CALL FOR COLLABORATORIES

Application Deadline:
Friday, April 3, 2026 (*for funding to be used July 1, 2026 - June 1, 2027*)

Hybrid Information Session:
Tuesday, March 3, 9:00-10:00 AM
- In-person: 939 Curtin Hall
- Virtual: https://tinyurl.com/registercollabinfo27

Details and links to the 2026-2027 application available on our website at
https://uwm.edu/c21/opportunities/c21-collaboratory/

Overview

C21 believes that the complex challenges we face in the 21st century are best met through collaborations across areas of expertise and experience, and that the humanities are a vital part of addressing these challenges. Collaborative project funding provides an opportunity to bring together teams of scholars across disciplines, across university and community partnerships, and across emerging and established scholars (students / staff / faculty) to generate new ideas and knowledge.

C21 offers funding for two distinct categories of collaborative projects: working groups and collaboratories. Working groups provide opportunities for collaborative study, research, and discussion of a common subject of interest. Collaboratories provide opportunities to bring new, humanities-informed ideas and knowledge to many different audiences both on and off campus. Collaboratories are also foundational to the Center's annual programming.

While the criteria for working groups will remain largely unchanged from previous years, collaboratory proposals must include a contribution to **C21's Day of Action**, slated for the Spring 2027 semester. The Day of Action will celebrate the culmination of SLOW, C21's 2024-27 thematic cycle, and will align with C21's 2026-27 theme, **Slow Action.** Slow Action will explore how the practices, methodologies, histories, and theories of collective organizing across communities and institutions might provide insight for building values-rooted systems and deliberate actionable pathways that endure over time to support shared goals.

Questions?

C21 strongly encourages questions and inquiries in advance of proposals. Please contact C21 Managing Director Katie Waddell with questions at **waddelke@uwm.edu**.

C21 Leadership Team will host an in-person **information session** with virtual option on **Tuesday, March 3, 9-10 AM.**
- This session will cover information on the Slow Action theme, the Day of Action, programming, tips on writing a strong application, and frequently asked questions.
- Attending the information session is not required to apply but is highly encouraged.

Funding Tiers: Collaboratories and Working Groups

C21 offers two distinct funding tiers for collaborative research projects:

1) Collaboratories

These are collaborative projects devised with a specific project or public outcome in mind. Priority will be given to projects with budgets of up to $5,000. A portion of awarded funds must be used to support programming for the Day of Action and/or related contributions.

In addition to funding, C21 staff will provide admin and marketing oversight for events related to the Day of Action and other related activities. Any major public events hosted by the Collaboratory will be included in C21's event calendar and promoted as a C21-supported program. C21 can also provide a dedicated working space for Collaboratory endeavors, which may include private office space and/or access to one of three reservable meeting spaces.

Preference will be given to project proposals that 1) address the pressing issues of our time and correlate with C21's annual theme of **Slow Action** for the granting period, 2) include team members with expertise in disciplines outside of the humanities, 3) experiment with new formats for presenting, conveying, or disseminating humanities research, and/or 4) partner with a community organization and engage the public in meaningful ways. All project proposals MUST include a public-facing component or other tangible final deliverable that will be presented or disseminated on the Day of Action. Funded Collaboratories will be required to submit a brief final report at the end of the grant cycle.

Tangible deliverables related to the Day of Action might include:

- A one-off event that occurs on the Day of Action
- Series of community-driven and/or publicly engaged events with one component that occurs on the Day of Action
- Series of academic events with one component that occurs on the Day of Action
- Original research and/or writing that aligns with Slow Action, to be presented or distributed on the Day of Action
- Producing a digital humanities project, such as a short documentary, multimedia publication, or online archive that aligns with Slow Action that can be accessed on the Day of Action

2) Working Groups

These are groups that gather for ongoing discussions, networking, and idea generation. They may be newly formed or pre-existing groups with an ongoing dialogic process or collaborative project. They do not necessarily have to have a fully formed project plan with a final deliverable in mind, nor must their proposed project cohere with C21's annual theme. Working Group funding presents an opportunity to build momentum towards a Collaboratory project proposal or an externally funded project.

While no public component is required, groups are encouraged to work with C21 to communicate about the work they are doing and will be required to submit a brief final report at the end of the grant cycle.

Working Groups receive $500, which might be used to support:

- Books/supplies
- A speaker
- A consultant or workshop facilitator
- Subscription services or software (in accordance with UW purchasing policy)
- Offsetting costs associated with site visits
- Other costs conducive to Working Group activity, provided they comply with UW purchasing policy

Eligibility/Requirements

For Collaboratories and Working Groups

- All collaborative groups **must include researchers from more than one unit** (i.e., department, division, or college) and at least one person from the humanities.

- All collaborative groups are **encouraged to pursue a broad diversity in their membership**, including students, academic staff, and community members.

- All collaborative groups will be expected to **meet at least once a month**. C21 has multiple spaces that can be reserved on the 9th floor of Curtin Hall.

- All collaborative groups are expected to write **reports on all activities at the end of the year**. A report template will be provided by C21.

- Collaborative group funding is implementation **funding to be used within the year it is granted**.

- The **principal investigator(s)** of the collaborative group **must meet with C21** staff at the beginning of the award period to discuss expectations, needs, projected outcomes, and other details.

- The **principal investigator(s)** of the collaborative group **must sign a written agreement** at the beginning of the award period stating that the group agrees to commit to the above actions and to provide documentation of the group's activities at the end of the award period. *Failure to comply with the terms of the agreement will render all group members ineligible to apply for future C21 funding and research fellowship opportunities for a period of up to three years.*

For Collaboratories *only*

- Collaboratories are expected to organize a public program in alignment with C21's Day of Action in April 2027 but can include additional programming if appropriate. We ask that Collaboratories **communicate with C21 about these public activities and events** with generous prior notice for inclusion in C21 communications.

- While an academic outcome (essays, articles, books, exhibits etc.) might be a goal of a Collaboratory, **teams are expected to tell the story of their efforts to a broad audience**.

How to Apply

Collaboratories

Proposals, which should not exceed 1250 words, should answer the following questions:

1. Overview of the project with key outcomes (limit of 100 words)
2. What question or challenge is the group addressing?
3. How does this align with C21's 2026-20267 theme of Slow Action?
4. What public-facing programs, projects, accessible publications, and/or events will the Collaboratory members pursue as part of the Day of Action?
5. What are the anticipated outcomes of the Collaboratory's project and how will success be measured?
6. What is the organizing logic for the composition of the group's members (e.g., why these members?)** Do you intend to recruit additional members during the grant period? Please indicate which members are humanities faculty, staff, and/or students.
7. How does the group plan to make its story/progress known to a broad audience?
8. What are the estimated costs? (Use this space to explain the purposes of any expenses listed in your attached budget.)
9. What administrative and/or programmatic support might the Collaboratory need from C21 staff, beyond general publicity for the Day of Action?

Proposals should also include a title/name for the Collaboratory and (a) short bio(s) for the group's Principal Investigator (PI).

** *Each Collaboratory team should identify a lead, UWM principal investigator (PI), who will be responsible for receiving and disbursing funds (from their home department) and for reporting on the group's activities. Please indicate the Collaboratory's PI when addressing question 6.*

Required attachments:
- Project budget (XLS, DOC, or PDF; 1 MB max)

Optional attachments:

- Relevant work samples (no more than **three work samples *total*,** between links and attachments)
    - These can include images (JPG, PNG, or PDF), video (MP4, MOV), sound files (MP3, WAV), text (DOC or PDF), or presentations (PPT, PPTX, KEY, PDF)
    - Maximum 1 MB *per file*
    - *Please contact Katie Waddell at waddelke@uwm.edu if you have work sample attachments that cannot be shared in one of the listed file formats.*
- CV or resume for Collaboratory PI(s) (DOC or PDF, 1 MB max)

Optional links:

- Relevant work samples (no more than **three work samples *total*,** between links and attachments)
- Professional or project website

Working Groups

Proposals, which should not exceed 750 words, should answer the following questions:

1) What question or challenge is the group addressing?
2) What is the organizing logic for the composition of the group's members (e.g., why these members?)** Do you intend to recruit additional members during the grant period?
3) What activities will the Working Group pursue and when (timeline)?
4) How do you plan to spend the $500?
5) Have you been a C21 working group previously? If yes, please list *the most recent year of C21 funding*, plus any activities, outcomes, and how funds were allocated during that year

Proposals should also include a title/name for the Working Group and (a) short bio(s) for the group's Principal Investigator (PI).

**Each Working Group should identify a lead, UWM principal investigator (PI), who will be responsible for receiving and disbursing funds (from their home department) and for reporting on the group's activities. Please indicate the PI when addressing question 2.*

Optional attachments and/or links:

- You have the option of attaching **up to three total links and/or documents** that may support your application.
- Attachments may not exceed 1 MB.