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Disaster Preparedness and Response

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS



The 2022 Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities Disaster Preparedness for Cultural Organizations initiative is made possible by



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I. INTRODUCTION

Hurricanes, floods, and even tornadoes have become a regular—and increasingly frequent—part of life in Louisiana, affecting critical cultural infrastructure and threatening arts and humanities organizations statewide. In 2021 Hurricane Ida, a category 4 storm, made landfall in South Louisiana. The devastating storm struck a state still reeling from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020's exceptionally active hurricane season, and extreme weather and floods earlier that year.

In September 2021, in the wake of Hurricane Ida, the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (LEH) conducted an impact survey for cultural organizations to assess damage, loss, and most urgent needs. Impact surveys like these are a regular part of our work at the LEH and help us to better understand how best to direct resources and raise support funds following a disaster. We heard from staffers at forty-four organizations across fourteen of the twenty-five parishes declared a major disaster area, including but not limited to individuals working in archives, museums, libraries and special collections, university publishers, Native American tribal groups, public-facing departments within institutions of higher education, regional arts and humanities councils, and heritage and festival organizations.

A full 75 percent of respondents reported storm-related impacts such as interior and exterior flooding; damage to grounds, facilities, equipment, and collections; loss of staff due to lengthy evacuations and damage to staff residences; loss of sewerage, water, and electricity; program and fundraising cancellations; and closures. Respondents estimated a loss of more than 1.2 million in revenue due to closures and cancellations—and this figure does not include estimates of the financial burden organizations faced due to recovery and rebuilding expenses.

When asked to identify their most immediate recovery needs, 36 percent identified repairs, 15 percent debris cleanup, and 15 percent general operating support. Other areas of need included disaster assessment, moving collections, staff support, mold remediation, equipment purchase and replacement, and temporary space rental. In communicating with affected organizations across the region following the storm, it was clear that our humanities partners needed additional support for both short-term recovery activities and longer-term planning to help them better prepare for and respond to future disasters.

Thanks to a Chairman's Award from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the LEH was able to provide an initial round of emergency recovery grants for relief, recovery, mitigation, and emergency planning to eligible nonprofit cultural organizations in early 2022. These funds also allowed the LEH to partner with the Louisiana Association of Museums to organize and host a free two-part virtual workshop series on emergency planning and disaster response for cultural organizations. This compilation of disaster planning and response resources is a product of those workshops.

The LEH is proud to work with a diverse network of historic and cultural sites across the state of Louisiana to increase access to the humanities for all. We recognize that the survival of our state's rich cultural resources depends on our collective ability to build a humanities infrastructure that can better prepare for and respond to natural and manmade disasters.

II. READINESS AND PLANNING

The below resources, compiled from the LEH's two-part disaster preparedness workshops, are intended to guide cultural organizations in preparing for disasters before they strike.

American Alliance of Museums (AAM)

Four Threat Categories

- Natural Threats: Tornado, Flood, Earthquake, Hurricane, Fire, etc.
- Mechanical Threats: Power Failure, Explosion, Chemical Spill, Gas Leak
- Biological Threats: Insects, Rodents/Animals, Disease, Poison
- Human Threats: Terrorism, Bomb Threats, Vandalism, Theft

Functional disaster plans:

- Include preparedness and response plans for all relevant emergencies and threats
- Address the needs of staff, visitors, structures, and collections
- Specify how to protect, evacuate, and recover collections in the event of a disaster
- Include evacuation routes and assembly areas for people
- Assign individual responsibilities for implementation during emergencies
- List contact information for relevant emergency and recovery services
- Include floor plans
- Give date of last revision

Required Elements for Core Standards for Museums Documents

<https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional%20practices/core-documents>

Don't reinvent the wheel: there are many resources to help you craft your disaster plan. The AAM website has the required elements, along with guidelines, a toolkit, and activities to help you, for each of the five core documents: 1. Mission Statement, 2. Institutional Code of Ethics, 3. Strategic Plan, 4. Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response Plan, 5. Collections Management Policy. through the core documents review program, which includes establishing a disaster and emergency response plan, without entering the museum accreditation pathway.

Sample Documents Library (Paywall - Tier 3 Members)

[Sample Documents – American Alliance of Museums \(aam-us.org\)](https://www.aam-us.org/sample-documents)

of all types and sizes. Explore the albums of documents or refine your search using parameters including document type, museum name, museum type, budget size, and governance type. All documents are fully text searchable. Access to sample documents is a benefit to staff of Tier 3 member museums.

American Institute for Conservation (AIC) | Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAC)

Risk Evaluation and Planning Program (REPP)

<https://www.culturalheritage.org/resources/emergencies/risk-evaluation-and-planning-program>

The REPP documents help institutions without emergency plans get started. Planning document examples include a walkthrough checklist, steps for developing an emergency plan, a risk prioritization worksheet, mitigation tips, and more.

Emergency Committee Wiki

https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Emergency_Preparedness_%26_Response

The Emergency Committee Wiki contains resources that span the stages of disasters, from preparedness and planning to salvage and recovery.

dPlan

The Online Disaster Planning Tool for Cultural and Civic Institutions

<https://www.dplan.org/>

dPlan is a free online tool that will help you simplify the process of writing a disaster plan. Enter information about your institution using the comprehensive fill-in-the-blank template, which will guide you through the steps necessary for effective disaster planning. dPlan was developed by the Northeast Document Conservation Center and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners to assist nonprofit organizations that hold cultural collections, such as libraries, archives, historical societies, museums, town clerk offices, and others.

Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities

Disaster Preparedness Workshop #1: Readiness and Planning

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrMO4bIWSJY>

Held April 6 and 7, 2022, the first of the LEH's two-part workshop series, presented in partnership with the Louisiana Association of Museums, focused on disaster readiness and planning. Panelists reviewed why the formal adoption of emergency policies and plans are essential to an organization's long-term sustainability and discussed ways to make a disaster preparedness strategy a living document that builds accountability and helps organizations prepare before disaster strikes.

Panelists

Elaina Gregg, Emergency Programs Coordinator, Foundation for Advancement in Conservation

Susan Zwerling, Core Document Verification Officer, American Alliance of Museums

Emilie Gagnet Leumas, PhD, CA, CRM, Archives and Records Management Consultant, EGL Consultants, LLC

National Park Service, National Center for Preservation Technology & Training (NCPTT)

Resilient Heritage: Protecting Your Historic Home from Natural Disaster

<https://ncptt.nps.gov/technical-resources/resilient-heritage>

This booklet was prepared by the National Park Service's Natchitoches-based NCPTT and the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation to help residential property owners minimize risk and prepare for future disasters, as well as provide critical environmental and historic preservation information to the citizens and leaders of Louisiana. While owners of historic residential buildings are the target audience, many others, including staff of historic properties and house museums, can benefit from the information provided here. Implementing the guidance outlined in this booklet can help safeguard historic buildings and possibly help prevent repetitive property loss, while maintaining the integrity of the building for years to come.

Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC)

Preservation Leaflet Series

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/ncptt/index.htm>

The NEDCC has developed a series of preservation leaflets available for download. Leaflet categories include 1. Planning and Prioritizing, 2. the Environment, 3. Emergency Management, 4. Storage and Handling, 5. Photographs, 6. Reformatting, and 7. Conservation Procedures. Additional resources include webinars, training videos, and funding opportunities.

Preservation Week

Preservation Week's Free Webinar Series

<https://preservationweek.org>

Sponsored by the American Library Association's Core: Leadership, Infrastructure, Futures division, Preservation Week hosts and archives a variety of free webinars on collections care and sustainability. Also available are webinars on community curation and collecting and documenting in the wake of disasters.

III. RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

The below resources, compiled from the LEH's two-part disaster preparedness workshops, are intended to guide cultural organizations in responding and recovering from disasters.

American Institute for Conservation (AIC) | Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAC)

Emergency Conservation Resources

<https://www.culturalheritage.org/resources/emergencies>

Introductory information on available emergency resources from the AIC and FAC.

Emergency Committee Wiki

https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Emergency_Preparedness_%26_Response

The Emergency Committee Wiki contains resources that span the stages of disasters, from preparedness and planning to salvage and recovery.

Heritage Emergency National Task Force (HENTF)

Major Disasters

<https://culturalrescue.si.edu/hentf/major-disasters>

Provides an overview definition of “major disaster” in the context of a presidential disaster declaration.

Resources

<https://culturalrescue.si.edu/hentf/resources>

HENTF, co-sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Smithsonian Institution, is a partnership of sixty national service organizations and federal agencies. Find more information on emergency assistance, current disasters, public assistance navigation, training, and more.

Library of Congress (LOC)

Training and Webinars

English – <https://www.loc.gov/preservation>

Español – <https://www.loc.gov/preservation/espanol>

Watch a training video on what to do when collections get wet and access additional free webinars on caring for your collection.

Response and Recovery

<https://www.loc.gov/preservation/emergprep/recovery.html>

Remaining calm is a critical asset in an emergency. These LOC guidelines focus on responding to water damage, as water exposure is arguably the most common problem facing collections.

Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (LEH)

Disaster Preparedness Workshop #2: Response and Recovery

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iM93lx5q9KU&t=2s>

Held May 17 and 19, 2022, the second workshop in the LEH's disaster preparedness series, presented in partnership with the Louisiana Association of Museums, focused on emergency response and recovery. Panelists discussed what should occur after disaster strikes and why having an emergency plan makes recovery more manageable. Panelists also explored a variety of recovery resources available to cultural organizations.

Panelists

Lori Foley, Coordinator for the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, FEMA

Rebecca Elder, Consultant, Rebecca Elder Cultural Heritage Preservation

Misty Taylor-Pride, Collections and Exhibitions Manager, Hilliard Art Museum – UL Lafayette

Louisiana Public Assistance

<https://louisianapa.com>

This site is for the online application and management of Public Assistance, a federal grant program to aid state and local governments in returning a disaster area to pre-disaster conditions. A minimum of 75 percent of eligible costs is provided primarily to address the repair and restoration of public facilities, infrastructure, or services which have been damaged or destroyed. Eligible applicants include local and tribal governments as well as certain private nonprofit organizations.

National Coalition for Arts' Preparedness and Emergency Response (NCAPER)

An Arts Field Guide to Federal Disaster Relief

<https://www.ncaper.org/general-8-1>

The NCAPER Field Guide was created to help demystify federal disaster relief for the arts and culture sector by helping the arts sector, artists, and cultural organizations see what's available, understand clearly what isn't available, and decide if pursuing federal aid is a good use of time. The field guide gives a snapshot of federal disaster assistance programs that can go into effect after a presidentially declared disaster and focuses on longstanding programs that are likely to continue. The guide is available in English and Spanish.

IV. BUILDING A NETWORK

The below resources, compiled from the LEH's two-part disaster preparedness workshops, are intended to guide cultural organizations in building relationships with first responders, emergency managers, conservators, and other cultural organizations.

Alliance for Response (AFR)

Toolkit

<https://www.culturalheritage.org/resources/emergencies/alliance-for-response/tool-kit>

The toolkit contains resources from the AFR, including information on how to build relationships with emergency responders, identify allies to develop local assistance networks, engage your network, and help find support to sustain local disaster networks.

Planning Handbook

https://www.culturalheritage.org/docs/default-source/resources/emergency-resources/alliance-for-response-documents/plan-an-alliance-for-response-forum/updated-forum-planning-handbook-1.pdf?sfvrsn=ca210820_4

Regions interested in establishing an AFR network will use the Forum Planning Handbook to walk through the process of planning a forum. The goal of an AFR Forum is to bring together cultural heritage and emergency management personnel in a particular region. Forum attendees typically hear from local experts and have ample opportunity to network with one another. Forums are also used as an opportunity to discuss network goals, priorities, and upcoming plans.

American Institute for Conservation (AIC) | National Heritage Responders (NHR)

<https://www.culturalheritage.org/resources>

Emergency Phone: 202-662-8068

Non-Urgent Email: emergencies@culturalheritage.org

NHRs respond to the needs of cultural institutions and the public during emergencies and disasters through coordinated efforts with first responders, state agencies, vendors, and the public. NHR members come from all corners of the United States, including Alaska, Hawaii, and American Samoa. They are conservators, archivists, collection managers, and other professionals. Together, they have a diverse skill set and experience in handling a wide range of materials, including paper, textiles, paintings, and more. Cultural institution staff may call the NHR emergency number for assistance with response and recovery situations and advice on salvaging collections.

Find a Conservator

<https://www.culturalheritage.org/about-conservation/find-a-conservator>

If a valuable or important item is badly damaged or has been exposed to contaminated water, a professional conservator may be able to help salvage it. Identify and locate professional conservation services using this free tool provided by the American Institute for Conservation.

Louisiana Business Emergency Operations Center

www.labeoc.org

Email Contact: James “Jim” Williams, james.williams@louisiana.edu

The Louisiana Business Emergency Operations Center, located on the campus of UL Lafayette, supports and connects the public and private sectors during a disaster. The center is a partnership between the Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness, Louisiana Economic Development, and the National Incident Management Systems and Advanced Technologies Institute, a division of the Informative Research Institute at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

New Orleans Preservation Coalition (NOPC)

<https://www.culturalheritage.org/resources/emergencies/alliance-for-response/networks/new-orleans>

Email: nolapreservationcoalition@gmail.com

The NOPC and Alliance for Response serves as a coalition of concerned organizations, agencies, and individuals who recognize the need to sustain and protect the area’s cultural heritage. The coalition’s mission is to provide opportunities for preservation education, disaster response, and related activities within the greater New Orleans area. Their website offers additional resources on disaster response and recovery guides, tip sheets, and more.

Working with Emergency Managers

<https://www.nedcc.org/assets/media/documents/dPlan/1002-workingwithemergencyresponders.pdf>

In any major emergency, you will work with local emergency responders to save and secure your institution. If you have a good relationship with your local emergency responders and know how their systems and practices work, you can help them keep your staff and collections safe. This how-to guide on developing relationships with local emergency responders was created by FEMA and HENTF.

**V. 2022 DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FOR CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS
WORKSHOP HANDOUTS**

SAMPLE EMERGENCY SUPPLIES LIST

Full Scale Emergency Conditions Supply List

Supply	Brand	Supplier (where to buy)	Quantity
Binder/Notebook	In-House		
Phone Tree	In-House		
Condition Report Forms	In-House		
Copy of Disaster Prep Plan	In-House		
Portable radio	First Alert	Grainger	1
Shovel	Ames	Home Depot	1
First Aid kit with burn pack	Camillus	Grainger	1
Face mask with filter	3M Cool Flow	Home Depot	1
Goggles	3M	Home Depot	3
Resuscitator	Ever Ready CPR Mask Kit	Amazon	1
Food/water provisions	Grainger Approved First Aid	Grainger	1
Hi-power flashlights	Kootek	Amazon	2 packs @ 5 count
Batteries AA	Rayovac	Home Depot	1 pack @ 60 count
Batteries AAA	Rayovac	Home Depot	1 pack @ 40 count
Tarp	Everbilt Heavy Duty 16 x 20'	Home Depot	2
Bolt cutter	Milwaukee 24"	Home Depot	1
Maul (sledgehammer/ax in 1)	Estwing	Home Depot	1
Block and tackle	Tuf-Tug	Grainger	
Caution tape	Empire	Home Depot	3-pack
Low-sudsing detergent	Vulpex Liquid Soap	Talas Conservation	1 liter
Disposable diapers, size 3	Parent's Choice	Walmart	1 box @ 210 count
Universal cell phone charger	Red Shield	Amazon	1
Burner cell phone	Boost Mobile Motorola Moto E4 16GB Prepaid	Walmart	1

In a Pinch Supply List

- Large rolling garbage pails (can be used for storage or to move supplies during response)
- Trash bags (lawn bags are sturdier and larger)
- Garden gloves (multiple sizes)
- Puppy pads and/or diapers
- Multi tool/Swiss army knife
- Blue shop rags
- Plumbing snakes
- Twine
- Flashlights
- Reading lights

SAMPLE EMERGENCY SUPPLIES LIST

- Headlamps
- Batteries - AAA and AA
- Sharpies
- Pencils - sharpened and ready
- Non-electric pencil sharpener
- Mops
- Buckets
- Brooms
- Squeegees
- Shells, plastic trays*
- End rolls**

Community Supply Requests

*Plastic crates from Coca-Cola [known as shells] – assists with draining water from items/objects.

**End rolls from your local paper – to use for interleaving wet paper items.

Exterior Emergency Facility Access

[Emergency Key Box - Knox Rapid Access System \(knoxbox.com\)](http://knoxbox.com)

SAMPLE STAFF EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

LOUISIANA WATERWAYS CULTURAL CENTER - STAFF EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

This guide provides staff members with basic information on how to initially respond to emergencies and hazards in the workplace. It is impossible to anticipate every situation that may arise within or around our facility. Staff members are reminded to use good judgment in responding to unusual or potentially hazardous situations and to report them as soon as possible. Please report emergencies to Security at X-2211 or dial 911.

Remember in any emergency you have only one of three protective actions to take:

- **Evacuation**
 - Get out of the building safely! Meet at the designated muster points.
- **Shelter in Place**
 - When it is more dangerous outside than in, go to interior spaces, stay away from windows, and close all doors and windows! Sit tight until the all clear is given.
- **Lockdown**
 - When there is imminent danger in the building, hide in your office or other spaces. Lock the door, turn out the lights, and remain quiet until the all clear is given.

To discuss the Cultural Center's Emergency Plan, you may contact one of the members of the Local Emergency Management Team.

The Skipper	X-2211	Mary Ann	X-2255
Gilligan	X-2222	The Movie Star	X-2266
The Millionaire	X-2233	His Wife	X-2277
The Captain	X-2244	The Professor	X-2288

1. Fire, Evacuation, Designated Muster Points

Evacuation of the facility is necessary in response to fire alarms, explosions, gas leaks, or other hazardous situations. Pre-emergency planning includes becoming familiar with alternate exits from the facility and designated meeting areas.

In case of a fire, fire alarm, or other event requiring evacuation:

- Rescue or relocate people in immediate danger, if you can do so without endangering yourself. Do not move injured persons without their consent.
- Alert other occupants by sounding an alarm.
- You may attempt to put out a small fire with a fire extinguisher if you are trained to do so without endangering yourself. Always maintain a safe evacuation path.
- Direct evacuees to report to the designated muster point.

In case of a fire, fire alarm, or other event requiring evacuation:

- Rescue or relocate people in immediate danger, if you can do so without endangering them or yourself.
- Alert other occupants by sounding the alarm.
- Confine hazards such as fires or chemical spills, if you can do so quickly and safely. You may attempt to put out a small fire with a fire extinguisher if you are trained to do so without endangering yourself. Always maintain a safe evacuation path.
- Direct evacuees to report to the designated muster point and gather there. Make note of anyone remaining behind.
- When exiting:
 - Close your office doors and leave them unlocked.
 - If there is smoke, stay close to the floor. Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth.
 - Do not break windows.
 - Feel doors before opening; do not open if hot.
 - Do not use elevators.
 - Do not attempt to save property.
 - Do not prop stairwell doors open.
 - **The primary muster point is [insert location] if that is deemed to be a safe area. The alternate muster point would be on the lawn area next to the [insert location].**

SAMPLE STAFF EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

2. Medical Emergencies

Medical emergencies may result at any time and involve staff or visitors. Prompt and appropriate responses are critical to ensure emergency responders can be summoned in a timely manner. If you are aware of a medical emergency:

- Call Security at X-2211 or call 911 and report:
 - The exact location and nature of the emergency.
 - Your name and the number you are calling from.
 - If it is safe to do so, remain with the ill or injured person until emergency responders arrive.
 - Do not move seriously injured people unless they are in obvious, immediate danger.
 - Be prepared to provide relevant details about the ill or injured person to medical responders.

3. Severe Weather and General Emergencies

Weather emergencies throughout the year can impact normal operations with little or no advance warning. The ability to open offices, galleries, meeting rooms, and classrooms may be affected by weather emergencies.

In the event of severe weather or other general emergency:

- During normal business hours, building occupants may receive information and instructions from an LEMT leader. This may include information related to early closures, sheltering in place, evacuation, or damage mitigation procedures.
- General Information about University emergencies and procedures can be obtained by visiting: <https://safety.louisiana.edu>

4. Power Outage

Power Outages can result from malfunctions within a facility as well as from the loss of power to the facility. Emergency lighting is in place throughout the facility to allow for safe evacuation.

If a power outage occurs:

- During nighttime hours, use emergency lighting to make a safe exit from the building. During daytime hours, security or facilities management will provide information regarding the anticipated duration of the outage and whether an evacuation is necessary.
- Provide aid as necessary and reasonable to visitors or other staff in the area.
- If you are stuck in an elevator, use the emergency phone to notify authorities.
- Unplug or turn off your computer to avoid damage when the power is restored.

5. Flood and Water Damage

Water leaks may come from several sources. Water lines, environmental systems, and faulty roofs can result in water penetration that can be harmful to the facilities, archives, and/or collections.

If a water leak occurs:

- If safe to do so, call Security at X-2211 and report:
 - The exact location and nature of the leak.
 - Any observed risks to people, the facility or the collections.
 - Your name and the number you are calling from.
- If there is any possible danger, evacuate the area.
- Use extreme caution if any electrical source is close by or if there is any indication of sewage.
- If you know the water source and are confident of your ability to safely stop it (e.g., unclog a drain or turn water off) do so with caution.
- Be prepared to assist as directed by emergency management in protecting art objects or other property that is in jeopardy.

DISASTER PLANNING 101

10 ACTIONS OVER 3 MONTHS

1. Meet with your staff. Find out what supplies you have and what supplies you need.
Are there any household supplies you can use?
Do you have a maintenance department that may have supplies?
2. Place staff members in teams and identify key roles in disaster response.
Who is doing what when they arrive?
Is their contact information easy to find?
3. Identify your collection priorities – records should be digital and analog in case of power outages.
How can you move them? Can they be moved?
How can you best protect them? Do you have the proper resources/supplies?
4. Make a list of 10 items you can take with you.
What if you can only take 1 item?
What is your most valuable (tangible or intangible value) item in your collection?
5. Know your insurance policy and representative's contact information.
Have you read the fine print?
Is there someone on your board who can help here?
6. Evaluate your facility for simple mitigation. Put a reminder to do this twice a year in the calendar.
Is the fire extinguisher up to code? Can you test your emergency alarms/signals?
Are there hazards in plain view? Are pathways obstructed? Are supply bins easy to locate?
7. Host meet and greet with emergency responders at your facility for treats and a tour.
Are they familiar with your floor plan?
How can they support your mitigation and response efforts?
8. Learn how to salvage wet/damaged items in place. Watch a few online videos and practice.
Do you have old photographs or items at home that are similar to your collection?
Do you have the contact information for conservators for your long-term salvage needs?
9. Understand your limitations.
What is each members' workload in a response?
Would a quick SWOT analysis help you to identify this?
10. Create a cheat sheet with contacts and priority tasks – print on bright cardstock and laminate.
Can you easily find this in a rush?
Have contacts been updated within the last year?

ESTABLISHING SALVAGE PRIORITIES

Source: Rebecca Elder
elderpreservation.com

In the event of a large-scale emergency, your decisions to salvage certain materials ahead of others will be critical. Wet materials have only 48-72 hours before mold growth begins, doing irreparable harm. Other limitations to your salvage efforts could include time restrictions by fire department officials, space limitations in available freezers, or quantity limitations because of a large amount of damage to collections. A pre-planned list of salvage priorities will help ensure that your efforts in the critical first hours after a disaster will be directed toward saving your most valuable collections and records, instead of replaceable, low-value materials.

Compile a list of salvage priorities for each department, area and/or office. Priorities should be based on the following for collections, record groups or valuable items:

- Is it critical for the ongoing operations of the institution?
- Is it a loan?
- Is it available in another format? Another collection?
- Can it be replaced?
- Would the replacement cost be more or less than the cost of restoration?
- Does it have a high or low collection value or priority?
- Would it require immediate salvage attention because of its composition?

Some things that require immediate attention include:

- Water-soluble media (watercolor, felt tip, etc.)
- Coated paper
- Daguerreotypes and tintypes
- Scrapbooks and albums
- Shellac discs
- Bone, shell, and leather
- Basketry
- Fluid-preserved collections

RISK EVALUATION AND PLANNING PROGRAM
Walk-through Checklist

Section I: Grounds and Institutional Policies and Practices
--

A. Grounds

- A1. yes no n/a Are railings, benches, planters, and light/flag poles well-anchored?
- A2. yes no n/a Are overhanging trees and branches trimmed clear of power lines, communication lines, and facilities?
- A3. yes no n/a Are branches trimmed away from windows and skylights?
- A4. yes no Do all exits, emergency exits, and fire escapes give unobstructed access to a safe area?
- A5. yes no Do the grounds comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) codes?
- A6. yes no n/a Are grounds clear of accumulations of combustible material?
- A7. yes no n/a Are the grounds surrounded by a fence of appropriate height?
- A8. yes no If the institution utilizes dogs as a security measure, is there a trained handler on staff?
- A9. yes no _____
- A10. yes no _____

B. Emergency Response Access & External Relationships

- B1. yes no Is the site reachable by fire trucks and other emergency response equipment?
- B2. _____ What is the response time for fire, medical, and police services:
_____ for an institutional event?
_____ for a community-wide event?
- B3. yes no n/a Is fire service access maintained and clear?
- B4. Are fire hydrants:
 - yes no n/a visible?
 - yes no n/a accessible?
 - yes no n/a operable?
- B5. Are fire department connections:
 - yes no n/a visible?
 - yes no n/a accessible?
 - yes no n/a operable?
- B6. yes no n/a Is there a drafting supply nearby (e.g., lake, creek)?
- B7. yes no Do local emergency services conduct annual walk-throughs or inspections of the grounds and buildings?

- B8. yes no Is the institution a component of a local emergency response plan?
- B9. yes no Have local, regional, and national resources for emergency planning and response been identified (e.g., volunteer pool, funding, mutual aid network, training opportunities)?
- B10. yes no Have appropriate contracts been secured for recovery operations (e.g., disaster recovery firm, conservator, project manager)?
- B11. yes no _____
- B12. yes no _____

C. Insurance

- C1. yes no n/a Are the insurance policies, including those covering collections, up to date?
- C2. yes no n/a Are "Acts of God" covered by the insurance policies?
- C3. yes no n/a Are replacement costs specified as needed?
- C4. yes no n/a Are staff aware of the records required for filing a claim?
- C5. yes no n/a Are records required for filing a claim maintained safely and accessibly?
- C6. yes no _____
- C7. yes no _____

D. Construction Projects

- D1. yes no Is a life safety and fire prevention policy in place for all contracted work?
- D2. yes no n/a Is the responsibility for fire safety precautions spelled out clearly in contracts?
- D3. Have room closures and changes in exit routes been:
yes no n/a noted in the emergency plan?
yes no n/a communicated to staff and visitors?
- D4. yes no n/a Are fire guards used in all cutting and welding operations?
- D5. yes no n/a Is debris removed nightly?
- D6. yes no n/a Are fire-resistant partitions used?
- D7. yes no n/a Are extra fire extinguishers available?
- D8. yes no n/a Is access by emergency response vehicles blocked by construction activity?
- D9. yes no n/a Is access to any emergency equipment (e.g., fire panels, fire department connections, fire hydrants) blocked by construction activity?
- D10. yes no n/a Is the construction area fenced off or otherwise secured?
- D11. yes no Is access to the building restricted to only necessary areas for

contractors?

D12. yes no

D13. yes no

E. Staff Responsibilities and Training

E1. yes no

Has a staff member been assigned responsibility for emergency planning?

E2. yes no

Are staff aware of how long it will take for a response from local emergency services in both local and widespread disasters and what they should do in that time?

E3. yes no

Do all staff members have access to emergency contact numbers from work and home?

E4. yes no

Are staff trained in sounding alarms?

E5. yes no

n/a Are staff trained in interpreting annunciator panels?

E6. yes no

Are staff trained in notifying emergency personnel?

E7. yes no

Are staff trained in using fire extinguishers?

E8. yes no

Are staff trained in turning off power, HVAC, sprinklers, and gas main?

E9. yes no

n/a Are staff trained in closing fire doors?

E10. yes no

Are staff trained in first aid, CPR, and AED?

E11. yes no

Is first aid, CPR, and AED equipment on-site?

E12. yes no

n/a Do staff have keys to mechanical rooms and janitorial closets?

E13. yes no

Are staff trained in overseeing evacuation of the building?

E14. yes no

Have all staff participated in an evacuation drill?

E15. yes no

Are there effective closing procedures to ensure the building is vacant?

E16. yes no

Has a staff member been assigned to inspect storage and exhibition areas?

E17. yes no

Has a staff member been assigned the responsibility for building maintenance?

E18. yes no

n/a Does security staff have appropriate training for dealing with all types of threats?

E19. yes no

n/a Have staff been trained in carrying out the emergency response plan?

E20. yes no

Have appropriate staff members been trained in conducting a damage assessment and collections salvage procedures?

E21. yes no

Have appropriate staff members been trained in collections preservation activities?

E22. yes no

Have appropriate staff members been trained in building maintenance and repair?

E23. yes no

Have appropriate staff members been trained in general housekeeping and cleaning?

E24. yes no

E25. yes no

F. Institutional Policies

- F1. yes no Does the institution have a written collections management policy?
- F2. yes no n/a Has a staff member been assigned the responsibility for implementation of the collections management policy?
- F3. Does the institution have a policy (written or unwritten) for:
- yes no interior environmental standards?
 - yes no documentation and record keeping?
 - yes no smoking?
 - yes no food and drink?
 - yes no housekeeping?
 - yes no loans (incoming and outgoing)?
 - yes no maintenance?
 - yes no pest management?
 - yes no preservation/conservation?
 - yes no theft?
 - yes no open flame/heat generation?
 - yes no vandalism prevention?
 - yes no vandalism response?
 - yes no bomb threats?
 - yes no hostage response situations?
 - yes no shelter in place situations?
 - yes no general security?
 - yes no power failures?
 - yes no emergency closings?
- F4. yes no n/a Are smoking, food, and/or drink prohibitions enforced?
- F5. yes no When changes are made to existing policies or procedures, are they documented?
- F6. yes no Are changes to existing policies or procedures distributed to all staff?
- F7. yes no
- F8. yes no
-
-

G. Best Practices

- G1. yes no Does the institution maintain thorough collections accession and inventory documentation, including images?
- G2. yes no Are duplicates of the catalog and inventory maintained in a secure off-site location?
- G3. yes no n/a Are backups of institutional financial and operational information maintained in a secure off-site location?
- G4. yes no Is the leadership of the institution aware of the availability of

- funding sources to aid in disaster recovery?
- G5. yes no Is discretionary funding set aside for use in case of emergencies that damage the collections?
- G6. yes no Does the institution have a long-range conservation/preservation plan?
- G7. yes no n/a Has a staff member been assigned the responsibility for implementation of the long-range conservation/preservation plan?
- G8. yes no n/a Have emergency plans been tested, reviewed, and revised on an as-needed basis?
- G9. yes no Does the institution keep building and site drawings indicating the location of utility control valves?
- G10. yes no Does the institution routinely monitor for collections conditions?
- G11. yes no Does the institution routinely monitor for security?
- G12. yes no Does the institution borrow objects from other collections?
- G13. yes no When designing or installing new exhibits, are exit routes taken into account?
- G14. yes no When designing or installing new exhibits, is ease of object retrieval/removal in an emergency taken into consideration?
- G15. yes no Are special events permitted?
- G16. yes no n/a Are post-event inspections conducted by a staff member?
- G17. yes no Does the institution have a priority object listing for the protection in place, removal, or salvage of collections objects?
- G18. yes no _____
- G19. yes no _____

RISK EVALUATION AND PLANNING PROGRAM
Walk-through Checklist

Section 2: Building Information
Building Name: _____

H. Building Exterior

- H1. yes no n/a Is the building exterior well lighted?
- H2. yes no Are there locks on all windows and doors?
- H3. yes no Are there alarms on all windows and doors?
- H4. yes no n/a Is the intrusion detection system monitored 24 hours?
- H5. yes no Is the roof sloped or pitched (not flat)?
- H6. yes no Is the roof covering sound—no buckling/bubbles, leaks, cracks, or standing water?

- H7. yes no Is roof and overhang flashing/caulking intact?
- H8. yes no Is equipment properly anchored on roof?
- H9. yes no n/a Is the drainage system (eaves, gutters, downspouts, etc.) connected into sewer system?
- H10. yes no n/a Is the drainage system directed away from building footings?
- H11. yes no n/a Is there good drainage around doors?
- H12. yes no n/a Are caulking and sealants around windows and skylights sound?
- H13. yes no Are walls free of cracks and seepage?
- H14. yes no n/a Does the building comply with seismic codes?
- H15. yes no Does the building comply with fire codes?
- H16. yes no Does the building comply with electrical codes?
- H17. yes no n/a Do chimney openings have a spark arrestor with sufficient mesh?

- H18. yes no _____
- H19. yes no _____

I. Building Interior

- I1. yes no Has the electrical system been inspected recently?
- I2. yes no Are appropriate outlet configurations in use and not overloaded?
- I3. yes no Are environmental conditions monitored?
- I4. yes no n/a Is environmental monitoring equipment calibrated yearly?
- I5. yes no n/a Does the institution have a back-up power supply?
_____ what kind?
_____ how long does it provide power?
- I6. yes no n/a Are ranges, hoods, and exhaust ducts in restaurants, eating areas, and laboratories professionally cleaned at least every two months?

17. yes no n/a Do restaurants and cooking areas have ventilation systems separate from collections areas?
18. yes no Are flammable liquids prohibited near electrical equipment?
19. yes no Are electrical appliances unplugged when not in use for extended periods of time?
110. yes no Do electrical appliances have warning lights?
111. yes no n/a Are woodworking equipment dust collectors functioning adequately and emptied when full?
112. yes no n/a Are power tools unplugged when not in use?
113. yes no n/a Are working fireplaces equipped with a spark screen and a schedule for cleaning?
114. yes no n/a Are elevators inspected every six months?
115. yes no n/a Are atriums inspected regularly?
116. yes no Does the building have a central heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system?
117. yes no n/a Does the system have an automatic shut-off in the event of a fire?
118. yes no n/a Is the furnace/boiler inspected each fall?
119. yes no n/a Does the air conditioning have leaks, mold, or effective damage?
120. yes no n/a Does the air conditioner have a dehumidifier?
121. yes no n/a Is the air conditioning capable of operating on exhaust to reduce smoke?
122. yes no n/a Is the temperature maintained 24 hours a day, 7 days a week?
123. yes no n/a Is the relative humidity maintained 24 hours a day, 7 days a week?
124. yes no n/a Is the system turned off for extended periods?
125. yes no n/a Does the system filter the air for dust?
126. yes no n/a Does the system filter the air for gaseous pollutants?
127. yes no Are portable fans used to cool the building?
128. yes no Are open doors used to cool the building?
129. yes no Are open windows used to cool the building?
130. yes no Are window air conditioners used to cool the building?
131. yes no Are portable heaters used to heat the building?
132. yes no Are portable humidifiers used?
133. yes no Are portable dehumidifiers used?
134. yes no Does the building comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) codes?
135. yes no _____
136. yes no _____

J. Collections Storage and Exhibition Areas

- J1. yes no Is storage furniture well braced?
- J2. yes no Are shelving and other storage furniture 4 to 6 inches off the floor?
- J3. yes no Are valuable materials stored above ground level?
- J4. yes no Have water pipes (both potable and fire suppression pipes) in the ceiling in the collections storage and exhibition areas been identified?
- J5. yes no Are collections storage areas equipped with:
yes no water alarms?
yes no drip pans?
- J6. yes no Are exhibition areas equipped with:
yes no water alarms?
yes no drip pans?
- J7. yes no Are all exits unobstructed?
- J8. yes no Are priority collections stored away from windows?
- J9. yes no Are exhibits and collections properly spaced (i.e., not overcrowded)?
- J10. yes no Are exhibit case lights operating properly with no signs of overheating?
- J11. yes no Is all exhibit furniture clear of exit routes and fire protection equipment?
- J12. yes no Are electrical needs met properly (e.g., no extension cords used)?
- J13. yes no Are salvage equipment and materials available from an easily accessible on-site location?
- J14. yes no Is the fire department familiar with collections storage and exhibition areas?
- J15. yes no Does the fire department have access to collections storage and exhibition areas?
- J16. yes no Does temporary wiring conform to the National Electrical Code®?
- J17. yes no Are any short-term temporary storage or preparation areas on site?
- J18. yes no Are any short-term temporary storage or preparation areas off site?
- J19. yes no Are access registers maintained for collections storage areas?
- J20. yes no Are non staff members allowed to work in storage areas unaccompanied?
- J21. yes no Are collections storage areas used for purposes other than storage?
- J22. yes no Are collections storage areas used to store materials other than collections?

- J23. yes no Are collections storage areas cleaned regularly?
 J24. yes no Are exhibition areas used for purposes other than exhibition?
 J25. yes no
 J26. yes no
-

K. Fire Safety

- K1. yes no Are appropriate detection systems in place and wired to a 24-hour monitoring station?
 K2. yes no n/a Are detection systems tested regularly (at least semi-annually)?
 K3. yes no Is an automatic suppression system present and working?
 K4. yes no Are all openings in the floors, ceilings, and walls able to be closed or sealed to prevent fire from spreading?
 K5. yes no n/a Are stairwell and hallway fire doors kept closed?
 K6. yes no Are stairwells and evacuation routes free of obstructions?
 K7. yes no n/a Are fire escape stairs in good condition?
 K8. yes no n/a Do emergency lighting units operate when tested?
 K9. yes no n/a Are emergency lighting units tested monthly?
 K10. yes no Are exterior emergency exit routes kept clear of snow and ice?
 K11. yes no n/a Are lightning rods properly grounded?
 K12. yes no Are illuminated exit signs lit and easy to see?
 K13. yes no Are portable fire extinguishers in proper locations?
 K14. yes no Are portable fire extinguishers fully charged and tagged?
 K15. yes no Are fire extinguishers inspected monthly?
 K16. yes no n/a Is the sprinkler system operable and accessible?
 K17. yes no Is a space of at least 18 inches kept between sprinklers and materials?
 K18. yes no n/a Are fire hose cabinets easily visible and accessible?
 K19. yes no n/a Are fire hose cabinets kept in good order?
 K20. yes no n/a Are fire panels located in readily-accessible areas?
 K21. yes no Are fire detectors free from obstructions?
 K22. yes no n/a Are sprinkler control valves open and secured?
 K23. yes no n/a Do dry pipe systems register at normal air pressures?
 K24. yes no n/a Are sprinkler tanks, piping, and supports in good condition?
 K25. yes no Are flooring and concealed spaces (e.g., false ceilings) identified on floorplans?
 K26. yes no n/a Is fire detection present in all concealed spaces?
 K27. yes no n/a Are stairways and pipe shafts enclosed?
 K28. yes no Is electrical wiring in good condition?
 K29. yes no Are appliance cords in good condition?
 K30. yes no Does the Fire Marshal visit annually?
 K31. yes no Does the fire department have floor plans for the institution, with high-priority collections areas noted?
 K32. yes no Are observed code violations given appropriate follow up?

- K33. yes no Are smoking regulations enforced with employees and visitors?
 K34. yes no _____
 K35. yes no _____

L. Protection from Water Damage

- L1. yes no Are pipes and plumbing well supported?
 L2. yes no Are pipes and plumbing free of leaks?
 L3. yes no Are water detectors/alarms present?
 L4. yes no n/a Are sump pumps and back-ups present?
 L5. yes no Is a backflow valve in use on the sewer?
 L6. yes no n/a If the basement has a drain, is a drain plug readily available?
 L7. yes no n/a Are window wells covered?
 L8. yes no n/a Are appropriate dehumidifiers available?
 L9. yes no n/a Are walls free of leakage and seepage?
 L10. yes no Are valuable materials stored above ground level?
 L11. yes no Are valuable and fragile media stored in protective enclosures?
 L12. yes no Do staff know where water main is and how to turn it off?
 L13. yes no n/a Do staff have the appropriate tools to turn off water main?
 L14. yes no _____
 L15. yes no _____

M. Indoor Hazards

- M1. yes no Are emergency measures in case of accidental spills posted?
 M2. yes no Is immediate clean-up of spills assigned to a staff member?
 M3. yes no Are spill clean-up supplies located on site?
 M4. yes no Are flammable/combustible liquids kept in approved safety containers?
 M5. yes no Are flammable/combustible liquids stored in an approved cabinet?
 M6. yes no n/a Are safety cabinet vents clear of obstructions?
 M7. yes no Are soiled rags kept in an approved self-closing waste container?
 M8. yes no Are decorations for holidays or special events inspected for proper functioning when in use?
 M9. yes no Are decorations for holidays or special events stored in a safe place when not in use?
 M10. yes no _____
 M11. yes no _____

N. Housekeeping



Alliance for
Response

Forum Planning Handbook

A GUIDE TO BRINGING
TOGETHER EMERGENCY
RESPONDERS AND
CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS
IN YOUR COMMUNITY



**Foundation for Advancement in
Conservation**

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Alliance for Response is an initiative of the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAIC).

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Preface

Are you as prepared for an emergency as possible? Even if you have a solid disaster response plan that your staff practices regularly, you may be missing one important element: a relationship with the first responders and emergency personnel who will play a vital role in your institution's survival and recovery.

The Alliance for Response initiative is designed to help you reach out and form partnerships with your local emergency responders, beginning with a one-day Forum. The Forum provides an opportunity for cultural heritage stewards, from executive directors to curators to conservators, to exchange important information with and get to know their community's firefighters, police, and local, state, and federal emergency managers.

This handbook provides guidance for people inspired to bring Alliance for Response to their communities. It offers a general framework for organizing a Forum, assuming that program specifics will be tailored to local needs. You will find templates and samples to help you on the Forum Sample Documents Web page, www.heritageemergency.org/forum-planning-handbook-sample-documents/



I. Introduction

The Importance of Partnerships

When an emergency strikes your institution, you know to dial 911. But will you know the responders who arrive, who is in charge, and how to communicate your priorities? Likewise, will the first responders know which collections are most important, how to handle them safely, and where hazardous materials are located?

Addressing these issues before disaster strikes can significantly increase your chances of a successful recovery. At Alliance for Response Forums around the country, emergency responders and cultural heritage stewards have been sitting down together, explaining their priorities and methods, and designing ways to ensure the best possible outcomes for collecting institutions in emergencies.

Emergency responders' first priority is saving lives, but they also want to protect community treasures. After the collapse of the World Trade Center Towers, the grandson of sculptor Alexander Calder printed flyers with a photo and description of Calder's sculpture *Bent Propeller* (at first assumed completely destroyed.) Once the workers knew what to look for, they began finding pieces, eventually recovering over 35 percent of the artwork. It is not known how much may have been hauled away as debris before the flyers were distributed.

The benefit of knowing your emergency responders was also illustrated in April 2007, when a three-alarm fire at the Georgetown branch of the District of Columbia Public Library destroyed the roof and much of the 1935 building's second floor, including the Peabody Room. When the assistant fire chief was told of the precious historic records and artifacts in the Peabody Collection, he sent in a team to cover the collections with protective tarps and bring whatever paintings and artifacts they could carry on the way out. Communicating your collection's needs and importance to the community can invest responders in its survival.

Alliance for Response: The National Initiative

Working with emergency responders to safeguard collections and historic sites has been a priority for the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation (FAIC).

A study of Lower Manhattan cultural institutions after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks confirmed the importance of preparedness.

Museums, libraries, and archives with emergency plans were better able to protect their collections from dust and debris. Institutions that had established relationships with emergency responders were able to

gain earlier access to their collections after the tragedy. Emergency responders also gained a better appreciation for the cultural heritage community when several institutions opened their doors as rest and supply centers.

In 2003, the non-profit Heritage Preservation launched Alliance for Response to address one of the study's major recommendations: building bridges between the cultural heritage and emergency response communities before disasters happen. In 2015, FAIC took over management of the program. In 15 years, more than 30 Forums have been held in cities and regions across the United States.

Definitions

The term **first responders** normally refers to professionals dispatched by the 911 system: firefighters, police, and paramedics. In larger events, this might also include the National Guard or Coast Guard. **Emergency managers** play a coordinating role before, during, and after disasters and are usually affiliated with city, county, or state government. Representatives of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are in this category. In this guide, the term **emergency responders** encompasses both groups.

Cultural heritage institutions refers to organizations that collect and care for cultural or historic objects and records, such as museums, libraries, archives, historic houses/site, and historical societies. The cultural heritage community also includes

For each Forum, strong local planning committees contributed not only to the success of the event, but to continuing networks and cooperative projects. Participants included leaders of museums, libraries, archives, and historic preservation organizations, as well as federal, state, and local emergency responders. Cultural heritage representatives ranged from conservators and preservation professionals to curators and security staff; emergency responders included representatives from FEMA, the U.S. Coast Guard, law enforcement, fire departments, local governments, and the American Red Cross. The Forums have been hosted by major cultural institutions such as leading museums and public library systems.

The Alliance for Response initiative goes beyond holding a Forum. Its ultimate goal is sustaining cooperation, both between the cultural heritage and emergency response communities - and among cultural institutions. Below are a few examples.

Boston Forum participants formed the Cultural Emergency Management Team (CEMT), which has since become Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness: Massachusetts (COSTEP MA). The group, trained and deployed through the State Archives and State Library Commission, has an official role in responding to emergencies. Thanks to COSTEP, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts added a new annex for cultural heritage to its emergency plan.

Since its 2004 Forum, Alliance for Response New York City has held regular

programming for its membership and built a strong relationship with the city’s Office of Emergency Management. Following Hurricane Sandy in 2012, the group trained a team of cultural heritage responders who are prepared to assist damaged heritage throughout the city. The network went on to apply for - and receive - official 501(c)3 status as a registered nonprofit.

The Atlanta Alliance for Response Forum resulted in the establishment of the Heritage Emergency Response Alliance (HERA). The HERA steering committee has created a successful structure and local listserv; it meets semi-annually and hosts two educational programs per year. Over the years, HERA has organized conference calls to check in with cultural institutions after regional disaster events including hurricanes and tornadoes.

Seattle Heritage Emergency Response Network, or SHERN, developed in the years following the initial Seattle Forum in 2006. SHERN has developed a mutual aid agreement between its member institutions, providing advice, guidance, and/or actual recovery assistance when requested.

Forum Facts

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The first Forum was held November 14, 2003, at the Dallas Museum of Art and featured a tour of the museum’s collections and storage areas to point out what local treasures are at risk. One attendee wrote, “What a wonderful conference! This was like receiving a college education in one day.”

After the 2013 Forum, a local emergency manager stepped up to serve as co-chair of the South Florida Alliance for Response. The network holds frequent meetings and trainings, and a representative was invited to serve in the Emergency Operations Center upon activation. In 2017, a group of thirty individuals completed cultural heritage responder training, creating a team prepared to respond to events in the region.

What a Forum Can Do for You

Alliance for Response Forum attendees have often noted that the meeting brought to light issues they had never thought about. Emergency responders said they learned about the importance of cultural heritage and why it needs to be protected; cultural heritage attendees learned how emergency responders operate and what they can do to help in an emergency.

A cultural heritage attendee wrote that she learned about “the hierarchy of local—state— federal emergency management; most importantly, that local offices are interested in hearing from me.” A museum staffer discovered some simple steps, like closing doors, that could help in a fire.

One participant from a fire department wrote that he learned to “take a proactive approach to asking about where high value/rare articles are located so that the fire department can address them as early as possible during an incident.”

An archivist noted that “the [state emergency management] folks were

especially accessible and I now feel more confident in reaching out to them and working with them.”

Another participant from a state archives wrote that the Forum helped her understand “not just the importance of the relationships but how to go about building them.”

After the Alliance for Response Forum in New York City, a FEMA regional environmental officer wrote, “The entire day was very worthwhile and beneficial to

planning. From my perspective, the meeting was an eye opener in terms of response and coordination in a disaster.”

An Alliance for Response Forum benefits both groups by establishing lines of communication: emergency responders tell cultural institutions how to make their jobs safer, and cultural heritage stewards tell first responders what should be saved first and how items should be handled. Perhaps most importantly, the Forum will ensure that in an emergency, you’ll have the help you need.

II. What You Need to Get Started

Goals

An Alliance for Response Forum is different from a hands-on workshop or educational seminar; its focus is on leadership, policy, and ongoing relationships. It can influence your trustees, raise your institution’s standing in the community, and create lasting partnerships with people who are critical to disaster recovery.

The overall goals of the Alliance for Response initiative are to:

- Provide education on local disaster management issues and protocols
- Raise awareness of the need to protect cultural and historic resources
- Encourage disaster planning and mitigation

- Develop strong, ongoing networks to facilitate effective local response

Funding and Budget

The costs associated with a Forum can vary widely. Yours will depend on the general cost of living in your area, whether you can secure donations of space, materials, or catering, and whether you pay honoraria for speakers.

Be creative about funding—think locally and nationally. Will a potential speaker already be in town for another engagement? Is there an organization or company in your community that may have much to gain from this new alliance of the cultural and emergency response communities? Has a local institution dealt with an insurance agency or

disaster recovery firm that would be willing to support this initiative? Also, check with your local or state government to see whether funding might be available—the California Forums were supported by the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services.

Put together a packet of information to give to prospective funders. This may include any material you have developed to date, from a proposed agenda to confirmed speakers. Solicitation and confirmation document samples are posted on the Sample Documents page.

FAIC may have funding available to help support administrative costs for Forums. E-mail foundation@culturalheritage.org to inquire.

It’s best to break your budget into categories and consider the costs for each:

Speakers. Decide up front whether you will offer honoraria for speakers; if so, include those costs in the budget. If you invite speakers from out of town, you may need to cover travel and hotel expenses. Most of your speakers should be local, but you may decide to splurge on an out-of-town keynote speaker. (The travel of federal employees, such as FEMA regional officials, is usually covered by the government.)

Catering. Previous Forum planners have found sponsors for lunch and snack breaks. Ask local representatives from disaster recovery firms or the chamber of commerce; point out that it is a great way for them to reach both the local cultural heritage and

emergency response communities. An acknowledgement of their support should appear on the program and in the welcoming remarks.

Forum Facts

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At the Triangle Alliance for Response Forum, Raleigh (NC) Fire Chief John McGrath told the cultural community to step up and “identify yourself. We will be grateful for your expertise, and we are looking for your guidance to do the right thing.”

Administration. Even if you secure donations to support some direct administrative costs (printing, mailing, conference calls), staffing resources will still be needed. Ask your committee members to enlist volunteers from their respective institutions—you can spread the work, and thus the cost, among several institutions.

Lead Time

Planning such an ambitious gathering can be daunting, so be realistic about the amount of time you need – usually five to

seven months. If you have a framework in place, such as cultural heritage network group that can help with the planning process, you will need less time than if you are starting from square one. (See “Sample Timeline,” p. 9).

A Wide Circle of Friends

An Alliance for Response Forum brings together several communities that normally have little or no contact. Making connections within new communities, particularly with emergency managers and first responders, can be challenging. You'll need to network and be prepared to do some legwork to find the right people to join you in the endeavor.

III. The Local Planning Committee

Who Should Be Involved

Assembling an effective planning committee is the single most important action to ensure your Forum is a success. In general, a planning committee should consist of 8 to 10 people from the cultural heritage and emergency responder communities.

Planning committees from past Forums have included executive directors of major art and history museums, directors of public libraries, state archivists, emergency management officials, insurance industry representatives, and preservation or conservation professionals (see roster in the Sample Documents). To make sure your Forum will attract a wide array of cultural and emergency responder professionals, seek out planning committee members from diverse institutions and organizations. Members bring different audiences and connections. Varying perspectives on program needs can lead to a stronger and more interesting agenda.

Recruiting Committee Members

When speaking with potential planning committee members, be clear that this project will require consistent and enthusiastic support, even after the Forum is over. Committee meetings will most likely take place at least once a month leading up to the Forum, possibly more often depending on the timeline. Members' attendance and

involvement is key to hosting a Forum that will perpetuate cooperation between the cultural and emergency management communities.

Perhaps a group of cultural or preservation professionals already meets regularly in your community, either for workshops and training or just to share information and expertise. This might be a good place to start looking for planning committee members. These people already demonstrate their interest in the preservation of cultural heritage and most likely work well together.

Be sure to recruit committee members from the emergency response field. This can be the most challenging part of putting your committee together. Ask other recruits for emergency manager and first responder contacts in their areas—networking is the best and easiest way to find these professionals. The local city emergency management agency or a university campus emergency planner should be able to offer good leads.

You can also look for emergency responders online. Every state has its own website, which should have a link to the state emergency management agency. Your city or county may have a website with similar information.

When you make contact with emergency responders, explain who you are, what you do, and why cultural institutions and historic sites need special attention. For further talking points, see *Working with Emergency Responders: Tips for Cultural Institutions*. This poster has helpful tips on communicating with first responders and emergency managers. A printed poster is available at www.conservation-us.org/store and can also be downloaded free as an 8.5 x 11-inch booklet at www.heritageemergency.org/working_with_emergency_responders/

When making your pitch to potential committee members, be sure to explain in general terms what an Alliance for Response Forum is. Mention that they will be an integral part of shaping the Forum and follow-up activities. Committee members will be involved in refining the goals and setting the Forum agenda.

Don't be discouraged if some of your first recruits turn you down. Ask them for recommendations of others in their institution or field who might be interested in contributing to the success of the project.

Responsibilities

In general, the planning committee should begin meeting about six months before the Forum date. For the inaugural meeting of the committee, find a convenient time and place, which does not need to be where the Forum will actually be held. It is important that everyone attend, since this will be the first time many of these people meet each other.

At this meeting, the first priority is to set the goals of the Forum. (See "Goals," p. 5.) Your particular goals will depend on the hazards in your area (natural disasters as well as industrial and environmental risks), the number and nature of your cultural heritage treasures, and other needs of local institutions. You should frame your Forum's objectives within the overall Alliance for Response goals.

Such goals might include highlighting the need for cooperative disaster planning or expanding the membership of a response network that is already in place. Thinking through your goals will help shape the program and ensure an effective follow-up to the Forum.

A suggested agenda for this first meeting is included in the Sample Documents. Future planning committee meeting agendas will be determined by what you decide during this first meeting. Suggest that committee members bring their calendars and appointment books to discuss the date for the Forum and schedule future planning meetings. Be sure to create a timeline for when tasks need to be accomplished (see "Sample Timeline," p. 9) and begin to develop a budget.

The committee should meet regularly until the Forum date and undertake the following tasks:

- design a program to meet the Forum goals
- identify and recruit the speakers

Sample Timeline

Seven to three months out:

- Planning committee begins meeting, selecting program, venue, and date
- Select and invite speakers
- Begin contacting potential sponsors
- Send letters of agreement to speakers and sponsors immediately once they agree to participate

Four to two months out:

- Shape the list of invitees. Remember that not everyone you invite will come, so build some redundancy into your list
- Send save-the-date postcards or e-mails to invitees

One month out:

- Send speakers a list of talking points for their presentations to ensure minimal overlap and adequate topic coverage. Ask for any audio-visual requirements
- Send invitation letters with details about the Forum, including the agenda and any special activities being offered by the host institution. Be sure to specify the RSVP date

Two weeks out:

- Host a conference call to coordinate presentations and panels

One week out:

- Registration closes
- Send reminder to participants
- Assemble materials for attendee packets; collate the list of participants and include it in the packets
- Confirm arrangements with the caterer and host institution
- Send a media advisory to local reporters
- Have speakers send any audiovisual materials for testing
- Confirm hotel and travel arrangements for out-of-town speakers

One day out:

- Give a tour of the facilities for planning committee members and others helping on meeting day
- Set up the venue space(s) and test the audiovisual equipment
- Send email reminders to local media contacts
- Set a date that doesn't conflict with cultural or emergency responder events
- decide on the size of the meeting
- secure an appropriate venue at a local museum or library
- identify participants, media contacts, and potential funding sources
- issue invitations
- encourage decision-makers to attend
- keep track of registrations and follow up as necessary
- work with the speakers to ensure effective content
- provide assistance to the host institution to guarantee a successful meeting day

Many Hands Make Light Work

Each member of the committee should be encouraged to contribute talent, knowledge, and time. Assignments may include: drawing up and reviewing the invitation list, making logistical arrangements, composing e-mails and correspondence, designing promotional pieces such as a save-the-date postcard or an informational brochure, identifying and inviting speakers, arranging for catering, identifying and soliciting additional funding, registering participants, and assembling Forum packets.

Some jobs will require more than one person, but be sure everyone has an assignment and knows when it has to be finished. You may want to draw up a “job chart” that includes deadlines.

If committee members are unable to meet physically on a regular basis, consider conference calls.

IV. Anatomy of a Forum

Planning a Forum requires some multitasking. Several basic decisions need to be made simultaneously. The committee should select a general target date for the Forum, outline the program, identify one or two key speakers, and select some possible venues. Members of the planning committee should tackle these issues in coordination with each other.

Selecting a Date and Venue

Pick the date and reserve a venue as early as possible so you can begin speaker recruitment and logistical arrangements. When picking a date, keep these factors in mind:

Weather. If people are traveling any distance to your Forum, weather can play a big role in

Forum Facts

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Savannah’s Forum, held in 2009, proved to be an inspiration to a member of the state EMS/fire department, who noted that “preservation of the archives is a must; we can no longer look at the archives as only a piece of paper of no value. The history and the information these documents provide are essential for society to function.”

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its success. Avoid times of the year when problematic weather (like snowstorms) are likely to occur. You may wish to consider a “rain date” to allow for unexpected weather conditions.

Conflicts. Find out the schedules for other conferences and meetings your audience might be interested in and avoid those dates. This takes some work, especially in the case of emergency responders. Also, keep in mind that preparedness campaigns (e.g., your state’s emergency preparedness month) are usually a busy time for emergency responders.

Speakers. If you have in mind the “perfect” keynote speaker, consider his or her availability.

The date you select will also depend on where you want to hold the Forum. A central, accessible, and iconic setting is ideal. For example, past Forums have been held at:

- Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
- Cincinnati Art Museum
- Dallas Museum of Art
- The Jewish Museum, New York City
- Museum of History and Industry, Seattle
- The Getty Center, Los Angeles
- The Carnegie Museum of Pittsburgh
- Denver Public Library
- North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh
- Jepson Center for the Arts, Savannah
- Minneapolis Institute of Arts
- Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, Miami
- Maritime and Seafood Industry Museum, Biloxi

All these venues are prestigious, high-profile, and conveniently located. Most of them

donated meeting and dining space. Several venues offered free admission, free parking, and tours of collections storage areas or areas where disaster hit.

Consider how events will flow when you choose the venue; be sure to consider accessibility issues. Some Forums used one room all day for presentations, lunch, and general discussions. Others reserved additional rooms for lunch and break-out sessions. You will also need registration space and a display area for materials from participants and sponsors. Pick the setting that best suits your Forum’s unique needs.

A few things to keep in mind:

- Are the space(s) for the presentations, break-out sessions, and lunch/snack breaks adequate for the number of people you anticipate at the Forum?
- Will the institution donate the space or will a fee be charged?
- Is the location easily accessible, either by car or public transportation?
- Is parking free, or can vouchers be negotiated?
- Will the institution donate security and other needed staff?
- Will the venue also serve as an incentive for people to attend?
- Does the institutions have strict requirements for catering (e.g., allowing only certain vendors or only allowing food in certain areas)?

Structuring the Program

There are two elements of the Alliance for Response Forum program that your planning committee will need to consider: the content and the structure.

Content. The content should address the Forum goals (see p. 5) and provide a learning experience for representatives of both the cultural heritage and emergency response communities. All panels, presentations, and break-out groups should help participants understand one another better.

There are several basic topics that Alliance for Response Forums have found useful to cover:

- how cultural heritage contributes to the community
- what hazards particular to the community or region put cultural heritage at risk
- how local and state emergency protocols work
- how to integrate cultural heritage into local planning efforts
- how to build and sustain a successful local network

Break-out sessions should be designed with follow-up activities in mind; specific topics can help you identify and refine future efforts. Sample issues include promoting cooperative efforts in disaster planning, identifying local resources, developing strategies for working with emergency managers, building a local network, or addressing training needs. See Sample Documents for break-out session worksheets.

Structure. Your mission is to fully engage the Forum audience and encourage them to learn about each other’s contribution to the community. The structure of the program can be as helpful in this regard as the topics you select and the quality of the presentations. Avoid too lengthy a program and build in many opportunities to network.

Forum Facts

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Following the Minneapolis/St. Paul Forum, a state emergency manager proclaimed that “we are here as a resource and encourage cultural institution representatives to reach out to local contacts and tap into available training/exercise resources to strengthen/build contacts and capabilities.”

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The typical Forum begins with a welcome from the host institution and local planning committee and a keynote address. It is also a good idea to allow participants to briefly introduce themselves. It requires less time than you’d think and encourages networking. Panel presentations usually follow. Some of the most successful panels have featured a mix of local, state, and regional emergency responders; offered case studies of emergencies at local institutions; or provided an overview of local resources and networks.

A facilitated discussion of a disaster scenario is a good way to illustrate how communication between cultural institution staff and emergency responders can affect

the outcome of an emergency. Recruit an experienced facilitator and use a “mixed” panel of both emergency responders and cultural heritage staff to highlight their respective roles and responsibilities.

Use lunch and breaks to enhance networking. Ideally, attendees will be assigned to tables to ensure diversity among lunch companions. Your goal is to facilitate a dialogue about the morning’s content that can fuel ideas and enthusiasm for a more permanent alliance.

Although you may have one presentation after lunch, most of the afternoon should be devoted to break-out sessions. Reconvene participants at the end of the day to hear reports from the break-out groups and make plans for following up. Sample Forum agendas are included in the Sample Documents.

Selecting Speakers

Draw on committee members’ experiences at national meetings as well as their knowledge of local experts to get the right speakers for this program. Committee members themselves might be the best possible choice. Keep in mind the budget for paying travel expenses and honoraria.

Be sure to secure emergency managers and first responders as speakers, along with representatives from the cultural community. The audience has much to learn from both fields. Other possible types of speakers include government officials qualified to talk about the federal disaster relief process

(such as FEMA regional officials or someone from the area who has been through the procedures). You can find out your FEMA region and contact information online.

Representatives from insurance companies and disaster recovery firms who have worked on cultural projects may make good speakers. Forums have also featured presentations by meteorologists from the National Weather Service, a water and sewer commissioner, and an earthquake specialist.

When a speaker has been recruited, send a confirmation letter. Be sure to tell speakers how much time they will have for their presentations. An outline of talking points is very helpful, and a pre-Forum gathering or phone call will guarantee strong presentations. See Sample Documents for a template of the confirmation letter and talking points.

Defining the Audience

A key element of the Forum to discuss at the first meeting of the planning committee is the intended audience. The audience will help achieve your Forum’s goals, so its composition is crucial to success. The mix of participants is very important. You need institutional leaders who can approve new disaster planning efforts and meet with local officials, as well as facilities, security, and collections staff to implement plans and forge ties with emergency responders. A diverse planning committee should be able to identify key people to invite from:

- the cultural community (directors, collections managers, conservators, and facility managers, as well as representatives from the regional National Archives and Records Administration office and National Park Service units)
- emergency responders (firefighters, police officers, and representatives from FEMA, local or state emergency management, universities, and colleges)
- local government (mayor, building inspectors)
- business (insurance agents, representatives from recovery firms and suppliers, corporate curators)
- sponsors (local foundation or business representatives)

Aim for an invitee list with 25 percent to 30 percent from non-cultural institutions. Attendance at past Forums has ranged from 60 to 120 people after inviting from 90 to 250 people. The invitee list and actual attendance will be determined by how ambitious you are. Past Forums have usually focused on metropolitan areas, but any town or even a college campus could benefit. Statewide and regional Forums are considerably more difficult to coordinate. Making Alliance for Response Forums invitation-only events ensures that each Forum attracts people who can make a difference in communications between the cultural and emergency response communities. An open-invitation Forum might result in a lopsided audience, since cultural heritage representatives are likely to be more familiar with the goals of the program. The Forum also takes on more

importance as an invitation-only event, letting the invitees know they are vital to making the alliance successful.

Forum Facts

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One of the Key Speakers at the Vermont Forum was Barbara Farr, Director of Vermont Emergency Management. Director Farr later extended an invitation for participants to take part in VEM's second annual Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference.

While creating the invitation list, pay special attention to well-known or highly respected institutions; their participation could lead to more buy-in from others. Note in the invitations that if the invitee can't come, someone else from the institution is welcome; if you can, specify which person or position would be most appropriate. If your pool of invitees is small, encourage a team from each institution to attend, such as a curator and a facilities manager or security chief.

Past Forum planners have said one of the biggest challenges is identifying and attracting emergency responders. They are busy with many other priorities. One way to identify likely participants is to ask your cultural heritage invitees to recommend emergency managers or first responders they know. Invite many first responders—several are likely to drop out at the last minute to respond to emergencies.

First responders are members of the community and care about its heritage and economic well-being. They can do their jobs better if they know what to expect when they enter a building, especially if it houses collections that may contain hazards when exposed to heat or water (such as ethnographic or industrial objects). The opportunity to be better informed will appeal to them. Also, investigate whether the Forum can count as a continuing education credit for emergency responders or other professions as an added incentive.

Issuing Invitations

Once the invitation list has been finalized, consider sending a “save-the-date” postcard or e-mail, then a letter of invitation containing more details. A follow-up e-mail containing logistical information is also a good idea. (You can find templates for these in the Sample Documents). Many of the people you are inviting have busy schedules; plan on sending the save-the-date information at least two months in advance of the Forum date. Be sure to also send a reminder one to two weeks before the Forum.

With the invitation, enclose background information about Alliance for Response. A PDF version of a brochure, as well as the Alliance for Response logo in electronic formats, is available on the Sample Documents page.

Consider dividing the invitee list among planning committee members and placing phone calls or sending personalized e-mails to key invitees. Many times the only

motivation a person needs to attend the Forum is more information about what is going to be accomplished. If someone cannot come, ask who should attend in his or her place.



Managing Registration

A volunteer or group of volunteers is necessary to staff the advance registration process. Decide how it will be handled—online, by mail, or by phone.

In addition to name, title, and contact information, collect any special meal or accessibility requirements. Keeping track of responses in a spreadsheet or database makes the data more accessible and portable.

Review registrations periodically to ensure the correct mix of attendees. If one target audience is unresponsive, you may want to follow up with e-mails or phone calls.

Set up a staffed registration table at the Forum. When participants arrive, they should check in and receive a name badge and program packet. The packet should contain the agenda, lists of all participants and sponsors, brief biographies of the speakers, speaker presentation handouts, discussion questions for the break-out session they are

assigned to, and an evaluation form (see Sample Documents).

Tips for a Successful Meeting

- Assemble extra meeting packets to have on hand
- Plan for all audio-visual equipment needs and make sure someone is on hand who can help if problems arise. If speakers are using visual presentations (such as PowerPoint), get them in advance so you can test them. Load presentations onto one computer to be used all day
- Assign someone to keep track of the time to signal speakers when their allotted period is ending. Small signs with large, easily readable numbers indicating 10, 5, and 1 (minutes left) will help speakers manage their time
- Include evaluation forms (see Sample Documents) in the packets. The information gathered will help you tailor future meetings. Collect as many evaluations as possible – ask for them as one of the final activities of the day. Be sure to ask whether attendees want to participate in follow-up activities
- Decide ahead of time how you want to keep in contact with the attendees after the Forum and make sure you get the appropriate information. Don't rely on them to provide business cards or send e-mails; get the information during the Forum

Alerting the Media

Although the Forum is invitation-only, publicity can attract broader participation in your follow-up activities. An article in the paper or a piece on a local radio station can help spread the word and might even attract some funding for future efforts.

Identify appropriate local media contacts in advance and send them information about the Forum (see Media Advisory in the Sample Documents). Specify which part of the day to attend; they will probably not have time to spend the entire day, and there may be sections, such as the break-out sessions, that would be of less interest. Occasionally a presentation contains sensitive information; make sure speakers are comfortable with a media presence.

Assign someone with media experience as the Forum spokesperson and supply them with talking points for interviews. After the Forum, send out a press release (see Sample Documents). This may gain you coverage in outlets that did not send a reporter and will act as a reminder and additional source of information for those that did. Post your press release online for anyone who might be searching for information about your Forum.

Conducting an Evaluation

An evaluation form can help you discover more about Forum participants and plan follow-up activities effectively. Although it is good to get feedback on the Forum itself, the evaluation form is really a tool for future

planning. Design it to elicit information about the interests of participants, the needs of their institutions, and their commitment to future cooperative efforts. The form gives attendees the opportunity to sign on to a new partnership in their community. You will find a good example in the Sample Documents.

The evaluation form should be included in the meeting packet attendees receive at registration. Encourage them to complete the form. Emphasize its value several times during the day and station volunteers at exits to collect the forms as participants leave the meeting.



20/20 Hindsight

We asked people involved in planning Forums what they would do differently next time based on their experiences. Here are some of their replies:

- Coach speakers and have more contact with them before the Forum
- Network more with cultural institutions to identify people in the emergency response community. Include emergency responders and representatives of insurance companies and other for-profit companies with art collections, such as banks, on the planning committee
- Ask the state emergency management association to encourage their members to attend
- Publicize earlier and better, explaining the benefits of attending in ways that appeal to each of the target participant groups
- Recruit media representatives to cover the Forum

V. Follow-up Activities

At the end of the Forum, you should come away with a strategy for the future. Following up with the audience and planning next steps are vital to accomplishing the Forum goals. An Alliance for Response Forum is the first phase in a process, not an isolated event.

As quickly as possible, send thank-you letters to speakers, planning committee members, sponsors, the host institution, and anyone else who contributed to the success of your Forum (see Sample Documents).

Send a summary of the meeting and next steps to attendees promptly. Be sure to thank them for coming and making your Forum a success.

Make some follow-up calls to the media contacts to whom you sent press releases. Publicity may attract new participants vital to your goals— perhaps even funding.

Send your Forum information to FAIC so we can share your experiences with others planning Forums around the country.

Several days after the Forum, your planning committee should de-brief. What went well? What didn't? What would you do differently next time? Review the program evaluations and decide what they mean for future activities.

Forum Facts

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Following the New York Capital Region Forum, the group held a three-part workshop series titled “Building Your Institution’s Disaster Preparedness Plan.” Participants completed a disaster plan, shared a risk assessment with their county emergency manager, and learned the Incident Command System.

Make arrangements to continue the dialogue begun at the Forum. Start with a meeting or conference call for those who indicated interest on their evaluation forms. Invite local institutions that weren't able to come to the Forum.

It is important to agree on realistic goals for follow-up efforts. Don't be overly ambitious; select strategies and projects that are doable. As with Forum planning, spread responsibilities among committee members. Examples of follow-up activities include:

- adapting Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) for cultural institutions and historic sites
- incorporating cultural institutions in a city-wide emergency access communications system
- developing a local disaster supply cache
- building an online database of local disaster prevention, response, and recovery resources and vendors

- designing a mutual aid agreement for neighboring cultural heritage institutions
- creating a mentoring plan to help smaller institutions prepare for disasters
- sponsoring a series of “table top” training exercises adapted to the needs of museums and libraries
- creating a census of all cultural institutions within a metro area



VI. Conclusion

Planning an Alliance for Response Forum can be a rewarding experience. Bringing members of the cultural heritage and emergency response communities together is one of the best ways to make sure your community’s treasures are as safe as possible in any situation.

Your first task is to gather a group of people who are enthusiastic and committed to the goals behind Alliance for Response. From there, it becomes a cooperative effort—a model for the kind of partnership you will build between the cultural and emergency response communities.

Remember, the Forum is only the beginning. Building networks is the ultimate goal of the national Alliance for Response project, and communities around the country have continued to build on the relationships their Forums began.

FAIC welcomes you to this vital national initiative.

VII. Resources

These are resources to help plan Alliance for Response Forums, work with emergency responders, identify allies in your community, and help sustain local disaster networks.

Sample Documents

The following are templates, based on documents used by various planning committees for previous Forums, available at www.culturalheritage.org/afr/forum

Please remember to credit FAIC on your program materials as follows: “Alliance for Response is a national initiative of the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation. For more information, visit www.culturalheritage.org/afr

General

- AFR brochure

Logos

- AFR logo for electronic use (gif)
- AFR logo for print use (CMYK tiff)

Sponsors

- Solicitation Letter
- Acknowledgement
- Thank-You

Planning Committee

- Pre-Forum Checklist
- Committee Roster
- Planning Committee Meeting Agenda
- Planning Outline

Program

- Agendas
- Group Discussion Questions

Speakers

- Invitation letter
- Confirmation Letter
- Talking Points
- Thank-You Letters

Save the Date

- Postcard

Invitation

- E-mail Invitation

Program Packet Materials

- Break-out Session Worksheets
- Acronym List
- Evaluation Form
- Sponsor Acknowledgement

Media

- Media Advisory
- Press Release

Be Prepared!



FEMA

It's important that cultural institutions and artists prepare for storms and floods.

- ✔ Track storms via the National Hurricane Center, <https://www.nhc.noaa.gov>.
- ✔ Gather your staff and review your disaster plan today.
- ✔ Make sure everyone has a printed copy of the disaster plan. An electronic version may be useless during a power outage.
- ✔ Make sure staff, volunteer, and board contact lists are up to date. Determine how you will communicate with one another before, during, and after the storm.
- ✔ Make sure your insurance and disaster recovery vendor contact information is readily available.
- ✔ If you don't already have up-to-date images (photographic/video) of your facility's exterior and interior, including storage areas, now's the time to take them. Being able to illustrate how your building and collections looked before damage will be helpful if the need arises to pursue recovery financing.
- ✔ Back up electronic records and store the back-ups off-site or in the cloud.
- ✔ Secure outdoor furniture, bike racks, book drops, etc. — anything that can become a projectile in strong winds.
- ✔ Move collections that are in areas vulnerable to flooding (the floor, the basement) or susceptible to rain (near windows or under roofs).
- ✔ Before the storm, cut lengths of plastic sheeting to be able to throw them over shelves or equipment should the building be compromised.
- ✔ Know the location and shut-off procedures for water, electricity, and gas.
- ✔ Review individual and family plans. You'll feel better attending to your organization knowing that your loved ones are safe.
- ✔ For tips on what to do before, during, and after a hurricane, go to <https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>.
- ✔ Keep this 24/7 hotline number handy: 202-661-8068. The National Heritage Responders, a team of trained conservators and collections care professionals, are available 24/7 to provide advice.
- ✔ Download FEMA fact sheets "After the Flood: Advice for Salvaging Damaged Family Treasures" and "Salvaging Water-Damaged Family Valuables and Heirlooms," available at <https://www.fema.gov/assistance/save-family-treasures>.
- ✔ Familiarize yourself with the disaster declaration process in case one is declared for your state, <https://www.fema.gov/disaster-declaration-process>.



FEMA and the Smithsonian Institution co-sponsor the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, a partnership of more than 60 national service organizations and federal agencies created to protect cultural heritage from the damaging effects of natural disasters and other emergencies. For more resources, visit <https://culturalrescue.si.edu/hentf>.