

Nonprofit Arts Development Guide



How To Conduct A Basic Community Arts And Cultural Inventory

Sunday April 24, 2022

It has become increasingly evident to city planners and community development specialists that artists, art organizations and cultural institutions make a strong contribution to the image and vitality of community life. As a result, arts and culture has become an important component in community planning. Therefore, before a community develops a cultural plan, or a new arts organization is formed, it is important to conduct a basic arts and cultural resource inventory. By identifying local or regional cultural assets, the community can focus on its own resources that enable the development of a comprehensive community or cultural plan, cultural heritage tourism., or arts programming. Consider these five basic steps for identifying your arts and cultural assets.

1. **Start with a small committee to plan the arts and cultural inventory process.**

Convene a diverse cross section of community citizens to provide names of artists, arts educators, cultural organizations, places and events, and other resources that make up the cultural fabric of the community. Consider having a facilitator to help guide the session.

2. **Identify your arts and cultural assets:** Community citizens brainstorm and list the community's arts and cultural assets. Place the arts and cultural survey form on a community website or in the local newspaper.

3. **Assign a community benefit that each resource serves.** Some resources may offer more than one benefit. Example: The local arts guild hosts a series of exhibits in downtown spaces throughout the year and also provides arts instruction to adults and youth. Community benefits would be a, d, and e from the list below. Community benefits may include:

- a. Enhance community livability
- b. Contributes to Economic Development
- c. Arts and Cultural Tourism Resource
- d. Contributes to Downtown Revitalization
- e. Arts Education Resource.

4. **Record, publicize and document the results of your cultural inventory.**

You will be surprised by the number of resources your community will identify!

Examples of community arts and cultural resources

- Artists: Visual Artists, Fine Crafts, Theatre Artists, Writers, Dancers, Musicians
- Teachers of Music, Art/Media/Design, Theatre, Dance, Literature
- Folk and Traditional Arts: traditional/ethnic music dance and crafts, traditional foodways, occupational crafts. (Examples of traditional arts: quilts, baskets, beadwork, cowboy poets, saddle makers, metal smiths, storytellers, folkdance)
- Traditional Elders
- Architects/Architecture
- Design Specialists
- Galleries and/or Exhibition Spaces
- Art Museums
- Performance Spaces
- Local Art & Humanities Councils
- Arts Organizations
- Community Theaters
- Artists' Spaces and Studios, Dance Studios
- Folklorists/Humanities Scholars
- Arts and Cultural Festivals
- Community Orchestras and Bands
- Choral Societies
- Church Musicians and Choirs
- Youth and Adult Arts Workshops
- Gathering Places for Cultural Activities: bookstore, coffee house, restaurant, community center, churches, etc.
- Universities and Colleges
- Libraries
- History Museums and Historical Societies
- Municipal Parks
- Arts Supply Shops