



ARTISTS IN COMMUNITIES TOOLS

CULTURAL INVENTORY / CULTURAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

CULTURAL INVENTORY

Purpose

A Cultural Inventory helps identify what you already have in your community for the purposes of planning for cultural and creative opportunities and identify gaps or needs that future arts programming can address. For example, if there is a concentration of local resources in one discipline, that discipline or art form might become the focus of your cultural activity, if the community wishes, or you could concentrate on undeveloped and unrepresented arts forms.

Guidelines

A Cultural Inventory is a list of the resources that exist in your community, both professional and non-professional, organized by category of organization or group. For example:

- Arts organizations – producers, theatre companies, book publishers, dance groups, etc.
- Arts presenters – festivals, individuals, galleries, museums, libraries, in some cases arts councils
- Arts venues and outlets – auditoriums, stages, halls, stores, selling co-ops, cultural centres, churches, school gyms
- Arts facilities – production facilities such as film and video co-ops, studios, pottery kilns, office spaces, rehearsal spaces, warehousing, studios
- Arts service organizations – clubs, guilds, associations, unions
- Resource persons – teachers, mentors, elders, coaches, editors
- Training opportunities – post-secondary programs, courses, workshops
- Communication resources – newsletters, public bulletin boards, community radio stations, PSA services, websites, social media
- Individual artists – grouped by discipline or individually according to level of practice
- Funding sources – municipal, provincial, federal, foundation, corporate

CULTURAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Purpose

The purpose of a Cultural Needs Assessment is to:

- Identify what type of creative and cultural programming the community needs,
- Get public opinion to help set creative and cultural programming goals and objectives,
- Evaluate existing cultural programming in the community,
- Establish the need for an *Artists in Communities – Residency*
- Increase awareness of community planning.

Selecting a Needs Assessment Technique

The quality of the information about a community is only as good as the techniques used to gather the information. Using only one technique may provide too little information and using too many could be too costly in terms of time, and financial and human resources. To determine what will get you the information you want and need, try asking these questions:

- What is your community like, i.e., what are the types of organizations, groups, values, attitudes, goals, concerns, and problems?
- What is unique about your community?

Then select several techniques that will work with your community, budget and timeline. For example:

- Community meetings (invite the whole community)
- Advisory or focus groups
- Surveys (online, telephone, personal interviews, written, email)
- Research of existing information
- Key people (those who know the community very well)

Needs Assessment Process

The following is a process that you may use in conducting your assessment:

1. Brainstorm session with key players to discuss your central exploration question (for Residency applications) to see if it makes sense for the community. Key players will include the community partner, the artist partner(s), and other organizational and community partners. The brainstorm session also will serve as an opportunity to identify any other issues and questions that the project should explore. You will be able to determine what is and isn't known about your cultural community, and to work to fill in the gaps.
2. Agree on the central exploration question, knowing that it may change throughout the assessment process.
3. Outline the available resources (e.g., funds, spaces, equipment, etc.) and volunteers to carry out the work.
4. Draw up a plan, including a timeframe and information gathering techniques.
5. Explain and promote the *Artists in Communities—Residency or Project* to the community, emphasizing long-term benefits.
6. Gather information according the most appropriate methods (e.g., surveys, workshops, meetings, etc.) for your community and resources.
7. Compile and analyze the information.
8. Draft a report of the findings and distribute to partners.
9. Discuss the findings of the survey and the other information gathered with the community partner and the artist partner.
10. Prioritize the list of needs identified by the community. Discuss how this relates to your original exploration question. You may have to re-frame the question considering what you now know.
11. Finalize the needs and priorities with additional community workshops, focus groups or meetings.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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