DISASTER PREPAREDNESS TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Information and Tools for Homeless Service Providers and Disaster Professionals

Objective:
Identify and collaborate with partners to address homeless individuals’ disaster response & recovery needs.

Key Audiences:
- Homeless service providers
- Disaster coalitions (e.g. Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOADs))
- Local government (e.g. public health departments)
- Disaster relief (e.g. American Red Cross)
- Funders

Section 1:
Build an Inclusive Emergency Management System

1. Get to Know the Community
   - Understand the homeless populations in the community
   - Identify key homeless service providers

2. Design a Strategy for Collaboration
   - Identify roles & responsibilities of partner agencies
   - Determine decision-making, collaboration & communication processes

3. Establish or Strengthen Relationships with Potential Partners
   - Expand non-disaster partnerships to include collaboration for disaster response

4. Meet and Discuss Common Concerns
   - Disaster response
   - Community capabilities
   - Collaboration opportunities
   - Ongoing nature of collaboration

5. Maintain Relationships
   - Bring something valuable to the table
   - Have a strategic plan and focus on small steps
   - Start working on homeless provider disaster plans (See Section 2)
   - Make sure key partners are present

6. Use/Test the System
   - Agree on clear roles & responsibilities in disaster response plans
   - Have a plan to communicate with partners after emergency
   - Connect homeless providers to government’s emergency response structure through the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) (i.e. designate a community representative in EOC)

7. Sustain an Inclusive System
   - Include local homeless service providers in the Long-Term Recovery Group
   - Establish agreements and contracts with homeless service providers in advance of disaster

The toolkit can be viewed at: https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/nchav/education/VEMEC-Toolkit.asp
For more information, please contact: June Gin at June.Gin@va.gov

A joint project of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
Objective:
Provide strategies, tools & guidance for homeless service providers to prepare & minimize disaster-caused service disruption

Key Audience:
• Homeless Service Providers

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Section 2:
Steps for Preparedness for Homeless Service Providers

1 Identify an Internal Champion and Preparedness Team
   Internal Champion(s):
   • “Owns the process” within organization
   • Engage and motivate leadership and staff for preparedness
   Disaster Committee:
   • Develop disaster plan and establish buy-in for preparedness

2 Identify Technical Assistance Resources to Initiate the Planning Process
   CBOs can take the lead in identifying potential resources, including:
   • Local emergency management agencies, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), police and fire departments, public health departments
   • Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), American Red Cross, and other nonprofit organizations

3 Build Organizational Buy-In
   Disaster Mission Statement:
   • The Disaster Committee drafts Disaster Mission Statement
   • Given limited resources in disaster, identify which services are most critical
   Launch Meeting:
   • Present disaster scenario
   • Explore how organization would respond to disaster scenario
   • Review Disaster Mission Statement and obtain feedback
   • Secure buy-in from key participants and identify expectations

4 Prepare Staff
   Disaster preparedness training for staff and key volunteers
   • Personal preparedness training
   • Search and Rescue, CPR, First Aid
   Disaster Personnel Policies
   • Expectations of staff following a disaster
   Identify disaster response skills of current staff

5 Meet Client and Staff Needs During and After a Disaster
   • Plan for the disaster needs of on-site clients & staff
   • Plan for the disaster needs of off-site clients
   • Helping clients prepare themselves for disaster
   • Plan for the possibility of delivering services at alternate location

6 Back up Unique Documents
   • Including financial records, personnel records, client records, legal documents, MOUs & other contracts, and state & local permits, credentials, and licenses.

7 Maintain Financial Operations
   • Maintain existing funding after a disaster and access new emergency/disaster funds
   • Staff compensation policies after a disaster should be written out in the organization’s plan
**Section 3: Guidance for Health Care Providers**

1. **Identification and Assessment**
   - Assessing medical and behavioral health issues and evaluation
   - Accessing services
   - Mental health considerations

2. **Prevention of Hospital System Surge and Coordination of Care**
   - Pre-event care management and planning
   - Surveillance monitoring
   - Pre-event triage and resource allocations

3. **Medical Capacity Available for Ready Mobilization in Disasters**
   - Pre-disaster planning
   - Response during a disaster
   - Post-crisis recovery activities

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