

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

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IMPACT STATEMENT ON NOHSEP ENGAGEMENT WITH PERFORMING CITY RESILIENCE

The City of New Orleans Hazard Mitigation (HM) Office began our engagement with Dr. Stuart Andrews and Dr. Patrick Duggan in spring 2018 as a result of the city's participation in their research on the *Performing City Resilience (PCR)* project through the 100 Resilience Cities initiative. During a structured discussion about the city's emergency management practices, including preparedness, operations, recovery and mitigation, we examined the importance and nature of our relationship to the art and culture community. The principle lessons for our department include:

- Art/culture community and practices represent a central part of the identity of the city and, as such, should be appropriately represented in critical planning and policy development efforts.
- In addition to inclusion in decision-making processes, the city's preparedness and resilience work can benefit from greater representation in the arts as a means of diversifying and expanding the reach of the public message.
- The work conducted in emergency management as a field can also be understood through and art and culture lens as a performance.

The PCR research prompted the HM Office to examine our current and future undertakings for ways to enhance our engagement with the art and culture community in New Orleans in both processes and projects. We were immediately presented with some key collaborative opportunities which have greatly benefitted our work outcomes for both planning and public engagement.

During the 2018 review of proposals submitted to the city as part of a Request for Information (RFI) process for a Comprehensive Recovery Plan (CRP), we invited a representative from the Arts Council of New Orleans to sit on the review panel. In addition to feedback on the proposals, they provided specific recommendations for means of inclusion of the art and culture community in the planning process. As a result of this approach, we developed and included a requirement in the RFP which called for respondents to demonstrate strategies for meaningfully integrating artists and culture workers into both the development of the CRP and its implementation. This RFP was released in the summer 2019, with the work scheduled to begin later this year.

In August 2018, the New Orleans Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (NOHSEP) became the sponsoring agency on a grant proposal submitted to the National Endowment for the Arts by Antenna. This organization formed in 2005 and promotes art and literature in the New Orleans community through events, publications and arts education. Their proposal, *20/20: Reflections on Water*, includes a series of artistic projects and community workshops that utilize New Orleans's waterways, waterfronts, and pump stations as sites and subjects for artistic exploration as a means to examine the city's relationship with water. The project was awarded a grant in 2019, with activities scheduled to start in early 2020. The Hazard Mitigation Office will be working with Antenna throughout the project as a means of fostering

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city-wide awareness and stewardship of our water systems and involve residents in shaping policy, practices and projects during the city's hazard mitigation plan update cycle.

Both of these activities have started our office on a long-term path of embedding arts and cultural practices in our strategic planning and have opened channels with valuable groups not typically included in our planning and project activities. In June 2019, Dr. Andrews and Dr. Duggan returned to New Orleans to lead a series of engagements with both city employees and members of the arts community to further inform our hazard mitigation strategies. We plan to build upon this momentum in the coming year as we move through our mitigation planning process, where we will be specifically integrating art and culture groups in both the project generation process as well as increasing public awareness of resilience practice. This process has already started with the development of local advisory committees, but we hope this will lead into a formalized focus group and engagement process with the broader arts community. Finally, we are exploring efforts to partner with local artists during Prospect 5, a citywide contemporary art experience, in late 2020.

We are incredibly grateful to Dr. Andrews and Dr. Duggan for engaging with us in their research and support as it has and will continue to provide great benefits to our work as we seek to create a more resilient city. In recognition of their efforts, NOHSEP presented them with the agency's challenge coin during their June visit to the city. Such coins are used by law enforcement and public safety agencies to acknowledge special achievement and their history dates back to the Roman Empire. It is our hope that, through their work, they are able to collect many more.



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