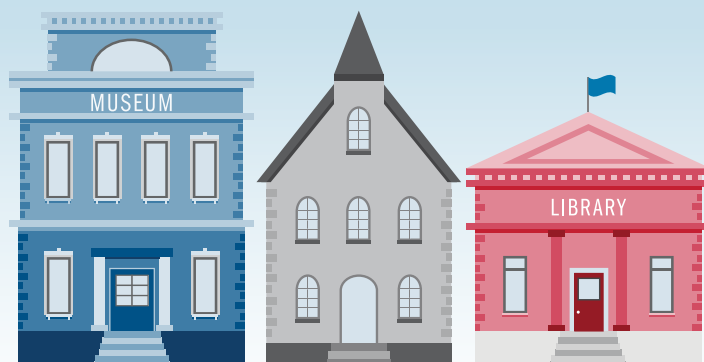


Saving Our Cultural Heritage For this Generation and Those to Come

Connecting Emergency Managers with Cultural Heritage and Arts Stewards

What if every museum, gallery, place of worship, and library in the United States disappeared?

A disaster can wipe out years of history and culture in a moment. **Cultural heritage** - our museums, libraries, archives, historical societies, historic sites, community spaces, tribal centers, performing arts organizations, galleries, zoos, and aquariums - are not renewable commodities. In order to safeguard these important assets, it is necessary to combine the skills of emergency managers and cultural heritage stewards. This framework was developed by a collaboration between emergency managers and cultural and arts organizations within the [Heritage Emergency National Task Force \(HENTF\)](#).



The Need

When cultural heritage is destroyed or damaged, communities lose resources for economic development, tourism, and commerce, as well as shared identity, knowledge, and creativity. There are differences in priorities and roles for both those affected by disaster and those responsible for response and recovery operations, which can lead to gaps in knowledge and practice. Addressing these gaps is especially important because cultural heritage is part of the [National Disaster Recovery Framework](#).

Cultural heritage organizations are often unaware of what assistance is available to them. Engagement during blue sky periods to educate them about access to resources would offer significant benefits. Establishing stronger collaboration between emergency managers and cultural and arts stewards will promote resilience for communities.

We all know the disaster site is not the place to exchange business cards and that preparedness is key. Let us strengthen *advance* coordination between emergency managers and cultural heritage stewards.

Approach and Methodology

Overall Goal: Sustained engagement for information sharing and cooperation between emergency managers and cultural heritage and arts stewards to foster comprehensive disaster risk management.

Objective: Emergency managers develop resources and practices that allow for preparation before the disaster strikes and engage with subject matter experts specializing in distinct types of cultural heritage.



ACTIVITY 1:

Identify and locate the cultural heritage and arts institutions in your jurisdiction.



ACTIVITY 2:

Meet with cultural heritage and arts institutions and visit the facilities, if possible.



ACTIVITY 3:

Document contact information and any special considerations for each institution in case of emergency.

Outcomes: Establishment of a relationship between stewards and emergency managers and compilation of information that can be used to implement an emergency response plan. Advance consideration of how the information about cultural heritage and arts institutions, including geospatial data, will be communicated and integrated across emergency management operations.

The Collaboration

A consistent and routine practice of preparedness is the most effective means of preventing damage and loss to cultural heritage. In an emergency, certainly preservation of life and public safety come first. As conditions stabilize, cultural institutions and arts organizations can play a vital role in the economic and social recovery of a community.

Cultural and arts institutions are trusted partners that provide meeting venues and opportunities to engage with the community. Involvement with cultural heritage organizations helps emergency managers better understand the dynamics of the populations they serve, ultimately allowing them to better tailor services to communities at all phases of the disaster cycle.

This collaboration will improve the capacity of public and private organizations to mitigate the effects of disaster on cultural heritage and support decision-making processes to protect cultural heritage at risk. It will result in the development of practical and innovative solutions to safeguard cultural heritage. It will support regional and local authorities and cultural heritage and arts organizations in preparing measures in the event of an emergency.

Case Study: Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) Mapping Project

The Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) provides an example of successful implementation of efforts to identify and map cultural and arts organizations statewide. With the help of HENTF and the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative, DEMA began holding meetings with stewards of natural, cultural, and arts resources across the state. It quickly became evident that the emergency management programs administered by the agency were unfamiliar to many invitees to the project. This unfamiliarity underscored the need to identify partners in these spaces before disaster strikes. Once partners understood the goal of the project, they were invited to recommend others who they felt should be involved in the effort. This attempt to produce a comprehensive statewide dataset yielded 820 individual assets from monuments to archives to theaters, and supplied emergency managers with locations, contact information, and other special considerations helpful before, during, and after disaster.



Since the creation of the DEMA mapping project, Delaware has experienced two federally declared disasters. In each case a geospatial representation of the dataset was overlaid onto existing mapping products, allowing planners to identify assets that were at risk, direct resources to specialized damaged assets quickly, and inform mitigation planning and funding efforts. These combinations of data make all of Delaware more resilient for generations to come.

Imagine the benefits to communities if processes and resources like this were available nation-wide. With our combined efforts and expertise, we can ensure that cultural heritage flourishes as a source of resilience and well-being for communities nationwide.

Resources

Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative HENTF Page:

culturalrescue.si.edu/who-we-are/hentf

FEMA HENTF Page:

fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/environmental-historic/heritage-task-force

Contact FEMA HENTF Mailbox:

fema-hentf@fema.dhs.gov

Contact Smithsonian HENTF Mailbox:

hentf@si.edu

