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Recovery LA

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Getting Started

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The Journey to recovery is long and hard. Louisiana is pioneering its way through the mission of retuning to normalcy in a variety of ways that reflects the needs of individuals and communities. In an effort to contribute to the good of the state and its citizens the non-profit community has taken a leadership role in community mobilization. Prior to the disaster, the state was as different as the 64 parishes it represents. Now many of the citizens are transient in an effort to find their way back home or start new lives in other parts of the state. Though neighboring states have harbored our citizens following the disaster, many Louisianans remain in the state and are attempting to make decisions on how to re-start their lives. Major concerns to all communities are affordable housing, suitable employment, reliable transportation and mental health.

Phases of Disaster

Preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation are the four phases of disaster. All four areas are funded by government, non-profit, and philanthropic organizations. Each disaster -- be it hurricanes, earthquakes, or terrorism - has a unique affect on impacted communities and surrounding areas. Arguably the two worst natural disasters in this country happened in the state of Louisiana within a month of each other. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have changed our lives, the structure of our organizations, and the allocation of our resources. According to the Louisiana Geographic Information Center (LAGIC):

- 780,000 persons displaced from homes
- 123,000 homes suffered major or severe damage
- 82,000 rental units destroyed

“Arguably the two worst natural disasters in this country happened in the state of Louisiana within a month of each other...”

Long Term Recovery

Long Term Recovery is:

- The process by which individuals and communities affected by the disaster return to normalcy
- Creating and participating in Long Term Recovery Committees to help communities achieve their goals
- Identifying and obtaining resources for un-met needs
- Adjusting to the changes, development, and funding of the community

“The Role of the United Way in Louisiana’s Long Term Recovery consists of providing resources to agencies assisting with recovery via case management, counseling, legal services and basic needs.”

The Role of the United Way in Louisiana’s Long Term Recovery consists of:

- Providing resources to agencies assisting with recovery via case management, counseling, legal services and basic needs
- Participating and in most cases convening Long Term Recovery Committees
- Providing resources for Long Term Recovery Committees
- Providing staff to support Long Term Recovery Committees
- Being the fiscal agency for Long Term Recovery Committees
- Providing direct services via donations and volunteer management
- Developing formal relationships with Offices of Emergency Preparedness (OEPs)

Best Practices

- Recovery Center in Lake Charles - Houses 200 volunteers
- Individual Development Accounts (IDA) - Matching resources for home ownership
- Office of Emergency Preparedness - Developing Memorandums of Understanding with OEP’s
- Recovery Center - One-stop-recovery-center that houses all area service providers
- Donations Management - Warehousing and distribution of goods
- Single Point of Entry for Case Management Services - 211 pre-registers clients for service referrals



Meetings, Meetings, Meetings

By Melissa Haley

In my quest to understand long term recovery throughout Louisiana I participate in numerous meetings. Though oftentimes intense and sometimes repetitive, the importance of establishing relationships with active organizations and providing technical assistance has been valuable. The content of the meetings may vary, but the focus is consistent:

- Engaging the key players
- Developing a mechanism in which data can be collected
- Assessing current issues and available data
- Identifying an intervention
- Evaluating the processes developed

It is imperative that all stakeholders be dedicated to an evolving process and understands that the work being done in this state is unprecedented. Creating tools to simplify the process and listening to clients and service providers are essential. Normally, the people creating the process and/or contributing to its success via donations are not the direct service providers. Case workers and supervisors are in the trenches everyday and see first hand what works and what doesn't. Though some bureaucratic processes are necessary, the degree to which procedures can be streamlined to better assist clients and case managers is vital.

Engaging Key Players

United Way agencies are involved in convening and providing resources to long term recovery committees. These committees engage service providers and donors in an on-going dialogue to address recovery issues. Additionally, many areas are also addressing preparedness to better respond to future disasters. United Way of America has assisted many of the regions via Long Term Recovery Coordinators whose primary job is to facilitate this process.

Collecting Data

Collecting data can be challenging. Many stakeholders use different software and reporting systems. The data on page four has been provided by Louisiana Family Recovery Corps. They have assisted over 14,000 individuals since the storm.



*“Engaging, Collecting
Data, Assessing,
Intervention, &
Evaluating.”*

Data Provided by Louisiana Family Recovery

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