

Attachment 1: Narrative

**1. Humanities mission and record of contribution:** The Yiddish Book Center is a nonprofit organization working to recover, celebrate, and regenerate Yiddish and modern Jewish culture. For four decades, the Center has uniquely positioned itself at the crossroads between educational center, cultural hub, library, and museum—pioneering a diverse range of groundbreaking initiatives that broaden understanding and accessibility of Yiddish and modern Jewish literature and culture. The Center was founded in 1980 by its current president, Aaron Lansky, then a 24-year-old graduate student of Yiddish literature. Lansky realized that untold numbers of irreplaceable Yiddish books—the primary tangible legacy of 1,000 years of Jewish life in Eastern Europe—were being discarded by Jews unable to read the language of their Yiddish-speaking parents and grandparents. Lansky’s work rescuing Yiddish books earned him a MacArthur “Genius Grant” in 1989, and the Center has rescued more than a million volumes, which represent Jews’ first sustained literary and cultural encounter with the modern world and provide a window onto the past thousand years of Jewish history, a precursor of modern Jewish writing in English, Hebrew, and other languages, and a springboard for new creativity. Through a wide range of bibliographic, educational, and cultural programs, the Center works to share these treasures and this history with the wider world—we have established and strengthened Yiddish holdings at 700 libraries around the world and have posted the full text of 12,000 titles online. Yiddish books from the Center’s Steven Spielberg Digital Yiddish Library have been downloaded more than three million times. In 2014, the Center was awarded the National Medal for Museums and Libraries at a White House ceremony. And this year, after nearly a decade in development, the Center launched a new website that allows users to search the full text of nearly 11,000 scanned Yiddish titles. This groundbreaking open source technology enables searches that used to take years to occur in a matter of seconds, revolutionizing research in Jewish history, literature, linguistics, ethnography, and genealogy.

The world’s first Yiddish museum, the Center is housed in a 40,000-square-foot building on the grounds of an apple orchard in Amherst, Massachusetts. We’re home to permanent and visiting exhibits, offer regular public tours, and our public programs take place in a 250-seat, multi-use auditorium and an 80-seat theater. We have more than 18,000 members from across the United States, and more than 10,000 visitors each year, including more than a thousand middle and high school students. Our website had nearly 200,000 unique visitors in 2019; we have more than 12,000 YouTube subscribers, 12,000 Facebook followers, and over 5,000 followers on Twitter.

Our educational programs include graduate fellowships; residential summer courses for high school students, college students, and teachers; classes for adult learners; and field trips for schools across the region. Our award-winning translation initiative includes a fellowship to train new Yiddish-to-English translators and a publishing program that brings this literature to new audiences. Our NEH-supported Wexler Oral History Project is a growing collection of more than 1,000 in-depth interviews, whose stories offer a complex chronicle of Jewish life and identity. The Center offers a full range of public programs, including film screenings, author talks, and lectures. The Center publishes an English-language magazine, *Pakn Treger*, and produces a weekly podcast, *The Shmooze*, which features interviews with writers, artists, and cultural figures in the Yiddish and Jewish world.

**2. Proposed activities and audience:** The Yiddish Book Center is currently celebrating its fortieth anniversary. This past January, the Center launched the Decade of Discovery, a new initiative designed to foster a deeper understanding of Yiddish and modern Jewish culture. Beginning in 2020, and continuing for each of the next ten years, we plan to select an annual theme around which we will hold special events, courses, conferences, exhibits, performances, and other programs, often in partnership with other organizations.

The first year's theme is "Yiddish in America: Cultural Encounters." Through special programs and dynamic partnerships with organizations across the country, we plan to explore the impact of Yiddish on American culture and the wider effects of all immigrants on the nation's identity. Through the lens of the Yiddish and Jewish experiences, we will consider the broader question of how cultures encounter one another. We believe that the example of Yiddish's impact is an important frame for understanding these larger questions.

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, we had organized public programs in cities across the United States in conjunction with this theme. Our partners ranged from the American Writers Museum in Chicago to the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles to Symphony Space in New York. For example, our program in Los Angeles, "An Evening in Celebration of Isaac Bashevis Singer," featured readings by actor Mayim Bialik, a rarely seen short film based on a Singer story and directed by the great American photographer Bruce Davidson, and a panel discussion reappraising Singer with scholar Ilan Stavans and film critic Kenneth Turan. We had also launched the "Coming to America" Reading Groups for Public Libraries program, in which librarians organize reading groups to discuss books of Yiddish literature in translation and books related to immigrant communities served by their libraries. Through a competitive application process, we selected twenty-two libraries from diverse communities across the country, brought librarians to the Center for a training workshop, and distributed copies of Yiddish books in translation to each library.

The pandemic has forced us to cancel the scheduled public events and the library reading groups and to achieve our goals through other means. In doing so, we have realized the great potential that exists for the Center to reach an even broader audience through digital public programs. The scheduled public programs and library reading groups will be reworked as virtual programs, and we will dramatically expand our offerings.

A second objective of the Decade of Discovery is to continue to enhance access to and understanding of our extensive digital collections. In addition to the Yiddish Book Center's Steven Spielberg Digital Yiddish Library, our digital collections include the Frances Brandt Online Yiddish Audio Library, hundreds of hours of remastered lectures by and interviews with writers who visited the Jewish Public Library of Montreal between 1953-2005; the Wexler Oral History Project; hundreds of hours of public programs recorded at the Center over its history; and more. We continue to collect, catalog, and make accessible new materials. While these digital collections are actively used by many researchers, teachers, and students, through the Decade of Discovery initiative, we are exploring innovative ways to share these resources with ever broader audiences.

We propose to move forward with our plans for this year's Decade of Discovery activities as follows: 1) present weekly digital public programs, both independently and in partnership with other organizations, delivered through Zoom and Facebook Live to a live audience and recorded for later viewing on our website; 2) engage the selected public library communities through digital programs and virtual discussion groups; 3) continue to catalog content so that we can make it available and searchable through our digital archive; 4) deliver curated content through our website, email, and social media. Our editorial, education, and communications teams will curate archival content to be delivered through a regular e-newsletter, "The Weekly Reader." This will be sent to our email list of more than 25,000 and will also be made available through social media channels. The grant will support retaining staff and costs for humanities presenters.

**3. Jobs and personnel:** Seven positions are retained in conducting the proposed activities: David Mazower, bibliographer and editorial director; Madeleine Cohen, director of translation and collections initiatives; Lisa Newman, director of communications and visitor services; Sarah Bleichfeld, public programs manager; Jessica Parker, education specialist; Amber Clooney, web developer and digital librarian; and Michelle Sigiel. Mazower, Cohen, and Newman will collaborate to create and organize the digital public programs, post new content to our website and on social media, and curate content for "The Weekly Reader." Parker will organize public library programs. Bleichfeld will manage all program logistics. Clooney will oversee digitization of the Center's past public programs, cataloguing and uploading this content so that it is available through the Center's website as part of our digital collections. Numerous scholars and humanities specialists will be engaged for the public programs.

**4. Institutional capacity:** The pandemic has impacted the Center's finances dramatically. We have lost admissions, program income and store revenue. The largest impact has been on contributed income, our primary source of revenue. We cancelled a planned prospect mailing to 100,000 households and a membership appeal to 25,000. While we are resuming direct mail appeals and are connecting with donors virtually, we anticipate that current economic conditions will continue to have a major impact for the foreseeable future. For the current fiscal year, ending August 31 we project a loss of more than \$1 million. Thanks to a loan received through the Payroll Protection Program, we have not yet furloughed or laid off staff. However, in late June, at the end of the eight-week period covered by the loan, we will be forced to lay off approximately one third of our current staff of forty people. An NEH Cares grant would enable us to maintain at least four staff members who would otherwise be laid off and two staff who would be furloughed. We are well-equipped to manage a federal award of emergency funds. Our financial systems are available remotely, and our finance team is working effectively from home. The Center is a current NEH grantee and has had no issues in continuing to execute that project.

While it is disappointing to cancel so many public programs across the country, we are quickly learning that digital public programs have the capacity to reach a far larger audience. We believe that the proposed activities have the potential not only to reach our existing membership more effectively but also to engage new audiences in ways that we had not previously imagined. The proposed activities have the potential to play a major role in the Center's long-term viability and survival, while enabling us to retain staff and support outside humanities presenters.

RESEARCH & RELATED BUDGET - Budget Period 1

ORGANIZATIONAL DUNS: (b) (4)

Enter name of Organization: National Yiddish Book Center

Budget Type:  Project  Subaward/Consortium

Budget Period: 1 Start Date: 07/06/2020 End Date: 12/31/2020

A. Senior/Key Person

Prefix	First	Middle	Last	Suffix	Base Salary (\$)	Months			Requested Salary (\$)	Fringe Benefits (\$)	Funds Requested (\$)
						Cal.	Acad.	Sum.			
Dr.	Madeleine		Cohen		(b) (6)	12.00			(b) (6)	(b) (6)	(b) (6)
Project Role: Co-Director											
	David		Mazower		(b) (6)	12.00			(b) (6)	(b) (6)	(b) (6)
Project Role: Co-Project Director											
	Lisa		Newman		(b) (6)	12.00			(b) (6)	(b) (6)	(b) (6)
Project Role: Co-Project Director											
	Amber		Clooney		(b) (6)	12.00			(b) (6)	(b) (6)	(b) (6)
Project Role: Web developer and digital librarian											
	Jessica		Parker		(b) (6)	12.00			(b) (6)	(b) (6)	(b) (6)
Project Role: Public Library Program manager											
	Michelle		Sigiel		(b) (6)	12.00			(b) (6)	(b) (6)	(b) (6)
Project Role: MetaData Specialist											

Additional Senior Key Persons:

Add Attachment Delete Attachment View Attachment

Total Funds requested for all Senior Key Persons in the attached file

Total Senior/Key Person (b) (6)

## B. Other Personnel

Number of Personnel	Project Role	Months			Requested Salary (\$)	Fringe Benefits (\$)	Funds Requested (\$)	
		Cal.	Acad.	Sum.				
<input type="text"/>	Post Doctoral Associates	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
<input type="text"/>	Graduate Students	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
<input type="text"/>	Undergraduate Students	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
<input type="text"/>	Secretarial/Clerical	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Project Manager	12.00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	(b) (6)	(b) (6)	(b) (6)	
<input type="text" value="1"/>	<b>Total Number Other Personnel</b>					<b>Total Other Personnel</b>	(b) (6)	
<b>Total Salary, Wages and Fringe Benefits (A+B)</b>								192,000.00

## C. Equipment Description

List items and dollar amount for each item exceeding \$5,000

Equipment item	Funds Requested (\$)
Laptop computers	2,300.00

Additional Equipment:

Add Attachment

Delete Attachment

View Attachment

Total funds requested for all equipment listed in the attached file

Total Equipment

## D. Travel

- Domestic Travel Costs ( Incl. Canada, Mexico and U.S. Possessions)
- Foreign Travel Costs

Funds Requested (\$)



Total Travel Cost

## E. Participant/Trainee Support Costs

- Tuition/Fees/Health Insurance
- Stipends
- Travel
- Subsistence
- Other

Funds Requested (\$)






Number of Participants/Trainees

Total Participant/Trainee Support Costs

**F. Other Direct Costs****Funds Requested (\$)**

1. Materials and Supplies	
2. Publication Costs	
3. Consultant Services	15,000.00
4. ADP/Computer Services	
5. Subawards/Consortium/Contractual Costs	
6. Equipment or Facility Rental/User Fees	
7. Alterations and Renovations	
8. <input type="text"/>	
9. <input type="text"/>	
10. <input type="text"/>	
<b>Total Other Direct Costs</b>	15,000.00

**G. Direct Costs****Funds Requested (\$)****Total Direct Costs (A thru F)** 209,300.00**H. Indirect Costs**

Indirect Cost Type	Indirect Cost Rate (%)	Indirect Cost Base (\$)	Funds Requested (\$)
MTDC	10.00	226,300.00	22,630.00
<b>Total Indirect Costs</b>			22,630.00

**Cognizant Federal Agency**

(Agency Name, POC Name, and POC Phone Number)

**I. Total Direct and Indirect Costs****Funds Requested (\$)****Total Direct and Indirect Institutional Costs (G + H)** 231,930.00**J. Fee****Funds Requested (\$)****K. Total Costs and Fee****Funds Requested (\$)****Total Costs and Fee (I + J)** 231,930.00**L. Budget Justification**

(Only attach one file.)

**RESEARCH & RELATED BUDGET - Cumulative Budget**

**Totals (\$)**

<b>Section A, Senior/Key Person</b>		(b) (6)
<b>Section B, Other Personnel</b>		(b) (6)
Total Number Other Personnel	1	
<b>Total Salary, Wages and Fringe Benefits (A+B)</b>		192,000.00
<b>Section C, Equipment</b>		2,300.00
<b>Section D, Travel</b>		
1. Domestic		
2. Foreign		
<b>Section E, Participant/Trainee Support Costs</b>		
1. Tuition/Fees/Health Insurance		
2. Stipends		
3. Travel		
4. Subsistence		
5. Other		
6. Number of Participants/Trainees		
<b>Section F, Other Direct Costs</b>		15,000.00
1. Materials and Supplies		
2. Publication Costs		
3. Consultant Services	15,000.00	
4. ADP/Computer Services		
5. Subawards/Consortium/Contractual Costs		
6. Equipment or Facility Rental/User Fees		
7. Alterations and Renovations		
8. Other 1		
9. Other 2		
10. Other 3		
<b>Section G, Direct Costs (A thru F)</b>		209,300.00
<b>Section H, Indirect Costs</b>		22,630.00
<b>Section I, Total Direct and Indirect Costs (G + H)</b>		231,930.00
<b>Section J, Fee</b>		
<b>Section K, Total Costs and Fee (I + J)</b>		231,930.00