

# Strategic Plan

## Digital Readiness Community of Practice

December 2019

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

We are a supportive, inclusive, and connected community of public history practitioners that shares resources, expertise, and knowledge of the creation and management of digital collections in order to collect, preserve, and provide equitable access to diverse histories. We facilitate strong and responsive leadership and communication across our community and within our own organizations.

Our histories have the power to enrich and connect people and communities in new and meaningful ways. By coordinating our efforts, we can create a sustainable and relevant future for Wisconsin's local history organizations and historic preservation groups through more effective and efficient development of digital collections.

### STRATEGIC GOALS

#### **Goal One: Leadership and Structure of Community of Practice**

The Digital Readiness Community of Practice (CoP) will have a sustainable leadership structure and communication strategy that will guide the launch and growth of the CoP.

#### *Goal One Objectives and Action Steps:*

1. Create a CoP Launch Committee that will inclusively and transparently establish the initial organizational model for the CoP.
2. Develop a plan to provide open, inclusive, consistent, and supportive communication among CoP members, between CoP leadership and CoP members, and between the CoP and the broader community of local history organizations, historic preservation groups and related cultural heritage institutions in Wisconsin.
3. Form a working group to begin work on Goal Two objectives, starting with identifying best practices and benchmarks for digital collections creation and management.

## **Goal Two: Skills, Knowledge, and Capacity Building**

Wisconsin's public history organizations will have a road map for undertaking digital collections creation and management. They will have access to best practices, guidelines, and tools that accommodate a range of needs and resources, and they will understand how to use those resources to support local goals and capacities.

### *Goal Two Objectives and Action Steps:*

1. Identify and adopt best practices in a structure of tiered recommendations or benchmarks.
  - a. Create a core document that individual organizations can use as a road map. Suggested topics/areas of need include:
    - i. Policies (records retention, management, selection, preservation)
    - ii. Copyright, use, and permissions
    - iii. Equipment (digitization, storage)
    - iv. Access options
    - v. Working with volunteers
    - vi. Cataloging/description/metadata
    - vii. Assessment and evaluation
2. Offer educational opportunities to help organizations implement the identified best practices.
  - a. Develop and deliver a training curriculum. One suggested model is a structured continuing education and certification opportunity along the lines of the UW-Extension Master Gardener program.
3. Offer opportunities for organizations to share information and help each other.
  - a. Make training materials and other resources gathered and created by the CoP easily accessible in a central online location.
  - b. Use a centralized email list for organizations to share information and ask questions.
  - c. Ensure experts/mentors at key stakeholder organizations are available to answer questions and provide support as needed.

## **Goal Three: Access to Digital Collections**

Wisconsin's public history organizations will have platforms, tools, and knowledge to improve public access to and engagement with digital community histories.

### *Goal Three Objectives and Action Steps:*

1. Increase the number of organizations that have an outreach plan to expand the use of their digital collections.

- a. Gather, create, and provide easy access to outreach and marketing planning resources, templates, and tools that can be used locally, including messaging for different audiences.
2. Increase the number of organizations that have an evaluation and assessment plan, so they can gather input from users of historical digital collections and use data to establish outcomes and share impact stories.
3. Provide pathways for local historical organizations to make their digital collections accessible on statewide and national levels, through Recollection Wisconsin and the Digital Public Library of America.

#### **Goal Four: Advocacy and Sustainability**

Public history organizations will have the tools and resources they need to increase support for and longevity of digital collections work. They will understand strategies for approaching this work sustainably and ensuring continuity within their own organizations by building strong cadres of volunteers, documenting policies and procedures, and developing succession plans.

##### *Goal Four Objectives and Action Steps:*

1. Gather and create guidelines or recommendations for how to attract, retain, train, and reward/acknowledge a volunteer labor base.
2. Gather and create guidelines or recommendations for how to nurture positive relationships within organizations – relationships with volunteers, staff, donors (both financial and collection), administrators.
3. Create advocacy messaging for organizations to use with different audiences (funders/supporters, businesses, schools, other community groups/members, etc.
4. Identify areas where resource sharing or cooperative purchasing results in significant cost savings, such as shared hardware, software or infrastructure (e.g. circulating equipment, group purchase of cloud storage space).
5. Increase applications for regional, state, and federal grants.
  - a. Create a coordinated process for sharing funding opportunities and identifying partner organizations to collaboratively seek funding.
6. Create an advocacy network to engage with elected officials and other leadership at regional and statewide levels to advocate for local and statewide historical digitization and preservation needs.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The responsibility to implement the Strategic Plan will initially fall to the CoP Launch Committee and will be carried on by the leadership of the CoP's organizational model once it is established. The CoP Launch Committee and, subsequently, the leadership of the organizational model that is established, will need to determine annual review processes, with a high level of inclusiveness and transparency, to prioritize, implement, communicate, and assess the progress and success of the plan's implementation.

### **Prioritization**

An annual prioritization process will be established to determine objectives and action steps for each year the plan is active. An annual prioritization process allows for the following:

- An opportunity to communicate with and gather input from CoP participants regarding the progress of the plan's implementation.
- Responsiveness and flexibility to adapt to changing conditions and needs of the CoP participants, especially as the CoP grows and new participants are added.
- Ability to pace implementation over time based on the time and resources needed to implement the action steps of the plan and the available capacities and resources of the CoP as it develops.

### **Project Planning and Management**

In developing the organizational model, the Launch Committee will consider the ongoing support needs of the CoP, including staffing, institutional partners, project planning and management models and practices the CoP will use to implement the action steps.

### **Assessment and Evaluation**

An evaluation plan that includes assessment measures will be included in the implementation of the overall strategic plan and within project plans to implement individual action steps.