



# Southern Finger Lakes Arts Preparedness Network Survey Findings and Summary

Funded by the generous support of a  
Performing Arts Readiness New Network Grant.

The Performing Arts Readiness project was formed in the recognition that performing arts organizations are especially vulnerable to disasters and emergencies which can halt performances, sometimes indefinitely, and can put an organization out of business overnight. The three-year project was launched in January of 2017 through a generous grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.



## PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTION

The ARTS Council of the Southern Finger Lakes (The ARTS Council) invited regional communities to take a brief emergency preparedness survey, to better understand how prepared arts/cultural organizations, arts business, or studio artists are if faced with a crisis or disaster.

The results have helped The ARTS Council assess which organizations have adequate plans, and which still need to develop plans. Participants were identified as being associated with, or identifying with, one or more of the following: arts or cultural organization, arts related business, or artist.

In an effort to be inclusive of all who would be interested in participating – crises and disasters affect all – it was important to make note of many multi-disciplinary businesses, groups, and individual artists who are working from home studios, small rental studios, and renting time and space from larger organizations. Therefore, when referring to “artist(s)”, we included all disciplines of visual artists, dancers, actors and theater groups, writers, vocalists, musicians, orchestras, choral groups, and those who teach any of the aforementioned practices.

The ARTS Council is able to offer this workshop through the generous support of a Performing Arts Readiness (PAR) grant which allows us to engage a consultant who will provide resources and guidance throughout the process.

## SPECS

- Developed December 2018
- Launched January 2019
- Emailed to 796 recipients through an e-blast from The ARTS Council
- Opened by 221 recipients
- Resulted in 78 survey responses
- Mailed ~200 postcards to The ARTS Council’s members and cultural partners
- Survey link was widely shared on social media through The ARTS’ Cultural Partner’s efforts

# FINDINGS

## Reach

Respondents were from eight counties in New York and one in northern Pennsylvania

## Participation

New York State Counties: Allegany – 1; Chemung – 24; Erie – 1; Ontario – 1; Schuyler – 6; Steuben – 39; Tioga – 2; and Tompkins – 1. Three responses from northern Pennsylvania.

## Responders self-identified as representing the following:

Museum - 21	Community Arts Center - 13	Library - 13
Historical Society - 10	Cultural/Performance Venue - 10	Concert series without own venue - 1
Individual Artist in home studio - 39	Service Organization - 7	Nature Center - 1
Individual Artist in rented studio - 5	School - 10	Arts Council - 1
Gallery - 16	Educational Facility - 10	Orchestra - 1
Small seasonal shop/gallery - 1	Dance Production Company - 1	

## Do you or your institution have a formal, written emergency action plan?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
No (note why below)	41	49.3%
No Responses	18	21.6%
Yes	13	15.6%
We're working on one	11	13.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on 28 written responses:

- 32% reported no awareness of a formal written plan
- 29% said that it was not a priority or noted no need
- 25% noted that they have no need because they feel they fall into a unique situation, circumstance, or position. I.e. do not own property or a building, work from home, present in other venues, etc.
- 11% noted that they have a specific type of plan, and need to assess whether other kinds of plans are needed
- 3% have an outdated disaster plan

If yes, for what type of emergencies do you have a plan?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Fire	16	50.0%
Flood	13	40.6%
Active shooter/Hostile event	10	31.2%
Medical	9	28.1%
Bomb Threat	9	28.1%
Computer Cyber Security	8	25.0%
Tornado	8	25.0%
N/A	8	25.0%
Chemical	7	21.8%
Other	5	15.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100%</b>

In addition to plans selected above, the following are also in place:

- Earthquake
- Biological/radiological threat
- Health emergencies (loss of work to personal crisis/health issue)
- Power outages and severe weather
- Flood damage to documents

If yes, have staff or others been trained to carry it out?

	Number of	Response Ratio
No Responses	49	59.0%
N/A	14	16.8%
Yes	12	14.4%
No	8	9.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100%</b>

59% of respondents noted no response, which along with additional comments, points to issues of training needs; that training expertise is available if the person currently in charge knows how and why to train; the concern for training hasn't come up; the organization is small and understaffed; and training procedures need to be updated.

Does it include protecting the many assets of your organization or studio? E.g. props, artwork, costumes, equipment, archives, digital media, instruments, tools, etc.

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
No Responses	40	48.1%
No	17	20.4%
N/A	16	19.2%
Yes	10	12.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100%</b>

Do you feel your computers and electronic files are secure?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes	34	40.9%
No Responses	25	30.1%
No (please explain why in the comment area below)	17	20.4%
Other	7	8.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the comments, overall there is no, to very low, confidence in the security of computers and electronic files. Furthermore, many don't know what they need to do to implement security procedures, and additionally note a desire to learn more.

How do you keep archives work, important records, and electronic files? Select all that apply.

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
On-site in storage	40	65.5%
Cloud based storage	29	47.5%
External hard drive	28	45.9%
Memory stick/flash drive kept on-site	22	36.0%
Off-site in a storage facility	13	21.3%
Memory stick/flash drive kept off-site	12	19.6%
On-site server	11	18.0%
Compact discs	11	18.0%
Off-site server	5	8.1%
Other	4	6.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Do you have a continuity of operations plan to quickly resume your essential functions in the event of a crisis?**

	<b>Number of Response(s)</b>	<b>Response Ratio</b>
No	49	59.0%
No Responses	26	31.3%
Yes (please explain what it includes in the comment area below)	8	9.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100%</b>

Answers:

- Assignment of staff, trustee and other resource responsibilities for various emergency situations.
- I work from home and if my home were to have a disaster, then it might be tough.
- Facebook and the Internet would be our way to respond in a crisis.
- Had a fire in my business once. We were back up within a month.
- I'm not sure of the specific plans. I think it would depend on the severity of the crisis.
- Chain of command; Contact information for all employees; Specific roles and responsibilities; Tasks outlined that must be continued.
- Still working on this. Includes day to day operating instructions, financial records, artist and inventory (including insurance) records.
- Alternative studio space isn't readily available. However work that does make it through a natural disaster could potentially be brought to my gallery rep for storage. If my computer survives, I would be limited to areas of WiFi until my home studio was deemed safe and internet could be restored.
- Most of what I do is on the computer and all of my working files are uploaded to a cloud server in a near real-time fashion. I would need access to a computer with MS Office and download some other software to get back to work.
- Telephone Chain

**Do you or your institution have a Pocket Response Plan or contact list that is easily accessed and can be used in a crisis?**

	<b>Number of Response(s)</b>	<b>Response Ratio</b>
No	31	37.3%
No Responses	27	32.5%
Yes	20	24.0%
We're working on one	5	6.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100%</b>

Which emergency preparedness/response topics would you like to learn about? Check all that apply.

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
What an Emergency Preparedness Plan includes	33	61.1%
How to prepare a Pocket Response Plan	29	53.7%
Protecting digital data and managing threats such as computer hacks	28	51.8%
Supplies and equipment that should be readily available in the event of an emergency	28	51.8%
Regional and national resources and organizations that can help in an emergency	27	50.0%
Preventative actions to protect your space and assets	24	44.4%
How to salvage wet or damaged objects	24	44.4%
Insurance for protecting you studio, site, tools, and collections	23	42.5%
Safety of personnel, students, or others during an active shooter incident or other threats	20	37.0%
How to effectively communicate with first-responders before an emergency occurs (E.g. Reviewing the plan with first-responders prior to implementation. Building relationships with first-responders.)	20	37.0%
Caring for damaged collections, items, tools, etc.	20	37.0%
How to deal with mold	20	37.0%
How to create a community based network	19	35.1%
Cybersecurity issues	19	35.1%
Email/server protection using firewalls, etc.	17	31.4%
Security/Reducing the risk of theft/fraud	15	27.7%
Fire extinguisher training	13	24.0%
Building assessment/Risk assessment	11	20.3%
Fire suppression systems	9	16.6%
Recovery Vendors and/or Alternate Locations	8	14.8%
Other	4	7.4%
<b>Total</b>	54	100%

Briefly describe crises that you've experienced and what you did to recover.

- We experienced an electrical outage within a few hours before curtain time of a major performance, and we truly didn't know how soon power would be restored. We used e-mail, Facebook & other social media, as well as TV and Radio to advise patrons of a delayed curtain time.
- We had severe flooding in August 2018, but luckily the library was not harmed or damaged.
- Flooding in the basement, all paper records are in the vault, which was dry and sealed. Less storage in the basement.
- The flood of 1972. Salvaged as many of the archives as we could, and moved on.
- Other than from Agnes as a child (in Virginia, so cleaning up water damage) and helping another household after losing their home in a fire, I don't have experience. When I worked at a bank, I went through an emergency preparedness drill to duplicate our operations offsite. We passed from an evacuation and technical replication perspective.
- In Colorado, the festival/camp that I ran was in the middle of the big flood. The facility had minimal damage, thankfully. The town and that whole area of the state had major repairs to do that lasted for years. We helped with the recovery efforts for our neighbors. Likewise the threat of wildfire was ever present and we had a full plan set up.
- I have not had to deal with a crisis so far. The only thing I've encountered up to this point is dealing with a homeless patron with a history of theft and violence and a couple patrons with behavior issues (fighting and outbursts). For the most part I used the libraries code of conduct policy and also having police monitor library.
- HVAC breakdowns ... maintenance agreements with vendors and relationships with storage and art transportation facilities helped.
- Identity fraud victim, reported to IRS officials, I am extra careful to not share my info.
- Virus ....had professional cleaner, then Cloud based server
- A few years ago, our server crashed and we lost all of our archived data. We were able to get some of it restored. After the incident, we created the rotating hard drive system with the assistance of a local IT expert.
- I recently had a hard drive fail. Not much to be done about it but I will be doing more extensive back up in the future
- Computer crash - Purchased new equipment, loaded existing software. I keep a print of key codes for software I've downloaded but need to do the same for physical software I've purchased, which I don't have right now.
- Computer viruses and managed to salvage most of my important documents with the help of professional computer repair guys.
- Break-in from thieves. Called the cops. Second break-in from thieves who were arsonists. Life changing experience.
- There has been one lock-down in library history. Police apprehended the shooter (who was in the vicinity but had nothing to do with the library). Otherwise, we've been very fortunate not to have any crises.

- We have had bomb threats and lockdowns that have all turned out to be false alarms, and have gone through some training at our college. Props have been damaged when a basement flooded, and we had to throw some things out. We vacuumed out the water, turned fans on and a dehumidifier. It was not completely adequate.
- Sudden paralysis. Called back up, rented computer while in hospital, told the world and asked for assistance. Purchased laptop while in hospital, changed one part of art endeavor, wrote. Still recovering....
- In my last job (HS Assistant Principal in Washington DC) I experienced Medical, Earthquake, Lockdown situations (DC Sniper), student self-injury, and of course, 911 attacks.
- Lack of heat/water/electricity - building was closed to public until could be fixed.
- Water damage to old documents and archived records. They were dried out as best as possible and moved to an off-site storage space. Environmental and architectural improvements were made to prevent any further water damage in the building.
- Sprinkler system rupture. Installed new shut-off valves.
- I have been in charge 15 years - the worst thing was snow requiring us to cancel a party and cancel a concert. Recently, we had to move to a different room in the building due to heat failure. We once lost a venue, because they ran out of money and we had contracted concerts coming up in 2 months. We found another venue to take us in.
- Snow emergencies - brief shutdown. We haven't experienced lasting crises.

### Are there resources or services you would call on to help you prepare for or recover from a disaster?

A majority of respondents noted that they are not fully aware of who to reach out to in the case of an emergency. They have a good sense of what first responders do and what to expect, but seem to be lacking knowledge of who can help them beyond the initial event.

### What resources/solutions would you like to have to assist you with disaster planning and recovery?

Overall respondents noted that they don't know where they should start when it comes to creating a plan and finding a full range of resources, tools, and solutions.

### What else would you like to add about disaster preparedness and recovery issues?

- American Alliance of Museums requires this planning as a component of Accreditation credentialing.
- Keeping people safe is the number one concern for me.
- Awareness is great. Makes me think.

- One needs a lot of capitol. My disaster nearly left me homeless and bankrupt. Four groups of people fundraised for me -- college alumni, poetry community, 171 and local artists and Arbor Development when it was Steuben Church People Against Poverty.
- This survey has made me feel woefully unprepared!
- We need everyone connected to our organization that the mindset for this subject is when a disaster will happen, not if it will.
- We really have not thought about this at all.
- I feel that as a community we are woefully unprepared, and as an individual, I am extremely unprepared.
- It is difficult to come up with all of the possibilities at one sitting.
- We know this should be high-priority but as with many understaffed organizations this becomes a back-burner issue.
- Live shooter preparedness is important, we use various venues across the state. They range from universities to community non-profits to theater etc. They all have different support structures, I'm sure there is great inconsistency across all of these situations regarding live shooter preparedness.
- Would like to know what other organizations like ours are doing to prepare themselves.
- We are pretty much starting from scratch so all information will be welcome.

## SUMMARY

Survey results exposed information about how much proactive preparedness planning is still needed throughout the Southern Finger Lakes Region, and therefore provides a platform for the further development of the Southern Finger Lakes Arts Preparedness Network (the Network). Having conducted a basic survey to understand current levels of preparedness, we've acknowledged that the real work of creating an active and supportive network is on the horizon, and within sight.

The ARTS Council sees its role as a connector to groups of like organizations – primarily within the arts and cultural sector - that will act as hubs, e.g. performing arts venues, museums, artists, libraries, historical societies, dance studios, etc.

Through the guidance of Performing Arts Readiness (PAR) and the National Coalition of Arts' Preparedness and Emergency Response (NCAPER) our intention is to use the Cultural Placekeeping Guide as a tool to guide the development of the Network.

We envision a core team that will determine regular meeting times and frequency, to begin moving the Network forward and assess the preparedness needs of the Southern Finger Lakes Region.

Initially, the Network will serve the arts and cultural sector by facilitating sharing of ideas, resources, and sample plans, in person and virtually. At minimum, providing emergency-related communications to the regional arts sector. Over time, a network will serve as a home base group comprised of people and organizations that can provide tools, updates, and assistance as needed during convening. Additionally, maintaining a contact list of organizations – noting areas of preparedness expertise – should help encourage direct outreach by those in need, to those who are willing to share their knowledge and experience.

More assessment is needed of those who have stopped before they've started, to those who require hands-on help, and additional motivation. Through The ARTS Council, the Network will work to contact those who might not have responded to initial invitations. Determining whether they need help with planning, or if they have an established operation plan, will allow us to assist them or request a different level of participation from the Network.

Our intention is to introduce a level of security and confidence in the organizations, businesses, and artists who work and live in this region.