

## Long-Term Recovery Overview

### Scope

Recovery starts soon after disaster response and is actually the third phase of the disaster response cycle – after preparedness and initial response. Transition into the recovery phase happens as the community moves from rescue, relief, and assessment into restoring infrastructure, housing, and the services of normal living. It is usually marked by a shift from assistance being provided by outside agencies to community-based programs. The recovery phase may last months and even years. It is focused on identifying, prioritizing, and servicing unmet needs.

### Guidelines and Principles for Long-Term Recovery

Much has been written on managing long-term recovery efforts. Two excellent resources are given below. We will not try to duplicate them here. However, several over-arching principles are worth emphasis.

- The faith-based role in recovery is important because recovery is mainly focused on community programs.
- Every disaster is local and requires local solutions to disaster recovery.
- Managing recovery means managing unmet needs. All aspects of the community should be involved in this effort.
- The presbytery and local churches have a role in finding those who may have fallen through the cracks in civic disaster relief, as well as those who do not have the resources to recover on their own.
- Unmet needs span clean-up, housing, employment, transportation, medical, mental health, and spiritual concerns.
- The presbytery should become involved in any community-based, long-term recovery organizations, sometimes called unmet needs committees. National models for these groups are found in the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD), see Reference 1.
- Long-term recovery groups may have a structured, legal standing and include local government agencies, social services agencies, faith-based organizations, and other volunteer groups.
- Long-term recovery groups can provide case management, volunteer management, donations management, and emotional and spiritual care.

- The long-term recovery group brings together case managers working with survivors with organizations that have monetary, material, and labor resources to meet those needs.
- There are many advantages of the faith community participating in the long-term recovery effort.
  - Allows expanded service to survivors by sharing the workload and limited resources while reducing duplication of services
  - Brings the highest degree of community credibility, cooperation, and support
  - Increases visibility for the faith community of their service
  - Provides greater potential for fund raising from donors who are service-oriented and appreciate efficient use of limited resources.

## **Specific Actions for Presbyteries**

These items are considerations for preparation and operation during a long-term recovery effort. Specific resources for many of these topics may be found in this and other sections on this webpage. The items below are listed in rough order according to when they should be addressed in the disaster response cycle.

1. Plan for long-term recovery well in advance of an incident. Have someone identified as the Long-Term Recovery Coordinator.
2. Develop a list of organizations that will likely form a network for long-term recovery.
3. Establish relationships with other civic and volunteer organizations prior to a disaster. Join your state Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) and appoint a representative.
4. Decide ahead of time what niche is best to fill for your presbytery in a long-term recovery. Note: PC(USA) through PDA has developed a niche for hosting volunteers. There are many information resources available to assist planning for this ministry.
5. There may be PDA financial support available for helping to pay for long-term recovery efforts. Be familiar with the PDA grant request and reporting procedures prior to a disaster (see the Initial Response section of this web page).
6. After disaster strikes, contact PDA for guidance and support (502-569-5839, [pda@pcusa.org](mailto:pda@pcusa.org)).
7. Contact the organizations known from steps 2 and 3 above to join or help form a local unmet needs committee.

8. Pastors of affected congregations are under a great deal of stress. Be especially attuned to the emotional and spiritual needs of any pastors directly affected by the disaster (see the Emotional & Spiritual Care section). PDA has resources to help in this area also.

## References

1. *Long-Term Recovery Manual*, National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD), Approved January 2004, Revised July 2013. [www.nvoad.org](http://www.nvoad.org)
2. *Community Arise – A Disaster Ministry Curriculum: Managing Volunteers in Disaster*, Church World Service, Emergency Response Program, New York, NY, 2006. <http://www.communityarise.com/CMManagingVol.htm>