

Ohio Heritage Partnership: A Statewide Initiative Abstract:

The State Library of Ohio, in partnership with the Ohio Historical Society is applying for an IMLS Connection to Collections Planning Grant.. The Project Partners will create a Steering Committee for the project which is broadly representative of the Ohio institutions responsible for preserving and protecting collections at risk. The kick off for the grant will coincide with Ohio Archivists Day on May 1, 2009.

The findings of the *Heritage Health Index* have found that nationally the collections of all types of institutions are in trouble. A lack of care and preservation of Ohio's cultural heritage has reached a crisis point. It is essential that this crisis be addressed if Ohio's cultural heritage is to be saved. Ohio is rich with libraries, historical societies, museums, genealogy societies, and government entities, all of which have documents and records held in the public trust. The degree of preservation of these documents as well as access to them varies greatly. Although preservation of and access to documents held in the public trust is a priority at the local level, it has not been a priority at the state level. Unlike many states, Ohio does not provide any type of state funding or grants for preservation or conservation.

Prior to beginning the implementation of any of the Heritage Health Index goals, Ohio must compile a comprehensive list, with contact information, of all institutions holding documents in the public trust. With funding from the grant the partners will develop a comprehensive directory. This directory will be very beneficial to Ohio's preservation effort by simply being able to identify the interested organizations.

Along with the development of the directory the following activities will take place during the grant implementation:

- A needs assessment of Ohio cultural heritage institutions: A consultant will be hired to gather data on the universe of Ohio's cultural heritage institutions. A survey will be used to assess institutions' capability to 1.) provide safe conditions for collections, 2.) deal with emergencies that threaten collections, 3.) provide adequate resources to care for the collection, and 4.) promote public awareness of issues affecting collections.
- Summit: A Summit in May 2010 will be held to discuss the "State of the Historical Record in Ohio" Because many of the issues and concerns are regionally based the summit will be followed by:
- Regional Meetings: A minimum of five regional meetings will be held around the state allowing repository officials and government officials to discuss the state of the historical record at the regional and local level.
- Preparation of the Ohio Cultural Heritage Strategic Plan. Once disseminated, the Plan will be used by cultural institutions to begin implementing the goals of the Heritage Health Index.
- Statewide Media Campaign: As part of the dissemination of the Strategic Plan a statewide media campaign, including a media kit with materials that can be tailored for the local level.

