

National Historical Publications
and Records Commission
([NHPRC](#)) Grant Application

Preservation and Digitization of Records of Legislation for the City of Circleville

Preservation and Digitization of Records of Legislation for the City of Circleville

Final Report

Project Title: Preservation and Digitization of Records of Legislation

Organization: Circleville City Council, 127 South Court Street, Second Floor, Circleville, Ohio 43113

Funding Requested: \$5,000 and Received: \$5,000

Project Director-Melissa Burns

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Authorized Official- Barry Keller

Email: bkeller@circleville.oh.gov

Project Dates: May 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025.



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Summary Statement:

Circleville City Council engaged in a government records preservation, conservation, and digitization project to preserve, organize, digitize, and enhance access to their Historic Records of Ordinances, Resolutions and Minutes. Additionally, Council enhanced the City's website by establishing an online database to digitize the past 35 years of Legislation (1990–2025), ensuring they are readily accessible to our elected officials and the public.

Project Objectives and Accomplishments: 2025 Historic Preservation, Conservation and Digitization of Records of Legislation for the City of Circleville

In 2024, Council was guided by fresh leadership and shortly after became confronted with the poor state of the historic records, revealing that the City's legislation has been lost, misfiled, and grossly neglected for decades. These vital documents urgently required preservation, systematic organization, appropriate storage, and digitization to guarantee their historical significance is safeguarded for the future.

City Council's project was derived of two different phases. Phase One concentrated on three key scopes of service for our Historic Records of Legislation: conservation and preservation, rehousing, and digitization. Phase Two was centered on providing the public online access to digitized records from the past 30 years.

Phase 1: Preservation and Conservation

The initial phase focused on preserving and conserving passed Legislation. After consulting with various experts, City Council selected HF Group to help undertake this project.

Preservation:

1. **Full Preservation, Scanning, Sleeves, and New Binders**

Full Archival Preservation – Surface clean all pages, mend and stabilize as needed with archival materials, de-acidify each document, encase in 2 mil Mylar sleeves, place into new loose-leaf binder(s), and scan each document (includes mold remediation if applicable).

2. **De-Acidify, Scan, and New Binders**

De-acidify each document, scan each document, encase in 2 mil Mylar sleeves, and insert into new loose-leaf binder(s).

3. **Scan and New Binders Only**

Scan each document and place into new loose-leaf binder(s).

4. **Scan Only**

Scan each document and store in bankers' boxes.

Rehousing:

- 1) **Full Preservation, Scanning, Sleeves, and New Binders** – This category includes 7 books.

- 2) **De-Acidify, Scan and New Binders** – This category includes 7 books.

- 3) **Scan and New Binders Only** – This category includes 2 books.

- 4) **Scan Only** – This category includes original legislation from 1930s through 2024 and is estimated to be 9,400 legislative records which is approximately 19,200-19,700 individual pages. The legislation will be scanned into electronic folders by year and returned in acid free archival banker boxes provided by HF Group.

Additionally, all records were to be digitized and transferred to a 2TB hard drive. In addition, these records were going to be securely backed up using our Microsoft 365 account, which serves as our primary repository for data storage and management.

Digital Conversion:

HF Group simultaneously began scanning and digitizing all the historic records as the conservation and preservation scope was being completed. The records were to be digitized with metadata, sorted into folders by year, and named according to their ordinance numbers, using PDF format in compliance with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 36, Chapter XII, Subchapter B, Part 1236, Subpart E (eCFR :: 36 CFR Part 1236 Subpart E -- Digitizing Permanent Federal Records). Documents were going to be scanned at 600 DPI to optimize optical character recognition, improving text searchability and accuracy in the digitized documents. Moreover, with some legislation showing signs of fading, 600 DPI was particularly well-suited for effective preservation.

Phase 1 Summary and Accomplishments

Phase 1 of the legislation digitization and archiving project was completed over approximately **22 weeks**. While the phase progressed successfully overall, several initial challenges required prompt adaptation and collaboration to ensure the long-term preservation and usability of the City's historical records.

Early in the process, project staff identified two key issues with the original physical documents:

- Legislation was not always in order or had multiple copies, making it hard to discern which piece was the original legislation and which was a copy.
- Attachments frequently lacked sufficient punching margins on the short side of the page. -These conditions made traditional rebinding into new volumes impractical and risky, as punching holes could damage critical text or compromise document integrity. After careful evaluation of all options, Council President and Clerk determined that **archival clamshell boxes** represented the optimal solution. This approach preserved the original documents without invasive modifications, eliminated the high costs associated with rebinding, and minimized the risk of damage.

Shortly after scanning began, additional technical issues emerged: Documents were being delivered in **TIFF format** rather than searchable **PDF**, and multiple pieces of legislation were combined into single multi-page image files. This created significant obstacles, as a core project goal was to produce **OCR-optimized** (Optical Character Recognition) files—enabling full-text searchability for future use by Council, the Law Director's office, and other stakeholders.

Converting large volumes of TIFF images to individual searchable PDFs manually would have required hundreds of additional hours and introduced unnecessary workload. Similarly, splitting multi-legislation scans into separate files would have compounded the effort.

President Keller and I promptly collaborated with **HF Group** to address these concerns. We clearly explained why TIFF format was incompatible with project requirements, and the vendor responded quickly by

implementing the necessary adjustments: scanning each piece of legislation as individual **PDF files** with embedded OCR. This format proved essential for the success of **Phase 2** and ensures efficient, long-term searchability of the digitized legislation.

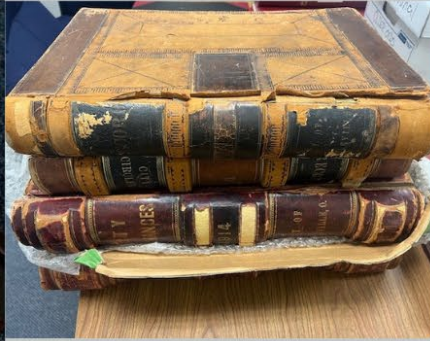
By proactively resolving these early hurdles through close communication and adaptive decision-making, Phase 1 established a strong, preservation-focused foundation for the entire project. The team successfully balanced archival best practices with practical efficiency, delivering high-quality digitized records ready for ongoing use and protection.

Council successfully relocated all the records and new shelving. The new records room measures 12 feet in width, 10 feet in height, and 9 feet in depth. It is situated on the third floor of the City Hall Building, specifically allocated for the storage of City Council Records. This room is equipped with temperature control to maintain optimal preservation conditions. The records will be stored on metal shelving.

Total Counts:

- Total number of pages digitized: 29,971 images.
- Total number of hours/weeks to complete the digitization project for Phase 1: 18 weeks; ~481 hours.
- Total number of books that were preserved: 14 books.
- Total number of pages preserved: 3,830 sheets
- Total number of new clam-shell boxes: 48 custom-sized clamshell KASEBoxes.
- Breakdown of the different types of conservation and the number of pages for each type:
 - 5 books (1481 sheets) had their punch-holes mended as needed for reinsertion into a new binder, digitized in 600dpi color PDF, and deacidified with Bookkeeper deacidification spray.
 - 2 books (596 sheets) had their punch-holes mended as needed for reinsertion into a new binder and digitized in 600dpi color PDF.
 - 7 books (1753 sheets) were disbound. Tape was removed if present and tears mended with heat set tissue. Pages were surface cleaned as needed. The sheets were digitized in 600dpi color PDF format then deacidified. The sheets were then sleeved in 2mil mylar and inserted into new binders.
 - 2 books from the 14 (560 sheets) were mold remediated with a HEPA vacuum and sprayed with isopropyl alcohol to retard mold growth.
- Total number of hours/weeks for HF Group to complete the conservation project for Phase 1: ~124 hours, about 4 weeks.

Mold and Deteriorated Legislation books and loose Ordinances and Resolutions before the Preservation and Conservation Project.



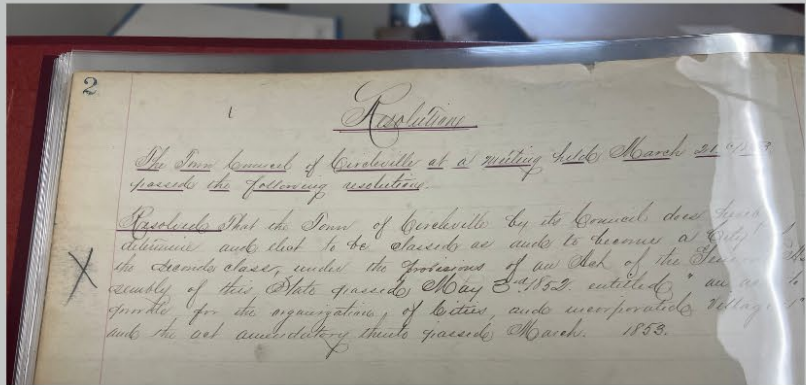
Ordinance No 1097.
Municipal Auditor's Office.
for Relief of
June 7, 1938
Recorded as Page 206
For the State of Connecticut, the undersigned, Auditor of the State, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of the original as the same appears in the files of the Auditor of the State.
Witness my hand and the seal of the State at Hartford, Connecticut, this 7th day of June, 1938.
Auditor of the State
[Signature]



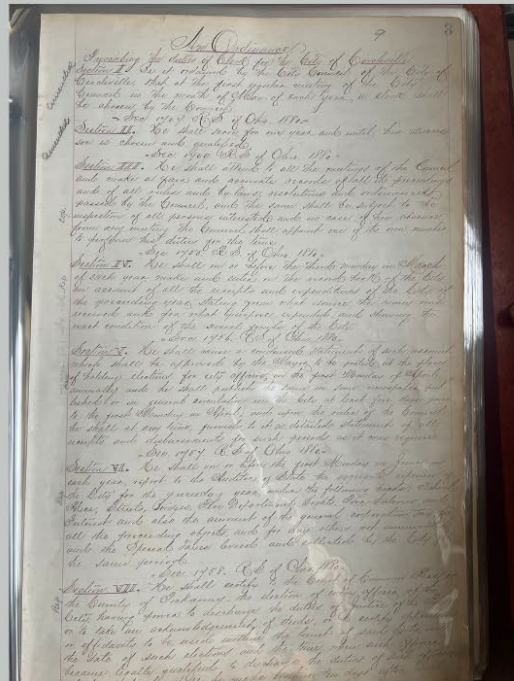
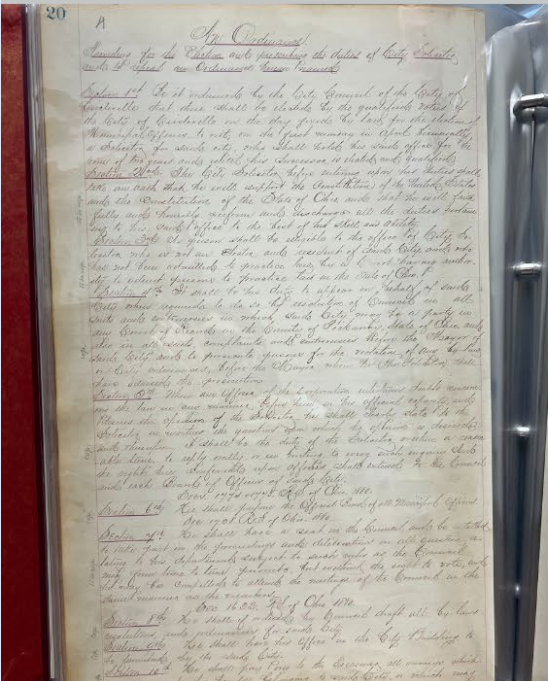
Ordinance No 1098.
Increasing pay to City
Engineers to \$10.00 per day
July 5, 1939
Recorded as Page 207



New Shelving, books, clamshell boxes, & binding to store the Legislation.



Repaired and preserved Legislation in new sleeve binding.



Phase 2- New Legislation Webpage Design and Implementation.

Phase 2 focused on digitizing the City of Circleville’s legislation spanning 30 years and seamlessly integrating it into a modern, user-friendly section of the City’s website. The result is a custom-designed, fully **mobile-responsive** platform built with tailored CSS, prioritizing accessibility, readability, and intuitive navigation.

Key features of the new Legislation webpage include:

- A dedicated custom post type capturing essential metadata: year enacted, legislation number, title, passage date, and support for uploading both **PDF** and **TIFF** files.
- Advanced search and filtering tools allowing users to quickly locate records by keywords, title, resolution/ordinance number, content, or year.
- An elegant **accordion-style layout** organized chronologically by year, with each section expanding to reveal legislation listed in clear columns (sorted by number, title, and passage date).
- Convenient **download buttons** for every record, enabling instant public access.

The design incorporates smooth animations and intuitive interactions to enhance the user experience, while built-in analytics track visitor numbers and download activity to measure engagement and success.

Phase 2- Webpage Design Summary and Accomplishments

The City of Circleville proudly launched this transformative Legislation webpage, making irreplaceable historical records accessible online for the first time. The project required over **650 hours** of development, data entry, and refinement.

Highlights include:

- **More than 8,158 visits** recorded to date.
- **Over 2,969 pieces of legislation** uploaded, covering **35 years** (expanding beyond the original proposal’s 1995 starting point to include records back to **1990**).
- Legislation is now added in **real-time** as ordinances and resolutions are passed or adopted.

The response from users has been overwhelmingly positive. Administrative staff report using the platform **weekly** for research, noting that it is significantly faster and more efficient than searching physical files or coordinating across departments. Prior to launch, locating specific legislation often required sorting through paper records and inter-departmental assistance—now, users find and download records instantly, reducing search time by **100%**.

Public records requests, which previously could take weeks (or longer) to fulfill, have been nearly eliminated. In the rare event a request is still needed, Council staff can now retrieve and provide any record in **minutes** from the comprehensive electronic database. The mobile-responsive design ensures accessibility on any device.

This initiative not only safeguards the City’s legislative history through secure digital preservation but also significantly advances government transparency, boosts community engagement, and streamlines internal operations. The Legislation webpage stands as a model of modern, citizen-centered digital governance for Circleville.

CITY OF CIRCLEVILLE LEGISLATION

Search Legislation By:

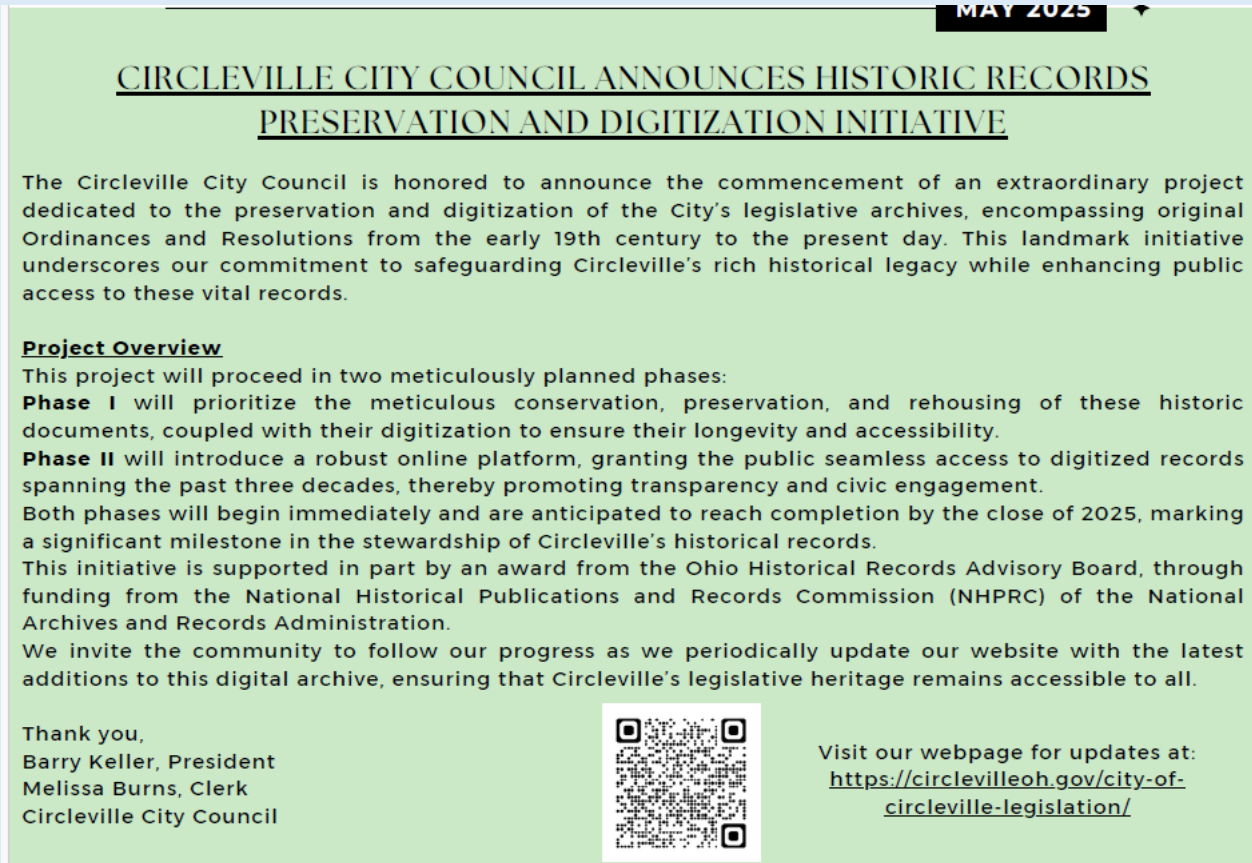
2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999
1998	1997	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990					

No.	Title/Description	Passed Date	Download
01.01.2025	AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 135.01, 135.03, 135.04, 135.11, 135.13(a) AND 135.13(g), ESTABLISHING SECTION 135.15 AND REPEALING SECTION 135.07 OF THE CODIFIED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF CIRCLEVILLE AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.	01/07/2025	Download
01.02.2025	AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND LAW DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE PICKAWAY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO PROVIDE LEGAL REPRESENTATION TO DEFENDANTS WHO ARE INDIGENT IN CASES INVOLVING THE CIRCLEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT OR THE CIRCLEVILLE MUNICIPAL COURT FROM JULY 1, 2024 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2025.	01/07/2025	Download
01.03.2025	AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF THE CITY OF CIRCLEVILLE TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH GOVDEALS.COM TO SELL AND DISPOSE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY SERVICES FOR THE CITY FOR THE YEAR 2025 AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.	01/21/2025	Download
01.04.2025	AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICE TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS AND ENTER INTO CONTRACTS FOR THE 2025 STREET, UTILITY, PARKS, BUILDING AND TRAFFIC SIGNAL IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAM AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY.	01/21/2025	Download

Records of Legislation can be found on our website at:
[CITY OF CIRCLEVILLE LEGISLATION - City of Circleville](#)

Publicity

The City announced the grant award and project details in its newsletter, *The Circleville Loop*, distributed to thousands of residents. The announcement was also shared on the City's official Facebook page, generating community interest and engagement. Copies of the newsletter and screenshots of the social media post are available upon request.



MAY 2025

CIRCLEVILLE CITY COUNCIL ANNOUNCES HISTORIC RECORDS PRESERVATION AND DIGITIZATION INITIATIVE

The Circleville City Council is honored to announce the commencement of an extraordinary project dedicated to the preservation and digitization of the City's legislative archives, encompassing original Ordinances and Resolutions from the early 19th century to the present day. This landmark initiative underscores our commitment to safeguarding Circleville's rich historical legacy while enhancing public access to these vital records.

Project Overview

This project will proceed in two meticulously planned phases:

Phase I will prioritize the meticulous conservation, preservation, and rehousing of these historic documents, coupled with their digitization to ensure their longevity and accessibility.


Phase II will introduce a robust online platform, granting the public seamless access to digitized records spanning the past three decades, thereby promoting transparency and civic engagement.

Both phases will begin immediately and are anticipated to reach completion by the close of 2025, marking a significant milestone in the stewardship of Circleville's historical records.

This initiative is supported in part by an award from the Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board, through funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) of the National Archives and Records Administration.

We invite the community to follow our progress as we periodically update our website with the latest additions to this digital archive, ensuring that Circleville's legislative heritage remains accessible to all.

Thank you,
Barry Keller, President
Melissa Burns, Clerk
Circleville City Council



Visit our webpage for updates at:
<https://circlevilleoh.gov/city-of-circleville-legislation/>

Conclusion

Together, both phases have revolutionized how the City manages and shares its legislative records, eliminating inefficiencies, protecting heritage, and empowering users with instant access. Despite budget overruns from unforeseen factors, the project delivered exceptional value, with lessons in comprehensive scoping and contingency planning informing future efforts. This initiative exemplifies Circleville's commitment to innovative governance, setting a benchmark for historical preservation in the digital age.

City Council is already taking steps to further its preservation of City Legislation. Council hopes to retrieve the first two books ever created containing the City's Ordinances and Resolutions from the 1800s. Council will continue to look for other ways to improve its access, transparency and preservation of the City's Historic records in the future.

Submitted By: President Barry Keller and Clerk of Council Melissa Burns of Circleville City Council.

**Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board
National Historical Records & Publications (NHPRC)
State and National Archival Partnership (SNAP) Grants Regrant Program**

Salaries and Wages	Grant Funds	Matching Funds	Total
Clerk of Council (Hourly rate of pay \$28.32)	\$0.00	\$8,946.00	\$8,946.00
Assistant Clerk of Council (Hourly rate of pay \$28.32)		\$4,238.00	\$4,238.00
Contract Auditors to help Auditing and correcting digitized Legislation		\$8,588.25	\$8,588.25
			\$0.00
Subtotals: Salaries and Wages	\$0.00	\$21,772.25	\$21,772.25
Supplies	Grant Funds	Matching Funds	Total
Heavy-Duty Steel Shelving (4x -72 x 24 x 72)	\$0.00	\$3,508.53	\$3,508.53
			\$0.00
			\$0.00
			\$0.00
Subtotals: Supplies	\$0.00	\$3,508.53	\$3,508.53
Equipment	Grant Funds	Matching Funds	Total
None- HF Group will utilize their own equipment for the project.	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
			\$0.00
			\$0.00
			\$0.00
Subtotals: Equipments	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Contracted Services	Grant Funds	Matching Funds	Total
HF Group-FULL ARCHIVAL PRESERVATION/SCAN AND NEW BUNDERS	\$2,500.00	\$35,552.50	\$38,052.50
HF Group-Full Scanning Proposal of City Council Legislation	\$2,500.00	\$27,997.50	\$30,497.50
HF Group-4 Boxes of Loose Documens-Collate, Scan, Index	\$0.00	\$7,891.75	\$7,891.75
33 Engines-Website updates		\$300.00	\$300.00
Subtotals: Contracted Services	\$5,000.00	\$71,741.75	\$76,741.75
Other Eligible Expenses	Grant Funds	Matching Funds	Total
			\$0.00
			\$0.00
			\$0.00
			\$0.00
Subtotals: Other Eligible Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Summary Budget	Grant Funds	Matching Funds	Total
<i>Salaries and Wages</i>	\$0.00	\$21,772.25	\$21,772.25
<i>Supplies</i>	\$0.00	\$3,508.53	\$3,508.53
<i>Equipment</i>	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<i>Contracted Services</i>	\$5,000.00	\$71,741.75	\$76,741.75
<i>Other Eligible Expenses</i>	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Project Budget	\$5,000.00	\$97,022.53	\$102,022.53

Yes No

If you do not receive full funding, will you accept partial funding and still complete the project as outlined in the application?

YES		
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