



# **New York Statewide Preservation Survey**

**Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)  
Connecting to Collections**



**Final Report, Draft 5  
by Thomas F. R. Clareson  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The national Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) developed a program in 2007 to provide funding to all U.S. States and Territories to determine their most important preservation needs. The State of New York was one of the first recipients of these “Connecting to Collections” statewide preservation planning grants. To address the preservation needs of the cultural heritage institutions of the State, and to better serve its citizens, a Preservation Planning and Advisory Group, led by the New York State Library, New York State Archives, the New York State Museum, and New York State Public Broadcasting, in partnership with many of the key cultural associations and organizations in the State developed a survey instrument available on the Web.

New York has long invested in the preservation of its cultural resources. Three New York State cultural heritage institutions: the New York State Museum (NYSM), New York State Library (NYSL), and New York State Archives (NYSA) have led this effort as stewards of the collections of the people of New York and as providers of services and funds to cultural institutions statewide. These three institutions, with the Office of Public Broadcasting, make up the New York State Education Department’s Office of Cultural Education (OCE). We have assembled a team of project partners, who with OCE represent the full range of service-providers to the cultural heritage community in New York.

### **Our partners include the following organizations:**

- New York State Council on the Arts
- New York Archives Conference
- Lower Hudson Conference
- New York Library Association
- Museum Association of New York
- Upstate History Alliance

Nearly 4000 institutions were informed of the existence of the survey through a variety of e-mail, traditional mailers, and listserv announcements. The survey was made available in January and early February, 2009, and had a total of 798 respondents, for a response rate of 20%. By market research standards, this is an excellent response rate, and it is especially good in the number and variety of institution types that responded. An important factor behind the response rate was the regional workshops

focused on the survey project which were held around the state and led by State Library and State Archives staff.

The cultural heritage institutions of New York State enjoy some of the widest varieties of external preservation funding sources available in the United States, and are taking good advantage of those resources, according to the results of the 2009 Connecting to Collections statewide preservation survey. The cultural organizations have done a great deal of work to protect and preserve their collections.

However, despite all of this work, there are still many strong needs expressed by institutions which can help them to develop sustainable preservation programs. Few cultural heritage facilities have full- or part-time staff focused on preservation, and most of those working on preservation do not have formal collections care training. The overarching findings of this survey project are needs for preservation training (particularly in the areas of photograph preservation, disaster planning, preservation advocacy, and grantwriting) and for preservation policy development. While disseminating continuing education workshops on preservation topics is important, the need to recruit and retain staff with formal (degreed) preservation and conservation training should not be underestimated.

While preservation training is widely available in New York, the survey results demonstrate a need for expanded and strengthened offerings. Bolstering preservation training by designing a cohesive curriculum, especially focused on formats such as photographic collections, books and bound volumes, unbound sheets, and digital material and electronic records collections, is key in development of stronger individual preservation programs throughout the state. An urgent need for training in digitization and preservation advocacy was noted. Some of the smaller institutions surveyed commented that they “did not know where to start” with preservation activities; workshops and information can assist them in developing their preservation programs.

Respondents noted barriers to training including travel and registration costs, unavailability of workshops in the institution’s regions, and distance to travel to attend the classes. A strategy of making workshop series available in many regional venues across the state could eliminate many of these concerns.

While respondents noted that they had access to many training communications capabilities, over one-third felt that distance learning methods were not applicable in their current situations.

Across the nation, in many of the Connecting to Collections studies now underway or recently completed, a revelation of great concern was that many individual collecting institutions do not have documented policies for the preservation of their collections. This is an area where training, model policy development, and consulting are needed. As a state, New York is doing much better than many others, but preservation policy development still remains one of the most urgent areas for action. A cornerstone in preservation policy development is disaster plan development, and assistance is needed to make sure that a majority of the institutions in the state are covered by this type of plan.

Even though many institutions reported that a majority of their collections were adequately stored, and many already monitor and control temperature, light levels and relative humidity, New York institutions identified shortage of space and environmental controls as their most serious preservation problems. This points out strong needs for presenting educational and informational assistance on environmental control, potentially teaming with well-known New York-based institutions such as the Image Permanence Institute at RIT. And, while storage needs are high, there is not a great deal of interest in shared storage facilities, so perhaps assistance for institutions to better utilize their current individual institution storage capabilities is a more realistic needs.

While the utilization of environmental control systems was not up to the level which many institutions would like, levels of use of fire detection systems was good (although further fire suppression system implementation is needed). Also, the use of security systems, policies, practices, and procedures was widespread as well.

Another trend being seen nationwide in Connecting to Collections projects is the lack of inventory of certain parts of the collection. Many repositories in New York hold, but do not know estimated numbers of unbound sheets, photographic, or digital collections. While preservation of collections is a key aim of this project, preserving and describing cultural

heritage materials to make them more accessible to users is the ultimate goal.

Overall, the need for preservation policies, storage space, and environmental controls were key factors identified in the survey. Cultural heritage institutions expressed a high level of interest for many collaborative preservation initiatives such as mutual aid in the time of disasters. Also highly-supported were services including ongoing state support for preservation grants to individual institutions, state-sponsored preservation workshops, and onsite visits by preservation professionals. Interest in statewide contracts for preservation supplies and conservation services was also high.

The interest in preserving and will to preserve cultural heritage collections in New York is evident. The support, through grants, associations, and regional groups, is strong. The challenge is to coordinate a variety of preservation information, education, consultation, and funding offerings to best serve the institutions and people of the state.

*New York is regarded by the rest of the country as a model/leader in providing preservation funding to institutions within the state.*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

New York lays claim to an unparalleled breadth, volume, and density of collecting institutions – museums, libraries, historical societies and archival institutions, which, under charter by the University of the State of New York, steward collections that span four centuries. These are unique, tangible documents and cultural objects, as well as a growing body of electronic collections. New York's cultural collections form an incomparable resource for a students and culture and history – a resource worthy of the utmost care.

New York has long invested in the preservation of its cultural resources. Three New York State cultural heritage institutions—the New York State Museum (NYSM), New York State Library (NYSL), and New York State Archives (NYSA), with the Office of Public Broadcasting, make up the New York State Education Department's Office of Cultural Education (OCE)—have led this effort as stewards of the collections of the people of New York and as providers of services and funds to cultural institutions statewide.

In 2007, the national Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) developed a program to provide funding to all U.S. States and Territories to determine their most important preservation needs. The State of New

York was one of the first recipients of these “Connecting to Collections” statewide preservation planning grants. To address the preservation needs of the cultural heritage institutions of the State, and to better serve its citizens, a Preservation Planning and Advisory Group, led by the New York State Library and New York State Archives, with input from many of the key associations and organizations in the State, developed a survey instrument available on the Web.

Nearly 4000 institutions were informed of the existence of the survey through a variety of e-mail and listserv announcements. The survey was made available in January and early February, 2009, and had a total of 798 respondents, for a response rate of 20%. By market research standards, this is an excellent response rate, and it is especially good in the number and variety of institution types that responded. An important factor behind the response rate was the regional workshops focused on the survey project which were held around the state, led by State Library and State Archives staff.

The survey was developed and analyzed by Tom Claeson, Senior Consultant for New Initiatives at Lyrasis, a new organization formed from the partnership of the PALINET and SOLINET networks. Claeson is working with ten other states on their Connecting to Collections projects, and has almost 20 years of experience in preservation and digitization consulting and cultural heritage market research.

The following report looks at key trends and findings from the survey, and suggests directions for statewide preservation initiatives and activities in New York.

## **FUNDING**

In New York State, cultural heritage institutions have received preservation/conservation funding over the years from a variety of sources; often single institutions can garner funds from a number of resources. New York is regarded by the rest of the country as a model in providing preservation funding to institutions within the state.

When asked about funding sources for preservation, over 500 institutions (64.6%) said they received funding from their institution’s own budget. In past surveys around the country, this consultant has seen this type of funding as (in limited cases) newly-allocated institutional funding dedicated to preservation activities;

most often, however, it is an expenditure from an already-strained core budget.

A majority of respondents (378 or 48.1%) indicated they had made a grant application (successful or unsuccessful) from a public or private source within the past five years. Important external preservation funding sources were State Grants (356 respondents or 45.3%) and donor funding/memberships/friends groups (257 or 32.7%). The number of institutions submitting and receiving grants, and the use of a variety of funding sources show New York as a leading state in offering preservation support, and the state’s cultural heritage institutions as among the strongest groups in the nation in the rate at which they apply for grants.

Those who did not apply for a grant cited the need for additional project planning or preparation before applying as a chief factor influencing why they had not applied for grants. Other major reasons were a lack of time to complete the grant application, and a lack of required matching funds for the grant.

The New York-based grants which the most institutions utilized for preservation/conservation projects in the past five years included the Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund (LGRMIF) from the State Archives; recurring New York State Legislature grants; and New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) grants. The largest Federal source for preservation grants was the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS); National Endowment for the Humanities’ Preservation Assistance Grants program; and Save America’s Treasures grants from the National Park Service, which had been awarded to 24 New York repositories. Other key funding sources include donors/members/friends group funding dedicated for utilization in conservation or preservation projects, private foundation funding, and the largest “other” source: line items in the organization’s operating budget. The survey results show a high rate of success with national grants, and make a case that New York is one of the leading states in the U.S. with the variety of preservation funding sources available to its cultural heritage community.

## **PRESERVATION STAFFING**

Staffing for preservation activities in New York State is accomplished in a number of ways. At most of the responding institutions (282 or 35.9%), various staff are assigned preservation and conservation duties as needed. Volunteers provide some conservation or preservation

services at 175 or 22.3% of the repositories. At just over 20% of the institutions, however, no staff person, volunteer, or external provider has conservation/preservation responsibilities. Full- or part-time paid staff with predominant preservation/conservation job duties work at 146 (or 18.6%) institutions; external providers supply some conservation/preservation services at 126 (or 16%) institutions.

A vast majority of responding institutions (586 or almost 75%) said they did not have collections care staff with formal training (for example, a graduate degree in conservation from a recognized training program, and/or equivalent experience or training).

### INFORMATION AND TRAINING

A majority of respondents, when asked about the most useful methods they currently use to obtain preservation information, said that print materials, electronic materials, phone and e-mail contacts, and short-term (one- to two-day) training workshops were either useful or very useful. Almost 57% of respondents noted that someone at their institution attended a training program on conservation/preservation in the past five years.

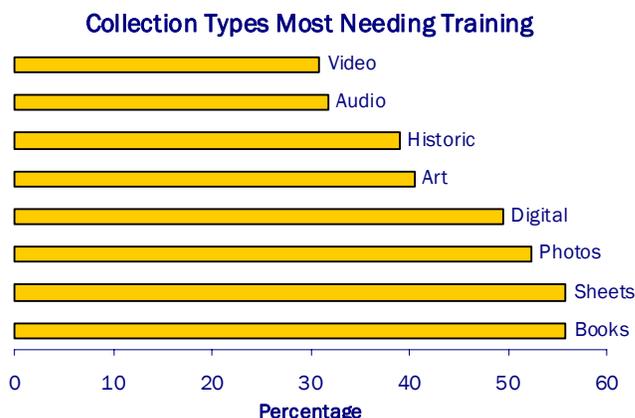
In a telling result in how cultural heritage staff members now receive information, over one-half of respondents felt that receiving preservation information via distance learning, online tutorials webinars, videos/DVDs, long-term training workshops, and college or university courses were applicable training methods in their current situations.

The leading sponsors/providers of preservation and conservation training in New York are the Library Councils often funded through New York State (cited by 40% of respondents), with regional service providers such as the Upstate History Alliance and professional organizations including the Museum Association of New York (MANY)

mentioned as key providers.

Institutional representatives were asked to identify the collection types on which they most needed training. Almost all of the collection types mentioned in the survey instrument were seen as areas of need for training. Collection types on which training was needed include:

- Books and Bound Volumes (55.8%)
- Unbound Sheets (55.8%)
- Photographic Collections (52.3%)
- Digital Material and Electronic Records Collections (49.5%)
- Art Objects (40.5%)
- Historic and Ethnographic Objects (39%)
- Recorded Sound Collections (31.7%)
- Moving Image Collections (30.9%)



When “need” and the largest number of respondents citing an “urgent need” for training (109 or 15.3%) was tallied, photographic collections held the highest combined score. Training on archaeological collections and natural science specimens were seen as not needed or not applicable by a majority of the respondents, but a relatively large number of respondents saw a need or urgent need for training in the care of ethnographic collections.

### Preservation Training Topics –Areas of Need

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ✧ Rehousing   | ✧ Collections conservation                            |
| ✧ Storage furniture   | ✧ Contracting for conservation/preservation services  |
| ✧ Disaster preparedness and recovery                              | ✧ Environmental monitoring                            |
| ✧ Care and handling of collections                                | ✧ Advocacy/fundraising/grant writing for preservation |
| ✧ Digitization/imaging  | ✧ Preservation of digital files                       |
| ✧ Preservation reformatting                                       | ✧ Exhibits  |
| ✧ Preservation management   | ✧ Pest management/mold eradication                    |
| ✧ Written policies and procedures for preservation of collections | ✧ Building design/construction/renovation             |
| ✧ Collection condition and needs surveys                          |   |

Almost all of the preservation training topics which were not format-specific were seen as strong areas of need.

Digitization and advocacy were seen as urgent training needs by 14% and 15.7% of the respondents. Only moving of the collections were seen as not currently needed by a majority of the responding institutions.

The preference for length of conservation/preservation training sessions was one day (315 respondents or 44.2%) or a half-day (162 or 22.7%).

The survey also focused on perceived barriers to sending staff members to preservation/conservation workshops and training courses. Key concerns were travel costs (529 or 74.2%), registration costs (461 or 64.7%) unavailability of workshops in the institution's region (415 or 58.2%) and distance (408 or 57.2%). A strategy of making workshop series available in many regions of the state could eliminate distance, travel, and availability concerns; registration costs must also be studied.

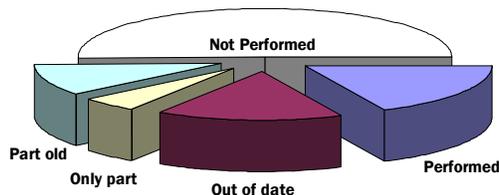
When asked the maximum amount institutions would be willing to pay per person to attend these training opportunities, the largest number of respondents indicated either \$50-99 (188 or 26.4%) or \$100-199 (146 or 20.5%).

A very positive trend in answers to the question about barriers was that very few respondents saw "lack of management support" or "lack of staff interest" as inhibitors to sending staff to training. This shows a good level of institutional support and staff interest in growing preservation training opportunities.

Finally, respondents indicated that they have access to many training communications capabilities, including:

- Touch-tone telephones
- Computer operating systems later than Windows 1998 or Mac OS 8
- Computers equipped with sound cards, speakers, or headphones

### Types of Surveys



- Computers with common Internet browsers
- Internet connections of minimum 56K (522 or 73.2%) or 128K (442 or 62%)
- Computers supporting flash player plug-ins

The only capability not held by a majority was computers equipped with a microphone for speaking.

### PRESERVATION POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Across the nation, in many of the Connecting to Collections studies now underway or recently completed, a revelation of great concern was that many individual collecting institutions do not have documented policies for the preservation of their collections. This is an area where training, model policy development, and consulting are needed. As a state, New York is doing much better than many others, but preservation policy development still remains one of the most urgent areas for action.

In the survey, a majority of responding institutions (340 or 51.1%) noted that they do not have a written long-range preservation plan for care of their collections. Over 10% have a plan, 15% have an outdated plan, 9.5% have preservation addressed in an institutional plan, and almost 9% are developing a plan.

A majority (315 or 47.4%) of respondents noted that a general conservation/preservation survey of their collections had not been done. However, when all the possible "yes" answers were added together, a nearly similar number reported that some type of survey had been done:

- Yes, a survey had been performed (113 or 17%)
- Yes, but the survey was not up-to-date (changes have occurred since the survey was done) (101 or 15.2%)
- Yes, but only a part of the collection was surveyed (32 or 4.8%)

*An additional positive note is the number and percentage of responding institutions (556 or 84.8%) said their repositories had a working relationship with their local emergency responders such as fire and police personnel.*

- Yes, but only a portion surveyed and survey not up-to-date (66 or 9.9%)

When asked if the survey resulted in conservation/preservation actions, 250 or 37.6% said yes, 207 or 31.1% said no, and 208 or 31.3% did not know.

With these areas of preservation action and need in mind, respondents were asked to name the three most serious conservation/preservation problems at their institutions. Upon analysis of these open-ended answers, the three problems cited by a large majority of the respondents were a general lack of space, especially storage space, the lack of or need for improved environmental control, and a lack of funding. What was surprising in these results was how much more prevalent the need for space and environmental improvements were mentioned over funding, even in the current difficult economic climate.

In addition to the most serious preservation problems, respondents were asked to name barriers their institutions faced in taking action to preserve their collections. The top concerns were lack of funding (521 or 78.3%), inability to spare staff time (347 or 52.2%) and inadequate staff expertise to carry out preservation activities (343 or 51.6%).

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL AND FIRE CONTROLS**

A majority of institutions controlled temperature and light levels in some or all areas. When combined, a slight majority controlled relative humidity, but 291, or 44% of respondents, did not. And, a great majority (408 or 61.6%) did not control air quality.

Respondents were asked to estimate how much of their institution's collection is adequately stored, for example, in areas large enough to accommodate current collections with safe access to them, with appropriate environmental control, and using appropriate storage furniture. While the majority (152 respondents or 23%) said 50-74% of collections

were adequately stored, 120 or 18.1% said only 1-24% was adequately stored, 93 or 14% said 25-49%, and 15% said none of their collections were adequately stored. To counterbalance this, 113 respondents or 17.1% said 75-99% of their collections were well-stored, and 32 institutions or 4.8% said all of their collections were well-stored.

A vast majority of organizations said they had smoke detectors, fire alarms, or fire extinguishers in all or at least some areas. However, wet-pipe or dry-pipe sprinklers and waterless fire-suppression systems were not held in any areas of a majority of the institutions. In essence, while a good level of fire detection is available in most institutions, far fewer have strong fire suppression systems.

#### **DISASTER PLANNING AND RECOVERY**

Over 70% (174 respondents) of institutions have not experienced a disaster that damaged collections in the past five years, although 174 (26.5%) institutions have had damaging disasters. The biggest causes of the disasters were water leakages, mold outbreaks, severe weather conditions (rain, snow, ice, and wind), and theft. Of those reporting disasters, a majority said 1-24% of their collections were damaged in these calamities.

When asked who took care of the recovery of damaged collections, a vast number of respondents cited internal staff, and 22 institutions, or 3.4% said the damaged materials had not been recovered.

To battle these disasters, current plans for protection and recovery of collections are needed. When asked if such a plan exists and has been updated in the past three years, a majority of respondents (353 or 53.8%) said no. However, when all the "flavors" of yes responses to this question are accounted for, (Yes – 19.5%; Yes, but out of date – 11.4%; and no, but a plan is being prepared – 11.6%) 42.5% have or are developing a plan. An additional positive note is the number and percentage of responding

#### **Institutional staff had taken a wide variety of actions to prolong their collections, including:**

- Rehousing
- Storage furniture
- Moving collections
- Care and handling of collections
- Digitization/imaging
- Preservation management
- Environmental monitoring
- Advocacy/fundraising/grant writing

#### **Preservation activities which had not been undertaken by institutional staff or external providers included:**

- Disaster planning and recovery
- Preservation or reformatting
- Preservation of digital files
- Written policies and procedures
- Collection conditions and needs surveys
- Collections conservation
- Contracting for conservation/preservation services
- Building design/construction/renovation
- Installation of environmental controls
- Pest management/mold eradication

**When asked for the top three preservation services they would like to see available in New York State, the biggest areas of interest were:**

- Ongoing state support for preservation grants to individual institutions (74.5%)
- State-sponsored preservation workshops (53%)
- On-site visits by a preservation professional (41%)

**A variety of preservation services proved popular when respondents were asked where New York State should negotiate statewide contracts. The most-requested services included:**

- Preservation supplies (59.3% – this was the highest-rated response across all types of answering institutions)
- Conservation services (49.2%)
- Disaster recovery, including vacuum freeze-drying and on-site cleanup (45.3%)
- Collection storage (36.3%)
- Electronic data storage (30%)

institutions (556 or 84.8%) said their repositories had a working relationship with their local emergency responders such as fire and police personnel.

To control some types of man-made disasters, New York’s cultural heritage institutions utilize various security systems and/or practices. A majority reported alarm systems, controlled access to collections, and written security policies and procedures. However, most respondents did not utilize security guards, control of items brought into collections, or employee or volunteer screening.

**QUANTITIES OF HOLDINGS**

Institutions were asked if they had holdings and knew the quantities of holdings in a variety of formats. They indicated that they had holdings but did not know the quantity, or had no holdings in that format.

The numbers of books and art objects in collections were known by most institutions. A majority did not hold moving image, recorded sound, ethnographic, archaeological, or natural science collections. The largest concern in this series of answers was that many repositories held, but did not know estimated numbers of unbound sheets, photographic, or digital collections.

However, a very positive finding was that almost 40% of the responding institutions said that 75-99% if their institutional collections had been inventoried, and another 16% said 50-74% of their respective collections had been. The results were also good in amounts of the collections that had been processed/cataloged, as 37% said 75-99% of their materials had undergone this activity.

**INSTITUTIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS**

The largest groups of institutions to answer the survey were government archives (16.6%), public libraries (15.1%), historical societies (11.6%), history museums (9.8%), and academic libraries (8.7%). Most of the respondents identified themselves as either private non-profit (51.2%) or local/municipal/county government agencies (34.5%).

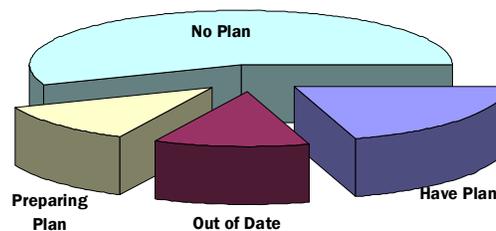
With the range of institution types, and the previously-noted range of staff sizes, one would correctly assume that there are a great range of annual overall and preservation-directed budget figures reported by the responding institutions. The smallest overall budget reported was \$190, the largest were several between \$190 and \$200 million. When focused specifically on preservation, many respondents reported a zero budget for preservation for FY 2007, although many did show existing budgets, with a number of respondents clustering around the \$500, \$1200, \$5000, and \$275,000 levels.

**COLLABORATIVE SERVICES**

Respondents showed “some” to “a great deal” of interest in mutual aid agreements for disaster response, preservation mentoring, collaborative exhibitions, collaborative digital collection-building, collaborative preservation grant projects, setting up regional interest groups about preservation, and “train-the-trainer” preservation programs.

Areas where institutions showed little interest were for shared storage facilities, shared digital file storage, and shared technical equipment for preservation.

**Disaster Plans**



## KEY FINDINGS BY TYPE

The complete survey was analyzed by type of responding institution, and many additional interesting findings were uncovered:

- While government archives and art museums received preservation funding from state grants at a much higher level than other organizations, historical societies, historical sites, and history museums mainly received their preservation funding from donors, memberships, and friends groups.
- Public libraries had a variety of concerns which caused them not to apply for preservation grants; perhaps training in preservation fundraising and advocacy can increase the number of these institutions applying for funding to preserve their local and regional treasures.
- History museums and art museums reported the highest number of paid staff whose job duties are predominantly conservation, but at the same time reported the largest number of volunteers providing some conservation and preservation services.
- Historical societies, art museums, academic libraries, had the most collections care staff with some type of formal preservation or conservation training.
- Short-term workshops, professional organization workshops, print resources, and telephone reference support were seen as very useful methods of gaining preservation information by all types of institutions; electronic sources of preservation information were very useful to academic libraries and government archives.
- While libraries of all types saw the regional Library Councils as the leading training providers, historical societies, historical sites, and museums preferred regional service providers and professional organizations.
- Disaster training was noted as an urgent need for government archives and public libraries; and over half of the responding academic libraries reported having a disaster which damaged collections in the last five years.
- By far, art museums have had more general conservation/preservation surveys; they report that the surveys have resulted in

action. This group was also the strongest user group of all types of environmental equipment.

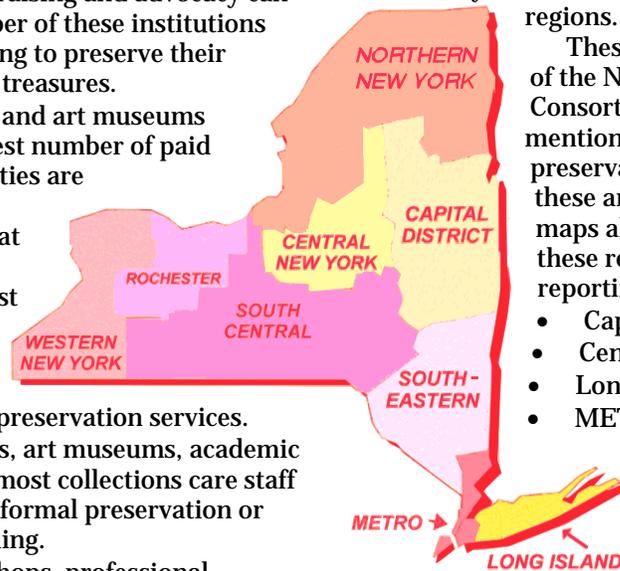
- Historical sites, academic libraries, and art museums had the highest number of institutions reporting an updated disaster plans.

## KEY FINDINGS BY REGION

Another method of analyzing the survey results was to look at preservation needs by region. The survey originally asked participating institutions to report their zip code. However, in order to arrive at a statistically valid view of the survey results, the zip codes were grouped into regions.

These regions follow the territories of the New York Regional Library Consortia, which were previously mentioned as the top sponsors of preservation training. Even though these are library regions, this survey maps all types of institutions into these regional groups for ease of reporting. The regions include:

- Capital District
- Central
- Long Island
- METRO (New York City boroughs and Westchester County)
- Northern
- Rochester
- South Central
- Southeastern



- Western

Some organizations did not provide zip codes, so their answers cannot be analyzed on a regional basis.

The analysis by region focused on four specific questions:

- Collection types on which training is needed
- Preservation topics on which staff need education
- Cause of disasters which damaged collections
- Preservation services desired in New York State

In the area of training needs, regional responses for collection types, across the state, noted needs in preservation of books and bound volumes, unbound sheets, photographic collections, and digital materials. The Central, METRO, and Long Island regions had the highest levels of urgent need for photographic preservation training.

Preservation topics on which training was needed included Digitization and Imaging, Disaster Preparedness, Care and Handling, Preservation Advocacy and Fundraising, Rehousing, Storage Furniture, and Collections Conservation. The Central region consistently had the highest urgent need for these courses; the need for Disaster Training was high across all of the regional groups.

METRO had the highest urgent need for Digital Preservation Training, and Long Island for Disaster Preparedness, Collections Conservation, and Advocacy/Fundraising.

By far the biggest cause of disasters, across all regions, was water related, which had struck 124 institutions. Mold outbreaks were a distant second, at 50 facilities hit. The METRO region reported the most disasters of any type, and with 34 water disasters, more than doubled the number of incidents reported in the next-highest region.

Finally, when asked the top three preservation services of interest for institutions, Ongoing state support for preservation grants, and state-sponsored preservation workshops were the leading answers; a place to contact for preservation information, assistance with disaster planning, and on-site visits by preservation professionals nearly tied for third, with a great variation of need by region.

#### **KEY FINDINGS BY BUDGET SIZE**

The final area of additional analysis on the survey results was to look at the data by budget size of the responding institution, with both overall and conservation/preservation budgets reviewed.

In the case of overall institutional budget, 2007 budget figures were used, and reported information was placed in five categories:

- Very small: \$250,000 per year or less
- Small: \$250,001 to \$1,000,000 per year
- Medium: \$1,000,001 to \$5,000,000 per year
- Large: \$5,000,001 to \$10,000,000 per year
- Very Large: Over \$10,000,000 per year

Some institutions did not report budget size, so their information for this question could not be analyzed.

As might be assumed, the institutions with the largest budgets reported having the most collection care staff with formal conservation or preservation training. The trends for training need (and urgent need) by specific format type and by topics were very similar to the overall

*Bolstering the preservation training available in the state by providing a cohesive curriculum, especially focused on formats such as photographic collections, books and bound volumes, unbound sheets, and digital material and electronic records collections, is key in development of stronger individual preservation programs throughout the state. An urgent need for training in digitization and preservation advocacy was noted.*

trends for these questions. All size of groups by budget preferred one-day training sessions over other choices.

Institutions of all budget sizes were willing to pay in the \$50-99 and \$100-199 range for conservation/preservation training events; those in the “very large” category responded that they would be willing to pay over \$300, as well.

Medium and large budget size institutions had most often experienced a general preservation/conservation survey; these groups and the “very large” group were most likely to have seen the survey result in preservation action.

When asked about preservation actions the institution has undertaken, across all budget categories, if the preservation work was done at all, it was done by institutional staff more often than by external providers.

#### **KEY FINDINGS BY CONSERVATION/PRESERVATION BUDGET**

When data was analyzed by the size of the institution’s 2007 conservation/preservation budget, the only category where a majority of collections care staff members had formal training was in those institutions with conservation/preservation budgets over \$25,000 a year.

Need and urgent need for training on preservation of materials by format was strong among institutions with no preservation budget, a budget of \$500 or less, and also among those with annual budgets of \$5001-10,000 and those over \$25,000 annually. These trends held true for almost all formats named in the survey, and by specific training topics as well.

No matter what the institution’s budget size, training session lengths of one day were preferred. And, regardless of size, the maximum amount institutions were willing to pay for training was \$50-99, although many indicated

that the \$100-199 registration cost level was also acceptable.

Those institutions with smaller conservation/preservation budgets were less likely to have had a preservation professional conduct a general conservation/preservation survey of their collection; they were also less likely to have had a survey result in conservation/preservation actions. Finally, the institutions with smaller budgets were also less likely to have taken actions to prolong the life of its collections.

Finally, there were a number of excellent suggestions by respondents to help advance preservation activities in the state. Many of the responding institutions added comments with data specific to their situations, but trends were able to be discovered in this set of open-ended answers as well: institutions, especially those with small staff sizes and small budgets, expressed the need for assistance in preservation policy development, disaster plan development, on-site preservation surveys, and preservation information and training. Once again, in this question, the need for increased preservation funding was also noted. It was especially gratifying for the survey developers to note that a number of small museums and libraries expressed appreciation for the opportunity to document their preservation needs in this type of forum.

## CONCLUSIONS

The cultural heritage institutions of New York State enjoy some of the widest varieties of external preservation funding sources available in the United States, and are taking good advantage of those resources, according to the results of the 2009 Connecting to Collections statewide preservation survey.

However, there are still many critical needs expressed by institutions in developing sustainable preservation programs. One is staffing. Few cultural heritage facilities have full- or part-time staff focused on preservation, and most of those working on preservation do not have formal collections care training.

Another is training. Bolstering the

preservation training available in the state by providing a cohesive curriculum of preservation training, especially focused on formats such as photographic collections, books and bound volumes, unbound sheets, and digital material and electronic records collections, is key in development of stronger individual preservation programs throughout the state. An urgent need for training in digitization and preservation advocacy was noted.

Barriers to training mentioned by respondents included travel and registration costs, as well as unavailability of workshops in the institution's regions, and distance to travel to attend the classes. A strategy of making workshop series available in many regional venues across the state could eliminate many of these concerns. While respondents noted that they had access to many training communications capabilities, over one-third felt that distance learning methods were not applicable in their current situations.

Across the nation, in many of the Connecting to Collections studies now underway or recently completed, a revelation of great concern was that many individual collecting institutions do not have documented policies for the preservation of their collections. This is an area where training, model policy development, and consulting are needed. As a state, New York is doing much better than many others, but preservation policy development still remains one of the most urgent areas for action. A cornerstone in preservation policy development is disaster plan development, and assistance is needed to make sure that a majority of the institutions in the state are covered by this type of plan.

Even though many institutions reported that a majority of their collections were adequately stored, and many already monitor and control temperature, light levels and relative humidity, New York institutions identified shortage of space and environmental controls as their most serious preservation problems. This points out strong needs for presenting educational and informational assistance on environmental control, potentially teaming with well-known

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New York-based institutions such as the Image Permanence Institute at RIT. And, while storage needs are high, there is not a great deal of interest in shared storage facilities, so perhaps assistance for institutions to better utilize their current individual institution storage capabilities is a more realistic need.

While the utilization of environmental control systems was not up to the level which many institutions would like, levels of use of fire detection systems was good (although further fire suppression system implementation is needed). Also, the use of security systems, policies, practices, and procedures was widespread as well.

Another trend being seen nationwide in Connecting to Collections projects is the lack of inventory of certain parts of the collection. Many repositories in New York hold, but do not know estimated numbers of unbound sheets, photographic, or digital collections.

Overall, the need for preservation policies, storage space, training, and environmental controls were key factors identified in the survey. Cultural heritage institutions expressed a high level of interest for many collaborative preservation initiatives such as mutual aid in the time of disasters. Also highly-supported were services including ongoing state support for preservation grants to individual institutions,

state-sponsored preservation workshops, and onsite visits by preservation professionals. Interest in statewide contracts for preservation supplies and conservation services was also high.

When comparing the results of New York's 2009 Statewide Preservation survey with the 2005 Heritage Health Index report, we see similar needs in emergency planning and preservation staff development. While New York's cultural heritage organizations have done many activities to safeguard their collections, safe storage conditions and more storage space remain high priorities, as they were in the HHI. As stated throughout this report, New York's stellar funding support for preservation is a model for many states to emulate. When New York's findings are compared to those of other states participating in Connecting to Collections Surveys, New York's strong funding for preservation and its yet-uncoordinated approach to preservation education are the most noticeable standout trends.

The interest in preserving and will to preserve cultural heritage collections in New York is evident. The support, through grants, associations, and regional groups, is strong. The challenge is to coordinate a variety of preservation information, education, consultation, and funding offerings to best serve the institutions and people of the state.

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