advance payment for reimbursable expenses

Separate grant-funded work from core functions.
The purpose of grant-funded positions should be to complete scoped projects with finite end dates, not to perform core library/archives functions. Grant-funded workers should not be held primarily responsible for diversifying collections and institutional work.

Ensure that employer expectations match available resources for grant work.
Expectations of what can reasonably be accomplished by grant-funded positions should be congruent with:
- Institutional capacity, resources, and history with similar projects
- Classification, expertise, and hours of grant-funded workers
- Agency and resources required to create necessary buy-in
- The project timeline

Provide adequate institutional support for worker growth.
Employers must treat grant-funded workers as colleagues with a past and future in the field by:
- Sharing position descriptions that include explicit percentages of time to be spent on specific responsibilities, including work not directly covered by the grant (e.g., research, service, other institutional responsibilities) and the salary range funded by the grant.
- Assigning an adequate level of supervision (one clear reporting line) and mentorship, especially keeping in mind that such employees may be early-career professionals.
- Including raises, cost-of-living increases, and parity of access to professional development funding through training and travel support (relative to equivalent positions) in personnel budgeting.
- Providing space, equipment, and institutional knowledge about the project's history.
- Acknowledging the worker's power, agency, and responsibility in steering and fulfilling project goals within the scope of outlined work.
- Supporting the worker's participation in research and service activities within the profession and the institution.

Define how project deliverables and outcomes will benefit the grant-funded workers.
Grant-funded projects should create opportunities for workers to develop as professionals and increase potential earning capacity by:
- Designing positions that enable workers to develop new skills (relative to classification of the position), not solely perform rote tasks.
- Encouraging grant-funded workers to incorporate project deliverables into their professional portfolios.
- Empowering grant-funded workers to claim credit for their contributions, including in publications and presentations.
- Including and acknowledging grant-funded workers in presentations about the work.
- Maintaining public acknowledgment of all workers who contributed to grant deliverables, not just those currently at the institution.

Support grant-funded workers during end-of-project transition.
Many proposal guidelines currently require applicants to describe plans for project wind-down and/or long-term maintenance. Institutions should budget and plan to support temporary project staff in the transition out of grant-supported work by:
- Providing grant-supported workers with additional, paid time off and flexible scheduling to secure continuing employment, incorporating possible need for this time into the project plan.
- Providing funding for broader professional training which would aid workers transitioning beyond the specific scope of the grant labor.
- Providing or connecting grant-supported workers with CV and cover letter review and other job search assistance.