Held in Trust Fact Sheet

*Held in Trust* is a three-year cooperative agreement between the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAIC).

**Mission:**
The mission of *Held in Trust* is to evaluate the state of preservation and conservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage in the United States.

**Goals:**
1. Consider the current state, future directions, challenges, opportunities, and resource needs for the conservation and preservation of cultural heritage in the U.S., including moveable objects (art, artifacts, decorative objects), archival materials, images, architecture, cultural sites, and intangible cultural heritage.
2. Examine the intersection of cultural heritage conservation and preservation with issues of urgent importance in the world today.
3. Identify future directions and resource priorities to ensure that our nation’s cultural heritage will be available for future education and enrichment.

The work will align with the overall goals of *A More Perfect Union*, including an emphasis on identifying future paths. The outcomes of the project, expected in 2023, will guide work through to 2026 and following the semiquincentennial and in concert with *America 250*.

**Methodology:**
This NEH-funded initiative is examining obstacles, opportunities, and needs, along with the resources required to sustain the field. A broad range of conservation and allied professionals, stakeholders, and communities, are engaged in exploring the intersection and impact of urgent global challenges with the profession, including: sustainability (environmental, financial, and collecting and conservation practice); social and racial justice; diversity and equity; climate change and environmental resource protection; technological and scientific innovation.

**Nine critical topic areas of study:**
- Field Sustainability (including: financial, collecting practices, conservation practice)
- Climate Change and Environmental Impact (including: conservation practice, building operations, cultural heritage resources)
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility
- Collection Care and Management (including: preventive conservation)
- Philosophy and Ethics in Conservation (including: conservation theory and practice)
- Education, Professional Development, and Leadership
- Engagement, Communication, and Storytelling
- Science and Materials
- Digital Technology: Research and Practice

September 2021
Participants:
1. The Held in Trust **Advisory Council (AC)** comprises individuals representing approximately 25 organizations working in cultural heritage and allied fields. Additional partners are invited to join as further input becomes needed. AC members offer guidance and expertise, and provide a conduit for dissemination of project outputs. They may also serve on Working Groups.
2. The Held in Trust **Steering Committee (SC)** comprises 17 individuals co-chairing Working Groups focused on 9 critical topic areas outlined above.
3. **Working Groups (WG)** comprise subject experts in a wide variety of fields pertaining to subtopics targeted for focused study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Sustainability, including financial, collecting practice, conservation practice</th>
<th>Climate Change and Environmental Impact</th>
<th>Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alison Gilchrest, Debbie Hess Norris</td>
<td>Héctor Berdecia-Hernández, Sarah Sutton</td>
<td>Isra El-beshir, Sarah Scaturro</td>
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| • New philanthropic trends, opportunities and partnerships  
  • Strengthening the private sector’s visibility, influence, and sustainability  
  • Collections sustainability | • Training  
  • Funding  
  • Policy | • Representation  
  • Recruitment and retention  
  • Caretaking and interpretation |

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<tr>
<th>Collection Care and Management, including preventive conservation</th>
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<th>Education, Professional Development, Leadership</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mariana Di Giacomo, Laura Hortz Stanton</td>
<td>Landis Smith, Glenn Wharton</td>
<td>Valinda Carroll, Ellen Pearlstein</td>
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| • Training  
  • Advocacy  
  • Collections Management | • Conservation philosophy  
  • Conservation Ethics  
  • Collaborative Conservation | • Education  
  • Professional Development  
  • Leadership |

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<th>Digital Technology: Research and Practice</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lauren Dugas Glover, Michelle Ramos, Laura Hortz Stanton</td>
<td>Francesca Casadio, Sarah Scaturro</td>
<td>Paul Messier, Linda Tadic</td>
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| • Engagement  
  • Artifacts  
  • Storytelling | • Innovation  
  • Sustainability  
  • Science for the Humanities | • Preservation of technology-based cultural heritage  
  • Technologies, tools, and methodologies  
  • Non-institutional archives |
These groups are led by *Held in Trust* Project Coordinator Pamela Hatchfield, assisted by FAIC Outreach Coordinator Katelin Lee.

**Milestones:**
Project Findings Discussion Session, AIC Annual Meeting – May 2022, Los Angeles
National Convening – Fall 2022, Washington, DC
Final report dissemination – Spring 2023

**Key web resources:**
Web page: [www.culturalheritage.org/hit](http://www.culturalheritage.org/hit)
Project email: [hit@culturalheritage.org](mailto:hit@culturalheritage.org)
2021 AIC Annual Meeting keynote presentation: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwkTpytgM_4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwkTpytgM_4)