CONNECTING TO COLLECTIONS: ANALYSIS OF IMLS C2C STATEWIDE PLANNING GRANTS, 2008-2010

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From 2007 to 2012, the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) conducted the *Connecting to Collections* Initiative, an effort "to raise public awareness of the importance of caring for our treasures, and to underscore the fact that these collections are essential to the American story" and to assist U.S. cultural heritage institutions in their collections care efforts. Four specific recommendations, taken from the 2005 report *A Public Trust at Risk: The Heritage Health Index Report on the State of America's Collections,* called for collecting institutions:

- To provide safe conditions for their collections;
- To develop an emergency plan;
- To assign responsibility for collections care; and
- To marshal public and private support for and raise public awareness about collections care.

This analysis reviews one component of the *Connecting to Collections* Initiative, the Statewide Planning Grants, which were designed to "encourage each state, commonwealth, and territory to develop plans for collections care and management, including emergency preparedness plans." A total of 57 Statewide Planning Grants were awarded in 2008, 2009, and 2010.

While individual states and territories used varied approaches in their planning projects, this analysis identifies several common themes, among them an ongoing need for more quantitative data on the state of collections held in trust by libraries, archives, museums, historical societies, and comparable institutions; a recognition that emergency and disaster preparedness must be addressed by all institutions; and a desire to broaden the base of support for collections care to ensure that future generations have access to the cultural record that has been so painstakingly collected.

Although the *Connecting to Collections* Initiative has concluded, the work goes on. Many of the projects begun during *Connecting to Collections* Statewide Planning Grants are ongoing, and the partnerships developed as a result of the projects continue to yield both tangible and intangible benefits. The projects discussed in this analysis offer continuing opportunities for regional and statewide collaboration, many of which require little to no dedicated funding. Economic challenges and natural disasters will always affect the ability of institutions to meet the challenge of preserving collections for the future. The *Connecting to Collections* Initiative has reaffirmed that this is a challenge America's cultural heritage institutions can face together, with support from the public and private sectors.

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

In 2013, Heritage Preservation, Inc. was awarded a grant (RE-06-10-0089-10) from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to expand on the results of the IMLS-supported *Connecting to Collections* Initiative. One of the deliverables of that project is an analysis of *Connecting to Collections* Statewide Planning Grants awarded by IMLS in 2008, 2009, and 2010. Heritage Preservation contracted with Danielle Cunniff Plumer of DCPlumer Associates and Thomas F.R. Clareson of LYRASIS to review materials submitted by Statewide Planning Grant recipients to IMLS and to the *Connecting to Collections* community, which is hosted by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library's IDEALS repository (https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/34610).

HERITAGE HEALTH INDEX

In 2001-2005, IMLS partnered with Heritage Preservation, Inc. to develop the Heritage Health Index (HHI), a comprehensive survey that assessed the condition and preservation needs of U.S. collections. This survey was developed by Heritage Preservation staff working with an Institutional Advisory Committee of 35 professional associations and federal agencies and 66 collections professionals, including conservators, preservation administrators, archivists, librarians, curators, and registrars, assigned to nine Working Groups (*A Public Trust at Risk* 2005:4-5). Heritage Preservation also hired the survey research firm Aeffect, Inc., of Deerfield, Illinois, to advise on survey methodology and questionnaire protocol and obtained guidance on statistical sampling and analysis from statistical consultant Lee-Ann Hayek, Chief Mathematical Statistician at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum for Natural History (*A Public Trust at Risk* 2005:4).

The result of this effort was a 14-page written survey that included a total of 40 collections-related questions. From the viewpoint of Heritage Preservation,

> Because Working Group members represented archives, libraries, historical societies, museums, and scientific research organizations, Heritage Preservation was able to build a consensus on neutral terminology that all types of institutions would understand. The survey avoided technical language and jargon to ensure that survey participants of any professional level would understand the questions. …. The result of this deliberate collaboration with the Working Groups was a comprehensive, yet focused, survey questionnaire (*A Public Trust at Risk* 2005:5).

In preliminary testing, participants reported that it took between one and three hours to complete the questionnaire, with input from multiple staff members (*A Public Trust at Risk* 2005:7).

RMC Research of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, was hired to conduct the survey, which was distributed on paper with an option to submit results via an online survey tool, created by Cultural Logic in Medford, Massachusetts. The survey was distributed in August 2004 to a total of 13,590 eligible U.S. institutions, selected from three target groups designed to represent: (1) the largest and most significant collecting institutions of all types and in all U.S. states and territories; (2) additional large or mid-sized institutions with important collections; and (3) all remaining institutions. A total of 3,239 institutions completed and returned the survey, for an overall response rate of 24%, with a 90% response rate from institutions in the first target group (*A Public Trust at Risk* 2005:7).

The results of the Heritage Health Index were published in 2005 as *A Public Trust at Risk: The Heritage Health Index Report on the State of America's Collections.* This report included four broad recommendations (p. 2):

- Institutions must give priority to providing safe conditions for the collections they hold in trust.
- Every collecting institution must develop an emergency plan to protect its collections and train staff to carry it out.
- Every institution must assign responsibility for caring for collections to members of its staff.
- Individuals at all levels of government and in the private sector must assume responsibility for providing the support that will allow these collections to survive.

In Fall 2014, Heritage Preservation distributed the Heritage Health Information survey to a sample of more than 8,000 cultural heritage institutions. The study, timed to coincide with the tenth anniversary of the Heritage Health Index project, captured data on the current state of preservation and conservation efforts in the United States. Utilizing the data from the Heritage Health Index as a benchmark, the Heritage Health Information will provide insight into changes and improvements in preservation conditions and practices in the intervening decade. It is anticipated that the report of the Heritage Health Information survey project will be released in Fall 2015.

CONNECTING TO COLLECTIONS INITIATIVE

In June 2007, IMLS convened a National Conservation Summit to launch the *Connecting to Collections: A Call to Action* Initiative. The stated goal of the initiative was "to raise public awareness about the urgent need to care for our nation's collections and to give museums and libraries the information and tools they need to care for their collections in the best possible way" (*C2C Guidelines* 2008, p. 7). The initiative included four elements:

- The National Conservation Summit, held June 27-28, 2007, in Washington, DC.
- Four *Connecting to Collections* forums, held in Atlanta, GA; Denver, CO; San Diego, CA; and Buffalo, NY. These forums were later supplemented by an international seminar in Salzburg, Austria, and a series of in-person workshops and online webinars.
- The IMLS *Connecting to Collections* Bookshelf, a selection of core texts and supplemental materials on collections care that was distributed to over 2,800 small and mid-sized museums and libraries nationwide.
- Fifty-seven *Connecting to Collections* Statewide Planning Grants made to U.S. states and territories. These grants were designed to "encourage each state, commonwealth, and territory to develop plans for collections care and management, including emergency preparedness plans." The planning grants were in some cases followed by implementation grants, intended to allow states and territories to continue their efforts to develop effective collections care resources. Nineteen implementation grants were awarded, covering twenty states (North Dakota and South Dakota collaborated on a single Implementation Grant).

The final Statewide Implementation grant awards in the *Connecting to Collections* Initiative were made in 2012. IMLS did not specifically designate funding for the *Connecting to Collections* Initiative in subsequent years, although eligible organizations have been encouraged to apply for funding from National Leadership, Conservation Project Support, Museums for America, and the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian grant programs to support *Connecting to Collections*-related projects.

In 2010, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission was awarded an IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian grant to develop the *Connecting to Collections:* Continuing Conversations project, in partnership with the American Association for State and Local History and representatives from eight other *Connecting to Collections* Statewide Planning Grants. One deliverable planned for the Continuing Conversations project was

the development of a digital archive of *Connecting to Collections* Statewide Planning Grant materials. Heritage Preservation joined the project to assist with the process of identifying and collecting materials from Statewide Planning Grant recipients, which were deposited into the IDEALS repository maintained by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library. Of particular interest to Heritage Preservation were the survey tools and data sets created as a result of statewide needs assessments. At present, 16 of the 57 Statewide Planning Grants are represented in the IDEALS repository, with materials from an additional 38 projects queued for ingest.

A final component of the *Connecting to Collections* Initiative was the development of the *Connecting to Collections* Online Community. This effort, led by Heritage Preservation, promotes continuing education on a variety of collections care topics to institutions and individuals. Because the workshops and discussions are conducted in an online environment, they have been made available to participants from every U.S. state and territory, and indeed throughout the world. While analysis of the *Connecting to Collections* Online Community is outside the scope of this report, the availability of this resource for continuing education should be noted as a means to address needs and concerns identified during the *Connecting to Collections* Initiative.

CONNECTING TO COLLECTIONS STATEWIDE PLANNING GRANTS

The *Connecting to Collections* Statewide Planning Grants were "intended to engage institutions with responsibility for collections stewardship within a state, commonwealth, or territory in consultation and planning for ways to address the HHI recommendations most relevant for their state" (*C2C Guidelines 2008*, p. 8). The HHI recommendations, as presented in the grant guidelines, called for collecting institutions:

- To provide safe conditions for their collections;
- To develop an emergency plan;
- To assign responsibility for collections care; and
- To marshal public and private support for and raise public awareness about collections care.

A total of 57Statewide Planning Grants were awarded in 2008, 2009, and 2010. Each Statewide Planning Grant was developed as a one- to two-year collaborative project and was awarded a maximum of $40,000 from IMLS. Partnerships were required for each Statewide Planning Grant; the guidelines stated, "All applications are required to reflect multiple partnerships, including representatives of libraries, museums, archives, statewide service organizations and state agencies" (*C2C Guidelines 2008*, p. 9). Substantial matching contributions from the partner organizations, while not required under the grant guidelines, were commonly necessary to complete the work.

PROCESSES AND APPROACHES

The *Connecting to Collections* Statewide Planning Grant program was intended to define best practices and develop models that could be broadly adopted by institutions and partnerships in other states, territories, and regions. The 57 awarded Statewide Planning Grants shared a number of similarities in the methodologies used to carry out the project.

WORKING ACROSS TYPES

The collaborative and uniting spirit of the *Connecting to Collections* Statewide Planning Grants is evident even from the initial activities of the formation of the statewide groups. In every state and territory report that has been reviewed, the makeup of the advisory group for the projects included state libraries,

archives, historical societies, and (where they existed) state museums. Additional participants in the advisory groups included leaders of state museum, archives, library, and historical organizations or associations.

The initial distribution of grants between library and museum organizations was itself remarkably even. A total of 28 grants were awarded to partnerships in which the primary partner represented a museum organization or archives (including state archives, state historical agencies or societies, museums, and museum associations), and 25 were awarded to partnerships in which the primary partner represented a library (including state libraries or their parent agencies, library associations, and university libraries). The final four grants were awarded to service organizations that provide consulting or conservation assistance to libraries, archives, and museums on behalf of a partnership of other institutions.

A step frequently mentioned in *Connecting to Collections* project reports was the need to develop all-type lists of cultural heritage organizations within the specific state in order to invite multiple institution types to participate in statewide surveys or meetings related to preservation planning at the state level. Nineteen statewide projects specifically mentioned setting up *Connecting to Collections*-related websites or web pages to communicate about progress on their activities.

INFORMATION GATHERING

The most common approach for Statewide Planning Grants was for statewide partners to perform a needs assessment of institutions in their state, commonwealth, or territory. While not directly tied to a single HHI Recommendation, this approach was justified by instructions in the *C2C Guidelines*: "Applicants should summarize the broad conservation needs within their state, commonwealth, or territory and provide a brief explanation of how these needs were determined. **If your state has not conducted such needs assessments, the planning project may include such efforts**." (*C2C Guidelines 2008*, p. 23, emphasis added).

Forty-three Statewide Planning Grant projects completed formal needs assessment surveys of institutions within their state. A few states supplemented their web survey activities by mail or e-mail survey distribution, and two states, Georgia and Texas, developed limited pilot surveys that they planned to implement more fully at a later time. Because of the number of states that adopted this model, and because many of those states used the Heritage Health Index as a source of survey questions, this approach is analyzed in more detail in a subsequent section of this report.

In five states (Michigan, North Dakota, Ohio, South Carolina, and South Dakota), project partner representatives acted as field liaisons, making visits or providing telephone and e-mail assistance to institutions that needed help in completing the survey. Not surprisingly, these were among the states with the highest survey response rates.

In 12 states, the survey work was supplemented by holding focus groups or town meetings which were designed as discussion forums to consider statewide survey results and other preservation questions. The depth and breadth of the information reported in the states that supplemented surveys with focus group activity was noticeably greater than those that did not, with project reports often including sections on focus group results, or appendices providing detailed reports of the focus group discussions.

Nine states included preservation needs assessment site survey visits as part of their *Connecting to Collections* methodology. These survey visits were conducted to determine preservation conditions and needs and, in most cases, to supplement survey findings with real-life case studies. In most cases, the onsite survey visits, which looked at preservation factors including building condition, collection condition, storage conditions, and preservation policies, were a half day or full day in length; these visits are briefer than a site survey of the type conducted by assessors associated with National Endowment for the Humanities

Preservation Assistance Grants (PAG) or the Institute of Museum and Library Services Conservation Assessment Program (CAP), both of which recommend visits of two or more days. It is important to point out that in Arkansas and Delaware, site surveys were the central information-gathering activity in the project; these states did not have participants complete web-based surveys on a statewide basis. The narrative site survey reports provide rich details on institutional preservation needs, and the final reports from these states show statewide preservation trends reflecting Heritage Health Index recommendations.

COLLECTIONS CARE CONTINUING EDUCATION

Many states and territories included some type of training and education for cultural organizations in their *Connecting to Collections* efforts. Whether called workshops, conferences, or forums, these learning opportunities, held in 31 states (some at multiple locations within the states) most often focused on the top concerns identified by statewide surveys, such as disaster planning, funding, or basic archival practices. Additionally, eight states featured presentations on *Connecting to Collections* projects or topics at state library or museum association meetings. Representatives from the Texas, North Carolina, Georgia, and New York Statewide Planning Grants also presented information about the *Connecting to Collections* Initiative with IMLS staff members at the 2009 Society of American Archivists annual meeting held in Austin, TX; this session led directly to the *Connecting to Collections*: Continuing Conversations project.

KEY TOPICS AND THEMES

Some Statewide Planning Grant projects focused their efforts specifically on one or more themes highlighted in the Heritage Health Index report. Eight states concentrated on disaster preparedness and recovery in their projects (Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Rhode Island, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming). This was by far the most popular single topic on which projects focused on a statewide level, aside from general needs assessment surveys.

Seven states (California, Connecticut, Florida, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Virginia, and Washington) addressed public and private support as their main *Connecting to Collections* Statewide Preservation Planning Grant topic. In Connecticut and Oklahoma, funding was the specific support-related topic of research and outreach activities. Virginia, which focused on disasters and public/private support, was the only state that had a stated purpose of also looking at safe conditions for collections in their project goals. The only Heritage Health Index topic that was not a focus of any statewide project was assessing staffing for preservation. Some states covered this issue in specific survey questions, but it was not the main topic of any of the statewide projects, possibly because it is a problem that is rooted in the longer-term financial needs of cultural heritage institutions.

For those Statewide Planning Grant projects that did not focus specifically on one Heritage Health Index topic in their work, there were several key issues that surfaced in the survey research, focus group discussions, or during other project activities. Twelve issues received attention from multiple states in their survey results and focus group reports:

- Lack of disaster preparedness plans – 22 states
- Lack of environmental controls – 16 states
- Lack of a long-range preservation plan – 14 states
- Need for digital preservation – 11 states
- Lack of/need for an onsite preservation survey – 10 states
- Lack of staff dedicated to preservation – 8 states
- Need for preservation policies – 6 states
- Need for further preservation education – 6 states

- Need for inventorying of collections – 5 states
- Need for better security – 4 states

UNIQUE PROJECT COMPONENTS

While some preservation issues and trends were common to a number of states, a variety of unique and useful program components were featured in individual states' reports. Some of the most interesting of these, all of which are potentially replicable in other states and projects, include:

- **Arizona** utilized a portion of its grant funding to purchase a cache of supplies for disaster preparedness and response, to be stored centrally and requested as needed from the state archives.
- **Arkansas** institutions that took part in the *Connecting to Collections* site survey activities were sent HOBO dataloggers to monitor institutional environmental conditions prior to their consultant's visits.
- **California** and the state of **Washington**, which had performed statewide preservation needs assessment surveys prior to their *Connecting to Collections* statewide planning projects, were able to pursue more advanced and sophisticated activities, focusing in particular on marshaling public and private support for preservation in their states.
- The **Colorado** *Connecting to Collections* project had several positive byproducts from their activities. Videos from portions of the project's workshops have been mounted on YouTube so that Coloradans who could not attend the training in person could still benefit from the expert advice of the trainers. In addition, Colorado's work on disaster planning activities, resulting from institutional interest expressed in survey results, led to the state developing an Alliance for Response initiative to bring together cultural heritage professionals and emergency managers to communicate more closely. These alliances were very important in recent summers when the state was plagued by wildfires and flooding.
- **Connecticut** had a number of unique features in their project. Their *Connecting to Collections* effort supplemented its IMLS grant budget with a National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) State and National Archival Partnership (SNAP) grant, which provided archival assessments to 60 museums, libraries with historical collections, and historical societies. The state also built upon interest in disaster preparedness to develop a Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness (COSTEP) initiative, which uses a planning tool to help cultural institutions prepare for area-wide disasters and build alliances with local, state, and federal emergency management agencies and first responders. Another feature of the Connecticut Conservation ConneCTion program was that "black boxes" were supplied to cultural heritage institutions so that they could safely store records related to preservation and conservation activities. The state also performed an inventory of emergency plans in Connecticut, with copies of the plans stored centrally at the state archives and state library.
- One major focus of **Florida's** *Connecting to Collections* initiative was educating elected officials on preservation issues. The planning project also took full advantage of social media, developing a LinkedIn discussion group on preservation.
- **Georgia** tested a survey which allowed participants to be rated on a stair step scale according to the current level of their collections care program and developed customized reports for participants with suggestions for moving their preservation programs up to the next level. Additionally, the Georgia statewide project addressed preservation issues affecting cultural tourism, working with a representative from the Georgia Department of Economic Development on the *Connecting to Collections* Project Advisory Committee.

- **Guam's** statement that each collecting agency "must define and know its collection in order to develop a preservation plan" is an excellent goal for institutions that need to get a better handle on their holdings inventory (a problem of noted concern in five states).
- **Iowa** concentrated its efforts on disaster planning and recovery. In addition to conducting a statewide survey of institutional emergency preparedness, the state *Connecting to Collections* initiative geocoded locations of cultural repositories throughout the state and provided the locations to emergency management representatives on a local and state level; integrated cultural collections protection into city and county emergency plans; presented workshops and conferences; developed a strategy for marshaling conservation resource people existing in the state to act as Iowa Cultural Collections First Responders; and adopted a broadly applicable model for writing disaster response plans.
- **Kansas** also focused on disaster preparedness and recovery training resources in its *Connecting to Collections* project, and four institutions in the state had an opportunity to put the information they learned into practice when they were struck by disasters soon after attending the Kansas workshops.
- **Maine** presented an interesting way to prioritize materials for preservation by developing a Values Assessment Tool, which allowed participants to document the various values of their institution's holdings, and act as a springboard for soliciting support.
- **The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands** and **U.S. Virgin Islands** *Connecting to Collections* initiatives were both featured in interviews on radio news programs in their regions.
- **New York's** *Connecting to Collections* report took a deep view of its survey data through cross tabulation of survey findings by factors including institution type, geographic region, and budgetary factors.
- **North Carolina's** multifaceted and very successful *Connecting to Collections* Statewide Preservation program was built in part on the activities of the earlier statewide Exploring Cultural Heritage Online (ECHO) preservation inventory project, which included visits to all cultural heritage organizations identified in the state. Additionally, the website created during the state's planning project received 51,000 hits in a two-year period.
- **Virginia** included a number of interesting aspects in their *Connecting to Collections* program, including a circuit rider program to offer preservation mini-assessments and development of a marketing plan to help cultural heritage organizations raise awareness internally and externally about the importance of collections.

Among all the reports, those from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, West Virginia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Nebraska stand out due to their excellent graphic design; each of these reports can be considered model outputs from the national *Connecting to Collections* Statewide Planning Grant project.

POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

Many of the components put into action by the states that participated in the *Connecting to Collections* Statewide Planning Grant program can easily be replicated if funding is secured on a statewide level. A notable example of this type of replication is the Virginia's Top 10 Endangered Artifacts program (http://www.vamuseums.org/?page=Top10), which itself was modeled on the successful Top 11 Endangered Places program at the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Representatives from the Virginia Association of Museums presented information about their program, developed during their *Connecting to Collections* Planning Grant, at the 2011 *Connecting to Collections:* Continuing Conversations Exchange held in Richmond, Virginia. Subsequently, the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts incorporated Pennsylvania's Top 10 Endangered Artifacts into the Pennsylvania *Connecting to Collections* Implementation Grant) (http://www.ccaha.org/uploads/media_items/pennsylvania-s-top-10-endangered-artifacts-winter-2013.original.pdf), both programs were featured in a 2013 *Connecting to Collections:* Continuing

Conservations Online Exchange. The Oklahoma Heritage Trust modified the program as the Top Ten Artifacts: Saving Oklahoma's Heritage campaign (http://www.culturalheritagetrust.org/node/39) in their implementation grant, awarded in 2012, and the Colorado Collections Consortium developed a similar program, Colorado's 10 Most Significant Artifacts (https://collectioncare.auraria.edu/programs/colorados-ten-most-campaign) as part of their 2012 implementation grant.

Other *Connecting to Collections* Statewide Planning Grant activities that have potential for replication are noted above, and additional activities have been or are being developed as part of *Connecting to Collections* Implementation Grants. Grant recipients should be encouraged to share information about their successful activities with other *Connecting to Collections* participants.

CONNECTING TO COLLECTIONS STATEWIDE SURVEYS

As noted above, the majority of Statewide Planning Grant recipients choose to perform some type of needs assessment, with 42 of the 57 grant recipients known to have performed a survey of collecting institutions in their state, commonwealth, or territory. Surveys, data sets, and reports from these projects have been compiled, where available, to provide some information about the scope of the needs assessment surveys that were performed and to draw some conclusions about the status of collections nationwide, approximately five years after the completion of the Heritage Health Index Survey.

This analysis is ongoing, as the data were not presented in a format that could be easily analyzed. Some projects provided raw data as returned from their survey tool (usually a commercial, web-based survey tool), redacted to preserve the identity of the respondents. Others provided only aggregate reports. Some provided only narrative reports with key findings, with or without a complete survey tool. Zip files containing the statewide survey tools and data (redacted) are available for download at http://www.dcplumer.com/resources/projects/imls-connecting-to-collections-analysis/. Individual survey tools and data are also being made available through the IDEALS repository at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library, in the *Connecting to Collections* community (https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/34610).

HERITAGE HEALTH INDEX AS INSPIRATION

Many states drew the inspiration for their statewide needs assessments directly from the Heritage Health Index. In some cases, the coordinator of the Statewide Planning Grant contacted Heritage Preservation to inquire about the availability of state-specific datasets from the HHI. Heritage Preservation is restricted from providing raw data, due to the fact that participants in the HHI had been assured that their data would remain private. *A Public Trust at Risk* notes that participants were told that: "RMC Research Corporation will keep your individual responses, whether submitted online or on paper, completely confidential. Only the aggregate data will be reported; your individual responses will never be published or identified" (*A Public Trust at Risk* 2005:8). Similar assurances were included in many of the statewide needs assessment surveys.

While HHI data were not made available to Statewide Planning Grant recipients, Heritage Preservation did allow Statewide Planning Grants to reuse questions from the HHI for statewide needs assessment surveys. In almost all cases, however, Statewide Planning Grant recipients modified or only selectively adopted questions from the HHI. Some recipients noted in their reports to IMLS that smaller institutions in their states perceived the HHI survey to be "too long." Section F of the HHI, Collections and Holdings, was frequently modified or eliminated in statewide needs assessments.

Despite the overall trend to shorten the HHI survey, some states added specific questions or altered the wording of HHI questions to allow data collection related to previously administered statewide needs assessments. These questions are frequently specific to the types of disasters commonly experienced in a particular state (floods and fire being two of the disasters commonly mentioned). This level of customization was made possible by the IMLS grant guidelines, which encouraged applicants to identify "ways to address the HHI recommendations most relevant for their state" (*C2C Guidelines 2008*, p. 8).

VARIANCE FROM HERITAGE HEALTH INDEX

Analysis of the statewide needs assessments reveals three key variations from the HHI survey that might significantly affect the quality of any comparison of state results and the HHI. These involve the method of delivery, the population of study, and institutional training and service needs. A fourth variation, relating to additional questions about digital collections, merely supplements information in the HHI.

METHOD OF DELIVERY

The Heritage Health Index Report notes that the primary expected method of delivery for the HHI survey was paper-based. In pre-testing the survey with potential respondents,

> Most expressed a preference to complete the survey on paper and said if it were only offered on the Web, they would likely print a paper copy. When given the option of saving Web survey responses so a survey participant could work on it in more than one sitting, the interest in using a Web survey increased. Several interviewees mentioned that they might use the paper version as a worksheet and then submit the final survey electronically. Therefore, Heritage Preservation decided to distribute the survey in hard copy to all participants and offer a Web survey as an alternative way to respond (*A Public Trust at Risk* 2005:8).

In contrast, the majority of the statewide needs assessments treated a web survey as the primary method of response. Some even specified that only surveys completed online would be accepted. A variety of free or commercial online survey tools, including Zoomerang, Survey Monkey, and Survey Gizmo, were used. This change may reflect the increased availability of Internet-equipped computers and easy access to online survey systems five years after the deployment of the HHI.

To supplement the web surveys, many Statewide Planning Grant recipients offered paper surveys, generally for use as worksheets, as well as telephone-based, in person, and mailed survey responses. In several states, interns were hired to administer these alternate forms of delivery. Because the statewide needs assessments were not, in general, attempting to provide the level of rigor in data collection and analysis that Heritage Preservation provided for the HHI, any differences resulting from method of delivery were ignored in the reports produced by Statewide Planning Grant recipients.

INSTITUTIONS SURVEYED

The Heritage Health Index survey was administered to a carefully selected sample of institutions selected from a limited institutional population of "archives, libraries, historical societies, museums, archaeological repositories, and scientific research organizations that hold their collections in the public trust" (*A Public Trust at Risk* 2005:8). The report continues,

> The survey instructed institutions to "complete the questionnaire for collections that are a permanent part of your holdings or for which you have accepted preservation responsibility," which would apply to collections at most archives, libraries, historical societies, museums, archaeological repositories, and scientific research organizations. Exceptions included elementary and secondary school and two-

year college libraries, since they do not hold rare, special, or archival collections. Likewise, branch public libraries, hospital libraries, and prison libraries were not included, unless the American Library Directory specified special collections were in their holdings. Record centers, such as county clerk offices, were not included in the survey population because their collections have not been through a decision-making process about long- term archival record retention. For-profit organizations, such as law firm, newspaper, corporate, and engineering firm libraries, were excluded from the Heritage Health Index survey population. Although the questionnaire did not include questions about living collections, arboretums, aquariums, botanical gardens, nature centers, and zoos were included in the study population because they often have non-living collections (*A Public Trust at Risk* 2005:8).

Statewide Planning Grant recipients were overall less methodical in their selection of institutions. In part, this is due to the fact that while the HHI relied on sampling from a pre-defined population, most of the statewide needs assessments allowed any interested institution to respond to the survey. In other cases, statewide needs assessments were deliberately tailored to a subset of the HHI institutional population, such as historical museums, or were intentionally expanded to include groups such as record centers or libraries with circulating collections that were excluded from the HHI survey.

TRAINING AND SERVICE NEEDS

The HHI is largely collections-based. Roughly 40 percent of the total length of the printed survey is devoted to Section F, Collections and Holdings, including a detailed question about number of items and percentage of collection in need of preservation, broken out by format of material. In contrast, the statewide needs assessments regularly eliminate or modify this section and instead add a section asking for information about institutional training and service needs, including information about preferences for in-person or online training and willingness to pay for training and preservation services. This greatly alters the nature of the survey, although the alteration is understandable in light of the nature of the *Connecting to Collections* Initiative generally and the Statewide Planning Grant program specifically.

DIGITAL COLLECTIONS DETAIL

The HHI was developed in 2002-2004, at a time when there was little consensus concerning best practices for preservation of permanent digital collections in libraries, archives, and museums. By 2009, when the first statewide needs assessments were deployed, some best practices had been established, particularly as a result of the 2007 publication of the *Trustworthy Repositories Audit and Certification: Criteria and Checklist* by OCLC, the Center for Research Libraries, and the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. Several of the statewide surveys, such as those developed in Arizona, Louisiana, Mississippi, West Virginia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, among others, include a section on digital collections that distinguishes between born-digital and reformatted (digitized) collections and asks for information about backups and long-term plans for management of digital collections. While analysis of the responses to these questions is outside the scope of the present study, these questions may be of use in development of supplemental questions for the next iteration of the Heritage Health Index Survey.

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEYS

For every Statewide Planning Grant project that included a statewide needs assessment survey, the survey was examined to determine its general correspondence to the Heritage Health Index survey. Based on the reports submitted to IMLS, 43 Statewide Planning Grant projects included some sort of survey. Thirty-eight surveys were identified within the set of materials provided by IMLS or by the statewide projects themselves. Of these surveys, one was eliminated because it had no correspondence to HHI, being a survey designed to help institutions create simplified finding aids for particular collections. All the remaining surveys had at least some relationship with HHI, but some were eliminated because only portions of the survey were included with

project reports or because only an edited report of the survey was made available and the original form of the questions could not be determined. A total of 32 surveys were examined to identify their similarity to HHI.

Each question on the 32 identified statewide needs assessments was scored on the following scale:

1. Exact correspondence. Question used on state survey exactly corresponds to question from Heritage Health Index with only minimal variation in wording (variation not sufficient to affect response).

2. Semantic correspondence. Question used on state survey corresponds to question from HHI semantically with some variation in wording (variation sufficient to affect response). Example:

   HHI:
   D6. Are copies of **vital collection records** *(e.g., inventory, catalog, insurance policies)* stored offsite? *(select one)*
      ☐ a. Yes
      ☐ b. Some, but not all
      ☐ c. No
      ☐ d. Do not have copies
      ☐ e. Don't know
      ☐ f. Do not have collection records

   Statewide Survey (ID):
   43. Are copies of important records related to your institution, such as your catalog, insurance policies, and other important documents, stored offsite? (Select one)
      ☐ Yes
      ☐ Some, but not all stored offsite
      ☐ No (skip to question 45)
      ☐ Do not have copies (skip to question 45)
      ☐ Don't know (skip to question 45)
      ☐ Do not have collection records (skip to question 45)

3. Partial correspondence. Question used on state survey corresponds to one or more question(s) from HHI but may capture only part of the information captured by the equivalent question(s) from HHI or may capture additional information not captured by the equivalent question(s) from HHI. Example:

   HHI:
   B5. Which of the following most closely describes your institution's governance? *(select one)*
      ☐ a. College, university or other academic entity
      ☐ b. Non-profit, non-governmental organization or foundation
      ☐ c. Corporate or for-profit organization
      ☐ d. Federal
      ☐ e. State
      ☐ f. Local (county or municipal)
      ☐ g. Tribal

   Statewide Survey (LA):
   4. Which one category best describes your organization type or affiliation? *(please select one)*
      ☐ Private non-profit (non-government)

☐ Local, municipal, or county government
☐ State government
☐ Federal government
☐ Tribal
☐ Other *(please specify)* _____

4. Topical correspondence. Question used on state survey corresponds topically to one or more question(s) from HHI but does not capture equivalent information. Example:

HHI:
D7. Do you have adequate **security systems** (e.g., security guard, staff observation, intrusion detection) to help prevent theft or vandalism of collections? *(select one)*
☐ a. Yes
☐ b. In some, but not all areas
☐ c. No
☐ d. Don't know

Statewide Survey (GA):
36. What security methods does your institution employ to help prevent theft or vandalism of the collection? (select the answer that best applies)
☐ None
☐ Alarms on doors and/or windows, but no off-site 24 hour monitoring
☐ Security system that is monitored 24 hours a day by an off-site service provider
☐ Security system that is monitored 24 hours a day by an off-site service provider, plus on-site guards or security staff/patrols

5. No correspondence. Question used on state survey has no correspondence to any question from HHI. Example:

Statewide Survey (OH):
20. What statewide preservation services would your institution like to see available in Ohio? *Select all answers that apply.*
☐ Help with general conservation/preservation surveys
☐ Preservation grants to individual institutions
☐ Assistance with disaster planning and recovery
☐ Loan of environmental monitoring equipment
☐ Experts to contact for preservation information
☐ On-site visits by a preservation professional
☐ Preservation workshops
☐ Other, please explain in the box below:

Issues of question order and arrangement were ignored. Formatting was generally ignored, as it was largely a product of the particular online survey tool chosen by the statewide project. Typographical errors and minor changes to spelling, grammar, and punctuation were similarly ignored. Survey logic, particularly as implemented in online survey tools, was ignored as much as possible, although in some cases the survey logic might explain data inconsistencies when comparing data to the paper-based HHI.

Overall, three Statewide Planning Grant projects (U.S. Virgin Islands, Alabama, and New Mexico) attempted to reproduce the HHI nearly verbatim, with only minor wording variations. The U.S. Virgin Islands survey

added additional questions to reflect territorial concerns and a section addressing digital collections, but otherwise was the closest overall to the original HHI survey. All other statewide surveys made changes to the HHI, either by omitting questions or modifying HHI questions. However, every statewide needs assessment includes at least one question with exact or semantic correspondence with HHI. A breakdown of correspondence to HHI by section is included below:

SECTION B, Description of Collecting or Holding Institution and SECTION G, Respondent Information

The two sections were frequently combined in statewide surveys. These sections of the HHI include the following questions:

B1. For purposes of comparing you with your peers, which of the following most closely describes your primary function or service?
B2. Which additional functions or services do you provide?
B3. Does your institution have Internet access?
B4. Does your institution have a Web site?
B5. Which of the following most closely describes your institution's governance?
B6. If you are controlled by a college, university, or other academic entity, which of the following most closely describes your governance?
G1. How many staff are currently employed in your collecting institution (as identified on page 1, question A1)?
G2. How many visitors or users did you serve last year? Indicate "0" if you had no visitors or users in a category.
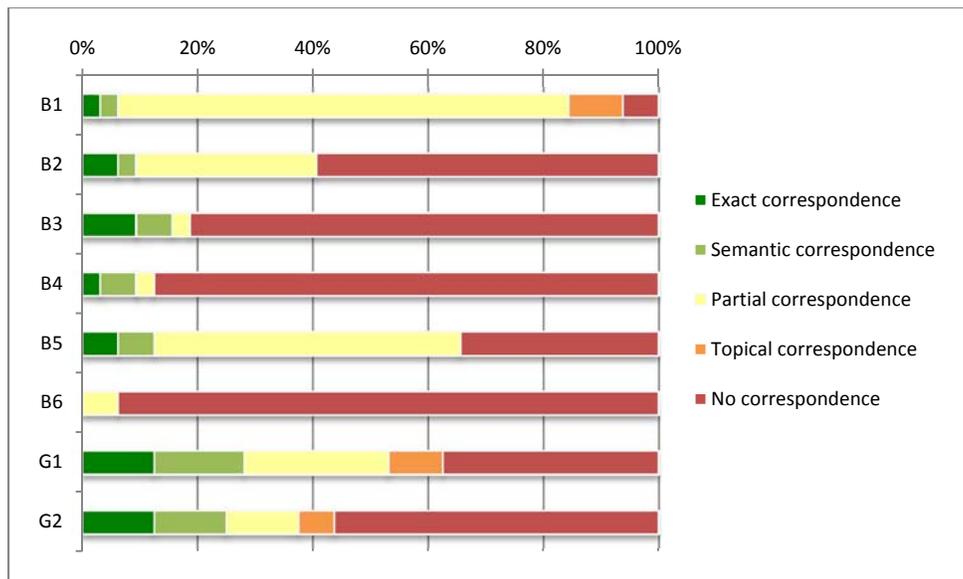
Figure 1. Percentage of Questions from Statewide Planning Grant Surveys with Similarity to HHI Sections B&G

Most statewide surveys included some questions from these sections. Frequently, the list of primary functions or services was modified to reflect particular state concerns, and the question concerning additional functions or services was omitted in a majority of statewide surveys. B5 and B6, addressing governance, were sometimes conflated, but in many statewide surveys question B6, which refines the governance categories listed in B5, was simply omitted.

In Section G, the statewide surveys frequently changed the information collected, asking about the number of full-time equivalents (FTE), whereas the HHI specifically instructed respondents "Do not

express in full-time equivalents (FTEs)." In the question on visitation, many statewide surveys only collected information about in-person or on site visitors, whereas HHI asked about off site (e.g., traveling exhibitions, bookmobiles, educational programs) and electronic visitation (e.g., visits to Web site, electronic distribution lists, electronic discussion groups) as well.

SECTION C, Environment

This section of the HHI includes the following questions:

C1. Do you use environmental controls to meet temperature specifications for the preservation of your collection?

C2. Do you use environmental controls to meet relative humidity specifications for the preservation of your collection?

C3. Do you control light levels to meet the specifications for the preservation of your collection?

C4. What estimated percentage of your collection is stored in areas you consider to be adequate (large enough to accommodate current collections with safe access to them and appropriate storage furniture, if necessary)?

C5. For the storage areas that are not adequate, indicate the degree of improvement needed in each of the following four categories. If all of your storage areas are adequate, select "no need."
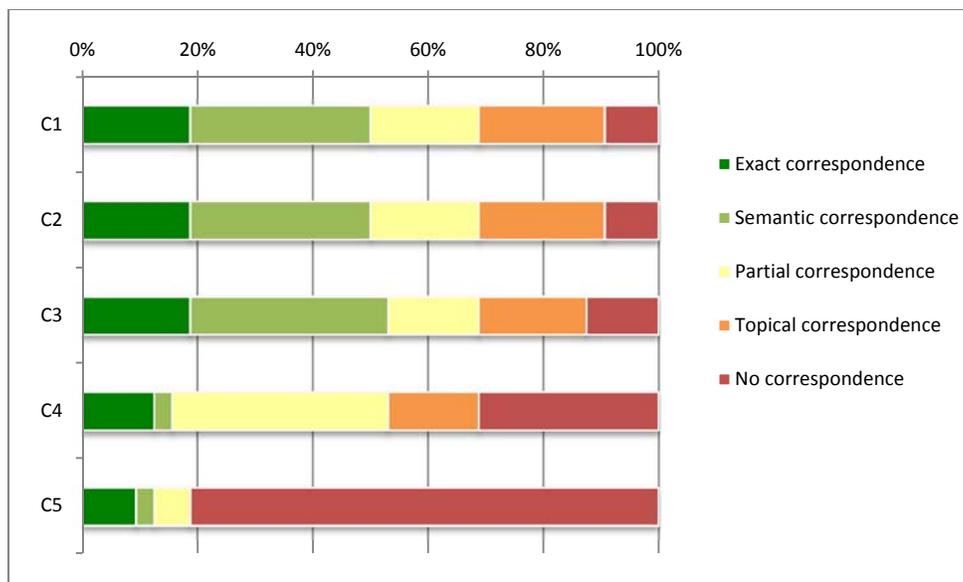
Figure 2. Percentage of Questions from Statewide Planning Grant Surveys with Similarity to HHI Section C

Questions C1, C2, and C3 were overall the questions that were best represented in the Statewide Planning Grant surveys. Question C4 was often included in with alternate wording or with altered response options (for example, HHI's range of 1-19% might be altered to 1-25%).

SECTION D, Preservation Activities

This section of the HHI includes the following questions:

D1. Does the mission of your institution include preservation of your collection?

D2. Does your institution have a written, long-range preservation plan for the care of the collection (a document that describes a multi-year course of action to meet an institution's overall preservation needs for its collection)?

D3. Has a survey of the general condition of your collection been done (an assessment based on visual inspection of the collection and the areas where it is exhibited or held)?

D4. Does your institution have a written emergency/disaster plan that includes the collection?

D5. If you have a written emergency/disaster plan, is your staff trained to carry it out?

D6. Are copies of vital collection records (e.g., inventory, catalog, insurance policies) stored offsite?

D7. Do you have adequate security systems (e.g., security guard, staff observation, intrusion detection) to help prevent theft or vandalism of collections?

D8. Which of the following most closely describes your current staffing for conservation/preservation?

D9. Indicate the internal staff who perform conservation/preservation activities. Please select an estimate from the ranges provided. If the number of FTE falls between possible responses, round to the nearest whole number.

D10. What does your conservation/preservation program include?

D11. Does your institution's conservation/preservation mission or program include the responsibility to preserve digital collections (computer-based representation of text, numbers, images, and/or sound, e.g., optical discs, websites, electronic books)?

D12. Please indicate your institution's level of need in the following areas related to conservation/preservation.

D13. For all your collections that are currently in need of treatment identify all the causes of the damage or loss of access to them.

D14. Do you promote awareness of conservation/preservation activities using the following?
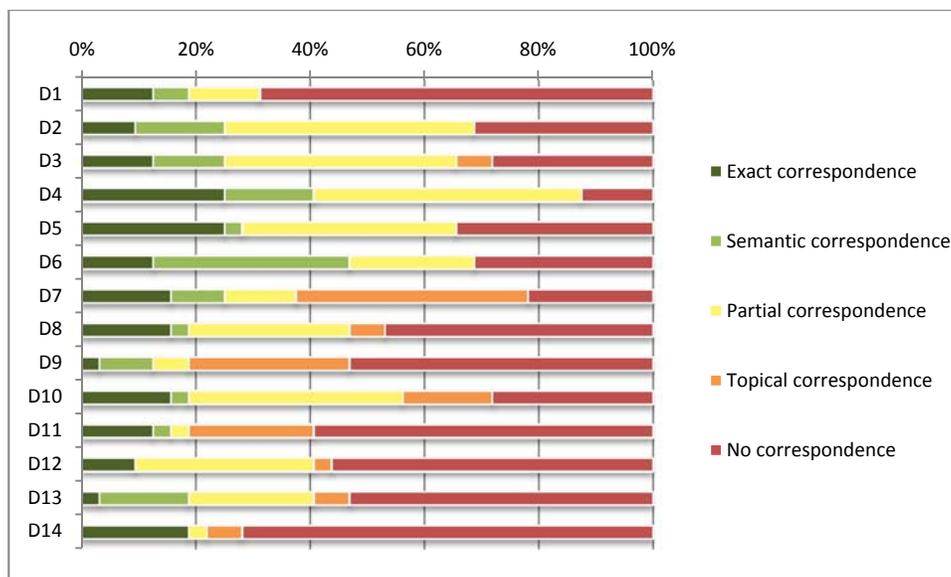
Figure 3. Percentage of Questions from Statewide Planning Grant Surveys with Similarity to HHI Section D

This section was very unevenly implemented across Statewide Planning Grant surveys. Overall, question D4 was well represented in the statewide surveys, with only minor changes of wording and response options. Question D3 is somewhat problematic; "survey of the general condition" was changed in some statewide surveys to "preservation survey," and in others the question was specifically modified to include only item-level collection assessments, or surveys conducted by a "conservation/preservation professional." D7 was frequently modified to include additional detail, as in the example of a topical correspondence noted above.

SECTION E, Expenditures and Funding

This section of the HHI includes the following questions:

E1. Do you have funds specifically allocated for conservation/preservation activities in your annual budget?

E2. What was the total annual operating budget of the entity indicated on page 1, question A1 for the most recently completed fiscal year? If exact amount is unknown, please provide an estimate.

E3. For the most recently completed fiscal year, what was your institution's annual budget for conservation/preservation?

E4. In the last three years, have any of your conservation and preservation expenditures been met by drawing on income from endowed funds?

E5. From which of the following external sources have you received funding that you have used to support conservation or preservation activities during the last 3 years (whether you applied for it or not)?

E6. Has your institution made an application, whether successful or unsuccessful, for conservation/preservation funding from any public or private source in the last 3 years?

E7. If your institution did not make a grant application for conservation/preservation funding from any public or private source in the last 3 years, which of the following factors influenced the decision not to apply?
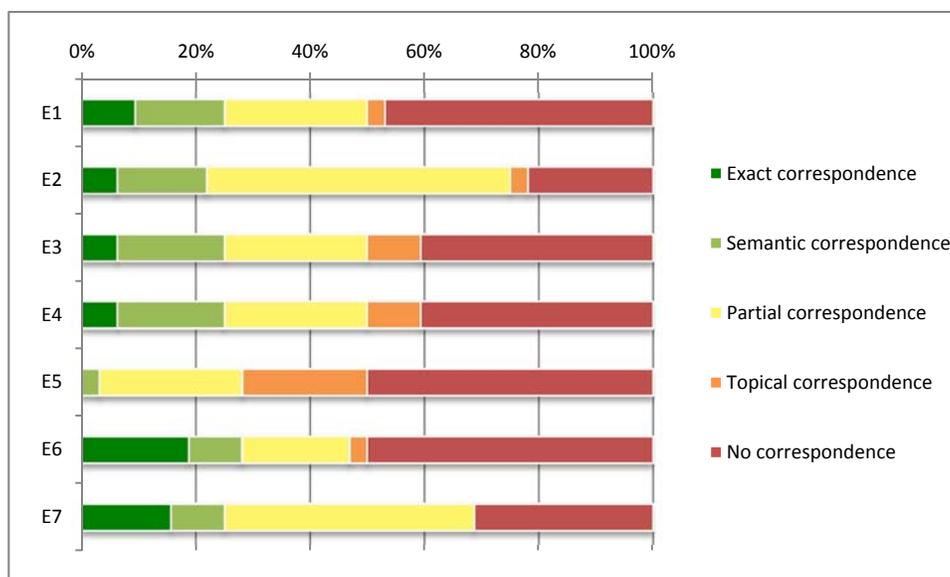
Figure 4. Percentage of Questions from Statewide Planning Grant Surveys with Similarity to HHI Section E

Statewide surveys attempted to gather similar information, but many changes were made. For example, while HHI asked respondents to provide a dollar amount for questions E2 and E3, statewide surveys frequently asked respondents to choose from a set of predetermined ranges for their annual operating and preservation budgets. The question most consistently implemented was E7, although minor changes to wording or response options were common (for example, adding "Do not have sufficient intellectual or curatorial information on collections items" as an option).

It was common for statewide surveys to add questions in this general category, as well. Questions about whether respondents had applied for specific state grant funding are common, and many states included

questions about specific federal funding sources, such as National Endowment for the Humanities Preservation Assistance Grants (PAG) and IMLS Conservation Assessment Program (CAP) funding.

SECTION F, Collections and Holdings

This section of the HHI includes the following questions:

F1. What estimated percentage of the collection is accessible through a catalog (research tool or finding aid that provides intellectual control over collection through entries that may contain descriptive detail, including physical description, provenance, history, accession information, etc.)?

F2. What estimated percentage of the collection's catalog is accessible online (whether for institutional use, or made accessible to the public through your institution or a service provider)?

F3. Do you provide online access to the content of any of your collections or holdings (e.g., online exhibitions, interactive resources, digital art, digitally scanned photographs, documents, books, and other artifacts)?

F4. Does your institution hold collections of the following types?

F5. In the following chart, please indicate the estimated number for each type of collection you hold.
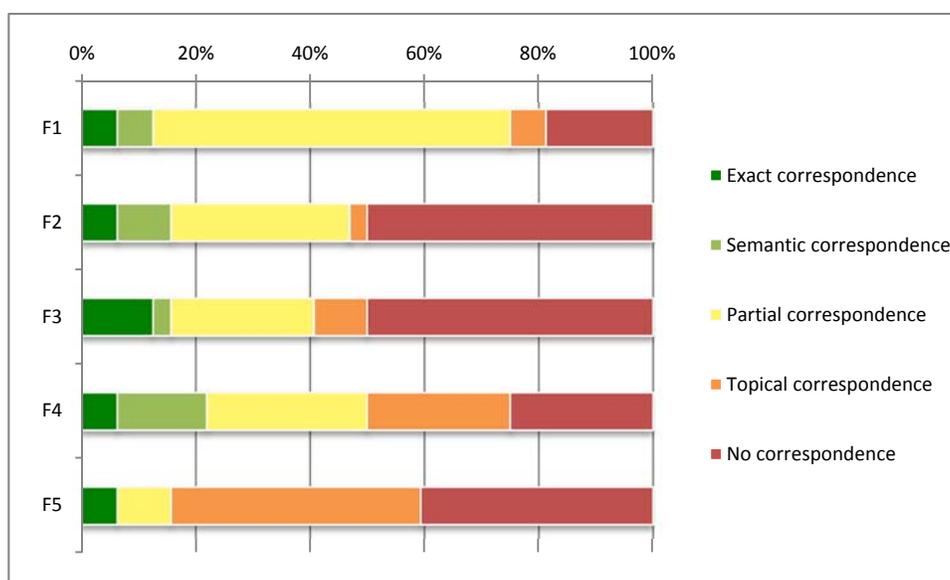
Figure 5. Percentage of Questions from Statewide Planning Grant Surveys with Similarity to HHI Section F

Questions F1, F2, and F3 were fairly consistently implemented. Questions F4 and F5, however, were not. F4 asked for simply yes/no responses for different types of items, such as books, unbound sheets, photographic collections, and so on. Question F5 asked respondents to estimate the number of each specific subtype of these items held by the institution, along with percentage of items in unknown condition, in need of conservation/preservation, in urgent need of conservation/preservation, and in no need of conservation/preservation. Project reports suggest that respondents saw this question as time-consuming, and it is possible that it did not convert well to an online format. Many statewide surveys simply omitted the information about collection condition and only asked about holdings of specific item types (for example, in the type "Books and Bound Volumes," listing subtypes such as books/monographs, serials/newspapers, scrapbooks/albums/pamphlets).

ANALYSIS OF STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENTS DATA

Thirty-two of the statewide needs assessments were accompanied by data for some or all the questions. Fifteen of the assessments included the raw data from the online survey tool. Because the data were not deduplicated and the number of responses included generally exceeded the number of participants reported in the survey reports, aggregate data from survey reports was used instead whenever possible.

The total number of institutions included in the statewide needs assessments aggregate data reports was 6,802. The largest number of responses (786) came from New York, followed by Massachusetts (506) and Michigan (458). These responses are proportionally in line with the number of institutions from those states reported as having responded to the HHI (New York = 188; Massachusetts = 114; Michigan = 85). The redacted statewide needs assessment data do not include institution names, making it impossible to determine whether particular institutions responded to both surveys.

Meaningful meta-analysis of the *Connecting to Collections* Statewide Planning Grant survey data can be accomplished for some, but not all, of the survey questions. Sections B and G can be excluded from the analysis, as these ask primarily demographic information and the high degree of variability in the question formulation would not permit useful cross tabulation by type or size of institution. Questions E2 and E3 can similarly be excluded.

Where questions with exact or semantic correspondence to questions from the HHI were included on more than 30% of statewide surveys, statewide survey data can be directly compared with HHI results. This includes the following questions:

C1. Do you use environmental controls to meet temperature specifications for the preservation of your collection?
C2. Do you use environmental controls to meet relative humidity specifications for the preservation of your collection?
C3. Do you control light levels to meet the specifications for the preservation of your collection?
D4. Does your institution have a written emergency/disaster plan that includes the collection?
D6. Are copies of vital collection records (e.g., inventory, catalog, insurance policies) stored offsite?

Where questions with exact, semantic, or partial correspondence to questions from the HHI were included on more than 50% of statewide surveys, responses can be heuristically reviewed for comparison with HHI results. This includes all the questions listed above with greater than 30% exact or semantic correspondence, plus the following questions:

C4. What estimated percentage of your collection is stored in areas you consider to be adequate (large enough to accommodate current collections with safe access to them and appropriate storage furniture, if necessary)?
D2. Does your institution have a written, long-range preservation plan for the care of the collection (a document that describes a multi-year course of action to meet an institution's overall preservation needs for its collection)?
D3. Has a survey of the general condition of your collection been done (an assessment based on visual inspection of the collection and the areas where it is exhibited or held)?
D5. If you have a written emergency/disaster plan, is your staff trained to carry it out?
D10. What does your conservation/preservation program include?
E1. Do you have funds specifically allocated for conservation/preservation activities in your annual budget?

E4. In the last three years, have any of your conservation and preservation expenditures been met by drawing on income from endowed funds?

E7. If your institution did not make a grant application for conservation/preservation funding from any public or private source in the last 3 years, which of the following factors influenced the decision not to apply?

F1. What estimated percentage of the collection is accessible through a catalog (research tool or finding aid that provides intellectual control over collection through entries that may contain descriptive detail, including physical description, provenance, history, accession information, etc.)?

The level of analysis possible for questions in this second group can be shown by examining question F1. For this question, two statewide surveys, done by Alabama and the U. S. Virgin Islands, had exact correspondence with the question as posed on the Heritage Health Index, and two more, the Federated States of Micronesia, and New Mexico, had semantic correspondence. This correspondence included not only the phrasing of the question but also the possible responses:

Survey	Heritage Health Index	Federated States of Micronesia
Question	F1. What estimated percentage of the collection is accessible through a **catalog** (*research tool or finding aid that provides intellectual control over collection through entries that may contain descriptive detail, including physical description, provenance, history, accession information, etc.*)? (*select one*)	F2: What estimated percentage of the collection is accessible through a **catalog**? (*select one*)
Responses	☐a. 0 % ☐b. 1-19% ☐c. 20-39% ☐d. 40-59% ☐e. 60-79% ☐f. 80-99% ☐g. 100% ☐h. Don't know	☐ a. 0 % ☐ b. 1-19% ☐ c. 20-39% ☐ d. 40-59% ☐ e. 60-79% ☐ f. 80-99% ☐ g. 100% ☐ h. Don't know

An additional 20 statewide surveys had partial correspondence to the question from the Heritage Health Index Survey. The exact nature of the partial correspondence varies widely, however. For example, the pilot statewide survey used in Texas kept the basic elements of the question but incorporated them into a grid with other options specifying the nature of the catalog. This survey also changed the response ranges, using a simplified set of options (All, 75%, 50%, 25%, None). Raw data for this survey were not available, and the only data available were included in the state's final report to IMLS. Because of the degree of change to the question, this question was eliminated from the heuristic comparison.

Institutions were asked to indicate the percentage of their collections described or available in the following systems. Museums were far less likely to have information about their collections available online, whether in online catalogs or finding aids/collections inventories. Museums also had fewer digitized materials online.

Item	All	75%	50%	25%	None	Total
Card Catalog	9.70% 3	16.10% 5	9.70% 3	9.70% 3	54.80% 17	31
Computer catalog or database accessible in-house	40.60% 13	12.50% 4	18.80% 6	9.40% 3	18.80% 6	32
Computer catalog or database accessible online	34.40% 11	6.30% 2	12.50% 4		46.90% 15	32
Collection inventories or finding aids accessible in-house	25.80% 8	12.90% 4	22.60% 7	12.90% 4	25.80% 8	31
Collection inventories or finding aids accessible online	6.50% 2	6.50% 2	9.70% 3	12.90% 4	64.50% 20	31
Digital image/files accessible in-house	16.70% 5	16.70% 5	6.70% 2	33.30% 10	26.70% 8	30
Digital image/files accessible online	3.20% 1	6.50% 2		12.90% 4	77.40% 24	31
Other (provide details below)					100.00% 24	24

Figure 6. Texas Connecting to Collections Statewide Planning Grant, LG-41-08-0005-08, Access Systems

The statewide survey conducted in Georgia was similarly problematic. Like the Texas survey, it was designed as a pilot, but the Georgia survey was designed to rate institutions on a stair-step scale according to the current level of their collections care programs. The Georgia question was semantically equivalent to the Heritage Health Index question, but the response options had only partial correspondence, at best. The response options were "No catalog," "Some collections cataloged," "Most, but not all, collections cataloged," and "Complete catalog."

Figure 7. Georgia Healthy Collections Initiative Survey Summary, 13: Have your collections been cataloged?

Like the Texas data, the Georgia data were eliminated from the heuristic comparison because they could not be cleanly mapped to the HHI response data.

Of the 18 remaining statewide surveys with partial correspondence to the HHI question F1, five altered the response options to exclude the 100% option, and eight eliminated the "don't know" option. Sixteen altered the response ranges, using some variant on the scale 0%, 1-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-99%, and 100.00%. Three of these states eliminated the 100% option.

The available statewide survey data can be redistributed into the Heritage Health Index response options, although this redistribution must of necessity be inexact. It assumes that 80% of the 1-25% responses in statewide survey could be assigned to the HHI 1-19% response, with the remaining 20% assigned to the HHI 20-39% response, and so on. The states that did not include the 100% response option were not so normalized.

A total of 2,879 responses came from the 17 states that used exact, semantically equivalent, or normalized partial response options. Aggregating those responses into the response categories and comparing them to the HHI allows the following comparison of percentages of collections cataloged, excluding "don't know" responses:
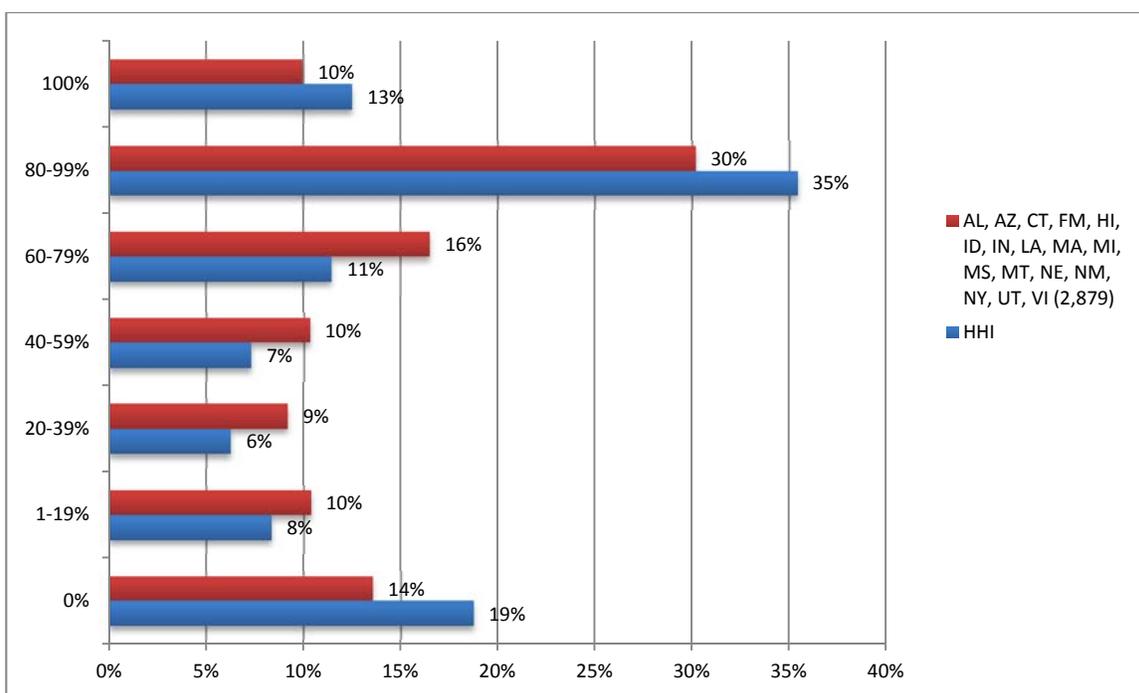
Figure 8. F1: What estimated percentage of the collection is accessible through a catalog?

The statewide data show that fewer institutions (as a percentage of all responses) reported having none of their collection cataloged than in the HHI data. However, the statewide data also show that fewer institutions responding to statewide collections care surveys have complete or nearly complete catalogs than was reported in the Heritage Health Index.

Looking only at the percentage of institutions reporting that they have no catalog of their collection, the data show that cataloging practice varies widely from state to state. The Heritage Health Index reported that 18% of institutions had no catalog of their collections. The statewide data vary from a low of 0% in Hawaii,

Massachusetts, and Nebraska, implying that all the respondents in those states have some portion of their collections cataloged, to a high of 60% for the Federated States of Micronesia. The states of West Virginia and Alabama and the territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands also reported high percentages of institutions with no catalog of their collection. All statewide surveys included this response option, so no normalization was necessary.

Institutions Reporting 0% of Collection Cataloged

State	%
HHI	18%
AL (119)	34%
AZ (152)	7%
CT (150)	7%
FL (124)	10%
FM (110)	60%
HI (76)	0%
ID (99)	9%
IN (239)	9%
LA (83)	8%
MA (253)	0%
MI (456)	11%
MS (114)	11%
MT (132)	2%
NE (3)	0%
NJ (177)	19%
NM (39)	21%
NY (621)	9%
OH (240)	5%
PA (339)	4%
UT (199)	12%
VI (34)	41%
WV (111)	29%
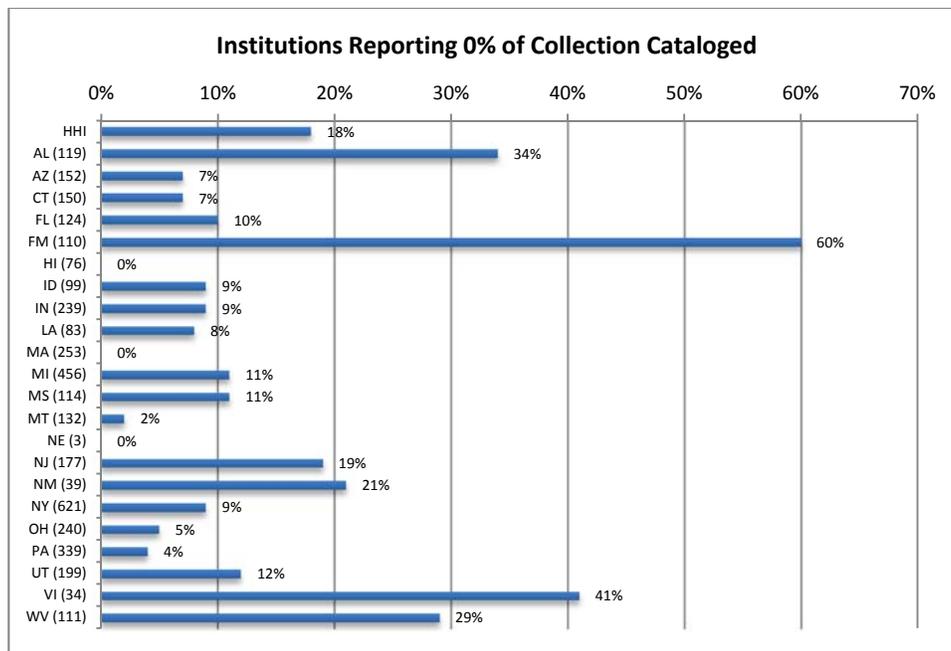
Figure 9. F1: Institutions reporting 0% of collection cataloged.

In summary, although the data for this question do not support a full comparison between individual states and the Heritage Health Index survey data, a heuristic analysis is nonetheless able to extract some interesting detail. It also reveals the large differences between the various statewide surveys, particularly with respect to question formulation.

ANALYSIS: EMERGENCY/DISASTER PLANS

An analysis of questions D4 and D5 shows the type of detail that is available through meta-analysis. These questions were chosen because they were highlighted in the *Heritage Health Index Report on the State of America's Collections:*

> The finding that 80% of U.S. collecting institutions do not have a written emergency/disaster plan that includes collections and staff trained to carry it out was determined from the responses to two questions. Question D4 "Does your institution have a written emergency/disaster plan that includes the collections?" was deliberately worded. Qualifying that the plan is "written" demonstrates that it has been carefully considered and codified as institutional policy. The wording "that includes collections" is also significant. Some institutions do have emergency plans in place for the safety of staff and visitors, and while that is paramount in the event of an emergency, planning for the protection of the collection is an essential component of responsible stewardship.

> Answer choices to D4 included "yes," "yes, but it is not up-to-date," "no, but one is being developed," "no," and "don't know." In analyzing the responses to this question, Heritage Preservation considered "yes," and "yes, but it is not up-to-date" as affirmative responses. While an up-to-date plan is important

in an emergency, an old plan is better than no plan at all. Likewise, the response "no, but one is being developed" was included with the "no" responses, because a plan in development is not adequate protection should disaster strike. "Don't know" was also included with "no" because all staff should be aware of the existence of a plan. The results to this question are:

Yes	22%
Yes, but it is not up-to-date	11%
No, but one is being developed	13%
No	50%
Don't know	5%

According to the analysis parameters, 68% do not have an emergency/disaster plan that includes collections. An essential aspect of emergency/disaster preparedness is that staff be trained to carry out the plan. A follow-up question for respondents with written emergency/disaster plans that include collections asked, "Is your staff trained to carry it out?" The responses are:

Yes	56%
No	29%
Don't know	14%

Heritage Preservation considered the high percentage of "don't know" responses to indicate that staff is not trained. Because a written plan without staff trained to carry it out is likely to be ineffective, Heritage Preservation staff and the advisers who reviewed the survey data concluded that understanding the actual level of preparedness by U.S. collecting institutions required cross-tabulating the responses to the two questions. The cross-tabulated result is that 80% of institutions do not have an emergency plan with staff trained to carry it out. (*A Public Trust at Risk 2005:*63)

Twelve states used question D4 in either an exact or semantically equivalent form, including the response options. In total, these 12 states provided survey data from 1,431 institutions. Their aggregate responses show similar patterns to the data obtained through the HHI.
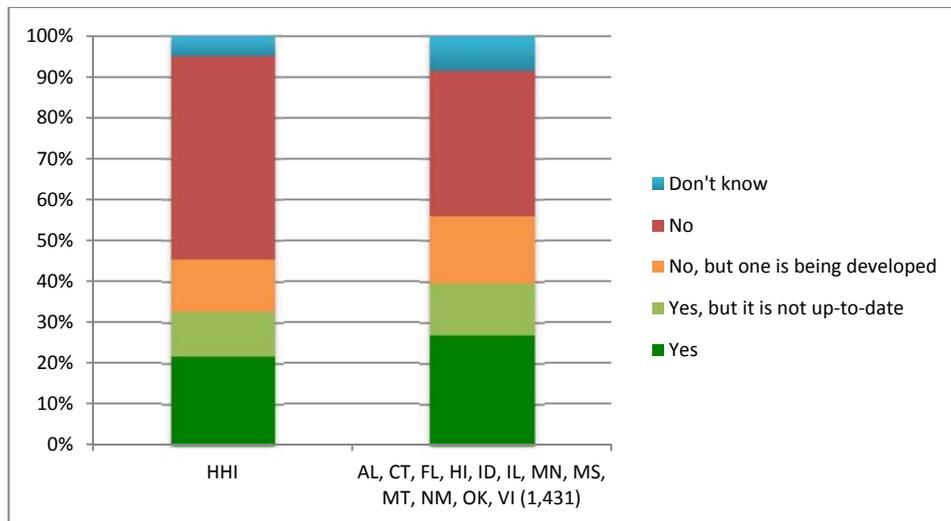

Figure 10. D4: Does your institution have a written emergency/disaster plan that includes the collection?

The aggregate state data suggest that the number of institutions with written emergency/disaster plans including collections increased from the number reported in the HHI. However, data for individual states show significant variability:
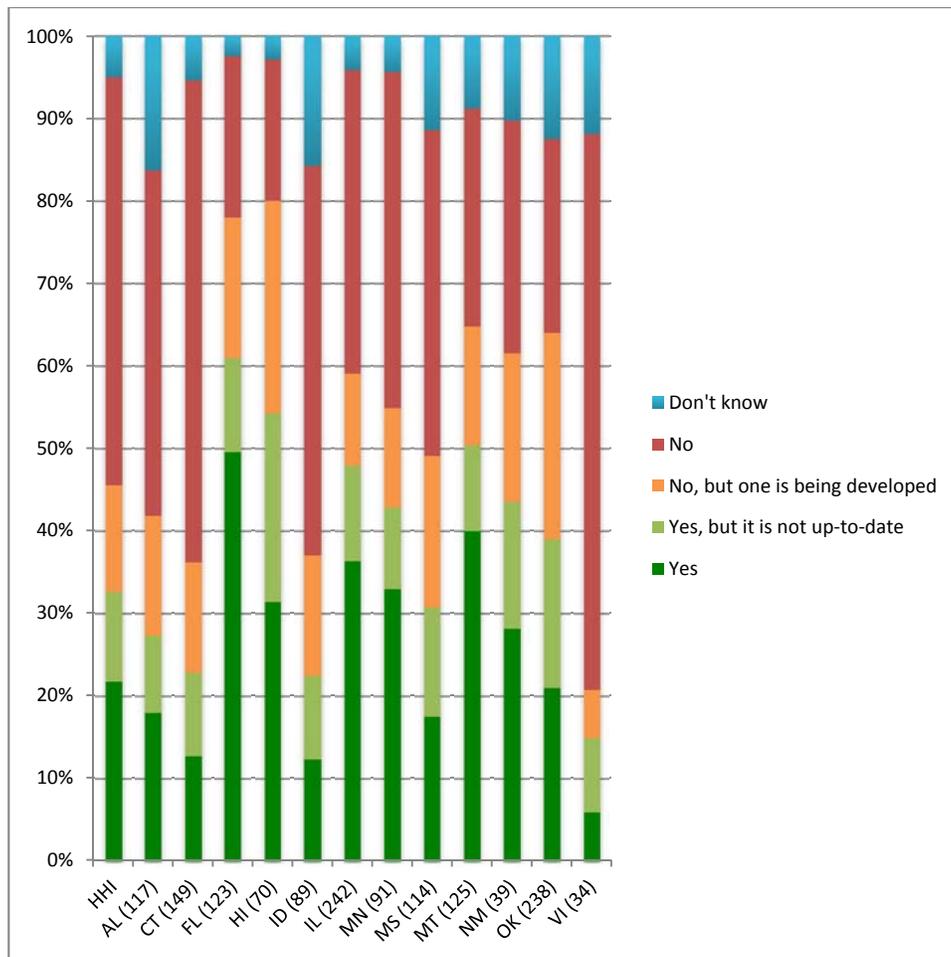

Figure 11. D4: Does your institution have a written emergency/disaster plan that includes the collection? (by state)

Figure 7 shows that institutions in some states, notably Florida, Hawaii, and Montana, have high rates of creating emergency/disaster preparedness plans, while other states and territories, including the Virgin Islands, Idaho, Connecticut, Alabama, and Mississippi, have institutions that are in greater need of assistance in this area, below the level of need identified in the HHI. As this example demonstrates, the data from Statewide Planning Grant surveys support the conclusions of the Heritage Health Index. However, because the surveys conducted by Statewide Planning Grant recipients had the potential to reach a larger percentage of smaller institutions, particularly institutions relying heavily on volunteers for collections care, the overall level of need revealed in statewide surveys is generally greater.

For the additional 14 statewide surveys that showed only partial correspondence to the HHI question, modifications to the question took multiple forms. Six statewide surveys omitted the "don't know" response option, which the *A Public Trust at Risk* (2005) notes can be included with other negative responses. Five statewide surveys omitted the "yes, but it is not up-to-date" option, which can be considered an affirmative response, and three omitted the "no, but one is being developed," which can be considered a negative response. In terms of the question itself, many statewide surveys omitted the qualification that the survey be written, while others tried to include information about currency of the plan in the wording of the question

itself. A few surveys eliminated the requirement that the plan include the collections, though the overall context nonetheless suggests that the plan should address collections issues.

A total of 28 statewide surveys included exact, semantic, or partial forms of the question "Does your institution have a written emergency/disaster plan that includes the collection?" Twenty-six of those statewide surveys included data, for a total of 4,744 institutional responses. Looking only at the positive and negative responses, the survey data show a slight increase in the number of institutions that reported having some type of emergency/disaster plan, presumably including the collections of the institution:

	Positive	Negative
HHI	32%	68%
Statewide Surveys	35%	65%

The follow-up question concerning emergency/disaster plans, "Is your staff trained to carry it out?" (question D5) posed some challenges for analysis. A total of 21 institutions asked this question in an exact, semantically identical, or partially corresponding form. As presented in the HHI, the question took the form "If you have a written emergency/disaster plan, is your staff trained to carry it out?" and one of the response options was "Have no written emergency/disaster plan." This phrasing reflects HHI's paper-based nature. Nine of the statewide surveys that used this question implemented it in their web-based survey tools as a conditional; that is, the question was only presented if the respondent had responded positively to the previous question. This change is rendered less significant because *A Public Trust at Risk* (2005) does not present results for respondents that did not have emergency/disaster plans; the listed responses include only "yes," "no," and "don't know," with a total response of 100%. Accordingly, all data from the statewide surveys was stripped of responses that indicated an absence of emergency/disaster plans.

In some cases, wording changes did affect responses. The Georgia survey offered the responses:

1. Staff members have been given a copy of the plan, but no training sessions or exercises have been held
2. Staff members have been trained to use the plan, and training sessions or exercises are held once per year or less frequently
3. Staff members have been trained to use the plan, and training sessions or exercises are held more than once a year
4. Have no written emergency plan

Responses 2 and 3 were treated as positive responses, while response 1 was negative. There was no option for "don't know."

Similarly, the Massachusetts survey offered the responses:

1. Yes, staff members are familiar with the plan and are trained to carry it out
2. Yes, staff members are familiar with the plan, but are not trained to carry it out
3. No
4. Don't know

Response 1 was positive, while responses 2 and 3 were treated as negative responses.

Overall, a total of 1,443 responses were identified in the statewide surveys. In this case, the data suggest that institution staff have a greater need of training on their emergency/disaster plans than had been revealed by the HHI.

	Positive	Negative	Don't know
HHI	56%	29%	14%
Statewide Surveys	42%	42%	16%

Because of the differences in number of statewide surveys that included this question compared to question D4 and the significantly smaller number of responses available for this question, a more comprehensive level of analysis of the level of need in this area is not available. However, it is clear that the *A Public Trust at Risk* (2005) recommendation "Every collecting institution must develop an emergency plan to protect its collections and **train staff to carry it out**" (emphasis added) remains relevant. Because training on this topic must occur at the institutional level, statewide training has only limited effectiveness. *Connecting to Collections* Implementation Grants in California, Connecticut, Florida, North Carolina, North and South Dakota, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin all include disaster planning and preparedness components targeted at institutions in those states. Results from these implementation grants may indicate best practices and approaches that can be replicated in other regions.

ANALYSIS: PRESERVATION PLANNING AND COLLECTIONS SURVEYS

Another question in this section of the Heritage Health Index focused on preservation planning. The *Heritage Health Index Report* noted that "Developing a designated plan can be a first step for an institution making a commitment to changing the condition of its collections" (*A Public Trust at Risk* 2005:30), but that half of U.S. collecting institutions do not have such a plan. Twenty-two statewide surveys included some form of this question, though only eight included verbatim or semantically equivalent versions of it. Some of the variance was perhaps due to concern that institutions might not be familiar with the specific nature of a preservation plan. The Heritage Health Index defined it as a "[written] document that describes a multi-year course of action to meet an institution's overall preservation needs for its collection" (D2). Some statewide surveys included this or a similar definition, while others omitted the definition completely. In contrast, the New Jersey survey expanded the definition to "A long-range strategic plan with timetables and prioritized goals focused on collections care and based on Preservation Needs Assessment recommendations."

Most statewide surveys, however, varied less in the wording of the question than in the possible responses. The Heritage Health Index included the following response options:

a) Yes
b) Yes, but it is not up-to-date
c) No, but one is being developed
d) No, but preservation is addressed in overall long-range plan
e) No
f) Don't know

The most common variation in the statewide surveys was removal of option d, "No, but preservation is addressed in overall long-range plan." Ten of the statewide surveys removed this response, possibly due to concerns that it might be interpreted as offering an alternative to development of a full preservation plan. Some states also removed option b, "yes, but it is not up-to-date," instead asking institutions to list the year that the plan was last updated in a comment.

Overall, of the 4,045 institutions that responded to statewide surveys including some variant of this question, 398 or 9.87% reported that they did had a written, up-to-date preservation plan for the care of their collection. This is remarkably close to the 9% affirmative response reported in the Heritage Health Index. 2,058 institutions, or 51%, reported that they had no plan at all; again, this is close to the 50% of institutions with no plan reported in the Heritage Health Index.

In the Heritage Health Index, this question is immediately followed by question D3, "Has a **survey of the general condition** of your collection been done (an assessment based on visual inspection of the collection and the areas where it is exhibited or held)?" As with question D2, some states attempted to provide additional detail for this question, perhaps for the benefit of institutions that do not have a history of such surveys; the Heritage Health Index report noted that "Libraries are the most likely not to have done any survey at all at 46%, including 47% of public libraries, 40% of academic libraries, and 50% of special libraries" (p. 82). Many surveys added the qualification of "formal" or "professional" to the survey, or specified that it was done by a "conservation/preservation professional." Some other variations of the question include:

- Have you or another member of your institutional staff completed a survey of the general condition of your collections (an assessment based on visual inspection of the collections and the areas where they are exhibited or held)? [AL]
- Has your institution had a conservation/preservation professional conduct a general conservation/preservation survey of your collection to determine the extent of its preservation/conservation problems, including environmental concerns, collection management, security, disaster planning, special collections and the needs of special formats? (please select only one) [Used with minor variations by AZ, CT, LA, NY, OH, UT]
- Has a professional survey of the general condition of your collections been done, such as Heritage Preservation's Conservation Assessment Program (CAP) or the American Association of Museum's Museum Assessment Program (MAP)? [KY]
- Has a formal preservation survey of the condition of your collection been done? [Used with minor variations by ID, MS, MT, NE]

Overall, 21 states included some variant of this question. As with question D2, however, there was substantial variation in the responses provided. The Heritage Health Index provided the following response options:

a) Yes
b) Yes, but only of a portion of the collection
c) Yes, but it is not up-to-date
d) Yes, but only of a portion of the collection and it is not up-to-date
e) No
f) Don't know

The surveys done in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and West Virginia by the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts stressed the need for the survey to be up-to-date:

a) We have an up-to-date Collection Survey of the entire collection.
b) We have an up-to-date Collection Survey of some of the collections held by the institution.
c) We have no up-to date Collection Surveys for our collections.

Other states again requested the year in which the survey was last updated, perhaps reflecting a perception that "up-to-date" is somewhat vague. The Heritage Health Index provided no guidance in this regard in either the original question or in the Definitions and Frequently Asked Questions appended to the survey. Overall, only eight statewide surveys were verbatim or semantically equivalent to HHI in both the question and the responses, while the remaining states provide at best partial correspondence to the HHI question.

A total of 3,912 institutions responded to some form of this question in the 21 states that posed it:
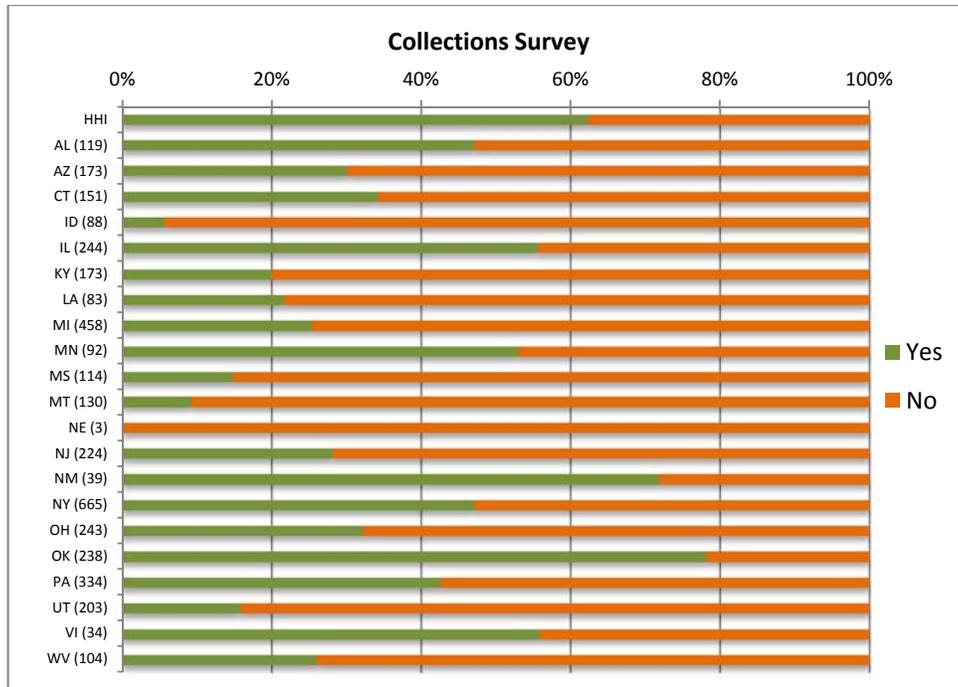
Figure 12. D3: Has a survey of the general condition of your collection been done (an assessment based on visual inspection of the collection and the areas where it is exhibited or held)? (by state)

The Heritage Health Index reported that 63% of respondents had a collections survey for all or part of their collection, whether or not it was up-to-date, while 38% reported that they had not done a survey or did not know whether they had. In the statewide surveys, these numbers are reversed, with only 37% of institutions reporting that they had done a survey and 63% reporting that they had not or did not know. The differences in wording and response options for this question may in part explain the statewide variation in the response data. The probable skew of the statewide respondents toward smaller institutions may also account for some of the difference.

ANALYSIS: FUNDING CHALLENGES

Given the needs identified in the statewide surveys, funding for continued collections care efforts is critical. The Heritage Health Index included several questions designed to provide some understanding of the funding situation of collecting institutions. One question adopted by a majority of the statewide surveys concerned reasons why institutions might not have applied for grant funding in the area of collections care. Question E7 asked "If your institution did not make a grant application for conservation/preservation funding from any public or private source in the last 3 years, which of the following factors influenced the decision not to apply?" Possible responses were:

a) Not aware of appropriate funding sources
b) Lack of staff time or expertise to complete application
c) Additional project planning or preparation necessary before requesting grant funds
d) Conservation/preservation not an institutional priority
e) Currently have sufficient sources of funding
f) Have applied for grant(s) from external sources in the past but have been unsuccessful
g) Other, please specify:

h) Not applicable
i) Don't know

Twenty-one state surveys included this question, with eight including the question verbatim in a semantically equivalent form. All states allowed for multiple responses, as did the Heritage Health Index. Unlike the paper-based HHI, however, the majority of statewide surveys appear to have used some form of conditional logic, only permitting responses from institutions that had responded (on question E6) that they had not applied for funding the previous three years. The response "not applicable" was dropped from several surveys, perhaps because of this conditional logic.
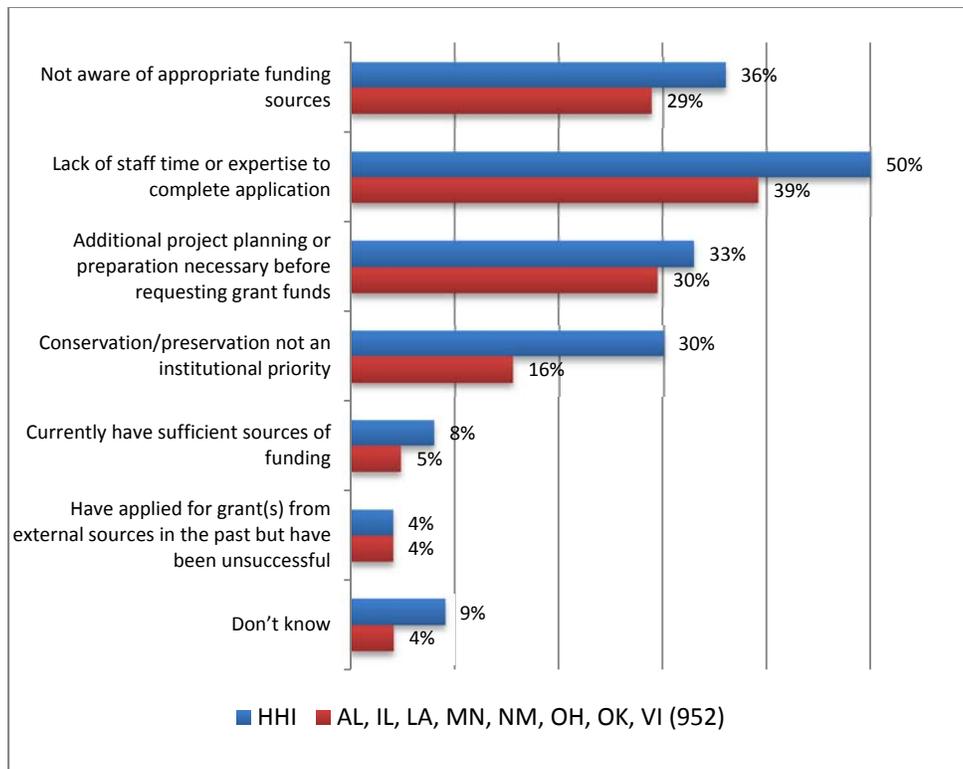
Figure 13. E7: If your institution did not make a grant application for conservation/preservation funding from any public or private source in the last 3 years, which of the following factors influenced the decision not to apply?

A common variation, for those states that modified the response options for this question, was to separate the issues of "staff time" and "staff expertise" into separate responses. Where the original data were supplied, these responses could be merged, but this was not possible given in three states, including one with a significant number of responses (New York).

Analysis of this question for surveys that partially correspond to the HHI is complicated by the various time frames used in this question and in question E6. Some states modified the time frame to ask if respondents had applied for grants in the last five years. In many cases, the phrasing of question E7 was modified to remove any time frame. If conditional logical was in fact used in all surveys, this might not be significant, but there is no way to confirm the use of conditional logical for the majority of surveys as they have been submitted.

Assuming that the time frame is not significant, the top three reasons for not applying for grant funding were the same in the statewide data in in the Heritage Health Index:

1. Lack of staff time or expertise to complete application (HHI 50%, states 38%)
2. Not aware of appropriate funding sources (HHI 36%, states 27%)
3. Additional project planning or preparation necessary before requesting grant funds (HHI 33%, states 29%)

Lack of staff time or expertise to complete application

State	%
HHI	50%
AL (115)	24%
AZ (177)	32%
GA (69)	41%
ID (90)	33%
IL (283)	35%
KY (97)	62%
LA (43)	58%
MA (237)	57%
MN (62)	48%
MS (71)	42%
MT (131)	41%
NJ (183)	55%
NM (38)	38%
NY (786)	20%
OH (145)	54%
OK (238)	38%
PA (275)	46%
UT (134)	43%
VI (28)	32%
WV (105)	46%

Not aware of appropriate funding sources

| State	%
HHI	36%
AL (115)	28%
AZ (177)	19%
GA (69)	22%
ID (90)	22%
IL (283)	27%
KY (97)	54%
LA (43)	37%
MA (237)	28%
MN (62)	29%
MS (71)	42%
MT (131)	32%
NJ (183)	33%
NM (38)	18%
NY (786)	14%
OH (145)	45%
OK (238)	23%
PA (275)	25%
UT (134)	48%
VI (28)	21%
WV (105)	45%

Figure 14. E7: Factors affecting decision not to apply for grant application for conservation/preservation funding

The first two factors can perhaps be addressed with additional training. The third factor, the need for additional project planning or preparation, is more complex, though it may be related to staff time constraints and lack of expertise. Some states also added the possible response "Do not have sufficient intellectual or curatorial information on the collection to ask for conservation funding," which is an aspect of project preparation and planning not simply reducible to staff time or expertise.

While much more detailed analysis of the statewide survey data could be done, all such analysis will be limited by the inconsistencies in survey methodology and question formulation illustrated above. At the first *Connecting to Collections: Continuing Conversations Exchange* held in 2011, some Statewide Planning Grant recipients noted that they felt that their success in implementing statewide surveys of this type was limited by their own lack of formal training in survey development. This can be considered a general lesson for initiatives of this scope. Specific training for grant recipients, and particularly for those that indicated that a statewide survey was of interest, might have improved the quality of survey results. Nonetheless, much of the available survey data are consistent with Heritage Health Index findings and can serve, to a limited extent, as an interim report between the first Heritage Health Index Report in 2004 and the Heritage Health Information 2014 survey, expected to go live later this year. Given the amount of change in economic conditions in the United States between 2004 and 2014, such interim results, even if limited, may provide significant value in understanding the ongoing challenges faced by collecting institutions.

Across the states, territories, and commonwealths that participated in *Connecting to Collections*, there were many positive impacts resulting from the planning grant program:

- Collaborative groups, including archives, historical societies, libraries, and museums, were formed, and the activities of many of these groups have continued through *Connecting to Collections* Implementation Grant projects and beyond. An "infrastructure" for statewide preservation was developed in states that might not have had this focus before, and collaborations were strengthened in states where cooperative preservation alliances previously existed.
- The *Connecting to Collections* Initiative raised the profile of preservation in the states and across the nation through workshops, conferences, statewide summits, and the reports on survey activities and other projects. Coverage of *Connecting to Collections* projects included many newspaper and newsletter articles, web articles, blog entries, and, in some locations, radio interviews and coverage of project-related activities.
- Baseline preservation knowledge grew among participants in the project, as a result of participating in survey projects (many of which were designed to be educational as well as to gain statistical information on preservation activities and needs), and through the site survey projects, workshops, and conferences associated with the statewide projects.
- New program ideas developed in one state were often utilized in other states. Methods of raising awareness or "marketing" preservation that were used to great success in Virginia also found success in other states. This result is due in large part to the content and design of the *Connecting to Collections: Continuing Conversation Exchanges*, but was even evident before these participant conferences, as states and territories shared successful strategies with each other through articles, reports, and interactions at other cultural heritage association meetings.
- One of the potential impacts with the longest-lasting positive effect has been the identification and growth of new preservation leaders in states that participated in *Connecting to Collections* Planning Grant projects. Whether serving as representatives to statewide advisory or steering committees, as speakers at workshops and conferences related to the project, or simply because the project allowed them to raise their profile in their community or state, the base of educated advocates for preservation and collection care grew as a result of the *Connecting to Collections* project.

PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS ON CONNECTING TO COLLECTIONS

As part of the *Connecting to Collections:* Continuing Conversations Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian grant project, meetings of the *Connecting to Collections* State Planning Grant partners from across the country took place in 2011 in Richmond, Virginia, and in 2012 in Salt Lake City, Utah, at annual conferences of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). Meeting participants heard presentations on a variety of grant-related activities from a number of states. Online materials from the conferences and a webinar held in 2012 are available at http://www.c2c-exchanges.org/events.

As a follow-up to those meetings, and to supplement the present analysis of the IMLS *Connecting to Collections* Initiative, focus groups with representatives from participating states were held in September and October, 2013, at the American Association for State and Local History annual conference in Birmingham, Alabama, and at the Mountain Plains Museums Association annual meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska. Focus group conveners spoke with *Connecting to Collections* project managers at the AASLH conference and with a mix of project leaders and participants at the MPMA meeting.

Eleven focus group participants, reporting on eleven different statewide *Connecting to Collections* projects, took part in the AASLH session. As an introduction, each spoke about the current status of their state project. Throughout the meeting, discussion ranged from the impact of *Connecting to Collections* programs within states to sustainability tools participants would like to see developed in order to keep information about current and future statewide preservation initiatives flowing nationwide.

While some of the groups had received both *Connecting to Collections* Planning and Implementation Grants, several had not received the implementation funding. Those that had not received implementation funding to continue their program were studying the potential to use other types of IMLS, federal, or state grants to move their initiatives forward and were looking into ways to build on the information discovered during the planning phase of their programs.

Representatives of the Colorado, Indiana, Ohio, and Nebraska *Connecting to Collections* projects talked about the current status of their implementation grants. In Colorado, the *Connecting to Collections* project has received a pledge of continuing support from the organization which is managing the implementation grant, so that their program will be funded for three years after the end of the two-year implementation grant. Discussion of other sustainability models was the focus of many of the questions to this group.

Connecting to Collections project managers in states that had existing historical field services organizations (often based at the state historical society) or other statewide efforts uniting cultural heritage organizations felt that the existence of established local history services made their projects easier to start up and to sustain. In Indiana, the state historical society has had a local history services division for 40 years, so they had already built many strong relationships across the state prior to the advent of the *Connecting to Collections* project. In Mississippi, the heads of library, museums, archives, and history statewide services have been meeting on a monthly basis since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, so these organizations have built strong ties and have developed a database of 400 cultural heritage institutions of all types within the state. This database proved very helpful in dealing with the outbreak of tornadoes near Hattiesburg, MS, in February 2013. A positive comment from the Mississippi *Connecting to Collections* project management team was that, even with the networking which has been going on in the state for a number of years, "the final *Connecting to Collections* project statewide conference attracted people who had never before attended a preservation education program."

While many of the states at the meeting said that development of a statewide cultural heritage database was part of their *Connecting to Collections* planning project or prior efforts, others said that the lack of lists in the historical society, county records office, and other communities within their state makes widespread communication among collections-holding institutions difficult. The Pennsylvania project representative echoed the need for further communication, outreach, and capacity building among the records management and county government communities.

Other participants saw outreach to new partners and constituents as a key outcome and impact of their projects. In Colorado, an Alliance for Response project, which brought together cultural heritage institution representatives and emergency managers/first responders, first in the Denver area and later statewide, was seen as a key point of success for the project. The ability for cultural heritage staff to work with the State Office of Emergency Response, particularly in the face of wildfires in summer 2012 and 2013, and the September 2013 flooding in Colorado, was seen to be an extremely positive outcome from the Alliance for Response and *Connecting to Collections* initiatives. Emergency managers put out calls to find out what cultural heritage institutions had been affected; in addition, cultural heritage professionals were able to introduce emergency management representatives to a database of institutions that the responders had not previously known about. Other states discussed the need to reach out to their State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) in order to strengthen ties with state emergency management.

Other outcomes and impacts included giving baseline knowledge on preservation to small organizations, and preservation awareness to one-person shops, building public awareness and advocacy for preservation through Top 10 endangered materials programs; and building stronger community networks among participants' workshop sites, including informal mentoring of emerging professionals. The latter was especially apparent with one Pennsylvania workshop group which went to an extended lunch during a workshop together and are discussing forming a local disaster preparedness network.

Some of the focus group participants felt that *Connecting to Collections* participants within their states had, at times, been overwhelmed by the amount of information and programmatic activities available through the program. In Pennsylvania, the project representative felt that public libraries with local history and genealogy collections might have particularly been overwhelmed by the amount of training available and that those groups might need some more-focused training particular to the limited size of the local history collections they hold. Representatives of the Indiana *Connecting to Collections* project suggested that future projects like this in their state and others should include work with groups to learn about the learning styles of their members so as not to overwhelm participants.

Another excellent suggestion from the Indiana, Colorado, and Pennsylvania project representatives was their use of a formal outcome plan to evaluate their state project. Among the many offerings of the Indiana *Connecting to Collections* program was a preservation survey visit; visits have been made to more than 100 institutions within the state as of September 2013. In addition to the visit, the institutions undertook pre-visit and post-visit surveys. To get the organizations to participate in the program evaluation, the project provided publications on preservation to those who completed the evaluation process. In Pennsylvania, workshop participants responded to pre- and post-class questionnaires to measure improvements in preservation knowledge. Colorado is using the same process and has a consultant specifically focused on evaluation as part of their grant team.

Participants spoke about some of the programs and activities they would like as follow-ons to their *Connecting to Collections* projects on a state and even national basis:

- Most of the states represented had, in some way, addressed the preservation of digital materials in their projects. However, because it was not the main focus of the *Connecting to Collections* efforts in any of the states, they hoped that a "Connecting to Digital Collections" project might be seen as a future national initiative.
- The *Connecting to Collections:* Continuing Conversations meetings held in conjunction with the AASLH Conferences in 2011 and 2012 allowed project representatives to share ideas, and participants in the informal 2013 focus group at AASLH felt many good ideas were still being generated within and between *Connecting to Collections* projects. The focus group participants asked whether regional links, "birds of a feather"/affinity groups, and other multi-state collaborations might be facilitated by further communication among all states participating in the program. Development of a *Connecting to Collections* Project Leadership listserv or forum was strongly suggested, with interest in sharing information on such successful ideas as the Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Colorado "Top Ten Collections" initiatives, work done by states such as California on preservation fundraising and stewardship programs, and other helpful concepts. An additional suggestion along this line was to establish *Connecting to Collections* Alumni Meetings at national professional conferences such as those held by the American Association for State and Local History, the American Library Association, and the Society of American Archivists/Council of State Archivists.
- Some of the groups specifically discussed their future plans for sustainability and funding for continuing statewide preservation efforts. Some will be applying for federal grants such as IMLS 21st Century Librarian grants or IMLS National Leadership Grants. Others seek to have different

groups or associations within their states assume project management roles, as some of the entities that supported initial planning or implementation activities have changed their focus to other projects. Other states are going to try to maintain a level of statewide preservation efforts among activities related to state centennials and other related projects. All the organizations at the meeting said it was important to look beyond original *Connecting to Collections* project leader organizations and personnel in order to have the program continue to grow. Flexibility is important in keeping these initiatives active, as is dealing with different political realities and political players within each state.

- An important final point was raised by one of the Indiana project representatives: "We built our program not on what we wanted to provide to institutions in our state, but on what they have said they needed." That is an important point for all *Connecting to Collections* continuing initiatives to take to heart.

MPMA SESSION

Sixteen *Connecting to Collections* project participants and leaders from eight states discussed the impact of the program and continuing preservation needs in their state in a session on October 1, 2013 at the Mountain Plains Museums Association in Lincoln, Nebraska. Some state project representatives and participants reported on the specific impact of the *Connecting to Collections* program in their states:

- In North Dakota, some museums that did not have disaster plans are now preparing them. On the negative side, some institutions and people were missed and never heard of the *Connecting to Collections* program, because mailings didn't connect. But even if one or two now have a disaster plan, that's an improvement. An issue is how to make the impact last past the life of the initiative. Sustainability, particularly when volunteer-based, is a real question. And finding an institutional home is a real issue. The *Connecting to Collections* project has raised important questions across both of the Dakotas and opened up important dialogue.
- In Nebraska, webinars and online resources have been helpful. It is good to have information to which we can point county and local folks on connectingtocollections.org.
- The Kansas project focused on emergency response through the Kansas Cultural Heritage Emergency Response Network (KCHERN). But it has sometimes been difficult to get people connected to those resources.

This group also discussed the evaluation of *Connecting to Collections* activities. North Dakota built an evaluation component into their grant. They were "aggressive" about evaluation and comments, stating that the information is needed to move forward with future funding efforts: "Meat is needed on bones to move forward." They did pro-active surveys—"You can't leave until you evaluate this program."

In conversations about the future plans for *Connecting to Collections*-related activity in their states, some key comments included the following:

- Kansas libraries are leading collections conservation efforts in the state. KCHERN is library-driven, and museums are struggling to find somebody to spend just an hour a month on a telephone conference call. The Kansas Museum Association has been partnering with the Kansas Humanities Council for some activities and has sponsored scholarships through KMA. This is important, as the economic shifts within the state have really hurt cultural heritage institutions.
- North Dakota is hoping to create a mutual aid/calling tree effort for disaster recovery, even with a smaller population, big geography, and few professionals. Getting buy-in to be part of the network from groups including snowbirds, and volunteer-only staff can be difficult. The project has no real library partners. A major question is "Who has time, resources, interest to move beyond inertia?" Library folks take advantage of training but don't partner up consistently.

> Museum folk are tuckered out -- burnout is a real issue. Who will carry the mantle forward? Is there a willingness to do so? That's the real question. The project leaders are now working with university public history faculty members as well.

All the organizations represented noted that outside funding will be critical to carry their efforts further forward, whether it is through other types of IMLS grants or different funders. Another idea that appealed to the group was the incorporation of the AASLH "StEPs" program (Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations) into collections care instruction, education, and information distributed by *Connecting to Collections* projects.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The *Connecting to Collections* Planning Grant and Implementation Grant programs have provided a number of benefits to the program participants and their constituents. Project partners and participants often describe this as one of the best collaborative programs they have participated in. Of course, there are always areas where a program can be expanded or improved. From the *Connecting to Collections* reports, exchange sessions, and other meetings, some of the areas for growth and improvement that were often repeated included:

- The need for continuing funding for statewide preservation activities. Project participants realized that IMLS could not continue to support the *Connecting to Collections* program indefinitely and have been pleased to learn, in 2013-14, about the ability to submit proposals for programs which are built from *Connecting to Collections* project results under the National Leadership Grants for Museums funding program, or through other programs where appropriate. However, because the *Connecting to Collections* Initiative coincided with the timing of the U.S. economic recession, many states found it difficult to develop local or state-based resources to continue the positive steps initiated during their *Connecting to Collections* grant projects. Perhaps further information, through publications, webinars, or conference calls of program participants, can help to address these sustainability concerns.

- The preservation of digital collections is a topic which some states analyzed through their *Connecting to Collections* planning project surveys, and later through workshops, presentations, and in their implementation projects. However, with the exponential growth of digital materials in cultural heritage collections, a survey to analyze states' activities and needs in the digital arena is a topic which many of those at the 2011 and 2012 Continuing Conversation Exchange programs and at the discussions held at AASLH and MPMA in 2013 strongly supported. With IMLS' proven leadership in funding for digital projects, a digitally focused program open to participation by states and territories is a natural next step for collaborative planning and action.

- Both the sustainability issues and addressing digital needs could be addressed by a third suggested area of improvement and future action: more national meetings and forums on preservation issues. Participants in the Continuing Conversation Exchanges and the 2013 program analysis discussion groups both longed for a continuing forum to discuss collaborative preservation issues. Funding future meetings to discuss the impact of *Connecting to Collections* or inviting participating states to meet at the annual conferences of cultural heritage focused professional associations and organizations is one way to keep the conversations going. The *Connecting to Collections* Online Community currently maintained by Heritage Preservation could be an alternative meeting space for virtual participation and ongoing training. Heritage Preservation already includes social media in its promotion of *Connecting to Collections* Online Community events, and Facebook, LinkedIn, and similar online engagement options should be considered for promoting communication between and among *Connecting to Collections* participants.

The momentum of the *Connecting to Collections* Initiative can also be sustained through ongoing communication of the outcomes of the initiative, with recommendations for replication of successful statewide projects. This analysis attempts to summarize some of these outcomes, but a printed report distributed by IMLS could serve

to re-energize participating state groups and further inform the cultural heritage community. In addition to program analysis, such a report could provide detailed case studies of successful statewide projects and, as appropriate, failure analysis of unsuccessful projects to identify risks to large-scale collaboration. Recommendations from IMLS concerning best practices for data collection and analysis, online training techniques, and outcomes-based evaluation for preservation projects would assist existing and future project partners in improving their collections care programs. In addition, an analysis and report on the impact of the *Connecting to Collections* Implementation Grant Program would serve to disseminate information about program components that could be replicated by many other states. These communications actions would help to further the legacy of the IMLS *Connecting to Collections* Initiative and to reinforce the recommendations of *A Public Trust at Risk: The Heritage Health Index Report on the State of America's Collections:*

- Institutions must give priority to providing safe conditions for the collections they hold in trust.
- Every collecting institution must develop an emergency plan to protect its collections and train staff to carry it out.
- Every institution must assign responsibility for caring for collections to members of its staff.
- Individuals at all levels of government and in the private sector must assume responsibility for providing the support that will allow these collections to survive.

As IMLS and other funders collaborate to support Heritage Preservation, Inc., in the development, dissemination, and analysis of the Heritage Health Information 2014 survey, the efforts of partners and participants in the *Connecting to Collections* Initiative should continue to be recognized and supported. These collaborations provide a vital grass-roots network for preservation of our nation's diverse collections. Their continued involvement in collections care conversations at local, statewide, and national levels can only strengthen and sustain the agencies and organizations that were there at the beginning and that serve an essential role in preserving America's cultural heritage.

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