

The Illinois Collections Preservation Network: Implementation of a Statewide Preservation Program

1. Need and Rationale

An extensive survey funded by the *Connecting to Collections* Planning Grant for Illinois revealed the acute need for a consolidated statewide preservation effort for collecting institutions. A total of 291 institutions from all regions of Illinois participated in this survey, including 12 archives, 141 libraries, 66 museums, 17 historical societies, 35 historic houses/sites, and 4 other collections-holding institutions. The survey results demonstrate the perceived needs and desires of institutional respondents (see *Appendix One* for full results). These data, in conjunction with the information gleaned during four open regional meetings with stakeholders concerning critical preservation topics, confirmed both a great need and desire for preservation funding, training, and resources throughout all categories and sizes of Illinois collecting institutions. Perhaps the most striking fact is that although 78% of survey respondents stated that the creation of a long-range conservation plan would be useful for their institution, nearly 60% of all survey respondents noted that their institution lacks such a plan. Similarly, 79% of all respondents felt that they would benefit from some type of emergency training, yet only 36% work at an institution that maintains a current disaster plan, and only 35% reported any experience with disaster training. Respondents also expressed the need for assistance with collection assessments (72%), continuing education through collections care workshops (69%), and an online source for collections care information (57%). After analyzing the survey data, four critical areas of preservation program development were identified: Assessing Environmental Conditions and Collections Care, Disaster Planning and Response, Building Public and Professional Awareness, and Facilitating Future Preservation Efforts. The survey and dialog at the regional meetings informed both the development of the Illinois Collections Preservation Network (ICPN) and a draft preservation plan for the state (*Appendix Two*). A brief summary of the mission and organization of the ICPN is included in *Appendix Three*. The preservation plan implements key recommendations of *The Heritage Health Index Report on the State of America's Collections* (Heritage Preservation, 2005) that were also identified during the initial planning project.

2. Project Design

The proposed project implements key elements of the ICPN Preservation Plan. The mission of the ICPN is to foster institutional capacity building to promote the long-term preservation of museum, library, and archival collections in Illinois that document cultural and natural heritage for the education and enrichment of future generations (*Appendix Three*). The ICPN proposes to accomplish this mission through the development of a preservation program focused on three key areas and seeks to sustain this capacity in individual organizations by offering a realistic approach that encompasses three areas targeted in *The Heritage Health Index* and our preservation plan: communication and awareness, education and training, and cooperative disaster planning and response.

- 1. Communication and Awareness:** We will increase awareness of and communication about the importance of collections and their preservation through programs for the professional community and the public, and will further develop the ICPN database of collecting institutions, listserv, and website (established during the planning phase) to facilitate broad communication and information sharing about collections preservation.
- 2. Education and Training:** We will provide and promote a broad program of preservation-based educational and training workshops and webinars for collections-holding institutions on needs identified through our planning grant survey, including preservation planning, assessment of environmental conditions, collections care, funding, and disaster planning.
- 3. Cooperative Disaster Planning and Response:** We will develop a network of trained specialists around the state to assist in statewide disaster planning and preparedness to offer support in the event of a disaster, and will offer training on disaster planning and response.

Partners in the implementation of the ICPN Preservation Program include the original steering committee formed for the planning project of directors and preservation personnel from the Illinois State Museum, University of Illinois Library, University of Illinois Spurlock Museum, Illinois State Library, Illinois State Archives, Illinois Heritage Association, Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, University of Chicago Library, Macomb Public Library, Chicago Public Library, and Morris Library at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Additional partners in the implementation phase, beyond those on the ICPN Steering Committee, include members of the Illinois Humanities Council, the Illinois Fire Service Institute (IFSI), and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA). Support from eight allied professional organizations around the state has also been secured and is presented in the attached letters of support (*Appendix Four*).

To achieve the goals outlined in *The Illinois Collections Preservation Network: A Statewide Network and Preservation Plan for Illinois*, the ICPN proposes to implement a series of critical projects and activities as part of a two-year grant project. Staff hired through grant funds, as well as the ICPN Steering Committee will oversee these projects and activities and will meet in-person twice a year during the term of the grant to facilitate implementation and assess end results. For stronger geographic representation and participation in the project, a regional approach is proposed for many of these activities. See *Appendix Five* for a map of the state illustrating our five preservation regions, which closely mirror those of the Illinois Association of Museums and the Illinois Regional Archival Depositories. Each of our three key project areas provides expected results and outcomes, products, identified lead partner institutions, and assessment mechanisms.

I. Communication & Awareness

Collecting Institutions Database: The ICPN will further develop the database of Illinois collecting institutions (originally developed for the planning project). From this database, ICPN staff will create a Google Earth Map showing the locations of collections-holding institutions that the ICPN will share with emergency responders in each region. The ICPN website will feature links to member institutions that maintain publicly accessible collections. Membership in this database will be optional and will be advertised through ICPN programs, listserv announcements, and targeted physical mailings sent to members of our allied state and local organizations (*Appendix Four*).

Results and Outcomes: We will develop a database and maps to identify collections-holding institutions for emergency response as well as public access and awareness of those collections.

Products: Electronic database of collections-holding institutions and related e-mail and physical mail contacts; Google Earth map coverages for emergency responders and tourist agencies.

Lead Partners: ICPN Staff, Illinois State Museum.

Assessment: Over the two years of the grant, measure growth and use of collections-holding institution database and map coverages by emergency responders and the public in each region with the goal of having ICPN members in all counties of the state.

ICPN Website: The ICPN will further develop and enhance our website (<http://icpn.museum.state.il.us>), which was piloted during the planning grant. The website will facilitate communication between ICPN steering committee members, institutional partners, individual members, and the public. This website will provide a forum for the dissemination of information to preservation professionals and interested parties throughout the state and beyond. The Illinois State Museum currently hosts the website free of charge and will continue to provide that service. During the period of the implementation grant, the ICPN steering committee and project staff will further develop the website to provide new resources and links to existing resources on preservation, collections care, training and program opportunities, funding opportunities and deadlines, answers to frequently asked questions, and templates or links to templates for preservation and disaster plans. We will provide a link to the IMLS *Connecting to Collections* Web site

and video for sharing with member institution staff and Trustees. An additional aspect of the website to be developed will be a members-only section, which will include a wiki that can be accessed and updated by all ICPN members. Each institution will be given a login that will allow them to make changes, and the wiki format will allow the tracking of those changes. The members-only portion of the website will include:

- A wiki-spreadsheet listing contacts and emergency responders for each institution which could be easily updated by an individual institution as required, without the need to contact a website administrator.
- A FAQ section of frequently answered questions discussed on the listserv.
- A wiki-list of funding agencies, available grants, and grant deadlines that could be updated by institutional members as grant deadlines expire and new grants become available.
- Streaming video recordings of previously recorded ICPN workshops and webinars.
- With institutional permission, examples of disaster plans and successful grant proposals.

Results and Outcomes: The Web portal will provide access to preservation-related information in the state, as well as member access to streaming video of previous ICPN programs. Collections-holding institutions and the public will have easy access to information on preservation planning, collections care, and training and funding opportunities.

Products: Website with capabilities and information as noted above.

Lead Partners: ICPN Staff, Illinois State Museum, all project partners.

Assessment: Analysis of traffic to the site performed by the State Museum and member/partner participation in wiki.

Professional Community Services: The planning grant survey results show that many members of collections-holding institutions need more information and training in preservation. The ICPN proposes to increase the availability of information to preservation and collections care professionals. This goal will be accomplished utilizing the ICPN website (described in detail, above) as well as the following specific approaches:

- ICPN Listserv: ICPN staff will expand the listserv, and it will be open to public membership to share ideas, grant and training opportunities, and other preservation-related information.
- Professional Publications: the ICPN will author preservation-related articles in Illinois professional association and institutional newsletters and magazines.
- Professional Presentations: As was done in the planning phase, the ICPN will make regular presentations on the project and preservation-related topics at professional meetings and conferences, such as the Illinois Association of Museums, Illinois Library Association, Midwest Archives Conference, American Association of Museums, and other meetings.

Results and Outcomes: We will provide outreach on the existence of the ICPN and on specific preservation topics to a broad professional audience around the state and beyond through a variety of media outlets.

Products: A variety of outreach mechanisms (listed above) to increase the spread of information on preservation topics to members of collections-holding institutions.

Lead Partners: ICPN Staff, Illinois State Museum, University of Illinois.

Assessment: Success will be evaluated by increased membership and use of the listserv and by an annual review of the number of outreach products produced, with multiple instances in each outreach format indicating greater success.

Public Services: The ICPN is committed to increasing public awareness about the importance and preservation of cultural and historical collections. We have already employed a number of strategies that

are increasing awareness and plan to expand these efforts through this proposal. We propose the following avenues to enhance public understanding of the importance of preserving cultural and natural heritage collections:

- **Public Events:** The ICPN will direct statewide preservation events for the public in coordination with the American Library Association's Preservation week (scheduled for April 24-30, 2011; TBA, 2012), including but not limited to preservation lectures and preservation fairs. Presentations and public communications will be an additional part of this endeavor, with presentations by ICPN steering committee members at widely-attended public events for target audiences (such as Illinois State Museum "Collectors Day" events, the Illinois History Symposium at the Illinois State Historical Society, and the Illinois State Genealogical Society Fall Conference). Media outlets such as local public radio stations and newspapers will be investigated for potential interviews and articles related to preservation.
- **Google Earth Map:** The ICPN will develop a Google Earth map showing the geographic distribution of publicly accessible collections-holding institutions. This map will be accessible on the web by tourism bureaus throughout the state of Illinois in order to promote public awareness and use of these collections.
- **Social Networking:** The ICPN will develop a Facebook social networking group to highlight preservation activities and topics that will be publicly accessible to a wide audience.

Results and Outcomes: Diverse methods of outreach will better inform the public about the importance of preservation, both for personal collections and for institutions that collect and maintain cultural and natural heritage. The public will have better access to and appreciation of the value of collections.

Products: At least 4 public events per year; a publicly available Google Earth map, and a Facebook group.

Lead Partners: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois State Museum

Assessment: Achievement of targeted number of public events and outreach efforts; increased attendance at each public event over the two year grant period; completion and distribution of Google Earth map; increased public attendance at collections-holding institutions.

II. Education and Training

Webinar Series: Based on the needs and desires indicated in the planning survey, the ICPN will offer no fewer than four webinars per year (eight topics are listed, below). The Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies in Mt. Carroll, IL, the ICPN Project Manager (an object conservator), experts from the Steering Committee institutions, and experts from identified external partners will deliver these webinars. Technology, registration, and publicity for the webinars will be provided through the Illinois State Library. They will focus on the topics identified through the survey and regional meetings, and will be delivered to a projected audience of collection institutions personnel with little to no prior preservation training. The Illinois State Library system, which has interactive videoconferencing capability, will assist with the production and delivery of the webinars. Public and University libraries and museums that maintain the technology necessary for interactive webinars will be identified in each region so that smaller institutions who lack the necessary technology can participate from these alternate locations. This strategy will help forge connections between libraries, museums, archives, and historical society staff. Webinars will be recorded and served on the ICPN Members section of the website. Topics will include the following (please see *Appendix Six* for webinar and workshop descriptions):

- **Preservation Assessment and Planning** (including basics of inventory control and security): Participation in this workshop will also include access to one of two ICPN-owned environmental assessment kits (contents outlined in *Budget Justification*). These kits will be housed by the Illinois State Museum and loaned for the cost of shipping to any ICPN member, but predominantly to those who have attended this webinar.

- Collections Care Introductions: This webinar will cover specific collection types including: media; paper, photographs and books; artifacts and ethnographic and historical objects; natural history specimens; textiles; and fine art.
- Fund Raising and Grant Proposal Writing, focusing primarily on the IMLS's Museum Assessment Program (MAP) and Conservation Assessment Program (CAP), and on the NEH's Preservation Assistant Grant (PAG) application processes.
- Preservation Tactics on a Shoe-String Budget.

Scholarships for Advanced Training: For those ICPN members who desire more advanced training on preservation topics, the ICPN will administer scholarships to attend advanced training opportunities at the Campbell Center. Ten scholarships of \$500 will be awarded through a competitive application process, to be reviewed by a sub-committee of ICPN members. These scholarships may be used towards tuition for any Campbell Center course. The Illinois Humanities Council also offers grants to attend the training workshops at the Campbell Center through their Technical Assistance Grant program. See *Appendix Seven* for topics covered by the Campbell Center.

Results and Outcomes: Individuals from collections-holding institutions will be able to attend free webinars offered on a variety of preservation topics, and have opportunities for low-cost advanced training through scholarships to the Campbell Center. Collecting institutions will show increased understanding of the topics covered in the Webinars (see assessment below).

Products: A minimum of four webinars per year, 10 scholarships to attend Campbell Center Courses, with additional scholarships and grants available through our partnership with the Illinois Humanities Council.

Lead Partners: Campbell Center, University of Illinois, Illinois Heritage Association, Illinois State Museum, Illinois Humanities Council, Illinois State Library.

Assessment: We will track the numbers of individuals participating in each webinar and the numbers of times the webinars are accessed on the ICPN Members Website. Pre- and post-webinar surveys will be distributed to evaluate each participant's level of knowledge of and familiarity with the webinar topic before and after attending the workshop.

III. Cooperative Disaster Response

Disaster planning and response is one of the most critical elements of a comprehensive preservation program. The ICPN proposes to provide collections-holding institutions with an increased ability to create and maintain institutional disaster plans, facilitate a greater familiarity with emergency response options, and better prepare emergency responders through the following approaches:

Building Relationships: Following the COSTEP (Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness) model¹, the ICPN proposes to work with the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) to encourage inclusion of collections-holding institutions in comprehensive emergency management plans. The ICPN will share the Google Earth map and Collecting Institutions Database (mentioned above, in *Communication & Awareness*) showing locations and characteristics of collecting institutions with IEMA, and through IEMA with local community response teams. As mentioned above, ICPN will partner with local first responders to provide a comprehensive list of contacts and phone numbers accessible by both member institutions and the emergency responders. Additionally, as communication between first responders and local collecting institutions is built, the ICPN will encourage participating institutions with adequate space to serve as disaster recovery centers in order to forge mutually beneficial alliances with local emergency management agencies.

¹ (<http://www.nedcc.org/disaster/costep.php>) *The COSTEP Starter Kit: a Handbook for the Cultural Community*, 2009, Northeast Document Conservation Center

Disaster Training Workshops: As part of the proposed regional training program, the ICPN will organize five regional disaster planning and response workshops to familiarize collections-holding institutions with standard emergency management issues and terminology, and will lead institutions through the process of creating a disaster plan. The ICPN will also invite local Community Emergency Response Teams to attend regional training sessions and assist in reviewing disaster plans. After the training workshops, the ICPN website will be used to provide additional resources, information on COSTEP and related activities, and offer a secure place for members to share disaster plans, contacts, and ideas. A digital video of one disaster training workshop will be served on the ICPN Member's portion of the Web site.

The ICPN will partner with the Illinois Fire Service Institute to offer two fire recovery workshops at their training facility in central Illinois. This one-day program, which has been offered previously to academic libraries through the CARLI preservation program, will present a controlled live burn of museum and library artifacts and will give participants the opportunity to experience the simulation of an institutional fire. Participants will also be trained to perform post-fire salvage and recovery operations and gain valuable hands-on experience working with fire damaged materials.

Disaster Supplies: The ICPN will create a section of the website dedicated to disaster planning and response that will provide a list of recommended, low-cost disaster response supplies and recommend local and national sources for those supplies. We will also purchase one complete disaster response kit to use as a teaching tool for our disaster response workshops (see *Budget Justification* for contents).

Disaster Assistance: The ICPN will offer assistance to members during and after a disaster event through a number of mechanisms. The member listserv and website will facilitate calls for emergency assistance and the exchange of disaster-related information. The website will include a listing of local and national preservation experts and individuals trained in disaster response that are willing to provide assistance in the event of a large-scale disaster. These experts will be available for telephone consultation. The ICPN website will also include links to agencies that provide emergency funding for recovery and information on disaster planning and response such as dPlan from the Northeast Document Conservation Center and the Alliance for Response Program from Heritage Preservation.

Results and Outcomes: Collection-holding institutions across the state will become better educated about disaster planning, and will be better prepared in the event of a disaster.

Products: Disaster planning and response workshops, a Google Earth map and collections-holding institution database accessible by emergency management agencies, and a disaster response kit for training.

Lead Partners: Campbell Center, University of Illinois, Illinois Fire Service Institute, Illinois Heritage Association.

Assessment: Pre and post program evaluations will be disseminated to all attendees after each event. The percentage of ICPN members who request a disaster kit will be used to gauge their perceived need.

3. Project Resources: Budget and Personnel

Budget

The majority of the budget for the proposed state-wide preservation plan will be used to fund two project staff to coordinate events, facilitate communications, and establish technological aspects of the project. Additional significant costs will cover workshops, scholarships, and supplies.

Personnel

The project directors from the planning project will also direct the implementation project. Bonnie Styles will serve as the Lead Principal Investigator and a Steering Committee Member. Dr. Styles is the Director

of the Illinois State Museum system. She oversees research; collections of over 10.5 million objects and specimens spanning art, anthropology, and natural history; exhibitions; and educational programs at six Museum facilities across the state. She has directed environmental condition surveys and collection assessment and treatment projects and is the Chair of the American Association of Museums Accreditation Commission. Jennifer Hain Teper will serve as the Co-Principal Investigator and a Steering Committee Member. She is the Conservation Librarian and Interim Head of Preservation for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library, received her MSLIS and Certificate of Advanced Study in the Conservation of Library and Archival Materials. She has published widely and lead multiple training workshops on the subject of caring for book, paper, photographic and audio-visual collections, has lead the Library in disaster planning and response, and has served in leaderships positions in the AIC, ALA and CARLI. Other Steering Committee Members, all of whom participated in the planning grant, include (see *Project Staff*): Sherry Byrne (Preservation Librarian, University of Chicago Library), Anne Craig (Director, Illinois State Library), Dennis Danowski (Director, Macomb Public Library), Christa Deacy-Quinn (Collections Manager, Spurlock Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Lesa Dowd (Conservator, Chicago Public Library), Patricia Miller (Executive Director, Illinois Heritage Association), Laura Gharst (Collections Manager, Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences), Kathryn Harris (Library Services Director, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum), David Joens (Director, Illinois State Archives), Kristan McKinsey (Vice President of Collections and Exhibitions, Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences), Julie Mosbo (Preservation Librarian, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale), Bonnie Parr (Conservator, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum), and Sharon Whelton (Director, Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies). Bronwyn Eves, an objects conservator, will serve as the project manager and also served in this capacity for the planning grant. An experienced technology associate will be hired part-time to manage the database, develop the Google Earth Map coverages, oversee the listserv, and develop and manage the expansion of the website.

Sustainability

The ICPN has been developed as a sustainable network and program with strong state, regional, institutional, and individual commitment to promote preservation of cultural and natural heritage collections in Illinois. The network is powerful because of the expertise and passion of its steering committee and partners and its realistic and achievable goals. Partner institutions are committed to continuing participation in the ICPN after the tenure of this grant. Membership on the steering committee will rotate with members serving staggered three-year terms to ensure that no one member is required to execute a disproportionate or overly long-term commitment. Support for the ICPN staff hired for the purposes of this grant will end at the conclusion of the implementation project, however, any products of their work will be developed with sustainability in mind (such as ease of website updates, addition of new members, etc). They will be available to continue with the program if we are successful in finding additional support for related ICPN projects. The preservation program has a strong institutional foundation. Current steering committee member institutions include state-level organizations, public and private universities, public libraries and museums, and non-profit organizations which will maximize diversity and extend responsibilities for both staff and fiscal resources. Technology for webinars and the potential for video-conferencing are already in place at many libraries around the state, and the Illinois State Museum will provide office space for the program manager hired through grant funds, maintain the database of collections-holding institutions, and host the ICPN Members Listserv, and the ICPN website, free of charge. At the end of the proposed grant period, some programs, such as the provision of disaster recovery kits and shipping of environmental assessment tools, will continue as fee-based programs. Through the ICPN's strategic use of regional workshops and recorded webinars, the training opportunities funded through the implementation grant will have long-reaching effects on the education of institutional staff and the public during and beyond the tenure of the grant.