



I N V E S T S T L

people | power | place | systems

# Neighborhood Storytelling Practice

## Background for Partnership and Collaboration

*A Resident-Led, Healing-Centered Storytelling Ecosystem in North St. Louis*

### Overview

The Neighborhood Storytelling Practice (NSTP) is a place-based pilot initiative from Invest STL designed to amplify resident voices, build neighborhood pride, identify and uplift stories, and shift narratives through individual and collective place-based storytelling.

The first phase of the **NSTP is scheduled to run from May 2026 - January 2027**, rooted in **The Ville, Greater Ville, and Kingsway East**. Created alongside residents and community partners, the practice strengthens neighborhood narrative power by supporting residents in exploring their stories, shaping them through creative mediums, and cultivating storytelling conductor capacity among neighbors.

The NSTP supports residents both as **storytellers** (sharing their own experiences) and **story conductors** (helping others uncover and express their own). By uplifting authentic perspectives, the practice challenges incomplete and harmful narratives, transforming how the region talks about, views, and values Black St. Louis residents and their communities.

### Purpose

We aim to **elevate resident voices** as primary narrators of their neighborhood's past, present, and future and **honor community histories and memory** through place-based storytelling. Our goals include:

- Develop a sustainable method for residents to train and be trained in shaping and sharing their own stories;
- Elevate resident voices as primary narrators and support a network of neighborhood-based storytellers;
- Create distinct and varied outlets for stories to be experienced and interacted with;
- Facilitate regional awareness of and engagement with stories across neighborhood boundaries and institutions.

### Opportunities for Collaboration

The NSTP welcomes partnerships with:

- Artists and Cultural Practitioners
- Neighborhood Organizations
- Cultural Institutions and Archives
- Creative and Healing Arts Organizations
- Media Partners



I N V E S T S T L

people | power | place | systems

Collaboration can include hosting workshops, sharing space, hosting stories within your space, offering expertise, co-creating public events, supporting story archiving and documenting, or aligning long-term storytelling and narrative change strategies. **Community-based partners will be compensated for their contributions to the practice.**

## Core Components

### 1. Resident Storytelling Cohort (9 months)

A group of Greater Ville, Kingsway East, and The Ville residents participate in a nine-month immersive storytelling journey that includes story harvesting and sharing, collective and individual memory mapping, oral and place-based history, medium exploration (audio, visual art, photography, performance, writing, mixed media, etc.), workshops with artists and storytellers, one-on-one mentorship, story conducting training, creative production time, collective reflection and healing practices.

Participants produce a **personal story** in the medium of their choice and learn to help neighbors craft stories of their own as story conductors.

### 2. Creative Medium Exploration and Production

Resident storytellers will be guided through and engage with multiple mediums, including teaching artists, hands-on labs, open studio time, field trips to cultural institutions, walking tours, mentorship, and production support. Story artifacts may include photography series, audio stories/presentations, drawings, installations, poems, short films, illustrations, zines, textile work, hybrid forms, among others – it's up to the resident storyteller.

**All community-based teaching artists and creative practitioners collaborating with NSTP are compensated** for workshops, resources, mentoring, guidance, and production support.

### 3. Story Conducting Guidance

Toward the end of the cohort, resident storytellers will learn to become **story conductors** — facilitators who help others uncover and articulate stories with care, consent, and intention. This supports a sustainable, community-owned model for narrative preservation and activation.

### 4. Archiving, Exhibitions, and Community Activation

Stories may be shared through neighborhood-based exhibitions, installations, galleries, walking tours, public events, publications, or partner activations. The resident storyteller will decide if and how their story will be shared.

**Community-based collaborators involved in archival support, public programs, or activations will also be compensated.**

Contact Alyssa Potter, Narrative + Communications Lead, to discuss collaboration opportunities at [apotter@investstl.org](mailto:apotter@investstl.org) or 314-399-8812.