



# The Standards for excellence

*An Ethics & Accountability Program for the Nonprofit Sector*

## **CRISIS AND DISASTER PLANNING**

**A STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE®  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE BULLETIN**



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## **PREAMBLE**

America's nonprofit sector serves the public interest and plays an essential role in our society and economy. Hard at work strengthening communities across the nation, nonprofits enrich our lives in a variety of ways by creating a broad array of benefits to society in fields such as charitable, religious, scientific, economic, health, cultural, civil rights, environment, and education.

Public investment and confidence drive the success of nonprofit organizations. Individuals, corporations, foundations, and federal, state, and local governments add value to the services that nonprofits provide by investing time, resources, and funds.

The Standards for Excellence Institute aims to raise the level of accountability, transparency, and effectiveness of all nonprofit organizations to foster excellence and inspire trust. The Standards for Excellence code (Standards, or code) provides a framework and step-by-step guidelines to achieve a well-managed and responsibly governed organization.

The code builds upon the legal foundations of nonprofit management, governance, and operations to embrace fundamental values such as honesty, integrity, fairness, respect, trust, compassion, responsibility, and transparency. The code consists of six Guiding Principles in 27 topic areas with specific performance benchmarks that characterize effective, ethical, and accountable organizations. The Institute helps the nonprofit sector operate in accordance with the Standards for Excellence code by providing educational resources, assistance, and a voluntary accreditation process.

The Standards for Excellence Institute encourages all nonprofit organizations to adopt the Guiding Principles of the Standards for Excellence code. By implementing the performance benchmarks in the code, nonprofit organizations will meet the highest ethical standards for effective service in the public interest.

## **STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE - GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

### **I. MISSION, STRATEGY, and EVALUATION**

Guiding Principle: Nonprofits are founded for the public good and operate to accomplish a stated purpose through specific program activities. A nonprofit should have a well-defined mission, and its programs should effectively and efficiently work toward achieving that mission. Nonprofits have an obligation to ensure program effectiveness and to devote the resources of the organization to achieving its stated purpose.

### **II. LEADERSHIP: BOARD, STAFF, and VOLUNTEERS**

Guiding Principle: Nonprofits depend upon effective leadership to successfully enact their missions and programs. Effective leadership consists of a partnership between the board and management, each of which plays an essential role. Understanding and negotiating these shared and complex elements of leadership is essential to the organization's success. A nonprofit's employees and volunteers are fundamental to its ability to achieve its mission.

Board members are in a position of trust to ensure that resources are used to carry out the mission of the organization. An organization's board leadership should consist of volunteers who are committed to the mission and who demonstrate an understanding of the community served. An effective nonprofit board should determine the mission of the organization, establish management policies and procedures, assure that adequate human and financial resources are available, and actively monitor the organization's allocation of resources to effectively and efficiently fulfill its mission.

Nonprofits should also have executive leadership which carries out the day-to-day operations of the organization, ensures financial and organizational sustainability, and provides adequate information to the board of directors. An organization's human resource policies should address both paid employees and volunteers and should be fair, establish clear expectations, and provide meaningful and effective performance evaluation.

### **III. LEGAL COMPLIANCE and ETHICS**

Guiding Principle: Nonprofits enjoy the public's trust, and therefore must comply with a diverse array of legal and regulatory requirements. Organizations should conduct periodic reviews to address regulatory and fiduciary concerns. One of a leadership's fundamental responsibilities is to ensure that the organization governs and operates

in an ethical and legal manner. Fostering exemplary conduct is one of the most effective means of developing internal and external trust as well as preventing misconduct. Moreover, to honor the trust that the public has given them, nonprofits have an obligation to go beyond legal requirements and embrace the highest ethical practices. Nonprofit board, staff, and volunteers must act in the best interest of the organization, rather than in furtherance of personal interests or the interests of third parties. A nonprofit should have policies in place, and should routinely and systematically implement those policies, to prevent actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest. Ethics and compliance reinforce each other.

#### IV. FINANCE and OPERATIONS

Guiding Principle: Nonprofits should have sound financial and operational systems in place and should ensure that accurate records are kept. The organization's financial and nonfinancial resources must be used in furtherance of tax-exempt purposes. Organizations should conduct periodic reviews to address accuracy and transparency of financial and operational reporting, and safeguards to protect the integrity of the reporting systems.

#### V. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Guiding Principle: The responsibility for resource development is shared by the board and staff. Nonprofit organizations depend on an array of sources of financial support. An organization's resource development program should be maintained on a foundation of truthfulness and responsible stewardship. Its resource development policies should be consistent with its mission, compatible with its organizational capacity, and respectful of the interests of donors, prospective donors, and others providing resources to the organization.

#### VI. PUBLIC AWARENESS, ENGAGEMENT, and ADVOCACY

Guiding Principle: Nonprofits should represent the interests of the people they serve through public education and public policy advocacy, as well as by encouraging board members, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders to participate in the public affairs of the community. When appropriate to advance the organization's mission, nonprofits should engage in promoting public participation in community affairs and elections. As such, they should communicate in an effective manner to educate, inform, and engage the public.

### **ABOUT THE STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE INSTITUTE**

The Standards for Excellence Institute is a national initiative established to promote the highest standards of ethics and accountability in nonprofit governance, management and operations, and to facilitate adherence to those standards by all nonprofit organizations. The Institute uses as a vehicle the Standards for Excellence program, a system of nonprofit sector industry self-regulation originated by the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations and currently replicated by licensed partners in Alabama, Central Virginia, Colorado Springs, Delaware, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. The program is also being offered to chapters of The Arc nationwide through The Arc of the United States, to the American Nurses Association, and to Catholic nonprofit organizations nationwide through the National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management.

The centerpiece of the Institute's program is the Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector. The Institute also makes available to member organizations a comprehensive system of educational tools to enable individual nonprofit organizations to improve their governance and management practices. Standards for Excellence accreditation is available to individual organizations through a rigorous peer review process in selected locations and nationwide through the Standards for Excellence Institute.

For more information about joining the Standards for Excellence Institute or to obtain additional copies of the booklet or educational resource bulletins visit our website at [www.standardsforexcellenceinstitute.org](http://www.standardsforexcellenceinstitute.org).



# The Standards for excellence

*An Ethics & Accountability Program for the Nonprofit Sector*

## **TOPICAL BULLETIN: CRISIS AND DISASTER PLANNING**

As the *Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector* states:

### **CRISIS AND DISASTER PLANNING**

#### a. Administrative Policies

A nonprofit should have written board-approved administrative policies that are periodically reviewed by the board. At a minimum, these policies should address issues such as crisis and disaster planning, information technology, communications, and social media.

Emergencies can happen at any time to any organization. They can range from natural disasters, loss of key staff, damage to computer systems, and business interruption. Generally, emergencies can affect five key areas:

- Physical or psychological injury to **people**
- Inability to continue important organization **operations**
- Damage to or destruction of **facilities**
- **Financial** loss, apart from the above
- **Spillover** effects from something that has affected some other person or organization

### **INTRODUCTION TO CRISIS AND DISASTER PLANNING**

The very nature of crises and disasters is that they are unplanned, unexpected, and have serious impact on people, organizations, and communities. In the United States, recent examples include the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Hurricane Katrina, Superstorm Sandy, category 5 tornados, and other natural disasters. Around the world, we see armed struggles, terrorism, and other man-made and natural events and the upheaval they produce.

These events capture the nation's attention, bring community members to action as volunteers and donors, and remind all that devastation can come at any time, at any place.

Many businesses, corporations, government agencies, and other entities have designed a variety of resources, tools, plans, and actions to guide their response to crises and disasters. You will

find a number of these in the resources section of this bulletin. This bulletin focuses on key principles and guidelines for nonprofits and provides a comprehensive list of additional references and resources.

## **CRISIS AND DISASTER PLANNING FOR NONPROFITS**

### **Importance for Nonprofits**

Nonprofits occupy a key role in the response to disasters. Nonprofits are often at the forefront of supporting those affected by disasters. Agencies such as the American Red Cross and the International Rescue Committee, hospitals, health and human services, food and housing organizations, and animal rescues are part of the first responder teams in many emergencies – and many of these organizations continue to provide support long after the immediate event. Maintaining the nonprofits’ health, strength, and capacity to serve others is vital to their community and constituents.

Nonprofits also hold a unique place in the public trust and often come under intense media scrutiny. Crises such as financial or ethical impropriety on the part of any member of your organization can seriously damage your reputation or ability to continue providing services. Even irresponsible actions by others in your field or in the larger nonprofit sector can have a negative, spillover impact on your organization. A proactive approach to addressing these issues will help you move beyond the crisis.

Safeguarding the knowledge, skills, relationships, passion, and creativity of its people is an essential component for every organization. In the nonprofit sector, the contribution of the board, leadership, and staff is even more critical. Many nonprofits operate with a small group of leaders, often playing multiple roles. The unexpected loss of any staff presents a challenge for nonprofits and the potential loss of several key leaders in a disaster situation can produce a major crisis for many nonprofits.

### **Dealing with Crisis**

Crisis management is defined as “an organization’s pre-established activities and guidelines for preparing and responding to significant catastrophic events or incidents . . . in a safe and effective manner”<sup>1</sup>

The Crisis and Disaster Plan is a key tool that documents the actions you will take in the event of a significant event, crisis, or disaster.

### **Benefits of a Crisis and Disaster Plan**

The focus on crisis and disaster planning ensures that the nonprofit is able to:

- prepare for emergencies, to the extent possible
- respond quickly and clearly to all constituents
- continue to offer its essential programs
- resume full operations, as soon as possible

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<sup>1</sup> Lockwood, Nancy R. *Crisis Management in Today’s Business Environment: HR’s Strategic Role Society for Human Resource Management*, 2005.

- safeguard and protect vital organizational resources

### **Risks of Not Addressing the Issue**

Without a Crisis and Disaster Plan, the nonprofit may not be able to:

- provide essential services
- generate revenue and/or donations
- retain or replace key organization leaders
- avoid negative media attention
- safeguard its intellectual property
- maintain public confidence

<p><b>Recommended Components of a Crisis and Disaster Plan</b></p> <p>A. Purpose, Priorities, and Principles</p> <p>B. The Response Team</p> <p>C. Assessment of Risk</p> <p>D. Business Continuity Plan</p>
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### **Recommended Components of a Crisis and Disaster Plan**

The components are introduced briefly below and samples or worksheets provided in the attachments section of this bulletin. Depending on the type of services your organization provides and the environment in which you work, you may find that the components of your crisis and disaster plan may need to be more highly developed in some areas than others. You may also find that your organization requires additional components in order to adequately prepare for disasters.

It may also be helpful to reach out to other similar organizations working in your field or region to explore and compare notes on disaster and crisis communications planning approaches.

#### **A. Define the Purpose, Priorities, and Principles**

Start your plan with an explanation of why and how the crisis and disaster plan is relevant to your organization, its mission, and the people you serve. This communicates the organizational commitment to addressing crisis situations in a focused and efficient way.

*See “Sample Plan Introduction” at the end of this bulletin.*

#### **B. Designate the Response Team**

The response team provides the structure, establishes the principles, and implements the policies for action in the event of an emergency. The plan describes roles and responsibilities of team members and provides up-to-date contact information.

*See “Guidelines for Assembling a Response Team” at the end of this bulletin.*

#### **C. Assess Your Risk through Different Types of Crises and Disasters**

Events may occur that are either external or internal to the organization and both will have serious impact on your organization. Take into consideration your location, community, and program focus in defining and prioritize the risks that are most relevant to you.

*See the “Worksheet for Assessing Risk” at the end of this bulletin.*

#### **D. Develop the Business Continuity Plan**

Business continuity planning addresses the following areas:

- **Preparation** – actions taken prior to a crisis or disaster
- **Response** – procedures and steps done immediately after an emergency or interruption to the business
- **Recovery/Restoration** – steps taken to restore functionality so that some level of service can be offered to clients while restoring the organization to its original status prior to an interruption

The Business Continuity Plan is an important tool and its development will depend upon many factors, including, but not limited to the mission of the organization, the services provided, and the individuals served.

*See the “Sample Continuity Plan” at the end of this bulletin.*

### **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**An Integrated Systems Approach:** As you develop your plan, it is likely that you will begin to see the connections between crisis and disaster planning and the policies, procedures, and operational plans that your organization has in place during non-disaster times. In some cases, a strong system can lessen the impact of a crisis situation. An established and well-functioning system can make for a quicker response and ease tensions and anxieties about an unexpected event. The development of your crisis and disaster plan should include a review of all related systems, plans, and procedures.

Consider how these other areas both impact or support the actions identified in your crisis plan:

- board, staff, and volunteer policies
- program/service standards and compliance
- insurance and risk management policies
- technology recovery and cyber-security policies
- communications/social media policies
- financial policies, including internal controls, purchasing, reserves, policies on uncovering improprieties
- succession planning and leadership development plans
- resource development plan

**Supporting Those You Serve:** Nonprofit organizations providing direct services to individuals, families, and communities have a special and heightened interest, need, and obligation to ensure that those who rely on their services continue to receive needed services and assistance. Many nonprofits offer essential direct services on an ongoing and regular basis (health and mental health, food, nutrition, public safety, to name a few). Procedures should address how the organization will address safety, basic needs, and ensure accurate and timely information and instructions for those individuals the nonprofit serves.

**Supporting Other Stakeholders:** Nonprofits may also want to consider their role in providing important disaster preparedness information and resources to their stakeholders. The American Red Cross (<http://www.redcross.org/prepare>) and the federal government website Ready.gov both have a wide range of materials covering many types of disasters, checklists, and tools for families, schools, and workplaces. Providing your stakeholders access to these resources on a regular basis will help them and their families be better prepared in cases of emergencies.

**Special Events:** Crisis and disaster events can also have an impact on a single event sponsored by a nonprofit, such as a fundraiser, conference, or meeting. Obtaining cancellation insurance may provide a financial cushion for this type of occurrence.

**Volunteers:** In a disaster or crisis situation, volunteers can play a major role in both the response and recovery phases. Volunteers might fill in for staff members who are unable to work, free up staff to focus on critical services, and/or provide aid and support to clients and community members. You can make the best use of this valuable resource by planning ahead and identifying the ways you will recruit, train, and manage volunteers during a crisis.

## **CRISIS COMMUNICATION**

Implementing a crisis communications plan is an essential part of a nonprofit's disaster preparedness efforts and risk management strategies. In the event of a crisis, a nonprofit must be able to communicate with all audiences with confidence, speed, and accuracy. Protecting your organization is one of the main goals of your crisis communications plan.

When an emergency or crisis arises, your organization should have a well-considered plan of action to communicate both internally to all of your stakeholders and externally to the public and media. This plan identifies who will (and will not) speak on behalf of the organization, how the messages will be developed, how all staff and board members will be prepared to deal with inquiries, and how the response will be evaluated afterwards so that improvements can be made to the plan, as needed.

Begin by brainstorming about the types of crises, disasters, or emergencies that might arise, no matter how unlikely – think about situations that are typical for your type of organization or may have occurred in the past, and also events that have appeared in the media. Once you have a potential list, you can prioritize those that are most relevant.

Here are a few scenarios to consider:

- Damage to facilities that seriously affects your ability to operate
- Natural disaster that prevents clients, staff, or volunteers from being able to access your location.
- Workplace violence involving a client, staff, volunteer, or board member
- Death or serious illness involving a staff or board member
- Criminal activity involving a client, staff, volunteer, or board member
- Improper conduct involving a client, staff, volunteer, or board member
- Widespread staff or board resignations
- Fraud or major theft

- Unfavorable action by a funder, auditor, or regulatory body
- Suspension or loss of license
- Outside event that involves your organization's areas of expertise where you may be asked to comment or take a position (for example a situation involving mental illness, immigration, child or spouse abuse)
- Proprietary information, rumors, or falsehoods spread through social media

### **Steps in Developing a Crisis Communication Plan**

- *Define key stakeholders/priority audiences*  
Think broadly when identifying stakeholders – consider families, neighbors, people and companies with whom you do business and other organizations in your network.
- *Organize all relevant contact information*  
This includes information about staff, volunteers, board, clients, partners, funders, vendors, and the media. Make sure this information is kept current. Access to the information should be available to several people in different locations, in the event that an emergency prevents access to your offices or computer systems
- *Develop your message and disseminate*  
In a crisis situation, a clear, timely, and thorough response is essential. This allows your organization to frame the issue, present the facts, and demonstrate to the public that you are taking positive action. This is also an opportunity for you to engage the public's support as you recover from the crisis.
- *Evaluate your response and revise your plan*  
After the crisis is over, take a critical look at your crisis communication – what worked, what didn't, what else was needed, and so on. Incorporate your findings into plan revision and staff training.

*See the "Sample Emergency/Crisis Communication Plan" at the end of this bulletin.*

In this age of instant communication, social media can be both a powerful tool and a potential liability for organizations dealing with a crisis. The Standards For Excellence Institute has developed an educational resource bulletin, *Communications, Engaging the Public and Social Media* to help you address this area.

## SELECTED RESOURCES

### Websites

American Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.org/prepare>

ASAE

<http://www.asaecenter.org/Search/search.cfm?Query=crisis+plan&x=0&y=0>

FEMA

<http://www.fema.gov/plan-prepare-mitigate>

Nonprofit Risk Management Center

<http://www.nonprofitrisk.org/search/search.shtml?cx=016947194574783241609%3AAt-cnjypalai&cof=FORID%3A11&q=crisis+plan&sa=Search>

Ready Business

<http://www.ready.gov/business>

### General Tools for Crisis and Continuity Planning

*“Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) for Non-Profit Organizations”*

A planning checklist

<http://oem.readyphiladelphia.org/Customized/uploads/Ready%20Philadelphia%20-%20COOP%20Checklist.pdf>

*“Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) for Non-Profit Human Services Provider”*

A template to guide an organization through the steps needed to begin the process of developing a comprehensive COOP plan for the organization

[http://niqca.org/documents/IT\\_Plan\\_for\\_Emergencies.pdf](http://niqca.org/documents/IT_Plan_for_Emergencies.pdf)

*“Disaster Planning, Emergency Preparedness & Business Continuity,”* Nonprofit Coordinating Committee of New York

Covers: Emergency planning, Disaster recovery, and Business continuity.

[http://npccny.org/info/disaster\\_plan.htm](http://npccny.org/info/disaster_plan.htm)

*“Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Plan,”* Council on Foundations

Very comprehensive and helpful planning guide for disasters that includes interactive portions and advice as to determining a plan of action and recovery plans.

<http://www.cof.org/sites/default/files/documents/files/DisasterandRecoveryPlan.pdf>

*“Disaster Recovery: Helping Nonprofits to Plan, Prepare & Recover”*

A guide to help nonprofits increase technological resiliency.

[http://www.techbridge.org/documents/TES%20032008%20TechBridge%20Disaster%20Recovery\\_presentation.pdf](http://www.techbridge.org/documents/TES%20032008%20TechBridge%20Disaster%20Recovery_presentation.pdf)

*“Elements of Disaster Planning”*

Very helpful checklist created by Emergency Network of Los Angeles.

[http://www.californiavolunteers.org/documents/Education/Elements\\_Disaster\\_Planning.pdf](http://www.californiavolunteers.org/documents/Education/Elements_Disaster_Planning.pdf)

*“Providing Long-Term Services after Major Disasters”*

Free download from the Urban Institute 2007

<http://www.urbaninstitute.org/publications/411519.html>

*“Surviving a Crisis: Practical Strategies for Nonprofit Organizations,”* Nonprofits' Insurance Alliance of California (NIAC), 2009.

This booklet offers suggestions, in narrative form, for anticipating and surviving a crisis in narrative form, as well as checklists and worksheets which can be used for crisis management planning in your nonprofit.

[https://www.niac.org/AMSCentral/Resource.cfm?var\\_PageAction=View&var\\_ID=64](https://www.niac.org/AMSCentral/Resource.cfm?var_PageAction=View&var_ID=64)

*“The Resilient Organization: A Guide for Disaster Planning and Recovery”*

Excellent resource about building resiliency in case of a tech crisis (best IT practices, internet presence, back-ups, documentation, recovery and communications plans).

<http://www.techsoup.org/disaster-planning-and-recovery>

*“Where can I learn more about disaster planning for my nonprofit?”*

<http://www.grantspace.org/Tools/Knowledge-Base/Nonprofit-Management/Sustainability/Disaster-planning>

### **Additional Tools Specific to your Programs and Populations Served**

#### **Search national organization in your field, such as:**

*American Alliance of Museums* (members only website resource information)

<http://aam-us.org/resources/resource-library/frm>

*American Society for Healthcare Engineering (ASHE)* – Hospital Disaster Preparedness

<http://www.ashe.org/advocacy/organizations/TJC/ec/emergency/hospdisasterprepare.html>

*Child Welfare League* (website article “Preparing for Natural Disaster”)

<https://www.cwla.org/voice/0607management.htm>

*Disability Prepared* (Research and Training Center on Independent Living (RTC/IL), University of Kansas - Best of Best Practices website)

<http://www2.ku.edu/~lsiprepared/>

*Disaster Planning for Animals* (Humane Society of America website)

[http://www.humanesociety.org/about/departments/disaster\\_preparedness.html#.Uw4k4M5kXkc](http://www.humanesociety.org/about/departments/disaster_preparedness.html#.Uw4k4M5kXkc)

*Model Plan for Disaster Preparation and Response for the Churches of Charleston-Atlantic Presbytery*

<http://www.foothillspresbytery.org/pdfs/ChurchModelPlanDRC.pdf>

*Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and other Special Needs* (Red Cross Booklet)  
[http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA\\_CustomProductCatalog/m4240199\\_A4497.pdf](http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m4240199_A4497.pdf)

### **HandsOn Network Resources: Volunteerism and Disaster/Crisis Planning**

*“Disaster Volunteer Roles”*

Includes mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery positions.

[http://www.handsonnetwork.org/files/resources/ORD\\_DisasterVolunteerRoles\\_2010\\_HON.pdf](http://www.handsonnetwork.org/files/resources/ORD_DisasterVolunteerRoles_2010_HON.pdf)

*“Top 15 Things to Know When Managing Volunteers in a Disaster”*

This list is intended for agencies that do not typically handle volunteer management activities, but that may find themselves in such a situation in response to a disaster.

[http://www.handsonnetwork.org/files/resources/Top\\_15\\_Things\\_to\\_Know\\_When\\_Managing\\_Volunteers\\_in\\_Times\\_of\\_Disaster.pdf](http://www.handsonnetwork.org/files/resources/Top_15_Things_to_Know_When_Managing_Volunteers_in_Times_of_Disaster.pdf)

### **National and Community Service – National Service Knowledge Network**

*“Knowledge Network for Disaster Services”*

<https://www.nationalserviceresources.org/disaster-services>

*“The Resilient Organization: A Guide for Disaster Planning”*

<https://www.nationalserviceresources.org/samples/resilient-organization-guide-disaster-planning-and-recovery>

*“Managing Spontaneous Volunteers in Times of Disaster”*

<https://www.nationalserviceresources.org/online-library/items/m4107>

*“Disaster Services Start-Up Guide for State Service”*

<https://www.nationalserviceresources.org/online-library/items/r4101>

### **Crisis Communication**

*“7 Steps for Social Media Crisis Management”*

<http://www.psfk.com/2013/08/social-media-crisis-management.html#!x9j0f>

*“Communicating During a Crisis,”* Non Profit Risk Management Center: Mission Controls Fact Sheets on Crisis Management

<http://www.nonprofitrisk.org/library/fact-sheets/communicate.shtml>

*“Crisis Communication Plan”*

<http://www.ready.gov/business/implementation/crisis>

*“Do You Have a Crisis Plan?”* Nonprofit Roundtable of Greater Washington

<http://nonprofitroundtable.org/blog/864-do-you-have-a-crisis-plan>

*“How to Handle a Social Media Crisis”*

<http://floresmo.wordpress.com/2014/02/28/how-to-handle-a-social-media-crisis/>

*“How to Use Social Media for Crisis Management”*

<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/how-to-use-social-media-for-crisis-management/>

*“The Socially Responsible Role of Social Media in Crisis Management”*

<http://www.technewsworld.com/story/77439.html>

*“The Ten Steps of Crisis Management”*

<http://www.bernsteincrisismanagement.com/articles/10-steps-of-crisis-communications.html>

### **Acknowledgements:**

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### **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A: Sample plan introduction

Attachment B: Roles and responsibilities of the disaster/crisis team

Attachment C: Sample risk assessment worksheet

Attachment D: Continuity plan worksheet

Attachment E: Sample emergency/crisis communication plan

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**SAMPLE**  
**Plan Introduction**  
**(Can also be called: Crisis, Disaster, Contingency, or Continuity Plan)**

The **purpose** of this document is to identify and address the critical factors that may affect (THE NONPROFIT) in the event of a national, regional or local emergency, disaster, or other unexpected event.

Our **priorities** are to:

- Secure the safety and well-being of all (THE NONPROFIT)'s clients and staff
- Protect our business property
- Safeguard our assets
- Provide an operational guideline for recovery
- **Add your own**

**Principles** that guide our actions:

- Open and continuous communication with our staff, board members, and clients
- Respect for privacy and dignity of all people
- Quick action and response
- Support for those directly affected
- **Add your own**

We recognize that while crisis/disaster/contingency planning can address some likely events, there are other emergency situations that cannot be predicted. Therefore, (THE NONPROFIT) has designated a response team to provide the structure, policies, and principles for action in the event of an emergency.

**ATTACHMENT B**  
**SAMPLE**  
**Roles and Responsibilities of Response Team**

**Responsibilities of (THE NONPROFIT)'s Response Team**

(THE NONPROFIT)'s Response Team is comprised of designated members (THE NONPROFIT)'s Senior Management staff and at least one member of the Board of Directors.

The following staff positions serve on the Response team (**select your own**):

- President/CEO/Executive Director
- Vice Presidents/Program Directors
- Director of Human Resources
- Director of Administration
- Director of Communications
- Director of Volunteers
- Board Member(s)
- **Add your own**

The team is responsible for the development, periodic review, and implementation of this plan. In the event of an emergency, (THE NONPROFIT)'s Response Team will meet (by telephone or in person) to assess the situation and develop a specific plan of action in response to an emergency.

**Response Team Objectives/Roles**

In the event of an emergency, crisis or other disaster, the (THE NONPROFIT)'s Response Team's tasks are:

**1. Information Gathering and Assessment**

- Gather information quickly
- Gather all relevant and accurate details
- Assess the need for immediate intervention and mobilize resources

**2. Immediate Actions**

- Secure the safety of people and property
- Evaluate damage and possible consequences
- Set up alternative plans, if needed, to continue regular business operations
- Minimize the impact and loss
- Return to normal operations as soon as possible

**3. Communication**

- Respond promptly to multiple audiences (staff, volunteers, board, families, clients, vendors, funders, partners, media, general public)
- Organize a telephone network to inform people of necessary information
- Calm fears, stop rumors, reduce uncertainty
- Plan for a public statement/press release

- Ensure the privacy and dignity of all people
- Protect (THE NONPROFIT)'s credibility and reputation

**4. Assessment**

- Conduct post-crisis evaluation
- Revise plan as needed

(Document the following information and make it available to all members of the response team and other key staff and board members.)

Position Title (Staff & Board)	Name	Location/ Telephone/email	Primary Roles on the Response Team	Back Up Person

**ATTACHMENT C**  
**SAMPLE**  
**Risk Assessment Worksheet**

**Examples of events that could disrupt business:**

- **Natural Disasters** – hurricane, earthquake, flood, fire
- **Civil Disruptions** – terrorism, riot, police action, bomb threat
- **Criminal Activity** – burglary, workplace violence
- **Technology Emergency** – computer virus, corruption of critical data
- **Health Emergency** – infectious disease, epidemic, contamination
- **Travel Emergency** – airplane/train accident, shutdown of major transportation services
- **Loss of Essential Members** – serious illness or death
- **Loss of Access to Workplaces** – office building or community emergency
- **Loss of Intellectual Capital** – loss of information and intuitive processes
- **Loss of Financial Capital** – fraud, unanticipated contract loss, banking system shutdown, loss of major funder or donor

**Steps in Risk Assessment**

1. **Review** the list of possible events and add to it, as needed
2. **Identify** specific scenarios/situations that are most relevant to your program focus, location, and community – for example, is your area prone to hurricanes or tornadoes or earthquakes? Do your clients and staff rely on public transportation to get to your location? Is your website the principal entry point for people accessing your services? Can you provide your programs only in specific location(s)?
3. **Prioritize** the potential crises to focus your need for planning and action
4. **Answer** these questions:
  - How likely is each event/crisis to occur?
    - Within 1 to 2 years
    - Not very likely
    - Unable to predict
  - What is the anticipated duration of disruption?
    - Short term
    - Long term
    - Ongoing
  - What is the potential impact on the organization should this occur?
    - Minimal
    - Major
  - Who would be most affected?
    - Your staff
    - Your clients
5. **Summarize** your assessment

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>TYPES OF EVENTS ADD YOUR OWN EXAMPLES</b>	<b>PRIORITIZE FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION (1...10)</b>	<b>LIKELIHOOD</b>	<b>POTENTIAL IMPACT</b>	<b>WHO WOULD BE MOST AFFECTED</b>
<b>Natural Disasters</b>	hurricane, earthquake, flood, fire				
<b>Civil Disruptions</b>	terrorism, riot, police action, bomb threat				
<b>Criminal Activity</b>	burglary, workplace violence				
<b>Technology Emergency</b>	computer virus, corruption of critical data, telecomm interruption or shutdown				
<b>Health Emergency</b>	infectious disease, epidemic, contamination				
<b>Travel Emergency</b>	airplane/train accident, shutdown of major transportation services				
<b>Loss of Essential Members</b>	serious illness or death				
<b>Loss of Access to Workplaces</b>	office building or community emergency				
<b>Loss of Intellectual Capital</b>	loss of information and intuitive processes				
<b>Loss of Financial Capital</b>	fraud, unanticipated contract loss, banking system shutdown, loss of major funder or donor				
<b>Add your own</b>					

## ATTACHMENT D

### WORKSHEET Continuity Plan

**Business Continuity Planning addresses the following areas:**

- **Preparation** – actions taken prior to disaster, crisis event, emergency
- **Response** – procedures and steps done immediately after an emergency or interruption to the business
- **Recovery/Restoration**– steps taken to restore some functionality so that some level of business can be offered to customers while restoring the organization to its original status prior to an interruption

### Sample Continuity Plan **Enter your own information**

Event	Preparation	Response	Recovery/Restoration
Natural Disasters	*Office evacuation plan *Office smoke detectors and fire extinguishers	*911 *Contact staff and customers	*Business insurance *Continue operations from alternate locations *Reschedule activities
Civil Disruptions	*Office evacuation plan *Designated alternate locations *Remote Access	*911 * Contact staff *Contact customers	*Continue business operations from alternate locations *Reschedule activities
Criminal Activity	*Preventative measures *Business insurance *EAP	*911 * Contact police and file a report	*File business insurance claim
Technology Emergency	*Backup of computer systems housed off-site *Restoration of backups tested regularly *Password and virus protection software *Multiple communication methods	*Contact tech support vendors	*Restore from back up data
Health Emergency	*Alternate locations *Telecommuting *Remote access to data *Liberal leave	*Assess the situation and explore travel alternatives *Contact staff *Reschedule activities *Contact customers	*Work from home office locations *Send alternate staff *Reschedule activities
Travel Emergency	*Phone tree *Multiple methods of communication *EAP	*Secure safety of staff *Explore travel alternatives *Contact customers	*Arrange for possible completion of activities by other staff *Reschedule activities

<b>Event</b>	<b>Preparation</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Recovery/Restoration</b>
Loss of Essential Members	*Succession planning *Cross training *EAP	*Contact board and staff *Implement succession plan *Share responsibilities	*Hire interim or acting staff or promote to fill position
Loss of Access to Workplaces	*Multiple locations/Telecommuting *Business insurance *Inventory of property updated annually	*Work from multiple locations *Contact office management company	*Relocate office location if necessary
Loss of Intellectual Capital	*Succession planning *Cross training *Desk manuals *Leadership development *Information sharing	*Contact staff and customers *Recreate loss of information and processes *Share responsibilities	*Hire or promote to fill position
Loss of Financial Capital	*Cash reserves of at least six months *Line of credit *Internal controls	*Contact staff *Contact customers and vendors	*Contingency plan and budget are implemented

**ATTACHMENT E**  
**SAMPLE**  
**Emergency/Crisis Communication Plan**

**Priority Audiences (Define)**

- Staff and their families, volunteers, and board members
- Clients
- Funders, and key business partners
- Media and general public

**Advance Preparation/Ongoing**

- Maintain up-to-date contact lists, accessible to several people in multiple locations
- Maintain current staff schedule and travel information, accessible to several people in multiple locations
- Maintain a media contact list, accessible to several people in multiple locations
- Establish a “telephone” tree system in advance

**Immediate Action**

- Define the message to be communicated; whom to contact for additional information
- Make personal phone calls, whenever possible, to staff and their families, and (THE NONPROFIT)’s board of directors
- Send email messages to other audiences
- Post press release or other messages on (THE NONPROFIT)’s web site and other social media
- Send press release via email

**Sample Media Policy**

(THE NONPROFIT) is committed to open and honest communication regarding the release of information. (THE NONPROFIT) will protect the privacy of personal information of its clients, employees, volunteers and board members. (THE NONPROFIT) will not comment on individual situations, but will present a statement of organizational position as needed.

If an occasion arises that requires media contact:

- Executive director, with advice from (THE NONPROFIT)’s Response Team, determines if a press release is needed and what points are to be covered in the press release.
- Director of Communications drafts the press release. (THE NONPROFIT)’s executive director and Response Team reviews the release.
- Executive director and Response Team decide the audiences for the release – clients, staff, board members, partners, funders, and media.
- Director of Communications distributes the press release through PR Newswire and relevant social media
- All media inquiries are referred to (THE NONPROFIT)’s executive director. If (THE NONPROFIT)’s executive director is not able to be reached, all media should be referred to (THE NONPROFIT)’s board chair.  
Director of Communications prepares all staff for media calls – how to respond to and refer callers.