

## **Puerto Rico Metropolitan Area Public Libraries and Municipalities Archives Digital Preservation Peer and Needs Assessment**

**Introduction:** The Consortium of Metropolitan Libraries (COBIMET) will perform a Puerto Rico Metropolitan Area Public Libraries and Municipalities Archives Digital Preservation Peer and Needs Assessment. This planning project meets Goal 3 of the National Leadership Grants for Libraries, to improve the ability of libraries and archives to provide broad access to and use of information and collections with Objective 3.2, intended to support innovative approaches to digital collection management. In today's digital era, librarians must embrace distance education to provide adequate and relevant services. In an age where information and cultural heritage are increasingly being stored in digital formats, ensuring these digital assets' long-term preservation is paramount. Puerto Rico Metropolitan Area Public Libraries and Municipalities Archives play a critical role in preserving their respective regions' cultural heritage and historical records of their respective areas. This project aims to evaluate using the Digital Preservation Peer Assessment framework and Digital Preservation Assessment Handbook created by the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC). COBIMET requests \$89,000 from IMLS for this 1-year planning project.

**Project Justification:** With the rapid shift towards digital records, many public libraries and municipal archives in Puerto Rico face challenges in preserving digital materials, including limited resources, outdated technology, and insufficient knowledge and expertise. Puerto Rico has a rich cultural heritage that must be safeguarded for future generations. Digital preservation is vital to ensure the accessibility and integrity of historical records and cultural artifacts. Collaborative efforts among institutions can maximize resources, share best practices, and promote innovation in digital preservation strategies. Furthermore, an extensive literature review did not provide data on a comprehensive digital preservation peer and needs assessment of the Puerto Rico Metropolitan Area Public Libraries and Municipalities Archives.

In 2017, COBIMET developed the Puerto Rico Cloud Repository (PRCR) for its 14 consortium members to allow for the archiving, preservation, and accessibility of retrospective and born-digital content. Since its creation, the PRCR initiative has published 1686 openly accessible items that range from historical archives to San Juan municipal laws. The consortium was approached during the years 2022 to 2023 by the municipalities of Cayey and Puerto Nuevo with interests in the possibility of collaborating with the PRCR initiative. Still, lack of archive knowledge, structure, funds to expand infrastructure, and evaluation of content made the project not feasible. A comprehensive needs assessment can provide essential data to seek funding for an implementation grant for digital preservation initiatives for municipalities' archives and public libraries like the Cayey and Puerto Nuevo.

**Project Workplan:** A Project Manager (PM) will plan, implement, and manage the one-year project. During the first 2 months of the project, the PM will Identify key stakeholders within the libraries and municipal archives in the Puerto Rico Metropolitan Area. PM will collaborate with relevant regional and national organizations specializing in digital preservation. Data Collection: Gather baseline data on current digital preservation practices and infrastructure.

By months 3-8, a Data Technician (DT) with the collaboration of the PM, will conduct surveys and interviews with staff from participating institutions to assess their digital preservation needs, challenges, and priorities using the Digital Preservation Peer Assessment framework and Digital Preservation Assessment Handbook. A

Data Analyst (DA) will develop and implement a database system for data entry and analysis. The DT will perform the data entry of the gathered information.

In the months 9 to 12, DA will Analyze survey and interview data to compile a comprehensive needs assessment report. The PM with DA will Compile and present comprehensive information detailing the needs assessment, recommendations, and action plans. The Report will be publicly available through the Puerto Rico Cloud Repository. Project participants at the end of each quarter must present a milestone and activities report.

**Project Results:** With National Leadership Grants for Libraries, COBIMET comprehensive report detailing the findings of the needs assessment, recommendations, and action plans. This data will help plan, design, request, and future implementation projects with qualitative and quantitative data. The short-, medium- and long-term results will be:

- Enhanced Knowledge and Expertise: Improved digital preservation knowledge and skills among staff in public libraries and municipal archives.
- Peer Collaboration Network: A network of institutions collaborating on digital preservation initiatives, sharing resources, and best practices.
- Strategic Plans: Strategic plans developed by participating institutions to guide their digital preservation efforts.
- Increased Funding Opportunities: Identification of funding opportunities and grant applications for digital preservation projects.

**Budget Summary:** The budget requested for each of the following categories will be: (1) Salaries and Wages-\$18,000.00; (2) Fringe Benefits-\$3,000.00; (3) Travel-\$3,000.00; (4) Supplies, Materials, and Equipment-\$8,000.00; (5) Subawards and Contracts-\$60,000.00; (6) Student Support-\$0.00; (7) Other Costs-\$0.00; and (8) Indirect Costs-\$0.00. The Total Direct Costs will be \$89,000.