

# *OurStoryBridge:* *Connecting the Past and the Present*

*User Guide* to Plan, Prepare, and Implement  
Your OurStoryBridge Partner Project



**OURSTORYBRIDGE**  
Connecting the Past and the Present

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***OurStoryBridge: Connecting the Past and the Present***  
***User Guide to Plan, Prepare, and Implement Your OurStoryBridge Partner Project***

This *User Guide*, which can be printed, is intended to serve as an instructional reference as you consider launching and realizing an OurStoryBridge Partner Project. Its copious detail will help you to capture, retain, communicate, and publicize the stories that make your community or organization unique – in a manner fitting the 21st century.

Be sure to visit [www.ourstorybridge.org](http://www.ourstorybridge.org) for *User Guide* updates and supplementary training materials, such as How-To Videos and Sample Documents. Together, these will help you to facilitate the creation of your own OurStoryBridge project.

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## Note on Terminology

**Partner Projects** sponsor community-based online oral history projects using the adaptable OurStoryBridge methodology. They collect and share **short-form oral histories** coupled to scrolling photos, creating miniplayers shared freely via embed/HTML codes on their websites. Each Partner Project has signed a Project Participant Agreement with OurStoryBridge and is using our methodology contained herein.

OurStoryBridge deploys the following terms interchangeably: **short-form oral histories, oral histories, stories, audio stories, personal narratives, digital stories, brief audio stories.** We emphasize the three- to five-minute format for all oral histories using our methodology.

## Disclaimer

The information provided in this *User Guide* is offered in good faith and believed to be reliable. It is provided for informational purposes only and not intended to provide specific advice.

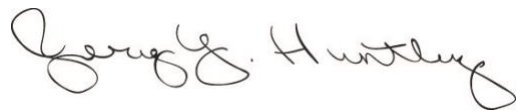
Third-party Tools: The OurStoryBridge tool kit may mention products and services offered by third parties (“third-party tools”). OurStoryBridge cannot and does not guarantee the continued availability of any such service features, and is not obligated to provide you with any refund, credit, or other compensation, if the provider of a third-party tool ceases to make the tool available. To the extent OurStoryBridge provides information about third-party tools here or elsewhere in our materials we do so for your convenience only. OurStoryBridge does not endorse or make any representations about the third-party tools. If you elect to use any third-party tools in connection with your project, you do so at your own risk. You should review applicable terms and policies, including privacy and data gathering practices, of any third-party tools, and make whatever investigation you feel necessary or appropriate before proceeding with use of such tools. Your use or purchase of any third-party tool, and any exchange of data between you and the provider of any such tool, is solely between you and the applicable provider. OurStoryBridge does not warrant or support any third-party tool. OurStoryBridge is not responsible for any disclosure, modification or deletion of your data resulting from access by any third-party tool or its provider.

## Foreword

We know this Third Edition of the OurStoryBridge User Guide will prove especially helpful because it offers you not just the benefit of our experience; it presents updates that were inspired by the questions and comments from communities who have read the User Guide, made their decisions to move forward, and created and shared their unique Partner Projects. In the pages that follow, you will find a more realistic, condensed timeframe for planning your Partner Project, updated budget details reflective of the experiences of recently launched new projects, added graphics, referenced details on Memria data and security, clarification around the availability of free transcripts, a new podcast resource, and more. We also left out details of low priority and those we discovered are more nuanced to individual Partner Projects.

We encourage all OurStoryBridge Partner Projects to lean on our experience and resources to get started and then to shape projects to meet their own needs and goals. We continue to think of OurStoryBridge as the loom on which the fabric of public memory comes together. Each story, each thread binds the fabric tighter and more deeply, creating intricate linkages between individuals, groups, organizations, events, environments, locals, and your unique community. Stories remind us of where we have been and inspire us toward where we can go. They inform, heal, and connect.

Get started now — and be sure to share your experiences with planning, preparing, and implementing your OurStoryBridge Partner Projects at [createyourstoryproject@gmail.com](mailto:createyourstoryproject@gmail.com).



## Acknowledgments

When OurStoryBridge was released on September 29, 2020, at the annual conference of the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL), I had strong doubts that anyone would be interested in my “pandemic project.” I’m so glad I was wrong! Over 400 librarians listened to the first presentations and hundreds more have followed since, participating in hundreds of subsequent presentations over the past four years.

The efforts of these curious librarians, museum staff, historians, educators, nonprofit organizers, grantors, and government leaders have made OurStoryBridge what it has grown to be today with over 40 Partner Projects in 15 states... and what it is quickly growing into tomorrow. Thank you all. And thank you especially to those communities who have already launched or are in the process of launching their very own Partner Projects. It has been my pleasure to have the opportunity to know you and to work with you.

We also couldn’t have imagined that when Adirondack Community was launched in 2019 in the rural Town of Keene, New York, it would become the national model for OurStoryBridge. Using 21st-century media (and being cognizant of the short attention spans of today), we thought we were starting an innovative short-form digital story project to protect our own community’s history and inspire our local students to become active citizens. It is wonderful to have now extended this opportunity across the country!

Thank you to the Keene Valley Library who originally sponsored us. We owe unending gratitude to friends and neighbors in the Town of Keene. You are the foundation of this project, sharing your ancestor’s stories and those of your families today. Your stories hold laughter, tears, frustration, love, and many surprises; they confirm the unique history of the High Peaks Region of the Adirondacks. Bravo!

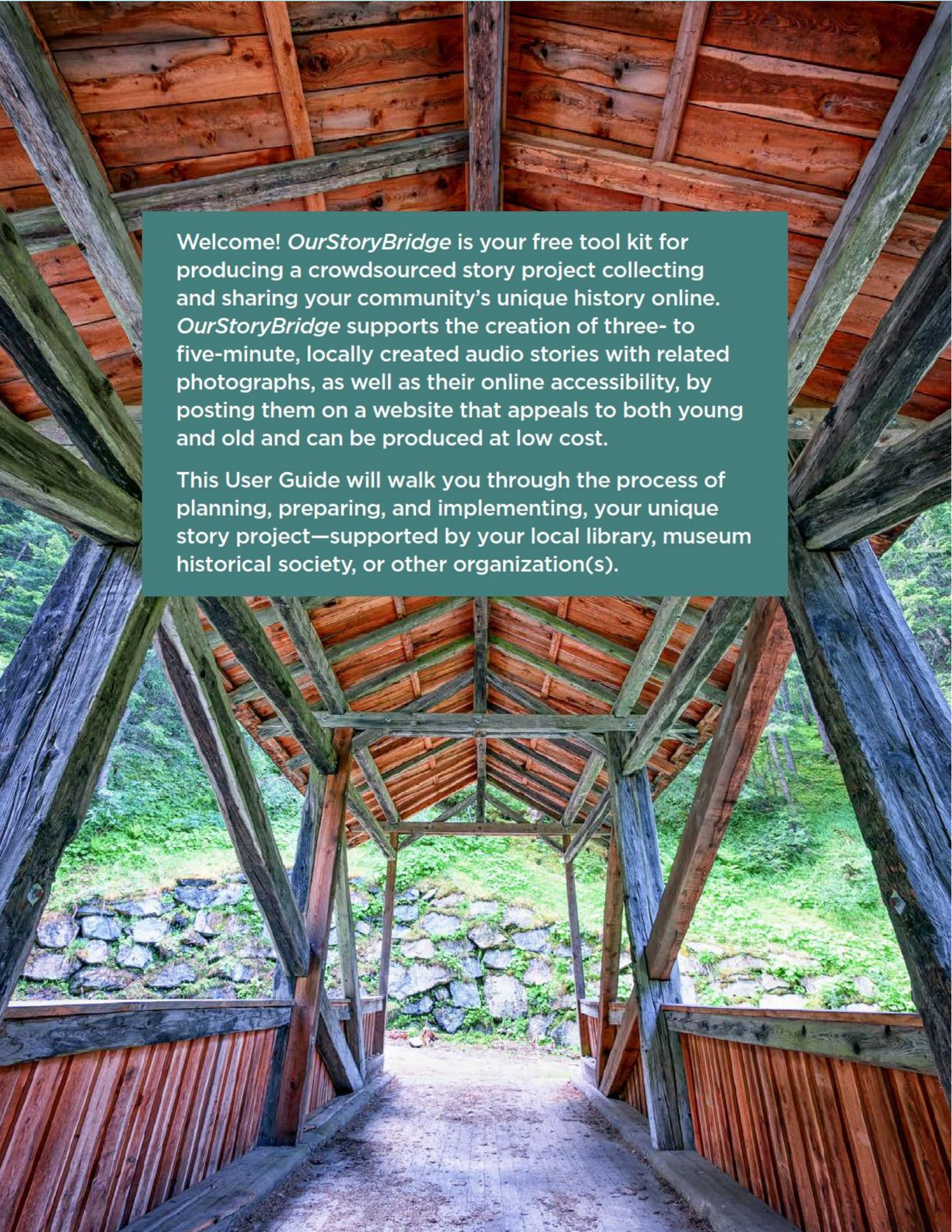
In 2022 OurStoryBridge became a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit and continues today providing free tools and resources for Partner Projects nationwide. And we now provide even more intensive training, facilitation, and troubleshooting for our grant-funded Partner Projects.

My hallmarks of process, patience, and persistence continue to pay off. As I lead our work as a full-time volunteer, there are many team members to thank for their part in our success! Our Board of Directors has kept us grounded and guided our path. Support from Janelle A. Schwartz, PhD, on writing, strategic thinking, and grants, and from Kelly Bartlett, MSIS, on Partner Project coordination and marketing, are

invaluable to our efforts. Volunteers, including teachers and students from across the country, kindly assist as well, helping to update our free Teacher's Guide among other assignments. Louis Bickford, Founder and CEO of Memria, created the platform we use for stories, and Jason Wallace constructs our websites. In addition, I want to thank the University at Albany for providing OurStoryBridge with future librarians as interns on this project.

We also couldn't do all that we do without the foundations, grantors, and organizations who have funded us from the start of Adirondack Community, including Humanities New York, the Northern New York Library Network, Cloudsplitter Foundation, Adirondack Foundation, Glenn and Carol Pearsall Adirondack Foundation, J.M. McDonald Foundation, Givinga, Harry Chapin Foundation, and Essex County Arts Council, as well as pro bono legal assistance from Cooley.

And of course we are grateful for the support of all of our donors. Your tax-deductible donations help sustain and grow OurStoryBridge. You can be sure that whatever you are able to give will serve to lift up the voices of communities across the country, bring old and young generations together, celebrate diversity, and engender collective kindness. Please donate today at [www.ourstorybridge.org](http://www.ourstorybridge.org). Thank you.

The image shows the interior of a rustic wooden structure, possibly a covered walkway or a small building. The ceiling is made of horizontal wooden planks, and the walls are also made of wood. The structure is supported by several thick, weathered wooden posts. The floor is made of wooden planks. In the background, there is a stone wall and a view of a lush green forest. A semi-transparent green rectangular box is overlaid on the upper part of the image, containing white text.

Welcome! *OurStoryBridge* is your free tool kit for producing a crowdsourced story project collecting and sharing your community's unique history online. *OurStoryBridge* supports the creation of three- to five-minute, locally created audio stories with related photographs, as well as their online accessibility, by posting them on a website that appeals to both young and old and can be produced at low cost.

This User Guide will walk you through the process of planning, preparing, and implementing, your unique story project—supported by your local library, museum historical society, or other organization(s).



## I. Introduction to OurStoryBridge: Connecting the Past and the Present

### What is OurStoryBridge?

Driven by the success of Adirondack Community: Capturing, Retaining, and Communicating the Stories of Who We Are ([www.myadirondackstory.org](http://www.myadirondackstory.org)), the initial Partner Project sponsored by the Keene Valley Library (Keene Valley, NY), OurStoryBridge brings into focus all the moving parts needed to make your Partner Project a similar success.

Given our experience building Adirondack Community and dozens of subsequent Partner Projects, we know OurStoryBridge can help you and your community connect past and present generations and link these generations to those that will follow, building a bridge to the future! Use OurStoryBridge for educational purposes in your local school or for community involvement and enrichment activities at your library, museum, historical society, community center, issue-oriented organization, and more. Listen as you sit at home or in your car. The opportunities are endless and diverse. And, of course, you can deploy OurStoryBridge for the pure enjoyment of preserving and sharing inspiring stories from across the country.

Everything that follows in this *User Guide* is based on Adirondack Community and the other Partner Projects built on that proven model. We use that first launch and continued operations as the outline to help instruct you on how to develop your own Partner Project tailored to your community or organization's unique history. OurStoryBridge creates, hosts, and shares resources to grow more Partner Projects region-wide, state-wide, and beyond. We streamline project execution by offering a suggested timetable for planning, preparing, and implementing; recommendations for staff needs; budget and fundraising suggestions; advice and procedures to recruit storytellers and secure their stories, including technology recommendations; advice for forming collaborations both internal and external to your community; and plans for how to market, celebrate, and sustain your Partner Project.

In addition to this *User Guide*, we invite you to use our supplementary training materials,  [How-To Videos](#) and  [Sample Documents](#), to get you started and keep you going. We can provide you with additional direct assistance via Zoom, telephone, email, and in-person meetings. Our work is dependent on funding, but substantial services are supplied by volunteers.

OurStoryBridge was originally a project of the Keene Valley Library, and since 2022 OurStoryBridge Inc. is an independent 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit as determined

by the IRS. The mission of OurStoryBridge Inc. is to be a resource and tool kit for OurStoryBridge projects that preserve and circulate local audio stories past and present through accessible online media; to promote, build, and assist with the deployment of these resources in communities across geographic, cultural, socioeconomic, racial, and organizational strata; and to help strengthen these communities through sharing of their stories, including preserving the stories of older generations before they are lost and encouraging younger generations to become engaged community members.

As stated in our vision, OurStoryBridge empowers every community to cultivate connection across the generations, encourage civic engagement, celebrate diversity, and engender shared and durable kindness.

We urge you to lean on our experience and resources to get you started, and then to innovate on and intuit the process that best fits your needs. Current OurStoryBridge Partner Projects are listed on [www.ourstorybridge.org](http://www.ourstorybridge.org), and you can contact them for advice as well. We would love to hear back about what worked for you, so we can share it with future OurStoryBridge adopters!

## **A Brief History of Adirondack Community**

**See  [OurStoryBridge: Engaging Folklore in the Digital Age](#)**

Adirondack Community: Capturing the Stories of Who We Are is a multi-year local Partner Project that collects and organizes three-to five-minute audio stories with related photos from Town of Keene community members through an online platform to share the rich social and cultural history of this community located in New York State's Adirondack Mountains.

Adirondack Community launched on June 15, 2019, after almost two years of preparation and planning. As of the writing of this manual, storytellers have contributed over 300 three-to five-minute stories with associated photos sourced from personal collections and/or the Keene Valley Library Archives. The total number of unique visitors to the project website quickly exceeded the total town population of 1,100 and is now over 10,000, and continues to increase daily. Compiled around common themes, individual stories are also developed into 30 podcasts to extend the listening experience. And collaborations have been established between Adirondack Community and several local and regional organizations, including but not limited to Keene Central School, Keene Historical Society, Keene Public Library, the Northern New York Library Network, Adirondack Experience: The Museum on Blue Mountain Lake, the Adirondack History Museum, Mountain Lake PBS, and North Country Public Radio.

The two primary goals of Adirondack Community are 1) to capture the rich cultural history of the High Peaks region of the Adirondacks, with a focus on recording older generations before their histories are lost, and 2) to build civic pride and engagement among the student population to encourage their growth as involved community members. Adirondack Community became the talk of town within its first six months of operation, with people stopping us on the street and on the trails to talk about their own stories, those of their friends and neighbors, and to suggest additional storytellers. People often speak about what brought them to the Keene area and why they stayed, or about the spiritual or environmental or community force that pulled them in and held them tight, for example. Word-of-mouth was and is a powerful tool to build the collection. Likewise, easy to use resources such as the [SchoolStoryBridge Curriculum](#) resulted in these and other stories being integrated into the 8 -12 Keene Central School curriculum and students are telling their own stories. Beyond our local school, stories are also being used in schools of all levels, such as college curricula at Paul Smith's College through the use of the *Teacher's Guide* (which will be explored in more depth in [Section VII: Collaborations](#)).

To support our primary goals, we emphasize free and unlimited access to our stories by posting them on an open website. Using this digital platform helps to modernize library resources, offering as it does a fresh complement to the physical archive and allowing us to meet our audience in the medium and on the devices they prefer. Short-form audio stories of up to five minutes each are coupled to curated photo arrays, making engagement immediate, captivating, and shareable. In short, the Adirondack Community Partner Project brings the stories from the Town of Keene, NY direct to audiences near and far... and OurStoryBridge can help you to do the same for the unique stories in your community!

## II. Why You Should Consider OurStoryBridge

We all have a story to tell, many stories. Life is a narrative, woven out of experience and emotion. Think of an OurStoryBridge Partner Project as the loom on which the fabric of your community's narrative comes together. Each thread, each story binds the fabric tighter and tighter, creating intricate linkages between individuals, groups, organizations, events, environments, locales, and more. In other words, OurStoryBridge offers a user-friendly framework on which to mount your Partner Project; but the shape this project takes and the content it captures and communicates remain yours to construct. We want to help. We offer a responsive and flexible methodology within the context of 21st-century media and our markedly shrinking attention spans. OurStoryBridge will guide you through how to collect the nuanced histories of your community, to preserve its stories and pass their characteristic wisdom from mouth to ear by going digital.

Some potential benefits and impacts that an OurStoryBridge Partner Project can have on your community are:

- Preserve stories that may be lost if not recorded soon and honor the legacies of elders by capturing stories in their own words.
- Appreciate the history that shaped your community or organization that helps make it what it is today and what it can become tomorrow.
- Create closer bonds and promote connections that lead to acts of kindness, assistance, and support in times of need.
- Educate local residents or members of your organization while inspiring them to become more engaged and interested in contributing to your efforts.
- Cultivate what makes your community unique, perhaps even famous.
- Reveal pockets of rich histories and connections heretofore unknown or not widely known.
- Acknowledge the catastrophes, tragedies, or difficult moments that have created change.
- Appreciate how the geography and the economics of your area impact how your community members live.
- Unravel the puzzle of how and why places like streets, stores, clubs, and other institutions came to be.
- Reflect upon and share the diversity of your community.
- Reignite a passion for archives and/or previously recorded oral histories by transferring some onto this new digital platform.
- Use the stories of your community to focus on the issues that are important to your organization's development activities.
- Bring your past and present to a wider world through the use of stories in schools.
- Help students engage with primary sources and find their own voices through listening to and telling their own stories.
- Leverage today's shorter attention spans with oral histories of three- to five-minutes each to build up the interest and engagement of your audience.
- Meet your audience where they are: online!

How else might an OurStoryBridge Partner Project impact your community? The many positive, enriching, and empowering possibilities are unlimited!

## **OurStoryBridge and Oral History Best Practices**

The OurStoryBridge methodology aligns with the [Oral History Association \(OHA\) Best Practices](#) on how to conduct high-quality oral history interviews.

OurStoryBridge was designed by a librarian whose training facilitated the archival and people-oriented aspects of such interviews.

## Testimonials for OurStoryBridge

*“At Keene Central School we have used Adirondack Community stories in the classroom to enhance our lessons with this amazing collection and to provide students with firsthand historical knowledge, including models of local civic engagement.” — **Brad Hurlburt***

*“I love this project and think of it as a balm and a community builder for our times, an amazing educational resource, carrying rich historical value.” — **Janelle Schwartz***

*“On cold winter evenings in our harsh Adirondack climate, I often felt very sad about COVID, so I’d listen to stories on Adirondack Community and hear about people in this community helping each other through multiple disasters and challenges. The stories warmed my heart and helped me get through the COVID winter.” — **Debby Rice***

*“The project has been important for our community because when you hear stories from people you see in the community, but don’t know much about them and their connection, we find out that we all are connected somehow. That is the true meaning of community! It draws us all closer!” — **Bethany Pelkey***

*“Working with OurStoryBridge has allowed the Chenango County Historical Society (CCHS) to accomplish our mission in dynamic new ways! By expanding partnerships and extending community engagement, we are able to more fully explore the culture of Chenango County through the preservation and presentation of our local heritage.” — **Jessica Moquin***

*“This project has been a pleasure from the beginning. Working with members of the community to record stories is a very rewarding experience. I love learning information about our community from local storytellers and learning new information about our community. We’ve recorded stories from a certified frog watcher (yes, there is such a thing!), to a lady who attended 6th grade in the 1940s when some students in town were sent to one-room schoolhouses because of the overcrowded school system at the time. It is a wonderful feeling to see a storyteller’s facial expression change from apprehensive to delighted after he/she finishes a story.” — **Shari Merrill***

*“I enjoyed telling my story for ADK Voices and appreciate how my story is preserved for me and others to look back at in the future.” — **Erin Sheffield***

*"The story project keeps the history of our small town alive and accessible. The older residents of the town have recorded eyewitness accounts of important events that happened 60, 70 years ago, and memories of the people who were born in the 1800s. The younger ones have memorialized more recent ones, knowing themselves to be links in the chain of generations that bind this community together."* — **Henrietta Jordan**

*"It has allowed people to remember treasures from their past that center around the Adirondacks. For me, it has renewed bonds within my extended family."* — **Norm Reynolds**

*"It preserves memories that might otherwise be lost."* — **David Thomas-Train**

*"OurStoryBridge weaves together the many different threads of our community's history into one beautiful tapestry that is ever expanding"* — **Katherine Brown**

*"OurStoryBridge is a great way to share the history of the Underground Railroad focusing on the positive activities of people who stood up for the freedom of everyone. It offers individuals a way of learning that is not intrusive."* — **Jackie Madison**

*"I met with people I've known for years and through their stories, saw new sides of them. The most important lesson I've learned from OurStoryBridge is that everyone has a story to tell, you just have to ask to hear it."* — **Rosemary Crowley**

*"Every story is like a bit of treasure gathered for safe-keeping; recording these stories is laying up treasure for our future generations."* — **A.J. Gooden**

*"OurStoryBridge has given me the opportunity to expand my role at the Old Stone Fort and share my story. Since I began this project I have learned more about Schoharie County's history and developed a stronger connection within the community."* — **Clay Edmunds**

*"At Academy of the Sacred Heart in New Orleans, we are using the OurStoryBridge methodology to bring history to life; promoting the investigation of the world with intellectual curiosity and cultural literacy; recognizing and valuing diverse perspectives; and communicating with agility. OurStoryBridge inspires everyone involved--the storytellers, the listeners, our faculty and students, and, of course, the New Orleans community. I love that it is preserving our history and culture while also building empathy."* — **Soline Holmes**

*"OurStoryBridge has allowed our community to know and hear each other during a time of isolation. Not only is the support you receive unbeatable, but the User Guide and videos make it unbelievably easy! We are looking forward to more stories from our community for years to come."* — **Debby Carter**

*"It gives us a sense of togetherness, and allows us to express our feeling that the community is important. More importantly, it conserves our history."* — **William Reed**

### III. Frequently Asked Questions

#### **How does an OurStoryBridge Partner Project help a community?**

Bringing an OurStoryBridge project to your community represents an appreciation of the history that shaped it. This is a celebration of what makes it what it is today, and what it can become tomorrow. There may be closer bonds between residents and connections that lead to neighborly acts of kindness, assistance, and support in times of need. Stories that could be lost as residents age will be preserved and younger generations will begin to appreciate their heritage. These are among the many potential benefits.

See [Section II: Why You Should Consider OurStoryBridge](#)

#### **How can community members help an OurStoryBridge Partner Project?**

Community members can immediately help by participating in focus groups to brainstorm relevant categories of stories and potential storytellers. They can volunteer to collect stories themselves, tell stories early on in the project's implementation, as well as help execute the project's logistics. They can help continuously to recruit storytellers and create buzz and positive momentum around the project, in order to expand its reach exponentially. You should solicit community members for funding recommendations, even asking appropriate people for donations. If your community has a newsletter or bulletin board (analog or digital), they can help you post information that can be widely shared. Ask your community members to share social media posts to help spread information about the Partner Project.

#### **What types of organizations can run OurStoryBridge Partner Projects?**

Libraries, museums, historical societies, and issue-oriented nonprofit organizations are the most obvious sponsors for your Partner Project, but any organization, for example, profit-based, nonprofit, government, or educational, can run an OurStoryBridge Partner Project. Some nonprofits with chapters collect stories posted on one website to educate about their work and promote their organization. The possibilities are endless!

See [Section VII: Collaborations](#)

#### **Why should I use the OurStoryBridge methodology vs. traditional oral histories?**

Differing from long-format traditional oral histories, OurStoryBridge offers a responsive and flexible methodology suited for 21st-century media and our markedly shrinking attention spans. OurStoryBridge's free online tool kit and resources guide you through how to collect the nuanced histories of your community through brief three-to five-minute audio stories coupled to scrolling photos, creating miniplayers

shared freely via embed/HTML codes on your website. These easy to digest personal narratives are retained in an online format that is accessible to both young and old.

The OurStoryBridge methodology aligns with the [Oral History Association \(OHA\) Best Practices](#) on how to conduct high-quality oral history interviews.

OurStoryBridge was designed by a librarian whose training facilitated the archival and people-oriented aspects of that methodology.

### **Why do I need a dedicated website for my Partner Project?**

We recommend a separate website to post your stories, which can be linked to your organization's primary website. This serves as a designated home for your oral histories, keeping your primary website focused. You should link your Partner Project website to your primary website and to any others that will help it gain visibility. This will also help you to gather metrics on the success and reach of your Partner Project. See [Section VIII: Hardware and Software](#)

### **How long does it take to set up an OurStoryBridge Partner Project?**

Launching an OurStoryBridge project typically takes six to nine months, from the initial planning and preparation phase through to the implementation phase. You can expect to collect, produce, and share your first stories within this timeframe.

See [Section IV: Suggested Timetable for Planning, Preparation, and Implementation](#)

### **What are the most frequent categories for stories collected?**

Story categories are designed to be reflective of the unique community from which individual stories are collected. Focus groups can help to determine these categories. Keep in mind that a story can be posted in more than one category. Consider visiting the [OurStoryBridge Stories](#) page on our website to view other projects and the categories they have created.

See [Section XI: Communications, Marketing, and Public Relations \(CMP\)](#)

### **How are storytellers recruited?**

The most effective recruitment tool is word-of-mouth, as well as in-person communication at events and locations throughout the community. Following up these interactions with emails, texts, and/or calls to schedule storytelling sessions works well. Getting Board members and important members of your community to tell initial stories, then commit to recruiting others, is important. The *Storyteller Worksheet* is used to log potential storytellers and record their involvement and serves as a live document to recruit storytellers. Likewise, a variety of marketing efforts can create awareness of your Partner Project by sending people to the project's website, which in turn demonstrates the impact of stories collected.

See [Section IX: Recruitment of Storytellers](#)

### **How long does it take to record and publish a story?**

Recording one story takes three to five minutes. However, there are other steps to account for, such as recruiting the storyteller, working with them to prepare and practice their story, obtaining photos, reviewing, publishing, and posting the story. This entire process can take up to 60 to 90 minutes in total, but is usually shorter, and can be stretched over several days. For repeat storytellers it usually takes no more than 30 minutes total.

See [Section X: Collecting, Processing, and Posting Stories](#)

### **What are the personnel needs of an OurStoryBridge Partner Project?**

Personnel recommendations are just that, recommendations. Each OurStoryBridge project will vary in personnel dedicated to the project, dependent upon use of paid staff, volunteers and consultants, speed of story collection, funds available, etc. Jobs can be combined, and several people can collect stories, as long as they are carefully trained and monitored, and processes are in place for coordination, e.g., use a shared Google calendar with storytelling sessions scheduled and storytellers assigned by color. The *Sample Personnel Responsibilities Chart* provided in this *User Guide* presents a sample breakdown of the core team with their roles and responsibilities. In any case, one person should review all stories before publication. Note that personnel needs are generally reduced after the first year a Partner Project is online.

See [Section V: Personnel](#)

### **What technical expertise do the Primary Contact and Story Aide need?**

You will find that most of the technology and procedures are intuitive, with the majority on now-commonplace platforms such as Gmail, Google Drive, and Microsoft Office Suite. Other platforms for recording and posting stories, creating podcasts, etc. have their own online tools to assist you. This *OurStoryBridge User Guide* provides ample detail to help you, and to place the technical needs of the project into context.

See [Section VIII: Hardware and Software](#)

### **Is it important to pursue collaborations?**

Forming collaborations, both internal and external to your community, can help you to raise and sustain funding, increase the number of storytellers, assist in the obtaining of photos, increase website traffic, find volunteers, and provide any number of opportunities to maximize the project.

See [Section VII: Collaborations](#)

### **What is the Teacher's Guide?**

The Teacher's Guide is a collaboration between OurStoryBridge and its Partner Projects. It is updated frequently to add the latest stories and podcasts from across the country, categorized by subject and with hyperlinks to each story. Educators and librarians can engage their students in the media that compels them, enhancing the learning experience. The [SchoolStoryBridge Curriculum](#) is a great resource to share with teachers for collaborations on student storytelling.

See [Section VII: Collaborations](#)

### **How is privacy protected for storytellers under 18?**

To protect their privacy, storytellers under the age of 18 should not give their names. Additionally, no photos will be used. These storytellers will need to have their Parent or Guardian complete the [Sample Parent Guardian Permission Form](#), which the Partner Project should retain in the Google Folder for the specific story.

### **How do I access the OurStoryBridge User Guide and its supplemental training materials, How-To Videos, and Sample Documents?**

Our full suite of tools can be found at [www.ourstorybridge.org](http://www.ourstorybridge.org).

### **What is the cost of an OurStoryBridge Partner Project?**

There is no set cost for an OurStoryBridge project. Estimated costs for informational purposes only, can be found in this *User Guide*. Your budget depends on use of staff, volunteer, and consultant services available and chosen marketing methods.

See [Section VI: Budgeting, Grants, and Fundraising](#)

### **How is an OurStoryBridge Partner Project funded?**

Partner Projects source their own funding. Your organization may include financial support of your community's Partner Project in their budget. Grants have proven to be especially helpful in setting up and sustaining projects. Nonprofit organizations, libraries, historical societies, local governments, foundations, local businesses, corporations with local presence, educational institutions, media outlets, and individual donors can also be solicited for funding. Use your community network to brainstorm creative funding ideas and opportunities. OurStoryBridge can guide you to services which can help you apply for grants.

See [Section VI: Budgeting, Grants, and Fundraising](#)

### **Are storytellers paid for their stories?**

No. This is a volunteer effort. On a related note: storytellers who may be wary of participating or especially nervous consistently complete their storytelling sessions by saying, "This was fun; I have to tell my friends!"

### **Are stories protected by copyright?**

The copyright to the full story as recorded belongs to the storyteller and they can have the story removed as they wish. The Partner Project is given rights by the storyteller (in Memria) to edit, publish, and share the story, and use the storyteller's full name (or choose to be anonymous). Additionally, the storyteller (in Memria) gives further rights allowing Memria.Org, a project of VoxBox, Inc., and OurStoryBridge Inc. and any third party authorized by them to edit, publish, and share the story.

See [Section X: Collecting, Processing, and Posting Stories](#)

### **What are the technology and service provider needs for an OurStoryBridge project?**

The OurStoryBridge *User Guide* describes specific vendors, software, and services for informational purposes only.

See [Section VIII: Hardware and Software](#)

### **What if I want to take a story but don't have access to WiFi or a computer?**

If you find yourself ready to collect a story and don't have access to a computer or WiFi, consider using an app on your phone like Voice Memos. After recording the story you'll easily be able to upload the audio onto Memria. If you do this, be sure to have a hard copy of the [Memria Permissions Form](#) available, or the storyteller's contact information to send the form, and make sure it's completed before publishing the story in Memria. You can find the form in the [Sample Documents](#) section of our website. You will file the form in the Google Folder related to the story.

### **Can individual storytellers record and submit their own stories?**

Absolutely! The OurStoryBridge *User Guide* outlines how to accomplish through self-recorded stories.

See [Section X: Collecting, Processing, and Posting Stories](#)

### **Can the entire story collection be backed up? What should be backed up?**

Although Memria has a secure backup process, we recommend that you backup your Google Drive and stories in Memria at least annually. Also go to [Memria Data and Security Information](#) for additional details.

See Backups in [Section VIII. Hardware and Software](#)

### **If a Memria subscription is terminated, what happens to the stories?**

Per Memria, “Once a client’s subscription ends, published stories continue to be available through their Public Stories Page. Any miniplayers embedded on the client’s website will cease to display. Clients will no longer be able to log into their accounts to access unpublished stories or collect additional stories.”

Go to [Memria Data and Security Information](#) for additional details.

### **How important is marketing to the success of an OurStoryBridge project?**

Very important! The suggestions for communications, marketing, and public relations presented in the OurStoryBridge *User Guide* are extensive. Be sure to adapt this information to the availability of personnel resources in your community and for your Partner Project, and to the opportunities/venues for sharing the collected stories.

See [Section XI: Communications, Marketing, and Public Relations \(CMP\)](#)

### **How can I learn about current OurStoryBridge Partner Projects?**

Check the OurStoryBridge website at [www.ourstorybridge.org](http://www.ourstorybridge.org) for links to new projects as they are released, with sample stories.

### **Does an OurStoryBridge project have an end point?**

As you plan your project, you should be creating a sustainability plan for the future of your project. Minimal funding is required to continue a Partner Project after its first year. As an historical resource, it is hoped that each local Partner Project continues as long as possible.

### **Can I get additional help outside of the online resources?**

If you need additional support beyond the OurStoryBridge *User Guide* and training materials, we invite you to contact us at [createyourstoryproject@gmail.com](mailto:createyourstoryproject@gmail.com). We can provide direct assistance via telephone, email, Zoom, and in-person meetings. Our work is dependent on funding, but substantial services are supplied by volunteers.

### **How can I help support OurStoryBridge?**

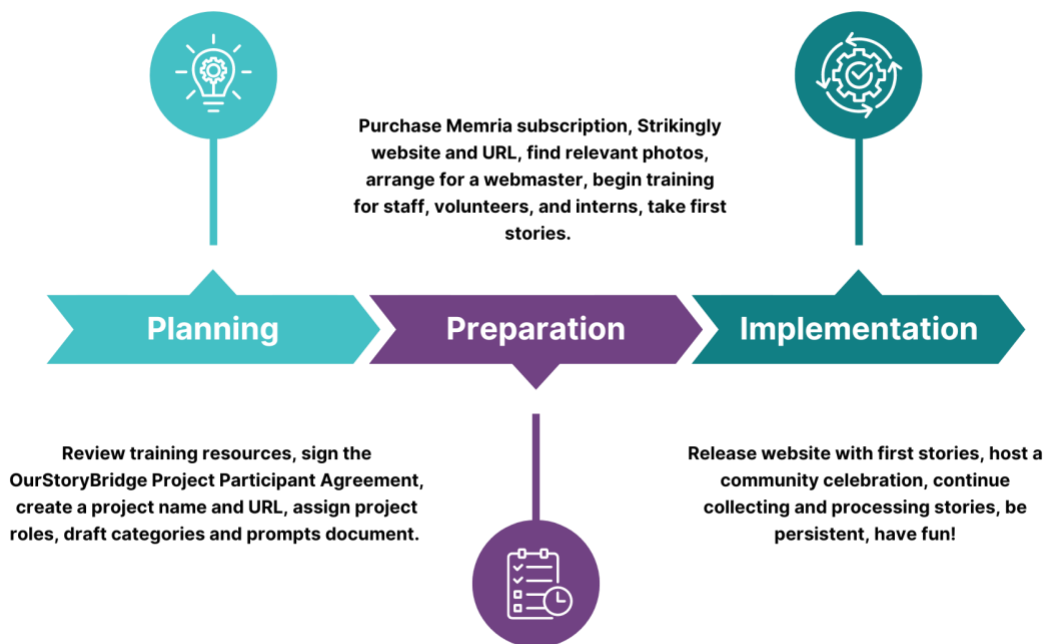
In 2022 OurStoryBridge became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, supported by donations and grants. The OurStoryBridge tools and resources are free, and OurStoryBridge is available to help you; however, we appreciate [donations](#) from Partner Projects who use our services, which can be made via the OurStoryBridge website.



## IV. Suggested Timetable for Planning, Preparation, and Implementation

Launching an OurStoryBridge project typically takes six to nine months, from the “planning phase” through the “preparation phase” to the “implementation phase.” You can expect to collect, process, publish, and share your first stories within this timeframe, or even more quickly.

We recommend that you adapt this task list into your own action plan.



**Note:** Specific guidance on the steps below can be found throughout this *User Guide*.

## 1 - 3 Months: Planning Phase

1. Review [www.ourstorybridge.org](http://www.ourstorybridge.org), for the *User Guide*, How-To Videos, and Sample Documents.
2. Sign the OurStoryBridge Project Participation Agreement and receive the OurStoryBridge Project Logo.
3. Prepare an action plan for the project; list personnel, responsibilities, deadlines, and goals for the number of stories.
4. Select your project name and URL, then write the boilerplate paragraph to describe your project's mission and vision.
5. Draft the categories and prompts document (possibly conducting focus groups) for ideas, see [Sample Story Categories](#).
6. Agree on a Primary Contact, Story Aide(s), and other possible staffing and volunteers.

## 4 - 5 Months: Preparation Phase

1. Purchase Memria subscription.
2. Create Story Requests in Memria from your categories and prompts document.
3. Purchase Strikingly website and selected URL.
4. Create a project specific Google Drive and Gmail Account.
5. Arrange for the webmaster, providing them with text, categories, photos, and other information they request to prepare your website.
6. Assess your options for photos; if possible, arrange a collaboration with a local archive for help.
7. Draft and begin implementing a marketing plan.
8. Purchase hardware if needed.
9. Train staff.
10. Start the *Storyteller Worksheet* with as many names as possible and create the *Story Log* with selected categories.
11. Collect and process your first stories.
12. Determine a date for releasing your website.

## 5 - 9 Months: Implementation Phase

1. Release website with first stories; possibly host a community celebration.
2. Continue collecting and processing stories.
3. Continue implementation of the marketing plan.
4. Set up Strikingly website analytics.
5. Plan how you sustain your project beyond the initial year.
6. Be persistent!

## Project Participation Agreement

Each Partner Project must sign a Project Participation Agreement that will be sent to them by OurStoryBridge. This solidifies our relationship, with rights and obligations, and requires the Partner Project to place the Project Logo on its website.

You will be asked to provide the following information as you begin your Partner Project:

- Name of Partner Project and website
- Primary Contact(s) and Story Aide(s) with contact information
- Story Log link (and permission to view)
- Memria Public Stories link
- Project Gmail address

OurStoryBridge also communicates with your Primary Contact several times a year to gather information on your stories, assist with updates to the *Teacher's Guide*, gain input, and help with marketing. A volunteer story reviewer will be assigned to summarize your stories for entry into the *Teacher's Guide*.



## V. Personnel

Personnel recommendations are just that, recommendations. Each OurStoryBridge Partner Project will vary in personnel dedicated to the project, dependent upon use of paid staff, interns, volunteers, or consultants, speed of story collection, funds available, etc.

**Sample Personnel Responsibilities Chart**

Primary Contact (PC)	Story Aide (SA)	Communications/Marketing/PR (CMP)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Project's primary contact</li> <li>● Oversee SA and CMP</li> <li>● Set up Memria</li> <li>● Plan, implement, and update website</li> <li>● Plan and update budget</li> <li>● Hire, train, and oversee staff, interns, and volunteers</li> <li>● Approve stories for publication</li> <li>● Recruit storytellers and record stories in addition to SA's efforts</li> <li>● Schedule events</li> <li>● Raise funds to assure project sustainability</li> <li>● Form collaborations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Report to PC</li> <li>● Recruit and schedule storytellers</li> <li>● Collect stories</li> <li>● Inform PC of stories to review pre-publication</li> <li>● Obtain photos from storytellers and/or other photo source</li> <li>● Post stories to website</li> <li>● Update <i>Story Log</i> and <i>Storyteller Worksheet</i></li> <li>● Maintain folders with photos, transcripts, permission forms, etc.</li> <li>● Develop and maintain relationships with current and potential storytellers</li> <li>● Help plan, implement, and market events</li> <li>● Help form collaborations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Draft, update, and implement marketing plan</li> <li>● Create and use boilerplate language</li> <li>● Generate press releases, media contacts, and event communications</li> <li>● Market through social media, e-news, listservs, and website</li> <li>● Publicize and assist at events</li> <li>● Store work products on Google Drive</li> <li>● Recruit storytellers</li> </ul>

**Note:** Maintain up-to-date contact information for all personnel associated with your project.

Selection, training, and oversight of the SA and CMP are very important, so be sure that whether they are volunteers, interns, staff, or consultants, they have passion for the project and skills or willingness to learn. Realistically, one person can perform all roles. Using the detailed guidance in this *User Guide*, current Primary Contacts have shared that learning the responsibilities is easier than they anticipated.

*Working with OurStoryBridge has allowed the Chenango County Historical Society (CCHS) to accomplish our mission in dynamic new ways! By expanding partnerships and extending community engagement, we can more fully explore the culture of Chenango County through the preservation and presentation of our local heritage.*

*— Jessica Moquin, Chenango Stories*

**Note:** Initial funding of Adirondack Community was from grants; this paid for software and a part-time SA and CMP. A volunteer served as PC. This person has an extensive background as an executive, is a certified librarian, and has technical expertise. While this level of experience is not required, continued commitment is. PC hours are heavier in the planning stage and the project's first year. The Keene Valley Library has a part-time Archivist and an Assistant who both help to obtain photos and create the optional hard-copy transcripts of each recorded story.

Again, your project may look different, but all of the above can help you to think through the personnel resources needed, which are generally reduced after the first year a Partner Project is online.

## VI. Budgeting, Grants, and Fundraising

### Budgeting

Before laying out an estimate of the costs needed to launch, maintain, and grow an OurStoryBridge project, it is important to note the following:

- Partner Projects source their own funding.
- A proposed budget for a Partner Project can be highly variable, dependent on levels of expenses, revenues, and staff, intern, volunteer, and consultant services available.

- The estimated budget below serves as a model to build on, dependent upon design of your Partner Project. Expenses are estimated from existing OurStoryBridge projects for informational purposes only.
- OurStoryBridge offers remote and in-person training and technical assistance to help you plan, prepare, and implement your own Partner Project. Our work is dependent on funding, but substantial services are supplied by volunteers.
- Be sure to visit [www.ourstorybridge.org](http://www.ourstorybridge.org) for additional resources.

### Estimated OurStoryBridge Partner Project Expenses

	Year One	Ongoing	Notes
Memria Platform Subscription	\$1,000	\$1,000	Platform for collecting, marketing, and gaining permissions for stories
Website/URL	\$175	\$175	See Strikingly
Webmaster	\$1,000	If needed	Jason Wallace
<b>Total</b>	\$2,175	\$1,175	

**Note:** OurStoryBridge is currently a free service, but as a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit, we appreciate donations from Partner Projects who use our services. Visit [www.ourstorybridge.org/donate](http://www.ourstorybridge.org/donate) to give today and help us help others.

Using existing staff, interns, and volunteers keeps costs down. Setting goals for the number of stories per year can help you estimate the cost of a Story Aide. Volunteers and interns can be very effective, especially retirees, but students can help as well. If grant funds or contributions are available, try to hire staff or consultants who can also seek out volunteers to help for sustainability.

**Note:** For Adirondack Community, as funding needs were reduced each year due to the elimination of one-time expenses (such as hardware and website set-up) and with volunteer support, community members were solicited for continued funding. It is expected that eventually costs will be absorbed into the library's budget.

## Grants and Fundraising

Donors and grantors for your Partner Project can be found in every community. You just need to do the work to fund your initial project and its growth. To start your grants and fundraising work:

1. Create a document describing your Partner Project (using your boilerplate), goals, and the resources needed.
2. Characterize what the Partner Project will do for your community and its sponsors.
3. Build a list of possible donors and network in the community to gather ideas.
4. Keep records of all you do.

Fundraising in your community from businesses, civic organizations, community programs, individuals, and foundations depends upon knowledge of existing resources:

- Ideally, your organization will build the Partner Project expenses into their budget.
- Work with others in the community to brainstorm ideas for fundraising: Are there local, state, or national businesses that might want to attach their names to the project (e.g., an internet provider or grocery store chain) and/or provide matching donation benefits for their employees (for those who have a connection to your community)? Does a school or college want to support you? Are there local merchants who can help? Civic or nonprofit organizations? Does someone in the community own a large business that might offer assistance? Is there a local citizen who supports community efforts?
- Presentations about the project can be helpful to raise awareness and generate contributions.
- Grants exist on federal, state, regional, and local levels and are offered by foundations and other organizations. State humanities councils have been especially helpful with grants.
- Training from Candid, (<https://learning.candid.org/>) or similar providers can help you start applying for grants.
- Research through Candid's Foundation Directory Online (<https://fconline.foundationcenter.org>) can be helpful.

## VII. Collaborations

Forming or enhancing relationships through collaborative partnerships or informal affiliations, both internal and external to your community, can help you to raise and sustain funding, increase the number of storytellers, assist in the obtaining of photos, increase website traffic, and provide any number of opportunities to maximize your Partner Project.

Details on the *Teacher's Guide*, at the end of this chapter, are intended for national use. Below are some common sources of collaborations to pursue.

### Local Schools (K - 12)

See [Sample School Introduction for Administration PPT](#), [Sample School Introduction for Students PPT](#), and [SchoolStoryBridge Curriculum](#)

Schools should be considered the most important collaboration. For example, Keene Central School (KCS), K – 12 school for the Town of Keene, NY, is a critical collaborator for Adirondack Community. Together they build on the project goal to build civic pride and engagement among the student population and to encourage their growth and retention as involved community members. To secure this collaboration, a PowerPoint presentation was created to explain the project to the KCS principal. He immediately agreed to appoint a teacher liaison, encourage students to tell stories, and integrate stories into the curriculum.

Visits to grades 8 – 12 included another PowerPoint updated annually, complete with recorded stories, to encourage interaction with the project. Students listen to stories on their own, tell stories, and talk about them in the community. Teachers use the *Teacher's Guide* to enhance classroom content with local stories and those from across the country. As outlined in the *SchoolStoryBridge Curriculum*, KCS 8th and 11th grade students receive lessons on storytelling and its value, practice narrative structure, gain insight into public speaking, share their personal narratives published individually or as podcasts, and review stories in the classroom.

### Colleges and Universities

See [SchoolStoryBridge Curriculum](#)

Colleges and universities in your area provide great opportunities for the integration of community stories into curricula. The first Story Aide for Adirondack Community was also an instructor at Paul Smith's College and Clarkson University. This provided an excellent opportunity to incorporate stories into her courses (e.g., Adirondack

History, Interpersonal Communications, and Environmental History and Social Justice). Students were assigned stories to listen to for homework, and some of the storytellers themselves were invited to class meetings as guest speakers. This provided an excellent learning experience and led to students recording their own stories as follow-up assignments.

## **Museums and Historical Societies**

Museums and historical societies sponsor OurStoryBridge Partner Projects. In addition, they are also valuable resources for communicating your project and its needs, recruiting storytellers, providing opportunities to present stories, and obtaining photos. Staff or volunteers may also be available to collect stories.

## **Libraries**

Libraries sponsor Partner Projects, and other libraries in your area can be enthusiastic collaborators with your project. Community events, public flyers, sponsored book talks, and more can all be used to help with publicity. For example, while Adirondack Community is sponsored by the Keene Valley Library, from inception we included the Town of Keene's other library, Keene Public Library, in our planning and activities. Libraries can also check with their public school or multi-type regional systems for possible sources of collaboration or funding.

## **Regional Library Systems and Organizations**

Regional library systems and organizations support individual libraries in their areas and can help you on your Partner Project. For example, the Northern New York Library Network (NNYLN) is a regional multi-type library agency primarily dedicated to cooperatively providing support and services necessary for all its members to meet their individual goals. NNYLN serves libraries in seven counties of New York for the ultimate benefit of the library user. NNYLN was an important sponsor of Adirondack Community, awarding an Innovation Grant, opportunities to communicate with other libraries, and continued guidance.

## **Businesses**

Research local, state, or national businesses that might want to become involved. Network in your community to determine if anyone might have an appropriate connection. Likewise, local merchants may want to help and tell their stories to publicize their work.

## Senior and Assisted Living Centers

Capturing the stories of the eldest in the community should be a priority. A stated mission of OurStoryBridge is “to help strengthen communities through sharing of their stories, including preserving the stories of older generations before they are lost and encouraging younger generations to become engaged community members,” and Partner Projects should strive to achieve this mission.

Senior and assisted living centers are therefore great resources. It may be difficult to obtain stories from the oldest of the seniors, but patience, a relationship developed with staff, and word-of-mouth between the residents help to support the effort. Build a relationship with your local facilities, and be patient, remembering that collecting the stories of our elders is a priority.

**Note:** When taking stories from seniors, you may want to collect them interview style, even though your voice will be recorded. Learn more in [Section X: Collecting, Processing, and Posting Stories](#)

## Cultural Institutions, Civic Groups, and Government

Government agencies, businesses and service groups, arts, music, sports, religious institutions, and other local organizations can be approached to help spread the word, sponsor activities, and be sources of funding.

For example, Freedom Story Project collaborates annually with the Adirondack Family Book Festival to collect and share stories from local authors; these in turn will be shared with students in schools through the *Teacher's Guide*.

## Teacher's Guide

See [OurStoryBridge: Expanding the Role of Primary Sources in the Classroom](#), [Sample Parent/Guardian Permission Form](#), and [Teacher's Guide](#)



The *Teacher's Guide* is a collaboration between OurStoryBridge and its Partner Projects. It is updated several times a year to add the latest stories and podcasts from Partner Projects across the country.

Each OurStoryBridge Partner Project should link to the [Teacher's Guide](#) through a tab on their website that can also be found in the tool kit on [www.ourstorybridge.org](http://www.ourstorybridge.org) so their local teachers, librarians, patrons, students, and other website visitors can use it.

Teachers and school and public librarians can engage their students in the media that compels them. They can use these stories and podcasts from OurStoryBridge Partner Projects by assigning stories relevant to a lesson as homework, playing them in the classroom, or suggesting them for activities or projects. They can use them to introduce a topic, make a concept memorable, or stimulate discussion, making classes appealing and engaging. As primary sources with audio and visual content, lessons come alive. Students connect what they are learning in the classroom to the real world, past, and present.

In the tool kit on the OurStoryBridge website, [How to Use the Teacher's Guide](#) introduces the project and provides instructions on use. All stories currently cataloged are in [Story Summaries](#), with titles hyperlinked and limited categories noted, e.g., Elementary School, Women's Studies, etc. For middle and high school classes, and higher education, the [Story Selection Chart](#) includes categories like Social Studies, STEM, English, or DEI. Under those categories, teachers can find courses closest to what they are teaching, again with titles hyperlinked for playing. Teachers and students can also go directly to the local Partner Project websites listed at the top of *Story Summaries*. [Sample School Assignment](#), [SchoolStoryBridge Curriculum](#), and [DEI Stories](#) provide suggestions for educational projects adaptable to all levels.

The storytellers are from communities across the country and their stories teach universal lessons, including challenges residents have faced, historical relevance of residents and visitors, cultural and outdoor activities, and surprises that hold meaning beyond their location.

**Note:** Specific concerns, e.g., student privacy, are addressed within these resources.

## VIII. Hardware and Software

Your Partner Project may vary from the adaptable methodology described herein. We hope our research and experience can help to expedite your decision-making process.

### Disclaimer

The information provided in this *User Guide* is offered in good faith and believed to be reliable. It is provided for informational purposes only and not intended to provide specific advice.

**Third-party Tools:** The OurStoryBridge tool kit may mention products and services offered by third parties ("third-party tools"). OurStoryBridge cannot and does not guarantee the continued availability of any such service features, and is not obligated to provide you with any refund, credit, or other compensation, if the provider of a third-party tool ceases to make the tool available. To the extent OurStoryBridge provides information about third-party tools here or elsewhere in our materials we do so for your convenience only. OurStoryBridge does not endorse or make any representations about the third-party tools. If you elect to use any third-party tools in connection with your project, you do so at your own risk. You should review applicable terms and policies, including privacy and data gathering practices,

of any third-party tools, and make whatever investigation you feel necessary or appropriate before proceeding with use of such tools. Your use or purchase of any third-party tool, and any exchange of data between you and the provider of any such tool, is solely between you and the applicable provider. OurStoryBridge does not warrant or support any third-party tool. OurStoryBridge is not responsible for any disclosure, modification or deletion of your data

## Hardware

By using a laptop, desktop, or Chromebook that you have access to, there's no need to purchase a device to collect stories. For example, Memria can be logged into from any device.

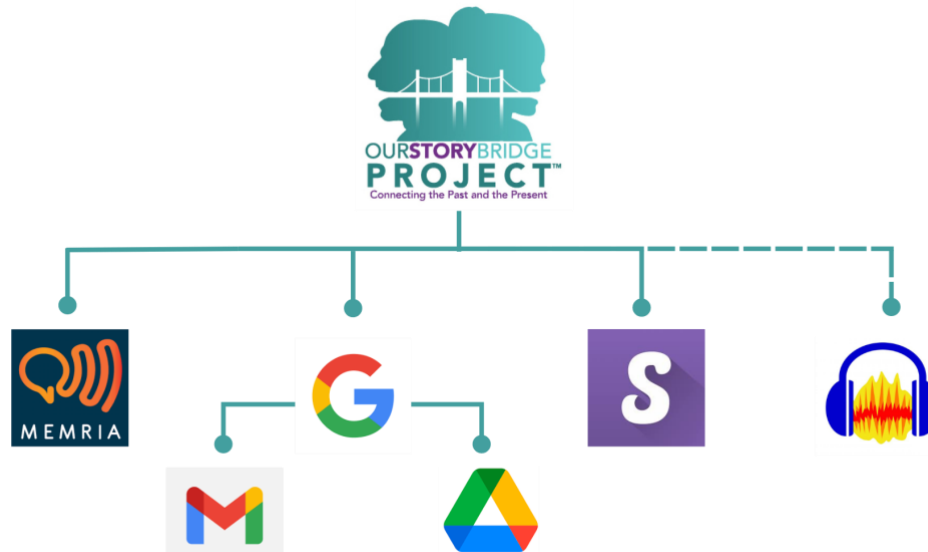
To improve the sound quality, a headset with a boom microphone can be purchased from Amazon for about \$30. When using, be sure that the microphone is placed close to the mouth of the storyteller.

**Note:** If you detach the microphone connection to listen to a story after the storyteller has finished, be sure to reattach it before the next story is told.

**Note:** If you are taking a story in a location where there is no WiFi or an unstable internet connection, you can use the Voice Memos app on an iPhone to collect the audio. Afterwards, make sure the storyteller signs the [Memria Permissions Document](#) (found on the Sample Documents page of the OurStoryBridge website) and you upload the MP3 onto Memria.

## Software

### Software Overview



- Memria to collect, process, post, record permissions, and market stories.
- Google Drive for storage of your documents and photos, with Gmail to communicate.
- Strikingly as a website host.
- Audacity for podcasts.

### Web-based Platform – Memria ([www.Memria.org](http://www.Memria.org))

- Memria is a web-based platform used by Partner Projects to create story categories and prompts from which you can record stories, upload photos, and obtain permissions.
- Memria records and houses audio stories and photos and generates embed/HTML codes that can be posted on websites to create miniplayers, links to stories, slideshows, free transcriptions in several languages, notes and tags for organization, and connections to social media.
- To learn more about Memria or to purchase a subscription, visit [www.memria.org](http://www.memria.org). Contact Louis Bickford at [louis@memria.org](mailto:louis@memria.org) to purchase a subscription or answer questions.
- Learn more about Memria’s Data and Security Information practices [here](#).

**Note:** Memria’s own User Manual contains additional information on how to use their platform, but it is not to supersede the information presented here in the *OurStoryBridge User Guide*.

## Strikingly ([www.strikingly.com](http://www.strikingly.com))

- We recommend a separate website to post your stories, which can be linked to your organization’s primary website. This serves as a designated home for your oral histories, keeping your primary website focused. You should link your Partner Project website to your primary website and to any others that will help it gain visibility. This will also help you to gather metrics on the success and reach of your Partner Project.
- Your website will ultimately host the three- to five-minute stories as miniplayers. They will be organized by category, three across with a maximum of 18 – 24 stories per page, along with the *Teacher’s Guide*, background on how and why your Partner Project got started, contact information, possibly podcasts, and additional resources, etc.
- Strikingly Pro with a multi-year agreement is suggested. Before your first purchase, contact Strikingly for a nonprofit discount code, which extends to your first multi-year contract. Use this code to tie to OurStoryBridge: <https://www.strikingly.com/a/qhs50j>.
- Strikingly helps you to obtain your domain name, which must be renewed annually.
- Choose a domain name that reflects the name of your specific project, is intuitive, easy to spell, and memorable. If certain domain names are already taken, you may need to cycle through a few choices, so we recommend that you have alternative configurations available as additional viable options.
- Renewal emails are sent to the address you select, this should be the project’s Gmail address.
- Review other Partner Projects’ websites, found [here](#) for models. On Home or About Us explain what your Partner Project is with the project name and maybe add a brief video with details or a story explaining your project. Include a straightforward navigation menu and photo array.
- Post the OurStoryBridge Project Logo on your website, linked to the [OurStoryBridge website](#), preferably in the upper left of the home page (more details can be found in section **[XI. Communications, Marketing, and Public Relations \(CMP\)](#)**).
- Link to the OurStoryBridge Teacher’s Guide from your website, which will automatically update.
- We suggest you hire webmaster Jason Wallace ([jason@jasonbwallace.com](mailto:jason@jasonbwallace.com)). He will work with you to create a website in the OurStoryBridge family,

request information e.g., boilerplate language, photos (with attributions), categories, logos, brand colors and fonts, and other components necessary to draft your website conforming to other OurStoryBridge websites; he will also post your first stories and train you on how to post subsequent stories.

## Google Suite

The Google Suite, with its many applications, is a great resource to store and share all of your project documents with staff, and to control access to edit, update, and otherwise use these documents. When starting your Partner Project you should create a project Gmail and associated Google Drive.

Share the username and password for the Google Drive as necessary, but with caution. Change it periodically, sharing with all staff who need to use it.

### Gmail

- Set up a Gmail account using an email address tied to the name of your project. Freedom Story Project uses [freedomstoryproject@gmail.com](mailto:freedomstoryproject@gmail.com), for example.
- All project communications should use this email address, including conversations with staff, storytellers, and for marketing purposes. This allows everyone to share the same information and store emails for later reference. Use by multiple individuals can be confusing, so set guidelines.
- Do not delete emails. File completed emails and responses appropriately, after relevant staff have seen them and/or responded. Suggested folders include (in alphabetical order): “Business,” “Marketing,” “Photos,” “Staff”, “Storyteller Communications,” and “Transcripts.”
- When a story is submitted in Memria, an email will be sent to this Gmail address, similarly, the Contact Us form on your website will generate emails here.

### Drive

- Create folders to organize the documents you will need. Suggestions include “Budget and Grants,” “Story Log, Storyteller Worksheet, Individual Story Folders,” “Podcasts,” “Website,” “Marketing,” etc.
- Within these folders should be numbered by story number and include photos, transcripts, relevant permission forms, and marketing materials.
- Within the “Story Log, Storyteller Worksheet, Individual Story Folders” folder, create a numbered folder for each story, into which you should add photos, transcripts, and permission forms, if used.

## Audacity (Optional)

Audacity is a free software recommended by OurStoryBridge to create podcasts. An excellent tool for marketing your stories to wider audiences, podcasts are a free method to connect a set of stories based on a common theme that may be within or outside of your project's existing story categories (e.g., "local business owners," "social justice and societal change"). They can also be used for your student stories to protect their privacy, since you should be using neither their names nor their photos. For example, [listen to these episodes](#) from Keene Central School for examples of podcasts.

After downloading the software, you can upload the audio of stories from Memria into Audacity. For ease of listening, we recommend recording a consistent introduction and closing, with segues between stories alongside and accompanying musical interludes.

Podcasts are also useful in rural locations where the internet is intermittent, as they can be downloaded for easy access.

### *Instructions for Podcast Creation*

- Create a spreadsheet with themes (perhaps in line with the categories you have chosen to reflect your community or using a different thread between stories that becomes evident) for individual podcasts and include reference numbers from your *Story Log* of the relevant stories.
- Four to five stories are usually best, creating a podcast of no more than 30 minutes.
- Write out a script: 1) include a standard introduction and conclusion, explaining the project, the website address at which to find individual stories, and an email address to contact for further information; 2) draft introductions to each story; 3) add podcast titles and numbers.
- Narrations can be recorded as MP3's, using an app like Voice Memos on your phone or other device.
- Using the script, record the introduction to the first story, then record separate introductions to the second, third, etc. stories.
- Download the actual stories from Memria by clicking the download button for each story. Add the downloaded stories, plus the MP3's, to the Podcast folder on your Google Drive labeled with the number of the podcast.
- Download Audacity. Use the instructions on the Audacity website or tutorials like [this](#) to create the podcast by giving it a title and uploading all the parts from your computer or the Google Drive folder.

- Use a royalty free music site, such as SoundStripe to select music for transitions or contact a local musician to see if they can offer their services.
- Place the audio parts in the proper order.
- After you review your podcast, save it as an MP3.
- Choose a podcast hosting site, such as Spotify for Podcasters or Apple Podcasts to upload your MP3 file.
- When creating a podcast on a hosting site, upload a cover photo and summary of your podcast and associated episode, providing details about story themes and titles.
- Once uploaded, these sites will provide an embed/HTML code for you to share on your website or social media.

## Backups (Optional)

Although Memria has a secure backup process, we recommend that you backup your Google Drive and stories in Memria at least annually. To backup your stories, log into Memria, select Requests on the left hand column. Next, choose the option to Export Stories, found as three lines under the Actions column. This will download existing stories onto your device. You need to do this for each story category found under the Story Request column. This function exports all the HTML, audio, text, slideshow, and photo data for each Story Request, but does not include the embedded miniplayer. Note that without an active Memria subscription, miniplayers embedded on your website are not available.

## IX. Recruitment of Storytellers

As with so many successful endeavors, it's all in the preparation. This section will guide you from understanding the software to putting the OurStoryBridge methodology into practice.

### Preparing and Updating the *Storyteller Worksheet*

The *Storyteller Worksheet* resides on your Google Drive. Download the *Storyteller Worksheet Template* from the [Sample Documents](#) page on the [OurStoryBridge website](#).

As the resource used to recruit storytellers and record progress, the *Storyteller Worksheet* must be continuously updated. By adding names and contact information for potential storytellers, you always have a list to go to when you are scheduling stories. Add names that are prominent in your area, e.g., families with long histories, town leaders, local business owners, etc. Reach out to friends who can

help you by telling their stories early on or suggest additional storytellers. Initiate a network to help connect you with storytellers, known and unknown. Be sure to include staff, board members, funders, patrons, etc.,

### Using the *Storyteller Worksheet*

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Date Added	First	Last	Email	Cell	Notes	Scheduled	Story #
1/1/24	Elizabeth	Bennet	<a href="mailto:abc@gmail.com">abc@gmail.com</a>	518-123-5467			33, 35
1/12/24	Jane	Bennet	<a href="mailto:def@gmail.com">def@gmail.com</a>	518-123-5468	House/family		50
2/20/24	Mary	Bennet		518-123-5471	From Jane	6/15/24 @ 10:00AM	
2/10/24	Charles	Bingley	<a href="mailto:jkl@gmail.com">jkl@gmail.com</a>	518-123-5470			43
3/8/24	Caroline	Bingley	<a href="mailto:mno@hotmail.com">mno@hotmail.com</a>				
2/9/24	Fitzwilliam	Darcy	<a href="mailto:ghi@gmail.com">ghi@gmail.com</a>	518-123-5469			42
4/10/24	Catherine	de Bourgh	<a href="mailto:stu@aol.com">stu@aol.com</a>	518-123-5473		6/20/24 @ 3:00PM	
3/29/24	George	Wickham	<a href="mailto:pqr@yahoo.com">pqr@yahoo.com</a>	518-123-5472		Wait	

<b>Column A</b>	Enter the date the potential storyteller was added to the sheet.
<b>Column B</b>	Enter the first name of the potential storyteller.
<b>Column C</b>	Enter the last name of the potential storyteller.
<b>Column D</b>	Enter the email address.
<b>Column E</b>	Enter the mobile phone.
<b>Column F</b>	Enter notes about each attempt to contact the potential storyteller, methods of communication, and possible ideas on what they could share a story about.
<b>Column G</b>	Enter the date, time, and location agreed upon for collecting the story. Highlight this cell when scheduling is in progress.
<b>Column H</b>	When the story is collected, enter the story number from the <i>Story Log</i> .

**Note:** If you use more than one Story Aide, you might use color coding to designate which Story Aide is working with each storyteller.

View  [How to Use the Storyteller Worksheet](#)

## Recruiting and Scheduling Storytellers

The most effective recruitment has been from in-person opportunities, including at community events, locations in town, in your organization’s facility, or whenever members meet, followed up by an email, text, and/or call to schedule. In-person communication takes more time, but its effectiveness cannot be emphasized enough.

**Often when Story Aides begin, they may find it's difficult to get the first potential storyteller to commit. It is important to push through that first barrier. As the Story Aide becomes more experienced, they find that the joy they and the storyteller feel after the narrative is collected makes the journey worthwhile.**

**Persistence is key! Dozens of Story Aides before have overcome this barrier, recognizing that once the story is recorded, the storyteller will appreciate these efforts.**

- Using the *Storyteller Worksheet*, select a potential or previous storyteller. First contact can be in person, via email, telephone, or text. More often than not, email or text is the preferred method of contact, but with seniors, telephone calls can prove effective.
- Storytellers can be nervous about committing; assure them the process is straightforward and supportive, and that their story is a significant piece of the project. Let them know that they do not need to prepare ahead; the number of times storytellers have said they are nervous, but that we make it easy for them to contribute, is astounding!
- Be sure the storyteller knows that they will just be talking to you; this is not video recording.
- Look at emails saved to “storyteller requests” in Gmail for ideas, making each email as personal as possible. For example, suggest a topic that they may want to talk about, given what you already know or have learned about them, and suggest a few possible times to record. State that it will take about 30- 45 minutes.
- Note each attempt to contact on the *Storyteller Worksheet*.
- When scheduling, be precise about the date, time of commitment, and location. Note the agreed upon date/time in the scheduled column of the *Storyteller Worksheet*.
- Upon scheduling, ask that the storyteller bring or email relevant photos, if possible. Include language such as “please bring or email up to five photos that we can use to accompany your story.” If necessary, after the story has been recorded, thank the storyteller and remind them about the photos. Note that you can even take photos of photos to use.
- Send a reminder email, text, or call a day or two before the appointment.
- If someone does not respond, try again. Be persistent, yet respectful. Maybe reach out to mutual friends to help gain a response, even a commitment.
- Keep all emails, filing in “Storyteller Communications” after the storyteller has come in.

**Note:** For additional hints, see [How to Get More Stories from Gretchen Schlie](#), one of our most prolific Story Aides!

## X. Collecting, Processing, and Posting Stories

### Creating Story Requests In Memria

View  [How to Create Story Requests](#),  [Sample Story Categories](#)

Before you can begin collecting stories, program Memria with Story Requests that contain the categories and prompts you have agreed on for your Partner Project.

#### *Categories and Prompts Document*

- After reviewing the [Sample Story Categories](#) document on the [Sample Documents page](#), create a Categories and Prompts document for your Partner Project. You should talk to others in your organization to agree on categories relevant to your community. Next, describe what would go into that category in a few words and create at least one prompt question that will help guide the storyteller in that category. Take time with this document because other tasks will depend on it.
- Put this document on your Google Drive.
- Print it as a reference and post in the area where you will be collecting stories.

#### *Programming Memria*

**Note:** These are not the same as the “storyteller requests” that go to individual storytellers asking them to tell their stories. Memria uses the same language for both: the information for each category is called a Story Request.

- Purchase a subscription to [Memria](#) and create a password to sign in, as instructed.
- After signing into Memria, begin by clicking the user icon at the bottom left of the navigation page and complete the basic information. Once you are enrolled, Memria will guide you as you set up the platform for your Partner Project.
- Your Memria password should be saved on your device and shared with staff.
- Go to Requests in the navigation pane on the left.
- Click Create Story Request and the wizard will walk you through the steps to complete a separate Story Request for each category of stories that you have created in your Categories and Prompts document.

- Under Story Content use the concise description of what you are looking for in a story from your Categories and Prompts document with the final sentence: “Make your story as personal as possible, keep it under five minutes, and use the questions provided for ideas on how to start.”
- Choose Edited, Published and Shared.
- Then add one, or maybe two, questions, using the prompts in your Categories and Prompts document, to help your storyteller get started.
- If you are using more than one prompt, you can toggle between the prompts in Memria to choose the most appropriate one for the story.
- Click Audio Recording and maximum of five minutes (you can make it a bit longer, but it is best if the stories are brief). Then click Add.
- Keep clicking through the steps, as some are irrelevant for OurStoryBridge projects.  
For example, you do not need to write invitations until later on, if you choose to do self- recorded stories.
- Repeat the process for each category. Story Requests can be edited later on.

## Index Card Method

View  [How to Get a Good Five Minute Story](#)

Differing from traditional oral histories, the OurStoryBridge methodology of short-form oral histories uses the “index card method” to make the storyteller comfortable, outline their story, and provide that outline, as a guide, to the storyteller allowing them to easily relay their personal narrative.

- If necessary, remind the storyteller not to be nervous. They can practice their story a few times.
- If your storyteller wants to listen to a story or two first, to get the feel of it, go to [OurStoryBridge.org](http://OurStoryBridge.org) and listen to previously recorded stories as examples.
- Guide the storyteller to talk about what the story could be about, with information, tone, and possible anecdotes.
- Help the storyteller pick a short, preferably catchy name for their story.
- On an index card, write down an introductory sentence for them, “My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am going to talk about \_\_\_\_\_.”
- As the casual conversation continues, write three to five bulleted points pulled from the discussion, to suggest a flow for the story.
- Draft a final sentence together, summarizing with emotion.
- Discuss how, in three- to five-minutes, they will add words to what has been written in order to make their talking points into a fluid story.

- Using their index card, have them practice the story with you once or twice, before you record. Provide gentle hints to improve the narrative and discuss how to keep the story short, if needed. Encourage the inclusion of names and dates (or approximate time periods). We recommend an hourglass timer as a visual to estimate time, so that you are not distracted by additional technology.

**Note:** Some storytellers may want to fully prepare their stories ahead of the recording. This is not recommended, because this can make the storytelling sound as if they are reading, rather than telling their story naturally. An interview format is not recommended, but with an elderly storyteller, it may help; prepare brief questions ahead of time.

## Collecting Stories

View  [How to Use Story Booth Mode to Collect Stories](#)

- After signing into Memria, click the orange circle with the initial or profile picture at the bottom of the left panel.
- Select Story Booth Mode. We recommend using Story Booth Mode because the personal contact made while sitting with the storyteller is most effective.
- Select one of the categories for stories, dependent upon previous discussion with the storyteller. For posting on the website for maximal visibility of each story, we recommend that stories be in one, two, or three categories, starting with the category you initially select in Memria.
- Click Get Started.
- If you are using a headset, be sure it is attached to the computer with the cable connected. Volume should be set at the highest level.
- Tell the storyteller they can view how much time of the maximum five minutes they have used by glancing at the screen, and that you will give them a signal to start, a warning at one minute left, and then again at 30 seconds remaining when they are running out of time, so they get to the last sentence on their index card.
- Remind them that they should begin as soon as you click Record, in order to avoid dead space and to start with their beginning sentence, introducing themselves with their full name and the subject of the story.
- Click Record and signal to let the storyteller know to start talking.
- If at any time the storyteller gets flustered or wants to start over, click Stop, wait for the story to upload, then start again by clicking Re-record. When re-recording, you must start from the beginning of the story.
- Add a title to the story written in Title Case, or you will not be able to proceed with processing the story. Try to make it catchy.

- You can click the Take Photo button to access the webcam on your device, although we rarely do this. If you click Allow and take a photo of the storyteller, it will automatically be added to their story. If the storyteller does not want their photo with the story or you think that other photos will be enough, that is fine. Only the photos selected later from your archive, that the storyteller supplies, or that you obtain from other sources, will appear with the story.
- When recording is complete, click Save and Preview at the top of the page.
- The preview screen will allow you to play the story before it is submitted. Always listen to the beginning of the story in the presence of the storyteller to be sure that the recording quality is good. Wait until the audio uploads. If you detach the headset to listen together, be sure to plug it in before recording again.
- Have the storyteller enter their full name and complete the permissions questions. These include giving the Partner Project rights to edit, publish, and share the story; use the storyteller's name (or choose to be anonymous); further rights allowing Memria.Org, a project of VoxBox, Inc., and OurStoryBridge Inc. and any third party authorized by them to edit, publish, and share the story; and that they have reviewed Memria's Terms of Service and Privacy Policy (in compliance with the European Union's Global Data Privacy Regulation).

**Note:** "Edit" is defined not as revising what the storyteller presents; rather, the Partner Project might adjust the speaker's volume in post-production, as well as remove long pauses. Editing should rarely be done.

- Afterwards, the Submit button will turn pink and you can click it to submit their story.
- An email will automatically be sent to the project Gmail account when each story is submitted.
- Close the browser and thank the storyteller. Tell them their story will be approved soon, with their own photos or those from the archive added to it, and it will then be released for them to enjoy on your Partner Project's website.
- Ask for photos (if they did not bring them to the recording session or send them beforehand). Be sure to set a deadline for them to send them to you at the project's Gmail address. Follow up with an email, call, or text if they do not send them within one week. Move on after you receive the photos, in order to concentrate on the next storytellers.

**Note:** Each Partner Project has granted to OurStoryBridge a perpetual, nonexclusive, royalty-free, transferable, sublicensable, worldwide license to use, copy, reproduce, distribute, display, perform, and prepare derivative works of, the stories and content collected or created by the Partner Project as part of the Project's participation in the Project (including, but not limited to, recordings of oral histories, and metadata,

HTML codes, and links for such recordings) in any and all forms of media and devices now known or hereafter developed. OurStoryBridge at its sole discretion may elect to communicate information about the Partner Project participation; link to relevant information on the Project's website from the OurStoryBridge website; and refer to the Partner Project's project in press releases and other communications materials (including, but not limited to, the *Teacher's Guide*). Each Partner Project must facilitate the accessibility of relevant information needed to include the Project's stories, podcasts, and other relevant information in the *Teacher's Guide*.

**Note:** If you have digitized old oral histories, you can edit them and upload five minute segments as stories in Memria.

**Note:** To protect their privacy, students under the age of 18 should not give their names. Additionally, no photos will be used if the storyteller is under the age of 18.

**Note:** A Story Aide can collect stories over Zoom, recognizing that sound quality may be diminished.

## Permissions

There are two instances where you will need additional permissions from your storytellers:

- If the storyteller is under 18
- If you are collecting stories outside of Memria (e.g., there is no WiFi connection and you are taking a story via Voice Memos).

To be in compliance, print out hard copies of the permission forms found on the [Sample Documents](#) webpage. Storytellers under 18 will need to have their Parent or Guardian complete the [Sample Parent Guardian Permission Form](#), which the Partner Project should retain. Those telling stories outside of Memria will need to fill out the [Memria Permissions Document](#) and store it in the folder titled "Story Log, Storyteller Worksheet, Individual Story Folders".

**Note:** The copyright to the full story as recorded belongs to the storyteller and they can have the story removed as they wish.

## Self-recorded Stories

View  [How to Collect Self-recorded Stories](#)

- Although the OurStoryBridge methodology works best with a Story Aide working in-person with the storyteller, you can send an email to a storyteller with a link for the story to be told using their own device.
- Communicate with the storyteller to determine the possible category for the story and to understand their ability to record the story on their own. You

might even want to do a Zoom with them to explain what they are doing. Because you can choose the category or categories, this is only relevant because of the prompt that will appear on their screen. You can tell them to ignore these.

- Open Memria and go to Requests on the left side of the page.
- Select the most likely category for the story and click the name.
- Go to Manage Storytellers, Add Contacts, and add the information for the storyteller.
- Click Edit Invitation.
- The email generated by Memria will include a link and specific information for what to do to record the story. It will also ask storytellers to create a one-time username and password, which will disappear once the story has been recorded. In addition, we recommend that the body of the invitation be edited to include relevant information for each category in use. For example:  
Dear [first name],  
Thank you for offering to tell your story. The link below will start you on the process. A few helpful hints:
  - If you have a headset, please use it.
  - Please email any relevant photos to [add project Gmail address].
  - Follow the [Index Card Method](#). Make sure you have the first line introducing yourself, an ending, and a few points you want to be sure you write down to touch on as you tell your story.
  - You might also want to think of a title as you plan your story.
  - Don't hesitate to email me with questions at [add project Gmail address again]. Thank you again for doing this,  
[your name]
- Select the storyteller from the list and click the Send Invites button. They will then receive your email invitation and all the information they need to record their story.
- When the storyteller has recorded, you will be notified by email in the same manner as when you use Story Booth Mode.

**Note:** You can also include a Tell Your Story button on your Partner Project's website, using the same generated link as in the emails you send. When visitors to your site click on the button, they will be taken to the public version of the story request. This contains the Tell Your Story button, which will require the user to create an account (with a one-time email address and password). Once this account is created, users will View a Record page that looks just like Story Booth Mode. We do not recommend this option for widespread use to execute your Partner Project. However, this option can allow for increased access to stories due, for example, to distance, comfort, mobility, or crises like the coronavirus pandemic.

## Processing Stories

### Preparing and Updating the Story Log

View  [How to Use the Story Log](#) and  [How to Generate Links and Embed Codes](#)

Immediately upon submitting a story, complete an entry in the *Story Log* which you have downloaded from the [OurStoryBridge](#) website and bookmarked on your device.

This is the resource used to keep track of stories; update it continuously. Enter the metadata as described in the chart below. Keep this updated as you process your stories.

After a story is published, the embed/HTML code, story link, and access to social media posting are available in Memria for each specific story, in the Share box.

A	B	C	D	E	F
#	Story Date	Title	Storyteller	Email	Mobile
42	5/1/24	An Eventful Night at Netherfield	Fitzwilliam Darcy	<a href="mailto:ghi@gmail.com">ghi@gmail.com</a>	518-123-5469
43	5/2/24	Getting to Know My Neighbors	Charles Bingley	<a href="mailto:jkl@gmail.com">jkl@gmail.com</a>	518-123-5470
44	6/15/24	A Story About My Life (Part 1 of 2)	Mary Bennet	<a href="mailto:middlechild@gmail.com">middlechild@gmail.com</a>	518-123-5471
45	6/15/24	A Story About My Life (Part 2 of 2)	Mary Bennet	<a href="mailto:middlechild@gmail.com">middlechild@gmail.com</a>	518-123-5471

Image 1. Columns A - F of Story Log


G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
Student	Form	Cat 1	Cat 2	Cat 3	Photos	Transcript	Published	Embed Code	Link
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	P	DL		Done	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<script type="t	<a href="https://app.memr">https://app.memr</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	P	DL		Done	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<script type="t	<a href="https://app.memr">https://app.memr</a>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DL	H		Done	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<script type="t	<a href="https://app.memr">https://app.memr</a>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DL	H		Need Photos	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Image 2. Columns G - P of Story Log

R	S	T	U	V	V
<b>Category Names: Change numbers to one or two letters to signify each category</b>					
P	People				
DL	Daily Life				
H	History				

Image 3. Column R of Story Log, where acronyms for Story Categories should be logged.

**Note:** A common stumbling block for Partner Projects is the Story Category Cell, however we have made this easy for you. To complete the story category cells, you must first go to column R in the *Story Log* and replace the numbers with an acronym e.g., Arts and Culture would be AC, signifying each story category. Automatically, the dropdown selection in columns I-K will reflect your personalized story categories.

<b>Column A</b>	Number each story in order.
<b>Column B</b>	Enter the date the story was taken.
<b>Column C</b>	Enter the title of the story in Title Case.
<b>Column D</b>	Enter the first and last names of the storyteller, as submitted in Memria.
<b>Column E</b>	Enter the storyteller's email address.
<b>Column F</b>	Enter the mobile number of the storyteller.
<b>Column G</b>	If the storyteller is younger than 18, check here.
<b>Column H</b>	If column G is checked, a permission form must be signed by a parent/guardian. Check when completed.
<b>Columns I-K:</b>	Choose one to three categories for posting each story on the website. Category choices are available in the dropdown list. Be sure that Category 1 matches the selection in Memria used to initiate the story.
<b>Column L</b>	What is the status of the photos accompanying the stories? Highlight the cell in yellow if photos are not supplied and uploaded. If you are waiting for photos to be sent, add that you are waiting. Keep details such as the date you emailed the storyteller or someone else for images. When photos are uploaded to Memria, write DONE and clear the highlighting.
<b>Column M</b>	Check the box if you have downloaded the story transcript from Memria.
<b>Column N</b>	List the date you have clicked Publish in Memria.
<b>Columns O-P</b>	Copy and paste the embed/HTML code and public story link from Memria into these cells. These codes can be found by clicking the Share button in Memria. Review  <a href="#">How to Generate Links and Embed Codes</a>
<b>Column R</b>	Replace the numbers with an acronym that aligns with your project's categories and prompts document e.g., Arts and Culture would be AC. Automatically, the dropdown selection in columns I-K will reflect your personalized story categories.

### Inserting Photos

See  [How to Add Photos and Publish Stories](#)

- At this point, you have already asked the storyteller to bring or email relevant photos.
- If the storyteller does not have photos available, and/or you are collaborating with an archive or other resource, immediately email the archive, requesting up to five (four if there is a storyteller photo) photos describing the type of

relevant photos you would like. Send key words to help in the archivist's search. Indicate that you need the photos within one week after the story is recorded.

- The photos must be digital; photos of photos taken on a smartphone are adequate, but be careful of shadows and lights that impede photo quality.
- If you cannot obtain photos from others or take them yourself, search the internet, but check for copyright and other intellectual property rights before posting. Credit contributing photographers as you upload them to the story, using the caption box in Memria. You can also add a photo description to the caption box. Several sites offer free resources, such as <https://ccsearch.creativecommons.org/>. When in doubt, check with the website from which images are taken.
- You can receive photos by email, then download to insert into Memria.
- Store the photos on your project's Google Drive under "Story Log, Storyteller Worksheet, Individual Story Folders." Make a folder for each story, using the number from the *Story Log* to organize the photos, and later the transcripts, if you get them. For storytellers with multiple stories, you can use one folder, adding the story numbers to the folder name.
- Add/change the photos by clicking Edit Photo(s):
  - To add photos, go to the story, browse to the photo location, then upload the photos, one by one.
  - To remove or change a photo, follow a similar process.
  - To edit or add a caption, click on the photo and make changes in the caption text box.
  - When you are finished, click the pink Save and View story button at the top of the page to return to the story.
- After the photos are uploaded, email the Primary Contact to publish.

## Publishing The Story

The Primary Contact should listen to each story before it is published to assure that quality and content are appropriate. The Story Aide can then click the Publish button to publish the story.

When a story is published, a green dot will appear within the story. Publishing the story allows access to embed/HTML codes, story links, social media sharing, a downloadable slideshow with scrolling photos, and transcripts.

When you publish a story, add to the Notes section in Memria the number of the story as it appears on your *Story Log* with a hashmark (#).

## Transcripts (Optional)

See  [Sample Transcripts](#)

- To continue processing the story, you can click the Transcript button for a free transcript generated from the audio recording. You can select from several languages.
- An email will be sent to your project's Gmail address when the transcript is ready (usually within 30 minutes); the email will contain a View Your Story link to download the story. You can also download later on by going to the story in Memria and clicking the Download Transcription File.
- Open the *Story Log* on Google Drive to see the list of stories in order. When the email about the transcript arrives, denote in the appropriate box on the *Story Log* that the transcript is completed.
- Upload the transcript into the folder you have already made.
- Review the transcript and make any necessary edits for misspellings of names or places including changing the name of the transcript document by adding the story number and deleting the date, so that what remains is the story number and storyteller.

## Posting Stories

View  [How to Post Stories in Strikingly](#) and  [How to Generate Links and Embed Codes](#)

- To post on the project website, sign in to Strikingly and click Edit.
- On the left where you see Home, click to find the category/categories webpage indicated on the *Story Log* for the story you want to post. You will do this several times, depending upon how many categories you have chosen for the story.
- Be sure that stories are presented three across, with no more than 18 – 24 stories per page. When a page has reached 24 stories, add a new page. This should be done by whomever updates the website. You can do this by duplicating the current page and renaming it, removing the current Memria stories and replacing them with the new ones. You will also need to create navigation to go back and forth between pages. You can do this by adding hyperlinks of the page numbers and “Next” and “Prev” arrows.
- When you are in the appropriate category, scroll down to the last story posted. Maintain the three columns of stories by clicking the plus sign (+) located directly under the story that you want to post. Make sure the stories line up.

- Find the embed/HTML code from the *Story Log*, highlighted in yellow because it has not been posted yet.
- Choose HTML, then Edit, then HTML.
- In the box labeled Custom HTML Code, paste the embed/HTML code from the *Story Log*. Then click Save.
- Remove the yellow highlighting from the cell with the Embed Code.
- Check that the story, with the photos scrolling, appears on the page, which you may need to refresh.
- If you make a mistake, click the garbage can on the upper right of a story. Undo, then click Publish.
- Repeat this process for all relevant categories, then click Publish. The exclamation point denotes that there are unpublished changes to the website.

**Note:** The Public Stories tab in Memria’s navigation menu on the left will show all published stories, with a public URL you can get from your Memria account; this is not the preferred way for stories to be viewed by the public, because this link shows all stories without organization by category or personalization to your organization.

**Note:** For stories from storytellers under 18, you may not wish to post their stories as miniplayers, rather, compile them into podcasts with teacher narration.

See  [Audacity](#)

## XI. Communications, Marketing, and Public Relations (CMP)

### Project Name

Agree on a concise, catchy name for your project and use it for the website, Gmail address, in grant proposals, and all project communications.

Many projects are incorporating the words “story” and “bridge” in their project names, which is recommended, e.g., Igiugig Story Bridge (Niraqutaq Qallemcinek in native language Yupik, meaning Bridge of Stories) and Willsboro Story Bridge.

### Boilerplate Project Description

Develop and use one boilerplate project description for all related project work. This description should be simple and clear, yet detailed enough to fully describe your project. It should captivate your audience and generate brand recognition.

You can include language required by funders, such as your sponsoring library, museum, historical society, nonprofit organization, grantors, etc. It is easy to forget that this boilerplate work has been done, so be careful not to re-invent language.

See  [Sample Boilerplate and Grantor Information](#)

## Marketing Plan

See  [Sample Marketing Plan](#)

As detailed below, your marketing plan should be developed from the boilerplate project description to include tools, details, personnel assignments, and status of completion. You may be able to get help from professionals in your community.

### Marketing Goals

Draft marketing goals. The first goal focuses on recruiting storytellers, creating awareness of the project before and during implementation. The second goal is to inspire listeners to visit the website to listen to stories. Together, these two goals can help increase listeners to your stories, create brand recognition, attract more storytellers, network for publicity, and increase opportunities for ongoing funding.

### Marketing Targets

List who you are targeting in your marketing: who are the audiences for your Partner Project? Make a list, e.g., potential storytellers, the community, the press, potential collaborators etc., and include contact information.

### What to Market

List initial expectations for what you can market. For example, Adirondack Community markets the web address to listen to stories; their email address to learn more about storytelling; specific stories and podcasts; grant awards; project implementation milestones; events; and opportunities to record stories.

Set ambitious, yet realistic goals for the number of stories by specific dates, e.g., launch, monthly (taking into account seasonal issues), and annual. Your OurStoryBridge Partner Project's story goals should reflect your initial understanding of the capacity and engagement of your community. You can adjust the story goals as needed once the project is underway.

**Note:** Each OurStoryBridge Partner Project can determine their community's resources and how best to employ them. Communications, Marketing, and Public

Relations (CMP) work is crucial to a project's success, and Marketing Plans should be updated continuously and implemented on schedule.

## Website Metrics/Analytics

Strikingly provides metrics on unique users for different periods, most viewed pages, countries of viewers, downloads, etc. Strikingly collects data in maximum 90-day intervals, so we recommend that you use Google Sheets to collate this running data. These numbers are useful to promote your project, as well as for development.

### Sample Metrics

We suggest you keep and update the following metrics monthly:

- Website unique users
- Stories published
- Storytellers
- Senior storytellers
- Student storytellers
- Podcasts
- Podcast listens
- Community events
- Press releases
- Media stories
- DEI stories
- Languages spoken
- Facebook followers
- Instagram followers
- Classroom visits

## Suggested Marketing Tools

These marketing tools are suggested for inclusion in the Marketing Plan, with descriptions, personnel assignments, and status of completion.

### Logo

See  [Sample Logos](#)

Design a colorful logo that exemplifies your project and use it often to gain brand recognition. Be sure to make it adaptable and attractive in different media, and in an electronic format that is easy to use (e.g., PDF also in vector format, JPEG, and PNG).

### Project Website

See  [Sample Adirondack Community Website](#)

Visit [Section VIII: Hardware and Software](#) to learn about how to set up your Partner Project's website. You should, of course, link your Partner Project website to your organization's website, but don't miss out on opportunities for other organizations to link to your website as well!

**Note:** The OurStoryBridge Project Logo is required to be used on the Partner Project's website only, linked to [www.ourstorybridge.org](http://www.ourstorybridge.org)

### **Social Media**

**See**  [Sample Social Media and Digital Community Platforms](#)

Assuming social media is a good way to communicate in your community, use it! Links on each story's page in Memria can help you.

**View**  [How to Generate Links and Embed Codes](#)

Develop a social media marketing plan. Determine your goals, targets, implementation, what to post, frequency, metrics, posting plan, etc. Create a master list of social media outlets (including digital community platforms), post, and follow up on any engagement. Post and cross-post links to stories with frequency, publicize events and engagement opportunities, post press releases and media coverage, etc. Use photos. If advertising funds are available, you can boost posts of your brief oral histories on Facebook, for example, but be sure to target as in your plan. Get help from professionals in your community.

See  [Sample Facebook Page](#) and  [Sample Facebook Marketing Plan](#)

### **QR Code**

Create a QR Code for your website to include on posters and other marketing materials to make it easy to go directly to your website.

### **Business/Appointment Cards**

**See**  [Sample Business/Appointment Card](#)

A business card with the logo, website address, Gmail address, and a space to write scheduled storytelling appointments can be very useful. Distribute them widely. Vistaprint is a resource to prepare and print cards.

### **Banner**

**See**  [Sample Banner](#)

Make a banner with the logo, project name, website address, and project email to display at events.

### **Emails & e-Newsletters**

Use the *Storyteller Worksheet*, *Story Log*, and other project-associated lists to periodically email groups (using blind copy [bcc]) to update them on progress, invite them to events, show your appreciation, ask for assistance, etc. An email marketing company, like Mailchimp, can be used to manage and design your e-newsletters. Keep in mind that this can add cost.

Links to stories can be used in emails and e-newsletters noting that a link is different from a miniplayer posted on a website through embed/HTML codes and when using a link the photos need to be scrolled manually.

Links to stories can be especially helpful in development, providing examples of stories that demonstrate what your organization does and why it should be funded.

### **Public Relations**

Keep copies of all press work, as outlined below, in the Google Drive within sub-folders.

#### **Media Contacts List:**

Create and continually update a Media Contacts List that includes the publication name, type of media, individual reporters, title, email address, phone number, and website address of publication. The list should include traditional and online media, radio and television, social media, and any community e-newsletters.

#### **Press Releases:**

See  [Sample Press Releases](#)

Draft and circulate press releases to highlight (and show appreciation) for funding, publicize events, celebrate milestones, ask for community assistance, etc. Be sure to use an accepted press release format, approved boilerplate language, and provide appropriate contact information. All press releases should be approved by the Primary Contact as well as anyone quoted therein. Use the Media Contacts List to initially circulate press releases, preferably through individual emails to each reporter, and call reporters to develop relationships to make it personal.

#### **Coverage:**

See [Sample Media Report](#)

Keep copies of all traditional coverage and samples of social media and e-

newsletters. This is especially important to provide to funders with grants and other requests.

### **PowerPoint Presentations**

See [!\[\]\(0e5aeb08abccf3e048d904d9c746b4a5\_img.jpg\) Sample School Introduction for Administration PPT](#), [!\[\]\(85b9408668db7d1c5eab6e35a251ec1d\_img.jpg\) Sample School Introduction for Students PPT](#), [!\[\]\(872061bdd1dac9b7692f04d4ed9e70f0\_img.jpg\) Sample 1st Story Release Celebration PPT](#), and [!\[\]\(574e00405acb3def5e85399543a6b806\_img.jpg\) Sample 100 Story Celebration PPT](#)

Prepare PowerPoint presentations and adapt for specific audiences. For Adirondack Community, we created several presentations — e.g., for the local K – 12 school, podcasts, 250 stories celebration, and other community celebrations.

### **Events**

See [!\[\]\(62227e9ec0d35f2c998784d44f728ba7\_img.jpg\) Sample Posters Including Events](#), [!\[\]\(3f07e987141c369639aac12a0fe3d9e5\_img.jpg\) Sample 1st Story Release Celebration PPT](#), and [!\[\]\(f371eaac60389ebe07ec444a40232314\_img.jpg\) Sample 100 Story Celebration PPT](#)

Hold events for the community, and invite your press contacts (using your Media Contacts List). For example, celebrate your website release and later milestones, and your storytellers, with presentations of select stories accompanied by refreshments and a brief update on your Partner Project's progress. You can also set up a story booth or other recording area with your equipment in order to demonstrate how the storytelling process works. Adirondack Community uses name tags with storyteller numbers from the *Story Log*, rather than names, to generate interest.

Be sure to record the names of all event attendees, with email addresses and phone numbers to solicit as potential storytellers. Count attendees for follow-up press releases. Create a festive, celebratory environment.

### **Posters**

See [!\[\]\(19735dddfb38eae642b52d0295e522e8\_img.jpg\) Sample Posters Including Events](#)

Draft posters to be placed in prominent locations throughout your community as well as in your library, historical society, museum, or other sponsoring organization. Always include your Partner Project's logo to generate brand recognition; the website address to attract visitors to the site for more information; a QR code directing people to the website; and the project Gmail address to field questions or receive volunteer storytellers.

# *OurStoryBridge:* *Connecting the Past and the Present*

*“This project weaves together the different threads of our community’s history into one beautiful tapestry, that is ever expanding.”*

*— Katherine Brown, Adirondack Community in Keene, NY*

*“OurStoryBridge understands how fundamental storytelling is to the human experience, the building of community, and for passing on values between the generations. OurStoryBridge is providing communities with the resources to access a common sense of identity, to ground themselves, and find shared history and connection. It is a valuable source of unity in a polarized time.”*

*— Cal Page-Bryant, Freedom Story Project in North Elba, NY*

*“People are natural storytellers and in this digital age where technology does so much to distract and divide, OurStoryBridge brings all ages together to acknowledge and build up the good in our community. Our Tribal Council President has said, ‘We grow stronger when we share our stories.’ I believe that’s true for all people and all communities. The free OurStoryBridge resources make starting your own story project totally doable! If we can do it, you can do it.”*

*— A.J. Gooden, Igiugig Story Bridge in Igiugig, AK*



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