

## Authority Control FAQs for Catalogers Contacting Creators/Contributors

### Who is this document for?

This document is for catalogers creating and updating LC/NACO Authority Records.

### Why contact creators/contributors?

Contacting creators (that is, authors, artists, editors, or anyone who contributes to a work) ensures that their privacy considerations are taken into account before a record is created and shared via linked open data. By explaining how we are using their data and providing options for which data is used in an authority record, we confirm the trust that library users have in libraries as an institution. It also provides a unique opportunity for catalogers to illuminate the authority control work that we do, allowing libraries to demonstrate their value to creators through the explanation of authority work and its benefits.

### When is it recommended that I contact creators?

Institutions can decide which creators they will contact to confirm information or gather additional information to differentiate them from others with the same or similar names. Depending on staffing levels, an institution may wish to focus on specific categories of creators to contact, such as those with local ties, or those from underrepresented populations. Contacting creators is also particularly valuable in cases where there is a confirmed or suspected name change or usage of a pseudonym, to ensure the preferences of the creator are reflected in the choices made during the creation of the authority record.

### What information should I ask for?

Anything that may help to distinguish creators with the same name or pseudonym, typically including information such as birth date, middle name or initial, field of activity, and/or occupation.

If you suspect a name change is involved, make clear that the latest form of name on a published work will generally be the authorized form. Alternatively, the form of name the creator

prefers may be used instead, even if it has not been used in a published work (see LC-PCC PS for 9.19.1.1, “Changes to Authorized Access Points for Persons,” for more information).

Inform creators that information they provide or agree to be included will be publicly viewable, and give precedence to creators' preferences about what is included in or excluded from a record

## What is the best way to contact creators?

Email provides the best opportunity to explain what authority control is and how it will benefit the creator, as well as giving creators the opportunity to reflect on their comfort level with sharing personal information.

Providing a link to the [“Authority Control FAQs for Authors and Creators” document](#) will give creators more information about the purpose of authority control and how their information will be used. Two sample email templates are provided below, which you should feel free to adapt.

## Sample templates:

### Template 1:

I am a cataloger at [Institution name] and I am cataloging [resource title]. Because there are multiple other people with the name [creator's name] in the Library of Congress Name Authority File, I need additional information to distinguish you. This will help ensure that you get proper credit for the works you've created or contributed to. Find more information about this process in the [“Authority Control FAQs for Authors and Creators” document](#).

Would you be willing to share the year of your birth and/or your full name for this purpose? This information will be used to create the international authority record for your name, which will be viewable online at [id.loc.gov](http://id.loc.gov).

### Template 2:

My name is [XX] and I am the [position title] at [institution name]. I am currently adding “[resource title]” to our library's collection and I'm writing to ask for additional information from you. One of the things libraries do to make library catalogs more reliable and accurate is to create a unique "name authority record" for each author or creator, so that searchers can find all of their work without mistakenly retrieving things by other people with the same name. The function is similar to disambiguation in Wikipedia, such as with the [disambiguation page for](#)

[Jane Smith](#). You can find more information about this process in the [“Authority Control FAQs for Authors and Creators” document](#).

In order to establish such a record for you, it would be helpful to have additional information. There are already several other people named [creator's name] in [WorldCat](#), the global catalog of library collections. In order to distinguish you from others with your name, I need to add extra information to the record.

The most common and simple way to do this is to add your year or date of birth, but a middle name or middle initial can also be used. If you would be willing to provide this information, it would help ensure that library users can find your work. Any information you provide will be viewable online at [id.loc.gov](#). If I don't hear from you, I will create a unique heading for you by using your profession/occupation or by identifying you as the author of “[resource title]”.