

**Society of American Archivists  
Council Meeting  
August 3, 2020  
Virtual Meeting**

**Create Crisis, Disaster, and Tragedy Response Working Group  
(Prepared by Council Member Steven Booth)**

**BACKGROUND**

At its May 12-13, 2020, meeting, the Council reviewed the comprehensive final report of the Tragedy Response Initiative Task Force, formed in January 2018, and agreed with the group's recommendation to create a standing working group to continue aspects of the work done by the task force.

**DISCUSSION**

Having served as the Council liaison for the task force, I drafted a description of the working group in preparation for the May Council meeting. Members of the Council refined the working group description from May to July 2020. Task Force Chair Lisa Calahan also reviewed the draft and provided no additional comments.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the following description of the Crisis, Disaster, and Tragedy Response Working Group be approved:**

**Crisis, Disaster, and Tragedy Response Working Group**

**Purpose**

The Crisis, Disaster, and Tragedy Response Working Group was created in 2020.

The purpose of the Working Group is to maintain and update SAA's Documenting in Times of Crisis: A Resource Kit; develop and provide immediate and ongoing resources and response assistance to archivists, allied cultural heritage professionals, and their communities in times of tragedies, disasters, or other crises; and build partnerships with organizations focused on relief efforts and cultural stewardship and preservation.

## **Working Group Size, Selection, and Length of Term**

The Working Group consists of nine members, including two co-chairs. At least one member of the Working Group shall be an international representative (that is, an individual who lives and works outside of the United States). Working Group members serve staggered three-year terms with the possibility of reappointment. The Vice President, on behalf of the Council and with the recommendation of the Working Group, makes new appointments and appoints the co-chairs.

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

The Working Group has the following duties and responsibilities:

- Ensure continuous review of the tragedy response toolkit, develop and solicit contributions for new resources, and update as appropriate.
- Provide best practices and recommendations on collecting, documenting, and preserving materials related to crises, disasters, and tragedies.
- Respond in a timely fashion to requests from SAA leadership or staff, archivists, and allied cultural heritage professionals.
- Bring to the Council's attention possible areas of collaboration with other organizations that are interested in response efforts and, under the Council's direction and with approval, cooperate with such organizations in furthering SAA's core values and strategic goals.

## **Reporting**

The Working Group works closely with its Council liaison, staff liaison, and the executive director to ensure that it is responsive to the needs of archivists, allied cultural heritage professionals, and their communities. In certain cases, when time is of the essence, the Working Group communicates directly with the SAA Executive Committee. The Working Group reports to the Council annually and upon request.

**Support Statement:** This description has been reviewed by SAA staff and a Council member and has been determined to align with the SAA Governance Manual, Section XIII: Working Groups. This description provides the appropriate structure while allowing for flexibility as the working group develops.

**Impact on Strategic Priorities:** This description will provide the framework for this new working group in supporting all four goals outlined in the Strategic Plan. The new working group will build on the efforts of the task force and will continue to provide expertise and resources to SAA members and the archives profession.

**Fiscal Impact:** None.