

UPLIFT | Our Community Is Wealth

You can redefine currency because your culture produces community wealth.

Your community already holds forms of wealth that do not always show up on a balance sheet: relationships, cultural knowledge, creativity, skills, traditions, trusted places, local businesses, stories, and people who make things happen.

This pathway invites you to make those strengths visible. Look closely at what your family, campus, neighborhood, workplace, or community already knows, builds, shares, preserves, and creates—and explore how those assets can open new possibilities.

Innovation belongs to the people. Start by recognizing what is already there.

Innovation Insight

What if our greatest community assets are the ones we've learned to overlook? Wealth is more than what we own. It is what we know, what we create, who we care for, what we preserve, and what we build together. When we recognize these assets, we discover that our communities are already rich with possibility.

Essential Question

How can redefining wealth help us recognize that our communities are already rich in knowledge, creativity, culture, and possibility?

The Challenge

Redefine Wealth. Uplift the strengths and assets that already exist within your culture, your family, and your community.

Investigate and document the people, places, practices, stories, skills, relationships, networks, and lived experiences that contribute to community wealth. Then create something that makes those assets visible and shows how they can create opportunity, strengthen belonging, inspire innovation, or help communities imagine what comes next.

Recognize your value. Build your idea. Create what comes next.

STEP 1: EXPLORE

What will you innovate?

Guiding Questions

Develop your own guiding questions as you investigate your idea, or use the questions below to help you look at your community through an asset-based lens. You do not need to answer every question.

Redefine Wealth

- What does wealth mean to you, and what experiences shaped that definition?
- What forms of wealth exist beyond money?
- How could redefining wealth change the way you see your family, campus, neighborhood, workplace, or community?

Discover Community Wealth

- What people, places, relationships, traditions, knowledge, talents, and lived experiences make your community strong?
- Whose contributions, skills, or cultural assets are often overlooked?
- What stories show people working together, solving challenges, creating opportunity, or supporting one another?
- What could you learn by listening to elders, artists, entrepreneurs, youth leaders, educators, and community organizations?
- How can recognizing our community's cultural wealth inspire hope, innovation, and opportunity?

Activate Community Strengths

- How could your project help others recognize and value the wealth already around them?
- How could existing community assets be connected or activated to create a new opportunity, inspire innovation, or address a challenge?
- How might making these strengths more visible deepen community connection and belonging?
- How could technology help document, connect, share, or strengthen community assets?
- What new possibilities could emerge when communities recognize and build from their own wealth?

STEP 2: INVESTIGATE

Use technology to bring your ideas to life.

Guiding Activities

Choose the activities that deepen your understanding of the community and strengthen your project. There is no required sequence.

Discover Community Wealth

- Explore the people, places, relationships, traditions, skills, organizations, and resources that make your community strong.
- Talk with family members, elders, artists, entrepreneurs, youth leaders, educators, neighborhood leaders, or community organizations.

- Gather stories that show how people have created opportunity, solved challenges, supported one another, or built belonging.
- Notice community strengths and contributions that may be overlooked or rarely recognized as forms of wealth.

Map Community Assets

- Create a community asset map highlighting people, organizations, cultural spaces, businesses, gathering places, traditions, and community resources.
- Photograph, record, or digitally document examples of community wealth.
- Use a digital map, StoryMap, visual diagram, or interactive experience to show where assets exist and how they connect.
- Explore how different people, places, relationships, and resources are connected

Imagine New Possibilities

- Consider how existing assets could be connected or activated to address a challenge or create opportunity.
- Brainstorm partnerships that could bring people, organizations, skills, and resources together.
- Design a new way to strengthen community relationships, belonging, creativity, or access.
- Explore how technology could help amplify voices, connect people with resources, or strengthen community relationships.

Reflect & Refine

- Identify the community strengths that feel most meaningful or overlooked.
- Consider what surprised you or changed the way you define wealth.
- Ask community members, peers, or mentors for feedback on your ideas.
- Refine your project so it represents community voices, strengths, and experiences authentically and respectfully.

Guiding Resources

- Community knowledge holders, including family members, elders, artists, entrepreneurs, educators, and neighborhood leaders.
- Community organizations, local businesses, libraries, museums, cultural centers, gathering places, and community archives.
- Mapping and geographic tools, including StoryMaps and other GIS or digital-mapping platforms
- Apple creative technologies and other photography, film, audio, presentation, and digital-storytelling tools.
- Research, design, prototyping, and community-engagement tools.

STEP 3: ACT

Own what you build. Share what you learn. Strengthen your community.

From Discovery to Impact

Communities are often measured by what they lack. This pathway invites you to measure them by what they already possess. Use what you discovered to create a project that makes community wealth visible and shows how existing strengths can create connection, belonging, opportunity, or new possibilities.

There is no single right answer. Every community holds different forms of wealth, and every project can reveal a different perspective on what makes a community strong.

Inspiration to Get You Started

Your project may focus on one or more expressions of community wealth. Start with what you discovered, then choose the direction that best communicates why it matters.

Possible Solutions

- **Cultural Wealth:** Explore languages, traditions, celebrations, stories, arts, beliefs, customs, skills, and cultural practices that strengthen identity and belonging within your family and community.
- **Mapping Community Connections & Hidden Assets:** Identify people, organizations, businesses, spaces, talents, relationships, and networks that support the community but may not always be recognized as forms of wealth. Show how mentorship, collaboration, mutual support, and community connection create lasting value.
- **Community Creativity & Innovation:** Document artists, musicians, entrepreneurs, educators, makers, leaders, and innovators who enrich your community and use creativity and cultural knowledge to solve problems and create opportunity.
- **Future Possibilities:** Imagine how existing community strengths could be connected, shared, or activated to address challenges, strengthen belonging, or create new opportunities.

Prepare Your Possible Solution

Choose the digital format that best brings your discoveries to life and helps others recognize the assets you found.

- **Community Asset Map or StoryMap:** Create a community asset map, StoryMap, or other interactive experience that documents the people, places, organizations, traditions, and cultural resources that strengthen your community.
- **Story-Based Media:** Create a documentary, short video, podcast, oral history, or multimedia story that centers on community voices and experiences.
- **Community Wealth Portfolio:** Curate photographs, interviews, maps, research, artwork, reflections, profiles, and other evidence into a digital portfolio.
- **Community Engagement Campaign:** Design a campaign, exhibition, public presentation, social content, interactive experience, or call to action that helps others recognize and build from community wealth.
- **Digital Archive or Community Resource:** Create a neighborhood guide, resource directory, website, searchable collection, or archive that preserves knowledge or connects people with local assets.
- **A Digital Format of Your Own:** Use another format if it communicates the discoveries more powerfully.

STEP 4: REFLECT, INSPIRE & SHARE

Reflect on Your Journey

- How has your definition of wealth changed through this Challenge?
- What community strength, relationship, gift, or asset became more visible to you?
- How has this experience changed the way you see your community and what it can make possible?
- How could your project inspire others to recognize and build from the wealth already around them?
- What is one way you could continue supporting, uplifting, or activating the strengths you identified?

Prepare to Share Your Innovation

Use technology to communicate your discoveries in a clear, creative, and meaningful way. Apple tools such as Camera and Photos, Clips, iMovie, Keynote, Pages, Freeform, GarageBand, Final Cut Pro, and Logic Pro may be used; equivalent creative and digital tools are also welcome.

Regardless of format, help your audience understand:

- the community strengths or assets you chose to document and why they matter, such as cultural wisdom, a tradition, dream, community voice, lived experience, or story.
- Who or what inspired your project, whose voices it represents, and how your culture, community, family, or personal experience shaped it.
- what you created and how you brought the story to life through your chosen creative format.
- How your project preserves or amplifies culture as a source of knowledge, creativity, and innovation, uplifts community, or inspires future generations.
- What you hope others will learn, remember, feel, or do after experiencing your project—and how you might continue building on or sharing the story.

What to Submit

1. **The Story** — What cultural wisdom, tradition, dream, aspiration, community voice, or lived experience did you choose to document? Whose story or perspective does it represent, and why does it matter?
2. **The Creative Approach** — What did you create, and how did you use storytelling, technology, or creative expression to bring the story to life? How did your culture, family, community, or lived experience shape the way you told it?
3. **The Impact** — How does your project preserve or amplify cultural wisdom, uplift your family or community, inspire innovation, or create possibilities for future generations?
4. **The Next Step** — What is one realistic way people could connect, strengthen, or build on the assets you identified? If you had access to mentors, technology, or seed funding, how could those resources help?

Inspire Others

Challenge-Based Learning is about taking meaningful action. By making community wealth visible and showing how existing strengths can be connected, shared, or strengthened, your work can help others look beyond what communities may lack and recognize what they already hold.

Ready to Share Your Innovation?

Complete the final step by visiting the Culture Is Currency Challenge Platform to sign up, submit your solution, and share what you discovered.

[SIGN UP & SUBMIT YOUR INNOVATION →](#)

Why Join

Outstanding submissions may receive:

- National Culture Is Currency recognition
- Innovation Pathway badges
- Innovation microgrants or seed funding to help advance an idea
- Mentorship and access to industry professionals and experts
- Apple technology and creative-learning experiences

- Featured storytelling through the Global HSI Equity Innovation Hub and partners
- National showcase opportunities and Innovation Launch Award consideration

Who Can Participate?

The Challenge is designed for current college students, recent college graduates within the published eligibility window, and eligible adult learners participating through the HSI Innovation Hub ecosystem, including programs serving families and justice-impacted communities. Participants may enter individually or as part of a team.

No previous experience is required. Start where you are. Build from what you know. Create what matters.

Challenge Timeline

SEPTEMBER 2026	Challenge opens • workshops and build support begin
FALL 2026	Mentorship • technology support • community research • project development
DECEMBER 18, 2026	Submission deadline
2027	Finalist recognition • national showcase • Innovation Launch Awards

For your family, your community, your future.

Recognize value. Build from assets. Develop skills. Create opportunity. Connect generations.