

**THE BLANCHE AND JULIAN ROBERTSON FAMILY FOUNDATION
2023 GRANT APPLICATION**

Organization Information

Organization Name:

Rowan Public Library

Mailing Address:

Street Address:

201 West Fisher St.

City:

Salisbury

State:

North Carolina

Zip:

28144

Telephone:

704-216-8233

Fax:

704-216-8237

Web Address:

www.rowanpubliclibrary.org

Application Contact Information

Salutation:

Mrs.

Contact First Name:

Melissa

Contact Last Name:

Oleen

Title:

Library Director

Telephone:

704-216-8233

Email Address:

melissa.oleen@rowancountync.gov

Is the contact person listed above also the Executive Director?

Yes

Organization Status

Is the organization a tax exempt charitable organization 501(c)3:

No

Is your organization a:

Government tax-exempt unit:

No

Accredited educational institution:

No

What are the current Assets of the organization?

\$ 8,191,238.00

Does your organization conduct an audit?

Yes

What is your most recent audit date?

06/30/2022

What is your annual operating budget?

\$ 3,667,186.00

List your income from the previous fiscal year:

\$ 278,703.00

List your expenses from the previous fiscal year:

\$ 2,849,811.00

Project Request Information

Project Title:

Salisbury Post Morgue Preservation Project

Grant request amount:

\$ 145,500.00

Total Project Budget:

\$ 227,773.00

Start Date:

11/01/2021

Completion Date:

12/31/2023

Provide a brief project summary (Max words 50)

Salisbury Post, a local newspaper over 100 years old, has been in its current location since 1922 and houses a “morgue” of historical research material. The building was recently sold, putting this extensive archive in jeopardy. Digitizing it ensures its continued preservation while increasing usability and accessibility.

Describe your proposal in detail: (include objectives, background of project, demonstration of need and how funds will be used) (Max words 500)

In July 2020, Salisbury Post editor Josh Bergeron contacted Library Director Melissa Oleen about partnering on a long-term solution for preserving the Post’s morgue ‘as is’ and allowing convenient access to Post staff and RPL patrons. History Room Supervisor Gretchen Witt and Reference Librarian Paul Birkhead consulted with Bergeron, visited the morgue, and developed a comprehensive project plan and budget to meet these objectives. The plan also supports the future possibility of RPL accepting the morgue’s physical contents, should this ever be desired by the Post.

The project’s goal is to preserve morgue contents, which span more than 50 years. The morgue includes 88,000 envelopes of clippings, photographs, brochures, and ephemera unique to Rowan-Salisbury history stored in 30, four-drawer filing cabinets. Reporters still use this archive. With the evolving state of newspapers and the Post office space reduced, the time for preserving this priceless local history collection is now.

This goal’s primary objectives are to 1) perform archival quality scanning and digitizing of this fragile contextual material, 2) preserve digitized documents as one collection with multiple access points, 3) make the digitized collection easily accessible to Post reporters, and 4) provide access to the digitized collection at all RPL branches. As copyright laws cease to apply to morgue materials, RPL will collaborate with the Post to make more content open access via the internet.

RPL’s Edith M. Clark History Room has long been the public access archive to the Salisbury Post. The History Room maintains past issues from 1905 to present on microfilm and specialized indexes. Important issues, such as the 1953 Rowan County Centennial, are

preserved in paper form. RPL recognizes the importance of preserving the Rowan-Salisbury community's shared past and maintaining its availability and accessibility.

The Salisbury Post Morgue Preservation Project (SPMPP) is labor-intensive and will require more than 19,000 hours of scanning to complete. The History Room has only 104 permanent staff hours per week. While a branch librarian (Birkhead) began assisting Witt with the SPMPP in 2020, with these limited staff hours, completion would have taken five years, at minimum. Thanks to the support of community partners, including the 2022 Robertson Foundation Grant Cycle, the SPMPP is much closer to its completion goal of December 2023. Six dedicated scanning stations were purchased to scan materials: two stations were placed in the History Room; two at RPL South and two at RPL West. With current staff scheduling, awarded funds for temporary personnel will be exhausted by early April 2023. Since October 2022, 11 part-time temporary staff have assisted with scanning materials for this large-scale project, using 455 gigabytes of storage and creating 63,449 unique files.

Unless additional funds for temporary personnel are secured, the pace of the SPMPP will slow. Funds from a 2023 Robertson Foundation Grant Award would be utilized to continue employing temporary librarians and associates and ensure the December 2023 goal deadline is met.

Once the SPMPP is complete, scanning stations will be converted to public use, allowing access to the digitized collection.

What funds from other sources have been received or are under consideration for this project? List sources and amounts.

State Library of North Carolina Aid to Public Libraries Fund, \$6,000.00

RPL History Room Gift Fund, \$3,700.00

Blanche and Julian Robertson Family Foundation 2022 Grant Award, \$50,000.00

Friends of RPL, \$3,249.00

Cannon Foundation 2022 Grant Award, \$25,000.00

Salisbury-Rowan Community Foundation Grant Award, \$3,500.00 (pending)

RPL Foundation, donation under consideration

Salisbury News Media, LLC, donation under consideration

RPL is actively working to identify additional grant opportunities and project sponsors.

Are you willing to make this grant application a Challenge Grant (where by no funds from The BJRFF, Inc. will be disbursed until funds are secured from other sources and approved by The BJRFF Board? List sources and amounts.

No. Rowan County Government will not allow county departments to seek grants that require matching funds.

What percentage of your annual budget is spent in Rowan County?

78%

What percentage of your Grant project budget will be spent in Rowan County?

87%

Will local vendors be used for the project?

Yes

How many people do you employ?

71

What percentage of your employees live in Rowan County?

89%

How many people will be impacted by your project?

250000

What is a measurable result you expect to accomplish with this grant? Please be specific in your reply.

By December 2023, the morgue will be completely scanned, enhanced, and full-text searchable. A finding aid to the collection will be created and available online.

Do you have another measurable result you expect to accomplish with this grant?

Yes or No

Yes.

(If Yes), Result 2:

Public access stations to the collection will be available at all four library branches. These stations will be available for the public to freely use with printing available at a nominal cost. History Room visitors are primarily from Salisbury-Rowan but numerous researchers and genealogists travel in from across the United States and foreign countries.

Do you have another measurable result you expect to accomplish with this grant?

Yes or No

Yes.

(If Yes), Result 3:

A copy of the entire digitized collection will be provided to the *Post* along with one scanning/access station for use by *Post* staff and reporters. The morgue research can be conducted remotely as opposed to working in the morgue itself and the refiling of morgue envelopes will dramatically decrease.

How do you plan to fund this project in the future? Explain your sustainability plan (Max words 100)

Once the SPMP is complete, day-to-day digital maintenance and user training and access will be provided by permanent library staff. These costs are already included in RPL's fiscal year budget. Preserving the morgue collections long-term and migrating/adapting its storage and access as technologies advance and digital archiving standards change is already addressed under the History Room's current preservation plan for its digital collections and documents.

Organization Overview

Organization Mission:

Inspiring the spirit of exploration and the power of imagination, promoting the joy of reading, and supporting the life long pursuit of knowledge for all people.

What is the geographic service area being served, such as neighborhood, county-wide, Salisbury area, etc.? (50 words max)

The RPL system serves all Rowan County residents, with four physical locations in Salisbury, China Grove, Cleveland, Rockwell, a 24/7 online E-branch, and mobile outreach. Library cards are free and have no annual fee. All children enrolled in the Rowan-Salisbury School System have a free digital library card.

Organization core services (100 words max)

RPL provides free access to materials and information to support the interests, education, careers, passions and life pursuits of people of all ages and abilities. Librarians assist users in locating, accessing and using information technology. Free computer and WiFi access is available. Meeting and study rooms are available for students, tutors, and community groups. Outreach programs deliver materials to nursing homes and nutrition sites, as well as language development programs, childcare centers, and RSSS NC Pre-K classrooms. Copy, fax, and scan services are available. These services meet RPL's vision of a knowledgeable, progressive, diverse, and economically vibrant Rowan.

Address the qualifications of the organization and the person or persons who will lead this project:

RPL has been serving Rowan County since 1911. Long considered the archive for the *Salisbury Post*, RPL has microfilm from 1905-2020. History Room staff has indexed the paper for the last 10 years and created obituary indexes covering 57+ years. The library is the location most citizens think to visit when looking for news items from the *Salisbury Post*.

Edith M. Clark History Room has a reputation for creating and maintaining quality online exhibits and evolving to ensure accessibility. For example, In the early 2000s, History Room staff created the "Buerbaum Postcard" digital exhibit for the RPL website. Over the years, technology changed and the platform on which the postcards were exhibited became obsolete. History Room staff shifted to another platform and recreated the "Buerbaum Postcard" exhibit, ensuring that those unique images remain available for online viewing.

The 2014 digital exhibit, "Travels with Balfour Pink," highlighted the local granite industry and those who worked in the quarries. Staff digitized glass lantern slides, a very delicate process, from a collection given to the History Room. Additional photographs and ephemera were also digitized to create an online overview of the collection. Other online exhibits by the History Room include "Early Landowners of Rowan County" maps, the Salisbury map of 1904, and the Knox Family tree.

Gretchen Witt supervises the History Room. She has a Master's Degree in Library Science, 15+ years experience as librarian and archivist. Witt has overseen the creation or transfer of the aforementioned online exhibits. Paul Birkhead holds a Master's degree in Library Science and has 17+ years experience as a librarian; he has done much of the work on the existing online exhibits. Both librarians worked on the NCPLDA award-winning project "Through a Soldier's Eyes: Remembering Vietnam". Witt and Birkhead are leading the *Salisbury Post* Morgue Preservation Project.

**Do you need licensing, zoning, or other regulatory approval to conduct the project?
Yes or No**

No

If yes, please explain: .

Have you received a grant from The Blanche and Julian Robertson Family Foundation in the last 3 years?

Yes or No

Yes

Year:

2022

Grant amount:

\$50,000.00

Project:

Salisbury Post Morgue Preservation Project

***Add another Grant year?**

Yes or No

No.

Project Impact

What is the main area of impact for your grant? Choose one:

History and Preservation

Attachments

Please upload the following documentation in support of your application:

1. Current list of Board of Directors or Board of Trustees: (Please identify Gender & Race):
Attached
2. Recent 990 Form or financial report:
Attached
3. IRS 501(c) 3 or appropriate tax determination status letter:
Attached
4. Project budget:
Attached
5. Organization's annual budget for current fiscal year, including income and expenses:
Attached
6. Organization's annual budget for the previous year, including income and expenses:
Attached
7. Please submit any pictures that correlate with your project:
Attached

Certification

Do you certify that this application has been reviewed by the organization's governing body and chief executive officer and approved for submission, all information provided is accurate to the best of your knowledge and the project and schedule as presented will be addressed:

Yes.

Electronic Signature - of Representative requesting grant