

UW-Madison Oral History Program

Statement on Compensating Narrators

January 2024

Starting January 2024, the UW-Madison Oral History Program (OHP), part of the UW-Madison Archives & Records Management, will consider compensating, through a \$50 Amazon gift card, a narrator for the gift of their time. While this will not begin to equate to the value of the narrator's invested time, the OHP, in giving this gift, wants to acknowledge that in certain cases there is an actual cost for our narrator's time.

This change is in line with recent discussion in the oral history & folklore professions about compensating narrators. When appropriate the OHP will consider the true cost of a person's time, particularly those whose economic situation makes the gift of their story a financial hardship to them.

Additionally, at this time, this statement will not apply to everyone interviewed by OHP staff; most of our narrators can take time to meet with us and let us record and preserve their stories & memories with no undue fiscal hardship or possible employment recourse. We do not believe that this level of payment could be construed as an undue influence on these specific future narrators.

Also, here are other specific disclaimers, which we include in the interest of transparency.

- This type of gift cannot be given to an employee of UW-Madison.
- This type of gift cannot be given to nonresident non-US citizens.
- Only one gift card can be given to a person per year.