A statewide consortium led by the Library of Virginia has received a $749,939 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to conserve and digitize collections documenting the history of American independence and Virginia's early government. The library is one of five institutions awarded the grant as part of a consortium that also includes The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Washington and Lee University, William & Mary Libraries, and the Virginia Museum of History & Culture. The award is part of NEH's Rediscovering Our Revolutionary Tradition initiative. The grant will fund conservation of a selection of manuscripts, bound volumes, artwork, and printed materials across thirteen historically significant collections held by the consortium partners. Once conserved, the items will be digitized and images with metadata will be uploaded to each partner's online catalog or digital asset management system. Students will transcribe a selection of the primary source materials, and after the grant period, consortium members will create cross-institutional finding aids, educational resources, online or physical exhibitions, public transcription, and public displays.

OCLC WebJunction, in partnership with the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL), the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA), and representatives from seven state libraries, has been awarded a grant to update a library competency framework. The updated framework will help library staff strengthen their knowledge and skills in today's evolving environment of artificial intelligence (AI)-driven digital transformation, increased community service demands, and expanded workforce development responsibilities. The twenty-four-month, $299,807 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) will be used to update WebJunction's Competency Index for the Library Field and design a set of credentials mapped to the index. The project team will first conduct a study of current library competencies and credentials and document how they are used across the library field, especially in small and rural libraries. The project will also be informed by WebJunction's recently developed Library Foundational Training core library skills training series, also funded by IMLS.

Acquisitions

The Atlanta University Center (AUC) Robert W. Woodruff Library, one of the nation's premier repositories for African American academic archives, history, culture, and research, recently announced a major partnership with Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., the nation's oldest intercollegiate Black fraternity, to preserve and digitize rare historical materials documenting more than a century of leadership, service, scholarship, and civic engagement. The landmark partnership includes a $125,000 investment from Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. to support the preservation of more than 200 boxes of archival materials and records. The Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Collection will be permanently housed at the AUC Woodruff Library and parts of the collection will be digitized in partnership with the HBCU Digital Library Trust and HBCU Library Alliance. Together, the partnership represents a significant milestone in expanding access to African American archival collections and ensuring that historically important records are preserved for students, faculty, scholars, researchers, and the public.

The University of Michigan's William L. Clements Library recently acquired an archive of 192 original sermons written between 1765 and 1780 by a Revolutionary War chaplain. Coinciding with the final years of the First Great Awakening and continuing through the American Revolution, many of Reverend Joseph Bowman's sermons were delivered to Continental soldiers during the siege of Boston. Particularly of note are sermons Bowman delivered to the army in July 1775 and February 1776, during the early stages of the War for Independence. These examples of sermons to Continental troops, along with a 1777 address for men departing "into ye service of ye Country," offer vivid insight into the moral, spiritual, and political world of Revolutionary-era New England. Held in a private collection, the existence of the papers was previously unknown. The 2,000-page handwritten collection forms a significant corpus of religious writing and a unique opportunity for the Clements Library to add to its already strong collection of Revolutionary War holdings.