ARTISTS IN COMMUNITIES
PROJECT TOOLS
PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is project documentation?

Project documentation is a systematic keeping of records throughout the course of a project. Think of it as keeping a project scrapbook for collecting and organizing different kinds of data and evidence. The information and records kept comprise the evidence for making decisions, reflecting on the project and planning for the future.

Why document the project?

Documenting a project from beginning to end will provide a comprehensive record of the processes that participants went through during the project. This record will provide the evidence to help answer any exploration questions posed for the project. It will also give the evidence needed to share the project story with others and convey the project's true impact.

Why is each project's documentation process different?

The exploration questions in *Artists in Communities* programs are intended to guide grant recipients' own planning, decision-making and changes in practice that result from the projects. It is important that recipients keep their own records in a way that is designed especially for that project. The documentation process as developed by each grant recipient should record the kind of information that is needed to address community needs and project exploration questions.

What kinds of "evidence" should be included?

This will vary from project to project, but common data/evidence includes photographs, video, journal writing, surveys or questionnaires, minutes of meetings, and press clippings. Artistic works themselves (both process and product) are important evidence, since they reflect the participants' interactions with artists. Records of reflective thinking can be included at any point in the project. This might include looking at the exploration question(s) on a regular basis to see if they are still the right questions or if they need refinement.

DOCUMENTATION TOOLS

The list of tools below is by no means complete but it gives some ideas for what can be used to plan and gather information.

Before Beginning the Project

Make a record of the original ideas about the project, who applied for the grant, why, etc. Your application is a source of this information. These early records are important because the project will likely grow and change during its course, and you will want to compare early ideas with how the project develops over time.

Record your exploration question and any possible sub-questions. Consider the exploration question an "essential question": the question that best reflects what the community would like to explore as a result of receiving this grant. This essential question is like an umbrella for other sub-questions.

Main Exploration Question	
Sub-question	
Sub-question	
Sub-question	

Information Gathering

A **Cultural Inventory or Cultural Needs Assessment** project tool is available in the *Artists in Communities* page on SK Arts' website. It can help you assess assets and needs related to culture in your community.

The table below provides suggestions for how project partners might gather a variety of information and the questions to be answered before proceeding. Pick and choose depending on needs.

Community Meeting	What do you want to know? Who will you invite? How will you invite people? Who will chair? Who will record? What process will you use at the meeting to explore your questions and ensure participation? How will you follow up with people who attend?
Advisory or focus groups	What do you want to know? What groups can advise on your questions? Who will chair each focus group? Who will record? How will you follow up?
Surveys	What do you want to know? Who will design the survey? What is your distribution audience? How will you collate the information you get on the survey? How will you conduct the survey? How will you follow up with respondents?

Information Gathering *(continued)*

Research of existing information	What do you want to know? Who will do the research? How will you collate the findings?
Interviewing key people in the community	What do you want to know? What are your key questions for these people? Who will consult with them? How will you follow up with them?
Artist Records	How will the artist keep track of his/her own reflections during the project?
Other	Look at your exploration question and sub-questions, and make sure you have addressed them through your information gathering processes. If not, what other means can you use to get the information you need?
Other	Look at the diversity within your community and make sure you have included ways of information gathering that will be widely accessible. Is there any group in your community that will not be reached through your planned means of information gathering? If so, what other means can you use, or how can you adapt one of the above means to serve this group?

Documenting Participation

Document public participation and interactions with the artist at all stages of the project, both process and product:

- Photographs
- Video
- Feedback forms
- Records of discussion

Reflection After the Project

The documentation you have kept should now allow project partners to answer questions such as the following. This reflection may be incorporated into your final report to SK Arts.

What did you do to make sense of and reflect on your information?	
Who was involved in the analysis of the information?	
Did the information gathered help you answer your exploration and sub-questions? What were your conclusions?	
What will you now do to act on the information you gathered?	
What new questions do you now have?	
What are your final reflections?	

Tell Your Story

"Telling your story" is a way of sharing the project through narrative, visuals, scrapbook, installation, performance, etc. The story of the project can be shared in many different forms using the documentary material collected as a basis. The point is to help others understand what you believe is the true impact of the project. Artists may want to contribute comments about what they learned as well. The story, however you choose to tell it, may become part of your final report to SK Arts.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
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