

A VISION FOR EMERGENCY READINESS, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY IN THE ARTS SECTOR

Submitted by the Coalition for Artists' Preparedness & Emergency Response

THE VISION

This country's diverse artistic output is one of our greatest resources. However, the arts sector is at great risk of loss from unanticipated and unplanned events. Time and again, the arts community has been faced with disasters of a mass order, including September 11, Hurricanes Katrina, Hugo and Ike, the AIDS epidemic, floods in the Midwest and fires on the West coast. Today we must be conscious of risks from H1N1 and terrorist threats.

On a smaller scale, individual artists and arts organizations face problems that impact their ability to do their daily work. The irreversible computer crash. The public protests to a controversial exhibit or performance. The unexpected loss of an organization's founder or leader. The frozen pipes or electrical fire that damaged a facility or studio. The sudden decline in revenue. The break-in or petty theft that damages the psyche of the organization or individual.

We as a community need to address this challenge. Over the past decade, a number of efforts have developed, ad hoc in most cases, in response to identified needs or to directly help in the aftermath of an emergency. But there is no coordinated, sustained effort, which we believe ultimately costs our community. We present a vision for a unified approach which will make us, individually and collectively, more resilient, more in-control, more able to withstand the unexpected. To come through crises, able to continue our artistic efforts, and with our artwork, physical assets, and community relationships relatively intact. In fact, the arts often act as a catalyst for community healing and connection in the wake of a disaster, and must be prepared to do



so. Our vision is that no matter what happens **today**, we want to be able to do **tomorrow**, what we were doing **yesterday**.

The best way to recover from an unexpected event of any type is to have planned in advance – to be in a state of **readiness**. To have records and portfolios backed up remotely, studios and arts facilities prepared for emergencies, crisis communications plans and contact lists in place, and plans for restarting critical business functions as quickly and completely as possible.

Whether or not an organization, artist or community has a readiness plan, when they experience an emergency they need outside assistance and support for immediate **relief**. Existing government and human service organizations are prepared to assist with general humanitarian needs but are unable to meet the specific and unique needs of the arts community including immediate recovery and preservation of artwork, equipment and facilities.

Once immediate relief has been provided and an organization or artist is ready to resume business activity, a system for **recovery** is needed for the short- and long-term return to full functionality: from restoring data and rebuilding damaged or lost physical facilities, to navigating public and private recovery programs and re-establishing previous – or establishing new – markets and audiences.

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RECOMMENDED GREEN
PAPER AMBASSADOR

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READINESS, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Two major collaborations are currently active. In 2006, the [Coalition for Artists' Preparedness and Emergency Response](#), an effort led by [CERF+](#) (Craft Emergency Relief Fund+Artists' Emergency Resources), formed in response to these needs in order to assure that an organized safety net was in place for individual artists and the organizations that serve them; members include the National Endowment for the Arts, state arts councils and regional arts organizations, arts funders, arts service organizations and individuals active and interested in its mission. A [Blueprint](#) to guide the creation of this safety net was drafted; member organizations have worked to create tools, resources and emergency response mechanisms, including the [Studio Protector](#) (described below), databases with emergency relief resources, an incipient arts responder network and an advocacy effort for the self-employed.

[ArtsReady](#) is an initiative led by the [Southern Arts Federation](#), a Coalition member, to encourage and prepare arts organizations in readiness planning and to assist in times of relief and recovery, including development of an online planning and support tool.

Together we seek to understand and respond to the needs of the entire arts community – from individual artists and artist-centered groups to arts presenting, producing and service organizations of all sizes, including the administrators that manage them. We envision a sector that is truly ArtsReady: prepared to meet exigencies and ready to serve those in need when preparation is not enough. However, this work depends on the engagement of leaders in all parts of the arts sector to carry the readiness message; build and develop resources for readiness, response and recovery; and to support one another in pro-

tecting our combined resources, history and people.

OBSTACLES

While SAF's ArtsReady project and the Coalition work to create one, no nationwide coordinated system currently exists to address the three phases of preparedness, relief/response and recovery. As posited in the [Blueprint](#), such a system needs to be in place prior to business interruptions; needs to be known to the arts community so that they can access it before, during and after an emergency; and needs to interact with but not duplicate the extant relief system including FEMA, SBA, the Department of Labor, state and local emergency management offices, and private relief agencies.

Readiness planning is also not a current business standard in our sector. When the Southern Arts Federation surveyed arts and cultural organizations across the country in May 2008, results showed that 68% of these organizations had experienced a crisis situation and did not have a plan in place before the event, and *still* did not have one in place afterwards. Top reasons given for the lack of a plan: 1) Not knowing where to begin and 2) Planning is not a priority for the organization's leadership. Artists, too, in large part, do not have readiness plans in place and again, the reasons boil down to not making it a priority and not knowing where to begin.

Some pockets of planning and recovery resources existed prior to the Coalition and SAF's formal work – The Actors' Fund, NYFASource, CERF+, The Chicago Artists Resource, Artist Trust, and others all maintain databases and resource information about emergency, relief or recovery. The NEA and

the Heritage Emergency National Task Force provide planning and recovery resources, particularly for institutions that manage collections and archives. Large public spaces are served by the International Association of Arena Managers. Some state arts agencies, such as Mississippi, offer artists and arts organizations direct training and tools for readiness planning. The Actors Fund, MusiCares, Jazz Foundation of America, CERF+ and other artists' assistance funds provide emergency financial assistance, counseling and case management services to help artists address immediate needs and access community and government benefits and services. Americans for the Arts and the Southern Arts Federation maintain Emergency Relief Funds to assist in the wake of emergencies. Individual artists may access training, tools and emergency grants by CERF+ and a number of private foundations. The American Association of Museums delivers services and information on planning, preservation and conservation to its members. There are excellent resources and best practices but they are largely uncoordinated and unconnected at this time, therefore many artists and arts organizations are uninformed, ill-equipped and underserved.

We also recognize that there are both actual and psychological barriers to readiness planning. With shrinking resources, artists and organizations are hard-pressed to achieve their most urgent activities – making it difficult to draw their attention to the long-range importance of risk management and planning. And few of us want to imagine ourselves experiencing an emergency large or small. Yet, our current investments of time, money, and creativity could be lost without a structure for readiness, response and recovery.

READINESS, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

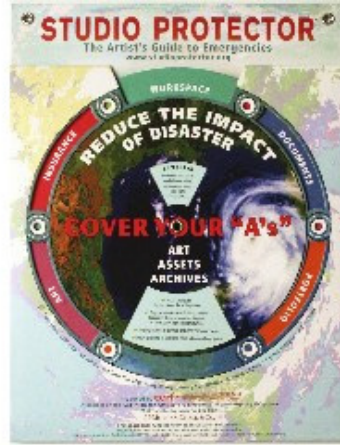
STRATEGIES

We propose a movement – **Be ArtsReady** – ready individually, ready as a sector, ready to help our own when they need it. We envision that ten years from now, artists and organizations will measure their overall health in part by their readiness. Just as our sector has recognized the need for, and works toward cultural diversity in our board rooms and our offices, and is working to ensure all people have access to the arts; so we can collectively and imaginatively move toward a standard of readiness.

The Coalition and the ArtsReady collaboration have conducted research and developed recommendations and tools, some of which are already active. These are summarized below. More information on the Coalition’s efforts can be found at <http://www.giarts.org/emergency-readiness-response-recovery>; the Coalition’s [National Blueprint for Emergency Preparedness, Relief and Recovery for Artists](#) informs this Green Paper; and information on ArtsReady’s organization-focused efforts is at www.ArtsReady.org.

The **Studio Protector** – Active

CERF+, on behalf of the Coalition, has developed an emergency preparedness and response toolkit for artists called the *Studio Protector*. It consists of an interactive ready-reference [Wall Guide](#) and a companion web site with an [Online Guide](#) that complements and elaborates on the information contained in the wall guide. These tools were designed by artists for artists with the assistance of some of the nation’s



leading authorities on emergency preparedness, recovery, and conservation - and field tested by artists who have been through disaster. As furniture maker Russell Karkowski said in a video interview for the *Studio Protector* web site, "[in an emergency] you can only do what you have practiced." The *Studio Protector* is here to help you get ready, respond effectively, and rebound quickly.

“**Be ArtsReady**” Campaign and Resources – Active

The Southern Arts Federation recently launched the **“Be ArtsReady” campaign** in its nine-state region. The campaign, distributed in collaboration with nine state arts agencies and also targeting local arts councils and state arts service organizations, communicates the value of readiness planning and guides users to

online resources including sample readiness plans, planning tips and trainings, and recovery and relief organizations. The site also has functionality to, in the event of a large-scale event in the region, immediately begin fundraising on behalf of affected artists and organizations.

ArtsReady Online Tool – In development

In response to the identified planning barrier “we don’t know how to start,” the Southern Arts Federation and its collaborative partners are in a prototype design phase for an online planning tool. This tool will take organizational users through a one-hour online risk assessment, leading to the development of an action plan with prioritized steps to plan for and respond to crisis situations, and mitigate damage. The tool will be functional for all types of arts organizations; its first iteration will have specific in-depth functionality for performing arts organizations. To carry this project to fruition, participation from partners nationally will be needed to sustain and promote the tool.



READINESS, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Overall Coordination and Funding – *In Development*

Both the Coalition through its *Blueprint* plan, and the ArtsReady collaboration, have identified processes and characteristics for a coordinated structure. These include:

- Recognition that the arts community is best qualified to provide certain kinds of relief to (and guidance to other relief providers about) artists and arts organizations.
- The system should be a “network of networks:” national in scope with some form of centralized management and a sense of shared ownership, but dependent on local delivery and regional/state organizations and back-up responsive to geographic, political and cultural differences. A pilot effort to engage and train/prepare “arts responders” nationwide is in its early stages.
- The effort must enroll non-profit, commercial and government entities to construct and sustain the system.
- Financial support to continue to build and maintain the system is essential, and can consist of a mix of public and private funders, pooled income or mutual benefit funds, charitable contributions and in-kind support.
- The effort must incorporate lessons and best practices gleaned from past efforts, to avoid re-creating the wheel.
- There is an opportunity to encourage readiness through a mix of technical assistance, public awareness and will-building, demonstration of cost-savings resulting from preparedness and risk management, and policy decisions by private and public funders and investors.
- Advocacy is a key component: both on a policy level to effect changes to the extant relief system (SBA, FEMA, Department of Labor, etc.) to help artists and arts organizations with their needs, and on a case-by-case basis to help artists and organizations who’ve been denied relief. We are building an advocacy alliance with other groups of the self-employed.
- The effort should ultimately curtail costs and losses by focusing on preparedness and mitigation in addition to relief and recovery.
- We can help one another. The distribution/replication/storage of information/ resources/data broadly across the country is a protective step. Sharing best practices; providing support and back-up to one another, whether artist-to-artist, organization-to-organization, or state-to-state.

THE INVITATION

To become ArtsReady is to help ensure our own sustainability. We believe that our sector has the imagination and drive to develop and maintain a system of readiness to protect our valuable and irreplaceable creative resources, and we will be reaching out to many of you over the course of the next year to join our effort, become an arts responder and provide resources.