



# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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NATIONAL HISTORICAL  
PUBLICATIONS  
& RECORDS COMMISSION

The attached document contains the Grant Narrative of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Be aware that minor changes may have been made to the plan of work and other portions of the proposed project in response to comments made during the review process. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations.

Prospective applicants should consult the NHPRC's application guidelines at <https://www.archives.gov/nhprc/apply> for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NHPRC staff member listed in the grant announcement well before a grant deadline. Prospective applicants are also strongly encouraged to submit a draft application by the deadline listed in the grant announcement.

The Commission welcomes collaborations that target institutional advancement for small and underserved local archives and repositories, **especially those with collections that focus on the voices and perspectives of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.**

Project Title: Planning Grant for the Valencia County Archival Collaborative

Institution: City of Belen, New Mexico

Project Director: Kathleen Pickering

Grant Program: Archives Collaboratives (Planning)

Belen Public Library and Harvey House Museum, City of Belen, NM

1. Project Narrative: Planning Grant for the Valencia County Archival Collaborative

**Overview:**

This project seeks a planning grant to develop a collaborative archival relationship among the Belen Public Library, the Los Lunas Public Library, and the Valencia County Historical Society (together “the Collaborative”). Other possible entities within Valencia County interested in preserving the unpublished historical records of the diverse and often underrepresented residents of Valencia County will also be recruited, such as the Pueblo of Isleta Public Library and the Bosque Farms Public Library. The project will begin February 1, 2022 and be completed by January 31, 2023. The total budget for the project is \$22,000, and \$12,000 in NHPRC funds are being requested.

Valencia County is located in central New Mexico, with a population of 76,000 residents. The area now called Valencia County was settled by Puebloan communities for centuries before Spanish missions were founded in the early 1620s. Hispanos families migrating north from Mexico City began farming and ranching in the area in the late 1600s. As part of Mexico from 1821 until 1848, the region’s culture remained distinctively influenced by both Native American and Hispanic heritage. After its annexation as the New Mexico Territory in 1848, merchants from the United States began to settle and open trading operations here. When New Mexico was admitted to the Union as the 47th State in 1912, this rich history of blending cultures and traditions had already become an embedded part of the Valencia County experience.

This rich history also presents a unique, ongoing challenge in preserving and representing the myriad voices and experiences combining to form contemporary life in Valencia County.

Demographically, 61.1% of the County is Hispanic, and 30.6% of households speak a language other than English at home, predominantly Spanish. In addition to the descendants of the early Hispanos settlers, many migrants from Mexico reside in the County on a temporary or permanent basis, with 6.8% of residents being foreign born. Members of Isleta Pueblo, the Navajo Nation, and Apache tribes live and work in Valencia County, constituting 6.4% of the population. There is also an important African American community within the County, consisting of 2% of the population and representing a significant and distinctive set of experiences and perspectives. This project is designed to engage with this tapestry of ethnic and cultural history not only to generate interest in and use of the archival resources but to collect and preserve a more inclusive archival record that reflects the interests and diversity of our entire community.

The centerpieces of historical collection, preservation and presentation in Valencia County are two museums—the Belen Harvey House Museum and the Los Lunas Museum of Heritage and Arts. The Belen Harvey House Museum, a branch of the Belen Public Library, preserves and promotes the history of the Belen Harvey House, the Harvey Girls, the history and role of the railroads in the southwest, and the local history of Belen and its surrounding communities. From 1910 to 1939, the Belen Harvey House had a first-class dining room and a lunchroom served by Harvey Girls, who lived upstairs. In the 1940s, it briefly reopened during World War II, with many Harvey Girls coming out of retirement to serve troop trains. In the 1950s, it became the Santa Fe Reading Room for railroad employees, serving as a breakroom and dormitory through the 1970s. To ensure its preservation, the Harvey House Museum was created and managed by the Valencia County Historical Society, featuring a strong collection of railroad and Belen

historical archives, artifacts and programming. In 2013, the Valencia County Historical Society turned over management of the museum to the City of Belen. Only a portion of the archival collection has been formally processed, so formalization, and expansion of the Belen Harvey House as an archival repository is one of the current goals of the Belen Public Library.

The Los Lunas Museum of Heritage & Arts, a branch of the Los Lunas Public Library, connects the present generation to the history of Los Lunas, surrounding communities and the State of New Mexico, inspiring a deeper appreciation and understanding of the area's rich heritage.

Collections focus on local residents, businesses, events, and their impact on local, regional, state and national histories. Notable collections and exhibits include: the Luna & Otero families and their roles in the sheep industry and subsequent political roles; the Huning Family and German & Jewish Immigrant Mercantilism in Valencia County; the Post at Los Lunas and its role in the American Indian Wars 1850 – 1880 and subsequent impact on the local economy; and the Civil War in New Mexico featuring the Battle of Peralta and Los Lunas' role. Los Lunas was also a supply settlement along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro since the 18<sup>th</sup> century; a refueling stop on Pre-1937 Route 66; and a shipping point for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. These collections literally and figuratively place the Village of Los Lunas on the crossroads of New Mexico history.

The Valencia County Historical Society (VCHS) was formally organized in 1969, although it had been conceived almost a decade earlier by local residents who were anxious to document and preserve the rich historical legacy and varied cultures of the Rio Abajo. For the ensuing five decades the organization has actively pursued its original goals through direct or indirect sponsorship of a number of facilities and activities. VCHS has supported and continues to support a number of documentary projects including the publication of books, papers, video

tapes, and newspaper articles on various historical topics. Society involvement in these projects ranges from direct financial support to providing peer review and editorial consultation.

Another important feature of VCHS is its ongoing involvement in community outreach and education. The Society directly or indirectly sponsors numerous lectures and tours and is working with local school officials to assist history and social studies teachers in utilizing local resources to develop classroom materials and to provide opportunities for students and teachers to get directly involved in historical research within Valencia County. As stated in its Bylaws, the Society's activities, as guided by the Board of Directors and the Society membership, are focused on identifying and preserving the rich history of Valencia County and sharing this history with all segments of the community.

VCHS is closely involved with the oversight, planning, and curating of exhibits in the Belen Harvey House Museum and the Los Lunas Museum of Heritage and Arts. Exhibits have included locally produced material as well as material from national and international traveling exhibits. In addition, the Society directly assists in the maintenance of the historical collections of artifacts, photographs, genealogical information, and documents in these facilities. VCHS will play a vital role in helping to define the archival collection policies, finding aids, and outreach strategies of the Collaborative. VCHS has more than 50 members active in the research, dissemination and preservation of history in our area. They hold an Annual Meeting every March, and host other events throughout the year.

Currently the Belen Public Library and the Los Lunas Public Library are partnered with the University of New Mexico's New Mexico Digital Collections (<https://nmdc.unm.edu>). We have a total of 822 items available (323 from Belen and 499 from Los Lunas), but a wealth of

additional materials that need to be added. What has been lacking is a comprehensive archive collection plan that encompasses not only what these two museums have that needs processing, but also the potential materials that could be collected through community engagement and outreach. The Valencia County Historical Society has the capacity and interest to generate community engagement, including regular meetings of their membership. However, the VCHS has also needed a comprehensive archive collection plan to know how to focus their outreach and which archival facilities would welcome the materials obtained through the engagement process. This project will help build the capacity of our small archives to increase public access, discovery and use of our diverse historic materials through collaborative planning and community engagement.

**Plan of Work: (See detailed work plan chart)**

The goals of this project will be accomplished through a series of monthly Collaborative meetings, interspersed with five community engagement events to provide input, direction, and local knowledge dispersed throughout our County's residents. The monthly Collaborative meetings will be working sessions to co-create archival collection policies, finding aids, and community outreach materials and marketing strategies. None of the Collaborative members have a fully implemented set of archival best practices, but all the Collaborative members have been working on some aspects of standards and best practices for their collections. Improved mission statements, acquisition and accession policies, records retention and disposal policies, arrangement and description, and access policies and procedures are some of the key areas of archival best practices that the Collaborative wants to prioritize for the first year. By learning together and sharing experiences along with any implemented archival best practices, as well as integrating the insights and perspectives gleaned from the community engagement events, all the

Collaborative members will build their capacity for improved inclusion in and public access to their archival collections. Each Collaborative meeting will select an area of archival practice to share and discuss, and draft policies and documents will be generated for Collaborative members to tailor and implement for their home institutions.

Community engagement events will be held in different locations to provide greater access for residents depending on where they live within the County. Because there has been limited formalization of the archival materials relevant to the diverse ethnic and cultural groups in this area, much of the critical social history from the rich fabric of this region still rests in the memories and personal documents of our area residents. Community engagement events will provide Collaborative members with access to these largely undocumented enhancements to the historic resources of Valencia County. Two of the Community engagement events will be focused specifically on the community of historians and researchers in the area, both for their particular interests and needs, and for guidance on how to best reach the regional and national research community with interests in the archival materials of the Collaborative.

Three of the community engagement events will focus on the general residents of Valencia County, inviting input into particular issues of local concern and types of collections for the Collaborative archival collection, asking for direction in the themes, topics and subject headings to include in the archival collection and finding aids. The community engagement events are also designed to solicit ongoing engagement with community members to access their personal knowledge of the people and events featured in the Collaborative archival materials to generate a more complete, detailed, and inclusive archival record.

Various methods of outreach will be used to invite the participants for community engagement events, including: Facebook and other social media; organizational newsletters like the area

libraries, museums, and historic societies; the Valencia County News-Bulletin announcements and articles; fliers for local retail outlets, churches, and educational institutions; invitations and presentations to area senior citizen centers and homes; and phone calls to targeted lists of identified key local knowledge holders. These outreach efforts will also provide the Collaborative with valuable information about how best to reach general and targeted audiences, as well as the opportunity to ask participants how best to reach others who may not have attended. By meeting and interacting with those involved with the archival collections, we hope to make County residents feel comfortable with and important to the archival history of our area. The Collaborative wants to form relationships with members of our County, to be able to preserve and present the rich history of the area that is significant to them, in a participatory archival practice. Ultimately, the Collaborative is committed to preserving the currently under-documented histories of specific ethnic and cultural groups within the County. Looking forward, this process will also provide community input for future co-creation of exhibits and presentations highlighting the interests, perspectives, and archival records identified through this planning phase.

**Project Products:**

Through the iterative process of Collaborative meetings and community engagement events, the Collaborative will co-create three broad products to improve the archival practice, public use, and inclusive content of the Collaborative archives. The Collaborative will produce two-way messaging about the public's role in both accessing and contributing to the archival history of our County.



1. Archival Collection Policies. The Collaborative entities each have some policies directed at collections priorities, archival management, and public access, but no one entity has a comprehensive set of archival collection policies. In addition, through the coordination of the Collaborative, each entity will have consistent and complementary policies with the other Collaborative members, supporting better communication and coordination across entities and throughout the County in relation to archival materials, access, and common questions. By using participatory archival practices to develop these joint policies, this final product will also better reflect the perspectives and interests of our under-documented community, leading to better ongoing engagement and use by the general public and researchers alike.

2. Finding Aids. The Collaborative members will share their existing finding aids and discuss the ideal template for future finding aids. Input from community engagement events will help provide relevant themes, topics, and subject headings that are needed to meet the needs and interests of both historians and local residents. While the Collaborative members have developed some finding aids, there are unprocessed collections and collections with only rudimentary documentation. By working together across repositories, the shared finding aid template will provide more consistency as well as easy cross-referencing of materials of interest held by other archival repositories in the County. Finding aids are also a priority for expanding awareness in researchers and the general public of the archival materials preserved within the Collaborative, including the planned expansion of materials from under-documented dimensions of the County.

3. Outreach Materials. In addition to finding aids, other forms of outreach materials are needed to provide information about the Collaborative archival resources, to inform historians and researchers about the materials and services available to them, and to encourage community

engagement with the Collaborative archives on an ongoing basis. With input from the Community Engagement events, the Collaborative will be able to produce effective outreach materials tailored to different audiences as well as learn about effective means of distributing those outreach messages.

Finally, the Collaborative will document its own process for forming a collaborative and working together to create community engagement while developing these three products. In this way, the Collaborative can provide lessons learned to other smaller and underrepresented communities who want to improve and expand their archival history through a collaborative, community-based effort.

#### **Staff Qualifications:**

The Project Manager, Dr. Kathleen Pickering, is the Director of the Belen Public Library and Harvey House Museum, so is well positioned to oversee, coordinate, and complete the plan of work, project products, and performance objectives of this planning grant. She has worked in community development as an Applied Cultural Anthropologist for more than twenty years, and has extensive experience with community engagement and the collaborative process. She also published numerous academic manuscripts involving archival materials from facilities across the country. In addition, the Belen Public Library's Reference Librarian, Stephanie Wallace, and the City of Belen's Museum Coordinator, Frances Zeller, will provide reference services, Collaborative coordination, and assistance with the design and printing of outreach materials.

The Collaborative Outreach Coordinator will assist with meeting and community event planning, communications, and logistics, as well as follow-up reports on the outcomes of these meetings and community events. They will assist the Project Manager in monitoring the work plan and

meeting outcomes to keep the Collaborative on the appropriate timeline to complete the products and performance objectives of the project. They will also implement the draft outreach and marketing strategies for inviting the public to community engagement events. They will support the collaborative meetings, take notes of the meetings, events and process of the Collaborative, and manage product versions and revisions. The Collaborative Outreach Coordinator will also work with the Volunteers to incorporate their recommendations into the outreach materials, finding aid templates, and archival collection policies.

Cynthia Shetter has been with the Los Lunas Public Library for 26 years, 17 of those years as Director. Born and raised on a ranch in southern New Mexico, Cynthia moved to Valencia County in 1984. Since that time, she has developed a network of connections across the County to facilitate community engagement and event planning. She has extensive experience with state and national legislative policy, and brings special expertise to the process of collaborative construction of collection policies. She has also been at the forefront of archival collection for the County, and is working to expand into areas of digitization and web-based collections. In 2008, she opened a branch library, the Museum of Heritage & Arts, to house their growing history collection. She has also been an active and recognized member of the Valencia County Historical Society, providing a natural communication link across the Collaborative. In addition, the Los Lunas Public Library has two staff members dedicated to the Museum of Heritage & Arts archival collection and digitization process.

Dr. Richard Melzer, President of the Valencia County Historical Society, will be responsible for identifying relevant historians and researchers to engage in the community events, representing the interests of the VCHS, and contributing to the archival collection policies, finding aids and

outreach materials from the perspective of an academic user. He has produced dozens of publications, presentations, classes and reports on Belen history.

The Volunteers, James Sloan, Mary Hahn, and Farabe Smith, have been recruited through their work at the Belen Harvey House Museum. These volunteers will be responsible for historic, architectural and photographic research, document design and drafting, and public outreach. Jim Sloan, a native of Belen, is an expert in photography and photographic archives, and has been active in local historical research through his service on the Belen Historic Properties Review Board and the Valencia County Historical Society. Mary Hahn has served as the volunteer reference librarian at the Harvey House Museum branch library for years, and is conducting independent research through community engagement on the employees of the Belen Harvey House. She has compiled unpublished records of the Harvey House and Belen history, and created draft finding aids for local business and family records housed at the Harvey House. Farabe Smith worked as a professional librarian and media specialist for more than 40 years, and is applying her expertise and love of the Harvey House to organizing the existing archival materials and generating draft finding aids.

**Performance Objectives:**

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Collaborative, the following quantifiable measures will be used:

1. The number of institutions that will form the Collaborative and their roles;
2. From within the Collaborative, the number of strengths enhanced and the number of challenges overcome, with qualitative information on the nature and impact of those improvements;

3. The perceived improvements for public participation, discovery, and use of the Collaborative's historical records as quantified from a questionnaire distributed at the beginning and again the end of the Collaborative's planning process, using a satisfaction scale;
4. The number of people who are reached with our outreach materials and who participate in our community engagement events.
5. The number of tools we develop to support use of the Collaborative archive by publishing historians and researchers in our area and beyond.

Sample Project Narrative