DEVELOPING AN ACCESS AND USE POLICY WORKSHEET

This worksheet defines key questions to address when creating an access and use policy. Providing access to collections is central to the mission of archives and other institutions. In opening your collections and materials for access and use, a number of questions arise. Who will have access to your collections and how? Where and when will your institution provide access? What rules will you put in place to ensure that materials are respected, preserved, and secure as they are being accessed and used?

While you complete this worksheet, examine access and use policy examples from institutions similar to your own by searching online or asking colleagues in your area. If you have an existing mission or vision statement, or other important values, you might include this information at the start of your policy. An introductory section including the purpose of the policy can also be helpful to audiences reading the policy.

Use the following questions as a guide while you create an access and use policy for your institution. These questions are designed to help you think through your institution's goals to form a policy statement that works for you. All institutions are different and have diverse sets of needs and goals. Choose the questions that best fit the needs of your institution as you work toward creating an access and use policy. The questions in this worksheet bring up many areas to consider, but remember to keep your policy concise and to the point. As you draft and finalize your policy, make sure to include information about when the access and use policy was last reviewed, how often reviews occur, and contact information for your institution or department.

What audiences do you serve at your institution?

When creating an access and use policy, you should think about who you want to access and use your collections. You can choose your primary audiences, as well as other secondary audiences. Think about the audiences served by your institution, collections, programming, and services. Here are some examples ranging from general to very specific audiences:

- Tribal members
- Tribal government staff

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- Tribal youth
- Tribal Elders
- Artists in your community
- Language teachers, learners, and speakers
- Members of your larger local community
- Tribal and community members living in distant locations
- Other publics from larger areas
- Researchers from other institutions
- Students
- Other audiences specific to your community

Should your audiences have different levels of access to and use of materials and knowledge? If yes, what are those levels?

An access and use policy can explain how appropriate access works in your community, the importance of cultural and local practices, and how access decisions are made. Consider the following questions:

- Are there materials that should be accessed and used by certain community members or groups only? Examples may be based on gender, age, Tribal affiliation, clan, or many other factors.
- Do you have sensitive or sacred materials that should only be accessed and used by certain people, during certain times, or in certain ways? Examples might be sacred materials, culturally sensitive materials, items to be used in only certain seasons, or materials that could bring about grief or trauma for users.
- Can types of access for different people be grouped into different levels? If yes, what are those levels? For example: Tribal members only, Elders only, staff members only or open to anyone might be some levels to consider.
- Who makes decisions on access? What is the decision-making process? Do you have a cultural committee, board, or other group to provide advice and accountability on decisions?
- How will you ensure and enforce access levels and protocols that restrict viewing or using materials?
- Is it appropriate or helpful to write or illustrate levels or types of access within a policy or other documentation?
- Do you have a private viewing area for sacred items and belongings? What would help community members to feel comfortable and protected in this area?
- Are there collections and materials that are specifically used for educating an audience external to your community?
- How are these levels of access implemented within digital environments?

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How can people access and use your collections?

Your access and use policy will provide information about your institution, procedures, and collections. It may also provide users a way to contact your institution so they can find and access collections. Some things to consider:

- Should people come to your building to do research in person? What are the directions to your institution and reading room or other research area?
- What is the contact information for your institution or department? When can someone expect to hear back if they reach out?
- Will you have open hours? Do visits need to be scheduled in advance?
- How should users prepare before visiting your institution? Will you have guides to your collections online?
- If you have library materials or other materials described at the item level, do you have a catalog people can search?
- Do you have digitized versions of materials online? Where are these hosted? For example, on a section of the Tribal website or using a content management system?
- How do you share access and use information to users? Do you have a website? Do you have a printed flyer or brochure? Do users find you by word of mouth?
- Do you create exhibits, displays, or community presentations?
- Do you share materials via a newsletter, newspaper, or other community communication?

What rules are in place to protect and preserve physical collections while handling materials in person?

An access and use policy should state reading room or research area rules for in person users. This will help potential visitors to prepare a research plan and manage their expectations. Some questions to address are:

- What are users allowed to bring into the reading room or research area and what must be stored outside? Some common items to consider are: Pencils, pens, coats and bags, notebooks, laptops, food, and drink.
- What handling rules are in place for users? Examples include: clean and dry hands (no lotion), use of gloves for certain materials, users can only use one folder or box at a time, books must be placed on a book cradle, etc.
- Can users photograph, scan, or digitally capture materials?
- Do you have a check in procedure for when users arrive and a check out procedure for when users leave?

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How do you educate and inform users about culturally appropriate use, and intellectual property, copyright, privacy, and other legal concerns in reuse?

An access and use policy should address culturally appropriate use and intellectual property information and can be a place to educate staff and users. This topic is extremely important for in person access and use and digital access and use. Some questions to consider are:

- What cultural or community guidelines should users follow in their use of materials?
- What copyright and intellectual property laws and practices should users follow?
- What responsibility does the user have to carefully research copyright information and find and contact copyright holders? How do you notify users of their responsibility?
- How should users cite and use materials from your institution, your community, or individuals? Consider this question for materials created by your institution, and materials created by donors, or other third parties.
- If provenance is unknown, and the copyright holder cannot be identified, what is your recommended action? An "orphan work" is another way of referring to materials with unknown history or unknown creator(s).
- What other information or education can you provide to users? For example, if your institution uses Traditional Knowledge Labels or Creative Commons Licenses, some background information on these tools may be helpful to encourage appropriate use.
- You may create a separate policy or guideline for Intellectual Property to assert rights and explain responsibilities, which can be referenced within an access and use policy.

If you provide digital access, what information do users need to know to navigate, view, and use materials appropriately?

An access and use policy should include information about digital access and use, as well as in person or physical access and use. This section may be fairly specific to your own situation and types of digital access available. Some questions to think about are:

- How do you provide digital access? Digital access can be provided in multiple ways, including: at a computer workstation in your institution, over email, using temporary storage such as flash drives, or using an online platform or website.
- Do you need to vet or verify users before providing digital access? How?
- How do you make decisions on what collections and materials are prioritized for digital access or restricted.

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- If you receive a request to remove digital access for an item, what is your process for review and action?
- If you are able to provide online access to content, what website or platform do you use?
- What responsibilities do you entrust users with when they view and use digital content? How do you convey this to users?

What reference, research, and duplication services do you provide? Do you charge fees for these services?

Use your access and use policy to state up front what services you provide to visitors. Reference and reproduction requests, for example, can be a drain on both human and financial resources. Decide ahead of time whether you will set any fees or limitations to offset costs associated with the services your institution will provide.
For example:
- Does your institution have the capacity to provide research and reference services with current staff and training? What can users expect in terms of help with their research questions?
- Are there questions that are asked by users repeatedly? Consider creating a list of Frequently Asked Questions or a Guide to Research to lessen the staff time spent with general or simple questions.
- How much time will staff spend on a reference or research question before stopping, or charging the user for time and resources?
- Are there any other boundaries or limitations on reference or research assistance, that should be made clear in a policy?
- If you charge for time spent on research, how much is the charge?
- Do you have storage media available for purchase?
- Do you charge fees for making copies or scans, or for using a camera?
- Do you charge fees for use in publications?

Should researchers fill out an application to view materials?

Your access and use policy should inform visitors about the requirements and restrictions to view your collections. Your policy can provide information on your institution's application or sign in process, if you have one in place. Add a research application or sign in process as an appendix to your policy, and use in the day-to-day research process. Asking visitors to sign in and fill out requests to view collections can provide a specific place for them to read and agree to your reading room rules. It is useful to have a record of what researchers have used most frequently, as well as a measure of security. These recommentations about documentation, surveillance, and

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security should be balanced with honoring your own community practices and norms so community members feel at ease and respected in their use of materials. Some questions to think about when adding this section to your policy are:

- Do you have a form or process for users to indicate their research needs or request permission for access? Is this necessary for all audiences or some audiences?
- What type of process is suitable for users in your community or communities?
    - Do you ask users to provide any information or documentation to your institution? For example, contact information, Tribal enrollment information, address, identification, or purpose of research?
- Do you have similar or different processes and questions for users from within your community and users from outside of your community?
- For audiences from outside of your community, do you have an Internal Review Board for your institution or broader Tribe, Nation, or community to evaluate research done by outside organizations or individuals?
- Who will decide if permission will be granted or how research requests will be attended to? What timeline can users expect?

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