

Recommendations for Disaster Response

In September 2008, the Council on Foundations (COF) assembled an ad-hoc group to discuss potential roles for COF to play during times of disaster. The following recommendations (adapted from the original document created by COF) serve as a guide for foundations deciding whether and/or how to respond to a disaster.

- ◆ **Create an “initial response team” to determine if the foundation should respond to a disaster at all. Factors in determining a response include:**
 - Severity of disaster – loss of life and/or property
 - Media coverage
 - Interest from members
 - Impact on members
- ◆ **If a response is warranted, the following immediate options may be implemented:**
 - Share information to help members understand ways to give money, including ability to give directly to individuals, as well as ways to give non-cash donations (volunteers, products, services).
 - Email blast to express care and concern, as well as share information. Email should be to those affected and to the general membership.
 - Telephone members to inquire about support needs and hear how they are responding.
 - Use email distribution lists as an additional information tool, both to push information out to the field and gather in information.
 - Touch base with experts in disaster response in governments and NGOs to gauge immediate needs.
 - For international disasters, use legal staff to seek, when appropriate, governmental tax designation regarding the direct transfer of aid to employees affected by a disaster. Publicize the designation.
- ◆ **Mid-term responses may include:**
 - Monthly teleconference calls to maintain connection and latest needs in the recovery process
 - Analyzing long-term recovery needs
- ◆ **Long-term responses may include:**
 - Reporting to members, the general public and government officials the impact of philanthropy in disaster response, the systems created to respond to disasters and the effectiveness of those systems. Tools include foundation newsletters, press releases, public reports, etc.
 - Educational forums, webinars and conferences on disaster response, including the long-term recovery needs, promising practices in the field, and exemplary programs and response networks.



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