California State Library Awards $3.1 Million to Protect Local Cultural Heritage Collections from Disaster

Funding will be used to assist community organizations in creating disaster preparedness plans

For Immediate Release: November 4, 2022
Contact: Alex Vassar (916) 603-7177
press@library.ca.gov

[Sacramento, Calif.] – The California State Library announces the award of a $3,144,000 grant to connect communities holding at-risk collections with the tools needed to protect their collections from natural and manmade disasters. The Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) was selected to work with local archives, historical societies, libraries, museums and tribal nations to assist those entities in creating customized disaster preparedness plans.

“California is home to more than 1,200 local cultural heritage entities, which are charged with preserving our state’s rich and diverse history,” said California State Librarian Greg Lucas. “We estimate that half of those organizations lack a written disaster preparedness plan. The ‘Ready of Not’ Disaster Preparedness Program will protect these irreplaceable collections from destruction and ensure that they are available for future generations of Californians.”

Organizations can schedule a free on-site emergency preparedness assessment by emailing CAready@nedcc.org or phoning 855-501-3020. More information can be found on the project website.

Under the three-year program, NEDCC will hire and deploy six roving Emergency Preparedness Consultants with experience in disaster planning and preparedness. The consultants will work with local cultural heritage organizations across the state to assess collections, gauge potential risk and identify ways to mitigate risk. The organizations will then create disaster preparedness plans based on those assessments and ensure that local disaster response agencies are apprised of those plans.

In 2021, the California State Library conducted the Cultural Collections Protection Survey, which surveyed more than 400 California archives, historical societies, libraries, museums and tribal nations. The survey found that approximately half of respondents lack disaster response plans, a significant need given the risks posed by fire, flood and earthquakes and threats from inadequate storage facilities and simple decay over time.
In 2023, the State Library will award additional grants to local cultural heritage entities to ensure the workability and effectiveness of their disaster preparedness plans.

# End of Press Release #

About the State Library: Founded in 1850, the California State Library has an extensive collection of documents from and about the state’s rich history, ranging from books, maps, miners’ diaries, newspapers, and periodicals to photographs, paintings and posters. The State Library also holds federal and state publications, is home to the Bernard E. Witkin State Law Library and the Braille and Talking Book Library, and serves as the lead state agency for library-related services throughout California. [State Library website]

###