

Section 2: Setting Up for Success in Community-Based Mitigation

Learning Objectives: Participants will learn how to establish a foundation and organization for a community-based mitigation program.



Instructor's Note: From this section onward, all sections of the curriculum assume that the participant group is interested in forming a community-based mitigation organization and moving forward with a program. At this point, the curriculum becomes how-to based.

Section 2.A: Checking out the Local Mitigation Scene

1. Researching local mitigation activities involving CBOs/FBOs



Instructor's Note: A quick and effective way to research CBO/FBO involvement with local mitigation activities is to ask a group of experts to participate in a discussion with your group. Consider asking local emergency management representatives, the FEMA VAL (voluntary agency liaison - see Resource Guide) for your region or a FEMA regional mitigation representative. The purpose is to:



- Determine if any volunteer mitigation efforts have occurred in the past or are presently underway.
- If community-based mitigation has been undertaken, learn about the activities, groups involved, and perceived successes and challenges.



Otherwise, ask the group to brainstorm what they know about local mitigation, if anything.

If no information emerges from the group, ask participants to consider forming a task force or identifying one or more individuals to conduct research outside the workshop.

2. Identifying local mitigation opportunities for volunteers



Instructor's Note: Participation by local CBOs/FBOs is helpful in this discussion, which is intended to identify ways in which local mitigation needs could be met by volunteers.



If CBOs/FBOs cannot participate, ask the group to brainstorm mitigation opportunities based on the case studies (Section 8) and the Resource Guide.



Ask participants to consider appointing someone to meet with local CBO/FBO groups to review the list outside of the workshop.

Section 2.B: Effectively Identifying and Recruiting CBO/FBO Volunteers

1. Obtaining buy-in from your organization

- How does your organization make decisions?



Instructor's Note: Lead participants in a discussion of the decision processes that their groups follow. Ask them to consider questions such as these:

- Can a committee form on its own and act?
- Does a governing body or individual have to approve or endorse the effort?
- What kind of decision process is required?
- What kind of process would engage the most widespread support?
- What actions must be taken for your organization to participate in mitigation programs?

Working with the entire group, ask the group to develop the steps in a brief action plan for obtaining organizational buy-in for mitigation program participation. Ask them to identify the following:

- What actions need to be taken?
- What kind of schedule is appropriate?
- Who should be responsible?

2. Identifying and recruiting volunteers from your organization

- Creating a list of volunteer candidates



Instructor's Note: Ask participants to work either individually or in small groups to create a list of individuals in their organization who might be interested in volunteering for mitigation activities.

Note: If participants attended the first workshop, they may already have the start of a volunteer candidate list that includes individuals from their own organizations and other community members. If so, they should expand the list during this activity with any additional names that have come to mind during the intervening period.

3. Developing an action plan for recruiting volunteers



Instructor's Note: Ask the group to develop the steps in a brief action plan for recruiting volunteers for mitigation program participation. Ask them to identify the following:

- How will volunteer candidates be contacted?
- What kind of information will need to be shared during the initial contact?
- Who will put the information together?
- Who will contact specific individuals?
- What will candidates be asked to do initially and in the future?
- What's in it for the volunteers (why should they participate, and what are the benefits to participation)?
- What is the schedule?
- Who from the group can spearhead the volunteer contact effort?

What's in it for volunteers? Reasons to participate:

No one is better equipped to prepare your constituencies for disaster – with less loss of property and life – than you.

- Participants can help individuals and CBO/FBO groups understand what role they might play in creating their own disaster-resistant environment, as well as how they can work with others to build a disaster-resistant community. Participants are empowered to take charge of their own safety and reduce their disaster risk.
- Participants can educate groups and individuals on the importance of disaster mitigation and the benefits they and the community will see from working to reduce disaster risk.
- Participants can learn new skills that would be valuable in mitigation projects (e.g., amateur radio and emergency communication, safety retrofit skills, power tool use, etc.)

Section 2.C: Identifying and Recruiting Volunteers from CBOs and FBOs

1. Developing a CBO/FBO list



Instructor's Note: Ask participants to work either individually or in small groups to identify CBOs/FBOs that might be interested in participating in mitigation activities. Leaders or points of contact should be identified.

If participants attended the first workshop, they may already have the start of a volunteer candidate list that includes CBO/FBO members. If so, they should expand the list during this activity with any additional names that have come to mind during the intervening period.

2. Expanding the CBO/FBO list



Instructor's Note: Review the previously developed CBO/FBO lists. Ask participants to brainstorm ways to expand the list. Possibilities include the following:

- Contacting the Chamber of Commerce, civic groups, Red Cross, etc. to identify CBOs and points of contact
- Contacting local churches/religious organizations to create a list of contacts for FBOs. Interfaith or ministerial alliances are an excellent starting place for obtaining information.



3. Understanding other CBOs/FBOs



Instructor's Note: Facilitate a discussion of each CBO/FBO and what is known about it. Emphasize the importance of understanding as a basis for recruitment. Questions to consider include the following:

- What do we know about this group?
- Does it have goals for community improvement or member safety?
- Does it represent a particularly vulnerable population?
- Is there a reasonable link between the group's mission and mitigation?
- What is the organization's culture?
- How does it make decisions?
- What is the organization's role in the community – both outwardly perceived and self-perceived?
- Would this group be interested in working with other organizations on community-based mitigation?

- Who do we know that has personal or professional relationships with the leaders of this organization? Would they be willing to help us recruit?

The Importance of Understanding Organizational Culture and Mission

Each CBO and FBO has a different culture, organizational and leadership style and structure, mission, and vision of its purpose. As you begin to recruit and work with different CBOs and FBOs, it is essential to form a basic understanding of these characteristics. This type of understanding:

- Is the starting place for finding common ground
- Highlights issues that will require sensitive treatment as you work with this organization and its members
- Helps you envision how and why this organization could or should become interested in participating in community-based mitigation
- Forms the basis for how initial contact should be handled and by whom
- Identifies concerns and questions that are likely to arise upon initial contact, enabling you to prepare to address them in advance of the contact
- Facilitates a strong beginning for building rapport
- Bodes well for the establishment of successful long-term relationships

4. Developing an action plan for getting other CBOs/FBOs involved



Instructor's Note: Ask the group to develop the steps in a brief action plan for recruiting CBOs/FBOs for mitigation program participation. Ask them to identify the following:

- How will CBOs/FBOs be contacted?
- What kind of information will need to be shared during the initial contact?
- Who will put the information together?
- Who will contact specific groups?
- What will the groups be asked to do initially and in the future?
- What's in it for the CBOs/FBOs (why should they participate, and what are the benefits to participation)?

- What is the schedule?
- Who in our group can spearhead the CBO/FBO contact effort?

Tips for Generating Excitement about Community-Based Mitigation

As you contact CBOs and FBOs to solicit their participation in community-based mitigation programs, be prepared to generate some excitement to gain their interest and commitment. What you learn about each organization's culture, organizational and leadership style and structure, mission, and vision of its purpose will help you define the best approach. However, here are some tips to get you started:

Appeal to human interest. Share some of the exciting human-interest stories of successful community-based mitigation programs. Many of the experiences are heart-warming and show how fulfilling this type of work can be.

Personalize the issue. Ask about the members of their organization, and engage in a discussion of risk and vulnerability. Discuss how mitigation programs could benefit the organization's constituents. For example, an FBO day-care facility may represent a vulnerable population.

Create a link to the organization's mission and programs. With most CBOs and FBOs, some aspect of their mission or existing programs forms a natural link to mitigation programs. For example, if helping the underprivileged is an organizational goal, describe the mitigation needs of the underprivileged population and how volunteers can assist.

Section 2.D: Setting up an Organizational Workshop



Instructor's Note: The Introductory Workshop included in this curriculum can be used to stimulate discussion or serve as a template. Facilitate a group session to design an initial organizational workshop. Ask participants to consider the following:

Design an initial organizational workshop.

- Who should be invited?
- What is the optimum number of participants?
- How should they be contacted and by whom?
- How much background information on mitigation will need to be conveyed?
- What other information will participants need to make a decision about getting involved in community-based mitigation programs?
- What instructional and other materials/equipment will be needed and how will we obtain them?
- Where should the workshop be held?
- Who should facilitate?
- How long should the workshop last?
- Where should the workshop be held?
- What time of day would be best for the participant group?
- What kinds of interactive exercises and group participation activities will help bring the group together and understand the key messages?
- What is the desired outcome?
- What are the next steps after the organizational workshop?

Section 2.E: Expanding the Network

Once our group is organized, how do we expand our network?



Instructor's Note: Facilitate a group brainstorming session on ways to get more CBOs/FBOs involved in your community-based mitigation programs. Ask participants to review Ideas for *Expanding Your Mitigation Network*.



Ideas for Expanding Your Mitigation Network

1. Ask people in your organization and other CBOs/FBOs if there are groups with which they would like to work on a mitigation activity. For example, in a larger community, perhaps several houses of worship of one denomination might enjoy having their youth groups work together.
2. Consider setting up a core team with membership from multiple groups to keep the concept of mitigation alive in the community and coordinate multi-group activities.
3. If CBO members are also FBO members, ask them to engage their FBO in mitigation activities, and vice versa.
4. Ask CBO/FBO leaders who get involved in mitigation programs to help carry the message to other groups, for example, speaking at a CBO luncheon meeting, or visiting a FBO class to give an informal talk.
5. Contact individuals from nearby communities that have succeeded in community-based mitigation programs. Ask them what kind of groups they included in their program. Solicit their help in sharing information with your local CBOs/FBOs.
6. Seek to bring together CBOs and FBOs that may not normally work together. Consider organizing a special event to engage these groups.