



Filing cabinet from Biloxi's Maritime and Seafood Industry Museum



The Maritime and Seafood Industry Museum after Hurricane Katrina swept through Biloxi, Mississippi, in 2005



Damage to Gulfport Public Library, Gulfport, Mississippi, from Hurricane Katrina



Drying files of the Maritime and Seafood Industry Museum in April 2006



# COSTEP

Coordinated Statewide  
Emergency Preparedness

AN EMERGENCY RESPONSE FRAMEWORK FOR THE CULTURAL COMMUNITY

The devastation of recent hurricanes and floods dramatizes the need for a coordinated response by the cultural community to area-wide disasters. One of the most important lessons we learn from such events is that cooperation and communication both within and outside the cultural community is of vital importance to saving cultural resources.

The **Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness (COSTEP)** Framework is a planning tool designed to bring together cultural institutions and emergency management agencies. It provides a blueprint for preparing for area-wide disasters and building alliances with federal, state, and local emergency management agencies.

## What Is COSTEP?

COSTEP builds upon existing emergency preparedness projects for cultural resources. In recent years a number of initiatives have been undertaken to improve emergency preparedness for cultural resources both statewide and regionally, including:

- Heritage Emergency National Task Force's Alliance for Response
- Council of State Archivists' (CoSA) Emergency Preparedness Initiative (EPI)
- Intergovernmental Preparedness for Essential Records (IPER) Project

These projects emphasize cooperation between emergency management agencies and cultural institutions. COSTEP complements these projects and provides a mechanism for incorporating them into a larger statewide planning effort.

## Who Should Participate?

- State agencies responsible for cultural collections
- Library/archives/museum associations
- Professional organizations
- Private libraries, archives, and museums
- Historic sites
- Local/county/state/regional emergency managers and first responders



## Why Involve Emergency Managers?

- Local and state emergency management personnel have authority over all recovery efforts in any emergency involving first responders.
- Cultural resource agencies and institutions must work through the emergency management structure to receive assistance and resources.
- Cultural resource agencies and institutions must build relationships with local and state emergency managers and become familiar with emergency management terminology.
- Emergency managers can educate the cultural community about standard management structures (the Incident Command System), protocols, and vocabulary used by emergency responders in small- and large-scale disasters.
- Emergency managers need to be informed about proper response and recovery activities when dealing with cultural collections.



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## How Does COSTEP Work?

The COSTEP planning process begins with a series of meetings centered around five basic components (see below). In most cases, multiple meetings will be needed to address each component of the framework. States build their program in stages, producing results at increasing levels of achievement—*essential*, *enhanced*, and *excellent*.

The COSTEP planning process is designed to be flexible to allow for organizational and political differences among the states, and to meet the needs of states that are at different stages of the emergency planning process. It should be revisited periodically to ensure that statewide emergency preparedness for cultural resources remains effective.

## What Are the Framework Components?

- **Startup** – A few proactive institutions within the state meet to identify existing resources and activities and to set initial goals.
- **Key Relationships and Goals** – Additional agencies/institutions/organizations are brought in and more specific goals are set for the emergency planning process.
- **Risk Analysis** – Hazards within the state are identified, the risks that they pose to cultural collections are analyzed, and strategies are determined for mitigating those risks statewide.
- **Preparing for Response** – Activities and resources for response and recovery are determined, and procedures are established.
- **Training** – Suggestions for tabletop exercises that simulate a statewide or region-wide disaster are presented, giving participants a chance to practice emergency response and identify any potential problems that should be addressed.

## Why Implement COSTEP?

- **COSTEP can help safeguard** cultural resources in a state-wide or region-wide disaster.
- **COSTEP guides** states through the process of planning for a disaster and suggests concrete outcomes and products that will increase the chances of saving cultural collections affected by catastrophic events.
- **COSTEP encourages** states to designate a lead cultural agency/institution such as the state archives, state library, or state historic preservation office to coordinate statewide response and work with emergency management personnel.
- **COSTEP fosters** collaborative planning among a wide range of agencies and institutions and ensures that the relationship is maintained after the plan is written.
- **COSTEP allows** for planning at all levels—institutional, local, county, state, and regional.

A COSTEP Massachusetts meeting





Firefighters at the World Trade Center in Manhattan on September 19, 2001

Photo: Andrea Boppre/FEMA

### COSTEP Can Help You Create:

- A list of cultural institutions in the state
- Geographic information system (GIS) data that show the location of these cultural resource agencies and institutions
- A prioritized list of risks to cultural resources in your state
- Low-cost strategies for reaching out to institutions in high-risk areas
- A communications plan, including a blueprint for collecting information on the status of cultural institutions after a disaster
- A basic emergency plan that helps integrate cultural resources into state, county, and city/town emergency management plans
- A list of training opportunities and a strategy for encouraging cultural institutions to take advantage of them
- Coordination between state and federal emergency managers and staff of cultural heritage organizations during the planning process as well as during response and recovery



Training at FEMA's Emergency Management Institute in Emmitsburg, Maryland

Photo: Jocelyn Augustine/FEMA



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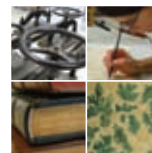
For more information about COSTEP and to view a working draft of the Framework in action, go to:  
<http://statewideplan.pbwiki.com>

### COSTEP Sponsors

The COSTEP Framework was developed by the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) in cooperation with:

- The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC)
- The Massachusetts Archives
- The Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA)
- The Society of American Archivists (SAA)
- Heritage Preservation
- The Southeast Library Network (SOLINET)

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NORTHEAST  
DOCUMENT  
CONSERVATION  
CENTER

100 Brickstone Square, Andover, MA 01810-1494  
ph 978-470-1010 • fax 978-475-6021 • [www.nedcc.org](http://www.nedcc.org)

Founded in 1973, the **Northeast Document Conservation Center** is one of the largest nonprofit, regional conservation centers in the United States, specializing in the preservation of paper-based materials. Its services include paper, book, and photograph conservation treatment; preservation microfilming; digitization; photograph duplication; surveys and consultation; disaster assistance; and workshops and conferences. Visit NEDCC's Web site at [www.nedcc.org](http://www.nedcc.org).



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