DISASTER PREPAREDNESS TOOLS

Alliance of Information and Referral Systems has a series of documents posted on their website including Business Contingency Plans, template for an I&R Emergency Plan, and sample Memorandums of Understanding. For more information go to: **www.airs.org**

Alliance of Information and Referral Systems ABC of I&R has training on disasters for I&R Specialists and Resource Specialists. For more information go to: **www.airs.org**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have links to fact sheets on illnesses, as well as information on how to prevent diseases from spreading. For more information go to: **www.cdc.gov**

Corporation for National and Community Services (CNCS) has an Effective Practices Collections specific to managing volunteers during disaster. The series can be found at: **www.nationalserviceresources.org/epicenter/practices/index**

The Department of Homeland Security has a website that features disaster preparedness materials for families, kids and for businesses. The site is useful for staff and volunteers who need to create a disaster response plan for their home or for 2-1-1s looking to start business continuity plans. The site is: **www.ready.gov**

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has an online training series which includes a section called Developing and Managing Volunteers. For more information go to: **www.fema.gov/emi**

Lutheran Disaster Response has developed a volunteer toolkit for their faith-based disaster response teams. For more information go to: **www.ldr.org**

National Human Services Assembly has produced a white paper outlining the need for systems to be in place to manager disaster volunteers called From Research to Action. For more information go to: **www.nassembly.org**

National Voluntary Organizations Assisting in Disasters (NVOAD) Volunteer Management Committee developed a white paper in 2003 called Managing Spontaneous Volunteers in Times of Disaster: The Synergy of Structure and Good Intentions. For more information go to: **www.nvoad.org**

The National Weather Service lists weather conditions, watches and warnings by location. For more information go to: **www.nws.noaa.gov**

The federal government now mandates that local, regional, state, tribal and federal government entities organize their disaster management response through an Incident Command System (ICS). For more information on the ICS go to: **www.fema.gov/NIMS**

United Way of America has developed disaster preparedness tools for 2-1-1 centers. Those tools are available through the United Way of America 2-1-1 staff. They can be reached at: 1.800.892.2757, Ext. 211

ACTION PLAN

Write down your plans, questions and ideas for development of disaster volunteer surge management for when you return home.

Section 3. **What is the first step you will take when you get back to your organization?**

Section 4. **What is your level of knowledge and how do you plan to learn what you need to know?**

Section 5. **Add to the list of ideas you developed in the small group discussion: Who do you need to speak with first about the development of the next part of your organization's plan.**

Section 6. **Who has the authority at the organization to put these pieces in place?**

Section 7. **What are three things to remember when recruiting for disaster volunteers?**

Section 8. **What is already in my place in my organization and what could I do when I return to my organization to better prepare for processing, orienting or training volunteers?**

Section 9. **Upon returning, determine how your organization conducts performance appraisals and develop a volunteer appraisal plan that will work within the current structure.**

Section 10. **Who will you speak to regarding virtual volunteer capabilities when you return home? What questions do you want to have answered?**

Section 11. **What can you observe about your organization and how it assists employees and volunteers manage call induced stress? What would you improve, how would you improve?**

Most important action to take when you get back to organization?

SECTION 3 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Does your 2-1-1 have a written disaster preparedness plan and/or a business contingency plan?**

2. **Does the organization's business contingency plan outline how the 2-1-1 could accommodate an increased need for an additional 10-50 personnel to answer calls and manage data?**

3. **Is the organization aware of the threshold where additional outside support would be needed and recognize the request for said support is appropriate business planning versus an inability to effectively function with existing staff?**

4. **Is your 2-1-1 accredited through AIRS?**

5. **Has your 2-1-1 implemented AIRS Standards 21-27 - known as the AIRS Disaster Standards?**

6. **Has your 2-1-1 populated the disaster taxonomy in the resource database?**

7. **Does your 2-1-1 have a plan or procedure to change the contingency plan should it become unworkable?**

8. **Do you have a personal/family disaster plan?**

SECTION 3
AIRS DISASTER STANDARDS

VI. DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

The Standards in Section VI describe the requirements an I&R service must meet in order to best position itself to connect people to critical resources in times of disaster. Although most I&R services do not promote themselves as disaster service agencies, in the past decade I&Rs have been identified as natural community partners for the dissemination of information about community based disaster-related services. In the wake of September 11th and the institutionalization of 2-1-1, it has become prudent business practice for I&R services to be prepared for disaster response and equip staff to handle disaster related inquiries appropriately. The I&R service shall be prepared to assess and provide referrals for inquirers who are experiencing a crisis due to a disaster of natural or human origin, or who want to offer assistance and contact the I&R service for a means to do so. Preparation includes a plan for the I&R to continue to provide services if its building is damaged or destroyed; and the ability to effectively accumulate and disseminate accurate disaster-related information, provide information and referral assistance for individuals impacted by a disaster and provide community reports on inquirer needs and referrals.

Standard 21: Emergency Operations and Business Contingency Plan

The I&R service shall have a written emergency operations and business contingency plan that specifically addresses disasters common to the area, but one that also prepares for emergencies in general. The plan shall reference emergency preparedness and mitigation activities such as structural alternations and changes in business operations; and shall address the steps to be taken before, during and after an emergency to prevent or minimize interruptions in business operations and assure long-term recovery.

Criteria

1. The I&R service shall have written procedures that address specific types of emergencies including power outages, fires, medical emergencies, bomb threats, radiological threats, workplace violence and other incidents which may require different forms of response, e.g., duck, cover and hold during an earthquake or sheltering in place during a radiological emergency. Included shall be procedures for contacting the police/paramedics.
2. The I&R service shall have written procedures for emergency evacuation of the facility following a disaster that impacts the immediate area surrounding the facility and may have made continued occupancy unsafe. The evacuation procedure shall designate exits, specify an assembly area, include provisions for ensuring that everyone has left the building, provide for damage assessment, and include instructions for shutting off gas, electricity and water when necessary. Special arrangements for helping staff or visitors with a disability exit the building shall also be addressed.
3. The I&R service shall develop and document a designated leadership description which outlines the roles and responsibilities of managers and staff before, during and in the aftermath of an incident.
4. The I&R service shall have procedures for maintaining service delivery during and after an emergency.
5. The I&R service shall identify alternative sites or different modes for service delivery in the event of loss of facilities.
6. The I&R service shall have periodic drills that allow staff to practice emergency procedures outlined in the plan.

Standard 22: Formal Relationships with Government and Private Sector Emergency Operations and Relief Agencies

The I&R service shall participate in ongoing cooperative disaster response planning in the community and shall take all steps that are necessary to become recognized as an integral part of the community's emergency preparedness and response network.

Criteria

1. The I&R service shall understand the command and control structure within their jurisdiction and their own role and that of other organizations in the response, relief and recovery phasesof a disaster.
2. The I&R service shall enter into formal agreements with appropriate government and private sector emergency operations and relief agencies such as VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Assisting in Disasters) and the Red Cross. The agreements shall outline the roles and responsibilities of all parties.

3. The I&R service shall actively participate in community meetings that address plans for disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, relief and recovery.

Standard 23: Pre- and Post-Disaster Database
The I&R service shall develop, maintain, and/or use an accurate, up-to-date computerized resource database that contains information about available community resources that provide services in times of disaster. Database records shall include detailed descriptions of the services organizations provide and the conditions under which services are available; and shall be indexed and accessed using the Disaster Services section of the AIRS/INFO LINE Taxonomy of Human Services.

Criteria
1. The I&R service shall include in their resource database information about permanent local, state and federal disaster-related resources, i.e., organizations with a formal role in emergency response, a clearly defined disaster mission and/or a history of providing services during a previous incident.
2. The I&R service shall add information about organizations that have no formal role in emergency response but emerge in the context of a particular disaster, specific relief and recovery services that come to life in response to the specific needs of the community, and information about specific services (and their locations) offered by agencies in the standing disaster database (such as Red Cross Service Centers).
3. The I&R service shall update the disaster resources annually, immediately prior to an anticipated disaster and throughout the response, relief and recovery periods.
4. The I&R service shall disseminate disaster-related information per pre-existing agreements with other organizations in the community.
5. The I&R service shall have an alternative means for allowing staff to access disaster resources in the event that computerized access is unavailable.

Standard 24: Disaster-Related I&R Service Delivery
The I&R service shall provide information and referral services to the community during (when appropriate) and following a disaster or other emergency. This service shall include assessing the needs of the inquirer, evaluating appropriate resources, indicating organizations capable of meeting those needs, helping inquirers for whom services are unavailable by locating alternative resources and actively participating in linking inquirers to needed services or volunteer opportunities.

Criteria
1. The I&R service shall ensure adequate staff to meet potential increases in inquirer needs.
2. The I&R service shall have in place mutual aid agreements with other I&R services which include provisions for relocation of staff and/or redirection of calls.
3. The I&R service shall have a protocol for staff who will be assigned to provide information and referral at local assistance centers (LACs) or other off-site locations.
4. I&R specialists shall have the skills to respond effectively to people in crisis, work cooperatively with other organizations, remain flexible in a rapidly changing environment, be willing to work under adverse conditions (e.g., long hours, uncomfortable surroundings), be aware of their own stress level and coping mechanisms, respond appropriately in face-to-face communications and work within the boundaries of their I&R role.
5. I&R specialists shall understand the government emergency response service delivery system, the types of services people typically need following a disaster, the organizations that generally provide them, the types of organizations that may be closed or otherwise unable to deliver services due to the emergency (e.g., government offices, the courts), atypical services people may need to access (e.g., open hardware stores, functioning ATM machines), and the structure and contents of the disaster database and/or other approved sources of disaster related information.
6. The I&R service shall have a written plan for providing disaster stress debriefing for all staff.

Standard 25: Disaster-Related Inquirer Data Collection/Reports

The I&R service shall track inquirer requests for service, referrals and when appropriate, demographic information about the inquirer; and shall be prepared to produce reports regarding requests for disaster-related services and referral activity.

Criteria

1. The I&R service shall collect and organize inquirer data that facilitates appropriate referrals and provides a basis for describing requests for disaster-related service and identifying gaps and overlaps in service.
2. The I&R service shall be prepared to produce regular reports to the community regarding referrals, access to services, service availability and unmet needs.
3. When appropriate, the I&R shall participate in shared client tracking efforts.
4. Following all emergencies that necessitate implementation of the provisions of the Disaster Preparedness standards, the I&R service shall produce an after action report which documents the special actions of the agency with a focus on what worked well and what needs to be improved through revisions of the agency's disaster plan and/or additional training for staff.

Standard 26: Disaster-Related Technology Requirements

The I&R service shall have technology in place that facilitates the ability of the organization tomaintain service delivery during times of disaster or a localized emergency.

Criteria

1. The I&R service shall take whatever steps are necessary to establish a relationship with their telephone service provider that will ensure that the organization is given high priority for continued phone service in times of disaster.
2. The I&R service shall have the ability to reroute calls to another site (e.g., to cell phones, to people's homes, to another local agency or out of the region) if their business site is not accessible.
3. The I&R service shall have the ability to access the resource database (e.g., via the Internet, a stand-alone single user copy of the database on a laptop, a directory or other print version) if their business site is not accessible.
4. The I&R service shall conduct an assessment of its facility to identify equipment, connections and other resources that may be vulnerable under emergency conditions and take steps to mitigate the situation, e.g., move computers and telephones that are located on the floor to safer locations.
5. The I&R service shall have power supplies (UPSs) on all critical systems for short-term recovery in the case of a power failure. It is recommended that the I&R service have an emergency generator or other power back-up that will allow them to continue operations on a longer term basis during a power failure. The I&R service will need to determine the length of time the back-up power supply will operate and inform staff regarding the components of the organization's operations (e.g., which computers, telephones, etc.) that it will power.
6. It is recommended that back-up systems for telephones be analog rather than digital so they do not require local electricity.
7. It is recommended that the I&R service have the ability to reprogram its phone lines and data network remotely.
8. It is recommended that the I&R service have redundant T1 lines from multiple central offices, where possible.
9. It is recommended that the I&R service have an alternative phone number in a different location for staff to access the agency in case of an emergency that makes the regular phone lines inaccessible.

Standard 27: Disaster Training and Exercise

The I&R service shall train staff on emergency operations and business expectations upon hiring and shall provide ongoing training at least annually thereafter. The I&R service shall actively participate in community disaster exercises to test the organization's emergency operations plan.

Criteria

1. The I&R service shall provide general training for staff that addresses the specific types of disasters common to the area; the organization's role and mission in times of disaster; the phases of disaster; federal, state and local response plans and resources; and other topics that will help prepare staff for an emergency and ensure that they understand their organization's commitments to the community.

2. The I&R service shall provide training on the organization's in-house disaster preparedness procedures and protocols.

3. The I&R service shall provide training for I&R staff that addresses the attitudes, skills and information they require to meet the needs of people in crisis during a disaster. The training shall help participants understanding how disasters affect individuals and communities and shall address the specific requirements of people with special needs, e.g., individuals with disabilities, language barriers, cultural differences or other relevant characteristics. It shall also prepare I&R staff for the likelihood of providing service delivery under altered and frequently adverse conditions which may include working long hours, off-site or under the direction of another organization.

4. The I&R service shall provide training for resource specialists that addresses the types of resources that need to be included in the standing pre-disaster database and those that need to be added following the occurrence of an emergency; use of the Disaster Services section of the Taxonomy as a classification structure; and procedures for the collection, validation, maintenance and dissemination of disaster-related information.

5. The I&R service shall actively participate in a community disaster exercise annually and should schedule their own exercise if unable to participate in a broader community event.

SECTION 4: ICS SKIT

Setting: Local Emergency Management Meeting.
Three participants: Emergency Manager, American Red Cross Representative and 2-1-1 Manager.

Emergency Manager (speak to the 2-1-1 Manager): *Welcome to the Midamerica VOAD meeting. The Operations Manager will be her in a few minutes and we will want to meet with you and the Logistics Manager as well as our finance department. The EOP states we need to have a comprehensive communication provider and American Red Cross is not equipped to fulfill that role right now.*

American Red Cross Representative: *We are working with FEMA and UMCORP to set up EICs, but we need to a telephone number where victims can call in and get information about where the closest centers are. Will your people be able to assist with explaining FEMA, SBA and Red Cross benefits and procedures? UMCORP is taking the lead in case management, can your staff train their volunteers about relief and recovery program?*

2-1-1 Manager: *It's great to meet with you.*

(To Emergency Manager:) *I brought a contract to finalize the reimbursement process for the disaster communication services. I also brought a list of the resources the 2-1-1 will need from logistics if we begin to take over 100 calls per hour. Our contract will cover up to a 25% increase in call volume.*

To ARC: *Here is a copy of our existing disaster resources...we update these annually immediately following the community disaster practice. Our staff have been trained in the FEMA application program and will be able to explain SBA processes and the Red Cross voucher programs, have you added any since last month? We can generate an unmet needs report by zip code either daily or weekly, just let me know when you need them. We will be able to provide trainers to UMCORP by the end of the week. I think this is going to be included in the emergency management contract.*

EMERGENCY MANAGER	PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER
LIAISON OFFICER	SAFETY OFFICER
OPERATION MANAGER	PLANNING MANAGER
LOGISTICS MANAGER	FINANCE MANAGER
VOLUNTEER OPERATION MANAGER	VOLUNTEER LOGISTICS MANAGER
EMERGENCY RESOURCE SPECIALISTS	EMERGENCY CALL SPECIALISTS
MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALISTS	

SECTION 5: MATRIX QUESTIONS

PLANNING QUESTION	YOUR IDEAS
Describe the most likely disaster for your geographic area that would require a surge of 10-50 volunteers to effectively manage an increase in call volume and resource data.	
How would you decide how many volunteers are needed to manage the incident?	
Where would your operation stage a response requiring an additional 50 persons? Does it have the desks and furniture to seat 50 additional persons?	
Do you have computers, telephones, electrical capabilities and Information Technology Specialists to connect the equipment and maintain its operability?	
Is there another site locally that already uses similar technology and/or equipment that could partner with you to manage the calls and data?	
Could data and/or calls be managed virtually by another 2-1-1 off-site or even in another state or region?	
Where would you recruit 10-50 I&R and Resource Specialists?	
How would they be screened, interviewed, trained and supervised? Who would be responsible for these duties?	
How is crisis debriefing currently being utilized in your 2-1-1?	
How would you implement a regular crisis debriefing in response to this incident?	
If you use volunteers from out of the area, where will they be housed? Who will provide meals and transportation? Who will be responsible for coordinating and managing these arrangements?	
How will the 2-1-1 pay for the expanded services and the related costs?	
How will you dismantle this service once the incident is over or the call volume declines?	
How will you manage the 2-1-1 if the surge call volume becomes the normal call volume for the 2-1-1?	
Who will follow-up with the volunteers after they return home or back to their previous employment?	
How will you recognize or reward the volunteers?	
How will you recognize or reward the staff?	

SECTION 6: PRE-RECRUITMENT CHECKLIST

❏   Job descriptions for each volunteer position

❏   Applicant Review Process

❏   Background or reference check process

❏   Orientation which includes

❏   Mission

❏   Disaster mission (if different)

❏   Role in disasters/incidents

❏   History of organization

❏   Normal services to the community

❏   Incident services to the community

❏   Define the role the 2-1-1 is playing in this disaster beyond normal I&R functions

❏   (missing person's registry, in-kind gift matching, rumor control, etc)

❏   To whom they report each day

❏   Where to record time worked each day

❏   On-site training with a checklist for the volunteer and trainer to sign upon completion of each section.

❏   Orientation to the building—accessing the building and any space restrictions, including a map

❏   Orientation and training on equipment—telephone and computer

❏   Orienting volunteer to supervisors and other staff and volunteers

❏   Emergency protocol training

❏   Plan for updating on the incident and changes to the resource information

❏   Additional roles the 2-1-1 are providing (GIK, missing persons matching, etc)

❏   Liability coverage for volunteers

❏   What else?

SECTION 10: MATCHING ISSUES W/EXAMPLES

Cut out each section and have participants match the issue/question with the example/answer.

ISSUE	EXAMPLE
What is the call capacity of the SO? What will happen of the call surge surpasses the SO capacity?	In Texas, the 2-1-1 discovered the rollover organizations began to become overwhelmed. They have implemented a planning process for three of their sites to develop a volunteer surge contingency plan in which those sites will have pre-qualified volunteers trained to assist in a surge.
Does the SO and the AO have similar job descriptions for I&R and Resource Specialists?	Job descriptions for I&R Call Specialists and Resource Specialists should contain similar job duties. If they do not, a disaster job description should be used in training and those staff at the SO should sign the job description indicating they understand the difference in responsibilities.
Is the staff training for both parties similar and compatible?	Most 2-1-1s use similar training for call and resource specialists, however protocols for managing different types of callers can be different. A review of training materials will help supervisors assess and plan for differences.
If the agreement is for resource database assistance, are the data collection standards similar and are they using the same database?	Nuances of differences in data collection can cause big problems. Consideration should be given to the experiences of 2-1-1s in disasters where they have noted that inclusion/exclusion policies are suspended, verification processes are altered and other aspects of data collection, including style temporarily change.
How does the SO gather and report caller data? Will this meet the AO needs?	The reciprocating organizations should agree on what reports will be anticipated and when and how those reports will be provided. Communities generally need reports on demographics, unmet needs, referrals and most common needs.
How often will disaster training occur for both organizations?	Disaster professionals recommend quarterly or biannual cross training occur. It should include actual transferring of calls and accessing of the resource database.
What is the plan for supervising the specialists managing calls/resources from the AO?	Both agencies should have a protocol in place for how staff at the SO handling calls and resources will be supervised. Agreements should clearly define whose procedures are primary during the implementation of a disaster agreement.
Who will be monitoring performance and how will each organization's staff be held accountable for the work?	Clear lines of supervision should be established in the agreement and practiced during the disaster drills. The AO may want to consider deploying a supervisor to the SO site to manage issues that may occur in answering calls or managing data. Another approach would be to have supervisors train at the reciprocal site and be familiar with their processes.

ISSUE	EXAMPLE
What are the plans for debriefing the SO staff who participated in the disaster call/resource response?	In Section 11, there are ideas for managing daily briefings and debriefings, if telephone systems are operational, these could take place via teleconferencing.
How will the SO be compensated? Per call, per staff member?	Agreements should be clear as to compensation levels. The Texas 2-1-1s transfer calls at a per call rate. Virginia 2-1-1s do not have a compensation rate for disaster calls.
What are the plans for communication between the organizations?	A written plan for hourly, daily, or weekly calls should be in the agreement and performed. The plan can be adjusted as the disaster response progresses, but open and on-going communication is key to successful partnership in resource sharing.
Who and how will the plan be evaluated following the disaster?	In the agreement, an evaluation should occur after each disaster drill that codifies issues and how they have been addressed. Organizations experience turnover and documentation of drills, the issues and the agreed upon adjustments should be catalogued for future review. A disaster drill notebook that contains the agreement and the evaluation of each drill could easily be established for both partners.
If the AO is going to use individuals rather than a reciprocal agreement with a SO, what are the protocols for transferring calls, supervision, performance review and debriefing?	A biannual review of the protocols should be required for qualifying to serve. Documentation of training and attendance should be kept with disaster protocol and drill information.
What is threshold for transferring services before and after the disaster?	The organizations should have a clearly defined threshold for what the call and resource staff can manage. It can be that staff can manage up to 100 information only calls and 75 referral calls per day, or a resource specialist can manage 50 new records per day. Each 2-1-1 knows their staff, their community and should be able to anticipate the call types, recognizing that adjustments may need to be made. A threshold can also be set by the SO, that when the volume drops to a specific level—maybe within 10% of pre-disaster levels, then transfer back to the AO could occur.
What is the contingency plan if the telephone software/hardware is damaged by the disaster?	A strong disaster contingency plan builds in redundancy for all hardware and software, as well as advanced planning with the phone company for priority reestablishment of telephone service.
Is the host of the Internet database located off-site, even out of region to ensure the database remains available?	2-1-1s have strong database back-up plans, but many of them do not consider a regional disaster scenario where back-ups may be destroyed or inaccessible. An Internet host that has back-up in another region should be considered.
What is the protocol for providing telephone and database access passwords to SO?	A clearly described protocol for how password access to telephones and databases should be in any Mutual Aid Agreement, as well as the level of permissions granted to virtual volunteer users.

ISSUE	EXAMPLE
Do confidentiality agreements transfer from SO to AO?	Confidentiality agreements should be reciprocal and addressed during disaster drills. Differences between confidentiality expectations should be resolved in the agreement and acknowledgment of the differences signed by participating staff.
How will call trends be communicated from SO to AO?	Call trends develop during disasters, communication from the SO to the AO about these trends needs to occur immediately, as the AO may be able to influence changes in services based on call demands. Hurricanes Wilma, Rita and Katrina 2-1-1 responses, scripts were developed by the AO and sent to the staff at the SO.
How will changes in data collection be communicated?	If either parties determines that data collection standards need to be adjusted to meet the rapidly changing disaster environment, a plan for how it will be determined, implemented and managed should be outlined in the agreement.

DATE   LOCATION   CONFERENCE   SITE

THE TRAINING	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Met some Expectations	Did not meet Expectations
The training provided new information				
The training provided hands-on tools				
The training provided new techniques for managing disaster volunteers				
The training provided information I can use to develop an MOU/MAA				

Comments:

THE TOOLS	Absolutely	Maybe	A little bit	Not at all
The tools will assist me in disaster preparation				
I will incorporate information from this training into my disaster plan				
I learned new techniques on how to handle disaster scenarios involving volunteers and staff				
I will apply the information regarding de-briefing				

Comments:

THE PRESENTATION	Too Long	Just Right	Too Short	Not Sure
The presentation was:				
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
The presenter was:				
The written materials are:				
The PowerPoint was:				
The tools in the Appendices are:				

Comments:

Now, a little information about yourself and your organization:

I have worked in a disaster providing I&R related services. ❑ Yes   ❑ No

My organization has a written disaster and/or business contingency plan.   ❑ Yes   ❑ No   ❑ Don't Know

My organization practices its disaster plan at least one time per year. ❑ Yes   ❑ No

What other suggestions for improving the training and/or the materials?