

THE HBCU

RADIO PRESERVATION PROJECT

In collaboration with  91.3 wyso

Position Description

Title: Public Historian, HBCU Radio Preservation Project

Time Commitment and Compensation

Full time, pending grant-funding through December 31, 2027. Compensation is \$60,000 annually and offers health benefits. This may be a remote position and entails monthly travel. Computer/software, field recording kit, and travel funds will be provided.

Responsibilities

The successful candidate will apply public historical methods to recording, documenting, and communicating the HBCU radio story. They will expand the project's capacity to gather and employ data, while also helping to preserve digital materials and make them accessible and useful to project partners and the general public.

As a member of the project team, they will work with the project's technical partner, the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC), and colleagues at the Margaret Walker Center, among others.

This position will report to the Assistant Director of Public History and Programming and performs the following duties:

- Help carry out preservation site visits at HBCU radio stations. This includes corresponding with campus archivists and radio station personnel; identifying potential narrators; researching institutional and regional histories; managing workflow between the oral history team and NEDCC field archivists; and coordinating trips to cultural heritage sites and museums.
- Conduct in-person and remote interviews with current and former HBCU radio station personnel, alumni, faculty, volunteers, supporters, and listener communities while following all assigned oral history protocol and documentation.

Position will compile background research; describe the interview process for narrators; explain the terms of use; garner signed consent; transcribe recordings; and archive recordings in collaboration with Jackson State University's Margaret Walker Center.

- Collect, analyze, and update survey data gathered at thirty active HBCU radio stations. Identify and gather data on stations no longer in operation.
- Help mentor project fellows and interns in public history best practices.
- Help develop and lead workshops on using oral history to tell HBCU radio stories.
- Creating digital content and online media that narrates HBCU radio history
- Additional responsibilities may include: contributing to the HBCU Radio Preservation Project newsletter; fielding audio for the *Broadcasting History: The HBCU Legacy* podcast; providing digital content for the website and social media channels; and presenting on oral history findings and experiences at conferences.

Qualifications and Requirements

- Candidates must have the ability to travel as needed for the duration of the project.
- Master's degree in a relevant discipline (Public History, African American Studies, etc.).
- An understanding of best practices and ethics in public, oral, and digital history
- Appreciation for diverse constituencies and ability to speak to a range of audiences; knowledge of and experience with the HBCU community is a plus
- Experience with community-engaged and/or community-driven archiving projects
- Ability to represent the HBCU RPP with professional organizations, governmental entities, and the public
- Strong technical, organizational, and interpersonal skills; effective verbal and written communication
- A portfolio of past public history projects and/or scholarship on African American experiences and histories; projects created using digital platforms is a plus
- Expertise in using Google office, meet, slides, sheets, and related products
- Familiarity using content management systems; basic web design/development literacy
- Ability to work independently with little or no supervision

About the Project

Through a grant from the National Recording Preservation Foundation, in the summer of 2019 project director Jocelyn Robinson began administering a survey to the existing radio stations located on Historically Black College/University (HBCU) campuses to begin ascertaining if these stations had historical materials and what preservation needs they might have, with the WYSO Archives, a division of Miami Valley Public Media in Ohio, serving as the administrative hub for the project.

Through 2021-22, the initial survey blossomed into the HBCU Radio Preservation Pilot Project funded by the Mellon Foundation to work with a small number of the radio stations and their institutional archives/libraries to plan and design a larger implementation project. With technical expertise provided by the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC), this pilot project provided audio and digital preservation training, disaster planning, reformatting, collection assessment, and other support to the participants. The overarching goal of the ongoing project is to foster an ethos of preservation at HBCU radio stations in concert with the institutional archives on their campuses.

Not only is the HBCU Radio Preservation project an example for the HBCU community, it is also a model of practice to be shared with college and community radio stations throughout the country. Radio preservation has been long neglected, and such projects are vital to the development and continuation of this important work. Beginning in 2024, elements of the project include: (1) education and training, in which post-grad fellows and graduate interns are afforded early career work experiences supervised by the project's roving archivist; (2) multi-platform learning experiences including NEDCC-led courses/workshops in audio preservation, digital preservation, disaster preparedness and WYSO-led training in oral history and using historical media in content creation; (3) preservation, which includes collections assessments performed by roving field archivists and also reformatting historical media, with access made possible through the American Archive of Public Broadcast (AAPB); and (4) public history praxis, including an oral history project, an annual symposium held on a different HBCU campus each year, and multiple seasons of a 6-episode podcast featuring interviews, oral histories, and reformatted media.

To Apply

Submit the following to Phyllis Jeffers-Coly, Assistant Director of Administration/Communications at pjefferscoly@wyso.org

1. Cover letter explaining how this position fits the applicant's career goals;
2. Current resume; and
3. Three references knowledgeable of the applicant's experience, skills, and suitability for the position

Application deadline is August 18, 2025 for an early fall start date.

The HBCU Radio Preservation Project and Miami Valley Public Media value people of all races, colors, national origins, gender identities and expressions, sexual orientations, ages, abilities, and religions. BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and persons with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

07/14/25