



IMPACT AREA:
**PREPAREDNESS
AND SAFETY**

PREPARED IS PROTECTED

A **CITIES OF SERVICE** BLUEPRINT

Prepared is Protected is a high-impact service strategy in which the mayor's office mobilizes knowledgeable volunteers to bolster disaster awareness and preparedness of households in their communities.

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PREPARED IS PROTECTED

Building on existing city efforts, the initiative employs a two-tiered training structure to amplify outreach.

To start, the Office of Emergency Management (or the appropriate agency in your city) familiarizes lead volunteers with the city’s disaster preparedness plans and toolkits, and trains these volunteers how to present the materials to public audiences. These lead volunteers then work with outreach volunteers to help broadly disseminate the plans and toolkits by training the outreach volunteers how to engage local households in disaster preparedness discussions. This force multiplication strategy - of volunteers training other volunteers to engage households across the city - is a powerful strategy for priming communities in disaster response.

Prepared is Protected is a high-impact service strategy in which the mayor’s office mobilizes knowledgeable volunteers to bolster disaster awareness and preparedness of households in their communities.





BACKGROUND

Every year, natural disasters take a stunning toll on human life and property. In the United States, natural disasters affect close to one million people each year, and cause hundreds of deaths and an average of \$18 billion in damages – a figure that’s increasing every year.¹ As most deaths associated with natural events are preventable² many mayors work to minimize the damage caused by natural disasters by developing comprehensive emergency preparation and response plans, and ensuring that citizens are well-informed to respond appropriately. Even with these efforts, many households still lack disaster preparedness plans and emergency supplies, and/or are unfamiliar with their communities’ emergency response plans. By deploying volunteers to conduct presentations, engage in preparedness discussions, and disseminate plans and toolkits, the mayor’s office can bridge this critical information gap and help citizens protect themselves in the face of disaster.

¹ <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/countries/statistics/?cid=185>

² “Overview of deaths associated with natural events, United States, 1974-2004,” Division of Health Studies, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, 2008.





REQUIRED ELEMENTS

- 1 Mayor's office works with the city's emergency management agencies, first responders, and disaster-focused nonprofit organizations to develop citizen-oriented disaster preparedness plans and toolkits.
- 2 The Office of Emergency Management (or the appropriate agency in your city) trains lead volunteers on the disaster preparedness plans and toolkits, as well as how to present them to larger audiences.
- 3 Lead volunteers train and organize outreach volunteers to disseminate the plans and toolkits as well as how to engage households in discussions on disaster preparedness and response.
- 4 Outreach volunteers canvass neighborhoods and engage individual households in conversation on how to prepare for and respond to a disaster, should one occur.
- 5 Mayor's office works with partners to track and report the impact of the initiative.

Required metrics include:

- Number of lead volunteers
- Number of outreach volunteers trained in emergency preparedness
- Number of households and individuals engaged by volunteers to discuss preparedness (e.g., walking through the emergency preparedness materials)³

Optional metrics include the number of households that sign up for emergency alerts (as applicable).

³ Individuals counted should include those who attend presentations/discussions led by lead volunteers, as well as those who are reached by outreach volunteers through door-to-door canvassing or information tabling (see the "Executing Prepared is Protected" section for additional context).





EXECUTING THE PLAN

DEVELOPING EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MATERIALS

The mayor's office works with the Office of Emergency Management and other emergency management agencies to develop a citizen-friendly guide to the city's emergency plan. This document should set out the most likely disaster scenarios within the jurisdiction, identify first responders and their roles, describe the emergency information system, and explain evacuation and shelter procedures. In addition, a set of simple community maps and lists of key telephone numbers, websites, radio stations and information resources should be included. (See the Resources section for more information.) To supplement the guide, the mayor's office enlists local first responders or leading volunteer organizations focused on disaster preparedness to develop a household toolkit. The toolkit is a short document outlining the provisions and materials a family should always have on hand in case of disaster or emergency. This document can be adapted from existing toolkits that are available from other cities or the federal government. (See the Resources section for more information.)

CREATING A LOCAL OUTREACH STRATEGY

Once the emergency preparedness materials have been developed, the mayor's office solicits input from local community groups, volunteer organizations, or first responders to customize the materials to specific neighborhoods. For example, these partners can help identify the locations of local shelters and other neighborhood-specific resources, so that the information can be included in the distributed materials. In addition, these partners can help develop an outreach plan that identifies targeted areas (e.g., impoverished communities with little access to information or language barriers) and outlines a strategy for deploying volunteers to reach audiences in these locations.





ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS

The mayor's office enlists local partners to recruit and manage volunteers. Two tiers of volunteers will be needed: lead volunteers, who must have prior experience with disaster training or response, such as having completed Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) or American Red Cross programs, and outreach volunteers, for whom no prior experience is necessary.

- 1** **Preparing lead volunteers:** The lead volunteers will complete a half-day (e.g., three hours) in-depth training from the Office of Emergency Management (or the appropriate lead emergency management agency appointed by the mayor) on the content of the emergency preparedness materials, as well as how to present the materials to an audience and answer questions that might arise. Using their prior experience in disaster training or response, these volunteers should be well-equipped to discuss unsettling scenarios in a calm and confident manner. As a condition of their participation, lead volunteers will commit to conducting a minimum number of 45-minute formal presentations⁴ to large groups each year (as an example, some cities feel that a minimum of four per year is a feasible target).
- 2** **Training outreach volunteers:** In addition to conducting presentations, lead volunteers are expected to train and manage outreach volunteers who have not previously completed CERT or similar training. Toward that end, lead volunteers will coordinate with partner organizations to set up training sessions with teams of outreach volunteers across the city. At these sessions (e.g., ninety minutes or two hours), lead volunteers facilitate a discussion on the emergency resources available in the community, the specific content of the emergency preparedness materials, as well as the key messages to communicate to households as outreach volunteers disseminate the materials provided. Having already received in-depth training and conducted formal presentations, lead volunteers will share insights from their experiences to personalize the conversation.
- 3** **Informing and preparing the public:** Upon completion of the training, outreach volunteers will canvass neighborhoods to engage in conversations with individual households about emergency preparedness. They will provide each household with a copy of the citizen's emergency guide and toolkit, and discuss what steps to take in the event of an emergency and how to use the toolkit. They can also offer to help households create disaster plans and/or prepare emergency supplies.

⁴ 30 minutes of presentation, 15 minutes allotted for Q&A





SECURING RESOURCES

While Prepared is Protected is a low-cost initiative, the program will incur expenses related to printing emergency preparedness materials and transporting volunteers to training sessions, presentations, and neighborhood canvassing activities. In some cities, in-kind resources can be secured – for example, printing companies in the community may print emergency preparedness materials free of charge or partner organizations may provide vehicles to transport volunteers. If additional support is needed, grants from federal and state agencies or private foundations may be available. If seeking philanthropic or governmental grant funding, the mayor’s office or non-profit partners may develop a short proposal that describes the opportunity for support and how the funds would be used. Elements of a typical proposal should include:

- Description of the Prepared is Protected initiative
- How this initiative would positively impact the city and mitigate the worst outcomes imposed by a disaster
- Amount of funding requested, proposed breakdown of grant(s) and how those funds would be used (budget is dependent on number of partners and respective roles of each partner)
- Metrics that would be collected to assess progress
- Information on Cities of Service (this is especially helpful for national organizations)
- Recognition plan for the donor (e.g., logo on t-shirts, branding on your city’s service website, etc.)

RECOGNIZING AND THANKING VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer recognition is an effective recruitment and retention tool. Once volunteers have completed a presentation or neighborhood canvassing, following up with them is encouraged. For instance, consider sending volunteers a thank you letter with the details of their involvement (e.g., when and where they completed the presentation/canvassing with an estimate of the number of people reached). Sending wallet-size emergency preparation cards or t-shirts with basic emergency preparation procedures may also be considered as a gesture of gratitude.





MEASURING IMPACT

Collecting data on the impact of the Prepared is Protected initiative is essential for demonstrating results. The following outcome metrics must be collected:

- Number of lead volunteers
- Number of outreach volunteers trained in emergency preparedness
- Number of households and individuals engaged by volunteers to discuss preparedness (e.g., walking through the emergency preparedness materials)⁵

Optional metrics include the number of households that sign up for emergency alerts (as applicable).

To measure the number of households and individuals that are engaged in discussions on emergency preparedness, creating a tracking system is key. The mayor's office or a designated local partner should create a basic system that allows outreach volunteers to report back on the number of households and individuals they engage – perhaps via monthly email outreach from the lead partner (e.g., using an online survey) or through a pledge commitment made by the outreach volunteer during his or her initial training.

⁵ Spreading coaching interactions over the course of the month is likely to be more impactful than a 4-hour monthly session. In addition, multi-year relationships are encouraged in order for the relationship/guidance to have the most impact on the youth, based on the experience of existing mentoring programs, which provide similar support and guidance to that offered by Graduation Coaches.





OPTIONAL ELEMENTS

ENCOURAGE PRE-AFFILIATION AND TRAINING

Citizens that want to become more involved can receive training to become a member of their local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). CERTs are volunteer-driven local teams. The 20-hour training is provided free of charge by local first responder organizations such as the city's fire department or Office of Emergency Management. Volunteers can also receive training in NIMS (National Incident Management System) and ICS (Incident Command System). Established National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOADs), such as the United Way, American Red Cross, The Salvation Army and others also accept volunteers and encourage their volunteers to be "pre-affiliated" by receiving training specific to that organization. In the event of an emergency, pre-affiliated volunteers would know where to go and what to do. Spontaneous volunteers are managed by an organization designated to serve that role, such as a local HandsOn Network affiliate.

CONDUCT SCHOOL-BASED OUTREACH

Lead volunteers can visit middle and high schools to conduct assemblies to raise awareness about emergency preparedness. In turn, students then engage their families in developing emergency response plans. Teachers can also implement lesson plans to encourage families to develop their emergency plans and prepare their emergency kits.

REFRESH THE MESSAGE BY TAILORING OUTREACH TO SEASONAL RISKS

Volunteers can revisit households with a focus on particular preparations for regular seasonal risks such as hurricanes, tornados, heat waves, or winter storms. The mayor's office can also use significant dates, such as the start of hurricane season or the anniversary of a local disaster, to remind people of how to prepare for and respond to an emergency.





LEVERAGE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MONTH

September is Emergency Preparedness Month, making it a prime opportunity to conduct public service announcements, awareness events, and drills; it is also an ideal time to recognize volunteers. Corporate sponsors could contribute funds to prepare starter “Go Bags”(kits that provide households with everything they may need in the event of an evacuation) for distribution in connection with Emergency Preparedness Month events..





PREPARED IS PROTECTED IN ACTION

READY NEW YORK

Through a collaboration of the New York City Office of Emergency Management, NYC Service (the office tasked with implementing New York City's high-impact service plan), and New York Cares (the city's local HandsOn affiliate), the Ready New York program aims to enhance New Yorkers' preparedness for all types of emergencies.

The program helps households develop disaster plans, gather emergency supplies, and stay informed through emergency alerts. The 1,400 volunteers participating in the program are heavily relied upon to deliver these messages. Those with prior training (e.g., CERT) complete a three-hour training and conduct formal presentations on emergency preparedness for groups such as tenants associations or residents at senior citizens homes. Those without experience participate in a two-hour discussion with experienced volunteers on what resources are available, as well as what key messages to convey to households. They are then dispatched to canvass neighborhoods door-to-door and attend community meetings.

To measure the impact of its efforts, Ready New York conducts community surveys gauging the extent to which people are prepared for emergencies. Below are some key lessons learned from the Ready New York's program:

Implementation:

- Select a lead partner (e.g., the local HandsOn affiliate) with sufficient capacity to recruit and manage a large cadre of volunteers.
- Ensure volunteer efforts fit within the context of the community's existing emergency management infrastructure.
- Do not reinvent the wheel; leverage existing emergency preparedness materials and toolkits where possible, and customize them appropriately.
- Tailor your outreach strategy to the local context; some areas are more prone to certain types of disasters, and the target audience and messages should vary accordingly.





SACRAMENTO READY

Sacramento Ready is a regional partnership of local governments working to provide emergency preparation, response training and information to people in the Metropolitan Sacramento Area.

Through a partnership of the Sacramento Mayor’s office, Volunteer Sacramento (the office tasked with implementing Sacramento’s high-impact service plan), the Office of Emergency Services, and the Capital Region Chapter of the American Red Cross, Sacramento Ready uses a sustained preparedness campaign to train and mobilize volunteers with a particular emphasis on special needs populations (e.g., populations whose members may have additional needs before, during, and after an incident in functional areas). Volunteers are recruited to receive CERT and other emergency responder trainings and are assigned to a pre-affiliated National Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster (NVOAD). Over 1,000 new individual volunteers have been recruited and trained in emergency preparedness and have helped to pass along training to over 6,000 residents in their community. (See the Resources section for more information.)





RESOURCES

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MATERIALS: CITY PLANS, HOUSEHOLD TOOLKITS AND MORE

New York City, through **Ready New York**, uses a website to share important information on disaster and emergency preparedness. <http://on.nyc.gov/blyOHT>

- The “NYC Hazards” page reviews all potential local hazards and discusses how New Yorkers can prepare for and respond to each type: <http://on.nyc.gov/b8XxSt>
- Examples of a household toolkit: An “emergency supply kit” helps households identify and stock materials that support survival at home for at least three days, while a “Go Bag” provides households everything they may need in the event of an evacuation. Information on both kits is available at: <http://on.nyc.gov/9Ag1w7>
- Example of a citizen-friendly guide to city emergencies: “Ready New York: Preparing for Emergencies in New York City” draws on expertise from dozens of city agencies to create a succinct and comprehensive guide to emergency preparedness, available at: <http://on.nyc.gov/qXMCAf>
- City evacuation plans and detailed recommendations on how citizens respond to emergencies such as hurricanes are also detailed in the city’s “Ready New York Coastal Storm” presentation: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/oem/html/hazards/storms.shtml>
- Sacramento, California has developed and adopted a number of user-friendly toolkits and guides as a part of their public safety initiative Sacramento Ready. Key materials similar to those mentioned in this blueprint include:
- Online, citizen-friendly guide for city emergencies available at www.sacramentoready.org contains city evacuation and emergency operations plans along with other key documents.

Example of a household toolkit: An “Emergency Kit” listing the items a household should have on hand in case of an emergency: <http://www.sacramentoready.org/Prepare/Pages/Emergency-Kit.aspx>





Example of a citizen-friendly guide to city emergencies: “Are you Prepared? A Guide to Emergency Preparedness in Sacramento County:” <http://www.sacramentoready.org/Prepare/Pages/Are-You-Prepared-Guide.aspx>

The Ready America Campaign (<http://1.usa.gov/lh7pJ>) is a national public service advertising (PSA) campaign designed to educate and empower Americans to prepare for and respond to emergencies including natural and man-made disasters. The goal of the campaign is to get the public involved and ultimately, increase the level of basic preparedness across the nation by asking individuals to do three key things: (1) get an emergency supply kit, (2) make a family emergency plan, and (3) be informed about the different types of emergencies that could occur and their appropriate responses. It is available in English and Spanish. Ready.gov has a sample preparedness kit checklist that can be used as-is or adapted to local circumstances, as well as many other resource materials: <http://www.ready.gov/>

HandsOn Network (HON) created HandsOn Disasters, a platform that highlights how HandsOn Action Centers and other volunteer connector organizations have become critical players in the field of emergency management, including serving as the designated lead agencies for disaster volunteer coordination in many local communities and states. HON has published Ready to Respond, an information and guidance resource to better prepare communities for emergencies and for the convergence of spontaneous volunteers. For more information, visit: <http://bit.ly/nzBHJ>

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) is a coalition of nonprofit organizations that respond to disasters as part of their overall mission. The NVOAD forum is where organizations share knowledge and resources throughout the disaster cycle—preparation, response, and recovery—to help disaster survivors and their communities. NVOAD offers many resources for disaster planning. For more information, visit: www.nvoad.org

The American Red Cross has prepared information sheets offering guidance on preparing for and coping with multiple types of disasters and emergencies. Visit: <http://rdcrss.org/RGrQo>

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has developed Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness which can be found at: <http://www.fema.gov/areyouready/>





The Department of Homeland Security offers tips for emergency preparedness. Visit: <http://www.dhs.gov>

The Federal Alliance for Safe Homes offers information on how to prepare for various types of disasters and enables users to determine severe weather risks for their own states. Visit: www.flash.org

Volunteer Florida (the Governor's Commission on Volunteerism & Community Service) provides information to help families prepare a disaster plan, develop a hurricane kit, find out how to get trained as a first responder, and prepare their home. Visit: <http://www.floridadisaster.org/>

TRAINING

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness through free, 20-hour courses offered nationwide from local first responder organizations-. CERT members are trained to assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help and are encouraged to support emergency preparedness in their community. Visit: <http://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/>

For more in-depth and higher-level training, **FEMA** offers free online training on their ICS (Incident Command System) and NIMS (National Incident Management System) systems. Visit: <http://training.fema.gov/IS/crslist.asp>

- Incident Command System (ICS): <http://1.usa.gov/fcYnu9>
- National Incident Management System (NIMS): <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nims/>





COORDINATION

Citizen Corps coordinates volunteer activities for disaster preparedness and response. It was created in January 2002 and is affiliated with the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency. Its mission is carried out through the activities of Citizen Corps Councils, which build on community strengths to implement the Citizen Corps preparedness programs and carry out a local strategy to involve government, community leaders, and citizens in all-hazards preparedness and resilience. For more information, visit: <http://www.citizencorps.gov/> and <http://www.citizencorps.gov/councils/>

Volunteer Sacramento is encouraging emergency response organizations at a regional level to meet regularly to establish cross-county networks, partnering with multiple volunteer Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) and city agencies covering various jurisdictions. Visit: <http://portal.cityofsacramento.org/HR/Volunteer-Opportunities>

HandsOn Nashville, an affiliate of the national HandsOn Network, had established an emergency management Memorandum of Understanding with Nashville's Office of Emergency Management before the historic 2010 floods devastated the city. With this MOU in place, the roles and responsibilities of partners managing the volunteer response to the flood was smooth and efficient, and can be a model for other cities seeking to prepare for disaster response. For more information, visit: <http://www.hon.org/>

FEMA offers resources providing an overview of disaster response coordination and volunteer management:

- Role of a FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaison: <http://bit.ly/powSnm>
- National Response Framework (NRF): <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nrf/>





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Cities of Service is a national nonprofit that designs and supports the implementation of high-impact service strategies that can be widely replicated in cities worldwide. We provide technical assistance, programmatic support, planning resources, and funding opportunities. Cities of Service supports a coalition of nearly 200 cities whose mayors are committed to using citizen volunteers to solve local pressing challenges, from engaging mentors to help decrease high school dropout rates to increasing energy efficiency in buildings. We help coalition cities share solutions, best practices, and lessons learned, as well as spread awareness about their great work.

Join us at citiesofservice.org
or on Twitter [@citiesofservice](https://twitter.com/citiesofservice).

