

A photograph of the Jefferson Library of Congress building, a grand neoclassical structure with multiple stories of columns and arches. In the foreground, a wide set of stone steps leads up towards the building. To the left, a decorative green lamppost stands on a pedestal. A small informational sign is visible on the right side of the steps. The entire image has a light blue tint.

Listening to Our Past, Amplifying Our Future

National Recording Preservation Foundation

2023–2024 Annual Report

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2023-2024 Annual Report



National Recording Preservation Foundation
March 2025

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Executive Summary

The National Recording Preservation Foundation (NRPF) *promotes and preserves* America's audio heritage—by raising funds and distributing grants to archives, libraries, museums and other non-profit collecting organizations. In 2023 and 2024, the Foundation undertook a strategic re-start and planning, revamped its communications, and supported significant American audio archives through critical preservation grants.

The Foundation receives support from the private sector, academia, and a range of performers and public figures who value NRPF's continued work to safeguard America's rich audio history. Here are some highlights from the past two years:

Funding Impact

- Distributed \$28,350 in preservation grants to support unique and at-risk audio recordings from culturally significant radio stations, to historic recordings of culturally significant American performers and composers, to disaster recovery at repositories of American cultural recordings

Communications and Engagement

- Launched the *Sound Files* podcast to share archived audio collections and spotlight the work of audio preservation professionals
- Expanded support for education and training, including a grants webinar, fiscal support of the 2024 international conference of the International Audiovisual and Sound Archives association (IASA) and new advisors

Strategic Planning and Organizational Refresh

- Ushered in new leadership, welcoming seven new members to the Board of Directors, and the appointment of Dr. Jesse A. Johnston as the Secretary and (pro bono) Executive Director
- Identified strategic goals and updated the Foundation's bylaws

Looking ahead to 2025, NRPF will focus on three strategic priorities:

1. **Expanding Audio Preservation Grantmaking:** Building resources to increase grants support for critical, basic preservation activities
2. **Supporting Education and Training:** Investing in training and education for current and future audio preservation professionals
3. **Raising Awareness:** Continuing the *Sound Files* podcast and developing public programming to highlight the importance of audio preservation

Board of Directors

NRPF is an independent non-profit organization with the mission to support and coordinate audio preservation in the United States through preservation grants and related activities. The Foundation's board of directors is appointed by the Librarian of Congress.

Jesse A. Johnston, *Secretary*
University of Michigan School of Information

Sam Brylawski
American Discography Project

Garrett Levin
Digital Media Consultant

George Massenburg
Producer, Engineer, Educator

Davia Nelson
Radio Producer, The Kitchen Sisters

Eric J. Schwartz
Mitchell Silberberg & Knupp LLP

Judy Tsou
University of Washington (emeritus)

Ex officio

Dr. Carla Hayden, Librarian of Congress
The Library of Congress

Kenneth Silverberg, Of Counsel
Nixon Peabody

Greetings from the Executive Director

Dear Friends and Supporters,

It is my pleasure to present the National Recording Preservation Foundation's Annual Report for 2023 and 2024. As I reflect on NRPF's last two years, I am inspired by the unique recordings and collections that we have helped to preserve.

The NRPF has undergone significant transition and renewal over the past few years. After a remarkable decade of service as the Foundation's Executive Director, Gerald Seligman stepped down in late 2023. In addition to stewarding the Foundation's most significant fundraising activity, he developed a portfolio of grants that truly exemplify the breadth of American audio heritage. During the transition, NRPF reached a significant milestone when our total grants given now surpasses a quarter of a million dollars given in support of audio preservation activities! I am inspired to further amplify the Foundation's impact by continuing to expand this legacy.



As we move into NRPF's next era, I am excited to guide the Foundation toward new opportunities that will advance our goals to *promote* and *preserve* significant audio collections. I have already begun working on new programs and engagement strategies. For example, projects like the *Sound Files* podcast allow us to share excerpts from archived audio collections, share the stories and perspectives of the people who work to preserve audio, and to connect with audiences and supporters who share our passion to protect and preserve America's cultural record.

The Foundation looks forward to building its relationship with the Library of Congress. While independent, we work along with the Library to safeguard America's recorded sound heritage for future generations. I also look forward to expanding and strengthening our partnerships with the philanthropic and private sectors over the next few years.

To our supporters, thank you for your ongoing trust! Whatever form it takes, whether financial donations, working on an NRPF preservation grant, or just sharing our message on social media, you are a critical part of NRPF's preservation mission. If you are not yet a supporter, consider joining us at www.recordingpreservation.org/donate/. Every sound tells a story, and with your help, we can ensure they endure.

Sincerely,

Jesse A. Johnston, Ph.D.
Secretary and Executive Director

Listening to Our Past: Highlights and Impact

The National Recording Preservation Foundation (NRPF) continues its vital mission to preserve America's audio heritage through strategic grantmaking and community engagement. Our impact spans both basic preservation and stabilization needs of at-risk audio collections, as well as foundational support for work that supports preservation and research, such as database maintenance, cataloging, and capacity-building for non-profit collecting organizations.

About the NRPF

NRPF is an independent, charitable non-profit with the mission to promote and ensure the preservation and public accessibility of the nation's sound recording heritage. The Foundation was federally chartered under the National Recording Preservation Act of 2000. The Foundation is a registered, 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and it advances preservation by coordinating resources to offer grants to libraries, archives, museums, and other non-profit collecting organizations in the United States.

Funding Impact and Grantmaking

To date, the Foundation has distributed over a quarter of a million dollars to support audio preservation projects across the United States. The Foundation has significantly grown its grant impact recently, and the past five years alone, we have expanded our support for audio preservation through \$128,382 awarded in 13 grants. The Foundation's fiscal operations are overseen by the Board of Directors, who are appointed by the Librarian of Congress for four-year terms.

Our giving since 2023 demonstrates NRPF's ongoing dedication to preserving historically and culturally significant audio recordings in the United States. The three projects described below reflect the breadth and uniqueness of American audio heritage, from historically significant radio broadcasts, to lesser-known recordings of an iconic American film composer and conductor, to the safeguarding of analog recordings threatened by natural disasters.

Recent Grant Awards

In 2023, NRPF distributed \$28,350 in grants to support three audio preservation projects:

HBCU Radio Preservation Project

The Foundation awarded \$8,500 to support the preservation of historic radio materials from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Working in partnership with WYSO/Miami Valley Public Media and the Northeast Document Conservation Center, this preservation project focused on the WRVS radio station archives at the G. R. Little Library at Elizabeth City State University. This initial documentation and preservation project served to develop methodologies that will support future HBCU radio preservation efforts and preserved over 100 hours of broadcast audio content. These materials will be made accessible through the American Archive of Public Broadcasting, ensuring these vital historical records are available to researchers and the public.

Bernard Herrmann Radio Broadcasts at UC Santa Barbara

The Foundation awarded \$8,500 to the University of California at Santa Barbara Library's Special Research Collections to preserve and digitize pioneering radio broadcasts conducted by Bernard Herrmann in the 1930s and 1940s. Known as a pre-eminent American composer in the twentieth century, Herrmann is renowned for his film scores, including *Psycho* and *Citizen Kane*. The recordings preserved in this project document Herrmann's early career as a radio composer and conductor, showcasing his innovative programming of works by Charles Ives, Edward Elgar, William Grant Still, and other major American composers.

Appalshop Disaster Response

Following the catastrophic flooding that struck eastern Kentucky in July 2022, NRPF provided \$11,350 to support archival recovery and emergency preservation at Appalshop, a non-profit arts and education center in Whitesburg, Kentucky. This grant enabled the cleaning and digitization of 280 flood-damaged tapes, preserving audio documenting nearly a century of irreplaceable Appalachian cultural expression. The project also supported conservation work essential to restore media playability and extend the viability of these unique audio collections.

Grantee Spotlight

NRPF awarded an \$8,500 preservation grant to the HBCU Radio Preservation project in 2023. With this support, the project worked with the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC), to reformat and preserve the audio from 47 Digital Audio Tapes (DATs). They were also able to remediate and treat 4 quarter-inch open-reel audiotapes for mold. In all, the work to restore and digitize this irreplaceable historical audio preserved about 100 hours of audio content.



Archivists working with the HBCU Radio Preservation Project sort reel-to-reel tapes at WRVS radio station at Elizabeth City State University.

The grant “enabled the project to test our protocol and process . . . and lay the groundwork for our implementation phase”

— Jocelyn Robinson, Project Director

NRPF’s *Sound Files* podcast featured Jocelyn Robinson in its first season. Hear the [full interview here](#), or learn more about the podcast at <https://www.recordingpreservation.org/programs/podcast/>.

Communications and Engagement

Beyond direct preservation grants, NRPF aims to strengthen and build community support for audio preservation. In 2024, NRPF expanded its impact through several key initiatives:

- Hosted a well-attended webinar on audio preservation funding opportunities, featuring presentations from the National Endowment for the Humanities, CLIR, and IMLS, reaching approximately 75 collection stewards
- Established collaboration with Dr. Josh Shepperd of the University of Colorado as our first Senior Faculty Research Advisor
- Provided fiscal support for the 2024 international conference of the International Audiovisual and Sound Archives association meeting
- Established the *Sound Files* podcast, which shares and celebrates archival audio through conversations and stories. The podcast is produced with support from the University of Michigan School of Information, Nightwise Media, and Black Ram Sound. We have so far released three episodes featuring the work of NRPF's grantees and supporters. Click below to read more about each episode!
 - [Preserving HBCU Radio Archives](#)
 - [Oral Histories and Native Alaskan Languages](#)
 - [Archival Repatriation and Native American Audio Archives](#)

Strategic Planning and Organizational Refresh

- Strengthened our organizational infrastructure:
 - Redesigned website, site hosting, and adopted new email and donation platforms to increase information security and to save costs
 - Updated bylaws at the 2024 annual meeting
- Organizational renewal
 - In January 2024, the Librarian of Congress appointed seven new Directors to the Foundation's Board of Directors
 - Also in January 2024, Dr. Jesse A. Johnston was appointed as Executive Director; he previously served as the NRPF's Associate Director and is a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan School of Information
 - In recognition of the multiple stakeholder communities of the NRPF, including archives, libraries, and museums; sound recording production, distribution, preservation, and restoration; artists and performers; and all those who love history, the NRPF is investigating the formation of an advisory board to provide strategic input

- Refreshed communications
 - Renewed social media presence across major platforms, including Facebook, X, and YouTube
 - Established new social accounts on Instagram and LinkedIn
 - New email newsletter to better engage with our supporters and stakeholders

These achievements reflect NRPF's ongoing commitment to preserving our nation's recorded sound heritage while building a stronger, more connected preservation community. Through strategic grantmaking, community engagement, and technical assistance, we are continuing to build a foundation that grows support for the preservation of America's audio heritage and its accessibility for future generations.

Recognizing Our Supporters

The Foundation thanks each supporter who has made possible our preservation grant programs. To better recognize our donors over time, the Foundation has undertaken a comprehensive review to record and list all donations since 2012, including major and repeat sponsors, as well as annual donors. In recognition of their generosity, and to celebrate their support, NRPF is using this research to establish and update a donor recognition page on the website, which reflects an updated donor record. Visit the page at <https://www.recordingpreservation.org/sponsors/>.

Harnessing the possibilities of online giving to amplify and expand our donor network, we have adopted the GiveLively donation platform, which will the expansion of giving opportunities through social media campaigns and donor recognition activities over the next few years. Stay tuned to our newsletter and social media channels to keep track of these initiatives!

Amplifying Our Future: New Initiatives

The Foundation has experienced unprecedented support over the past two years, with record-setting levels of giving. Our partnership with the GiveLively platform, which supports direct giving online, payment via major online services like Stripe and PayPal, donation via text message, and social media integration, has supported this increase.

Priorities in 2025

As NRPF continues its work in 2025, we are dedicated to increasing support for several key initiatives:

- Establish resources, through a combination of grants and donations, to support basic preservation activities of audio collections through competitive grants. These may include collection stabilization, rehousing, metadata and collection documentation, and digitization for preservation. NRPF aims to build support to make at least 5 awards each year in amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000.
- Support the training and education of current and future audio preservation workers, including through the support of continuing training in webinars and workshops, as well as support for new generations of researchers and scholars, such as through fiscal support of the Radio Preservation Task Force.
- Promote awareness around the importance of and challenges facing audio preservation. This will include the continuation of the *Sound Files* podcast, support for engaging and impactful public talks, and other programming. We anticipate partnering with the Library of Congress to provide a national platform for such programs.

Support of the National Recording Preservation Foundation has can from many sources. This includes individual donors, trade organizations, and industry. NRPF is committed to expanding its financial support in the coming years to amplify the impact of the critical preservation activities that we can support.

Financial Summary

The following table summarizes NRPF’s receipts, expenditures, and overall financial position over 2023 and 2024:

Receipts & Expenditures, 2023–2024	2023	2024	Total
Receipts (funds raised and income)			
Contributions from individuals	-	\$21,651.42	\$21,651.42
Contributions from organizations	-	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Interest income	-	\$493.58	\$493.58
Total receipts			\$23,145.00
Expenditures (programs, administration and fundraising)			
Programs – NRPF Preservation Grants	\$28,350.00	-	\$28,350.00
Personnel	\$8,698.03	-	\$8,698.03
Management and general expenses	\$774.74	\$515.91	\$1,290.65
Fundraising		\$573.05	\$573.05
Total expenditures			\$38,911.73
Financial position, 2023–2024			
2023 Beginning of Year Net Assets (unrestricted)			\$37,822.77
Total receipts and expenditures, 2023–2024			(\$15,766.73)
2024 End of Year Net Assets (unrestricted)			\$22,056.04

Highlights from 2023 and 2024:

- NRPF awarded \$28,350 through NRPF Preservation Grants, meaning that over the past two years, nearly 73% of NRPF’s expenditures supported audio preservation activities
- NRPF raised \$22,651.42 from individuals and organizations
- NRPF’s administrative costs totaled \$9,988.68

Following the Combined Federal Campaign’s Administrative and Fundraising rate (AFR), a representation of the rate of total costs excluding programs divided by total receipts, NRPF’s AFR is just above 45% over the last two years.

Various factors affect the AFR. For example, NRPF did not conduct any substantial fundraising in 2023 during the leadership transition. Since 2023, we have also lowered administrative and technology costs in comparison to funds toward programs. As of 2024, NRPF’s Board of Directors and Executive Director serve pro bono in the interests of recorded sound preservation as we work to build fundraising.

The NRPF makes regular financial reports for accountability and transparency. NRPF’s Form 990s are available by request or through Candid.org or similar sites.

Colophon

This report is published by the National Recording Preservation Foundation in March 2025. It is available in pdf format at recordingpreservation.org or by email inquiry to info@recordingpreservation.org.

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