Community-Based Pre-Disaster Mitigation

for Community and Faith-Based Organizations

Student Guide

FEMA

Community-Based Pre-Disaster Mitigation for Community- and Faith-based Organizations
Student Guide
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Introductory Workshop

Learning Objectives: Gain a basic understanding of community-based mitigation; the benefits of partnerships among CBOs, FBOs, and emergency managers; and how mitigation could help their community.

Introduction to Partnerships in Pre-Disaster Mitigation

When it comes to disaster, emergency managers and community-based and faith-based organizations (CBOs and FBOs) have long operated within certain traditional roles. CBOs and FBOs are accustomed to deploying volunteers and services in disaster relief and recovery. Food, shelter, blankets, the organization of volunteer resources, and the provision of human warmth and comfort are their areas of expertise.

Emergency managers typically are focused on emergency operations and technical solutions. They are burdened with too much to do and too few resources. In many cases, emergency managers have their hands full maintaining a decent state of preparedness and responding when disaster occurs. They generally work with volunteers in well-defined circumstances during and after disasters.

There is a growing trend around the country for CBOs and FBOs to cooperate with emergency managers in a different kind of partnership. Community-based mitigation programs concentrate on ongoing efforts that can lessen the impact disasters have on people and property. These programs capitalize on the distinct and separate strengths that CBOs/FBOs and emergency managers represent.

CBOs and FBOs offer:

- Immense volunteer capacity
- Understanding of community needs and awareness of the most vulnerable populations
- Built-in credibility with the community
- Access to social and population groups that may avoid interaction with government officials
- The power of persuasion and community influence
- The ability to make decisions outside of government processes

Emergency managers provide access to:

- Funding available through government mitigation grant programs
- Government-based expertise and technical know-how

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- Deep understanding of local risks and mitigation needs
- Current status of mitigation within the community
- Access to government expertise and resources at the local, state, regional and federal level

The benefits of CBO/FBO emergency management partnerships are enormous. They include the following:

- CBO/FBO and emergency management partnerships support the reduction of disaster risk, even in highly resource-constrained situations.

- Mitigation activities can keep experienced volunteers active and enthusiastic even in times when their special disaster response and recovery skills are not needed.

- Opportunities exist to bring a whole new group of volunteers into play.

- Program activities maintain community interest and increase awareness regarding disaster risk reduction and preparedness.

- Community members acquire a sense of empowerment through reducing their disaster risk. They buy in at the grassroots level.

- The partnerships and relationships built through such programs further strengthen community bonds.

- When disaster does strike, response and recovery efforts are likely to proceed more smoothly because people know each other, damage and loss are reduced due to mitigation activities, and citizens are apt to be more prepared as a result of their increased disaster consciousness.

Both CBOs/FBOs and emergency managers will be challenged by cultural and organizational differences when they step beyond traditional roles to form these new partnerships. Leadership and operational styles may vary widely. The mission of each group will vary distinctly, both within the CBO and FBO community, and between CBOs/FBOs and emergency managers. For example, CBOs and FBOs are likely to have decision processes that are less structured and potentially more consensus-based. On the other hand, emergency managers generally operate within a command-and-control, fairly hierarchical decision-making and leadership framework. For any partnership to succeed, it is important for each group to understand the cultural values and viewpoints of their partners, and to honor and respect them.

A Caveat on Community-Based Mitigation Programs

If your community chooses to either establish a community-based mitigation program – or to enhance an existing partnership between emergency managers and CBOs/FBOs – it's critical that emergency managers be informed and brought into the loop as early as possible. Emergency managers are a tremendous resource that should be tapped to help volunteer groups understand the local natural hazards and how volunteers most successfully and effectively address outstanding mitigation needs in the community.

Because emergency managers are charged formally with the task of community disaster preparedness, response, and mitigation, volunteer efforts must dovetail with the official plans either in place or underway. Volunteer support should be viewed as the asset it is. Failure to involve emergency managers in discussions could result in misunderstandings or even a situation in which volunteer activities impede progress. Coordination and solid communication are a must.

CBO and FBO volunteers can achieve optimum results when working in partnership with emergency managers and in accordance with official Community Mitigation Plans. By coordinating with the local emergency manager, volunteers will be able to join any pre-existing mitigation committee.

Resource Guide: FEMA publication 386-1 "Getting Started: Building Support for Mitigation Planning," describes the mitigaiton planning process and how volunteers can contribute to it. For further information, see the "General Resources" section of the Resource Guide.

Mitigation vs. Preparedness and Why Pre-Disaster Mitigation is Important

Mitigation is defined as ongoing efforts that can lessen the impact disasters have on people and property. There is a distinction between community preparedness and mitigation activities. Community disaster preparedness gets people and communities ready for a disaster that almost certainly will occur.

Examples of preparedness activities include:

- Knowing how to drop, cover, and hold on when an earthquake happens
- Warning sirens
- Emergency communication systems
- NOAA weather radios
- Evacuation plans
- Emergency supplies kit
- Sandbags
- Smoke alarms

On the other hand, disaster mitigation activities will actually prevent or reduce the impact of the hazard. Examples of mitigation activities are:

- Installing hurricane shutters

- Strengthening roofs

- Installing fire-resistant shingles

- Installing shatter-resistant window film

- Anchoring outdoor items that can become projectiles in hurricanes and high winds

- Implementing vegetation management – for example, removing fire-prone dry plant material from gutters and around residences and other buildings, or trimming tree limbs that overhang roofs to avoid roof damage during hurricanes, tornadoes, or high straight-line winds

- Clearing streams

- Adopting and enforcing stricter building codes

- Installing hail-resistant shingles

- Conducting a needs assessment – determining the level and type of mitigation needs present in the community; for example, identifying clogged drainageways and streams that could cause flooding during periods of high rainfall; can include specific details on the number of areas that need clearing and a prioritization of which areas need to be cleared first based on the severity of the problems that could result if the stream or drainageway remains uncleared

- Bolting bookshelves to walls

- Installing backflow valves – special valves that prevent toilet overflows when the household sewer system is infiltrated with floodwater

- Developing mitigation plans – specific plans for mitigation activities to address one or more hazards faced by a community

- Building safe rooms – specially designed rooms built to withstand high winds generally associated with tornadoes; these are available in modular, pre-built form or are built using specified materials to pre-engineering specifications

Importance of CBO/FBO Involvement with Emergency Management in Community Pre-Disaster Mitigation Activities

Large Group Brainstorming (suggested time 25 minutes):

1. What are the elements of your community that you value most?
2. What potential hazards or disasters most concern you?
3. What existing CBOs and FBOs are active in your community? Who are their members? What do they accomplish? What resources do they offer?

Opportunities Identification Brainstorm (Small Group) (25 minutes):

1. What opportunities exist to improve or expand upon hazard mitigation in our community?
2. Where have we seen the greatest benefits in our community from previous mitigation activities?
3. What geographical areas, facility types, or population groups are most in need of mitigation assistance?

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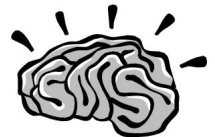
Section 1: Becoming a Community-Based Organization (CBO) and/or Faith-Based Organization (FBO) Pre-Disaster Mitigation Volunteer

> **Learning Objectives: Learn how CBOs and FBOs can contribute to their communities by serving as pre-disaster mitigation volunteers.**

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Section 1.A: Understanding our Risk of Disaster

Brainstorm the following:

1. What natural hazards are of greatest concern to us? How have these hazards affected us in the past?

2. Is it possible to eliminate or reduce our risk from some or all of these natural hazards? How could we do that?

3. Who is most vulnerable to disaster in our community? In my personal circle? How would they be affected during a disaster?

Section 1.B: Can we Help Make our Community Safer?

1. Mitigation is one of the ways we can reduce our disaster risk. Mitigation brainstorm:

What is mitigation? Why should we mitigate?

Mitigation is defined as ongoing efforts that can lessen the impact disasters have on people and property. There is a distinction between community preparedness and mitigation activities. Community disaster preparedness gets people and communities ready for a disaster that almost certainly will occur.

Note: The focus of these training materials is on pre-disaster mitigation, even though preparedness and mitigation go hand-in-hand in making communities safer.

Examples of preparedness activities include:

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2. How does mitigation get done?

- The role of emergency managers in mitigation

- The role of CBOs and FBOs in mitigation

Brief Definitions of Mitigation Partner Organizations

- Community-based Organization (CBO): Non-commercial grassroots organization for community support; has visibility and influence; grounded in the community culture; may include politically focused organizations

- Faith-based Organization (FBO): A group that bases its gathering on a unifying faith or belief system; is visible and involved in the community; has formal or reputational influence

- Emergency Managers: Government employees who have the knowledge, skills, and ability to effectively manage a comprehensive emergency management program, including:

  - Working knowledge of all the basic tenets of emergency management, including mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery

  - Experience and knowledge of interagency and community-wide participation in planning, coordination, and management functions designed to improve emergency management capabilities

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Brief History of CBO/FBO Involvement in Disaster Mitigation

Traditionally, CBOs/FBOs have been involved in the disaster response and recovery phase – providing shelter, food, clothing, and emotional support to victims of disaster. However, during the 1970s, researchers and government officials began to shift their thinking about disasters away from a simple emphasis on immediate response. Disasters began to be seen from a more continuous perspective, rather than as independent single events.

These ways of thinking stressed the need for disaster preparation and awareness – to be ready for disasters before they occurred rather than simply reacting afterward. Accordingly, how the conception of people who might be affected by disasters changed as well.

Rather than passive "victims" of disasters dependent upon government assistance in the wake of a disaster, residents of affected communities began to be seen as potentially empowered to actively affect their own environment by taking action to mitigate the potential effects of disasters.

The knowledge of potential disasters faced by a community came to be seen as an incentive for communities to better plan and prepare for their occurrence. For example, hurricanes will always occur, but the amount of damage they cause will be determined in large part by where and how people choose to build, and how well-prepared they are to deal with the hurricane and it aftermath. Inherent in a number of these new ways of thinking about disasters was a realization that disasters could be effectively dealt with on a local level. This approach emphasized that local grassroots involvement was crucial to addressing the challenges that planning for a potential disaster posed to local communities. From these changes in thinking about disasters arose great interest in the concept of disaster mitigation.

The goal of involving CBOs and FBOs in local disaster mitigation can clearly be traced back to a number of these developments in thinking regarding disasters. As locally based organizations with strong networks within communities, CBOs and FBOs are well situated to bring about grassroots involvement in disaster mitigation. They can provide a truly "bottom-up" approach to mitigation, featuring an emphasis on social, rather than technological, solutions and empowerment of the local community.

Mitigation activities occur, first and foremost, at the local or individual level. Because of circumstances that are unique to individual communities, disaster mitigation must necessarily take place at a local level. Accordingly, the status of CBOs and FBOs as locally based organizations makes them excellent candidates to undertake or be involved in disaster mitigation activities.

Section 1.C: Establishing Mitigation Partnerships Between Emergency Managers and CBOs/FBOs

1. Communities like ours have been able to create beneficial mitigation partnerships. Use the case studies provided here to stimulate discussion. Additional resources are available in the Resource Guide and through the FEMA library.

Evansville, IN

In Evansville, Indiana, a project to help residents of two neighborhoods strap down their hot water heaters was done by the Disaster Resistant Community Corp. (DRC) along with CBOs/FBOs and the neighborhood's Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT). The local building inspector helped organize the event and train volunteers.

Materials for strapping down the hot water heaters were provided to residents in these two neighborhoods free of charge. Installation help was provided by the CERT and CBO/FBO members to residents who needed someone to do the actual work. There was no charge for this service.

Strapping down hot water heaters keeps them from falling over and causing gas leaks and possible fires, as well as providing 30 gallons of fresh water if water lines are damaged in an earthquake. In all, almost 40 water heaters were strapped down by volunteers, and kits for strapping down water heaters were distributed to another 30 households.

Polk County, MO

In Polk County, MO, a team formed to complete what became known as the "Bare Ditch Project." Various organizations, civic groups, and schools came together at 24 locations across the county to clear the drainages of debris and other obstructing items. The goal was to provide preventative maintenance by removing debris that collects and stops proper water drainage through drainage ditches, which can lead to flooding. In all, 47 community groups and 252 volunteers came out and worked 829 hours to accomplish the drainage clearing.

Ouachita Parish, LA

The Ouachita Multi-Purpose Community Action Program (OMCAP) and its community partners worked together to rehabilitate structures in a lower-income area of Monroe, LA. The Group Work Camp project consisted of a hurricane preparedness drill, the rehabilitation of 50 homes, cutting weeds and vegetation management, and the development of mitigation strategies for an encephalitis outbreak (clearing standing water). The project mitigated a number of natural and technological hazards in addition to improving the quality of life for participating families:

- Debris removal
- Weatherizing homes
- Roof repairs
- Minor structural repairs
- Disseminating educational materials

Partners included the City of Monroe (police, fire), City of West Monroe American Red Cross, United Way, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Fair Park Baptist Church Men's Group, and Ouachita Parish Civil Defense, among others.

Brattleboro, VT

In Brattleboro, VT, a group of volunteers from local agencies and CBOs worked together to retrofit local childcare centers against earthquake damage. The group contacted the Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS) for advice on how to assess the needs of these facilities to increase the safety for the children. Once the assessments were completed, it was decided that the needs included anchoring bookcases, bracketing shelves, and velcroing pictures and knick-knacks to keep them from falling.

Brainstorm the following:

2. As volunteers, how could we work with emergency managers to reduce our risks?

3. Are we interested in pursuing a community-based mitigation program?

4. Do we know others who would like to participate? Do we have special skills or networks that could help support our emergency managers in their efforts to keep our community safer?

notes:

Section 2: Setting Up for Success in Community-Based Mitigation

Learning Objectives: Learn how to establish a foundation and organization for a community-based mitigation program.

Note: From this section onward, all sections of the curriculum assume that the participant group is interested in forming a community-based mitigation organization and moving forward with a program. At this point, the curriculum becomes how-to based.

Section 2.A: Checking out the Local Mitigation Scene
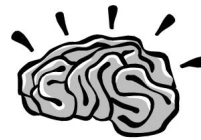
1. Brainstorm local mitigation activities

- Determine if any volunteer mitigation efforts have occurred in the past or are presently underway.

- If community-based mitigation has been undertaken, learn about the activities, groups involved, and perceived successes and challenges.

2. Identifying local mitigation opportunities for volunteers

Section 2.B: Effectively Identifying and Recruiting Individual Volunteers

1. Obtaining buy-in from your organization

- How does your organization make decisions?

- Can a committee form on its own and act?

- Does a governing body or individual have to approve or endorse the effort?

- What kind of decision process is required?

- What kind of process would engage the most widespread support?

- What actions must be taken for your organization to decide to participate in mitigation programs?

- Develop an action plan for obtaining buy-in from your organization to participate in community-based mitigation. Consider the following:

- What actions need to be taken?
- What kind of schedule is appropriate?
- Who should be responsible?

2. Identifying and recruiting volunteers from your organization

- Creating a list of volunteer candidates

3. Developing an action plan for recruiting volunteers

- How will volunteer candidates be contacted?

- What kind of information will need to be shared during the initial contact?

- Who will put the information together?

- Who will contact specific individuals?

- What will candidates be asked to do initially and in the future?

- What's in it for the volunteers (why should they participate, and what are the benefits to participation)?

- What is the schedule?

- Who in our group can spearhead the volunteer contact effort?

What's in it for volunteers? Reasons to participate:

No one is better equipped to prepare your constituencies for disaster – with less loss of property and life – than you.

• Participants can help individuals and CBO/FBO groups understand what role they might play in creating their own disaster-resistant environment, as well as how they can work with others to build a disaster-resistant community. Participants are empowered to take charge of their own safety and reduce their disaster risk.

• Participants can educate groups and individuals on the importance of disaster mitigation and the benefits they and the community will see from working to reduce disaster risk.

• Participants can learn new skills that would be valuable in mitigation projects (e.g., amateur radio and emergency communication, safety retrofit skills, power tool use, etc.)

Section 2.C: Identifying and Recruiting Volunteers from other CBOs and FBOs

1. Developing a CBO/FBO list

2. Expanding the CBO/FBO list

3. Understanding other CBOs/FBOs; Brainstorm the following:
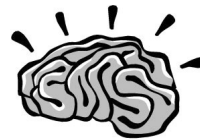
> • What do we know about this group?
>
> • Does it have goals for community improvement or member safety?
>
> • Does it represent a particularly vulnerable population?
>
> • Is there a reasonable link between the group's mission and mitigation?
>
> • What is the organization's culture?
>
> • How does it make decisions?
>
> • What is the organization's role in the community – both outwardly perceived and self-perceived?
>
> • Would this group be interested in working with other organizations on community-based mitigation?
>
> • Who do we know that has personal or professional relationships with the leaders of this organization? Would they be willing to help us recruit?

The Importance of Understanding Organizational Culture and Mission

Each CBO and FBO has a different culture, organizational and leadership style and structure, mission, and vision of its purpose. As you begin to recruit and work with different CBOs and FBOs, it is essential to form a basic understanding of these characteristics. This type of understanding:

- Is the starting place for finding common ground

- Highlights issues that will require sensitive treatment as you work with this organization and its members

- Helps you envision how and why this organization could or should become interested in participating in community-based mitigation

- Forms the basis for how initial contact should be handled and by whom

- Identifies concerns and questions that are likely to arise upon initial contact, enabling you to prepare to address them in advance of the contact

- Facilitates a strong beginning for building rapport

- Bodes well for the establishment of successful long-term relationships

4. Developing an action plan for getting other CBOs/FBOs involved

- How will CBOs/FBOs be contacted?

- What kind of information will need to be shared during the initial contact?

- Who will put the information together?

- Who will contact specific groups?

- What will the groups be asked to do initially and in the future?

- What's in it for the CBOs/FBOs (why should they participate, and what are the benefits to participation)?

- What is the schedule?

- Who in our group can spearhead the CBO/FBO contact effort?

Tips for Generating Excitement about Community-Based Mitigation

As you contact CBOs and FBOs to solicit their participation in community-based mitigation programs, be prepared to generate some excitement to gain their interest and commitment. What you learn about each organization's culture, organizational and leadership style and structure, mission, and vision of its purpose will help you define the best approach. However, here are some tips to get you started:

<u>Appeal to human interest</u>. Share some of the exciting human-interest stories of successful community-based mitigation programs. Many of the experiences are heart-warming and show how fulfilling this type of work can be.

<u>Personalize the issue</u>. Ask about the members of their organization, and engage in a discussion of risk and vulnerability. Discuss how mitigation programs could benefit the organization's constituents. For example, an FBO day-care facility may represent a vulnerable population.

<u>Create a link to the organization's mission and programs</u>. With most CBOs and FBOs, some aspect of their mission or existing programs forms a natural link to mitigation programs. For example, if helping the under-privileged is an organizational goal, describe the mitigation needs of the underprivileged population and how volunteers can assist.

Section 2.D: Setting up an Organizational Workshop

Design an initial organizational workshop.

- Who should be invited?

- What is the optimum number of participants?

- How should they be contacted and by whom?

- How much background information on mitigation will need to be conveyed?

- What other information will participants need to make a decision about getting involved in community-based mitigation programs?

- What instructional and other materials/equipment will be needed and how will we obtain them?

- Where should the workshop be held?

- Who should facilitate?

- How long should the workshop last?

- Where should the workshop be held?

- What time of day would be best for the participant group?

- What kinds of interactive exercises and group participation activities will help bring the group together and understand the key messages?

- What is the desired outcome?

- What are the next steps after the organizational workshop?

Section 2.E: Expanding the Network

Brainstorm the following:

Once our group is organized, how do we expand our network?

Review *Ideas for Expanding Your Mitigation Network*.

Ideas for Expanding Your Mitigation Network

1. Ask people in your organization and other CBOs/FBOs if there are groups with which they would like to work on a mitigation activity. For example, in a larger community, perhaps several houses of worship of one denomination might enjoy having their youth groups work together.

2. Consider setting up a core team with membership from multiple groups to keep the concept of mitigation alive in the community and coordinate multi-group activities.

3. If CBO members are also FBO members, ask them to engage their FBO in mitigation activities, and vice versa.

4. Ask CBO/FBO leaders who get involved in mitigation programs to help carry the message to other groups, for example, speaking at a CBO luncheon meeting, or visiting a FBO class to give an informal talk.

5. Contact individuals from nearby communities that have succeeded in community-based mitigation programs. Ask them what kind of groups they included in their program. Solicit their help in sharing information with your local CBOs/FBOs.

6. Seek to bring together CBOs and FBOs that may not normally work together. Consider organizing a special event to engage these groups.

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notes:

Section 3: Program and Project Development

Learning Objectives: Participants should understand the basic infrastructure needed to develop a community-based pre-disaster mitigation program, as well as identify appropriate resources and projects.

Section 3.A: How to Be a Mentor

1. What is a mentor?

Discuss what mentoring is and what a mentor does. Refer to the mentoring resources in the Resource Guide for additional information.

2. What qualities make an ideal mentor?

Brainstorm the qualities that make a good mentor.

Possible qualities include the following:
- Community-based mitigation experience
- Mentoring experience
- Familiarity with CBOs/FBOs and their missions
- Availability and willingness to mentor

3. Given these qualities, who should the mentor be, and where should we look to find that person?

Develop an action plan that includes identifying mentor candidates and the means of securing their assistance.

Section 3.B: Thinking Creatively about Resources

1. Identifying what kinds of resources are needed

Brainstorm resources needed for the mitigation program and activities. Consider the full range of needs, including the following:

Financial

- Funding
- Advice
- In-kind donations

Materials

- Equipment and tools, either donated or loaned
- Specialized safety equipment (hard hats, vests)
- Supplies (office supplies, water coolers, cups, refreshments, garbage bags, etc.)
- Printing (signs, training materials, forms, flyers, posters, etc.)
- Information (how-to, project ideas, training materials, etc.)
- Participant and donor recognition (ball caps, T-shirts, key chains, other freebie items, plaques, etc.)

Legal/Insurance

- Volunteer liability release forms
- Trained operators for specialized equipment

People

- Volunteers
- Office and administrative support (answering phones, making copies, word processing, database development, mailing assistance, postage, etc.)

Miscellaneous

- Transportation
- Facilities for meetings and activities
- Technical support and volunteer training
- Other organizational and project specific needs

2. Defining what our organization can provide

List resources available through your organization.

3. Identifying other sources of support

Brainstorm support that could be requested and obtained from other sources, including the following:

- FEMA and other Federal agencies
- Volunteer organizations that specialize in disaster programs
- CBOs/FBOs – local, regional, national
- Personal and professional networks
- Local businesses
- Trade associations and other similar groups
- Funding and grant sources (agencies, institutions, foundations, etc.)
- Web sites and published resources
- Asset analysis; analyze what is existing within your organization – don't re-invent the wheel
- Economic development office
- Planning office
- Insurance agencies
- Unions
- Utilities
- School districts
- Transportation departments

Refer to the Resource Guide for more ideas.

4. Getting outside of the box

Stretch and get creative. Come up with three "really out of the box" ideas for obtaining resources.

Creative Resource Thinking

- <u>Consider reframing your program</u>. For example, while mitigation is the goal, you could consider other focal points for grants or requests for assistance, such as support for community-building and social development, skill development for minority or underserved populations, intergenerational or interfaith programs, environmental programs, etc.

- <u>Ask for referrals</u>. Ask each person to recommend other sources to contact, regardless of whether that individual or group is able to assist.

- <u>Join forces with other organizations to ask for joint donations</u>. For example, if a group of low-income residents needed home improvements/repairs to mitigate an encephalitis outbreak, FBO volunteers could join forces with the Boy Scouts to request window screen donations from the local hardware store.

- <u>Share resources with other organizations</u> – you provide the safety equipment for your project and a project of their choosing, they provide the volunteers to do the work.

5. Setting the wheels in motion – the action plan

Develop a plan for approaching other organizations to request assistance and resource support. Consider the following:

- Whom are we contacting?

- What are we asking them for?

- How will we contact them?

- What will they need and want to know?

- Who will put the information together?

- Who will contact specific individuals?

- What's in it for the donors (why should they help, and what are the benefits to participation?)?

- What is the schedule?

- Who from our group can spearhead the effort?

- How will we express our appreciation?

- How will we keep track of what we've done?

- Are the donations we're asking for tax-deductible?

- What are the legal ramifications/obligations?

Section 3.C: Creating No-cost and Low-cost Projects

Many communities have been able to achieve significant mitigation results with little or no funding. What could we do?

Brainstorm projects that can be accomplished with little or no funding.

Brainstorm activities that could be accomplished by volunteer forces.

Review the case studies (in Section 8 and the Resource Guide) that leveraged volunteer labor, equipment, and other resources while keeping costs minimal. Discuss *Changing Local Codes and Zoning for Mitigation Purposes* as an example of a project that requires a significant time commitment but virtually no hard cash.

Changing Local Codes and Zoning for Mitigation Purposes

Consider forming a committee to become involved in local building code, zoning, and other issues that can affect mitigation efforts. Identify individuals to serve who already understand some of the technical concerns or who are willing to become educated on the subject. Committee responsibilities could include:

- Researching and targeting areas of local code and zoning that could be changed or modified to lessen threats and loss of property from disasters

- Drafting policy for the larger mitigation group to consider

- Spearheading advocacy campaigns to effect changes to local codes and zoning

- Attending official meetings regarding planning and zoning, changes to building and fire codes, and relevant meetings of local governmental bodies

- Meeting with members of local government (City Council, mayor, etc.), planning and zoning committee, and code enforcement officers to discuss mitigation efforts and concerns

- Educating self and constituency about topic

- Finding allies, i.e., firefighters, planning and zoning officials

Easy-to-Implement Low/No-Cost Mitigation Projects

Flood

- Remove all debris from culverts, streams, and channels to allow the free flow of potential floodwaters.

- Clean storm drains and gutters, and remove debris from residential properties to allow free flow of potential floodwater.

Fire

- Move shrubs and other landscaping away from the sides of homes, public buildings, businesses.

- Clear dead brush and grass from properties so that it will not be there to fuel a spreading fire.

Earthquake

- Install cabinet locks.

- Secure televisions, computers, or other heavy appliances and equipment using flexible straps.

- Anchor bookshelves/large cabinets to walls.

- Strap water heaters to walls.

Wind

- Secure or remove items that could become projectiles in high winds.

Generic

- Establish a community tool-lending library.

- Provide instructions and tools to assist homeowners with disaster mitigation.

- Simple activities include making cabinets more earthquake-proof or raising water heaters and other appliances to avoid flood damage.

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Section 4: Media/Publicity/Recognition

Learning Objectives: Gain a basic understanding of how to publicize your community-based mitigation programs and activities, as well as reward and recognize volunteer and partner participation.

## Section 4.A: Publicizing Your Program and Activities

Media and public relations are an art that can take a professional years to master. However, these simple starter tips can help you navigate successfully in the communications realm. The benefit of this session can be enhanced by the participation of an expert in public relations. If possible, ask a local public relations practitioner to help teach this session. Possible sources of assistance include the public information officer from the city or another local, regional, or state agency; staff members from a local or nearby public relations or advertising agency; or public relations staff members from local corporations or institutions (school district, major companies, universities, etc.).

It is important to acknowledge that the media can be an invaluable partner if used proactively. By orchestrating events and including the media at the initial stages, you can help keep mitigation on the public agenda and help citizens embrace mitigation as a public value.

Some CBOs/FBOs may view the media in a negative light, based on past experiences or stereotype notions of who the media is. For example, work to form relationships with the media before a disaster strikes. Share the positive impacts of mitigation efforts, and let the media help you further the long-term strategic objective of building disaster-resistant communities. Or better yet, invite a member of the media to participate on a committee.

1. Developing a publicity plan (note: these are starter tips only)

Brainstorm publicity; address the following:
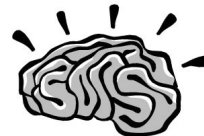
- What would we like to publicize?

- Where would we like to see our efforts reported and recognized?

- What do we want publicity to do for us? What are our long-term goals for publicity? (Example – Inform people of events, support recruitment, increase community awareness of mitigation, etc.)

- What types of media will work best for what we want to achieve? (Example – Radio works well for immediate news; magazines convey ideas in-depth; newspapers reach a big audience on a timely basis; etc.)

- Should we do our own publicity, or should we seek help? If we need help, where can we get it?

- Do we need training? If so, where can we get it?

- Who will take responsibility for this activity? Do we need a committee?

• Who should serve as our media spokesperson? Who will be the backup spokesperson?

• What do we need to know about crisis communications? (Example: What will we tell the media if a volunteer gets hurt while working on a mitigation project?)

• Do we need to establish guidelines for what we say and how we interact with the media?

• How to organize/write a publicity plan (see Resource Guide)

• Do we know anyone who can help formulate a plan?

2. Creating a media list

The best way to build a media list is to start with a good list that someone else has developed and used successfully. If possible, obtain a well-used, well-maintained media list from a local public relations expert.

With the publicity goals in mind, develop a list of relevant media, or review the media list provided and select the appropriate contacts.

Whether working with a donated list or developing your own, media to consider include the following:

• Newspapers (daily, weekly, shoppers, etc.)

• Local and regional magazines

• Radio stations

• Television stations (network, cable, closed-circuit systems)

• Web sites

• Newsletters and bulletins, both print and email (published by neighborhood associations, CBOs, FBOs, local businesses, local associations, schools, etc.)

• Community calendars and other calendars of events

• Columns and special features (getting the home improvement editor to run a feature on disaster-proofing your home, 10 things everyone can do to make their homes more disaster-resistant, etc.)

• Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA)

• List servs

A good media list is more than a list – it indicates a number of important facts about each media source. These facts include:

- Contact name, address, phone, fax, and email

- Preferences – How do they want their news – by fax, in the mail, via email? If electronic, do they need a certain file type? What types of information are they interested in? Do they have any other requirements?

- Deadlines – If you want it to run, when do you have to get it to them?

- Supporting graphics – Do they like photographs and illustrations? If so, what formats do they accept or require?

3. Getting the news out

Discuss the sample news release. Draft the first paragraph of a news release using the fact set and sample. Review formats for news and feature stories (refer to the Resource Guide for other formats).

Fact Set for Potential Mitigation Activity for Students to Use in Writing Practice News Releases:

Who: Local Emergency Management Personnel and the Boy and Girl Scouts and their leaders

What: Clearing vegetation around 10 elderly person's homes to mitigate against fire damage and loss

When: Saturday, June 10, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Where: Volunteers to meet at Firehouse #11, 2020 Dunbar Street

Why: Brush and debris clearing helps to create a safe zone around a person's home in the event of fire. Clearing dead brush and grass helps to eliminate the fuel for spreading fire.

Cost: Elbow grease and time

4. Gaining attention for your news

There are a number of ways to increase media interest in your organization's news. Brainstorm ways to make news attractive and attention-getting. Examples include:

- Asking a prominent local official or community leader (mayor, fire chief, police chief, city council member, Chamber of Commerce president, CBO/FBO leaders, etc.) to endorse the mitigation program and provide quotes for media coverage

- Piggybacking your activities and news with other, better-known community programs or events

- Combining forces with other organizations to issue joint news releases on similar activity.

- Meeting with the media prior to the event to give them background information

- Inviting the media to your meeting

NEWS RELEASE TEMPLATE

Contact: **NEWS RELEASE**

(Name)   **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

(Title)   (Date)

(Phone Number)

Headline Explaining What News Release Is About

CITY, State—Begin with a short and concise lead sentence that explains generally what the story is about and draws the readers into the story. Complete the first paragraph by describing the who, what, when and where of the story.

The middle paragraphs continue with details to further describe the essentials of the story and support the lead paragraph. In these paragraphs, the writer can quote credible authorities that represent key parties in the issue.

The middle paragraphs should also include the significance of the story to the readers, as well as any positive features about the event being described. Use as much space as necessary, but only include main points.

The final paragraph should be the least important because editors will often chop off the bottom of a story to make room in the publication. This paragraph should summarize any key facts or issues and clarify any additional information.

At the bottom, the organization can include a statement, called a "motherhood" statement that explains who the organization is and what it does. This should be the same on all news releases by the organization and is similar to a mission statement. Finally, be sure to include a "Call to Action." For example, add a sentence that says: "For more information about how to get involved, please call _____."

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Example of An Actual News Release

_____

Disaster Resistant

Community Corporation, Inc.

1111 W. 1st Street - Evansville, Indiana 47708

Telephone: 812/555-5555 Fax: 812/555-5556

E-Mail: jdoe@isp.com

<div align="center">

News Release

</div>

To: News Director

From: Johan Doernbecker, Exec. Director

<div align="center">

Pilot Project to help STRAP HOT WATER HEATERS

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Evansville, Indiana…….A pilot project, to help residents of 2 neighborhoods strap their hot water heaters, is being done by the Disaster Resistant Community Corp. (DRC) along with Community Based/Faith Based Organizations (CBO/FBO) and the neighborhood's Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT).

Materials for strapping the hot water heaters will be provided to residents FREE of charge. Installation help will be provided by the CERT and CBO/FBO members to residents who need someone to do the actual work.

Residents in the Lorraine Park area bounded by Weinbach Ave., Washington Ave., Boeke Rd. and Covert Ave. will have a meeting on Tuesday, July 23, at 6:30 p.m. at St. Marks Lutheran Church, 2300 Washington Ave. to learn about the pilot program and sign up for the FREE materials. Residents in the Willemette area bounded by Highway 41, Diamond Ave., Weinbach Ave. and Morgan Ave. will have a meeting on Thursday, August 8, at 6:30 p.m. at the Baptist Church, 12345 Spangler Ave. to learn about the pilot program and sign up for the FREE materials.

Those residents needing installation help may sign up at the meeting for a specific time to have the work done by the CERT and CBO/FBO members. There is no charge for this service. The project will be done in the Lorraine Park and Willemette neighborhoods, on Saturday, August 17, 2002 from 8:00 a. m. to 12 noon.

Strapping the hot water heater will keep it from falling over and causing a gas leak and possible fire; as well as providing 30 gallons of fresh water if water lines are damaged in an earthquake.

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Section 4.B: Recognizing Volunteers and Partners

It's very important to recognize everyone who supports your program. There are many ways to say thanks that cost little or nothing, and they all are appreciated. Recognition and thanks should be a continuous activity – it's crucial to building and sustaining momentum.

Brainstorm ways to recognize volunteers and partners. Recognition will vary depending on personalities and preferences. Possibilities include:

- An annual volunteer and partner banquet or other special event

- A picnic or other special conclusion to a volunteer activity

- Distribution of small donated gifts such as ball caps

- Formal recognition, such as plaques and certificates

- Special awards for service "above and beyond"

- Recognition from a prominent local official or community leader

- Recognition from local, state, and Federal agencies

- Handwritten thank you notes

- Email thank you notes

- A note to the volunteer's supervisor, thanking him/her for allowing the volunteer to participate

- Who else can you use to say thanks?

notes:

Section 5: Identifying and Implementing Projects Within Your Program

Learning Objectives: Learn to identify projects that are appropriate for their community and level of organizational development.

You can jumpstart your community mitigation program by selecting the right projects.The "right" projects are going to depend largely on your group's capacity, understanding, and skill set. In addition, the "right" project will address an identified risk for your area and help further long-term mitigation goals identified by local emergency managers. Starting small is often the best way to ensure success when engaging in community-based pre-disaster mitigation.

Brainstorm mitigation projects that CBO/FBO volunteers can assist with. Refer to *Small Steps to Big Success*.

Small Steps to Big Success

- Involve as many people as possible in the project selection process to assure commitment and buy-in.

- Gather initial project ideas by consulting with FEMA, voluntary disaster organizations, and emergency managers, and by reviewing the case studies provided in Section 8. Even better, invite representatives from these groups to meet with you during project selection.

- Select small projects that can be accomplished simply and rapidly. Brainstorm ways to break any project down into manageable steps/tasks.

- Choose a project that CBOs/FBOs can help accomplish. It should be readily achievable from a resource and skills standpoint.This will help gather momentum and quickly show your group tangible results.

- Duplicate or build upon previous successes of your own or others. For example, if you have successfully completed one daycare center seismic retrofit, try another one. Or, select a well-documented project done successfully in another community. Contact the community to get advice on what worked and what they wish they'd done differently.

- Recognize every aspect of the project that is successful, even if the entire project doesn't come off as planned. Celebrate every achievement, no matter how small.

- Use lessons learned to plan for future successes.

(Continued)

Small Steps to Big Success (Continued)

- Organize skill training that will leave participants with lasting benefits.

- Take appropriate steps to assure the safety of your group.

  - Share information on liability and safety from FEMA, your emergency management group, and other organizations. Provide information on Good Samaritan laws, insurance coverage, etc.

  - Assign appropriate individuals to appropriate tasks, and assure that individuals are appropriately skilled and trained for their roles.

  - Clearly differentiate between tasks that should be completed by professionals versus volunteers.

  - Organize skills training if needed.

  - Appoint a safety officer to assess project safety issues, develop and implement a safety plan, and organize the availability of appropriate safety equipment.

Resource Guide: Refer to the Resource Guide for safety and liability information, additional project ideas or "lessons learned."

notes:

Section 6: Learning from Our Experiences

Learning Objectives: Learn the importance of documentation and evaluation as a means for performance improvement.

It's important to keep track of what we do and to learn from our experiences. Doing this can help us improve our program and its results.

Brainstorm ways to document and assess programs and activities. Topics for discussion include the following items:

• Documenting our activities and achievements – in words and pictures

> Documentation will not only help your group in the evaluation process, but it will facilitate smoother relationship with the media and make your projects easily accessible to other groups.

• Measuring success – how will we know we've succeeded?

> There are a number of ways to measure success, but your group will determine the most important measures of success. Check your project/program's progress against these measures at designated intervals.

Brainstorm what you feel will be important measures of success.

• Getting feedback – evaluation tools and techniques

> Ask participants how they're feeling about your group's project, or use a more structured form of feedback gathering. (See the Resource Guide).

• Debriefing – learning in the moments after a major activity

> Sometimes the best feedback is available immediately after a project has taken place. For workshops, structure a short period of time at the end of your session to solicit feedback and allow participants to evaluate the session. For projects, try and schedule time for your group to meet immediately following the project for just 20 minutes or so. Discuss successes and challenges, lessons learned and any other feedback. Make sure there is a recorder for your group.

• Incorporating what we've learned into future efforts

> Often times, challenges met are easily avoided in the future. Make sure that everyone in the group knows that successes and challenges are vital to the continued success of future projects. Consider a running "best practices" list for particular projects, workshops, or even demographic groups (i.e., When working at the senior home, volunteerism is more visible in the morning hours).

• Sharing what we've learned with others in our group and beyond (tell FEMA, local media, other communities— anyone who will listen!)

> The importance of spreading the word can not be emphasized enough. If you're proud of your group's achievements, others will be intrigued. Utilize the methods outlined in Section 4 to attract media, and use any other methods available to you to share your successes. FEMA's regional offices and

mitigation staff are interested in your successes as well. The FEMA website will have the latest information on how to share your mitigation successes with others.

• Utilizing the Internet to spread the word.

> The Internet has become a powerful information-sharing tool. Chances are that a member of your group has experience using the Internet either personally or for business. Solicit help in getting project and volunteer information online. If no member of your group is comfortable taking on this task, solicit help from a local web-development firm.

The link between evaluation and sustainability is well documented. Programs and projects that are consistently evaluated are more likely to satisfy engaged volunteers and more likely to effectively serve your community. As programs and projects change over time, consistent evaluation allows your group to refine processes and procedures. Well-evaluated programs are often the longest lasting and most successful.

It can also be valuable to ask participants to evaluate themselves or a particular project before and after the fact. A simple structure for self-assessment is available in the Resource Guide.

If your group is planning on using this curriculum or a similar workshop structure, the following form can help you evaluate your effectiveness.

Please take a moment to answer the following questions. Circle the response that best reflects your opinion. Return the form to the workshop facilitator.

1. The facilitator spoke with clarity and was easy to understand.
   a) Very clear and understandable
   b) Clear and understandable
   c) Somewhat clear and understandable
   d) Not clear

2. The facilitator was knowledgeable about the subject.
   a) Very knowledgeable
   b) Knowledgeable
   c) Somewhat knowledgeable
   d) Had no clue….

3. I understood the objectives of the workshop.
   a) Very clear
   b) Clear
   c) Somewhat clear
   d) Not sure what the workshop was about

4. Workshop objectives were accomplished.
   a) All accomplished
   b) Most accomplished
   c) A few were accomplished
   d) None were accomplished

5. The activities and discussions contributed to the completion of the workshop objectives.
   a) Major contributors
   b) Added interest to the workshop
   c) Somewhat useful
   d) A waste of time

6. I felt the scheduled pace of the workshop was…
   a) Enough time
   b) A bit too quick
   c) Too much time
   d) I found my mind wandering….

7. I was given plenty of opportunity to express my opinion in the group about the subject.
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Disagree
   d) Strongly disagree

8. The group sessions had the right amount of participants and elicited participation from all workshop members.
   a) Size was perfect
   b) Size was too small
   c) Size was too big
   d) Didn't need group sessions

9. The facility met the visual and auditory needs of the audience.
   a) I could see and hear very well
   b) I could see and hear
   c) I couldn't see and hear all the time
   d) I couldn't see and hear at all

10. The training media (overheads, PowerPoint, posters, etc.) were clear and legible.
    a) Very clear and legible
    b) Clear and legible
    c) Blurry and somewhat small
    d) I couldn't make them out at all

11. Our community will benefit from the subject matter of this workshop.
    a) Great things will come from this
    b) It will benefit
    c) Somewhat benefit
    d) Not benefit at all

12. I will be able use the knowledge and skills I received in this workshop immediately.
    a) Yes
    b) No

Please answer the following questions. If more space is needed, please use the back of this page.

• The best part of the workshop was:

• The part of the workshop that could use improvement is:

• Comments:

notes:

Section 7: Sustainability: Keeping Volunteers Engaged

Learning Objectives: Gain an understanding of ways to promote program sustainability and long-term volunteer commitment.

Maintaining momentum is important to the success of any effort. Why do volunteers do what they do? There's some reward for them, whether it's personal satisfaction in helping others, fun and fellowship, or a combination of many factors.

Brainstorm ways to maintain volunteer commitment and involvement. Refer to *Ideas to Keep Your Mitigation Program Moving*.

Ideas to Keep Your Mitigation Program Moving

When it comes to your community, no one knows it better than you. So, you can come up with the ideas that will work best to keep your mitigation program alive and exciting. Here are some things that other communities have found successful.

1. Start small. Identify your group's capacity, and focus on achievable goals.

2. Continue to identify interesting, fun, and effective mitigation projects for CBO/FBO volunteers.

3. Actively work to recruit the involvement of additional CBOs/FBOs to spread the workload and keep fresh ideas flowing.

4. Set up a system to rotate leadership to maintain interest and avoid burnout. Establish a way to continuously recruit committee chairs and members, as well as identify candidates to fill other leadership roles. Try to avoid choosing the same people that do everything else in your organization; these people are often overburdened. Instead of recruiting them directly, ask their advice and suggestions for good candidates.

5. Quantify and document the benefits of your volunteer mitigation program over specific time periods. For example, "This year, thanks to you, we were able to reduce the risk of flood damage in 100 households. By raising appliances in the homes of the elderly, as much as $____ could be saved in the event of a flood."

6. Assure your group's achievements are celebrated and that volunteers and partners are recognized regularly.

7. Have "the next project" lined up at the conclusion of any major activity. The activity itself can be used to recruit and involve new groups and individuals in your volunteer mitigation program.

8. Let your CBO/FBO volunteers know that some activities need to be performed more than once, such as vegetation removal and ditch clearing. Such an activity can set the stage for an annual or semi-annual event.

(Continued)

7-1

Ideas to Keep Your Mitigation Program Moving (Continued)

9. Develop an annual calendar of planned mitigation events.

10. Become part of something bigger. Tie one of your mitigation activities into a major community event or celebration. Example: Combine a pre-flood-season ditch or storm drain clearing with a spring community event. Have a fire-prone vegetation "round up" during the annual summer rodeo. And so on!

11. Teach new skills. Volunteers will continue to be involved when they are constantly engaged and learning. Similarly, try to match volunteer tasks with interests—people are often looking for new challenges when volunteering.

12. Continue to diversify your volunteer pool. Involve youth groups and senior groups.

13. Maintain consistency. As much as possible, keep contact information, phone numbers, email, etc. the same over time. This will help recruiting efforts and media relations.

14. Re-evaluate. Constantly revisit your goals and visions. Ensure that they are consistent with the current group's ideas.

15. Share your success!! Tell the media, tell your friends, and tell FEMA.

Many of the preceding suggestions rely on your group identifying common ground. Understand that groups will have different personalities, as will the individuals within your group. Try to identify the types of people you have in your group, as well as the leadership style that will be most effective in working with them.

Here are some short overviews of typical leadership styles:

Leadership Styles in a Nutshell

The Autocrat

The autocratic leader dominates team members, using unilateralism to achieve a singular objective. This approach to leadership generally results in passive resistance from team-members and requires continual pressure and direction from the leader in order to get things done. Generally, an authoritarian approach is not a good way to get the best performance from a team.

There are, however, some instances where an autocratic style of leadership may not be inappropriate. Some situations may call for urgent action, and in these cases an autocratic style of leadership may be best. In addition, most people are familiar with autocratic leadership and therefore have less trouble adopting that style. Furthermore, in some situations, subordinates may actually prefer an autocratic style.

The Laissez-Faire Manager

The Laissez-Faire manager exercises little control over the group, leaving team members to sort out their roles and tackle their work, without participating in this process. In general, this approach leaves the team floundering with little direction or motivation.

Again, there are situations where the Laissez-Faire approach can be effective. The Laissez-Faire technique is usually only appropriate when leading a team of highly motivated and skilled people who have produced excellent work in the past. Once a leader has established that the team is confident, capable, and motivated, it is often best to step back and let the team get on with the task, since interfering can generate resentment and detract from their effectiveness. By handing over ownership, a leader can empower the group to achieve its goals.

The Democrat

The democratic leader makes decisions by consulting the team, while still maintaining control of the group. The democratic leader allows the team to decide how the task will be tackled and who will perform which task. The democratic leader can be seen in two lights:

A good democratic leader encourages participation and delegates wisely, but never loses sight of the fact that he or she bears the crucial responsibility of leadership. He or she values group discussion and input from the team and can be seen as drawing from a pool of team members' strong points in order to obtain the best performance from the team. He or she motivates the team members by empowering them to direct themselves and guides them with a loose rein.

However, the democrat can also be seen as being so unsure that everything is a matter for group discussion and decision. Clearly, this type of "leader" is not really leading at all.

Resource Guide: For more information on leadership styles, refer to the Resource Guide.
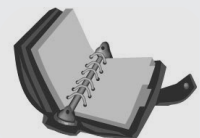
Decision Processes: ORID

Some groups find the ORID method useful for digesting information and in helping to make decisions. ORID stands for Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, and Decisional. The acronym ORID refers to the order in which group members or an entire group can react to material or ideas. For example:

Objective (What):

What words or phrases do you remember from the presentation?

What are some key ideas or images in the presentation?

Reflective (Gut):

Where were you surprised?

What was a high point of the presentation for you?

Interpretive (So What?):

What were the presenters saying? What was it about?

What issues does this dialogue bring up for you?

What are some of the deeper questions we could explore?

Decisional (Now What?)

What can we do here about these issues? What actions can we take?

What would be our first step?

For more information on ORID, see the Resource Guide.

Consensus Decision Making: Steps to Reaching Consensus

Many small groups find it effective to work towards consensus. The consensus process allows the group to come to one decision with which everyone agrees. Following are some tips for reaching consensus and a quick tool to measure where your group stands. For more information, consult the Resource Guide.

Purpose: To guide a team through the process of reaching consensus

When to Use: Whenever making a consensus decision

Whom to Involve: All team members

First, review the meaning of consensus and the process of achieving consensus. Then agree on a targeted time period to reach consensus.

1. Identify Areas of Agreement

2. Clearly State Differences

- State positions and perspectives as neutrally as possible.

- Do not associate positions with people. The differences are between alternative valid solutions or ideas, not between people.

- Summarize concerns and list them.

3. Fully Explore Differences

- Explore each perspective and clarify.

- Involve everyone in the discussion - avoid a one-on-one debate.

- Look for the "third way." Make suggestions or modifications, or create a new solution.

4. Reach Closure

5. Articulate the Decision

- Ask people if they feel they have had the opportunity to fully express their opinions.

- Obtain a sense of the group. (Possible approaches include "go rounds" and "straw polls," or the Consensus Indicator tool. When using the Consensus Indicator, if people respond with two or less, then repeat steps one through three until you can take another poll.)

- At this point, poll each person, asking, "Do you agree with and will you support this decision?"

Tips for Consensus Building

Do's

- Try to get underlying assumptions regarding the situation out into the open where they can be discussed.

- Listen and pay attention to what others have to say. This is the most distinguishing characteristic of successful teams.

- Encourage others, particularly the quieter ones, to offer their ideas. Remember, the team needs all the information it can get.

- Take the time needed to reach the point where everyone can agree to support the group's decision.

Don'ts

- Do not vote. Voting will split the team into "winners and losers" and encourage "either-or" thinking when there may be other ways. Voting will foster argument rather than rational discussion and consequently harm the team process.

- Do not make agreements too quickly or compromise too early in the process. Easy agreements are often based on erroneous assumptions that need to be challenged.

- Do not compete internally; either the team wins or no one wins.

Consensus Decision Making: Consensus Indicator

Purpose: To give a team a way of gauging where team members stand on an issue

When to Use: Whenever making a consensus decision

Whom to Involve: All team members

Time Needed: 1-5 minutes

Ask individuals to react to the proposal by raising the number of fingers that correspond to their position:

FIVE: I'm all for the idea. I can be a leader.
FOUR: I'm for the idea. I can provide support.
THREE: I'm not sure but I am willing to trust the group's opinion and will not sabotage its efforts.
TWO: I'm not sure. I need more discussion.
ONE: I can't support it at this time. I need more information.
ZERO (FIST): No. I need an alternative I can support.

The preceding resources are meant as a starting point. Every group will be different and will change over time. For more information on group dynamics and leadership styles, refer to the Resource Guide.

notes:

Section 8: Examples of Success

Learning Objectives: Learn to identify characteristics of successful projects as well as potential obstacles to success and ways to overcome them.

Section 8.A: Examples of Successful CBO/FBO Integration in Local Pre-disaster Mitigation

The following are examples of successful local pre-disaster mitigation projects. Note how integration of CBOs/FBOs was achieved in each case.

Brainstorm to identify elements in the success stories that are relatively simple to emulate as ways to involve CBOs/FBOs in potential mitigation projects.

Evansville, IN

In Evansville, IN, a project to help residents of two neighborhoods strap down their hot water heaters was done by the Disaster Resistant Community Corp. (DRC) along with CBOs/FBOs and the neighborhood's Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT). The local building inspector helped organize the event and train volunteers.

Materials for strapping down the hot water heaters were provided to residents in these two neighborhoods free of charge. Installation help was provided by the CERT and CBO/FBO members to residents who needed someone to do the actual work. There was no charge for this service.

Strapping down hot water heaters keeps them from falling over and causing gas leaks and possible fires, as well as providing 30 gallons of fresh water if water lines are damaged in an earthquake. In all, almost 40 water heaters were strapped down by volunteers, and kits for strapping down water heaters were distributed to another 30 households.

Polk County, MO

In Polk County, MO, a team formed to complete what became known as the "Bare Ditch Project." Various organizations, civic groups, and schools came together at 24 locations across the county to clear the drainages of debris and other obstructing items. The goal was to provide preventative maintenance by removing debris that collects and stops proper water drainage through drainage ditches, which can lead to flooding. In all, 47 community groups and 252 volunteers came out and worked 829 hours to accomplish the drainage clearing.

Ouachita Parish, LA

The Ouachita Multi-Purpose Community Action Program (OMCAP) and its community partners worked together to rehabilitate structures in a lower-income area of Monroe, LA. The Group Work Camp project consisted of a hurricane preparedness drill, the rehabilitation of 50 homes, cutting weeds and vegetation management, and the development of mitigation strategies for an encephalitis outbreak (clearing standing water). The project mitigated a number of natural and technological hazards in addition to improving the quality of life for participating families:

- Debris removal
- Weatherizing homes
- Roof repairs
- Minor structural repairs
- Disseminating educational materials

Partners included the City of Monroe (police, fire), City of West Monroe American Red Cross, United Way, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Fair Park Baptist Church Men's Group, and Ouachita Parish Civil Defense, among others.

Brattleboro, VT

In Brattleboro, VT, a group of volunteers from local agencies and CBOs worked together to retrofit local childcare centers against earthquake damage. The group contacted the Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS) for advice on how to assess the needs of these facilities to increase the safety for the children. Once the assessments were completed, it was decided that the needs included anchoring bookcases, bracketing shelves, and velcroing pictures and knick-knacks to keep them from falling.

Section 8.B: Mitigation Challenges

Discuss how best to overcome the following challenges to initiating or completing mitigation projects with emergency managers and CBO/FBO participants.

Scenario 1 - Personal Agenda City
In Personal Agenda City, community members are somewhat enthusiastic but also cautious about involvement in a disaster mitigation project. The reasons:

- Fragmentation and disagreements among local government leaders
- Imminent closure of a local disaster recovery organization due to lack of funding
- Personal agenda, presented by one of the local CBO leaders, that presents a barrier to the inclusivity needed for successful completion of the project

Scenario 2 - Lack of Leadershipville
In Lack of Leadershipville, interest in mitigation efforts is high. However, local CBOs/FBOs are confused regarding the difference between disaster mitigation and preparedness. Additionally, the local emergency manager has resigned and left a void in leadership.

Scenario 3 - Lack of Funding, USA
In the multi-ethnic city of Lack of Funding, community members initially display high levels of enthusiasm about mitigation initiatives. However, because of lack of funding and a high level of government and outsider distrust, no project moves forward.

Section 8.C: Best Practices

The following are practices and processes that have been found to be effective in integrating FBOs and CBOs into disaster mitigation programs across the country. These concepts and approaches are employed in communities that have successfully integrated CBOs and FBOs in grassroots disaster mitigation activities. Discuss how these apply in your community.

1.   Help individuals and CBO/FBO groups understand what role they might play in creating their own disaster-resistant environment, as well as how they can work with others to build a disaster-resistant community. Individuals appear to be more motivated and enthusiastic when the focus is on empowering them to take charge of their own safety and reduce their disaster risk.

2.   Identify and recruit at least one champion or "cheerleader" for the process of enrolling the FBOs and CBOs in working together to create disaster-resistant communities. These are people with "fire in the belly," whose enthusiasm is contagious, and who are able to rally excitement – both within and among groups.

3.   Educate groups and individuals on the importance of disaster mitigation and the benefits they and the community will see from working to reduce disaster risk. Clearly define and communicate how these benefits relate to each group's mission, purpose, and goals.

4.   Find simple ways to educate people about the main mission of the mitigation program, and develop a common understanding of vision and goals. Help them recognize the community's risks and opportunities to work together to mitigate risk. A shared vision helps individuals and groups overcome potential and actual differences.

5.   Involve the organizations in the mitigation planning process from the beginning, if possible, so they can be invested in the program and feel a sense of ownership in it.

6.   Take advantage of partnerships that naturally arise after a disaster. Nurture and build momentum after the urgency of the recovery effort is past.

7.   Take advantage of, and actively encourage the process of "satellite networking." Contact ambassadors from different groups, and obtain their support and involvement. Ask them to carry the excitement to their groups, and encourage their group members to carry it further, within the individual group, and within groups with which each person is involved.

8.   Work collaboratively and inclusively. Share ideas. Give everyone a chance to contribute and "buy in" to the overall goal. Invite everyone appropriate to the table.

9.   Be flexible in all ways possible – in thinking, planning, approach, and action.

10. Be persistent, and keep a positive, "can-do" attitude. Brainstorm ways to overcome obstacles. If a project doesn't work out the way it was initially envisioned, find another way to make it work or to capture value from the work that was done.

11. Keep information and approaches simple; get rid of "government-ese" and complicated language. Simplify, simplify, simplify.

12.   Maintain an ongoing list of projects and activities to sustain momentum and keep excitement alive. Make sure all groups and individuals are aware of this list, and how they could be supporting the various projects in which they are not already involved.

13.   Be generous in recognizing volunteers and donors.

14.   Adopt project ideas from other groups, agencies, and communities; most of them are glad to share what they have learned and what has worked for them. Keep a good idea going by replicating projects in different parts of the community and from group to group.

15.   Publicize successes to increase awareness and create a bandwagon effect. Use local media, neighborhood gatherings, and meetings of clubs, civic groups, and professional associations to create and maintain interest. Also, favorable publicity for groups and/or individuals can bolster their motivation to continue with the process.

16.   Recruit intermediary groups and/or individuals to network with potential partners reluctant to interface with official authorities.

17.   Create a structure that allows for autonomy so that individual FBO/CBO partners can conduct independent mitigation projects aimed at achieving the overall common goal. The goal is to centralize communication, rather than governance or control.

18.   Teach new skills that would be valuable in mitigation projects (e.g., amateur radio and emergency communication, safety retrofit skills, power tool use, etc.)

19.   Engage the entire community in mitigation through intergenerational and multidimensional projects that incorporate diverse groups, such as children, the elderly, the disabled, and groups that supply diversity in socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, and faith backgrounds.

20.   Demonstrate respect and sensitivity for each group's knowledge, perspective, cultural background, and internal governance structure (either formal or informal).

21.   Recognize and address language diversity.

22.   Identify a central point of contact for information exchange and referral.

23.   Be assertive in asking for support and resources; think "outside the box" regarding potential partners, volunteers, financial sources, and in-kind donors.

24.   Strive to cultivate input and buy-in from the bottom up.

25.   Emphasize public outreach, education, and other interaction so participants understand why and how they can be involved.

26.   Be able to articulate success of the program to the entire community.

27.   Foster work groups that will produce tangible results – not just studies or recommendations.

28.   Look at ways to obtain additional funding and keep the momentum going under the umbrella of mitigation.

29.   Couple educational outreach with hands-on projects.

30.   A monitoring program or annual plan update can help keep the project on the front burner.

Resource Guide: For more information tips on implementing community-based pre-disaster mitigation programs, refer to the Resource Guide.

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