

Pre-Event Planning Checklist for Post-Disaster Recovery

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

1. Identify vulnerable areas and people, businesses, etc. who are most at risk in various disaster scenarios. Utilize information on soil and building types, for example, in anticipating earthquake vulnerability.
2. Make sure all community groups, businesses and resource organizations understand how the government will respond and where they fit in. Establish roles and relationships utilizing incident command system.
3. Prepare a Community Based Disaster Response Plan identifying linkages among government responders and the variety of organizations that will be involved in response including medical, shelter, relief, neighborhood, business, social service, religious, school, and others. Tailor the plan to the uniqueness of your community.
4. Formalize the relationships with Memoranda of Understanding between the City and each community-based organization. Supporting responders authorized in the adopted Disaster Response Plan become eligible for FEMA reimbursement.
5. Plan for flexible administrative structures adaptable to the particulars of the disaster. Keep in mind that new working relationships will need to be formed and that client groups outside city hall will seek to work with staff with whom they are most familiar.
6. Emphasize situation analysis and information gathering and dissemination capabilities in the Disaster Response Plan. Situation analysis is the essential building block from which to begin making recovery decisions. Establish information linkages and networks widely throughout the community.
7. Prepare mobilization strategies for massive building inspection needs.
8. Anticipate how emergency response decisions may affect long-term recovery (e.g., demolition policies). Prepare scenarios with a range of "acceptable risk" choices.
9. Establish separations and linkages between policymakers and the Emergency Operations Center. Anticipate how policy matters will be resolved and how information will flow to and from the EOC and the community political leadership.

RECOVERY: BUSINESS

1. Retrofit vulnerable structures. Important! Retrofitting, even in marginal applications, can greatly enhance the recovery potential for an individual property.
2. Recognize that short-term survival of the damaged business district is critical to long-term recovery.
3. Recognize that strong public/private partnerships will be needed for long-term recovery.
4. Encourage private-sector pre-disaster planning for protection and/or redundancy of important business records and documentation.
5. Include inventory recovery strategies in pre-event planning.
6. Formulate a plan and a structure for planning short-term business resumption following the disaster. Include consideration of who should be involved in the planning as well as substantive concerns such as transportation, circulation, alternative business locations, temporary quarters (e.g., pavilions), etc. Make sure to anticipate the resources needed to handle the details such as real estate agents and attorneys.
7. Include a long-term recovery planning process and structure in the Community Based Disaster Response Plan. Identify the key players (stakeholders, politicians, officials) who will need to begin planning for recovery during the emergency response phase and keep the list current.
8. Establish a tax-deductible business relief fund account through the Chamber of Commerce or other business organization that can accept relief contributions for business. Establish a process for disbursing relief money.
9. Identify and become familiar with post-disaster relief programs and sources such as FEMA assistance, Small Business Administration loan programs, etc. Assign responsibilities in advance for public agency and private sector people to pursue recovery assistance immediately following the disaster. Prepare to move quickly while the "opportunity window" is widest.
10. Anticipate how ongoing Federal or State economic development assistance programs could be refocused a recovery resources for particular business districts or areas.
11. Anticipate how redevelopment powers could be applied in the post-disaster setting, including the potential expansion or reconstituting of existing redevelopment districts.
12. Work to minimize vulnerability of content to earthquake damage. Content damage can be a major source of loss, even absent structural failure.

RECOVERY: HOUSING

1. Emphasize retrofit and mitigation.
2. Establish shelter sites and identify areas that could serve as sites for interim housing. Be sure to identify inappropriate temporary sites and put emergency personnel there immediately following a disaster to direct people to the appropriate areas.
3. Adopt a policy or ordinance to deal with nonconforming uses.
4. Establish a city-sponsored relief fund that can be directed to housing recovery.
5. Tailor short- and long-term responses to meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations anticipating ethnic, language, cultural or other special considerations. Anticipate problems for each particular type of housing.
6. Identify resource and assistance programs in advance that can be activated following the disaster. Do not overlook foundations or philanthropic agencies that would not otherwise be involved in housing.
7. Plan ways for existing city housing programs (e.g., rehabilitation) to be refocused following the disaster.
8. Work with local non-profit housing agencies to establish post-disaster roles.
9. Evaluate local housing market conditions (elasticity) to anticipate how varying levels of need could be addressed.
10. Prepare a plan for building permanent streamlining, including field issuance of some types of permits, and how-to-repair information for common damage items such as chimneys.

OTHER

1. Integrate pre-disaster planning for recovery into other ongoing community planning activities. For example, when preparing economic development strategies, include a component for business hazard mitigation, resumption and recovery. Do likewise for neighborhood planning.
2. Consider historic preservation needs and strategies in pre-event planning.
3. Be practical; avoid a doomsday mentality. Risk reduction is always an *achievable* goal and all incremental mitigations count.
4. Use scenarios to involve the community in risk identification and hazard reduction strategies.
5. Keep up with changing technology. Information exchange is the most important aspect of disaster response and recovery and this is where technology is moving the fastest.
6. Use outside resources; learn from others. Organizations such as the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute, California Specialized Training Institute, and the state Seismic Safety Commission have a wealth of resources available.