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The Voice is a publication of FEMA Region 6
 Contact the editors:
 Diane Howe
diane.howe@fema.dhs.gov
 Charla Marchuk
charla.marchuk@urs.com

National Disaster Recovery Framework Basics

One of the greatest challenges in a large-scale disaster is coordinating the myriad of groups involved in recovering from the disaster: governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) such as the American Red Cross, and private sector partners. In 2011, FEMA developed the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF) to address this challenge and to help individuals, families, and communities recover from large-scale disasters as quickly and effectively as possible.

The NDRF is a guide for disaster recovery managers at all levels of government. The focus is on establishing well-defined decision-making structures at the local level to facilitate coordination with State and Federal recovery partners after a disaster. The flexibility of the NDRF enables recovery managers to collaborate to prioritize recovery needs, determine the limitations in recovery capacity and the resources for supplementing steady-state capacities, develop partnerships to support the recovery, and identify redevelopment opportunities.

The NDRF also emphasizes the critical role that pre-disaster recovery planning plays in ensuring a more sustainable and resilient future for our communities. As clearly stated in the NDRF, “The speed and success of recovery can be greatly enhanced by establishment of the process and protocols prior to a disaster for coordinated post-disaster recovery planning and implementation.” See the article “Benefits of Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning for Communities.”

Although the NDRF applies to Presidentially declared disasters, many of its concepts and principles are also applicable to non-federally declared disasters and incidents that have recovery consequences.

The NDRF aligns with the National Response Framework, but it does not address critical early response functions, such as lifesaving and initial sheltering. It does, however, provide guidance for efficiently transitioning from response to longer term recovery operations using the recovery continuum (Figure 1).

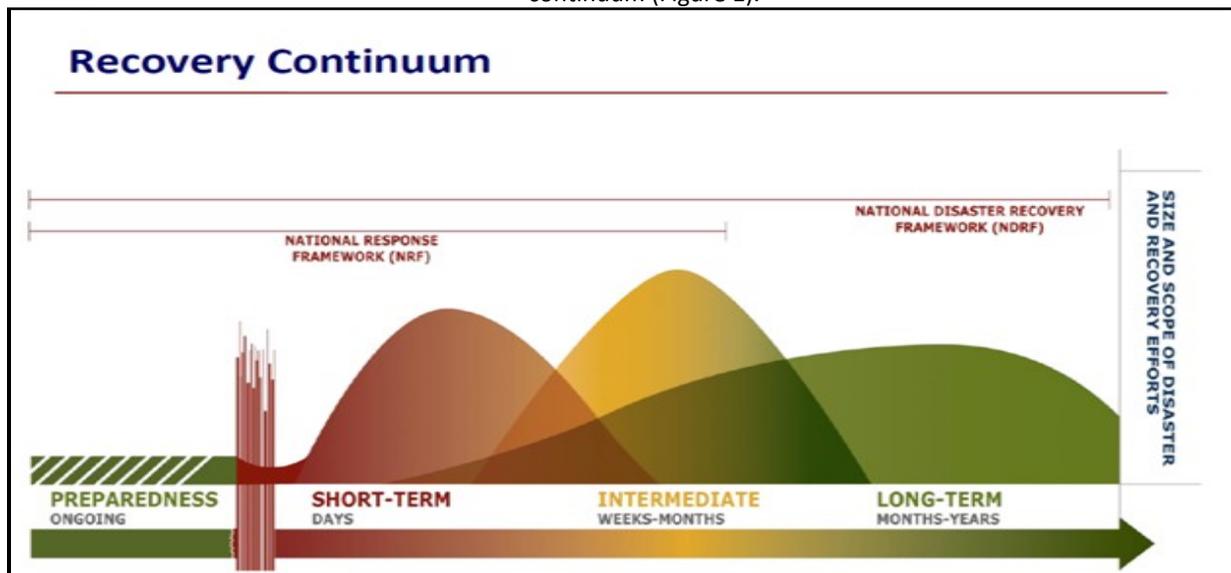


Figure 1 -The recovery continuum helps to understand transition from response to recovery functions.

Local Governments Face Common Recovery Challenges

When disaster strikes, local governments face many challenges. In addition to maintaining regular services and duties, community officials need to focus a large portion of their time on recovery efforts. Having a recovery plan in place helps prepare for the unexpected. While communities might not be able to anticipate every scenario, a great deal can be put in place before a disaster strikes to speed the recovery process. Some considerations include identifying and training additional staff that is prepared to respond and initiate important recovery activities; and determining immediate priorities in advance of a disaster that focus resources on response activities vs. longer-term priorities that need to be considered throughout the recovery process. It is also important that communities familiarize themselves with state and Federal funding opportunities to aid in the recovery process. Proactive recovery planning can ensure a greater likelihood that communities will not only bounce back more quickly, but in the face of future disasters, will sustain less damage and build back stronger than before.

Additional Resources

FEMA. *Integrating Hazard Mitigation Into Local Planning*

<http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/31372>

FEMA. *Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans: CPG 101 Version 2.0-*

<http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/25975?fromSearch=fromsearch&id=5697>

FEMA. *Mitigation Ideas: A Resource for Reducing Risk to Natural Hazards -*

<http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/30627?fromSearch=fromsearch&id=6938>

FEMA. *Community Recovery Management Toolkit*

<http://www.fema.gov/national-disaster-recovery-framework/community-recovery-management-toolkit/resources-plan-post>

FEMA. *National Preparedness Community.*

<http://www.community.fema.gov/connect.ti/readynpm/view?objectid=127524>

FEMA. *Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment Guide: CPG 201*

<http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/26335?id=5823>

& Supplement 1: Toolkit <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/28651>

Resources to Help Communities Organize After a Disaster

The Long-Term Community Recovery Management Toolkit is a compilation of guidance, case studies, tools, and training to assist local communities and community leaders manage the complex issues in long-term post-disaster recovery. The toolbox is available at: <http://www.fema.gov/national-disaster-recovery-framework/community-recovery-management-toolkit/resources-organize#CRL>. The website also has resources for organizing local leadership, involving the local community, and coordinating among community stakeholders.

The Recovery Support Functions' Role and How They Assist Local Communities

The National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF) groups the core areas of disaster recovery into six Recovery Support Functions (RSFs) and identifies the primary and secondary Federal agencies responsible for each one.

The six RSFs are:

1. Community Planning and Capacity Building
2. Infrastructure
3. Housing
4. Economic Development
5. Natural and Cultural Resources
6. Health and Social Services

The RSFs provide an operational structure that promotes problem-solving, improves access to resources, and fosters coordination among the various groups involved in the recovery, including those not active in emergency response, to focus on community recovery needs.

The objective of the RSFs is to facilitate the identification, coordination, and delivery of Federal assistance needed to supplement recovery resources and efforts by local, State, Tribal and Territorial governments and private and nonprofit sectors.

REGION 6 RECOVERY SUPPORT FUNCTIONS CONTACT:

Charlie Cook
Community Planning and Capacity Building
Recovery Division | Region 6 | FEMA
800 North Loop 288, Denton TX 76209
O: 940.898.5400 | BB: 940.268.9952
Email: charles.cook4@fema.dhs.gov

Benefits of Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning for Communities

When disaster strikes, local governments face many challenges. One of those challenges is that community officials must devote time and energy to recovering from the disaster while continuing to provide regular services. Preparing for a disaster by developing a pre-disaster recovery plan can help speed the recovery process even though it's not possible to anticipate every scenario.

Because every community has a unique combination of factors such as geographical size, population, and vulnerabilities, the development of a pre-disaster recovery plan needs to be community-driven, and the plan needs to be crafted to fit the community's capabilities and challenges.

There is no set template for a pre-disaster recovery plan, but considerations include identifying staff who are prepared to respond and initiate important recovery activities, training additional staff if necessary, and determining the priorities immediately post-disaster to focus resources on response activities rather than on longer term recovery issues. Plans should also include information on sources of State and Federal funding that can be used for the recovery.

Some communities have used the planning process to integrate hazard mitigation in local planning and development review activities, such as comprehensive plans, land use plans, economic development, housing plans, zoning ordinances and other development regulations.

It is important that communities embrace opportunities to rebuild in a more resilient and sustainable manner, which can be defined during recovery planning. An example is reducing the risk of flood damage when rebuilding in areas of the community that have experienced or are highly vulnerable to flooding. Options such as elevating and relocating structures can be evaluated during recovery planning.

Pre-disaster recovery planning benefits the community in many ways. Here are a few of them:

- Avoiding the difficulty of developing partnerships with community leaders, faith-based organizations, nonprofits, and the private sector in a post-disaster environment by establishing the partnerships during plan development; doing so can also set the tone for a collaborative planning process.
- Shortening timelines and improving recovery outcomes as a result of enhanced coordination between the community and State/Federal partners.
- Identifying before a disaster the potential Federal, State, nongovernmental, and private sector sources of recovery funds, which can help the community recover financially more quickly.
- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of governmental and nongovernmental partners to streamline recovery processes.
- Creating a mechanism to effectively engage nonprofits and the private sector post-disaster to encourage a whole community approach.
- Developing a unified message to communicate recovery planning priorities and processes that will foster community-wide support and an understanding of sustainability and resiliency principles. A unified message reduces confusion and improves the ability to get things done.
- Ensuring a greater likelihood that communities will not only bounce back more quickly from a disaster but will also sustain less damage and build back stronger than before.

Upcoming Webinar Trainings

Topic: E210: Recovery from Disaster: The Local Government Role
Date/Time: This course is available online and focuses on local roles and responsibilities, and provides guidance on developing a local disaster recovery plan
Where to Register: <http://www.training.fema.gov/>

Topic: Introduction to the Community Rating System (CRS) Webinar Training
Date/Time: Tuesday, October 21, 2014, 1:00 pm CST
Where to Register: <https://atkinglobalna.webex.com/mw0401/mywebex/default.do?siteurl=atkinglobalna&service=7>

Topic: Developing Outreach Projects (CRS Activity 330)
Date/Time: Wednesday, October 22, 2014, 1:00 pm CST
Where to Register: <https://atkinglobalna.webex.com/mw0401/mywebex/default.do?siteurl=atkinglobalna&service=7>

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