



COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS

Community collaboration is essential to disaster readiness, response, and recovery. Public housing agencies (PHAs) should coordinate with community partners to clearly define roles and responsibilities to facilitate an efficient response and recovery. The information below provides an overview of potential partners and best practices in incorporating these stakeholders into your agency's readiness plan.



Local Emergency Managers

State and local offices of emergency management (OEMs) are crucial partners for PHAs. OEMs are responsible for coordinating a multiagency response to emergency conditions. OEMs are ideal partners for conducting training, drills, and tabletop exercises. They have access to planning books, on-call contracts, and various funding sources, as well as a current list of vital resources to assist your PHA during a disaster response. Visit Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) website for [local emergency management resources](#) or to find your [state emergency manager](#).

In an emergency event, the state OEM coordinates with local OEMs to request necessary resources. Local OEMs coordinate activities such as tree removal, debris removal, demolition of unsafe buildings, and the restoration of critical services with utility companies. Establishing relationships with local OEMs prior to a disaster is a critical part of disaster readiness.



First Responders

A first responder is an individual with specialized training who is among the first to provide assistance during an emergency; they are the primary resource for a PHA in issues of life and safety during an emergency. Partnerships with first responders are invaluable. First responders include:

- law enforcement officers,
- firefighters,
- paramedics, and
- emergency medical technicians.



Federal and State Partners

Identify [federal and state resources](#) before a disaster occurs. Establish relationships with your state emergency management recovery partners to ensure a thorough understanding of expectations and processes. Request all necessary resources, including [FEMA programs](#), as they become available. While a Presidential disaster declaration may fund resources to support a PHA and its residents, many of these programs and funding opportunities are provided through the state.



Charitable Organizations

Charitable organizations (e.g., churches and food banks) are also excellent resources. These organizations may provide direct services and/or connect PHAs with other service providers or resources to meet the critical needs of residents pre-and post-disaster. PHAs are encouraged to identify all available service organizations in their area and maintain a list of appropriate points of contact.



Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters

[Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters](#) (VOADs) are often critical partners to support unmet needs. VOADs, such as the Red Cross, may be embedded within the community before a disaster or relocated to support a community immediately following a disaster. The [National VOAD](#) has affiliates in every state and territory. These organizations are known to work closely with FEMA and state and local emergency managers to coordinate efforts to serve disaster victims.



Readiness

It is critical that your PHA engage partners to plan how to respond when an event occurs. Below are best practices to develop a plan with stakeholders:

Identify guiding principles for a successful recovery.

Promote inclusive and equitable coordination, planning, and information sharing processes by:

- engaging community, residents, staff, and other stakeholders; and
- utilizing quantitative and qualitative data.

Describe key factors, activities, and considerations for pre- and post-disaster recovery planning.

Outline pre- and post-disaster recovery roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders.

Identify leadership roles across all partnered agencies, including who will take responsibility for property preparedness, evacuation, and communication.

Define what, when, and how resources and information will be shared in the event of a disaster.

Describe how the community will build, sustain, and coordinate the delivery of recovery services and core capabilities.

Establish an operational support agreement with a PHA outside of your geographical area.

Leverage opportunities to increase resilience and incorporate [climate adaptation](#) and mitigation measures pre- and post-disaster.

Participate in training exercises with local OEMs.

Store electronic and physical copies (onsite and offsite) of an up-to-date list of local disaster services and resources beyond 911.



Response

When a disaster occurs, consider the following best practices:

Communicate with your key partners. Share critical information, such as:

- resident safety concerns,
- damaged infrastructure,
- unmet needs, and
- evacuation and sheltering status.

Participate in recurring joint agency-level meetings to share information, triage, and address ongoing concerns.

Notify partners of any changes to your plan or issues related to resources, infrastructure, timing, etc.



Recovery

Throughout the recovery, previously established and newly developed partnerships are excellent resources for assistance, advocacy, and information sharing. Below are best practices during recovery:

Establish or reconfirm roles and responsibilities to enhance coordination and communication.

Assess recent events to identify what went well and opportunities for improvement; adjust accordingly throughout the recovery.

Implement opportunities to increase resilience and incorporate post-disaster climate adaptation and mitigation measures.

Identify gaps and establish new partnerships to address any unmet needs.

Continue to foster existing partnerships, solidifying them into long-term partnerships.