



**Wisconsin  
Library  
Association**

## **2021-2023 State Budget Priorities**

### **Recollection Wisconsin: Preserving & 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. The Recollection Wisconsin partnership with the Digital Public Library of America **elevates Wisconsin's unique heritage** to a wider audience by making this treasure trove of resources searchable to anyone in the world.

#### **Why is State Funding So Important?**

Recollection Wisconsin has been funded with a patchwork of grants intended to support piloting of innovative programs and to encourage **collaboration** among cultural heritage organizations. The uncertainty of grant funding hampers responsible planning for future sustainability. Modest state funding support will **leverage those past investments** by ensuring continuation of a program that has digitized only a fraction of the state's available historical treasures. State investment is needed to ensure timely digitization and preservation of potentially vulnerable historical resources from communities across the state 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, as well as the ability to offer appropriate training and support. Funding Recollection Wisconsin at the state level ensures that the state's historical resources, held in local institutions of all sizes, are both preserved and made **universally 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 own **unique contributions to Wisconsin's heritage**.

#### **Funding Information**

WLA supports a request for \$150,000 in FY22 and \$300,000 in FY23 enabling basic 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.