



Situation Critical

Nonprofit Emergency Preparedness

As we approach the anniversary of last year's historic flooding in Southern Alberta, it is an opportune time to both look back at how far we have come over the past months and to also be mindful of the work that lies before us. Nonprofits provided an array of critical services throughout the floods and the lengthy recovery period that followed. While life has

returned to normal for many, for others the impact of service demands and restorations continue to be felt.

Over the past year, CCVO has taken a lead in monitoring and assessing the impacts of the floods on Calgary and area nonprofits. Our work has included a number of activities designed to gauge the experiences of

organizations and their expectations of the future as well as research, participation on recovery working groups and consultations with nonprofit organizations. We continue to work with organizations to learn from our experiences of this crisis and equip the sector for future emergencies.

Preparing for Emergencies



Prepare your staff.

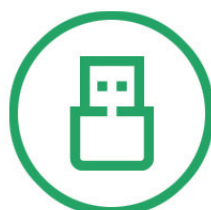
A prepared organization begins with employees who are ready for an emergency. By preparing employees organizations are better able to offer services in the future. All households should have a 72 hour Emergency Kit. Encourage and educate your staff about taking steps to protect themselves and their families during an emergency.



Prepare the organization in advance.

Engage key staff in an annual planning process. Inform all staff about the plan and their role as a member of the organization. Staff need to be informed during an emergency, have a clear understanding of the organizations role and how business is going to proceed, know their role during the crisis and have the authority to make quick decisions.

Consider creating a "Go-Kit" which will allow your organization access to vital information wherever you go. The kit may include copies of vital documents; contact information for staff, board, volunteers, clients, funders and any other stakeholders; insurance documentation; lease/deed for facilities; legal documents; banking information; phone numbers for insurance, utilities, etc. The kit should be in a mobile waterproof/fireproof case. You may want to consider having more than one kit and keeping one off-site.



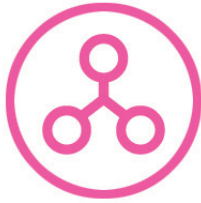
Back up critical materials.

You may not be able to access the physical location of where your files are stored. Ensure back-up files are accessible and in a useable format. Decide what critical files the organization is going to need in the case of an emergency.



Create a communication plan.

Every organization will need to be able to effectively communicate to stakeholders internally and externally. Effective communication is important to access needed information, contact staff, board and clients, stay organized, and obtain approvals, supplies and services. Consider a crisis communication plan that uses a variety of platforms including social media to support the emergency response plan.



Build your network.

It is important to consider what community support you might need in a crisis, and what you can offer others before an emergency hits. Existing relationships and partnerships are a source of volunteers, support and cooperation.

Funding Opportunities

While the immediacy of need has abated, we do know that some organizations are still dealing with the physical and service delivery impacts of the floods. Historic levels of financial support for our communities have been provided through public, private and corporate sources. If your organization has experienced damage from the floods, is dealing with increased service demands or is working to reduce the impacts of future events, there are potential funding sources available:

- **Alberta Culture** assists arts and nonprofit/voluntary sector organizations with meeting additional needs in their communities and rebuilding.
- **The Calgary Foundation** supports nonprofit organizations in long-term rebuilding and recovery efforts that restores community spirit, rebuilds gathering places and enhances resiliency.
- **Canadian Red Cross** supports Albertans as they rebuild their lives in the areas of: assistance to families and individuals, shelter and home clean-up, repair and rehabilitation, community initiatives and support to small businesses and community resiliency and disaster preparedness.

Resources

The process of effective emergency preparedness planning is multifaceted and there is a lot of information available. Emergency planning is broad, it considers a variety of scenarios as to how organizations can continue to provide services and how organizations can get back up and running once the crisis is over. Here are a few resources to get you started:

- Ready provides information and tools to create a plan that addresses the impact of many hazards.
www.ready.gov
- Get Prepared provides information about the hazards in your province, information on family emergency planning and building an emergency kit.
www.getprepared.gc.ca
- Emergency Preparedness Resources for Businesses provides links to guides, sample plans, case studies and worksheets.
www.fema.gov/media-library/resources-documents/collections/357
- The Resilient Organization by Tech Soup provides information on ways to protect your systems from disasters, backup plans, and recovering IT systems after or during a disaster.
www.techsoup.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/resilient-organization-pdf-document.pdf



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Calgary Chamber of
Voluntary Organizations

www.calgarycvo.org