

Alliance for Response Tip Sheet: Diversifying your AFR Network and increasing community inclusivity

Written by AFR Outreach Team, 2025

Communities are defined by the characteristics their members share, such as geography or cultural background. AFR networks should include representatives from both local communities and those reflected in their member's collections.

Outreach Suggestions

- **Tailor outreach to local needs.** AFR networks are most effective when they reflect the unique context of their communities.
- **Leverage existing relationships.** Build on connections from other projects like exhibitions, partner events, or workshops.
- **Involve emergency managers.** They often have community ties and can be valuable collaborators or workshop speakers. Outreach and advocacy may be part of their job description already.
- **Promote AFR at local events.** Table at emergency management, local museum conferences, or community events to build awareness.



The strength of AFR networks is that they operate on a local level, and that means the outreach should be specific to your local needs.

Coordinate trainings or resource-sharing through your local Tribal Historic Preservation Officers.

Directory:
members.nathpo.org/thpodirectory

If unavailable, they may refer others who can assist.



- **Practice intentional and empathetic outreach.**

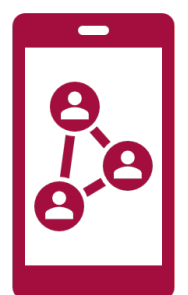
Respect community resources, communication preferences, and willingness to engage. Marginalized communities may require patience and trust-building.

- **Make an effort to meet in person.** Traveling to meet the community where they are is a great way to begin a relationship and develop trust.
- **Support community-led emergency planning.** Collaborate work with communities to establish trust so that you can help identify their needs and preferences for emergency response together.
- **Consider creating surveys** to better understand how the community will respond in an emergency and what information they may share up front for disaster response. Explore the **Resources** section below, to find a link to the AFR's Communication Guide.

- **Use personal touches in communication.** Add a friendly message or photo when emailing your network to increase engagement.
- **Minimize barriers to entry.** Emphasize that AFR membership is low-commitment and clarify any dues expectations.



- **Be proactive in offering help.** Monitor social media, make calls, and ask network members to identify organizations that might need assistance.
- **Offer support for participation.** Provide stipends for travel, time off, childcare, internet hotspots, or speaking engagements.



*Do not rely on email.
Call and listen.*

Collaboration Suggestions

- **Maintain communication.** Agree on the best way to stay in touch and follow up regularly. Use video conferencing or other tools if in-person meetings aren't possible.
- **Support communication access.** If in-person visits aren't possible, help ensure communities have internet access—consider providing hotspots or partnering with libraries for computer access.
- **Invest in the process.** True collaboration takes time, trust, and mutual understanding—it's not immediate.
- **Respect diverse expertise.** Individuals like Tribal officials, elders, and artists offer unique insights. Confirm when someone is speaking in an official capacity.
- **Be flexible and adaptable.** Understand that schedules may shift due to cultural observances or local priorities.
- **Compensate fairly.** Community members should be paid for their time and contributions like any other expert.
- **Help the community fill out the pocket response template (PReP™)** with information from local resources, emergency responders, and AFR's contact information.



Leadership Team Suggestions



- **Build a diverse team.** Include members from arts and cultural organizations, emergency management, historical sites, and collecting institutions.
- **Respect time and add value.** Keep meetings purposeful by developing agendas collaboratively, while remaining flexible to different cultural norms and expectations around meetings.
- **Focus on relationships.** Use meetings to uncover shared goals and ongoing projects.
- **Coordinate during emergencies.** A unified team can streamline communication and response efforts.
- **Distribute leadership.** Anchor leadership in multiple institutions (e.g., Arts Council + State Archives) to ensure continuity and commitment.

Resources:

- Building Connections Conversation Guide: www.culturalheritage.org/afr-build-network
- Pocket Response Template (PReP™): statearchivists.org/pocket-response-templates/
- Emergency Planning Toolkit for Tribal Institutions: www.culturalheritage.org/resources/emergencies/preparedness/tribal-toolkit
- Field Guide to Emergency Response (for purchase): store.culturalheritage.org/site/index.php?app=ecom&ns=prodshow&ref=FAIC-2