

CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Finance Committee

January 15, 2019

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AGREEMENT WITH IDEASTREAM FOR CPL150
STORYTELLING PROJECT**

- WHEREAS, On February 17, 2019, the Cleveland Public Library will begin a year of celebration commemorating 150 years of service to the people of Cleveland; and
- WHEREAS, To commemorate its 150th anniversary, the Library desires to work with Ideastream public broadcasting to capture and present stories of everyday people living in Cleveland in order to create a present-focused counterpoint to the Library's collections relating to local history; and
- WHEREAS, Ideastream has proposed a project to the Library wherein Ideastream will train librarians on storytelling and interviewing techniques, and librarians will record interviews with patrons at their branches. Ideastream's proposal also includes providing a recording van at the Party for the People where attendees can record stories in the style of National Public Radio's *Story Corps* project; and
- WHEREAS, Under Ideastream's proposal which is attached to this Resolution, the storytelling project will last an entire year beginning in January 2019 and culminating on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, January 20, 2020, at which time a projected 60 community stories will have been collected and six fully-produced radio stories will have been broadcast; and
- WHEREAS, The Library Administration finds Ideastream's proposed fee of \$50,000 to be fair and reasonable and hereby requests that the Board of Library Trustees authorize the Executive Director to enter into a contract with Ideastream for the CPL150 storytelling project; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That the Board of Trustees authorizes the Executive Director, CEO, or his designee, to enter into an agreement with Ideastream, for services in connection with the CPL150 storytelling project as described in Ideastream's proposal dated December 21, 2018 attached to this Resolution, for a total cost not-to-exceed \$50,000 which shall be charged to the Founders Fund Account 20380103-53710 (Professional Services) and which agreement shall be subject to the review and approval of the Chief Legal Officer.



**Proposal to Cleveland Public Library for
150th Anniversary Storytelling Project**

January 2019 – January 2020

December 21, 2018

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I. PROJECT

Cleveland Public Library will commemorate its 150th anniversary between February 2019 and January 2020 with a series of projects and events. As part of this effort, the Library would like to capture and present stories of everyday people living in Cleveland today, creating a present-focused counterpoint to its already excellent collections relating to local history.

II. BACKGROUND

Cleveland Public Library, one of the largest libraries in the U.S., was founded in 1869. The Library has maintained inclusive lending and service policies from very early in its history, offering open stacks, youth programs, and satellite book stations in factories and hospitals. Today, its collection encompasses multiple media, including more than 3 million books, and 2.5 million people visit its 27 branches annually. The Library's mission is to be "The People's University," and its current strategic plan calls for creating communities of learning that start with collecting information "to understand the roots of [Cleveland's] current reality."

III. APPROACH

ideastream, with producer Justin Glanville, will create a storytelling project that builds on the Library's extensive reach into Cleveland's neighborhoods. The stories will be audio-focused and emphasize the everyday experiences of people across the city's full socioeconomic spectrum. The tone will be real and aim to evoke compassion and camaraderie rather than pity and "otherness."

We will approach the project in several phases:

Phase I - Training #1 and Initial Collection (January - April 2019)

Early in the project, we will work with Library administration to convene an introduction and training session with as many branch librarians as possible from across the city. In this meeting, Justin and ideastream will:

- Introduce themselves and explain the project's intent;
- Provide a basic introduction to storytelling and interviewing techniques;
- Ask librarians to record interviews with several patrons at their branches, using library recording equipment, and send the best conversations to us for review by March 1, 2019 along with storytellers' contact information.

As stories come in, Justin and ideastream will review the recordings and identify the ones that have special promise -- either because they are particularly interesting, rich in detail, or touch on themes relevant to life in the city today.

By April 30, 2019, we will have fully produced at least one story for broadcast on radio and presentation on ideastream's website, using a tagline or series title that ideastream develops in partnership with the Library (e.g. "Your Story.")

Yield: About 20 community stories (depending on librarian participation); one fully produced story

Phase II - Training #2 and Continued Collection (May - August 2019)

In early May 2019, after the fully produced story has aired, we will work with the Library to convene a second meeting of branch librarians. In this meeting, we will discuss what made the fully produced story stand out and what made it "work" as a fully produced story. Librarians will be encouraged to discuss their own story collection efforts, ask questions, and give feedback on the project.

The hope is that this second training session will lead to even more skillful collection of stories during a second round. Librarians will again be asked to interview several patrons at their branches and send back their best recordings for review by July 1, 2019.

By August 30, 2019, we will fully produce at least two additional stories for broadcast on radio and presentation on ideastream's website.

Yield: About 20 community stories (depending on librarian participation); two fully produced stories

Phase III - Public Event and Continued Collection (July 2019 - January 2020)

During (and perhaps for several hours before and after) the Library's "Party for the People," planned for July 27, 2019, we will set up a recording van, staffed by Justin and/or ideastream staff, where attendees can record their stories -- either solo or in intergenerational pairs (*Story Corps* style). These recordings will be facilitated to help ensure quality stories.

We will review these stories for those with the greatest potential, and either reach out to storytellers for more in-depth interviews or -- in the case of high quality recordings -- use existing tape.

Meanwhile, via email, we will also ask branch librarians to continue collecting community stories at their branches. We will review these on an ongoing basis.

By Martin Luther King Day, January 20, 2020 -- the official "close" of the 150th anniversary celebration -- we will have produced an additional three stories for broadcast on radio and presentation on ideastream's website.

If desired, we can also create a short presentation commemorating the storytelling project (and honoring storytellers) during the MLK Day festivities.

Yield: About 20 community stories (depending on librarian and public response); three fully produced stories

IV. IMPACT

This project will create greater public understanding of the city as it exists today through the personal stories of “regular” people who live here. In the process, we hope to build social connections and compassion in a city (and region) where divisions of race, economics, and geography continue to weaken our economy and social cohesion. By working with ideastream to create this gift to the community and this contemporary snapshot in Cleveland’s history, the Library will underscore its value to the city and demonstrate another of the ways it serves residents.

V. DELIVERABLES

- A presentation about storytelling (including examples) for use in the training sessions
- Approximately 60 community stories (depending on librarian participation) recorded on site either by branch librarians, Justin, or ideastream
- Six fully produced radio stories, plus related written posts on ideastream’s website

VI. EDITORIAL POLICY

As an independent news organization, ideastream’s integrity and trust among audiences derives largely from its ability to operate autonomously in producing and presenting stories. We appreciate the Library placing its trust in us to produce the six broadcast stories according to ideastream’s own high standards of editorial quality. At the same time, we welcome the Library’s input in developing the overall goals and structure of this project, which we hope are reflected in this proposal. At the conclusion of the project, ideastream and Cleveland Public Library will have joint ownership of the community stories and 6 fully produced pieces.

VII. FUNDING

We request funding of \$50,000 for planning and implementation of the project. This amount covers staff time for a core team that includes producer Justin Glanville, ideastream Managing Producer Joseph Frolik, and an assistant producer (TBD). Additional as-needed staff time (including for Chief Content Officer Mark Rosenberger and Senior Director, Foundation and Corporate Support Lori Marks) are also included in this amount.

THANK YOU

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this proposal. We are honored to help mark this milestone anniversary of a Cleveland institution whose mission aligns so closely with our own.