



CALL FOR PROPOSALS  
Focus Group Facilitator



*Creating Access to HBCU Library Alliance Archives: Needs, Capacity,  
and Technical Planning*

The HBCU Library Alliance and the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) seek proposals from research and assessment professionals or small teams with experience in conducting qualitative research about higher education to facilitate a series of online focus groups with library directors and deans at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) about the significance of institutional archives and related needs and aspirations.

The facilitator's work comprises one part of a two-part assessment project led by the HBCU Library Alliance and CLIR. The project will inform strategic planning to build the capacity of HBCU Library Alliance member organizations to survey, describe and digitize hidden library and archival collections so they become easily discoverable and accessible to HBCU campus community members, alumni, and researchers.

The goals of the two-part project are to:

1. build consensus around and articulate common values, priorities, and needs for describing and managing special and archival collections for the HBCU Library Alliance community; and
2. document basic technical capacities and user profiles that could be used to design sustainable shared technical solutions for HBCU Library Alliance members' archival collections.

The consultant selected from the responses to this call will address the first of these two goals and provide the context for addressing the second goal.

The consultant will be a researcher with significant experience using qualitative methodologies to gather and analyze data about work in higher education. With the support of the HBCU Library Alliance Executive Director, the HBCU Library Alliance Board, and CLIR staff, the selected facilitator will:

- Prepare a focus group discussion guide designed to elicit deans' and directors' perspectives on the values, priorities, and needs driving strategies for describing and managing special and archival collections at their institutions. The discussion guide will prompt participants to identify perceived gaps affecting the ability to pursue their topmost priorities and to meet emerging needs in light of the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic.
- Using this guide, the consultant will Lead a series of eight to ten (8-10), ninety-minute (90-minute) online focus groups. Using documentation from the group discussions, the facilitator will
  - Prepare a draft report for review in August 2021, revise it in consultation with the HBCU Library Alliance Executive Director, Board, and CLIR staff, then
  - Submit a final draft on or before November 2021. This report would be subsequently published by CLIR.

The report will outline shared and diverging values, priorities, and needs among the HBCU Library Alliance members' leadership, and will articulate a series of recommendations and action items for the HBCU Library Alliance for building member capacity to create access to rare and unique library and archival collections.

#### Required Qualifications:

- Strong written and oral communication skills;
- Demonstrated ability to work on research projects with limited day-to-day supervision;
- Demonstrated experience conducting focus groups;
- Demonstrated experience with qualitative data analysis;
- Familiarity with academic libraries and/or Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs);

Familiarity with the HBCU Library Alliance and its programs would be helpful, but to ensure the independence of the assessment no current or recent members of the HBCU Library Alliance Board will be considered.

Interested professionals should contact Sandra Phoenix, Executive Director of the HBCU Library Alliance, and Christa Williford, CLIR's Senior Director of Research and Assessment, at [hbculibrary@clir.org](mailto:hbculibrary@clir.org), for further details and instructions on how to prepare a proposal for consideration. We welcome candidates who can bring diverse professional and life experiences to the project, including those from minority racial, ethnic, or religious backgrounds, immigrants, veterans, those with disabilities, and people with any sexual orientation or gender identity. The selected professional will begin work in early 2021 and continue on an occasional, part-time basis through October 2021.

The HBCU Library Alliance is a consortium that supports the collaboration of information professionals dedicated to providing an array of resources designed to strengthen Historically Black Colleges and Universities and their constituents. To learn more, visit <http://hbculibraries.org/>.

The Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) is an independent, nonprofit organization that forges strategies to enhance research, teaching, and learning environments in collaboration with libraries, cultural institutions, and communities of higher learning. To learn more, visit [www.clir.org](http://www.clir.org) and follow CLIR on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



CALL FOR PROPOSALS  
Interviewer



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and Technical Planning*

The HBCU Library Alliance and the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) seek proposals from research and assessment professionals or small teams with experience in conducting qualitative research about higher education to conduct a series of approximately twenty-five in-depth virtual interviews about special collections and archival holdings, technical capacity, and researcher needs with a select group of library staff (archivists, systems librarians, and IT specialists) and faculty based at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

The interviewer's work comprises one part of a two-part assessment project led by the HBCU Library Alliance and CLIR. The project will inform strategic planning to build the HBCU Library Alliance membership's capacity to survey, describe and digitize hidden library and archival collections so they become easily discoverable and accessible to HBCU campus community members, alumni, and researchers.

The goals of the two-part project are to:

1. build consensus around and articulate common values, priorities, and needs for describing and managing special and archival collections for the HBCU Library Alliance community; and
2. document basic technical capacities and user profiles that could be used to design sustainable shared technical solutions for HBCU Library Alliance members' archival collections.

The consultant selected from the responses to this call will address the second of these goals.

The consultant will be a researcher with experience using qualitative methodologies to gather data about working practices and user needs in academic libraries. With the support of the HBCU Library Alliance Executive Director, the HBCU Library Alliance Board, and CLIR staff, the consultant will prepare interview guides appropriate for varied types of participants, including archivists, systems librarians, IT specialists, and faculty users of special collections and archival materials held by HBCU libraries. The questions gather information about:

- Rare and unique materials held at the participant's institution;
- Technical systems and standards used to provide access to rare and unique materials at the institution;
- IT support and technical capacity among library staff at the institution; and
- Known researcher needs and researcher support provided by the institution.

After the discussion guide questions have been approved by Executive Director Phoenix and President Henry, the consulting interviewer will:

- Schedule and host interviews with approximately twenty-four participants representing approximately six different HBCU Library Alliance member institutions of varied sizes. Using documentation from the interviews, the consultant will:
  - Prepare a draft internal report about shared technical capacities and researcher needs across the sample of HBCUs represented by interview participants. The HBCU Library Alliance Executive Director, Board members, and CLIR staff will provide feedback to inform revisions to this report.

Once the content for this report has been approved, its general findings and recommendations may be published by CLIR as part of the public report of the two-part project. A fuller internal report with more detailed user profiles and a technical capacity assessment will be disseminated among leaders at the HBCU Library Alliance member institutions.

Required Qualifications:

- Strong written and oral communication skills;

- Demonstrated ability to work on research projects with limited day-to-day supervision;
- Demonstrated experience conducting unstructured interviews;
- Demonstrated experience with qualitative data analysis;
- Familiarity with academic libraries and/or Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs);
- Familiarity with library and archival systems, standards, technologies, and faculty support services

Familiarity with the HBCU Library Alliance and its programs would be helpful, but to ensure the independence of the assessment no current or recent members of the HBCU Library Alliance Board will be considered.

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