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Nevada State Library and Archives



LSTA Grant - 2008

A Nevada Statewide Digitization Plan

Applicant Library Name: Nevada State Library and Archives

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Abstract:

Nevada is rich in resources housed in its libraries, archives, museums, historical repositories, special collections, and state and local government agencies. The State has the core elements of a digital infrastructure in place as the result of work by archive, library and museum staff who have been implementing elements of a Nevada Digital Heritage Initiative. The collaborative nature of Nevada's statewide digital collections will be formalized with a strategic plan. A sound planning methodology will be implemented that builds collaboration using facilitation, meeting management and collaborative problem solving methodologies among all Nevada cultural heritage institutions and allied information providers wishing to increase access to their research collections through digitization. The statewide process will result in a planning document that develops a shared vision and long term goals which enable the wise and effective use of available resources in Nevada. The plan will be used to guide the development of Nevada's digital collections on a statewide basis and secure support from funding sources.

C. Describe the need or opportunity.

Through Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS), the Nevada State Library and Archives (NSLA) is charged with a number of responsibilities. These include holding, maintaining, and providing access to state publications, records and historical documents for the State of Nevada in its archive, records center, and library. NSLA also has responsibility for the statewide program of development and coordination of library and informational services. It assists and cooperates with other state agencies and officials, local governments, federal agencies and organizations in carrying out programs involving library and informational services. NSLA encourages and assists the efforts of libraries and local governments to develop mutual and cooperative solutions to problems with respect to library and informational services.

There is a critical need to meet the requirements of NRS 378.180 and provide a strategic infrastructure for the long-term maintenance of Nevada's primary source materials including newspapers, manuscripts, photographs, maps, sound records, and government publications. The state's archives, historical repositories, libraries, and museums are working towards the development of Nevada digital collections. The following needs are core to the continued development and implementation of an effective infrastructure that will support those digital collections:

- Currently there are a number of institutions engaging in digitization projects in the state. Partners are being identified and projects are being completed. A sound planning methodology must exist that facilitates collaboration among all Nevada cultural heritage institutions and allied information providers wishing to increase access to their research collections. A shared vision and long term goals will allow for the effective use of available resources in Nevada.

- The development of a statewide digitization program requires identifying and addressing major areas of focus such as organizational infrastructure, collection selection criteria, standards, legal issues, accessible collections, and training. From these areas identified through the planning process, goals can be developed that, when achieved, will result in improved access to Nevada's collections.
- Funding sources award money for projects involving digitization based on criteria including evidence of an effective planning process that appropriately involves all partners, the effectiveness of project plans to preserve and sustain digital materials, agreed upon standards, how well the project to be planned will benefit the intended audience, the degree to which tasks result in clearly articulated goals and objectives for the planned project, and documentation that resources are sufficient to accomplish the specified planned tasks. (http://www.ims.gov/applicants/grants/pdf/NLG_2007.pdf)

The primary target audience for this project will be libraries, archives, museums, historical repositories, special collections, and local government agencies which have a need to publish digital collections. A digital task force consisting of members of the various organizations will be identified and will provide advise and input into the planning process.

This project addresses an activity identified in the *LSTA 5 Year State Plan 2008-2012* under Goal 2 which calls for a planning initiative to develop a statewide digital plan that includes standards and a statewide framework. The goal charges the people, governments and associated cultural heritage organizations of Nevada with shared responsibility to preserve, protect and make the state's unique heritage available. Goal 2 serves two LSTA purposes including:

- expanding services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats, in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages, and
- developing public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations.

D. What are the benefits/changes proposed for the target audience?

While cultural heritage institutions have continued making digital representatives (surrogates) of photographs, monographs, maps, letters, artifacts and even audio files available on the Internet, the collections are haphazardly organized and not accessible except through Internet search engines. An infrastructure underlying a statewide Nevada digital collection remains to be fully implemented.

The primary target audience for this project includes 81 library jurisdictions (academic, special, public, school) representing 672 sites, one state archive, 26 museums and historical societies, two university library special collections, and local and state government agencies of which the organizations and their staff will benefit from the planning project. Members of this target audience will serve on an advisory task force of up to 10 individuals to be appointed by the NSLA Administrator.

The secondary target audience, as broadly defined, which will be served by well thought out and planned digital collections includes the people of Nevada estimated by the Nevada State Demographer in 2006 at 2,622,753. The Nevada Electronic Records Committee has defined five user categories, of which the first three apply to the project, including:

- The general/casual user – this user is similar to the museum visitor who is going to see a new exhibit or experience; or the library patron seeking general information, recreational reading or viewing materials.
- The student and lifelong learner – the individual who is seeking basic level of information to support their k-12 learning environment or the lifelong learner who is learning something new to advance his/her career or for general enrichment.
- The hobbyist – the individual who desires more in-depth information on a particular topic. This may be an undergraduate or graduate student, a docent, etc.

The planning process will use principles of leadership and group collaboration similar to and/or as identified in the LSTA funded 2007 Nevada Library Leadership Institute entitled Facilitating to Lead! The planning project will result in Nevada's cultural heritage institutions and allied information providers sharing a common vision and a set of agreed upon goals. They will be documented in a three year statewide plan which addresses major areas of focus such as organizational infrastructure, collection selection criteria, standards, legal issues, accessible collections, and training.

The vision and goals will drive local digitization and statewide projects resulting in a recognized and supported Nevada Digital Heritage Initiative. The strategic plan will serve as supporting documentation for FY08/09, and later, state and federal applications that secure ongoing funding for the development of the Initiative and its infrastructure. Funding sources include, among others, the Nevada State Legislature, the Institute for Museum and Library Services, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The measurable outcomes for this project are:

1. Nevada's cultural heritage institutions and allied information providers share a common vision and set of goals in the development of a Nevada Heritage Digital Initiative.
2. Nevada's cultural heritage institutions and allied information providers develop a statewide network based on the best set of solutions for Nevada's statewide digitization.

E. List LSTA Goal this project addresses and the element(s) of the library's master plan.

Three documents will serve as a context for the development of a statewide digitization plan. The Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Five Year Plan is mandated by the Institute for Museum and Library Services. It sets the framework for how LSTA funds are allocated in Nevada. The State Historic Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) Strategic Plan establishes the direction for projects designed to support the archival and records community. The Nevada State Library and Archives (NSLA) Strategic Plan outlines direction for the division. Additional planning documents developed by other divisions in the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) will also be consulted during the planning process for goals and enabling language which supports digitization of resources.

Key goals and objectives which support this project are identified as follows:

Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Five Year State Plan 2008 – 2012

Goal #2: The people, governments and associated cultural heritage organizations of Nevada will share responsibility to preserve, protect and make the state's unique heritage available.

Activity: Support a planning initiative to develop a statewide digital plan that includes standards, statewide framework

State Historic Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) Strategic Plan for 2007 – 2011

Goal 2: Nevada shall achieve best practices in electronic record keeping.

Objective: NSLA needs to do a feasibility study on the needs to and issues to establish a Digital Archives for the state of Nevada and local governments and implement same.

Objective: State and local governments need to begin a program to preserve their digital records, publications and information in 2009.

Goal 3: Nevada's people and governments will share responsibility to preserve and make our unique documentary heritage available.

Objective: Improve access to records statewide by encouraging the creation of traditional finding aids and directories, as well as through the wider use of standard online descriptions.

Nevada State Library and Archives (NSLA) Strategic Plan 2003-2008

Goal #4: Identify and remove barriers to ensure that all Nevadans have equal opportunity to access and utilize public information.

Goal #7: Explore new types of physical and virtual environments for providing NSLA services to our clients

F. Describe the implementation of the project.

1. Define purpose, identify charges, and convene Nevada Digital Advisory Task Force. (March-June 2008)
 - In order to build buy-in from the library, museum, archive, and allied information agencies it will be necessary to convene an advisory group which will work with NSLA staff and the contracted consultant to develop consensus regarding a digital infrastructure for Nevada. The group's input will be critical to the success of the planning process.
 - Committee work is productive when a clear purpose for the members is identified along with charges and desired outcomes. This groundwork will be laid by the project staff prior to the identification of key stakeholders in Nevada.
 - Up to 10 potential members will be contacted and the NSLA Administrator will appoint a statewide digital advisory task force.
2. Issue a Request for Proposal seeking a national level consultant with expertise in strategic planning and digitization and complete a contract. (March-July 2008)
 - Given this is a grant funded project, the timeline is tight. Once funding is secured, a bid will need to be issued. A scope of work is written. Strategic planning methodology and facilitation techniques are identified as part of the scope of work. A bid evaluation committee including NSLA staff and members of the digital community is identified. The bid is posted. Bids submitted by the due date are reviewed. Negotiations occur. The state contract is compiled, signed, and submitted to the Board of Examiners for its July 2009 meeting.
3. Complete a focused assessment of the digital environment in Nevada. (August-October 2008)
 - This planning process is not intended to do a thorough analysis of the digital environment in Nevada. That is a project, in and of itself, which needs separate funding and a contractor to complete it. Rather this project is intended to address major areas of focus such as organizational infrastructure, collection selection criteria, standards, legal issues, accessible collections, and training.
 - Over the last 10 years a great deal of groundwork has been laid by NSLA archive staff assessing the digital environment. This information will be identified and used as a core element of the planning process.
 - All Department of Cultural Affairs planning documents will be reviewed and digital goals, objectives, and enabling language will be compiled and made available to the project consultant.
 - Where available, data about the current digital infrastructure will be identified and included in the planning process.
 - National model digital initiatives will be identified and reviewed for information that will lend itself to the planning process. Examples include the Washington State Digital Archive, the Colorado Digital Project, and the Hudson River Valley Heritage project.
 - A planning survey will be developed based on gathered information and current national best practices by consultant, project staff and digital advisory committee. The survey will be implemented and the resulting data compiled.
4. Develop a vision and identify strategic issues, goals and activities for a Nevada digitization plan through use of strategic planning techniques and collaborative problem solving. (October 2008-February 2009)
 - Consultant will interview identified key stakeholders in the state regarding a digital initiative.
 - Three focus groups will include library directors and staff, library boards of trustees, Cooperative Library Automated Network (CLAN) members, university library and archive staff members, K-12 school media specialists and identified teachers, State Historic Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) members, State Records Committee members, tribal members, museum staff, historical society staff, and others as identified.

- Focus group information, survey, and interview data will be compiled by the consultant and used by the Digital Advisory Committee in a consultant facilitated process to identify key focus areas (organizational infrastructure, collection selection criteria, standards, legal issues, accessible collections, training), resulting goals and activities, and evaluation criteria.
 - Consultant will draft resulting planning document which will be reviewed by the Digital Advisory Committee. Any necessary revisions will be completed.
5. Provide plan to governing boards or institutional management of identified statewide project participants for review and buy-in. (March-May 2009)
- An effective planning document is utilized by multiple players, not cast in concrete, reviewed and evaluated annually, and does not sit on a shelf. In order to ensure buy-in within the constraints and timeline of this grant, the plan will be provided to identified individuals, boards, and management for their review and buy-in. Acceptance of the plan by these individuals will ensure its use on a statewide basis. Actual use of the plan will ensure effective use of resources in the state.
6. Plan is completed. (June 2009)
- The three year strategic plan will be completed and submitted to the NSLA Administrator for acceptance. All acceptances and/or endorsements of the plan by individuals and groups in the state will be identified and provided with the plan.

Who will complete the activities:

- Digital planning consultant: The consultant will complete a focused assessment of the digital environment in Nevada and work with NSLA staff, members of the Digital Advisory Task Force, and the primary target audience to develop a vision and identify strategic issues, goals, activities and evaluation criteria for a Nevada digitization plan through use of strategic planning techniques and collaborative problem solving. The consultant will compile and submit reports documenting all findings and data as well as write the draft plan based on those findings and data.
- NSLA staff: The project manager will work with key NSLA and DCA staff to identify and write the purpose and charge of the digital advisory task force, identify potential members and work with the appointment process, write the scope of work for the consultant's contract, manage the bid and contract process, and provide staff support for managing the overall project. Appropriate NSLA staff will provide background information and content to the consultant for the planning process. Appropriate NSLA staff will review and provide editing of the draft plan.
- Statewide Digital Advisory Committee: Members of the committee provide background information for the consultant, contribute to the strategic planning process, review any survey questions, analyze focus group and survey data, and work with the consultant to develop digitization focus areas, goals, activities, and evaluation criteria. The members recommend next steps in the development of the statewide digitization infrastructure as follow-up to the planning process.
- Members of the Nevada cultural heritage and information community: Provide input into the planning process, review the planning document, accept the plan were possible and appropriate, and utilize the plan to obtain funding support and implement digitization projects.

G. Describe the evaluation method and measures that will be used to assess the project.

This project will result in a statewide digital planning document. Key stakeholders in the development of digital collections will benefit from a document which identifies focus areas of a Nevada Digital Heritage Initiative, goals and activities that will implement the focus areas, and documents a statewide collaboration or network which results in funding and effective use of available resources. In effect the outcomes will be:

- Nevada's cultural heritage institutions and allied information providers share a common vision and set of goals in the development of the Nevada Digital Heritage Initiative.
- Nevada's cultural heritage institutions and allied information providers develop a statewide network based on the best set of solutions for Nevada's statewide digitization.

Building a collaborative planning document results in changes in skill, knowledge, attitude, and behavior among project participants. An indication that change has occurred will be the use of the statewide three year digitization strategic plan by key stakeholders in the primary target audience as supporting documentation for FY09/10, and later, state and federal grant applications which secure ongoing funding for the development of the Nevada Digital Heritage Source.

Project participants, grant writers and funding agencies can provide an indication of the number of funded state and federal digital grant applications citing the plan. This information can be identified at grant application cycles during the project year and on an ongoing basis.

Additional outputs which will be collected and reported as part of this grant funded project include:

- A statewide three year digitization strategic plan developed, accepted by project participants, and available via the Web.
- The number of institutions agreeing to participate in a statewide digital network initiative.
- The number of funded projects which result from grant applications and which utilize goals and activities in the plan's identified focus areas for implementation of the projects.