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## UCLA Wins \$3.65-Million Grant to Build 'Age of Mass Incarceration' Archive with LAPD Records

With a \$3.65-million grant and a trove of Los Angeles Police records dating back decades, scholars at UCLA have launched a new archival project aimed at independently preserving and dissecting the history of mass incarceration in L.A.

The project, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and called “Archiving the Age of Mass Incarceration,” will seek to reveal in new ways how the Los Angeles region became a global outlier for imprisonment — with the largest jail system in the most heavily incarcerated nation in the world — and what the implications of that legacy are in the city’s most heavily affected communities, organizers said.

In addition to 177 boxes of LAPD records from the 1970s through the early 2000s, which the university fought for and won access to in court, the project will seek out and include oral histories and other ephemera from community members whose lives are captured in the documents or who were otherwise affected by the region’s aggressive criminal justice pipelines, said professor Kelly Lytle Hernández, who heads UCLA’s Million Dollar Hoods team and leads the latest project.

“This is an example of community control over policing. We are taking control over the archive of what happened, and we will be curating what gets released and how, and we will be describing it, filling it with meaning,” Lytle Hernández said. “It’s reparative work.”

Lytle Hernández, a MacArthur “genius” fellow who directs the university’s Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies, will partner with scholars from the school’s three other ethnic studies centers: the Asian American Studies Center, the American Indian Studies Center and the Chicano Studies Research Center.

Elizabeth Alexander, the Mellon Foundation president, said she has been impressed with Lytle Hernández’s work with Million Dollar Hoods —which maps the high cost of incarceration in L.A.’s diverse neighborhoods — and is excited to help her in the work of ensuring the city’s history of mass incarceration is “properly interpreted, preserved and taught.”

“We are incredibly excited to see, in the years ahead, what comes from this research team,” Alexander said.