Achieving Cultural Heritage Preservation Through Professional Partnership

Brandon Bristor and Megan Hewitt

Purpose and Goals
The purpose of this project is to:
- Raise hazard awareness to collections
- Provide recommendations, training and resources for improved disaster preparedness
- Make resources easily accessible for organizations

Goals generally include: conducting a preliminary assessment of a collection’s risk, discussing prospective needs and goals, identifying strengths, gaps and opportunities for improvement, and lastly providing guidance and future recommendations with the overarching goal of mitigating hazards and ensuring organizational continuity.

Activities
With these purposes in mind, we are working on/have completed:
1. Satisfaction and Salvage Priority Surveys
2. SWOT Analyses
3. DDAT Member Map
4. Resource Database
5. Tabletop Exercise Documents and Resources
6. Materials Lists for Response Kits

Satisfaction and Salvage Priority Surveys
Survey functions:
1. Allow all stakeholders to offer an equal opinion of collection priorities
2. Gauge organizational expectations about preparedness
3. Assess overall and specific satisfaction of stakeholders with preparedness aspects

Sample Survey Results:
- First Priority
- Second Priority
- Third Priority

SWOT Analyses
A SWOT analysis identifies an organization’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The strengths and weaknesses represent internal factors to the organization, while opportunities and threats represent external factors presented by the environment.

For our purposes, a SWOT analysis is conducted as a preliminary evaluation of a collection’s risk to hazards, after conducting an initial walk through. This information is used to tailor specific goals and tasks to facilitate disaster preparedness and operational continuity.

DDAT Member Map
An interactive web map application was created to be imbedded within the DDAT website with the intention of displaying each institution’s location and facilitate member networking. Doing so will create opportunities for neighboring members to establish mutual aid agreements and support one another during a disaster.

Resource Database
We established a bibliography as a “living document” of scholarly resources, providing awareness and knowledge pertaining to disasters for museums, libraries, archives, and historical societies.

Tabletop Exercise Documents and Resources
Tabletop exercises are an important and helpful tool in disaster preparedness. They help draw attention to what needs to be added to or changed in emergency plans and offer personnel a greater understanding of what to do if there is an emergency.

We created templates and aids to provide basic information and instruction for DDAT members so they can design, develop, and execute tabletop exercises quickly and with ease. By creating these documents, DDAT members can get more involved in exercising their disaster and recovery plans.

List of Documents:
1. Introduction to Tabletop Exercises
2. Exercise Design and Development Aid
3. Situation Manual Template
4. Player Guide Template
5. Sample Scenarios and Questions
6. Exercise Evaluation Guide Template
7. Participant Feedback Form Template
8. After-Action Report Template

Materials List for Response Kits
A response kit is a portable collection of emergency supplies that enables personnel to be more organized and ready to complete their roles during an incident. We created materials lists for both institution kits and larger storage pods to be strategically placed around the DDAT service area. The materials in these lists are prioritized based on the varying size of DDAT member institutions and categorized for better organization.

Categories:
1. Personal Safety
2. Backup Energy Sources
3. Collection Recovery

Prioritizations:
1. Essential
2. Secondary
3. Additional

Conclusion
This initiative was a pilot that we hope will lead to further collaboration and increased awareness among institutions that serve as stewards of cultural heritage resources. Looking forward, we both plan to continue our involvement with the project on a volunteer basis.