

At the Heart of the Storm

A DISASTER PREPAREDNESS &
RECOVERY GUIDEBOOK FOR
NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

SPONSORED BY:
SOUTHERN MINNESOTA
INITIATIVE FOUNDATION AND
THE BUSH FOUNDATION

Lessons
learned
from
the
Bush
Disaster
Project



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In a matter of minutes on Sunday, March 29, 1998, the most devastating tornadoes in decades forever altered both landscape and lives in a 100-mile region of south central Minnesota. The community of St. Peter tallied 3,200 buildings destroyed or damaged, 80,000 windows blown out of buildings, and 2,000 trees uprooted. The nearby small city of Comfrey lost 75 percent of churches, 80 percent of residences, and 100 percent of its businesses and municipal buildings. Damage to the region totaled somewhere between \$300 and \$500 million. Lifestyles and the familiar patterns of daily living were irrevocably changed. As soon as the skies cleared, a massive cleanup and recovery effort began. It continues to this day, nearly three and a half years later.

In the days, weeks, months and years that followed, non-profit agencies stepped up to fill the enormous and crucial task of coordinating and facilitating communications and activities between the community at large and the various sources providing them with assistance and financial aid. In the aftermath of the devastation, valuable lessons were learned about preparing for and recovering from disasters. What follows is a summation of these lessons from those who experienced them firsthand, offered to help guide your organization in preparation for and recovery from a similar disaster.

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Part One: Preparation

The single, most valuable thing that any non-profit agency can do to aid in disaster recovery in their community is to establish and maintain their own disaster resistant organization. Doing so involves the following steps:

1. Address Personal Safety

The first priority in any disaster is personal safety. Become familiar with these Red Cross guidelines and encourage all staff members to develop personal safety plans for themselves, their homes, and their families.

Safety First Facts

Tornadoes

- Know the safest place to be during a tornado.
- At home, your basement is the safest location.
- If there is no basement, take shelter in a bathroom, in an empty bathtub if possible, or a closet located closest to the center of the house. A mattress or blankets make good protective covering.
- Evacuate mobile homes and go to a designated storm shelter or go outside and lay face down in a ditch or low lying area.
- If driving, don't try to outrun the storm. Get out of the vehicle, find shelter next to the largest, sturdiest structure possible or lay face down in a low lying area.
- In the office, go to a designated tornado stairwell or to the interior of the office, away from flying glass and metal.
- Maintain essential emergency equipment and rations and store them in the area used as a storm shelter. Items to include are:
 - a first aid kit
 - portable radios
 - bottled water
 - blankets, etc.
 - flashlights
 - a fresh supply of batteries
 - non-perishable food

Fire

- Meet with family and/or co-workers and establish two routes out of any area in your home or office. Also, establish a meeting place a safe distance from the building where everyone is to gather immediately after exiting the building.
- During a fire, get out of the building as quickly as possible and do not re-enter the building. Exit the building first, then call the fire department.
- If you use a fire extinguisher and that does not immediately extinguish the fire, drop the extinguisher and get out. Most portable extinguishers empty in 8 – 10 seconds.
- If escaping through a closed door, feel the door, cracks, and doorknob with the back of your hand before opening. If it feels cool, open the door slowly. If you see or smell smoke ahead, close the door and use your second way out. If the door feels warm, do not open. Use your second way out.
- If you must exit through smoke, crawl low under the smoke.
- Close doors behind you as you leave to slow the spread of the fire.
- If you are unable to exit the room you are in, keep the door closed, open or break the window and hang a sheet or articles of clothing outside the window to let firefighters know of your location. Use any available phone in the room to call 911 and let the fire department know your location as well.

Flood

- Know your area's flood risk. If a flood seems likely, stay tuned to local radio or TV, or listen to a weather radio.
- Once a flood watch is issued, increase monitoring. Move furniture and valuables to higher floors. Fill vehicle with gas in case evacuation notice is issued. Choose several safe places where you could go and plan several safe routes you could take to get there. Assemble supplies to take if you are evacuated. Items to include:
 - first aid kit
 - bottled water-3 gal./person recommended
 - protective clothing
 - bedding or sleeping bags
 - flashlight & batteries
 - battery powered radio and batteries
 - canned food & opener
 - special needs items: prescription medication, infant needs, etc.

Whatever the nature of the disaster, consider the likelihood of clients being in your office when a disaster occurs. Plan for their safety, taking into account any special needs they may have. Ensure that your place of refuge and your emergency kits contain adequate provisions for them.

- When a flood warning is issued, flooding has already begun or will occur soon. Head for high ground immediately.
- Do not drive, walk, or swim through swift flowing water. Never drive through water overflowing a road. Observe all road closure signs and barricades.

Whatever the nature of the disaster, consider the likelihood of clients being in your office when a disaster occurs. Plan for their safety, taking into account any special needs they may have. Ensure that your place of refuge and your emergency kits contain adequate provisions for them.

2. Provide Documentation

Establish and maintain adequate insurance protection.

- Make certain that several people in your organization and on the Board of Directors are familiar with the terms of the coverage. Does your policy cover natural disasters typically deemed "acts of God?" Most policies provide coverage for lightning strikes, tornadoes and windstorms, but exclude floods and earthquakes. Separate insurance policies may be needed for anything that is not covered, so find out what is covered under your policy and supplement with additional coverage as needed. Be aware that flooding can and does occur in areas outside of the flood plane, so consider carefully before opting not to purchase flood insurance. In short, get the best insurance coverage possible.
- Ensure that coverage is based on replacement cost. Replacement cost ensures compensation for the cost of replacing the item(s) destroyed or damaged, without deduction for use or depreciation. Coverage not based on replacement cost typically only compensates for the cost of the item, or for its worth after depreciation.
- Discuss business interruption protection with your provider to determine if it is applicable to your situation. This type of coverage may provide operating income during a time when damage to the business prevents earnings.

- Video or photograph your place of business and all of your equipment, furniture, and fixtures. Prepare an equipment list with specific detail on make, model and features of equipment. Make several copies of the inventory and keep some of those copies off-site. If the only record is kept on-site and the site is destroyed, then the record is destroyed along with the building. Keeping copies off site guarantees that you will be able to produce an asset inventory when needed.
- Regularly review and adjust your coverage with your agent, especially following any major equipment purchases.

Update all organizational documentation

- Review by-laws, making sure the language provides flexibility during a disaster. Are there provisions for increasing capacity during a disaster? Is there a policy for overtime and overtime pay? Be sure that the organization's Board of Directors is willing to allow the organization to grow rapidly to accommodate new programs, staff, and an influx of disaster recovery funds (if the organization is to be a fiscal agent).
- Write a separate disaster mission statement that supplants your normal mission statement. The statement can be as general as to state that your agency's mission during time of disaster is to maximize community access to critical resources or can be tailored more specifically. Keep in mind that an agency responding to a disaster has a different function than an agency in non-disaster mode. Some agencies, First Call For Help for example, will assume lead roles during this time, while others will fill support roles. In every case, all or most of the organization's efforts and activities will be driven by the disaster and the agency's disaster mission. The entire function of the agency may change. If not, many of its components will.

First Call Minnesota is a statewide information and referral system that has regional offices located around the state. First Call Minnesota works closely with many state and local agencies to provide the most up-to-date and comprehensive information about human services available to the people of Minnesota. The New Ulm office has provided specialized services to the following counties since 1981: Blue Earth, Brown, LeSueur, Martin, Nicolett, Rice, Sibley, Watonwan, and Waseca.

Lesson Learned

Following the St. Peter tornado, Brown Nicollet Environmental Health Services experienced a major shift in one of their agency's components: restaurant inspection and certification. Performing scheduled compliance inspections no longer seemed reasonable for restaurants that were damaged by the storm. "The old rules of checking to see if the wastebaskets were covered, etc. seemed inappropriate with businesses that were both struggling to survive and to serve a needy community," says Director Bonnie Holz. "Rather than write citations, we worked with the restaurants to help them re-open. Sometimes that meant helping them file insurance claims, other times it was helping them to simplify their menu to work with what they had. We also focused on the large issue of food safety and worked with all food preparation sites to ensure that food was being prepared and stored properly and that proper hygiene was being practiced in these areas."

- Make sure you have copies of your tax exemption certificate listing your identification number. Keep copies with insurance and disaster plan documents in case you need to furnish disaster response agencies with proof.
- Update all brochures and literature promoting your organization to reflect current services and programs, especially if your mission has changed or evolved from its description in your original charter or incorporation. Failure to do so might preclude your agency from receiving full disaster recovery benefits.

Document Checklist

Put the following documentation together, make copies and distribute to designated people in your organization. Have a copy in the office and several copies off-site.

- Insurance policy
- Insurance binder
- Insurance agent's name and contact numbers
- Insurance company's contact numbers
- Inventory of equipment, furniture, fixtures
- By-laws
- Mission statement
- Tax Exemption certificate with ID number
- Up-to-date brochures and literature
- List of all places where copies of all pertinent information is housed

3. Develop a Disaster Plan

Disasters can and do happen in Minnesota. All 87 counties in Minnesota have been declared a federal disaster area at least once since 1965. Some have had the distinction seven or more times! The events during and immediately following a disaster are critical and confusing. Help may not be available for up to 72 hours. The agency may experience damage, injuries, property loss and even loss of life. Critical services may be lost or interrupted. Agency services which clients depend on will be disrupted or suspended. The ability to respond quickly is greatly diminished. Without a disaster plan, there is no clear idea of how to re-group and move forward! Planning ahead and implementing a disaster plan not only helps your agency prepare for how it will function in disaster mode, but, if shared throughout the community, will help multiple agencies recognize which agency will be responsible for what activities. It can also be an opportunity to identify gaps and address them pre-disaster. Drafting a disaster plan will allow an agency to identify their role, respond quickly and be confident in their decisions. It reduces confusion and saves time and money.

All 87 counties in Minnesota have been declared a federal disaster area at least once since 1965. Some have had the distinction seven or more times!

*“Knowledge gained
ahead of time makes
the process of recovery
more tolerable, less
of an unknown...”*

*Dick Graves
LSS/LDR*

Developing this plan can be done during a workshop or retreat, but already overburdened non-profits often feel they cannot devote the time to such planning. If this is the case with your agency, break the planning into weekly increments. What follows is a weekly guide for writing the plan. Discuss the following topics with your staff, brainstorm on solutions, and record the most viable answers. Appendix 1 also provides worksheets to help work through and document each weeks planning.

Planning

Week One: Functioning after a disaster

Consider the various types of disasters that could interrupt the service you provide and how each might uniquely affect that service.

Realistically, how many staff could work after a disaster? Does everyone live in the same geographic area? What physical obstacles do staff members encounter between their home and the office that might prevent them from getting to or from the office? Who or what else does each staff member care for (family, livestock, etc.)? Consider various scenarios. What would the impact be if the disaster struck during the workday? Early morning before work? On a weekend? What skills would be available and/or lost with each staff member's availability? What work could best be assigned to volunteers?

What do you need to conduct business? Are all pertinent files, documents, and records regularly backed up, hard copied, and stored off-site, preferably in numerous, geographically separated locations? Store back-ups in different towns, if possible, or at least in different parts of town.

What do you need to assess and minimize potential damage to your offices? Develop disaster kits and house them in three locations: on-site, in homes, and in the vehicle you drive to work. Suggestions for contents:

- disposable cameras
- flashlights
- radios
- batteries
- spare keys
- first aid kits
- scissors
- tape of various kinds
- plastic garbage bags and plastic sheeting
- paper towels
- extension cords
- rubber gloves
- boots

Also essential are handouts, posters, and other pertinent information either about your agency or about general safety practices that would be important to distribute following a disaster but which might not be available to you if your offices are destroyed.

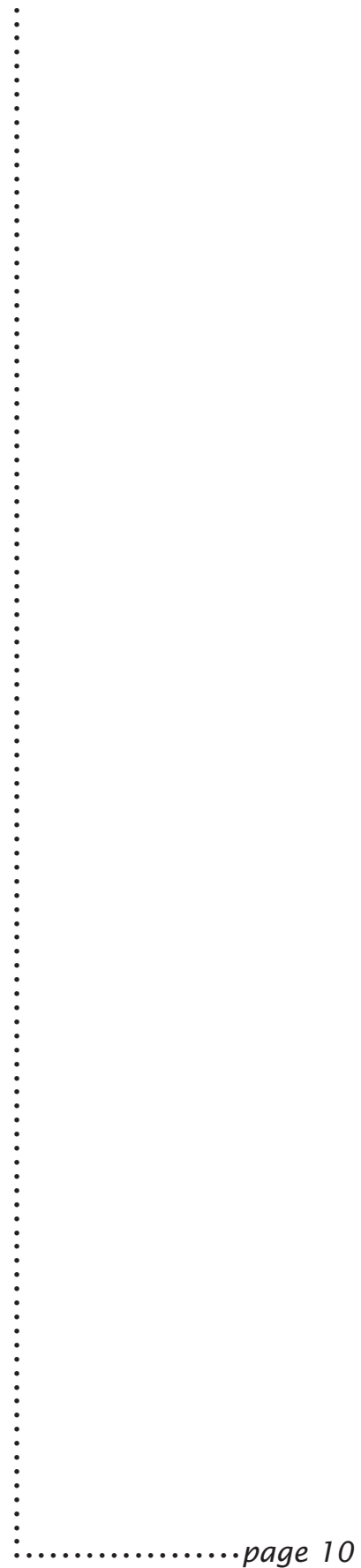
Lesson Learned

Brown Nicollet Environmental Health in St. Peter learned this the hard way when their office was destroyed in the tornado and along with it their hand washing and food storage and preparation safety posters. These would have been immensely useful for volunteers in the hours and days immediately following the disaster. Since then, they keep a supply of posters both in their homes and in their vehicles.

Brainstorm on what type of emergency equipment might be needed and develop a list of where/how to secure it:

- wet vacs
- dehumidifiers
- generators
- brooms
- hard hats
- ladders
- sand bags
- fans
- pumps
- mops
- portable toilets

List the resource you'll use for each (personal, rental agency, etc.) and their phone numbers, address, etc.



Secure a viable source of water.

Consider what forms of transportation will be affected by a disaster and how that might impact your agency. What can you do now to plan for disruption?

Will you need additional staff, resources, and/or funding in order to operate following a disaster? Where will those resources come from?

Week Four: Identifying community resources

Establish relationships with emergency responders in your community. Visit with the local civic Emergency Management Services office. A complete listing of all city and county offices and contacts can be found at the following web site:<http://www.dps.state.mn.us/emermgt/contacts/index.asp>. Make them aware of your existence and your role in the community during a disaster. Give them literature about your agency. Review their plan and find out what their role is during a disaster. What needs of yours will they meet (providing emergency power, etc)? Likewise contact police, fire department, 911 responders, public health clinics, etc.

What buildings have been designated by Emergency Management Services as potential sites for mass care? Familiarize yourself with their location and resources.

Determine where Emergency Management will locate the Emergency Operations Center and find out if there will be space for your agency to operate nearby.

Determine what neighboring agencies might serve the same clientele and check to see if you can share resources. Are these potential partners as prepared as you are for a disaster?

Can community businesses help your agency? In what way(s)? Do the managers of supermarkets, pharmacies, and hardware stores know about you? What about schools, day care and senior centers?

Do you regularly use or can you perceive needing the services of interpreters to serve your clients? What languages will need interpreting? What resources do you have for access to interpreters?

A complete listing of all city and county offices and contacts can be found at the following web site: <http://www.dps.state.mn.us/emermgt/contacts/index.asp>

*Brown Nicollet
Environmental Health
Services clientele and
services were both limited
and expanded following
the tornado – some
voluntarily, others
involuntarily. They lost a
grant and therefore a
client when the site they
were to research was
impacted by the storm.
Likewise, they opted to
table some services.
"You don't put a priority
on doing river samples
when you're concerned
about drinking water,"
said Holz. "We felt
strongly that as public
health we had a moral
obligation to expand our
services in whatever
direction they were
needed to help the entire
community with health
and safety issues."
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Week Five: Considering impact on clients

Is it likely that clients will be in your building when a disaster strikes?
Are there provisions for them?

How will you find out about the status of clients off-site?

Who else do you need to communicate with regarding your clients?
Off-site staff? Other agencies? Family of clients? Is anyone else
dependent on information you hold on clients? How will you
communicate with them?

Assume that telephone service is destroyed for a minimum of several
days. Decide any and all alternate measures of communication.

If evacuated, what will your clients need that might not be available at
a mass shelter? How can you provide for these needs?

Will you limit or expand your clientele and/or services following a
disaster? In what way(s)?

Week Six: Developing contingency plans

This is a critical planning step which needs to be specific, yet also
flexible. Brainstorm on all the "what if" and worse case scenarios to
complete your plan, record your answers, and then choose the most
viable solutions. Examples of things to consider are:

- What if the building is destroyed - where will you serve clients?
- What if employees are unable to work following the disaster?
- What if the disaster occurs before this plan is completed?
- What if you haven't backed up your files, documents, etc. and they
are destroyed?
- What if you lose all communication for several days?

The solutions to these contingencies may involve mutual aid
agreements with other agencies in your vicinity. Think of the ways that
other agencies, colleagues, friends, etc. might be beneficial.
Remember that most everyone truly wants to be useful following a
disaster.

Finally, after the plan is completed, remember it must be documented,
rehearsed, and understood by all involved.

4. Educate Yourself About the Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Process in Your Community

Familiarize yourself with agencies that play essential roles in disaster response. You should have already connected with your nearest Emergency Management Services office. Another excellent resource is your area's First Call For Help office. They will be key in a disaster response and can help you identify the Federal and State players (Federal Emergency Management Administration, FEMA; Red Cross; Minnesota Department of Emergency Management; National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters, NVOAD; etc.) as well as local and regional agencies. They also maintain and update a state wide directory on disc of all human service, education, health, legal aid, recreational, and social service agencies.

5. Heighten Your Visibility

Take advantage of every opportunity to let your community know of your existence and of the services you provide.

Make your name a recognizable one. This increases the odds that people will think of you in times of disaster. This can be accomplished in a variety of methods:

- Public Service Announcements (PSA's)
- news releases
- mass mailings
- payroll stuffers
- lunch room posters
- posters in churches
- announcements in church bulletins
- contacts with schools and counseling services
- letters of introduction and appropriate literature distribution to other non-profits
- manning a booth at community home shows

Put together a packet of information or brochure about your agency and distribute it to all agencies and entities that respond to disasters in your region.

One of First Call For Help's greatest assets is the ability of their network of offices to come to the aid of any office responding to a local disaster. When the office in New Ulm responded to the tornado recovery efforts in St. Peter and Comfrey, having their phone calls rerouted to another office was highly effective. They also benefited from additional staff and resources loaned to their offices.

If appropriate, attend meetings of emergency operations planning groups.

6. Build Collaborations

Collaborative efforts make recovery happen. Constantly network and build relationships in your community. If possible, build mutual aid agreements with other non-profits in your area and throughout the state.

Lesson Learned

Following the tornadoes, Brown Nicollet Environmental Health developed a mutual aid system through their attendance at a statewide Community Health conference. Now parallel agencies can readily go to a stricken area and lend their assistance.

How can your agency help another like agency in need and vice versa? After these relationships have been formed, maintain them. Personnel and policies change, so stay up to date.

Seek out agencies that have played vital roles in disasters elsewhere and learn from them. Most agencies that have been through a disaster are very active in educating others about their experiences and often consider it a new part of their mission to do so. If possible, should a disaster occur near you, try to become involved in the recovery first hand to learn what really occurs. Creating a mutual aid agreement with like agencies throughout the state or region will provide you with the flexibility to do so.

Lesson Learned

First Call For Help assembled an informational packet including a letter of introduction, brochures, and a list of the disaster response strategies they were capable of and willing to provide during a disaster. They mailed these packets to all response agencies as well as insurance agents and the National Guard.

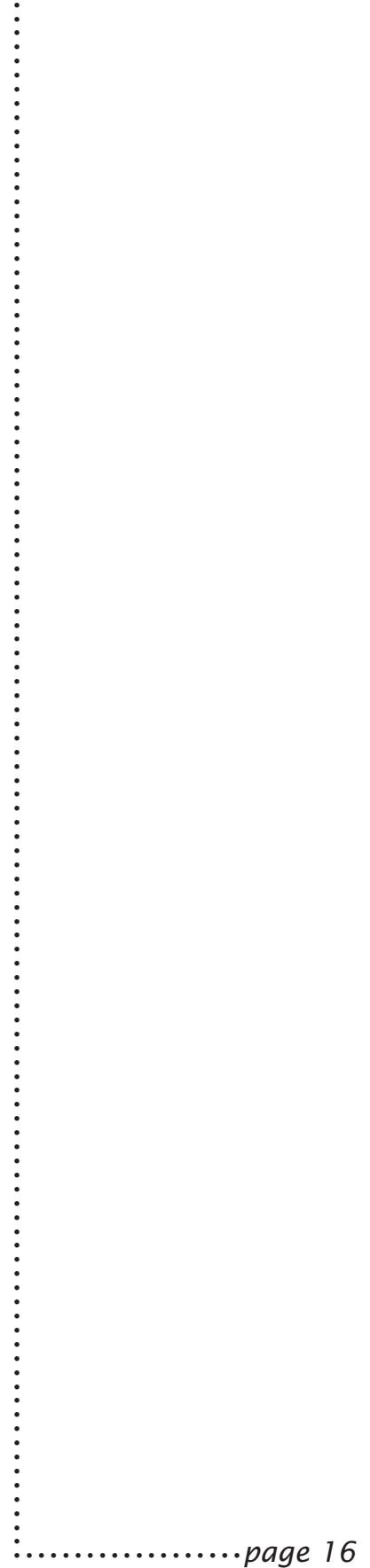
Part Two: Recovery

In the hours immediately following a disaster, the needs are overwhelming. Communication and power systems may be virtually destroyed. Confusion is paramount. Survivors of the spring tornadoes of 1998 shared the following tips for survivors of future disasters to ease their recovery process:

1. Immediate Actions

The American Red Cross provides the following useful tips:

- Remain calm and patient.
- Listen to the local radio and other forms of accessible media for pertinent information and directions.
- Check for injuries, administer first aid, and seek medical help as needed.
- Help anyone you know of in your immediate vicinity that has special needs.
- Wearing protective clothing, especially sturdy shoes, check for damage in your home or office. Remember, the most common injury following a disaster is cut feet!
- Do not use candles for lighting as they can easily cause fires. Use battery powered flashlights.
- Look for fire hazards and gas leaks. If any are discovered, evacuate the area as soon as possible and contact the proper authorities. If possible, turn off the gas and power at the main valves.
- Check for damaged plaster and ceilings that might collapse.
- Confine or secure pets.
- If you have access to a phone, inform your family of your safety and then only use the phones in emergencies to clear the lines for emergency and priority needs.



*Four Basic Points
For Recovery*

- 1) Photograph your property damage.*
- 2) Find out your insurance claim filing deadlines.*
- 3) Register with FEMA (if the disaster is federally declared).*
- 4) Document everything! Make copies of all paperwork.*

2. Four Basic Points For Recovery

The Disaster Recovery Clearinghouse polled directors of Minnesota recovery agencies to find out what basic information they would pass on to survivors of future disasters. **The unanimous response was that all survivors should observe these FOUR POINTS!**

- 1) Photograph your property damage.
- 2) Find out your insurance claim filing deadlines.
- 3) Register with FEMA (if the disaster is federally declared).
- 4) Document everything! Make copies of all paperwork.

The Clearinghouse has since prepared a laminated card listing these four points which has been enthusiastically received by survivors of other disasters throughout the country.

3. Set Your Disaster Plan In Motion

Once everyone's safety and welfare has been established and your staff assembles, it is helpful to prioritize and diversify as needed to set your disaster plan into motion.

Lesson Learned

Brown Nicollet Environmental Health Services developed a strategy they would repeat if and when another disaster strikes. Their office was destroyed in the tornado and several staff members also experienced damage to their homes. They immediately realized that they could no longer operate in the manner in which they were accustomed. First, they diversified and reassigned staff duties in a manner that made sense. A staff member who had been injured during the storm took phone calls. Those that lived out of town and did not sustain damage did harder things because they had more energy. Those that had sustained damage were relieved more often and were assigned more immediately productive tasks, such as evacuating records, to counterbalance the chaos they were experiencing personally.

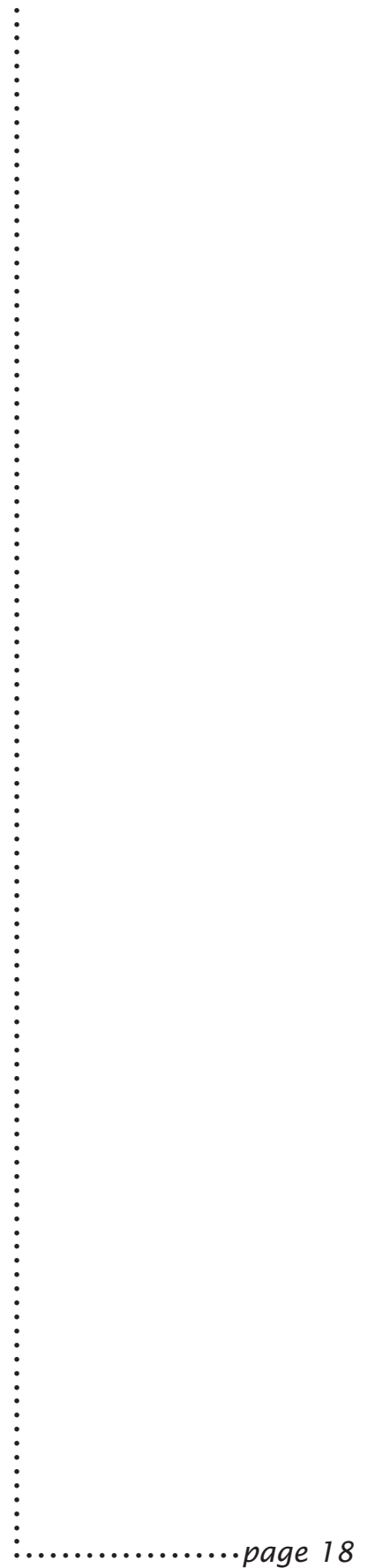
Beyond that, Holz shares the following: "In retrospect, we should have made time to talk more and share. It is crucial not to be judgmental of one another, but it happens instinctively. You can find yourself resenting someone who seems overwhelmed and is unwilling or unable to take on more work although they sustained less damage to their home. What you need to realize is that everyone is affected and everyone recovers in a different place and at a different pace. The oddest things may trigger a reaction in someone. People are fine one day and fall apart another, so you need to be patient and accepting of everyone everyday."

Holz says it took about two weeks for the shock to wear off and to make the appropriate staff allocations. Overwhelmed by mounting public health needs coupled with the loss of the office to service them from, Holz and her staff quickly recognized the need to set priorities in how they would conduct their daily operations.

Lesson Learned

Brown Nicollet Environmental Health Services realized that their old rules of operation were inappropriate following the tornado. They also felt overwhelmed by the amount of work that needed to be done to restore their community. Realizing that it would be easy to spin their wheels; they sat together as a staff and established the following priorities in order to maximize their efficiency and effectiveness. Holz explains that they placed a high priority on recovering their own office because they recognized that they could not be effective if they remained disorganized.

1. Assist victims and institutions affected by the tornadoes
2. Assist businesses affected by the tornadoes
3. Recovery for own office
4. Deal with emerging issues that are seasonal or critical
5. Deal with emerging issues that are more long-term
6. Return to business as usual



"We kept a tornado drawer," says Holz, "where every piece of paper that had to do with the tornado was placed. We did not have regular mail or phones for a month, so it was very important to keep things in a central location. Our office manager then knew where everything was for insurance claims and reporting."

Despite careful planning, which is critical and will go a long way to expediting recovery, the actual disaster may not perfectly fit the hypothetical scenarios so it is necessary to brainstorm and find creative solutions. Set your priority list early, refer to it daily, and stick to it. Be realistic about your resources and do not be overly ambitious. While there is much to do immediately following a disaster, and little option other than to dive in and get started, the recovery process is a long one (about five years on average), so it is vital to conserve energy and resources. Break it down into daily or weekly objectives. Keep a detailed communications log starting day one. Realize that your staff may be operating from different locations and that normal means of communication will be suspended. Think about how you will coordinate information and keep responses from either being duplicated or falling through the cracks. Will you each keep an individual phone log and then transfer daily entries to one master log? Will you initial and/or date stamp all incoming written materials to make sure they have been read? Again, document everything; keep copies of everything; take pictures when needed. Know and refer to all pertinent deadlines.

4. Reaching Out Effectively

Non-profits are called on for a variety of services following disaster. Those in leadership roles will be especially utilized. Non-profits may be asked to provide services, money or supplies, or to help increase capacity. A key role of non-profits following disaster is to act as a connector between community needs and funders. Remember that all of this will unfold as your agency is trying to stage its own recovery as well as meeting or increasing services to your clients, so be careful in overextending yourself and your capabilities.

Recovery needs will vary with the type of disaster. A visible disaster such as a fire or tornado brings more widespread support than does a less visible disaster like a flood. Some residents of the communities of Austin and Eagan, for example, were not even aware of the devastation suffered by others in their own community following flooding during the summer of 2000. Realize that these disasters are also in need of recovery efforts.

Stay informed

In order to maximize effectiveness, it is important to stay as informed as possible on the scope of the recovery efforts. During your first staff meeting following the disaster, assign each staff member to listen to a different radio and television station. Read as many area newspapers as possible. Assign a staff member to affiliate with each response agency in place and attend their meetings.

Go where the people are

Do not rely on regular systems of communication to reach those in need of services. If appropriate and possible, establish a physical presence in the area or areas staged as the emergency headquarters. If not, make sure you have flyers or posters posted in those areas which list your location, hours of operation, and contact information. Go to all community meetings and be prepared to discuss the role your agency is able to play in recovery. It is through these meetings that you will most likely be able to determine your niche in recovery efforts. Federal and State agencies will be in place and will be clear on what steps remain to be taken.

Communicate

Get your information out to the public in as many forms as possible including flyers, posters, word of mouth, toll-free numbers and Internet sites. Remember family members and others outside the area will be trying to access you as well. Communication is of the utmost importance. To that end, hold daily or twice daily staff meetings to keep everyone abreast of progress.

Make repeated offers to help

Remember that everyone you are dealing with is recovering. They are all dealing with stress and will move through it at different rates. They may seem fine one day and fall apart the next. They may be unwilling or unable to ask for help when they first need it. Keep offering.

Allow people the opportunity to talk; it is an important piece of recovery. Dick Graves of the Lutheran Social Service/Lutheran Disaster Response (LSS/LDR) says: "After a disaster, people will never be the same. They might be better or worse, they might be

Lutheran Disaster Response utilized this effective strategy in getting people to accept help: "If people seem too proud or simply too stunned to accept help, try rephrasing your offer. Tell them that you have volunteers that need to feel appreciated and it would be helpful if they could take a few for a little while and put them to work, or the Red Cross has prepared so much food and they'll be disappointed if it doesn't get eaten, etc. Most will accept under those conditions, feeling that they are the ones helping rather than being helped."

"After a disaster, people will never be the same. They might be better or worse, they might be 'normal' but they will never be the same. Most agencies realize that it isn't possible to undo the disaster, or to make the situation exactly like it was before. Rather the objective may be to accompany clients through the worst part of the recovery... until they are far enough along to complete the journey to a new normal."

*Dick Graves
LSS/LDR*

'normal' but they will never be the same. Most agencies working in disaster (therefore) have come to realize that it isn't possible to undo the disaster, or to make the situation exactly like it was before. Rather the objective may be to accompany clients through the worst part of the recovery... the paper nightmare, the bureaucratic jungle, the depths of emotional depression until they are far enough along to complete the journey to a new normal."

Increase capacity

Part of your recovery efforts may include hiring additional staff. This can be difficult in times of crisis, especially in a tight labor market. To this end, be flexible. Create two part-time positions or a job-share position if one full time isn't working. In addition to posting the job notice in usual mediums, use extensive word of mouth to seek applicants. Some qualified applicants may not read the want ads, or even be seeking a job for that matter, but would respond to a personal request for help. Contact a school about creating an internship for a student as part of the position. Be creative and resourceful.

Be proactive

Be proactive whenever possible. Look for needs that are unfulfilled and think of creative ways to fill them. Remember that most everyone wants to be helpful following a disaster so reach out accordingly.

Lesson Learned

As they worked with individuals and businesses, First Call For Help discovered that most needed help with identifying the proper agency that could help them and then accessing that agency. They felt that a printed resource and referral guide would be a helpful and effective tool to get in the hands of everyone affected by the storm. Therefore, they developed and distributed two highly effective resources: a Tornado Relief Resource Directory, published within days of the disaster, and a more comprehensive Tornado Relief Handbook published within a month. They successfully approached a local law firm and printing company to donate secretarial assistance and printing.

Take care of yourself

Give yourself license to go through your own recovery and healing, especially if you have sustained personal loss as well. Get out of town, take breaks, and get adequate rest. Yes, there is much to be done, but you will be no good to anyone if you allow yourself to get worn down physically and emotionally.

5. Doing No Harm

The hours and days following a disaster are confusing. Unfortunately, actions intended to be helpful can have the opposite effect. There are many pieces to the recovery puzzle and many vantage points towards the same end. Therefore it is prudent to ensure that all actions taken towards recovery do no harm.

Lesson Learned

Brown Nicollet Environmental Health Services experienced this first hand following the tornadoes in St. Peter and Comfrey. Volunteers arrived in record time to help with the clean up, but there were no port-a-potty facilities in place for them. Along with that, the hand washing facilities were inadequate. This was of critical concern to Brown Nicollet because the storms had passed through farmland, dispensing not only dirt, but also chemicals and toxins such as Anthrax along with it. Now, instead of one disaster, there was potential for a second if residents and volunteers were unable to sanitize their hands. Food safety issues also were of concern. Well-intentioned people began cooking and dropping off food for those in need. This forced health workers to ensure that these volunteer providers had followed requisite temporary food establishment sanitation policies such as adequate hand washing and cooking with proper temperature controls. This might seem nit-picky in view of the large need, but coping with a widespread outbreak of a food-borne illness would have been impossible under the already strained physical and emotional conditions. Even a large shipment of chicken provided by a well-meaning business in a neighboring county had to be tossed because no one knew how long it had been out of temperature.

According to Graves of LSS/LDR, it is logical in this predominantly Lutheran area to look to the Lutheran churches for leadership as they have the capacity. In his job traveling around the nation responding to disasters, he finds that on the East Coast, it's more efficient to let the Methodist or Episcopalians take the lead and for other faith communities to support them with financial contributions. In other words, don't try to reinvent the wheel or duplicate services, rather find out how you can be the most help.

Let other groups do what they do best and support them.

To help guide people and organizations in how to do no harm while helping in recovery efforts, prepare media releases detailing very specific information on how people can help. Health workers, for example, should quickly educate people on food salvage and safety practices. Get these releases in the hands of all media frequently.

Lesson Learned

In Granite Falls, volunteers from public health went from door to door passing out fliers that guided families through the process of food salvage and acquainted them with the hazards of food spoilage.

Be aware that well-meaning individuals and businesses will want to help in the hours and days immediately following a disaster. While this can be helpful, it can also create problems. Being inundated with volunteers or donations when you are ill prepared to receive them only adds to the confusion. It is clearly the most helpful to designate one or two people who work side by side in the Emergency Operations Center to coordinate volunteers and donations. That team should keep an updated roster of needs and match them with incoming offers for help. No one else should accept requests for volunteers or donations.

Lesson Learned

Kate Tohal, Director of First Call For Help shares these observations from St. Peter: "If there had been better planning, there would have been less confusion. There was a real problem with massive loads of volunteers showing up and trying to find whose job it was, or someone who wasn't too busy, to coordinate them. There was a problem with too much unusable "stuff" being donated, warehoused, and distributed. Where do you warehouse donations when buildings have been destroyed? I think the Granite Falls folks benefited from this knowledge and immediately sent out the word: "Don't send stuff, send money." I also think that in St. Peter there were a lot of donations right away that weren't used as wisely as they might have been. Ongoing unmet needs proved that spending donated funds should have occurred in a different way."

Above all, be a good neighbor. Realize that while some may disagree with the reasoning behind the practices and policies of some agencies, everyone is moving towards the same goal of recovery. Time spent arguing about issues takes away from the positive energy needed to move forward on the recovery continuum.

6. Funding

An enormous part of the recovery effort depends on funding. Non-profits are in a position to facilitate the relationship between funders and the ongoing community needs.

Non-profits' Roles

Consider establishing a clearinghouse

Much like the coordination of volunteers and donations, it is efficient and productive to have a central clearinghouse to coordinate communication and resources between organizations and individuals in need and those willing to provide for them. A clearinghouse ensures that needs are neither duplicated nor overlooked.

Following the 1998 tornadoes, First Call For Help teamed with The Initiative Fund through a Bush Foundation Grant to create the Disaster Recovery Clearinghouse (DRC). The DRC proved to be an excellent tool for gathering and distributing reliable and up-to-date information between organizations in need and appropriate resources. The Clearinghouse did not directly distribute the dollars; rather it catalogued agency needs and shared the information with interested funders and donors.

First Call For Help Director Kate Tohal says an optimal time to establish such a clearinghouse is about three months after the disaster. By that time, unmet needs are clearly surfacing and it is apparent what needs are falling through programmatic cracks. A clearinghouse with the sole mission of matching needs with funds is an excellent vehicle for connecting non-profits with for-profits and exploring and tapping into for-profit resources. Having the Clearinghouse under the First Call For Help umbrella is especially effective as there are branches of First Call For Help found throughout the state. These branches can network in an effort to build capacity wherever it is needed.

Educate funders to realistic timelines

Non-profits can assist with increasing donations and raising funds for community recovery through their various publicity formats. They must also help educate the public about the realistic recovery timeline. The long-term needs are the ones that are more "invisible" and may require both solutions that are more creative and significant resources.

Funders' Roles

Support disaster preparedness efforts

Funders also have a crucial role to play during recovery. Organizations that regularly support non-profits should first encourage non-profits in their disaster preparedness efforts. Financial resources are needed for training, programming and technical assistance.

Be cognizant of recovery timeline

Funders need to be aware about the realistic timeline (five years) of recovery and the changing needs that occur along that journey.

Stay flexible

Many non-traditional needs arise so funders must remain flexible in order to address them. For instance, one of the greatest needs arising after the 1998 tornadoes in the area of childcare was not repairing the buildings or restoring programs, but replacing sod. The grass surrounding childcare facilities was filled with broken glass and had to

be completely replaced. The areas of mental health, childcare and financial counseling always have great needs following a crisis. Following the tornadoes, counselors reported that it wasn't just the adults who were experiencing stress; they were also treating children who were dealing with anxiety because their parents were consumed in rebuilding their homes and businesses.

Keep the funding process simple

Whenever and however possible, the funding process should be kept as simple as possible. The last thing already taxed agencies and individuals need to deal with is red tape and endless forms and processes.

Build on existing strengths

An excellent use of funds during a disaster also comes in building onto existing strengths within the community. The Disaster Recovery Clearinghouse referred to earlier in this document is a perfect example of such use of funds. Because First Call For Help was already well established and highly regarded, it was both easy and appropriate to rely on them to provide a resource that would significantly affect the recovery of the region. Funders should also remember that buildings such as churches and community centers that take on community roles during a disaster will incur unplanned extra expenses in the form of increased utilities, staffing and custodial needs, and excess wear and tear to the building and accelerated depreciation.

Thanks to creative funding, children affected by the tornadoes in St. Peter were provided with a free bus trip and fun outing at Valley Fair. It helped to restore some of their childhood and gave parents a needed break as well, aiding everyone on their recovery journey. Several dozen families also benefited from a donation of used computers and educational software and games. Likewise, a barren counseling office was brightened by donations of artwork and furnishings.

Part Three: Phasing Out

Finally, there will come a time when your organization will switch from recovery mode to regular business. There is no magic formula as to when and how this occurs. Both the community needs and the resources to remain begin to diminish. For most, departure is a gradual and anticipated process. The crucial thing is to leave your clients and those you have served with information and with hope. It is common for disaster survivors to feel a sense of abandonment as media play dies down and response agencies move on to the next disaster. It is important to let survivors know how they can continue to access those who can help them. Continue to put information in the various media, distribute flyers, etc. with your contact information. Be aware that some individuals will come forward, perhaps for the first time, with "last chance" urgency.

If your staff has been in the trenches with helping individuals, plan a debriefing workshop or retreat to allow people to deal with the issues and emotions they have. They will have dealt with a lot and may have deferred their reactions and individual needs, as they were overwhelmed with the work in front of them.

Part Four: Returning to a New Normal

Everyone impacted by a disaster will realize, at some point in their recovery, that they are waiting for something that's impossible to achieve: getting back to normal. Things will never be as they were before. The disaster will be a marker in time; hereafter life will be referred to in terms of "before the disaster" or "after the disaster." It becomes part of your identity.

Lesson Learned

Dick Graves from Lutheran Disaster Response recalls that his mother lost her family home during a tornado when she was nine and, therefore, for the rest of her life never saved or accumulated anything. She attached little importance to possessions because at an early age, the knowledge that it could all be swept from her in an instant became a part of who she was.

Physical structures are gone, routines altered, memories lost. Individuals move through the recovery process at different rates and in different ways and healing only occurs when individuals realize their losses but are also able to see the potential opportunities brought about as a result. Life will be normal again, but it will be a new normal.

The human factor must be kept at the forefront of all attempts to get back to business. Destruction of day care centers and schools greatly impacts parents' ability to return to work as they search for new arrangements for childcare and deal with inevitable separation anxieties caused by the disaster and the new routine. Some families are forced to leave town if they are unable to find housing or adequate childcare arrangements in a destroyed community. Individuals may also have delayed reactions until a certain event triggers a sense of despair. Not having Christmas in their home or church, not being able to participate in a seasonal sport, not being able to take a planned vacation are all occasions that can trigger a depression or crisis point

Things will never be as they were before. The disaster will be a marker in time; hereafter life will be referred to in terms of "before the disaster" or "after the disaster." It becomes part of your identity.

As an agency, recognize that the disaster will not only take its toll emotionally, but will alter your bottom line as well.

for an individual who seemed to be doing fine. Stress is very high and the burn out rate is tremendous on the heels of a disaster because those directly involved often feel, and rightfully so, that they have held two full time jobs: their regular one and recovery.

As an agency, recognize that the disaster will not only take its toll emotionally, but will alter your bottom line as well.

Lesson Learned

Brown Nicollet Environmental Health Services found their revenue was down 28% in the year following the tornado, while the level of services provided rose. They lost a grant they had projected into their budget because the area they were to study sustained damage. Six months following the storm, realizing their financial strain, they encouraged their staff to seek other employment if possible. Two staff members did so, alleviating the need for a lay-off, but leaving them short staffed. Inspections that were performed routinely before the disaster now take longer due in part to the shortage of staff, but also due to a change in protocol which arose following the storm. They now determine a restaurant's state of readiness for a disaster as part of each routine inspection.

Two and a half years later, Bonnie Holz of Brown Nicollet sums up her recovery this way: "My home has been repaired and is nicer than it ever was before the tornado. As an organization, we've gotten better at what we do thanks to the lessons we learned about prioritizing during the disaster. Financially, we're still struggling. Our building has yet to be replaced so we are renting space, which is costly since space is obviously at a premium. Many of our staff have taken on unexpected roles of leadership in various state and national capacities thanks to the lessons we learned during the disaster. Ironically, that seems to truly help in recovery. I went to Granite Falls following their storm and said: 'I'm here and I know what to do.' I was so welcomed and appreciated. I was of help to them, but being there was also very good for me."

Conclusion

Hundreds of individuals and associations aided with tornado recovery in south central Minnesota in 1998 and 1999. Katherine Austinson, Project Manager of the Disaster Recovery Clearinghouse, said: "The Midwest spirit of volunteerism brought a level of efficiency to the process that stunned recovery officials nationwide." Kate Tohal stated that whenever help was asked for, it was received. Thanks to the generous and collaborative efforts of dedicated people and organizations, survivors were assisted on their recovery journeys. How will your agency react in a disaster? By preparing for it well ahead of time, as outlined in this manual, you will be highly effective and ready to care for your staff, your clients, and your community. As Dick Graves put it, in hindsight: "Knowledge gained ahead of time makes the process of recovery more tolerable, less of an unknown. The general feeling is that one of the best ways to help people get through a disaster is to prepare before it happens. It is much easier to inform and learn about the phases disaster affected people go through and the process of recovery when people are not in the midst of a disaster."



APPENDIX I WORKSHEET OUTLINING A DISASTER PLAN

WEEK ONE: FUNCTIONING AFTER A DISASTER

<u>Date of Completion</u>	<u>Task</u>	<u>Comments</u>
_____	Determine each staff member's personal scenario and discuss how they might be impacted in a disaster.	_____ _____ _____
_____	Plan for varying effects of disaster depending on time of day it occurs.	_____ _____ _____

Best use of Volunteers:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Task</u>	<u>Number needed</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Back up of documents and off-site storage:

<u>Document</u>	<u>Date backed up</u>	<u>Location(s)</u>	<u>Comments</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Preparation of disaster kits:

Contents and Locations

Information essential for distribution to clients/public following disaster:

<u>Material</u>	<u># Copies</u>	<u>Off site storage locations</u>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Emergency equipment plan:

<u>Equipment</u>	<u>Resource</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

WEEK TWO: CREATING A CHAIN OF COMMAND

Chain of command:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name(s)</u>	<u>Contact Numbers</u> <i>Home phone, cell phone pager, email</i>	<u>Responsibilities</u>
-----------------	----------------	--	-------------------------

<u>Team Leader</u>	_____		

First Backup	_____		

Second Backup	_____		

<u>Operations</u>	_____		

First Backup	_____		

Second Backup	_____		

WEEK TWO: CREATING A CHAIN OF COMMAND

Chain of command:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name(s)</u>	<u>Contact Numbers</u> <i>Home phone, cell phone pager, email</i>	<u>Responsibilities</u>
------------------------	-----------------------	---	--------------------------------

<u>Logistics</u>	_____		

First Backup	_____		

Second Backup	_____		

<u>Finance</u>	_____		

First Backup	_____		

Second Backup	_____		

WEEK TWO: CREATING A CHAIN OF COMMAND

Chain of command:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name(s)</u>	<u>Contact Numbers</u> <i>Home phone, cell phone pager, email</i>	<u>Responsibilities</u>
-----------------	----------------	--	-------------------------

Communications _____

First Backup _____

Second Backup _____

<u>Date of Completion</u>	<u>Task</u>	<u>Comments</u>
_____	Name a staff member to each position.	_____ _____ _____
_____	Meet to determine how team will operate.	_____ _____ _____

Emergency portfolio checklist:

- Chain of command worksheet
- Staff roster including home addresses, home phone numbers, cell phone numbers, pager numbers and email addresses
- Emergency contact numbers roster:

	Contact	Phone
Landlord	_____	_____
Maintenance company	_____	_____
Insurance company	_____	_____
In-house security	_____	_____
Fire department	_____	_____
Police or sheriff	_____	_____
Ambulance	_____	_____
Attorney	_____	_____
Electrician	_____	_____
Plumber	_____	_____
Locksmith	_____	_____
Glass company	_____	_____
Utility companies:		
Electric	_____	_____
Gas	_____	_____
Telephone	_____	_____
Water	_____	_____
Computer technician	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____

- Insurance documentation
- Non-profit status and Tax Identification Number
- Emergency equipment resource list
- Roster of area response agencies

Emergency Management Service	_____	_____
First Call For Help	_____	_____
Red Cross	_____	_____
Interpreter(s)	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Others	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

WEEK THREE: SECURING RESOURCES AND BUILDING CAPACITY

<u>Date of Completion</u>	<u>Task</u>	<u>Comments</u>
_____	Learn how to shut off power to building.	_____
_____	Learn how to shut off building's water supply.	_____
_____	Identify source(s) for emergency generators: _____ _____	_____ _____
_____	Identify location(s) of nearest pay phones: _____ _____	_____ _____
_____	Place multiples of correct change and/or phone cards in emergency kits.	_____
_____	Secure emergency bottled or other viable drinking water.	_____
_____	Plan for how interruption of transportation will affect agency.	_____
_____	Consider needs for additional resources of staff, materials and funding and sources.	_____ _____

WEEK FOUR: IDENTIFYING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

<u>Date of Completion</u>	<u>Task</u>	<u>Comments</u>
_____	Meet with Emergency Management Services director.	_____
_____	Review Emergency Operations Plan as it impacts agency.	_____
_____	Make Emergency Management Services director aware of role agency can play in a disaster.	_____
_____	Leave agency literature with director.	_____
_____	Locate potential sites for public care.	_____
_____	Locate potential site(s) for Emergency Operations Center.	_____
_____	Contact like agencies to determine their level of disaster preparedness.	_____
_____	Discuss potential collaborating or mutual aid with other non-profits.	_____
_____	Visit appropriate businesses and organizations to make them aware of agency and determine possibilities for mutual aid and record findings.	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
_____	Consider potential need for interpreters and identify availability of such within community.	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
_____	Contact other response agencies as necessary, i.e. police, fire, public health, etc.	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

WEEK FIVE: CONSIDERING IMPACT ON CLIENTS

<u>Date of Completion</u>	<u>Task</u>	<u>Comments</u>
_____	Make provisions for clients being in building during disaster.	_____ _____ _____
_____	Consider ways to determine status of clients impacted by disaster.	_____ _____ _____
_____	Consider need to communicate with others about clients and take necessary steps to do so.	_____ _____ _____
_____	Plan for potential needs of clients evacuated to a shelter.	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

WEEK SIX: DEVELOPING CONTINGENCY PLANS

<u>Date of Completion</u>	<u>Task</u>	<u>Comments</u>
_____	Brainstorm with full staff on all possible "what if" scenarios.	_____ _____
_____	Document and rehearse final plan.	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____



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