

Why you should be Ready to Respond

Disaster can strike anytime, anywhere. It takes many forms—a hurricane, earthquake, tornado, flood, fire, power outage, hazardous spill or an act of terrorism. An event can build over days or weeks, or hit suddenly without warning. When a disaster occurs, a poorly managed staff response can put the safety and well-being of residents at risk, as well as expose housing owners to unnecessary costs, difficulties and liabilities. Affordable housing organizations face unique challenges during emergency events. Unable to easily relocate, these organizations depend on the continuous operation of their buildings, or at least a rapid return to service. Moreover, many housing organizations play a role in providing vital services to their residents and neighbors, and serve as important anchors in their communities. Having the right plan in place before disaster strikes will contribute to an effectively managed, coordinated response across staff, departments, partner agencies, and sites.

The Toolkit

Enterprise’s Ready to Respond: Business Continuity Toolkit is designed to assist affordable housing organizations build continuity plans that will promote business continuity resident engagement and building protection. The Toolkit is based on the Incident Command System (ICS), a planning framework used by federal, state, and local first responder agencies to help structure command, control, and coordination of emergency response. By modeling their plan on the readiness standard, housing organizations are drawing on best practices, and can align their protocols and response timelines and share a common language with key public agencies.

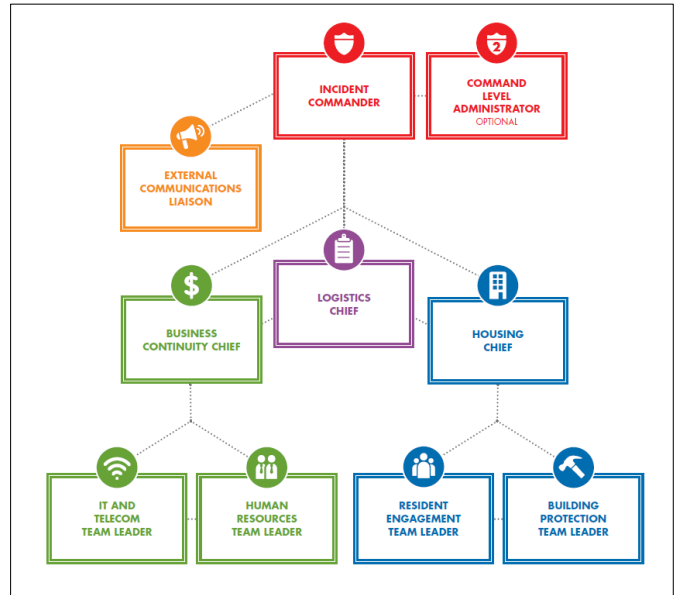


With a series of videos, guides, worksheets and checklists, the Toolkit will help housing organizations assign staff to disaster response roles, engage in vital planning tasks, test the strength of their plan with a simulated disaster scenario, and perform ongoing maintenance. When an organization completes the steps in the Toolkit and customizes the materials to fit their particular needs, the organization and its residents will be ready to respond.

Disaster Planning in Practice

The following are a few key examples of how our local affordable housing partners have used the Toolkit to develop emergency plans over the last year.

Bailey House is a New York City based supportive housing organization founded in 1983 to provide housing and social services to homeless men living with HIV/AIDS. Bailey House has used the Toolkit to customize their staffing plan. Bailey House calls their Housing Section, “Operations” which is divided into two



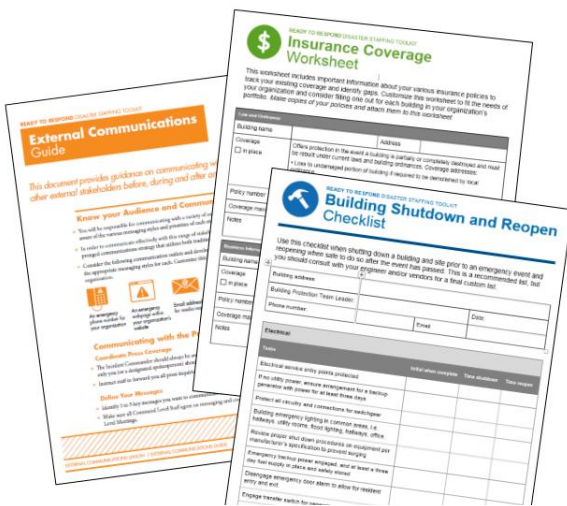
The Disaster Response Roles Staffing Chart guides organizations in structuring their disaster response.

sections: Facility management and Client services. Facility Management is a combination of Resident Engagement and Building Protection. Client Services focuses on maintaining the continuity of social services that Bailey House provides.

Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE) was founded in 1974 to advocate for equal rights for Asian Americans in New York City. Today, AAFE develops and manages affordable housing, provides economic development assistance and social services such as case management, daycare centers, and financial services to underserved communities across New York City. To accommodate AAFE’s multilingual staff, staff members adapted and translated the Disaster Response Roles Staffing Chart and Job Action Sheets into Spanish and Chinese. This process culminated in a Tabletop Exercise that tested the strength of their plan. AAFE has now

translated all their Toolkit materials into Chinese and Spanish so staff have access to important information.

The Jewish Association Serving the Aging (JASA), founded in 1968, manages and develops affordable housing, provides legal assistance, case management, meal deliveries, and other essential services to seniors across New York City. Using the Toolkit as a guide, JASA has appointed an Emergency Preparedness Coordinator to steward all emergency planning updates. To ensure the plan is active and coordinated, JASA’s leadership created an emergency planning website with updated versions of the Disaster Staffing Plan and associated checklists; ensures updates on emergency preparedness are an item on the quarterly staff meeting agenda; has written emergency preparedness protocols and work plans into new employee orientations; and created an annual calendar that outlines emergency planning tasks to be completed each quarter.



Toolkit guides, worksheets and checklists help staff complete important preparedness and response tasks.



For more information contact:

Laurie Schoeman, National Director, Resilience and Disaster Recovery
lschoeman@enterprisecommunity.org or keepsafe@enterprisecommunity.org