

Notes from Presentation on Disaster Response/Preparedness

Louisiana Interchurch Conference Annual Assembly

March 2, 2020

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Louisiana has not had a major declared disaster which included FEMA assistance for individuals since the 2016 flooding and storms, other than the February 2017 tornadoes that hit Orleans and Livingston. There have been several federally declared disasters; however, none have met the thresholds necessary to receive individual assistance (IA) only public assistance (PA) which typically provides reimbursement for protective measures taken by the state or local municipalities or damage to public infrastructure. This includes storms this past year for Hurricane Barry and tornadoes in North and Central Louisiana, where recovery continues and relies heavily on the non-profit and faith-based communities to support.

2019

- Hurricane Barry DR 4458: Event 7/25-8/8; Declared 8/27/19
 - Public Assistance declaration only – no individual assistance
 - Primary damages in Allen, Iberia, Lafourche, Plaquemines, St. Mary, Terrebonne, and Vermillion Parishes
 - Flooding in New Orleans which happened just prior
- Severe Storms and Tornadoes DR 4439: Event 4/25-25; Declared 6/3/19
 - Public Assistance declaration only – no individual assistance
 - North Louisiana – Lincoln, Morehouse, Union
- Tornado – 12/16/19 Tornado in Central Louisiana – Vernon and Rapides

2016 Flooding - FEMA funded case management closed out last year, but some still in recovery

- Restore Louisiana – over 17,000 awarded assistance – recent changes (October 2019) in the Action Plan Amendment (APA) allowed reimbursement to approximately 870 homeowners, which was previously inaccessible due to federal regulations regarding SBA loans. This came more than three years after the storms and certainly delayed recovery for those families.

The State (GOHSEP) is being proactive in working with Louisiana VOAD and non-profit partners to plan for future response efforts and disaster case management models. This is a welcomed change which we hope will create better partnership and preparedness.

COVID19

Coronavirus Disease 2019

GOHSEP has created an incident in its tracking system and the Governor held a UCC meeting this morning (March 2, 2020) to discuss the state's preparedness and announcement of a taskforce.

While the flu itself is actually a greater threat annually, because Coronavirus is new and there is no vaccine it is "deemed" as more of a threat – regardless, while we have people's attention – it is a great time to discuss preparedness and review your church body or congregations plans!

- Review your organization's COOP (Continuity of Operations Plan), disaster response and communication plans in context of pandemic. Create plans to enable your staff to work remotely if that becomes a necessity, including crafting systems for office equipment and technology necessary to have remote access and VOIP phone apps to answer office calls. Utilize online meeting apps to facilitate meetings and communication.
- Encourage staff, congregational and community members to review their family emergency plans. Plan to be socially separated for two weeks if quarantine or separation is required. Be sure to have medications, food, water, and baby supplies on hand.
- Remind your community and networks that rumor control and regular situational awareness are essential. Please get your information from trusted sources like state or local health departments or CDC official sites.
- Stigma and Fear – Discourage rumors and fears that people of Asian descent are more likely to contract or spread COVID-19.

Resources:

Congregational and faith-based preparedness

- Public Health Planning Guide for Faith Communities, Humanitarian Disaster Institute, Wheaton College - This guide has a great list of resources
https://www.wheaton.edu/media/humanitarian-disaster-institute/hdi-files/1314-252_DisasterPreparednessCCDHP_UPDATED.pdf

Coronavirus Updated Statistics – Quick Links

- WHO – Global Situation Reports: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/>
- CDC – United States: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>
- Texas DSHS: <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>
- Louisiana Department of Health: <http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3835>

CDC main website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

WHO main website: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>