



# Project Planning Template

## A Guide for Documentary Songwriting Projects

*This template is here to help you think — not to overwhelm you. You don't need to have all the answers before you start. But the questions here are worth sitting with. They'll help you design a project that feels grounded, realistic, and true to why you do this work.*

*Work through it at your own pace. Return to it as your project evolves.*

### Section 1: Project Foundation

*Before anything else, get clear on the heart of this project. A strong foundation makes every other decision easier.*

**What is the name or working title of your project?**

**In 2–3 sentences, describe what this project is. What will happen? Who is involved? How long will it take?**

**Who is this project for? Whose stories are at the center?**

**Why this project? Why now? What drew you to it?** *(This doesn't need to be polished. Just honest.)*

**What do you hope this project makes possible — for storytellers, for your community, for yourself**

## **Section 2: Community Context**

*Documentary songwriting works best when it's rooted in real relationships and real trust. This section helps you think about where you're starting from — and what you may need to build.*

**Where will this project take place? (Neighborhood, organization, institution, online, etc.)**

**What existing relationships or community ties are you building on or is this something new entirely?**

**Are you partnering with any community organizations or institutions? If so, who?** *(Don't worry if this isn't confirmed yet — we'll come back to it.)*

**What do you know about this community that will shape how you approach this work?**

*(Culture, history, dynamics, sensitivities, strengths — anything relevant.)*

**Is there anything about this community context you're still learning or uncertain about?**

**Section 3: Storyteller Recruitment & Consent**

*Finding the right storytellers — and making sure they feel safe and informed throughout — is one of the most important parts of this work. This section helps you think it through carefully.*

**How many storytellers are you hoping to work with?**

**How will you find and invite storytellers? What's your outreach plan?** *DocSong provides relevant documents you can use to send storytellers the basic information they will need to learn about being involved.*

**How will you explain the project to potential storytellers? What do they need to know upfront?**

*(Think about: what the process looks like, how their story will be used, what they're agreeing to.)*

**How will you handle consent? When will you introduce the [consent form](#), and how will you walk storytellers through it?**

**Are there any particular vulnerabilities or sensitivities you need to be thoughtful about with this group of storytellers? Do you have vulnerabilities or sensitivities of your own you should be aware of while working with this person or group?**

**What will you do if a storyteller wants to change or withdraw their story after the song is created?**

#### **Section 4: Project Logistics**

*Getting the practical details right makes space for the creative work to breathe. This section helps you map out the shape of your project.*

**What format will this project take?**

*(Check all that apply)*

- 1:1 story-song (working with one storyteller at a time)

- Small group workshop series
- Single-day intensive
- School or organizational residency
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**What is your target start date?**

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**What is your target end date or public sharing date?**

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**Roughly how many sessions will this project involve, and how long will each one be?**

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**Where will sessions take place?**

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**What equipment or materials will you need?**

*(Recording equipment, instruments, printed materials, etc.)*

**Is there anything logistically that feels uncertain or complicated right now?**

## **Section 5: The Songs**

*This is the heart of it. This section helps you think through how the songwriting process will unfold — from story to song to something shareable.*

**How many songs do you expect this project to produce?**

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**Walk through how the songwriting process will work in this project. What does each stage look like?**

*(Listening session, drafting, feedback, revision, recording, etc.)*

**How will you share drafts with storytellers and invite their feedback?**

**How will you handle it if a storyteller doesn't feel the song reflects their experience accurately?**

**What does "done" look like for a song in this project? What's the final form?**

*(Demo recording, produced track, live performance, written lyrics, etc.)*

*Sharing the songs is how the impact of this work travels beyond the room. This section helps you think about how and where the songs will live.*

**Do you plan to share the songs publicly? If so, how? DocSong provides platforms to upload songs to, but if there's any other way you envision sharing it, this is the space to brainstorm that.**

*(Live performance, online release, community screening, archive, etc.)*

**Who is the intended audience for the public sharing?**

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**How will storytellers be involved in — or prepared for — the public sharing?**

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**Are there any songs or stories that should not be shared publicly, or that require special handling? This could include songs that feature themes of trauma – psychological, emotional, and/or physical.**

**How will you document the project? (Photos, recordings, written reflections, etc.)**

## **Section 7: Budget**

*Sustainable practice requires thinking honestly about money. This doesn't need to be a detailed spreadsheet right now — just a realistic first pass.*

**What are the anticipated costs for this project?**

Expense	Estimated Cost
Your time / artist fee	\$
Recording or production	\$
Materials or supplies	\$
Space rental	\$
Transportation	\$
Marketing or printing	\$
Other:	\$
<b>Total Estimated Cost</b>	\$

**How do you plan to cover these costs?**

*(Self-funded, organizational partner, grant, DocSong micro-grant, fee for service, other)*

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**Is there a funding gap? What's your plan for addressing it?**

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**Section 8: Support & Accountability**

*You don't have to do this alone. This section helps you identify who's in your corner — and build in some structure so the project stays on track.*

**Who can you turn to for support during this project?**

*(DocSong staff, peer teaching artists, mentors, community partners, etc.)*

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Is there a peer teaching artist or accountability partner you'd like to check in with during this project? Hazel Delehey, our program director is available for around the clock support.

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What would you want to flag to DocSong or a mentor if things get hard?

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Are there any aspects of this project where you feel like you need more skills, knowledge, or support?

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### Section 9: Reflection

*Before you launch, take a breath and look at the whole picture. This section is a gut-check — not a grade.*

What feels strong about this plan?

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What feels uncertain or fragile?

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What's the one thing you most need to figure out before you can move forward?

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On a scale of 1–10, how ready do you feel to start this project? What would move that number up by one?

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*When you're ready, share this plan with a DocSong mentor or peer teaching artist. Not for approval — just for a second set of eyes and a conversation. The work gets better when we think together.*

Questions? Reach out to Hazel ([hdelehey@docsong.org](mailto:hdelehey@docsong.org))

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