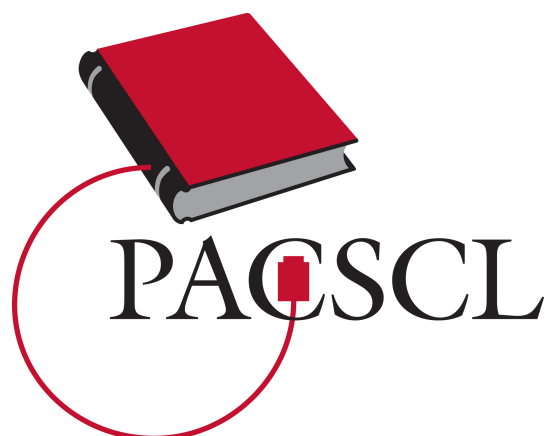


Chronicling Resistance



Chronicling Resistance at The Free Library of Philadelphia Activist-Curator Fellow Application Guidelines

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in *Chronicling Resistance at The Free Library of Philadelphia*. This project is immense and exciting, and we're thrilled it got your attention.

In 2018, the [Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries \(PACSCL\)](#) began [Chronicling Resistance](#) with two goals: 1) amplify stories of resistance in Philadelphia's historic archival collections, and 2) preserve records of today's acts of resistance.

Now, in a partnership with the Free Library of Philadelphia and with generous funding from the [Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#), we can build on that mission. *Chronicling Resistance* aims to do four things:

1. increase public recognition and understanding of the history of marginalized groups and people in Philadelphia;
2. deepen the relationship between traditional archives and activists who might use the information held there;
3. produce models for how public libraries can empower activists and traditionally marginalized communities in preserving their own history and partner in their social change work; and

4. produce models for how public libraries can think more broadly about how they present archival materials.

We're asking local activists and cultural organizers -- that is, people who do social justice work and do it in and with community -- who are interested in how historical materials can strengthen and support their community work to fill our reading rooms (virtually and eventually in person), then use what they find there and in their communities in the present to co-curate a series of public programs that tell stories of Philadelphia's social, political, artistic, religious, and scientific resistance -- historically and present-day.

We're calling the activists and cultural organizers we will work with **Activist-Curator Fellows**, and **we will select ten (10)**. **Here's what Activist-Curator Fellows will do:**

- conduct historical/archival research at PACSCL institutions, with support from research librarians.
- facilitate cultural organizing and community archiving with the Project Director.
- collaborate with the Consulting Curator to develop a series of exhibits or interpretive experiences for the Free Library based on their archival research.
- share progress on social media channels.
- publish monthly blog posts.
- attend bi-weekly check-ins with the Project Director.

What Fellows will produce:

- a list of 10 or more items from PACSCL collections that could be used in exhibits or other interpretive programs.
- an installation proposal for the Consulting Curator, based on their archival research.
- a narrative interpretation for the Consulting Curator, based on their research and their own activism and community engagement.

What Fellows will receive:

- free consultation on record-keeping from archivists in PACSCL institutions.
- a stipend of \$10,000 (paid monthly over the duration of the work), as independent contractors with the Free Library of Philadelphia Foundation.

We don't know what the interpretive experience/public programs will look like -- that's something you and the consultant curator get to decide! -- but the Free Library of Philadelphia is trying to think beyond text on the wall or materials in display cases.

We'll match you with a research librarian at a PACSCL member institution, but as research sometimes leads us down a rabbit hole of documents at many different locations, Fellows will be able to access any PACSCL member institution they need. (Check out our podcast, [Research Revelations](#), for an idea of what virtual research spread across different archives might be like and our [Historical Resistance Collections](#) website for a tiny sample of the resistance-themed materials held in special collections.)

As the timeline stands now, Fellows would begin their research in October 2020, community archiving in July/August 2021, and begin a concentrated period of collaboration with the consulting curator in April 2022 for an exhibition beginning August 2022 at Free Library central and neighborhood branches.

A few things to keep in mind as you consider this opportunity:

- Attendance at a half-day, afternoon orientation in early October 2020 is required. No exceptions.
- All of the orientation will be virtual, given the pandemic and health concerns.
- This project will take up an average of 6 hours per week for research, interpretation, meetings, and presentations, from approximately September 2020 to early December 2020. Anywhere from 5-8 hours of work per week would be expected in 2021 and 2022.
- Attendance at an exhibit opening in 2022 isn't required, but it's ideal.

We envision local special collections and public libraries as places where research, activism, and public presentations can meet and maybe merge. We hope activists and cultural organizers like you -- people who do social change work and do it in and with community -- can find rare documents that affirm their work and/or connect it to the past; special collections staff can learn how to be better allies in grassroots struggles; and public libraries can be stronger, even more relevant places of civic engagement for the public.

We know we can't achieve this vision without creating a good working environment for you. We acknowledge that social justice activists may feel especially vulnerable when contracting with organizations that have a history of prioritizing white, cisgendered, heterosexual men, and that the Free Library of Philadelphia and PACSCL members fit that description. So in addition to monetary compensation for your work, we -- the Project Director, PACSCL Board of Directors, and Free Library of Philadelphia Division of Civic and Cultural Engagement -- make the following commitments to Fellows:

- We will listen to and take seriously any issues or concerns you voice about racism, homophobia, transphobia, or other forms of oppression, whether it's institutional or interpersonal.
- We will not remove you from the project, discredit your work, censor your work, or revoke your pay because you speak up about the above issues or other issues.
- We will ask you to make changes to your blog posts, programs, installation plan, narrative, or other work you produce for the project only if it is a fire hazard, health hazard, or violates the Americans with Disabilities Act or Free Library of Philadelphia Foundation policies on appropriateness.
- We will give you 7-10 business days to make changes to your programs, installation plan, narrative, or other work, unless it poses an immediate threat to someone's health or rights.
- After a period of 90 days, you will retain the intellectual property rights to any written, visual, performance, or digital work you produce for the project.
- You will retain these rights and be credited for your work even if you have to leave the project early.
- For our group meetings, we will contract with meeting facilitators who approach group dynamics through lenses of anti-racism and power.
- In the event that one of our Thinking Partners (paid advisors with experience in community-based archives) leaves the project before it ends, we will ask your recommendation for a replacement.
- We will give you the option to read and edit our annual reports to the funder and will send reports you have approved, provided we receive your comments and edits before the submission deadline.

Thank you again for your interest in *Chronicling Resistance*. Chronicling Resistance's leadership team and advisory panel will select the Activist-Curator Fellows based on a number of factors, including their availability, field of activism, and geographical location. To apply, please answer the questions [on the application form](#) honestly and to the best of your ability by **5:00 p.m. on September 4, 2020**. We'll read everyone's answers, discuss, and interview finalists beginning September 8, 2020.

An Applicant Information Session will be held Tuesday, August 25, 2020, at noon. If interested, please email WilliamsM@FreeLibrary.org to register.

In solidarity,

Chronicling Resistance at the Free Library of Philadelphia Leadership Team:

Mariam Williams, Project Director

Yolanda Wisner, Consultant Curator

Andrew Nurkin, Deputy Director of Community and Civic Engagement, Free Library of Philadelphia

Sarah Horowitz, Board Representative, PACSCL

Community Advisory Panel

Chronicling Resistance at The Free Library of Philadelphia Activist-Curator Fellow Application

This completed application will be submitted to the Free Library of Philadelphia and reviewed by the Chronicling Resistance Project Director, representatives from PACSCL and the Free Library of Philadelphia, and the Chronicling Resistance Community Advisory Panel. Reviewers will see your name and answers to all application questions. By submitting this application, you are consenting to allow the aforementioned individuals to read and review your application.

Applications must be submitted online by **5:00 p.m. ET on Friday, September 4, 2020.**

Contact and Personal Information

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____ Zip code: _____

Gender Pronouns (optional): _____

How long have you lived in Philadelphia? _____

Please provide brief answers to the following questions, limiting your answers to the word count specified on each question. Replies to the longest open-ended questions should take 150-300 words.

Your Work and Community

1. What part of Philadelphia (geographically) do you work in as an activist or organizer?
2. Do you ever conduct your work at/with/near a branch library? If so, which one?
3. What communities does your activism/organizing involve? (This can mean basic demographics like age, race, gender, and class, or a more specific identity, like survivors of intimate partner abuse and their children.) *100 words or less*

4. How would you describe the way(s) in which you belong to this community?
150-300 words
5. Part of this project is studying the history of your field, so what's your field of activism? (Examples may include, but certainly are not limited to, food security, environment/conservation/slowing climate change, racial equity, voting rights, LGBTQIA rights, women's rights, immigration reform and immigrant rights, reproductive justice, sexual freedom, disability rights, education, criminal justice reform, etc.)
6. For how many years have you been working in this field?
7. Chronicling Resistance has defined "resistance" broadly as small and large pushes against the status quo, but we view these pushes within the categories of social, political, religious, scientific, or artistic resistance. With this in mind, how would you describe the work you do as resistance work? *150-300 words*

Your Potential Work as a Fellow

8. If selected as a Fellow, how will research in historical documents benefit the work you are currently doing? In other words, if there were no exhibit and no stipend, how would you justify spending 6-8 hours a week in the archives? How might you be able to use that research in your activism beyond the project? If you're already conducting such research, how might this project deepen or enhance what you've already learned? *150-300 words*
9. Let's say this project gives you the chance to start a community-based archive or strengthen one that already exists. What would be the best way(s) to support you in that work? *150-300 words*
10. (It's okay if all of your answers here are "1.") On a scale of 1-5, with 1 being very uncomfortable and 5 being completely at ease, how would you rate your comfort level with:
 - archival research?
 - interpretation of historic documents?
 - the particulars of the special collections libraries in which these documents are held?

11. What amount of hours per week do you think you could seriously commit to this project?

12. What are some of the other demands on your time? *up to 150 words*

13. The Free Library wants to think beyond static images on the wall for “exhibits” and think more about “interpretive experiences.” What do you imagine your interpretive experience for this project might be? (It’s okay if you don’t know.)
150-300 words

14. Please list any similar or related projects you’ve worked on. You may also list here any links to those projects. *150-300 words*

Also ...

15. Anything else you’d like us to know? *up to 150 words*

