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## **Florida Nonprofits, State and Preservationists Unite to Help Cultural Organizations Prepare for Emergencies**

*Florida Humanities and Florida Association of Museums proudly partner with preservationists to help cultural organizations brace for additional disasters and pandemics*

ST. PETERSBURG, Florida (September 18, 2020)--Florida Humanities and the Florida Association of Museums Foundation (FAMF), in partnership with FEMA's Heritage Emergency Task Force, Florida Division of Emergency Management, Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts and the Society of Florida Archivists, are producing a series of training webinars designed to enhance the emergency planning capacity of cultural institutions across Florida.

As the hurricane season approaches its apex and Florida continues to deal with the challenges of COVID-19, libraries, museums, historical societies, and other organizations need to consider their ability to respond to a number of contingencies. In addition to hurricanes, sessions will consider the potential damage and danger from flash floods, pandemics, fire, and prolonged power outages.

Conversations related to emergency planning began in 2017 in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria. Florida Humanities received supplemental funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities to address post-disaster relief.

"A key lesson we learned in 2017 is the need to help coordinate resources available with state and federal agencies," said Patricia Putman, Associate Director of Florida Humanities. "After an impacted organization has ensured the safety of their staff members and volunteers, they can then consider how to access appropriate resources of recovery-focused agencies."

To that end, Florida Humanities are proudly supporting the Florida Association of Museums Foundation to produce emergency planning resources with information curated by FEMA's Heritage Emergency National Task Force, the State of Florida's Division of Emergency Management, the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts, and the Society of Florida Archivists. Information about the workshops will also be shared with local Community Foundations and directly with cultural organizations.

"We planned to produce in-person programming earlier this year," said Malinda Horton, Executive Director of the Florida Association of Museums. "COVID-19 complicated those plans. Digital resources, however, allows us to reach more organizations."

The first program included a webinar to help organizations consider reopening strategies during our current national public health emergency, as appropriate with guidance from local health authorities. Future programs include tabletop exercises to simulate disaster planning and responses; digitization efforts to preserve valuable artifacts; and the creation of website-hosted training modules to guide organizations through the disaster planning process.

"Any organization can--and should--develop contingency plans," said Horton. "Disasters may be hyperlocal, like a broken pipe in your museum's basement, or larger in scope like a flash flood or storm that impacts an entire region or a significant portion of our state. Regardless of an organization's size, we are committed to helping with the planning process."

Organizations that are interested in signing up for the free training can visit FAMF's [Emergency Preparedness Webinar Page](#) to learn more information.

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### **About Florida Humanities**

Florida Humanities, the statewide, nonprofit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, is dedicated to preserving, promoting, and sharing the history, literature,

culture, and personal stories that offer Floridians a better understanding of themselves, their communities, and their state. Since 1971, Florida Humanities has awarded more than \$8 million in support of statewide cultural resources and public programs strongly rooted in the humanities. These programs preserve Florida's diverse history and heritage, promote civic engagement and community dialogue, and provide opportunities to reflect on the future of Florida. Learn more at [www.FloridaHumanities.org](http://www.FloridaHumanities.org).

### **About The Florida Association of Museums**

The Florida Association of Museums is the not-for-profit professional organization for Florida's museums and museum professionals. The mission of the Association is to represent and address the needs of the museum community, enhancing the ability of museums to serve the public interest. The Association encourages excellence in its members by promoting communication through which its members share information and resources, effect legislation, and promote support of museums. Learn more at <https://www.flamuseums.org/>.