

Planning for Operations During an Emergency or Disaster



The past year has tested the resiliency of Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) and their staff. They have had to continue to operate programs and serve residents in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and an uptick of natural disasters such as hurricanes and wildfires.

This informational handout focuses on key information PHAs should be aware of to ensure they are best prepared to react in the event of a disaster or emergency. It also provides recommendations related to Emergency Response Plans and Continuity of Operations Plans.

Plan Ahead: Interagency Coordination

- Know the Disaster Coordinator in your city or jurisdiction.
- Establish connections with local nonprofits.
- Review [FEMA guidance](#) on disaster sequence of events.



Emergency Response Plan

- Identifies most likely community threats (e.g., hurricanes, tornados, blackouts, cyberattacks, etc.)
- Specifies measures and equipment to address specific emergencies
- Spells out emergency procedures for disaster event
- [HUD Emergency Response Plan Toolkit](#)



Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

- A COOP is a plan for recovering and continuing operations in response to emergencies or significant disruptions to agency operations.
- COOPs ensure that all personnel, facilities, and information are protected so that necessary functions and normal operations can resume rapidly following the emergency



- COOPs address:

- Critical functions an agency must perform regardless of emergency;
- Personnel and resources needed to perform these functions;
- What to do if an agency is unable to perform regular housing counseling services; and
- How to get up and running again after the emergency.

Additional Considerations

- Identify barriers for tenants and landlords.
- Ensure your Administrative Plan provides for flexibility during a disaster.
- Prepare for increased communication when funds become available as a result of disaster.
- Create flexibilities in processes.
- Establish alternatives to routine activities.



Summary

Please refer to the [HUD Exchange website](#) for past recorded training sessions, informational briefs, and case studies.

