



Wisconsin Library Association 2019-2021 State Budget Priorities

Recollection Wisconsin – Preserving and Making Wisconsin’s Historic Treasures Accessible to All

What is Recollection Wisconsin?

Since 2005, Recollection Wisconsin has helped over 200 partners—including libraries, historical societies, universities, and museums — to digitize and share their **one-of-a-kind collections**. Working in partnership with Recollection Wisconsin, libraries and cultural heritage institutions around the state have been able to digitize, curate, and host historic resources making the unique heritage of Wisconsin **discoverable online**. Tens of thousands of photographs, maps, letters, diaries, oral histories, artifacts, and local newspapers are now preserved and made accessible. This treasure trove of resources is made searchable to anyone in the world and the Recollection Wisconsin partnership with the Digital Public Library of America **elevates Wisconsin’s unique heritage** to a wider audience.

Why is State Funding So Important?

Recollection Wisconsin was funded initially with grants intended to support piloting innovative programs and to encourage **collaboration** among cultural heritage organizations. The uncertainty of grant funding hampers the ability to plan for the future in the most responsible manner. Investing state funding now **leverages those past investments** by ensuring continuation of a program that has digitized only a fraction of the state’s available historical treasures. There is much work remaining to digitize and preserve the wealth of resources that exist in communities large and small throughout the state and to make them freely and readily accessible for future generations.

Details of Digitization

Digitization is far more than simply scanning documents to a computer. It includes copyright considerations, metadata development, storage and preservation, vendor coordination, and ongoing access. **Preserving the past involves thinking about the future**. Rapidly changing technology and the complexity of how people access information requires professionals with expertise in digital project management and the ability to offer appropriate training and support. Funding Recollection Wisconsin at the state level ensures that the state’s historical resources, held in institutions of all sizes, are both preserved and made exponentially more accessible. A map, a diary, a letter, a newspaper, an oral history recording—each offers its own preservation and content management challenges as well as its **unique contributions to Wisconsin’s heritage**.

Funding Information

WLA supports a request for \$150,000 in FY20 and \$300,000 in FY21 enabling program costs to transition from grants to state funding while ensuring that the state’s history is preserved and accessible into the future. Anticipated expenditures include project management, content hosting and management, staff training, and technology.