

## Glossary for Shared Understanding

These are some words and concepts that were frequently addressed during the IMLS Accelerating Promising Practices: Community Memory program, with definitions discussed and agreed upon by the cohort members in order to facilitate conversations about these important topics.

### BUILDING CAPACITIES

#### **Asset Mapping**

**Asset:** An item of value owned; a quality, condition, or entity that serves as an advantage, support, resource, or source of strength

**Mapping:** To make a map of; to show or establish the features or details of, with clarity like that of a map; to make a survey of, or travel over for, as if for the purpose of making a map

Asset mapping, drawing a map of what is valuable in our communities, is an exercise in community development ([Mapping Community Assets Workbook, by Diane Dorfman](#)).

Understanding assets (and challenges) starts with listening to community members and informed partners ([IMLS 2016 “Strengthening Networks, Sparking Change” report](#)).

#### **Capacity building**

Strengthening the capacity [or ability] of [organizations] to improve the wellbeing of their communities.

[IMLS has the following objectives for building capacity](#); these may help inform your goals and ideas about capacity building within your own organizations and communities:

1. Support the recruitment, training, and development of library and museum staff, boards, and volunteers, helping to grow a skilled, professional workforce.
2. Encourage library and museum professionals and institutions to share and adopt best practices and innovations.
3. Identify trends in the museum and library fields to help organizations make informed decisions.
4. Promote the ability of museums and libraries to serve as trusted spaces for community engagement and dialogue.

### **Documentation & Documentation Planning**

Documentation is important to continuity and sustainability of processes in library work. “According to various definitions, project documentation is ‘a set of officially written, maintained or recorded material with information or evidence pertinent to your project.’ The main purpose of project management documents is to provide materials that you can reference, and with which you can prove that something was or was not done.” ([ProjectCentral.com](http://ProjectCentral.com))

Types of Documentation:

Workflow: a sequence of steps towards the completion of a task

Policy: organizational guidelines to inform why workflows and processes are undertaken

Process: a series of actions taken to achieve a goal, may encompass multiple workflows

Checklist: used to manage repetitive, ongoing processes (like a step in a workflow)

Template: select language for forms/paperwork that are used repeatedly, such as legal releases, letters of inquiry, Thank You letters, etc.

### **Legacy planning**

Similar to "sustainability" but long term planning to ensure your project or program endures and thrives in the future. Consider administrative support/buy in and support from your leadership and community, resource allocation, staff commitment, funding, training, documentation (i.e. Memorandum of Understanding with partners; see *Documentation & Documentation planning above*), and infrastructure needs (technology, space, tools, etc.).

Keep in mind (from [IMLS Community Catalyst Report](#)): “Community initiatives tend to follow a similar path: big idea, planning, launch, growth, and sustained operation or sun-setting. Not all initiatives will be lasting, nor should they be. As one museum official put it, “We start each pilot with a question” to guide the work. Starting small with pilots or informal partnerships creates learning opportunities that require minimal resources and minimal risk. Even after a program has entered full implementation, it may need to adapt to changing needs or resources.”

### **Logic Model**

A logic model, sometimes called a “theory of change,” is a picture of how your organization does its work as well as the theory and assumptions underlying that work. A program logic model links outcomes (both short- and long term) with program activities and processes and the theoretical assumptions/principles of the program. ([IMLS Logic Model User Guide](#))

### **Process Design**

A tool that helps you break down large projects into smaller, easier-to handle stages. Process design is an approach to making decisions that keeps community members and stakeholders at the center of your project.

### **Rapid Response Collecting**

Rapid Response Collecting refers to collecting materials related to a present moment, movement, or crisis. The two such moments most commonly referred to within this resource are the global COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matters protests of 2020. However, these lessons and tools can be applied to rapid response collecting on any scale, to collect materials about a wide variety of activities, events, and communities.

According to the Society of American Archivists, “The recurrence of both human-made tragedies and disasters of weather combined with the great speed of technological development lead archivists [and other information professionals] to a new role in society—as stewards of contemporary information.”

### **Sustainability**

Activities to ensure your project can continue beyond your grant period, for example:

1. Creating and documenting policies, procedures and workflows,
2. Creating training materials for future project staff,
3. Developing a digital preservation plan,
4. Building organizational or community support for the project,
5. Pursuing additional grants or more permanent funding to support the project work.

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## **ACCELERATING PRACTICES**

### **Cohort**

WiLS Defines: A cohort is a group of people who are brought together by a learning need they share, who concurrently engage in a curriculum or path of study. A cohort has a determined or expected end date, with the potential result being an end product that can be individual to cohort members or shared by the cohort as a whole.

The design of each cohort will look different depending on the purpose and needs of the participants. After the set end-date and/or the achievement of set objectives, a cohort may choose to change shape (such as becoming a Community of Practice) or will be dissolved.

### **Community of Practice**

WiLS Defines: A Community of Practice (CoP) is a group of people who share a common concern, set of problems, or passion about a topic and deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis. Any end products are developed collaboratively and project steps may be shared based on community-driven sharing protocols so others can do similar work.

The design of each CoP will look different depending on the purpose and needs of the participants. In some cases the objective of the CoP may be to create self-sufficiency to continue the work; if/when self-sufficiency is achieved, CoPs can opt to change shape (such as becoming a Consortium) or dissolve.

Also known as a *Collective*.

### **Mentor**

Mentor organizations for the IMLS APP cohorts facilitate communication between grantees, provide expert guidance, and build grantee capacity in relevant areas.

### **Practice/Skill sharing**

A commitment to sharing experiences that impact each others' work, including lessons learned through grant project work and knowledge acquired from learning opportunities (workshops, webinars, conferences, etc.). For our work, this may involve sharing information and ideas via Basecamp, sharing knowledge with cohort members during our monthly meetings, and/or making yourself available to answer questions from your peers about your work.

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## **DEVELOPING COMMUNITY**

### **Community**

“A group of individuals who share a collective geographic space, experience, or level of ownership of the content being shared.” ([OHA Principles and Best Practices Glossary](#))

Community is fluid and necessarily self-identified.

### **Community engagement**

“Drawing into participation; creating a circumstance of involved commitment.” ([Community Voice: A Conversation with Cyns Nelson](#))

[IMLS emphasizes](#): “We are interested in projects that engage local communities in the collection, documentation, and preservation of their local histories, experiences, and identities...Projects should incorporate authentic and ethical practices and relationships with community members or organizations to ensure that the work undertaken aligns with community needs.”

### **Community memory**

“The goal [of a community memory project] is to raise awareness and a sense of ownership in the production of our shared historic record and our dream is that any member of the

community who visits these collections feels his/her experiences and perspective are represented.” ([Queens Memory Project, About Us](#))

### **Intended community group**

A specific sub-community or group of stakeholders that you want to engage with for your project and for the future.

### **Shared authority**

“Procedures and best practices where the decision-making aspects of consultation and collaboration are shared between researcher [or project manager, etc.] and community at all phases of a project.” Prioritizing shared authority in community memory work is important because “1) voicing history is a form of power, and 2) the impact upon stakeholders of producing a narrative about the past must be considered and respected.” ([Shared Authority, Reflective Practice, and Community Outreach: Thoughts on Parallel Conversations in Public History and Historical Archaeology, by Kathryn Sikes](#))

### **Vulnerable communities**

“Understanding the power dynamics involved in [any community memory project] is essential for ethical work in this field. This is especially important when working with vulnerable populations—including but not limited to the following: those who might be put in danger or face harm by publicly sharing their experience; legal minors, and others with limited agency and freedom, and those with impaired ability to fully consent. Examples of groups of people who may fit this description include those who have lived through traumatic experiences and those who discuss or describe activities, such as immigration, that could technically violate state or federal laws.” ([OHA Principles and Best Practices Glossary](#))