

Elements of Disaster Planning

A nonprofit organization with a clearly written disaster mission statement doesn't need "expert" assistance in writing a comprehensive, working disaster plan. Because you (as an individual, or as a committee or workgroup who plan to write the disaster plan) are an expert in your business, you have all the tools you need to write a complete and useful disaster plan. You just need to make sure you include the basic components of a plan, and customize the plan to best serve your location, staff/volunteers, and the people you serve. You'll know what to change after you exercise the plan for the first time: this when missing pieces really stand out, and you'll learn what doesn't work. Here are the elements to consider including in any disaster plan for a nonprofit organization:

- I. Disaster Mission Statement**
Clearly defining your organization's role helps make a great disaster plan
- II. Facility Preparation**
Make sure your site is ready to support your staff and volunteers during a disaster
 - a. On-site Supplies Cache
 - b. Agency Go-Kit
 - c. Signage
 - d. Communications Tools
- III. Meeting the Needs of the People You Serve**
Plan ahead to meet the basic needs of staff, volunteers, and clients/members
- IV. Preparing Staff for Emergencies**
Preparing their families first allows staff to return to work
 - a. Communications Plan
- V. Inventory of Neighborhood Resources**
Who are your neighbors? What resources are available close by?
- VI. Personnel Resources During an Emergency**
How many people do you need to keep things going during an emergency?
- VII. Volunteer Resources During an Emergency**
Utilize volunteers effectively during and after a disaster
- VIII. Evacuation/Transportation**
If you have to go, make sure everyone gets there safely
- IX. Ensuring Service Continuation**
Make sure you have the resources and support you need to provide services
- X. Financial Resources**
Plan ahead to ensure that regular and backup financial resources are available

You can find great templates for getting a plan up and running quickly on the ENLA website: www.enla.org (click on Training).

ENLA also provides supplemental materials for helping people get personally prepared, writing a communications plan, and designing an exercise to test your plan.