

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
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Chicago, Illinois**

**Report: Tragedy Response Initiative Task Force
(Prepared by Lisa Calahan, Chair)**

The SAA Tragedy Response Initiative Task Force was created by the SAA Council in January 2018. Since February 2018, members have held monthly conference calls to address the following charge:

“The Tragedy Response Initiative Task Force is responsible for 1) creating and/or compiling material for ready accessibility by archivists who are facing a sudden tragedy and 2) exploring the feasibility of creating a standing body within SAA that would update documentation as needed and serve as a volunteer tragedy response team.”

Active members of the Task Force include: David Benjamin, Steven Booth (Council Liaison), Lisa Calahan (Chair), Jackie Esposito, Felicia Owens (SAA Staff), Thomas Padilla, Allen Ramsey, Patricia Rettig, Vanessa St.Oegger-Menn, and Susan Tucker.

Thus far, the work of the Task Force has focused on researching current best practices, compiling professional policies and best practices, building relationships with allied organizations, and serving as contacts for communities/individuals managing tragedy-based collections.

One of the first activities completed was the compilation of a bibliography of articles and monographs related to archiving memorial and commemorative collections. The Task Force recently provided public access to the working bibliography on the [TRI microsite](#) as an available resource and are encouraging viewers to make recommendations and suggest additional content.

Currently, the Task Force is focused on continuing the creation and compilation of documents related to best practices and policies for the creation and management of tragedy-based collections. In September, members of the Task Force completed the small-scale compilation of documents, wherein we focused on talking one-on-one with colleagues to hear more about their experiences and make personal connections. Task Force members have connected with colleagues at Louisiana State Museum, University of Virginia, University of Houston, Boston City Archives, Orange County (Florida) Museum, Rice University, Washington University, Saint Louis; New York Historical Society, and the National Heritage Responders. Through these conversations, the Task Force has received samples of planning and collecting strategy documents from the Columbine Memorial collection, a Memorandum of Agreement between the

town of Newtown (Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting) and the Connecticut State Library, a job description for working with memorial collections from Syracuse University, the collection policy from the 9/11 Memorial Museum and the Boston Marathon Memorial Collection, and a project plan from Documenting Ferguson.

In order to reach a wider audience the Task Force put out a call to both SAA membership and allied organizations on October 4, 2018, requesting suggestions and additional examples.

In the meantime, Task Force members have begun drafting templates based on recommendations from colleagues and personal experience. Thus far, we have drafted templates for a volunteer/intern job description, oral history creative commons permission form, guidelines for creating a collection policy, and a collection policy template.

Social Media Archiving	Management Budget
Anonymous donations accession policy	Job Description
Deaccessioning Policy	Self Care Tips
Privacy Policies	Stages of Grief & How to help someone who is grieving
Biological Material Policy	Volunteer/intern guidelines
Deed of Gift or Addendum	Appraisal Guidelines
Oral History release forms	Checklist for volunteers
Oral History documentation	Checklist for response
Unique collection policy or addendum	Digitization Guidelines
Use Agreement	Creative Commons permission form
Processing Budget	

Although the Task Force was unable to meet as a whole at the 2018 Joint Annual Meeting, Council Liaison Steven Booth wrote a blog post on the activities of the Task Force for [Off the Record](#), and Steven Booth and Task Force member David Benjamin provided an update to SAA leaders at the SAA Leadership Orientation.