

Section 3: Program and Project Development

Learning Objectives: Participants should understand the basic infrastructure needed to develop a community-based pre-disaster mitigation program, as well as identify appropriate resources and projects.

Section 3.A: How to Be a Mentor

1. What is a mentor?

Discuss what mentoring is and what a mentor does. Refer to the mentoring resources in the Resource Guide for additional information.

2. What qualities make an ideal mentor?

Brainstorm the qualities that make a good mentor.



Possible qualities include the following:

- Community-based mitigation experience
- Mentoring experience
- Familiarity with CBOs/FBOs and their missions
- Availability and willingness to mentor

3. Given these qualities, who should the mentor be, and where should we look to find that person?

Develop an action plan that includes identifying mentor candidates and the means of securing their assistance.

Section 3.B: Thinking Creatively about Resources

1. Identifying what kinds of resources are needed

Brainstorm resources needed for the mitigation program and activities. Consider the full range of needs, including the following:



Financial

- Funding
- Advice
- In-kind donations

Materials

- Equipment and tools, either donated or loaned
- Specialized safety equipment (hard hats, vests)
- Supplies (office supplies, water coolers, cups, refreshments, garbage bags, etc.)
- Printing (signs, training materials, forms, flyers, posters, etc.)
- Information (how-to, project ideas, training materials, etc.)
- Participant and donor recognition (ball caps, T-shirts, key chains, other freebie items, plaques, etc.)

Legal/Insurance

- Volunteer liability release forms
- Trained operators for specialized equipment

People

- Volunteers
- Office and administrative support (answering phones, making copies, word processing, database development, mailing assistance, postage, etc.)

Miscellaneous

- Transportation
- Facilities for meetings and activities
- Technical support and volunteer training
- Other organizational and project specific needs

2. Defining what our organization can provide

List resources available through your organization.

3. Identifying other sources of support

Brainstorm support that could be requested and obtained from other sources, including the following:

- FEMA and other Federal agencies
- Volunteer organizations that specialize in disaster programs
- CBOs/FBOs – local, regional, national
- Personal and professional networks
- Local businesses
- Trade associations and other similar groups
- Funding and grant sources (agencies, institutions, foundations, etc.)
- Web sites and published resources
- Asset analysis; analyze what is existing within your organization – don't re-invent the wheel
- Economic development office
- Planning office
- Insurance agencies
- Unions
- Utilities
- School districts
- Transportation departments



Refer to the Resource Guide for more ideas.

4. Getting outside of the box

Stretch and get creative. Come up with three “really out of the box” ideas for obtaining resources.

Creative Resource Thinking

- Consider reframing your program. For example, while mitigation is the goal, you could consider other focal points for grants or requests for assistance, such as support for community-building and social development, skill development for minority or underserved populations, intergenerational or interfaith programs, environmental programs, etc.
- Ask for referrals. Ask each person to recommend other sources to contact, regardless of whether that individual or group is able to assist.
- Join forces with other organizations to ask for joint donations. For example, if a group of low-income residents needed home improvements/repairs to mitigate an encephalitis outbreak, FBO volunteers could join forces with the Boy Scouts to request window screen donations from the local hardware store.
- Share resources with other organizations – you provide the safety equipment for your project and a project of their choosing, they provide the volunteers to do the work.

5. Setting the wheels in motion – the action plan

Develop a plan for approaching other organizations to request assistance and resource support. Consider the following:

- Whom are we contacting?
- What are we asking them for?
- How will we contact them?
- What will they need and want to know?
- Who will put the information together?
- Who will contact specific individuals?
- What's in it for the donors (why should they help, and what are the benefits to participation?)?
- What is the schedule?
- Who from our group can spearhead the effort?
- How will we express our appreciation?
- How will we keep track of what we've done?
- Are the donations we're asking for tax-deductible?
- What are the legal ramifications/obligations?

Section 3.C: Creating No-cost and Low-cost Projects

Many communities have been able to achieve significant mitigation results with little or no funding. What could we do?

Brainstorm projects that can be accomplished with little or no funding.



Brainstorm activities that could be accomplished by volunteer forces.

Review the case studies (in Section 8 and the Resource Guide) that leveraged volunteer labor, equipment, and other resources while keeping costs minimal. Discuss *Changing Local Codes and Zoning for Mitigation Purposes* as an example of a project that requires a significant time commitment but virtually no hard cash.



Changing Local Codes and Zoning for Mitigation Purposes

Consider forming a committee to become involved in local building code, zoning, and other issues that can affect mitigation efforts. Identify individuals to serve who already understand some of the technical concerns or who are willing to become educated on the subject. Committee responsibilities could include:

- Researching and targeting areas of local code and zoning that could be changed or modified to lessen threats and loss of property from disasters
- Drafting policy for the larger mitigation group to consider
- Spearheading advocacy campaigns to effect changes to local codes and zoning
- Attending official meetings regarding planning and zoning, changes to building and fire codes, and relevant meetings of local governmental bodies
- Meeting with members of local government (City Council, mayor, etc.), planning and zoning committee, and code enforcement officers to discuss mitigation efforts and concerns
- Educating self and constituency about topic
- Finding allies, i.e., firefighters, planning and zoning officials

Easy-to-Implement Low/No-Cost Mitigation Projects

Flood

- Remove all debris from culverts, streams, and channels to allow the free flow of potential floodwaters.
- Clean storm drains and gutters, and remove debris from residential properties to allow free flow of potential floodwater.

Fire

- Move shrubs and other landscaping away from the sides of homes, public buildings, businesses.
- Clear dead brush and grass from properties so that it will not be there to fuel a spreading fire.

Earthquake

- Install cabinet locks.
- Secure televisions, computers, or other heavy appliances and equipment using flexible straps.
- Anchor bookshelves/large cabinets to walls.
- Strap water heaters to walls.

Wind

- Secure or remove items that could become projectiles in high winds.

Generic

- Establish a community tool-lending library.
- Provide instructions and tools to assist homeowners with disaster mitigation.
- Simple activities include making cabinets more earthquake-proof or raising water heaters and other appliances to avoid flood damage.