

# Organization Emergency Plan

For Community Based Organizations

Emergency Preparedness Conference

Western Mass IRAA Preparedness Project

# Preface

## BACKGROUND

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In a major emergency, such as a catastrophic tornado, hurricane, earthquake, flooding or ice storm, response systems such as police, fire and hospitals will be overwhelmed. Officials from all levels of government and the Red Cross tell us we should be prepared to be on our own for the first 72 hours.

To help prepare community based organizations for such disasters, this plan was originally produced by the Bay Area Emergency Preparedness Coalition for Seniors and People with Disabilities.

It was adapted from *Creating a Workable Disaster Plan for Your Agency*, which was produced by VOICE of Contra Costa County and from the *Earthquake Preparedness Guidelines for Large Retirement Complexes and Large Residential Care Facilities*, which was produced by the Bay Area Regional Earthquake Preparedness Project.

Significant changes and additions have been created by Collaborating Agencies Responding to Disasters. Further adaptations have been made by the Western Mass IRAA Preparedness Project, thanks to support from the Western Regional Homeland Security Advisory Council.

**Please perform a quick review of this plan every 6 months to ensure it stays current.**

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# Contents

- Preface ..... 2**
  - Background.....2
- Contents ..... 3**
- Disaster Mission Statement ..... 4**
- Preparing Staff for Emergencies ..... 5**
- Personnel..... 6**
- Volunteers ..... 7**
- Meeting the Needs of the People You Serve ..... 8**
- On-Site Supplies Cache ..... 9**
- Agency Go-Kit.....10**
- Facility Preparation..... 11**
- Signage ..... 12**
- Neighborhood Resources ..... 13**
- Evacuation/Transportation ..... 15**
- Communication – People ..... 17**
- Communication – Tools ..... 18**
- ICS – Roles ..... 19**
- ICS – Contact Information..... 21**
- Financial Resources ..... 23**
- Ensuring Service Continuation.....24**

# Disaster Mission Statement

MAKE SURE YOU KNOW WHAT ROLE YOU ARE PLANNING TO PLAY IN A DISASTER

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- What type of services are you going to provide for your clients and community when disaster strikes?
- Does your current mission statement encompass how you see your agency functioning in a disaster?
- Think about your commitments and your resource limitations in order to create a disaster mission statement.

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## Preparing Staff for Emergencies

MAKE SURE YOUR STAFF IS MENTALLY, PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY PREPARED TO RESPOND

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In an emergency, the first concern of staff will be the safety and welfare of their own family members.

1. Have all staff and key volunteers trained in basic emergency preparedness on a regular basis.
2. Encourage and support staff and key volunteers to have a family or home emergency plan (see note below). This increases the likelihood that staff and their families can cope with the disaster without outside help.
3. Your agency will want to ensure that all staff members have an opportunity to check on their homes and family members as soon as possible following a disaster.

# Personnel

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ENOUGH PEOPLE TO DO WHAT NEEDS DOING FOR A RESPONSE

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Determine your staffing requirements for post-disaster response.

- 1. Realistically, how many staff will continue working after a disaster, if it strikes during work? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 2. If a disaster strikes on a weekday, but before the workday begins? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 3. If a disaster strikes on a weekend? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 4. What is the minimum number of staff needed to provide essential services, if disaster is ongoing (2-4 weeks)? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 5. Develop a list of staff home telephone numbers for emergency use. (Update at least every 6 months).
  
- 6. To support the work staff in an emergency, we will use volunteers as follows:
  - a) \_\_\_\_\_
  
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_
  
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_
  
  - d) \_\_\_\_\_
  
  - e) \_\_\_\_\_

# Volunteers

## MAKE SURE YOU KNOW THE BEST WAYS TO USE/WORK WITH VOLUNTEERS IN A DISASTER

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Know how you will appropriately recruit, task and manage volunteers.

1. Are your current volunteers appropriate for disaster-related work?
2. Do your current practices of recruiting or accepting volunteers include your disaster preparedness and response needs?
3. What important activities (that keep your agency able to provide services) can be assigned to spontaneous volunteers? What should *not* be?
4. What safety and/or legal considerations should you include in your plan?
5. Do you have someone in charge of volunteers? Who (else) might take that role for new volunteers?

# Meeting the Needs of the People You Serve

## MAKE SURE YOU CAN ADDRESS THE BASIC NEEDS OF STAFF, CLIENTS AND VOLUNTEERS

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- 1. How many total clients would be at your site in a disaster? (Look at both maximum client load and minimum staff availability for day, for all times.)
  
- 2. How will you find out about the condition of people you serve who are off-site?
  
- 3. In an emergency, who else needs information about the status of people you serve? Off-site staff? Families of clients? List the most critical contacts that need to be made. Be sure to have all necessary phone, cellular phone and pager numbers for each contact.
  
- 4. What else will be needed (e.g. bedding, medicine, special equipment, etc.)? Where can you get these items?

a) Item: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
b) Item: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

- 5. What are the special needs of the people you serve? Are these needs of the group or of individuals?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Also consider: What skills can you instill in your clients to let them take part in your preparedness and response efforts as full partners and helpers?

## On-Site Supplies Cache

### MAKE SURE YOU HAVE PREPAREDNESS SUPPLIES AVAILABLE

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Create and maintain an on-site cache of emergency preparedness supplies. The exact contents will depend on the size and diversity of your staff, volunteers, clients and potential visitors. Some basic contents of an on-site supply cache are:

- Food and water
- First Aid supplies
- Light/Flashlights
- Radio(s)
- Batteries
- Whistles
- Blankets
- Garbage bags
- Duct tape
- Extra Cash
- Necessary medicines\*
- Alcohol hand cleaner\*
- Thermometer\*
- Personal hygiene supplies\*

Perishable supplies, such as food, water and medicine, need to be replaced regularly. One way to do this is by “cycling” the food and water. “Non-perishables” have a much longer shelf life before they go bad.

*\* Especially recommended for Pan Flu Preparedness*

## Agency Go-Kit

### MAKE SURE YOU CAN OPERATE EVEN IF YOU EVACUATE

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If you need to evacuate your facility, an Agency Go-Kit will allow you to continue providing your most vital services wherever you go. This small, portable container should hold copies of every document as well as some basic supplies such as pen and paper.

Some basic contents of an Agency Go-Kit are:

- Your Disaster Plan
- Important documentation: Insurance policies, deed or lease
- Legal identification, such as your taxpayer ID number
- Bank information, including all of your account numbers and personnel contacts
- Documentation for your emergency line of credit
- Memoranda of Understanding (MOU's)
- Contact and Emergency Contact Information for your staff and key contacts
- Some cash, including coins for phones
- Backup of financial, staff and client records

You may wish to maintain more than one kit. Creating two is not harder than creating one, and an off-site backup may be what ensures that you have needed records.

## Facility Preparation

### MAKE SURE YOUR PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS YOUR SAFETY

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- Secure pictures and other wall hangings by using safety hooks
- Clear exits and pathways
- Fasten breakables to walls or shelves with museum wax
- Lower heavy items to bottom shelves
- Remove fire and chemical hazards
- Install smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, cabinet latches
- Label fire exits and safety supplies
- Clearly mark your gas and water shut-off valves. Post clear simple instructions for shutting off each one (in all languages needed).
- Keep a conveniently located set of tools to facilitate prompt gas shut-off. Tools should include both pip and crescent wrenches.

Sketch your facility and note vital emergency resources including:

- |                      |                      |                  |
|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| • Fire extinguishers | • First-Aid Supplies | • Escape Routes  |
| • Go-Kits            | • Water Shut-off     | • Generators(s)  |
| • Tool Kits          | • Gas Shut-off       | • Documents Safe |
| • Supply Cache       | • _____              | • _____          |
| • _____              | • _____              | • _____          |

## Signage

### MAKE SURE YOUR SAFETY AND PREPAREDNESS TOOLS ARE WELL-MARKED

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Make preparedness visible! Clear and visible signs indicating safety tools, exits and emergency instructions will help people to keep themselves safe while at your agency.

These and other preparedness signs are available at [www.FirstVictims.org/tools](http://www.FirstVictims.org/tools)

# Neighborhood Resources

MAKE SURE YOU KNOW THE LOCAL RESOURCES – THEY MAY BE YOUR ONLY SOURCE

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1. If you do not have a back-up generator, in an extended power outage, where can you rent or borrow a generator? Create a written agreement with this supplier.

2. If the phones at your agency are not working, where are the nearest pay phones?

3. Where is the nearest public health clinic?

Clinic Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Where is the nearest place to go for help if phones are not working?

Place Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Where is the nearest fire station and do they know about you?

Station Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Where is the nearest police station and do they know about you?

Station Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

# Neighborhood Resources (continued)

MAKE SURE YOU KNOW THE LOCAL RESOURCES – THEY MAY BE YOUR ONLY SOURCE

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Make sure preparedness resources in your neighborhood are clear. Post a large, clear map of your neighborhood. Note these potentially valuable resources, and highlight:

**Key Resource Framework**

- City Hall
- Other Government Offices
- Fire Station
- Police Station
- Red Cross
- Town-Designated Shelter
- Public Library
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Church, Mosque, Synagogue, etc.
- School
- Gym
- Shelter
- Open Space
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Possible Gathering Points**

**Liaison/Connections**

- Funders
- Partner Agencies
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Supplies**

- Hardware Stores
- Disaster Stores
- Drugstores
- Sports/Camping Stores
- “Big Box” Stores
- Dollar Stores
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Food/Water**

- Restaurants
- Soup Kitchens
- Grocery Stores
- Corner Stores
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Medical**

- Hospital
- Clinic
- Veterinary Offices
- Pharmacy
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Evacuation/Transportation

MAKE SURE YOU CAN GET PEOPLE SAFELY FROM YOUR LOCATION TO A SAFE ALTERNATIVE SITE

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Fire, hazardous material spills or structural damage may require you to evacuate your building.

1. Are there program participants who will need assistance evacuating your facility?  
Remember to assign staff and volunteers to help these participants and have assistive aids/devices available to help with their evacuation.
2. If your facility must be evacuated, assign a staff person the responsibilities of taking a head count to ensure that all staff, volunteers and program participants have exited.
3. Practice your evacuation plan.
4. Keep an "Agency Go-Kit". Include copies of your emergency plan, action checklists, phone roster, copies of vital documents, credit cards, etc.
5. Post a notice indicating where you have gone.

# Evacuation/Transportation (continued)

MAKE SURE YOU CAN GET PEOPLE SAFELY FROM YOUR LOCATION TO A SAFE ALTERNATIVE SITE

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The following suggestions anticipate that you must evacuate your building and that you are responsible for the care and shelter of the people you serve.

- 1. Locate and secure a temporary shelter to be used (consider churches, nearby community centers, schools, other residential facilities). You may want to develop mutual aid agreements with these sites.

Temporary Shelter Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

- 2. Create a phone list and a system for letting the authorities, family and friends know where you are sheltering your program participants. "Date Created" should appear on this as well as on all lists and documents.
- 3. Designate and identify alternative transportation for moving your program participants to you temporary shelter, or to clients' homes, if necessary.

Alternative Transportation: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

- 4. Assign responsibility for the care of your clients at the alternate site(s). identify this person or persons.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. If evacuated, what will your clients need that may not be available in the temporary shelter?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_

## Communication – People

MAKE SURE YOU CAN COMMUNICATE WITH STAFF, CLIENTS, FUNDERS AND YOUR COMMUNITY

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Communication will make or break a disaster response. From a simple note on the door identifying your new location, to a Public Information Officer correcting news reports about your agency, communication is the key to letting people make the right decisions.

### **WHAT should you communicate?**

- Agency operation status reports
- Damage assessment
- Services offered or changed
- Funds needed
- Volunteers needed
- Other needs

### **TO WHOM are you communicating?**

- Disaster services partners
- Staff and volunteers
- Clients
- Funders
- Media
- General public

### **WHO should communicate the message?**

- Ensure they have proper training
- Ensure they have proper authority
- Ensure they share consistent message

### **HOW should you communicate?**

- Electronic
- Paper
- Verbal
- Combination

### **WHAT can you do or prepare in advance?**

- Agency talking points/key messages
- Disaster/emergency response press release
- Emergency related funding solicitation
- Email, phone, pager, cell phone and fax lists
- Take crisis/risk communication training

# Communication – Tools

MAKE SURE YOU KNOW ALL THE COMMUNICATION TOOLS AVAILABLE TO YOU

Mastering how you send and receive information will help you in both crisis and opportunity. A variety of options is the key to maintaining communications.

## Disaster Communication Tools

There are many communication tools we don't normally consider that may become useful if a disaster cuts off our normal channels.

- Bulletin Board/White Board
- Carbon Paper/NCR Paper
- CB Radios
- Cell Phones
- Digital Telephones
- Drums
- Flag Pole
- HAM Radios Weather Radios
- Megaphones/Bullhorns
- Pagers
- Palm Pilots/Blackberries
- POTS Telephones
- Public Signage
- Runners
- Walkie-Talkies
- Whistles
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Communication Outreach Options

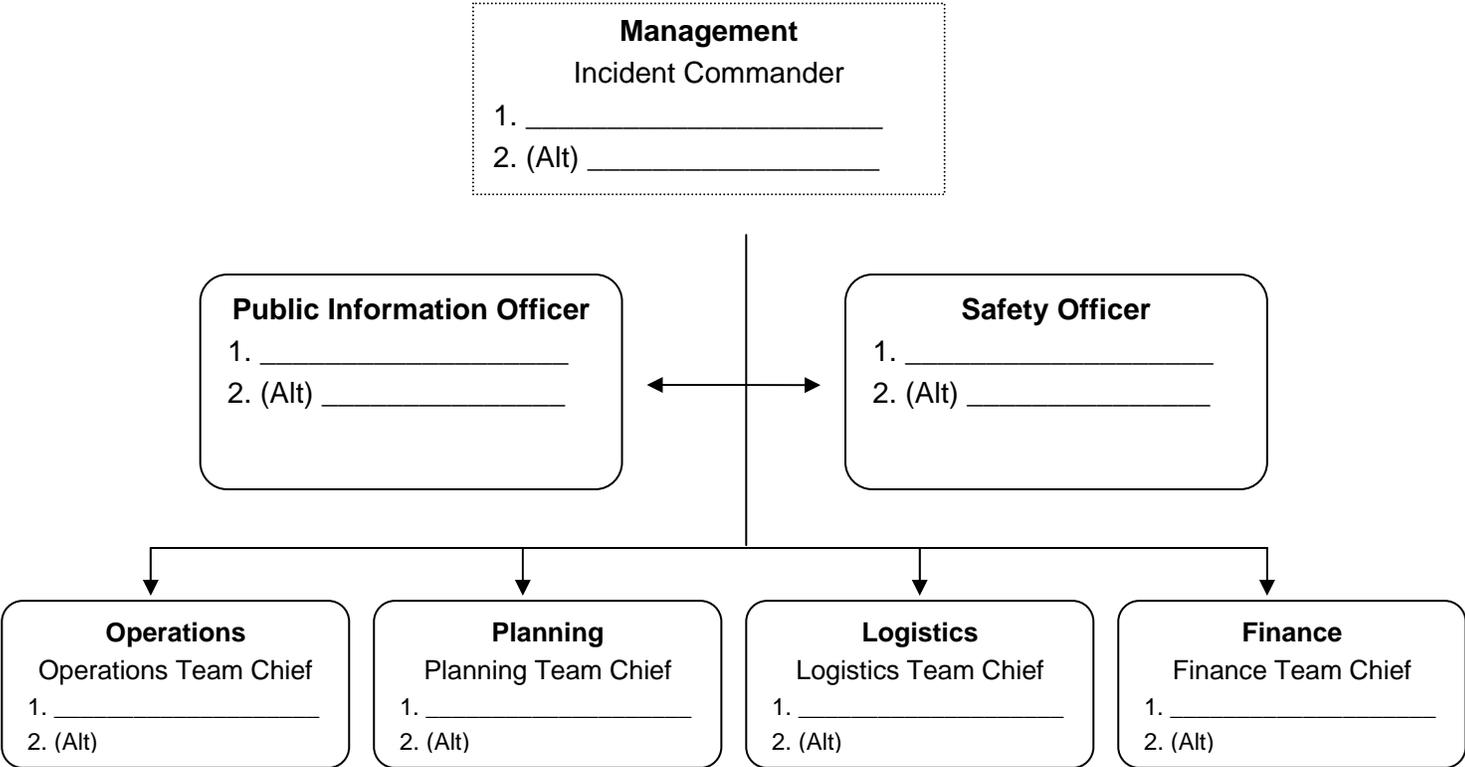
What are all the different ways you can speak to your community? Different methods have different advantages, and may help you reach people you had not reached before.

- American Sign Language
- Computers: DSL or Dial-up
- Door-to-Door Canvassing or Home Visits
- Email and Listservs
- Fact Sheets or FAQs
- Fax Machines/WinFax
- Information Phone Lines (800 numbers)
- In-person Events, Workshops or Classes
- Language Translators
- Mailing Lists: Brochures, Fliers
- Radio
- Television
- Video/Cassette Tape/CD-ROM/DVD
- Websites
- 211 Toll-Free Information Centers
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# ICS – Roles

MAKE SURE YOU KNOW THE NATION’S UNIVERSAL RESPONSE SYSTEM

The National Incident Management System is the Federal standard for responding to disasters. Understanding the Incident Command System that is the core of NIMS will allow you to organize for managing any situation, coordinate with your community partners, and “speak the language” of the professional responders – which makes you that much easier to help.



## ICS – Roles (continued)

### MAKE SURE YOU KNOW THE NATION'S UNIVERSAL RESPONSE SYSTEM

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**Incident Command:** Leads the response; appoints and empowers team leaders; sets tone and standards for response. Encourages teamwork and communications.

**Safety and Security Officer:** Focuses on the safety of all people responding to the incident.

**Public Information Officer:** Works with the media and distributes messages to the public and local community.

**Operations Team:** Handles key actions including first aid, search and rescue, fire suppression and securing the site.

**Planning Team:** Gathers information, thinks ahead and keeps all team members informed and communicating.

**Logistics Team:** Finds, distributes, and stores all necessary resources (supplies and people) to respond appropriately.

**Finance/Administration Team:** Tracks all expenses, claims and activities and is the record-keeper for the incident.

# ICS – Contact Information

MAKE SURE YOU KNOW THE NATION’S UNIVERSAL RESPONSE SYSTEM

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Considering who might do well at certain functions is an excellent tool for understanding NIMS and getting people used to the idea. Be careful, though, you never know who will be part of your disaster response team, so be prepared to assign roles when they are needed.

**Primary Functions**

**Incident Commander**

Name:	Name:
Phone:	Phone:
Alt. Phone:	Alt. Phone:

**Operations Officer**

Name:	Name:
Phone:	Phone:
Alt. Phone:	Alt. Phone:

**Planning Officer**

Name:	Name:
Phone:	Phone:
Alt. Phone:	Alt. Phone:

**Logistics Officer**

Name:	Name:
Phone:	Phone:
Alt. Phone:	Alt. Phone:

**Finance/Admin Officer**

Name:	Name:
Phone:	Phone:
Alt. Phone:	Alt. Phone:

# ICS – Contact Information (continued)

MAKE SURE YOU KNOW THE NATION’S UNIVERSAL RESPONSE SYSTEM

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## Support Functions

### **Safety and Security Officer**

Name:

Phone:

Alt. Phone:

Name:

Phone:

Alt. Phone:

### **Public Information Officer**

Name:

Phone:

Alt. Phone:

Name:

Phone:

Alt. Phone:

## Financial Resources

### MAKE SURE YOU KNOW YOUR FINANCIAL ASSETS, LIMITATIONS AND COMMITMENTS

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It is a good idea for your organization to be aware of its cost of normal operations; estimate cost increases that might arise from emergencies and be familiar with eligibility and other prerequisites for aid and reimbursements from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other agencies.

Some topics to explore include the following:

1. Copies of Financial Support Documentation to have ready
  - Insurance policies
  - The deed or lease for your facilities
  - Bank information, including all of your account numbers, including personnel contacts
  - Legal identification, such as your taxpayer ID number and evidence of exemption status
  - Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)
  
2. Liquid Assets
  - How much cash do you keep in “petty cash”?
  - Do you have \$15-\$20 in coins for pay phones?
  
3. Credit Cards/ Lines of Credit
  - What credit cards does your agency own?
  - Where are they?
  - What are the limits of each?
  - Who can sign on each?
  - Do they have emergency credit extensions?
  - Do you have a line of credit immediately available?
  - Who can access the money?

**Reminder: Keep this information updated. Be sure it reflects any staff or policy changes!**

## Ensuring Service Continuation

### MAKE SURE YOU ARE CLEAR ON YOUR SERVICE PRIORITIES

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What is needed to continue essential providing services after a disaster?

1. List the primary services you will continue to provide following an emergency?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. What are the critical material resources necessary to maintain these operations?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. What neighboring agencies or businesses can you connect with in order to share resources in an emergency, to maintain operations and to ensure the care of people you serve?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_

Your organization should clarify what its mission and priorities will be in the aftermath of a major disaster. It is important for agencies working with at-risk clients on a daily basis to know their clients' needs and how to support their recovery following a disaster.

Some questions to include:

1. What are the predictable needs of the people you serve in emergencies?
2. Will the needs of the people you serve require you to expand services in a disaster's aftermath?
3. Will you need to consider providing new or different services?

**Remember:**

**Knowing your priorities as an agency makes everything else fall into place.  
In crisis or opportunity, if you are clear on your priorities, you can make  
the best decisions for you agency.**