

OurStoryBridge: *Connecting the Past and the Present*

User Guide to Plan, Implement, and Sustain
a Digital Story Project in Your Community



OURSTORYBRIDGE™
Connecting the Past and the Present

Jery Y. Huntley, MLS
April 2022/Edition #2



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

***User Guide* to Plan, Implement, and Sustain a Digital Story Project in Your Community**

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

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

Table of Contents

Foreword	4
Acknowledgements	6
I. Introduction to <i>OurStoryBridge</i> : Connecting the Past and the Present	9
II. Why You Should Consider <i>OurStoryBridge</i> for Your Community	11
III. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	13
IV. Suggested Timetable for Planning and Implementation	19
V. Personnel	23
VI. Budgeting, Grants, and Fundraising	25
VII. Partnerships	29
VIII. Technology Recommendations	33
IX. Using the Recommended Software	37
X. Recruitment of Storytellers	41
XI. Collecting, Processing, and Posting Stories	43
XII. Communications, Marketing, and Public Relations (CMP)	51

Disclaimer:

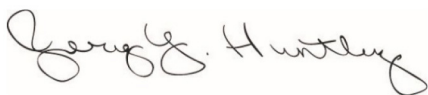
The information in this *User Guide* is offered in good faith and believed to be reliable. It is provided for informational purposes only and not intended to provide specific advice.

Foreword (Edition #1)

Upon my retirement as President/CEO of an association in Washington, DC, my staff presented me with a memory book of photographs titled, *Persistence, Process, and Passion: Celebrating Two Decades of Transformational Leadership*. Honored and humbled by this gift, I was also thrilled by the perfect fit of those three P's. Persistence, Process, and Passion, which surely brought their fair share of frustrations onto my staff through the years, also helped us come together around vital projects and achieve success as a dedicated team. These traits have always guided my work, including in my early career as a librarian and a teacher, and now *OurStoryBridge* gives me the opportunity to share their impact with you—as community leaders, dedicated citizens, and storytellers spanning generations.

In 2018, when the seed of an idea for a community story project was planted by Karen Glass, Director of the Keene Valley Library in upstate New York, I couldn't help but jump in to cultivate it. To date, our local story project, *Adirondack Community: Capturing, Retaining, and Communicating the Stories of Who We Are*, has collected and shared over 165 three- to five-minute audio stories from community members in the Town of Keene, NY, and this effort continues. As a volunteer, I took on the role of Project Manager for this ambitious project, and as the ground swell of participation rose I saw above the tree line of my individual community. Thus was born *OurStoryBridge*, a DIY project that pays it forward and helps other communities reap the benefits of a multi-year, online local history project.

OurStoryBridge provides the guidance, tools, and experiential insight for you to replicate our success. Read this *User Guide*, visit www.ourstorybridge.org, and let us help you to create an enduring bridge across the generations in your community!



Jerry Y. Huntley

createyourstoryproject@gmail.com

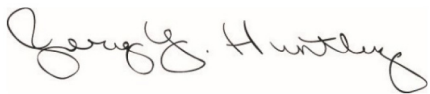
September 2020

Foreword (Edition #2)

Creating this second edition of the *OurStoryBridge User Guide* allowed me to reflect on what we have accomplished in the 18 months since the project's launch: Four new community story projects have been released to date, with several more now starting up and collecting their stories. At our current pace, we are on track to have 15 story projects running by the end of the year, from Vermont to Alaska and many communities in between. We exceeded 500 downloads of the original *User Guide*; there are over 3,500 unique visits to the website; and our monthly *OurStoryBridge* e-newsletter and other marketing efforts through social media and beyond enjoy robust and growing audiences. Likewise, I continue to maintain a busy presentation schedule, both virtual and in-person, introducing more and more communities to the benefits and ease-of-use of *OurStoryBridge*.

We know this second edition 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 their unique story projects. For example, we updated the budget section to reflect the experiences of new *OurStoryBridge* projects, shared additional information on the Project Logo, referenced details on *Memria* data and security, added updates to the Teacher's Guide, etc.

We wish you the best success with your new story project!



Jerry Y. Huntley

createyourstoryproject@gmail.com

April 2022

Acknowledgements (Edition #1)

We wish to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the following sponsors and project partners:

The **Keene Valley Library and its Trustees** have supported *Adirondack Community* since the first grant was applied for in 2018. They have generously agreed to continue *OurStoryBridge* for the next few years, as we work to replicate our local history project to benefit other communities. The mission of the Keene Valley Library is “To connect people to ideas, experiences, information, and the community in a comfortable, welcoming setting. We strive to do this through: Providing adults and children with a collection of current and relevant books, other media, and local Adirondack historical resources; providing an inviting and lively cultural center for community events; evolving as our community grows and technology advances.” By supporting resources beyond their unique, rural *Adirondack community*, they are demonstrating the true importance of libraries to evolve and serve a wider community in the digital age.

The **Cloudsplitter Foundation** and **Adirondack Foundation** provided essential seed money that allowed us to release *OurStoryBridge* in September 2020. Grants from **Humanities New York**, the **Northern New York Library Network**, and the **Glenn and Carol Pearsall Adirondack Foundation** helped *Adirondack Community* achieve its launch and move forward. Likewise, **community members in the Town of Keene** continue to commit donations toward the sustainability of *Adirondack Community*; their continued support and stewardship are heartfelt.

Thanks go to **Karen Glass**, Keene Valley Library Director, for the seed of an idea that became *Adirondack Community*, and for her continued guidance. **Olivia Dwyer** served as our first marketing/communications/public relations professional and **Bethany Garretson** was our first Story Aide. **Elizabeth Rogers** and **Margaret Hawthorn** from the Keene Valley Library Archives provide photographs, assist with the transcripts, and share their supportive enthusiasm. **Darsie Townsend**, the library’s bookkeeper, not only keeps our accounts in order, but also provides continual support and encouragement. **Jason Wallace**, webmaster, created the *Adirondack Community* website and works through upgrades with creativity, patience, and skill; he is continuing to provide his services to *OurStoryBridge*. **Louis Bickford** and **Karen Schlesinger** of Memria created an amazing multi-use platform that we hope to help them grow; their commitment and customer service are extraordinary. **Janelle A. Schwartz** served as an excellent editor, quickly getting up to speed on the intent of this *User Guide*, re-organizing and improving its language tremendously, and asking great questions. This project would never have reached over 165 stories and counting without the efforts of all of these professionals.

And finally, unending gratitude goes to all of our **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!

Acknowledgements (Edition #2)

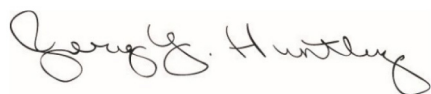
When *OurStoryBridge* was released on September 29, 2020, at the annual conference of the Association for Rural and Small Libraries (ARSL), I had strong doubts that anyone would be interested in my “pandemic project”. I’m so glad I was wrong! Over 400 librarians attended the first presentations and hundreds more have followed since, participating in dozens of subsequent presentations. The efforts of these curious librarians, historians, teachers, museum staff, nonprofit organizers, government leaders, and members of the organizations like ARSL have made *OurStoryBridge* what it has grown to be today... 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 story projects. It has been my pleasure to have the opportunity to know you and to work with you.

After *Adirondack Community*, the librarians who led the second and third projects, **Debby Carter** of *Our Bear River Valley Stories*, in Tremonton, Utah, and **A.J. Gooden** of *Igiugig Story Bridge* (*Niraqutaq Qallemcinek*), in Igiugig, Alaska, have become invaluable resources to *OurStoryBridge*. Beyond their own local projects, these women continue to contribute to presentations across the country. They not only share their enthusiasm through firsthand accounts of what it is like to launch these projects, they also help to recruit new story projects and provide continued counsel.

The core team of **Darsie Townsend**, **Jason Wallace**, **Janelle Schwartz**, **Elizabeth Rogers**, **Margaret Hawthorn**, and **Louis Bickford** and **Karen Schlesinger** of Memria were aided by volunteers from across the country, all tremendously appreciated. In addition, I want to thank the **University at Albany** for providing *OurStoryBridge* with future librarians as interns on this project. And **Suzanne Macaulay** taught us how to produce a first-class e-newsletter and guided us as we learned the power of social media.

After the **Cloudsplitter Foundation** and **Adirondack Foundation** provided essential seed money that allowed us to release *OurStoryBridge* in September 2020, these two organizations have continued to be generous with their support. And now the **Glenn and Carol Pearsall Adirondack Foundation** and the **J.M. McDonald Foundation** have added their support, and we are confident that others will follow.

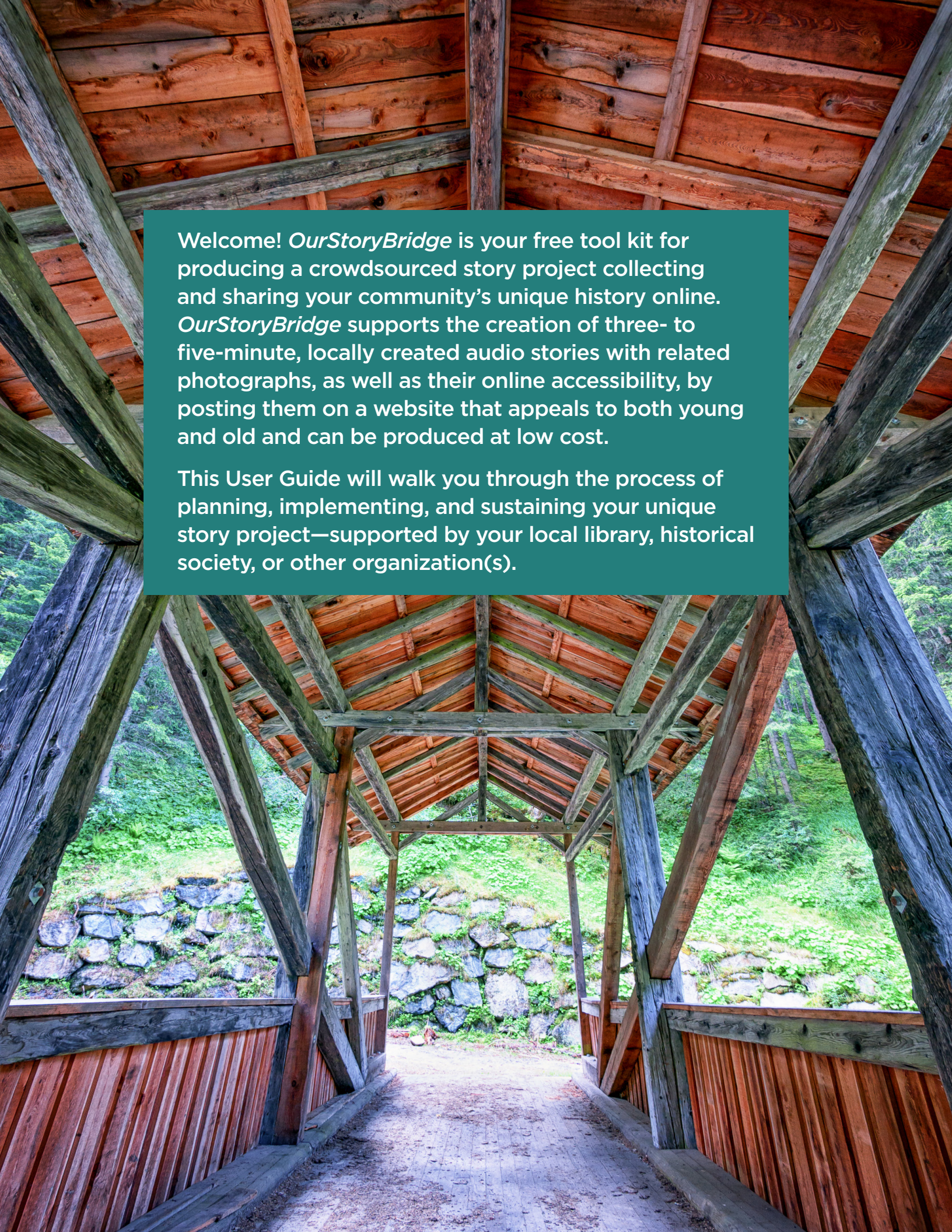
Inspired by the success and national growth of *OurStoryBridge*, and with the support of the Keene Valley Library Association, *OurStoryBridge* Inc. has incorporated and received IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable status. The support of **community members in the Town of Keene, NY** has been crucial for our success. Their enthusiasm made it easy to do the hard work needed to foster our growth. Thanks go to the **Keene Valley Library Association, its Staff and Trustees**, especially Board President **Carolyn Peterson** for her continued support, especially during this transition period.



Jerry Y. Huntley

createyourstoryproject@gmail.com

April 2022



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, implementing, and sustaining your unique story project—supported by your local library, historical society, or other organization(s).

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

Driven by the ongoing success of *Adirondack Community: Capturing, Retaining, and Communicating the Stories of Who We Are* (www.myadirondackstory.org), the community story project launched out of the Keene Valley Library (Keene Valley, NY), *OurStoryBridge* brings into focus all the moving parts needed to make your own community story project a similar success.

Given our experience building *Adirondack Community*, 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 enrichment activities at your local library, historical society, museum, community center, 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 the inspiring stories of your community throughout your region and beyond.

Everything that follows in this *User Guide* is based on *Adirondack Community* as the proven model. We use its launch and continued operations as the outline to help instruct you on how to develop your own story project tailored to your community and its unique histories. *OurStoryBridge* creates, hosts, and shares resources to grow more projects like *Adirondack Community* region-wide, state-wide, and beyond. We streamline project execution by offering timetables for planning and implementation; recommendations for staffing needs; budget and fundraising examples; advice and procedures to recruit storytellers and secure their stories, including technology recommendations; suggestions for forming partnerships both internal and external to your community; and plans for how to market, celebrate, and perpetuate your story project.

In addition to this *User Guide*, we invite you to use our supplementary training materials,  [Sample Documents](#) and  [How-To Videos](#), to get you started and keep you going. We can provide communities with additional direct assistance, at no charge, via telephone, email, and remote 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 OurStoryBridge Inc. is now an independent corporation, with 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable status 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 encouraging younger generations to become engaged community members.

We encourage you to lean on our experiences and resources to get you started, and then to innovate on and intuit the process that best fits your needs. Current *OurStoryBridge* projects are listed on 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

Adirondack Community: Capturing the Stories of Who We Are is a multi-year local history project that collects and organizes three- to five-minute audio stories with related photographs 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 225 three- to five-minute stories with associated photographs sourced from personal collections and/or the Keene Valley Library Archives. The total number of unique visitors to the project website quickly exceeded our total town population of 1,100 and is now over 6,000, and continues to increase daily. Compiled around common themes, individual stories are also developed into 18 podcasts to extend the listening experience. And partnerships 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, Paul Smith's College, and Clarkson University.

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 our student populations to encourage their growth as involved community members. *Adirondack Community* became the talk of the 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 other storytellers. People often speak about what brought them to the Keene area and why they stayed, about the spiritual or environmental or community force that pulled them in and held them tight. Word-of-mouth was and is a powerful tool to build the collection. Likewise, presentations of collected stories made to grades 8 – 12 at Keene Central School in has resulted in these and other stories being integrated into the school curriculum and students telling their own stories. Beyond our local school, stories are now also being used in college curricula at Paul Smith's College and Clarkson University, and schools of all levels through use of the *Teacher's Guide* (which will be explored in more depth in [Section VII: Partnerships](#)).

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* story project brings the histories of the Town of Keene, NY directly 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* for Your Community

We all have a story to tell, many stories. Life is a narrative, woven out of experience and emotion. Think of an *OurStoryBridge* 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 community's story project; but the shape this project takes and the content it captures and communicates remain yours to construct. We want to help. *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 impacts that an *OurStoryBridge* project can have on your community are:

- Appreciate the history that shaped your community, that helps make it what it is today and what it can become tomorrow.
- Create closer bonds between residents and promote connections that lead to neighborly acts of kindness, assistance, and support in times of need.
- Preserve stories that may be lost if not recorded soon and honor the legacies of your older generations by capturing their stories in their own words.
- Engage the younger generations and encourage them to remain in or return to their home community after high school, college, trade school, or any number of life's adventures.
- Educate residents and visitors of all ages and inspire them to become contributing members of your community.
- Celebrate what makes your community unique, perhaps even famous.
- Attract new residents and visitors.
- Reveal pockets of rich histories and connections heretofore unknown or not widely known.
- Acknowledge the catastrophes, tragedies, or difficult challenges that shape your community.
- Appreciate how the geography and the economics of your area impact how your community members live.
- Unravel the puzzle of how and why street or place names, stores, clubs, and other institutions came to be.
- Re-ignite a passion for your community archives and/or previously recorded oral histories by translating some onto this new digital platform.
- Use the stories of your community in your organization's fundraising activities.
- Meet your audience where they are: online!

How else might an *OurStoryBridge* project impact your community? Hold a brainstorming session to expose the many more positive, enriching, and empowering possibilities!

Testimonials for Adirondack Community

"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, KCS Teacher and Liaison to Adirondack Community

"My Adirondack Story gives us all a sense of community. It gives us an appreciation of our community members and their history, which makes us all closer to each other. It is wonderful to save the history of our wonderful community."

— Jill Murray

"It has allowed many people to remember treasured things from their past that center around the Adirondacks. In my case it has renewed a bond in my extended family."

— Norm Reynolds

"The Community 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

"The project has drawn out stories that are important, but not widely known. They're the root of the character of a community, often unseen but revealed by this effort. It isn't the first time this sort of thing has been tried. I think that fast turnaround to listeners in town has helped spur others to contribute. Well done."

— Dave Mason

"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 COVID winter."

— Debby Rice

"When I hear an interesting tidbit about our town, I ask, 'Did you tell it to Jery for the story project?' Usually they say 'yes.'"

— Lorraine Duvall

"It helps tie the community together through the huge variety of our tales, both past and present."

— David Thomas-Train

"It preserves memories that might otherwise be lost."

— Ellen DuBois

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

— William Reed

"This project weaves together the different threads of our community's history into one beautiful tapestry, that is ever expanding."

— Katherine Brown

"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

III. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

How does an *OurStoryBridge* project help a community?

Bringing an *OurStoryBridge* project to your community represents an appreciation of the history that shaped your community. It is also 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 for Your Community*

How can a community help an *OurStoryBridge* project?

Community members can immediately help by participating in focus groups to brainstorm relevant categories of stories and potential storytellers. They can volunteer to tell stories early on in the project's implementation, as well as volunteer to help execute the project's logistics. They can help continuously to recruit storytellers and create a 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 story project.

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.

See *Section XII: Communications, Marketing, and Public Relations (CMP)*

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

Our full suite of tools can be found at www.ourstorybridge.org.

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. We can provide communities with additional direct assistance, at no charge, via telephone, email, Zoom, and in-person meetings. Our work is dependent on funding, but substantial services are supplied by volunteers.

How long does it take to set up an *OurStoryBridge* project?

Launching an *OurStoryBridge* project typically takes six months to one year, from the “planning and approval phase” through the “preparation phase” to the “early implementation phase.” You can expect to collect, produce, and share your first stories within this time frame.

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

What is the cost of an *OurStoryBridge* project?

There is no set cost for an *OurStoryBridge* project. Any proposed budget is highly variable, as it depends on levels of expenses, revenues, and staff, volunteer, and consultant services available in and to your individual community. Estimated costs can be found in our *User Guide*, for informational purposes only.

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

How is an *OurStoryBridge* project funded?

Grants have proven to be especially helpful in setting up and sustaining *OurStoryBridge* projects. Your organization may approve financial support of your community’s story project. 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.

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

What types of organizations can run *OurStoryBridge* projects?

Libraries and historical societies are the most obvious sponsors for your audio history project, but any organization, either profit-based, nonprofit, government, or educational, can run an *OurStoryBridge* project. Some nonprofits with chapters and partners have considered collecting stories posted on one website to educate about their work and promote their organization. The possibilities are endless!

See [*Section VII: Partnerships*](#)

Is it important to pursue partnerships?

Forming partnerships, 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 photographs, increase website traffic, and provide any number of opportunities to maximize the project. You can ask partners and potential partners to join your Planning Committee and attend events.

See [*Section VII: Partnerships*](#)

What are the personnel needs of an *OurStoryBridge* 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 *Personnel Responsibilities Chart* provided in the *User Guide* presents a sample breakdown of the core team—their roles and responsibilities—and recommendations for supplementary assistance. In any case, one person should review all stories before publication. Note that personnel needs are generally reduced after the first year a story project is online.

See [Section V: Personnel](#)

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 story project by sending people to the project's website, which in turn demonstrates the impact of stories collected.

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

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?

Storytellers agree to the terms set forth by the individual story project. Typically, this involves storytellers giving your story project the right to use their name and to edit, publish, and share their stories. The project itself then holds the copyright to all the stories.

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

What technical expertise do the Program Manager and Story Aide need?

You will find that most of the technology and procedures are intuitive, with the majority of the experience needing to be with now-commonplace platforms such as Gmail, Google Drive, and Microsoft Office Suite (or Google's equivalents). The more idiosyncratic platforms for recording and posting stories, creating podcasts, etc. have their own Help Centers to assist you, and tutorials for all of these can be readily found online. The [OurStoryBridge User Guide](#) provides ample detail to assist you as well, and to place the technical needs of the project into context.

See [Section VIII: Technology Recommendations: Hardware, Software, and Services](#)

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

There are many options to choose from for your *OurStoryBridge* hardware, software, and service provider needs. Strive to balance your choices by considering what is most appropriate, user friendly, and cost effective for your project. Because technology evolves rapidly and hardware and software are subject to periodic updates and changes, Project Managers would be wise to consider technology outlook and trends to facilitate longer shelf life for hardware and software. In evaluating service providers, assess the provider's history and ability to incorporate or adjust to technology developments.

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

See [*Section VIII: Technology Recommendations*](#)

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 photographs, and reviewing 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 XI: Collecting, Processing, and Posting Stories*](#)

Does an *OurStoryBridge* project involve a lot of traveling to collect stories?

Travel tends to stay within the community served. Stories will often be collected from a dedicated space provided by the program sponsor (such as your local library), but this is not required. Because the equipment is portable, story collection can be done anywhere that has sufficient internet access. A link can also be sent to an individual storyteller if they wish to self-record their story, but this is not always recommended due to a lack of control over the recording quality.

Can individual storytellers record and submit their own stories?

Absolutely! The *OurStoryBridge User Guide* outlines how to accomplish this.

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

Can the entire story collection be backed up?

Per Memria (1/16/22), "Clients can export their entire story collection data at any time through the Story Request Dashboard. Our export tool exports all the HTML, audio, text and photographic data for each story request in a form that enables client to host their projects as static webpages on their own website. This does not include any functionality to collect, edit or share the stories. It also does not include the embedded mini player. If a client requests Memria to delete all their data after they've exported their stories, any mini players embedded on their website will disappear."

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

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

Per Memria (1/16/22), “Once a client’s subscription ends, published stories continue to be available through their Public Stories Page. Any mini players embedded on the client’s website will cease to display. Clients will no longer be able to login to their accounts to access unpublished stories or collect additional stories.”

Go to [Memria Data and Security Information](#) or 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 story project, and to the opportunities/venues for sharing the collected stories.

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

What is the *Teacher’s Guide*?

The *Teacher’s Guide* is a partnership between *OurStoryBridge* and its story 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. Teachers and school and public librarians can engage their students in the media that compels them, enhancing the learning experience.

See [Section VII: Partnerships](#)

How many individual stories make up a single podcast for an *OurStoryBridge* project?

Podcasts work well with four to five related stories, so that the podcast runs less than 30 minutes to retain audience attention.

See [Section IX: Using the Recommended Software](#)

How can I learn about current *OurStoryBridge* projects?

Check the *OurStoryBridge* website at www.ourstorybridge.org for links to new projects as they are released.

Does an *OurStoryBridge* project have an end point?

As long as the minimal funding required to continue a story project after its first few years is available, along with the personnel to run it, there is no definite end point. As an historical resource, it is hoped that each local story project continues as long as possible.



IV. Suggested Timetable for Planning and Implementation

Launching an *OurStoryBridge* project typically takes six months to one year, from the “planning and approval phase” through the “preparation phase” to the “early implementation phase.” You can expect to collect, produce, and share your first stories within this time frame.

The table below presents a general timeline and recommended task list for the implementation of your community story project. We recommend that you adapt this task list into a detailed Action Plan, including staff assignments, expected dates of completion, and status.

6 – 12 months: Planning and Approval Phase

1. Review www.ourstorybridge.org, this *User Guide*, and its Sample Documents and How-To Videos.
2. Pitch *OurStoryBridge* to leaders of your organization; commit to constructing project plan and funding options before approval.
3. Form a planning committee with relevant organization personnel, members of your community, and representatives of potential partnerships.
4. Hold the first planning committee meeting, led by the Project Manager: introduce the project; organize focus groups (if you choose to conduct them); work through budget and funding options; draft project plan; determine staffing options; coordinate meeting schedule.
5. Gain approval of organization leadership.
6. Finalize project plan and funding options; circulate to organization leadership.
7. Gain tentative commitments for staffing.
8. Raise initial funds.
9. Draft and execute focus group marketing plan.
10. Set program name and draft boilerplate project mission and vision.
11. Possibly hold focus groups to determine story categories; determine initial storytellers; create community interest; utilize social media.
12. Share focus group or other recommendations for story categories.
13. Prepare hard copy loose-leaf to develop your own user guide/manual; include all relevant documents.

6 – 9 months: Preparation Phase

14. Continue planning committee meetings; oversee and troubleshoot issues.
15. Continue fundraising; solidify funding for “preparation” and “early implementation” phases; submit reports as required by funders.
16. Fill staffing needs; determine whether they are volunteer or paid.
17. Contract with Memria or other web-based platform for story collection.
18. Adapt web-based platform to your story project.
19. Set up URL and Google Suite, including Gmail, Calendar, and Drive.
20. Determine website builder (e.g. Strikingly); design website outline.
21. Gather photographs for website.
22. Draft and create website.
23. Draft and begin implementing marketing plan for year one.
24. Purchase and set up equipment.
25. Set up location in which to collect stories.
26. Train staff.
27. Set goals for number of stories posted within specified time frames.
28. Collect photographs from local library, archive, historical society, and/or other organizations, with permissions.
29. Determine kick-off date for collection of first stories.
30. Recruit first storytellers; work with Story Aide(s) on techniques and administrative tasks.
31. Post first stories to website after pictures are collected; do not make website public yet.
32. Continue updating hard copy loose-leaf of your user guide/manual; include all relevant documents; add transcripts.

6 – 12 months: Early Implementation Phase

33. Continue planning committee meetings; oversee and troubleshoot issues.
34. Follow marketing plan to announce website release date and URL. Continue outreach through social media and other plan components.
35. Set up website analytics and schedule to update; use Sheets in Drive.
36. Hold website release celebration; invite community to learn about the project, hear first stories, and participate.
37. Aggressively schedule storytelling, collect photographs from storytellers and other resources, and post stories. Complete all related administrative tasks.
38. Continue implementing marketing plan to raise awareness of the project; recruit storytellers; promote website views.
39. Plan budget for next year.
40. Plan community events to celebrate milestones, e.g., 75 stories recorded.
41. Hold second celebratory event.
42. Start list of potential podcasts; create podcasts.
43. Continue updating hard copy loose-leaf of your user guide/manual; include all relevant documents; add transcripts.



V. Personnel

Personnel recommendations are just that, recommendations. Each *OurStoryBridge* project will vary in personnel dedicated to the project, dependent upon use of paid staff, volunteers, or 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 for a Library* below presents a breakdown of a core team with roles and responsibilities. and recommendations for supplementary assistance.

Sample Personnel Responsibilities Chart for a Library			
Project Manager (PM)	Library Director (LD)	Story Aide (SA)	Communications/Marketing/PR (CMP)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lead Planning Group ■ Write grant proposals and reports; be contact ■ Coordinate with LD; provide updates ■ Oversee CMP and SA ■ Set up, communicate with Memria ■ Provide and update budget; coordinate with Fiscal Manager/ LD ■ Hire, train, and oversee staff and volunteers ■ Plan, implement, and update website ■ Post stories to website ■ Draft, update project manual ■ Purchase equipment ■ Set up story area / equipment ■ Recruit storytellers and record stories, in addition to SA ■ Review and publish stories ■ Schedule, lead events ■ Send emails to storytellers and other lists, as relevant ■ Obtain initial buy-in and liaison from partners; make plans ■ Raise funds to assure sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participate in Planning Group ■ Coordinate with PM ■ Help with grants ■ Present reports to Library Board ■ Expedite budget issues ■ Hire staff, per job descriptions and PM approval ■ Train staff on library procedures ■ Communicate project at events and play stories ■ Recruit individual storytellers and send to SA for scheduling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Report to LD and PM ■ Participate in Planning Group ■ Maintain storytelling area/contents ■ Recruit and schedule storytellers ■ Instruct storytellers; record stories ■ Inform PM of stories to review for publication ■ Alert Archivist to stories upon recording; get photographs ■ Update documents on Google Drive ■ Develop and maintain relationships with current and potential storytellers ■ Post stories to website ■ Make podcasts ■ Help plan and implement events ■ Assist in communicating project ■ Communicate issues and suggested program upgrades ■ Perform organizational/ administrative tasks ■ Help form partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participate in Planning Group ■ Draft, update, and implement Marketing Plan ■ Use boilerplate ■ Create and implement press releases/media contacts/event communications ■ Market through social media/post on relevant e-news and listservs ■ Provide website and other updates to library ■ Write correspondence ■ Publicize and assist at events ■ Store work products on Google Drive ■ Recruit storytellers

In addition to the core team outlined above, consider the following (including, but not limited to) as supplemental personnel needed to help you execute your story project:

Planning Group	Archivist	Fiscal Manager	Web-based Platform
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet to review plans and progress Accept and complete tasks, as agreed upon Recruit storytellers Participate in events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in Planning Group Find photographs for stories, as requested Assist with transcripts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project accounting Updates to PM/LD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide platform and technology recommendations Help with start-up Troubleshoot assist, and upgrade, as requested

Liaison with Historical Society	Liaison with Relevant Schools, Other Partners	Liaison with relevant libraries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update, liaison, and provide suggestions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with PM to communicate with faculty and students Integrate program into school activities Help recruit student storytellers Coordinate with PM; publicize program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with PM and SA on storytelling on-site Publicize project

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

Selection, training, and oversight of the Story Aide and CMP are very important, so be sure that whether they are volunteers, staff, or consultants, they have passion for the project and skills or willingness to learn. Using the detailed guidance in this *User Guide*, current Project Managers have shared that learning the responsibilities is easier than they anticipated.

For the *Adirondack Community* story project, a volunteer serves as Project Manager. This person has an extensive background as an executive, is a librarian, and has technical expertise. While this level of experience is not required, continued commitment is. In addition, *Adirondack Community* initially raised funds to hire a paid, part-time Story Aide and to obtain communications/marketing/public relations (CMP) assistance. Project Manager 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 photographs and log the 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 story project is online.

VI. Budgeting, Grants, and Fundraising

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

- Organizations who choose to participate source their own funding.
- A proposed budget for a story project can be highly variable, dependent on levels of expenses, revenues, and staff, volunteer, and consultant services available.
- The estimated budget below serves as a model to build on, dependent upon design of your story project. Expenses are estimated from existing *OurStoryBridge* projects for informational purposes only.
- At the core of the estimated budget are variables including level and skills of staff, volunteer, and consultant services for leadership, grantsmanship, financial management, planning, human resources services, marketing/communications/public relations, story collection, administrative tasks, implementation, and sustainability.
- *OurStoryBridge* offers remote and in-person training and technical assistance to communities as in-kind contributions to help you plan and implement your own story projects. Our work is dependent on funding, but substantial services are supplied by volunteers.
- Be sure to visit www.ourstorybridge.org for additional resources.

Estimated OurStoryBridge Story Project Expenses			
	Year One	Ongoing	Notes
Memria Platform Subscription	\$1,000	\$1,000	Platform for collecting and marketing stories
Website/URL	\$125	\$125	See Strikingly
Webmaster	\$1,000	\$500	See suggested webmaster
Total	\$1,925	\$1,625	
Optional Expenses			
Transcripts	\$300	\$300	\$1.50/minute for automatic transcriptions for 50 stories/year
Chromebook	\$300		Website design/ maintenance
Headphone with microphone	\$30		Consultant or part-time staff
Supplies	\$100	\$75	Consultant or part-time staff

Labor

The expenses shown above to start and continue a story project are minimal; the real cost is in labor, which is variable dependent upon use of staff, volunteers, and/or consultants to fill the Project Manager, Story Aide, and Communications/Marketing/PR (CMP) roles. For existing projects, the Project Manager has generally been staff, but a dedicated volunteer or consultant can fill the role. In the first year of the project, selection, training, and oversight of the Story Aide and CMP are very important, so be sure that whether they are volunteers, staff, or consultants, they have passion for the project and skills or willingness to learn. Using the detailed guidance in this *User Guide*, current Project Managers have shared that implementing the responsibilities is easier than they anticipated.

Using existing staff and volunteers keeps costs down. Setting goals for number of stories per year can help you estimate the cost of a Story Aide. Similarly, expectations for the CMP responsibilities will determine how much help is needed. Volunteers in the community can be especially effective, especially retirees, but students can help as well. You can also reach out to local colleges for interns. If grant funds or contributions are available, try to hire staff or consultants who can also seek out volunteers to help for continuity.

Note: For *Adirondack Community*, initial funding was from grants. Later on, as funding needs were reduced each year due to the elimination of one-time expenses (such as equipment and website set-up) and addition of volunteer support, community members were solicited for continued funding and it is expected that eventually, costs will be absorbed into the sponsoring library's budget.

Grants and Fundraising

To start your grants and fundraising work:

1. Create a document describing your program, its goals, and the resources needed.
2. Characterize what the program will do for your community and its sponsors.
3. Create and build on a list of possible donors and network in the community to gather ideas.
4. Keep records of all you do.

Sources for grants and fundraising vary for each organization. The ability to fundraise in the community, through corporations, local organizations, community programs, and grant-making organizations is dependent upon knowledge of existing resources:

- Ideally, your organization will build the story project expenses into their budget.
- Work with others in the community to brainstorm ideas for fundraising: Are there local, state, or national corporations 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? Non-profit 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 in the community and externally 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.
- 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. A tool to research grantors to libraries in particular can be found [here](#).



VII. Partnerships

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 photographs, increase website traffic, and provide any number of opportunities to maximize the project. You can start by asking partners and potential partners to join your Planning Committee and attend events.

Details on the *Teacher's Guide*, at the end of this chapter, are intended for national use.

Below are some common sources of partnerships to pursue, using the *Adirondack Community* story project as our working example:

Local Schools (K - 12)

See Sample  *School Introduction for Administration PPT*,  *Sample School Introduction for Students PPT* and  *Sample School Story Projects Design*.

Schools should be considered the most important partnership. Keene Central School (KCS), K - 12 school for the Town of Keene, NY, is the most important partner for Adirondack Community; this partnership builds on our project goal to build civic pride and engagement among our student population and to encourage their growth and retention as involved community members. To secure this partnership for Adirondack Community, a PowerPoint presentation was created to explain the project to KCS's principal. He then agreed to appoint a teacher liaison, encourage students to tell stories, and integrate stories into the curriculum.

As the partnership continued, annual 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* (detailed later in this section), to enhance classroom content with local stories and those from across the country. KCS 8th and 12th grade story projects include a lesson on storytelling and its value, help organizing stories, storytelling by students, publication as individual stories or podcasts, and review of stories in the classroom.

Colleges and Universities

See  *Sample College Assignment*.

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 integrate the story project 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 a follow-up assignment.

Local Historical Societies

Historical societies are sponsors or partners of *OurStoryBridge*. They are valuable resources for communicating the project and its needs, recruiting storytellers, providing opportunities to present stories, and obtaining photographs. In addition to providing material resources for *Adirondack Community*, the Keene Historical Society contributed a member to the project's Planning Committee—a great way for us to liaison.

Libraries

See  [Sample Library Website](#).

In addition to the sponsoring library, other libraries in your area can be enthusiastic partners with your project. Community events, public flyers, sponsored book talks, and more can all be used to publicize the project. While the *Adirondack Community* project is sponsored by the Keene Valley Library, from inception we included the Town of Keene's other library, Keene Public Library. This included a seat on the Planning Group and pairing promotional activities at both libraries. Libraries can also check with their public, school, or multi-type regional systems for possible sources of collaboration or funding.

Library Systems

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 us an Innovation Grant, opportunities to communicate with other libraries, and continued guidance. For *OurStoryBridge*, their guidance continues.

Businesses

Research local, state, or national corporations 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.

Senior and Assisted Living Centers

Capturing the stories of the eldest in the community should be a priority. It is a goal of *Adirondack Community*: to capture the rich cultural history of the High Peaks Region of the Adirondacks, with a focus on recording older generations before their history is lost. Senior and assisted living centers are therefore great resources. *Adirondack Community* maintains contact with our local Neighborhood House, an assisted living center. 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.

Cultural Institutions, Civic Groups, and Government

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

Museums

Local and regional museums can publicize your project and provide great opportunities for partnerships. For example, *OurStoryBridge* was asked to lead the Adirondack History Museum's Historian's Day, open to the public. When the day was moved to a virtual presentation, a new museum partnership model was created when the Historian's Day included not just information about *OurStoryBridge* and current story projects, but a virtual *walkthrough* of the museum, including stories from *Adirondack Community* that tied to specific current library exhibits. Also, Adirondack Experience, The Museum on Blue Mountain Lake (<http://theadkx.org/>) created an exhibit, "Wilderness to Warfront: The Adirondacks and World War II." *Adirondack Community* provided its recorded World War II stories to be used in the exhibit as well as helped to facilitate the local collection of artifacts and contacts with storytellers. We expect that additional museum collaboration opportunities will follow.

Teacher's Guide

See  [Sample School Story Projects Design](#) and links below.

The *Teacher's Guide* is a partnership between *OurStoryBridge* and its story projects. It is updated approximately quarterly to add the latest stories and podcasts from story projects across the country.

Each *OurStoryBridge* project can link from their website to the *Teacher's Guide* in the Tool Kit on 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* 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 memorable. 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 catalogued are in *Story Summaries*, with titles hyperlinked and special 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, or English. 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 story project websites listed at the top of *Story Summaries*. *Sample School Assignment* provides suggestions for a project adaptable to all levels.

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



VIII. Technology Recommendations

There are many options to choose from for your *OurStoryBridge* hardware, software, and service provider needs. Strive to balance your choices by considering what is most appropriate, user friendly, and cost effective for your project. We hope our research and experience can help to expedite your decision-making process.

Technology evolves rapidly and hardware and software are therefore subject to periodic updates and changes. Project Managers would be wise to consider technology outlook and trends to facilitate longer shelf life for hardware and software. In evaluating service providers, assess the provider's history and ability to incorporate or adjust to technology developments. Prices and service terms will vary. *Adirondack Community*, for example, was approached as an independent project. Some communities may be able to leverage existing resources.

OurStoryBridge is unique among oral history projects through collection of brief audio stories with associated photographs posted online, making them easily accessible. At least one *OurStoryBridge* project under our umbrella is collecting brief video stories. Your project may vary from the methodology described herein, which will evolve, and *OurStoryBridge* will continue broadening its umbrella as creative story projects with similar goals join us.

Disclaimer: This *User Guide* describes vendors, software, and services. Information and statements regarding any specific vendor, commercial product, process, or service specifically refers to successful use in the *Adirondack Community* story project and does not constitute or imply an endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by the sponsors of *Adirondack Community* or *OurStoryBridge*, its directors, or employees.

HARDWARE

Acer Chromebook R11

- Purchased from Amazon for about \$200, but more current models may be available.
- Includes touchscreen, onscreen keyboard, and camera, and functions either as a regular laptop or with the screen rotated into different positions.
- The Chromebook can be a dedicated device for your story project, with access limited to the core team and relevant bookmarks maintained (e.g., *OurStoryBridge User Guide*, your project's Gmail account and website, the Google Drive, the *Story Log* and its individual storyteller folders, the *Storyteller Worksheet*, Memria, the project website, Strikingly, etc).
- **Note:** Although the Chromebook was very useful as *Adirondack Community* began and stories were taken in the library, due to the pandemic we switched to personal laptop computers and other devices to take stories, publish them, and perform other tasks.

Acer Wireless Optical Mouse

- Purchased from Amazon for about \$20; any cordless mouse will suffice.
- Keep the mouse with the Chromebook; do not detach the USB receiver.
- **Note:** Some users prefer the trackpad, so this is not a necessary purchase.

Mpow Wired USB Headset

- Purchased from Amazon for about \$20, but more current models may be available.
- Plugs into a USB port.
- The top microphone button turns blue when on; the two middle buttons are for volume (keep at the highest); the bottom button mutes.
- Improves sound quality.
- Note: If you detach the USB connection to listen to a story after the storyteller has finished, be sure to reattach it before the next story is told or you will lose the story.

SOFTWARE

Memria (www.memria.org)

- Web-based platform used to record and house stories and photographs, generate links to stories, download them, produce transcripts, get permissions, connect to social media.
- Cost to organizations in *OurStoryBridge* is currently \$1,000 per annual subscription.
- To learn more about Memria or to purchase a subscription, visit www.memria.org. For additional questions, contact Louis Bickford at louis@memria.org. If you already have a Memria subscription and are looking for instructional assistance, visit the *Memria User Manual*. Questions about security, back-ups, and disposition of stories after termination of a Memria subscription can be found in the *Memria Data and Security Information* document.
- **Note:** Although some story projects do not use Memria, we have found it to be the best platform for story projects because of its capabilities for the price.

Strikingly (www.strikingly.com)

- Website provider.
- Multi-year agreement is recommended, about \$230 for two years.
- Contact them for discount code for nonprofit organizations.
- They help you to obtain your domain name, which must be renewed annually for about \$25; email reminders should be sent by Strikingly.
- Relevant emails are sent to an address you select (e.g. the project's Gmail address).

Password Locker (www.1password.com or www.passwordsplus.com)

- Recommended for all staff at a cost of approximately \$40 per year.
- Because there will be several passwords and multiple staff using them, it is important to use a password locker for security and efficiency. You only share the main password and all other passwords are then available and updated.
- Chromebook, Google Suite, Strikingly, and Memria all require passwords and they should not be the same.
- Never write down a password for others to share.
- In any case, change passwords often to increase security.

Anchor.fm (www.anchor.fm)

- Podcast generator, free service. Automatically posts podcasts on common platforms. The link to the podcast and its name is posted to the podcasts page of the story project website.
- The software is intuitive and easy to learn.
- Links to social media are included.
- You can also download apps to your smartphone and tablet to create the podcasts.
- Narrations are recorded as MP3's, using various programs, including Voice Recorder on a Windows computer, Voice Memos on an iPhone, or other options. The MP3's can be combined with stories downloaded from Memria.
- Options for musical interludes are provided.

SERVICES

Webmaster

- Jason Wallace works remotely and can be reached at jason@jasonbwallace.com or (704) 794-7069. His website is www.jasonbwallace.com.
- Jason understands the intricacies of making the connection between Memria and the story project website, and can be helpful with other needs.
- After the initial setup, your staff will post stories to the website and communicate with Jason (or another webmaster) to make changes and updates, if/when needed.

Security

- The Chromebook has security protections installed.
- All usual preventions should be implemented. For example, do not download anything or click links from an unknown sender.



IX. Using the Recommended Software

WEB-BASED PLATFORM— e.g. Memria

- *Memria* is the web-based platform used by *Adirondack Community*.
- It records and houses the audio stories and photographs; generates links to stories; allows for downloading; provides links to social media, generates transcripts (at \$1.50 per audio minute of transcription), etc.
- This *User Guide* contains detailed instructions for how to employ this platform in your story project.
- In addition to features described in this *User Guide*, Memria provides a “Share by video” option which converts the audio and photographs into a video slideshow that can be shared on social media.

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*.

WEBSITE BUILDER— e.g., Strikingly

- We recommend a separate website, linked to your organization’s website.
- You can use *Strikingly* or another website builder to plan and create a website to host and publicize your stories. Review the *Adirondack Community* website (www.myadirondackstory.org) for a model.
- If you buy a Pro subscription to Strikingly, email them to request the nonprofit discount for the first year. (Alert *OurStoryBridge* first because we may be able to generate a code that gives *OurStoryBridge* credit for referring you). You save more money with a multi-year subscription. Some story projects have been able to clone the *Adirondack Community* website, changing colors, words, photos, categories, etc. or just copy elements, to make it easier to create their story project website.
- You can design and update the website, or you can hire a webmaster like Jason Wallace. If you use Jason (jason@jasonbwallace.com), he will also train you on how to post the stories.
- 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 options, so we recommend that you have alternative configurations available as additional viable options. Buy the domain name, which can be obtained through Strikingly if you are using them, or elsewhere.
- Create a Gmail address with your project name, for example smithvillestorybridge@gmail.com, to use for communication on your project and to connect to the Contact Form. Decide who monitors it.
- You can use the same page tabs as on www.myadirondackstory.org, but you could combine Home and About Us and you do not need podcasts (yet), nor In the Press. On Home or About Us explain what your story project is with the project name and maybe add a 90 second video with details. Include a straightforward navigation menu and photo array.
- Your website will ultimately host the three- to five-minute stories you collect (organized by category, three across with a maximum of 18 – 24 stories per page, categories listed in the order you want them to appear), and possibly podcasts, the *Teacher’s Guide*, publicity

materials, background history on how and why your story project got started, contact information and additional resources, etc. This *User Guide* contains detailed instructions for marketing your story project.

- Colors and fonts should be the same as on your organization's website or choose other attractive colors to use consistently.
- Put the *OurStoryBridge* Project Logo on your website, linked to www.ourstorybridge.org, preferably in the upper left of the home page (details in Chapter XII.)
- Supply the webmaster with the logo for your organization or the project if you create one.
- Provide photos (with attributions), including at least two choices for each category so the webmaster can choose the most appropriate one, plus a few others to be scattered on the website.
- For the *Teacher's Guide* page, use <https://www.ourstorybridge.org/tool-kit> as your *Teacher's Guide* tab page (scroll down to Teacher's Guide).

PODCASTS— e.g. Anchor.fm

- [Anchor.fm](https://anchor.fm) is a free, user-friendly program that generates podcasts and is very intuitive.
- 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 are recorded as MP3's, using various programs, including Voice Recorder on a Windows computer, Voice Memos on an iPhone, or other options.
- Record the standard introduction to the podcast series for your *OurStoryBridge* project, then an introduction to the specific podcast topic.
- Next, record the introduction to the first story, then record separate introductions to the second, third, etc. stories.
- Be sure also to record the standard conclusion, adding language relevant to the topic.
- 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.
- Set up a free [Anchor.fm](https://anchor.fm) account. Use the instructions on the Anchor website to create the podcast by giving it a title and uploading all the parts from your computer or the Google Drive folder.
- Within your [Anchor.fm](https://anchor.fm) account, select music from their selections for transitions.
- Place the parts in the proper order; it is easier to arrange the parts of a podcast on a tablet, even if you construct it on a computer.
- You can add a photo and summary to each podcast (episode).

- After you review your podcast, publish it per the instructions on [Anchor.fm](#) and a link will appear for you to upload the finished podcast to your website.
- Social media connections are also available.

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.
- Free tutorials from Google are readily available to teach you how to use them.
- From the [Google home page](#), click the box with nine black squares in the upper right to select your app, as described below. You will need to sign in to your story project Google account, if you haven't already. Next to the boxes is a circle with a letter or logo showing which Google account is being used. Be sure you are entering the appropriate account, as other Google accounts you have (such as a personal account) may be active. You can click the circle of the Google account and add/login with the correct project email address and password, when necessary.
- The following Google Apps are recommended for your *OurStoryBridge* project:

Gmail

- Set up a Gmail account using an email address tied to the name of your project. *Adirondack Community* uses myadirondackstory@gmail.com, for example.
- Bookmark the URL on the Chromebook or other device.
- All project communications should use this email address, including between staff. 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 (in alphabetical order): “business,” “marketing,” “photographs,” “storyteller requests,” “staff,” and “transcripts.”

Calendar

- Staff should include all their appointments with storytellers and other related activities.
- Bookmark the URL on the Chromebook or other device.
- Assign colors to individual staff, obtained by right clicking the appointments.
- Staff meetings and events should be designated with their own color.

Drive

- A Google Drive should contain all project documents (including the latest *OurStoryBridge User Guide* and your specific project manual, if you draft one).
- Bookmark the URL on the Chromebook or other device.
- Share the Drive with staff as relevant.
- Create folders to organize the documents you will need. Suggestions include “budget and grants,” “implementation,” “*story log*, photographs, and transcripts,” “CMP” [marketing/communications/public relations], and “podcasts.”



X. Recruitment of Storytellers

The following *Storyteller Worksheet* should reside on the shared Google Drive. This document will quickly become the fulcrum on which your story project turns. As the resource used to recruit storytellers and record progress, it must be continuously updated and referenced.

STORYTELLER WORKSHEET

121									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Date Added	First	Last	Email	Cell	Other	Notes	Scheduled	Story #
2	3/2/18	Sue	Ashe	abc@gmail.com	518-123-4567	518-123-4577	Student		33, 96
3	4/7/19	Mary	Auer	def@gmail.com	518-123-4568	518-123-4578			57
4	1/2/19	Linda	Austin		518-123-4569		Merchant		
5	3/7/20	Yvonne	Ayres	ghi@gmail.com		518-123-4580			
6	5/31/19	Candy	Bailey	jkl@gmail.com	518-123-4571	518-123-4581		wait	
7	11/3/20	Bob	Banks	mno@hotmail.com	518-123-4572	518-123-4582		6/21/20 3:00 PM	
8	4/14/19	Peter	Bardman	pqr@yahoo.com	518-123-4573		House/family		
9	3/22/18	Josh	Edmonds		518-123-4574		From Suzy		43
10	5/30/18	Craig	Bell	stu@me.com	518-123-4575	518-123-4585			37
11	8/14/19	Tony	Berger	vwr@ac.com	518-123-4576	518-123-4586		6/20/20 2:00 PM	
12									
13	KEY								
14	Get email/phone								
15	Told story								
16	Told story/get more								
17	Great prospect/senior								
18	Great prospect for 1st								
19									

USING THE STORYTELLER WORKSHEET

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

- Construct the *Storyteller Worksheet* to contain the following: date the potential storyteller was added, first and last names, email address plus cell and other telephone numbers, additional notes and suggestions for stories, scheduling information, and numbers of stories told.
- Collect names and data before you are ready to record the first stories, and continually expand and update this data pool. For example, when you hold focus groups to identify story categories, solicit names of potential storytellers with contact information; this will help to jump start the generation of data. 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 of communication to help connect you with storytellers, known and unknown.
- Determine a threshold number of names for your *Storyteller Worksheet*. Once reached, then select from among those individuals who you will contact first to tell their stories.
- Color code the worksheet to facilitate workflow and record keeping. For example, *Adirondack Community* assigns specific colors to individual staff to designate who pursues which storyteller. In addition, we code each story with “red” if they have told one story, “blue” if after one story they have the potential to tell more, purple if they are an excellent

prospect for a first story, and grey if they are seniors and a great prospect. And as the final column revealing story numbers is updated, the color of the first column is updated as well. This helps to streamline follow-up communications. The email column has “yellow highlighted” cells for missing email addresses or telephone numbers.

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 when members meet, followed up by an email, text, and/or call to schedule. Clearly, in-person communication takes more time, but its effectiveness cannot be emphasized enough.
- 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 more 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. The number of times storytellers for *Adirondack Community* have said they are nervous, but that we make it easy for them to contribute, is astounding!
- 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 45 minutes and that they do not need to be prepared; you will help them.
- Note each attempt to contact on the *Storyteller Worksheet*.
- When scheduling, be precise about the date/time of commitment, and that you will be waiting at the library (or other determined location in a specific place). Note the agreed upon date/time in the scheduled column of the *Storyteller Worksheet*.
- Upon scheduling, ask that the storyteller bring or email relevant photographs, if possible. Include outreach language such as “please bring or email up to five photographs 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 requests” after the storyteller has come in.

XI. Collecting, Processing, and Posting Stories

Our experience with the *Adirondack Community* story project serves as the working template for the step-by-step instructions that follow in this section. Be sure to adapt them as needed for your own *OurStoryBridge* project.

START BY CREATING STORY REQUESTS IN MEMRIA

View  [How to Create Story Requests.](#)

- **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* (process described below) is called a story request.
- Purchase a subscription to [Memria](#) and create a password to sign in, as instructed. 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 story project.
- The password should be saved on the Chromebook, laptop, or other device and entered in the Password Locker. If there is a problem, obtain the password from the Password Locker or Project Manager.
- 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.
- Under Story Content write a concise description of what you are looking for in a story in the category, an example, and 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 to help your storyteller get started.
- 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.
- The storyteller to receive the request is whomever set up Memria for your project. Make it public, invite only. Click Yes for embedded on a website. Click No for private group.
- 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.

PREPARE THE STORYTELLER

- If necessary, remind the storyteller not to be nervous. They can practice their story a few times, even practice recording and re-record.
- If your storyteller wants to listen to a story or two first, to get the feel of it, go to your project website and listen to previously recorded stories and/or visit [Adirondack Community](#) for examples.
- Discuss with the storyteller what they want to talk about.
- Help the storyteller pick a short, preferably catchy name for their story.
- Ask them to think of three or four things they want to be sure to say and jot them down on an index card.
- Add beginning and final sentences to their notes. The beginning sentence should start with their name and then something about the topic of their story, preferably in an interesting way.
- 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.
- 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. Also, 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 discussion with the storyteller. To help you select the category, a hard-copy list of categories with descriptions and prompting questions should be posted in the area you collect stories. For posting on the website, we recommend that stories be in one, two, or three categories.
- Click Get Started.
- Be sure that the microphone is attached to the computer by USB, with the cable connected and the blue light on. Volume should be set at the highest level; click the + to increase.
- Tell the storyteller that 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 warning at one minute and then again at 30 seconds when they are running out of time.

- Remind them that they should begin as soon as you click Record, in order to avoid dead space at the beginning. Remind them to start with their beginning sentence, introducing themselves with their full name and introducing the subject of the story.
- Click Record and make a motion with your hand to let them 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.
- You can click the Take Photo button to access the webcam on Chromebook, although we do not do this in *Adirondack Community*. 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 photographs will be enough, that is fine. Only the photographs selected later from your archive, that the storyteller supplies, or that you obtain from other sources will appear with the story.
- When they are done recording, 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 it uploads. If you detach the microphone to listen together, be sure to plug it in before recording again.
- To re-record, if needed, click Back to go to the Tell Your Story page and click Re-record.
- Have the storyteller enter their full name and complete the permissions questions. These include permission to display the storyteller's name, grant the sponsoring organization permission to use their story, and that they have reviewed on the Terms and Conditions (in compliance with the European Union's Global Data Privacy Regulation).
- Afterwards, the Submit button will turn pink and they can click it to submit their story.
- An email will automatically be sent to the project Gmail account when each story is submitted.
- Close and thank the storyteller. Tell them their story will be approved soon, with their own photographs and/or photographs from the archive added to it, and it will then be released in about one week for them to View and hear on your story project's website.
- Ask for photographs (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 photographs, in order to concentrate on the next storytellers.
- **Note:** Other than those with program responsibilities, no one should be touching the program equipment or software.
- **Note:** Only children 13 and older can record stories without parental permission, because they are posted online. You can use parental/guardian permission forms for those stories. Of course, listening to stories is recommended for all ages!
- **Note:** If you have digitized old oral histories, you can edit them and upload five minute segments as stories in Memria.

SELF-RECORDED STORY COLLECTION

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

- Although *OurStoryBridge* works best with a Story Aide working in-person with the storyteller, you can send an email to the storyteller with a link for the story to be told using their own computer or tablet.
- Communicate with the storyteller by email or telephone to determine the possible category for the story and to understand their ability to record the story on their own. Because you can choose the category or categories, this is only relevant because of the prompting questions that will appear on their screen. You can tell them to ignore these.
- You may want to help the storyteller construct and practice their story.
- 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.
- Got 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. 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 headphones, please use them (although it is not required).
- Please email any relevant photographs to [add project Gmail address].
- Remember to write out the first line introducing yourself, an ending, and a few points you want to be sure 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 the story, you will be notified by email in the same manner as when you use Story Book Mode.

- **Note:** You can also include a Tell Your Story button on your story 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 an email address and password). Once this account is created, users will View a Record page that looks just like Story Booth Mode. (Given *Adirondack Community's* success with in-person storytelling and recording, we do not recommend this option for widespread use to execute your *OurStoryBridge* 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

View  [How to Use the Story Log](#),  [How to Add Photographs and Publish Stories](#), and  [How to Generate Links and Embed Codes](#).

- Immediately upon submitting the story, complete an entry in the *Story Log*, bookmarked on the Chromebook, laptop, or other device. This is the resource used to keep track of stories—update continuously. Enter the story number, title, storyteller, email address, telephone number, categories to post in, date published, transcript status, and status of photographs. Keep this updated as you move through the steps. When the Embed Code is added, it should be highlighted in yellow until the posting is completed. Also add a link to the story.

#	Story Date	Title	Storyteller	Email	Mobile	Cat 1	Cat 2	Cat 3	Photos	Transcript	Published	Embed Code	Link
1	3/27/19	Winning the Olympic Gold Medal	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com	111-111-1111	P	O		Done	TRUE	6/6/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
2	3/29/19	From Brooklyn Girl to Adk Outdoorswoman	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com	111-111-1111	P	O		Done	TRUE	6/6/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
3	4/3/19	The Morning Routine at Route 9N Bus Stop	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com	111-111-1111	D	C		Done	TRUE	6/6/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
4	5/1/19	Why Advocacy is Important in the Adirondack Park	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com		W	NME		Done	TRUE	6/9/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
5	5/8/19	Falling in Love with the 46 and Finding New Loves	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com		O	NME		Done	TRUE	6/6/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
6	5/8/19	From the Old World to the New	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com		P	NME		Done	TRUE	6/6/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
7	5/10/19	The River House	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com	111-111-1111	NME	P		Done	TRUE	6/7/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
8	5/14/19	Nourished by the Arts	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com	111-111-1111	AC	P		Done	TRUE	6/7/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
9	5/21/19	75 Years of History on the Little Porter Trail	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com	111-111-1111	O	P	NME	Done	TRUE	6/7/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
10	5/21/19	The Largest Landslide in NYS	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com	111-111-1111	Cat	NME		Done	TRUE	6/7/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
11	5/21/19	Adrian Edmonds & the Storytelling Culture	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com	111-111-1111	P	NME		Done	TRUE	6/7/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
12	5/21/19	Adrian Goes to College	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com	111-111-1111	NME	P		Done	TRUE	6/7/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
13	5/23/19	Glenmore School of Cultural Sciences	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com		C	AC		Done	TRUE	6/7/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
14	5/25/19	A Tax Collector, "Sworn In and Then Sworn At"	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com		W	P		Done	TRUE	6/7/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
15	5/28/19	Sunday Nights Sings	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com	111-111-1111	C	AC		Done	TRUE	6/7/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
16	5/28/19	Family Homes on Beede Road	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com	111-111-1111	P	NME		Done	TRUE	6/7/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
17	5/29/19	Music As a Thread in My Life	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com	111-111-1111	AC	P		Done	TRUE	6/7/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
18	5/29/19	Brother Bud Goes to War	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com	111-111-1111	P	Cat		Done	TRUE	6/7/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
19	5/30/19	Who is the Newcomer?	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com	111-111-1111	P	D		Done	TRUE	6/7/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	
20	5/30/19	Our 21st Century Library	Sally Smith	ssallysmith@gmail.com	111-111-1111	C	NME		Done	TRUE	6/7/19	<script type="text/javascript" src="ht	

Note: The embed code, link, and access to social media posting are available in Memria in each specific story, in the Share box.

- *Sample Story Log* shows you how to construct your *Story Log*.
- When entering data into the *Story Log*, also add one, two, or three relevant categories for website posting. Try not to use any one category too often.
- If you have an arrangement with an archive or other resource, immediately email them requesting up to five (four if there is a storyteller photo) relevant photographs related to the story description you write. Send key words to help in the archivist's search. Indicate that you need the stories within one week after the story is recorded. Remind either the archivist or storyteller, as needed.
- The photographs must be digital; photos of photographs taken on a smart phone are adequate, but be careful of shadows and lights that impede photo quality.

- If you cannot obtain photographs from others or take them yourself, search the internet, but check for copyright and other intellectual property claims before posting. Credit photographers contributing to the site as you download them to the story, using the caption box in Memria. You can also add a photo description to the caption box. A Creative Commons (CC) license is one of several public copyright licenses that enable the free distribution of a copyrighted work. Several sites offer Creative Commons search tools for creators Seeking to discover and reuse free resources, such as <https://ccsearch.creativecommons.org/>. When in doubt, check with the website from which images are taken.
- You can receive photographs by email, then download to insert into Memria.
- Store the photographs on the Google Drive under “*Story Log*, Photographs, and Transcripts.” Make a folder for each story, using the number from the *Story Log* and storyteller name, then input the photographs, 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 photographs by clicking Edit Photo(s):
 - To add photographs, go to the story, browse to the photo location, then upload the photographs, 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. You can use this box to credit photographers.
 - When you are finished, click the pink Save and View story button at the top of the page. This will return you to the story.
- Update the *Storyteller Worksheet* with appropriate story numbers.
- After the photographs are uploaded, email the Project Manager to publish. The Project Manager should listen to each story before it is published to assure that quality and content are appropriate. You can then decide whether the Project Manager or other staff should continue processing and posting the story.
- Update the *Story Log* to indicate the date that the story is published, and add the Embed Code from Share to the last field, highlighted in yellow (to signify that it is not posted yet). Then add the Link too.
- Add the story number to the notes field in the *Story Log*, then click Add.

TRANSCRIPTS

See  *Sample Transcripts*.

- To continue processing the story, click the Transcript button to have a transcript generated from the audio recording (if you want one).
- 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 Download Transcription File.

- Open the *Story Log* on the 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.
- Add the transcript to the Google Drive, in the folder “*Story Log, Photographs and Transcripts*,” under the appropriate number and storyteller.
- Change 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.
- Print the transcript and place into the loose-leaf binder in story number order, writing the story number on the top right of each page.
- **Note:** Memria will invoice you at the rate of \$1.50 per audio minute transcribed.
- **Note:** You may decide not to collect transcripts, leaving out these steps; they can also be requested at a later date.
- **Note:** Transcripts are especially helpful if you are translating your stories into other languages.

POSTING STORIES

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

- By clicking the Share button on the story on Memria, social media buttons will appear in order to post the story directly onto Facebook and Twitter, along with a website link to the story and HTML code for website posting. That HTML (Embed) Code is used to post the story on your website.
- To post on the project website, sign in to [Strikingly](#) or another website builder, bookmarked on the Chromebook, laptop, or other device.
- Click Edit.
- On the left where you see Home, click to find the category pages indicated on the *Story Log* for the story you want to post. You will do this several times, dependent 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 and that you select the next available space for the story, so they line up.
- When a page has reached 21 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. Remove the current Memria stories and replace them with the new ones. You will also need to create navigation for 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 right clicking the plus sign (+) located under the story that you want to post.

- Find the Embed Code from the *Story Log*, highlighted in yellow because it has not been posted yet.
- Choose HTML, then Edit, then HTML.
- In the custom HTML Code Box, paste the Embed 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 photographs rotating, appears on the page.
- Repeat this process for all relevant categories, then click Publish. The exclamation point denotes that there are unpublished changes to the website.
- **Note:** The changes will not appear on your website until you close out of Strikingly and refresh the browser for the website.
- If you make a mistake, click the garbage can on the upper right of a story. Delete, then click Publish.
- **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 Memria; this is not the preferred way for stories to be viewed by the public, because this link shows all stories without the organization by category.

XII. Communications, Marketing, and Public Relations (CMP)

Note: Because there are so many Sample Documents for this section, a comprehensive list of these documents can be found [here](#).

Adirondack Community began with one part-time staff, in conjunction with the volunteer Project Manager, to execute the CMP responsibilities. These are especially important in project planning and during the first year. Ideally, staff would have relevant experience. It may be possible to combine the CMP responsibilities with those of the Story Aide.

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 their native language Yupik, meaning Bridge of Stories) and www.ourbrvstories.org for Tremonton, Utah, in the Bear River Valley. *Adirondack Community: Capturing, Retaining, and Communicating the Stories of Who We Are* was created before *OurStoryBridge*. Colloquially, and for branding purposes, we refer to this story project as *Adirondack Community*.

Note: You may want to suggest a tentative project name with which to convene focus groups and generate feedback (see below).

FOCUS GROUPS

You can hold focus groups during the initial planning phase to: 1) finalize project name; 2) determine story categories; 3) list initial storytellers; and 4) engender community interest. Market the focus groups through word-of-mouth, posters, email, social media, community e-newsletters, press releases, etc., and recognize that personal and in-person contacts are the most valuable.

Focus group work from *Adirondack Community* can help you to conduct the process. See [■ ■ Sample Focus Group Agenda](#), [■ ■ Sample Focus Group Email](#), [■ ■ Sample Focus Group PPT](#), [■ ■ Sample Focus Group Summary](#), and [■ ■ Sample Story Categories](#).

We recommend using an experienced meeting facilitator in your community to conduct the focus groups, being especially careful to guide participants to focus on the types of stories that are relevant to your community. (And be careful not to let them get sidetracked telling stories to each other so the process gets sabotaged!) There is an excellent guide online for meeting facilitation prepared by the American Library Association: [Leading Conversations in Small and Rural Libraries](#).

Document everything discussed at the focus groups. Determine story categories based on focus group consensus. Circulate the final category summary, and be sure to include appreciation for everyone’s participation.

Create the *Storyteller Worksheet* from the names of potential storytellers collected. Update and research email addresses and telephone numbers.

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 the project. It should captivate your audience and generate brand recognition.

Be sure to include language required by funders, such as your sponsoring library, grantors, or other organization. It is easy to forget that this boilerplate work has been done, so be careful not to re-invent language. Use this document as a central reference.

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 the items below, with tools, details, personnel assignments, and status of completion.

■ Marketing Goals

Draft marketing goals. Generally, the first goal will focus on *story collection* by creating awareness of the project before and during implementation and making the recruiting storytellers high priority. The second goal should relate to *inspiring listeners to go to the website* to listen to stories. Together, these two goals can help you to generate 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 story project? Make a list, e.g., potential storytellers, the community, the press, potential partners, etc., and include contact information where possible.

■ What to Market

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

■ Story Goals

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* project 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.

Each *OurStoryBridge* project can determine their community's resources and how best to employ them. The CMP work for *Adirondack Community* remains crucial to its success, and Marketing Plans should be updated continuously and implemented on schedule.

WEBSITE METRICS/ANALYTICS

- Strikingly provides for such metrics as 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.
- Google Analytics is a free service with deeper analysis. Free online tutorials are available.

Sample Metrics

We suggest that you keep the following metrics, updated monthly, for your story project:

- Website Unique Users
(noting start and update dates)
- Stories published
- Storytellers
- Storytellers 70 and older
(or an age you select)
- Podcasts
- Podcast listens
- Classroom visits
- Student stories
- Community events
- Facebook Followers
- Instagram Followers
- Press releases
- Media stories

SUGGESTED MARKETING TOOLS

Marketing tools like those described below are recommended 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 to 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).

■ **OurStoryBridge Project Logo**

Each *OurStoryBridge* project must include the official *OurStoryBridge* Project Logo and conform to use requirements. We recommend that it go on the upper left of your Home Page and link to the *OurStoryBridge* website at www.ourstorybridge.org.

You can obtain the *OurStoryBridge* Project Logo by emailing createyourstoryproject@gmail.com. We will send you the agreement for its use and when signed, the *OurStoryBridge* Project Logo will be sent to you by emailing createyourstoryproject@gmail.com. The agreement contains use requirements and permits *OurStoryBridge* to link to relevant information, refer to your story project in press releases and other marketing materials, include your stories in the *Teacher's Guide*, etc.

■ Project Website

See  [Sample Adirondack Community Website](#).

Buy a domain name appropriate to your *OurStoryBridge* project as soon as it is agreed upon.

We recommend that your stories be posted on a separate story project website, linked to your organization's website. Using the *Adirondack Community* website as a model simplifies the process, adding your verbiage, colors, photographs, etc. Some story projects have been able to clone the *Adirondack Community* website or just copy elements, to make it easier to create their story project website.

When starting from scratch, draft an outline and navigation for the website's design and content; add text and links; collect photographs; and include the logo. Hire a webmaster or ask experienced staff or a volunteer to follow the recommendations in this *User Guide* to put it together. Keep it attractive and straightforward and continually updated. *Do not publish until the first stories are posted*. An "In the Media" tab can be used to post news stories and publicity about your project and links to the project social media can be added. Most importantly, keep your story project website current and use it to communicate ongoing and future activities and events.

See *IX. Using the Recommended Software, Website Builder*.


■ Library or Other Organization Website

See  [Sample Library Website](#).

If a library or other organization is your sponsor, be sure to provide them a link to your website so that they can help promote your project. Any partnerships you cultivate can add to your exposure; be sure to ask them to place a link to your *OurStoryBridge* project on their websites.

■ 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 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

See  [Sample 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 tentative or scheduled storytelling appointments can be very useful. Distribute them widely. [Vistaprint](#) is one of many easy resources to prepare and print such cards.

■ Banner

See  [Sample Banner](#).

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

■ Emails

Use the *Storyteller Worksheet*, *Story Log*, or other project-associated lists available to you 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 email/newsletter blasts. Keep in mind that this can incur additional cost.

■ Public Relations

Keep copies of all press work, as outlined below, in the Google Drive in 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 approved boilerplate language and provide appropriate contact information. All press releases should be approved by the Project Manager 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 grant and other requests.

■ PowerPoint Presentations

See  [Sample Focus Group PPT](#),  [Sample Planning Group PPT](#),  [Sample School Introduction for Administration PPT](#),  [Sample School Introduction for Students PPT](#),  [Sample 1st Story Release Celebration PPT](#), and  [Sample 100 Story Celebration PPT](#).

Prepare PowerPoint presentations and adapt for specific audiences. For *Adirondack Community*, we created several presentations—e.g., for the focus groups, the Planning Group, the local K – 12 school, and community celebrations.

■ Events

See  [Sample Posters Including Events](#),  [Sample 1st Story Release Celebration PPT](#), and  [Sample 100 Story Celebration PPT](#).

Hold events for the community, and invite your press contacts (using your Media Contacts List). For example, celebrate milestones and storytellers with a presentation of select stories accompanied by refreshments and a brief update on the story 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 individual names, to help start conversations and encourage storytellers to be proud of their efforts.

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. Use the banner and hand out business cards.

Attend other events in the community, ask if you can set up a table to present stories; solicit names with email and phone numbers to schedule storytellers. Speaking at events outside the community can help with fundraising.

■ Posters

See  [Sample Posters Including Events](#).

Draft posters to be placed in prominent locations throughout your community as well as in your library, historical society, or other sponsoring organization. Replace the posters regularly to keep the messages fresh and laminate them, if possible, to keep them in good condition. Always include your story project's logo to generate brand recognition; the website address to attract visitors to the site for more information; and the Gmail project address to field questions or receive volunteer storytellers. Also list all upcoming events that you are hosting or attending.

HARD COPY LOOSE-LEAF FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Maintain a hard copy, loose-leaf binder for staff and volunteers. Include the *OurStoryBridge User Guide*, the Story Categories document, the *Story Log*, transcripts of stories, contacts, and other relevant documents. Update this binder as you progress through your community story project.



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, Keene, NY

“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, Librarian, Tremonton City Library, Tremonton, UT

“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, Library Supervisor, Igiugig Tribal Library, Igiugig, AK



OURSTORYBRIDGE™
Connecting the Past and the Present



www.ourstorybridge.org

createyourstoryproject@gmail.com