

# Community Foundations of Canada 2008 Conference

## Disaster Response & Community Foundations November 7, 2008

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COUNCIL *on*  
FOUNDATIONS

# Stages of disasters:

- **Preparedness/public education**
- **Emergency response/relief phase**
- **Recovery and rehabilitation**
- **Long-term development**

# Common characteristics of disasters in initial emergency response stage:

- **Disorganization**
- **Poor communication**
- **Lack of good information**
- **Absence of coordination**
- **Emotional atmosphere**

# Tension between community philanthropy and disasters:

- Emergency response vs. long-term
- Reactive approach vs. strategic grantmaking
- Charity vs. development
- Most foundations do not have disaster grantmaking programs or expertise
- Many CFs do not have disaster plans

# Community Foundation Advantages at Times of Crisis:

- **Enjoy local respect and credibility**
- **Know the community well – where most vulnerable are located**
- **Have links to local service delivery organizations**
- **Ability to convene actors across sectors**
- **Serve as catalyst for collaboration and coordination**
- **Flexibility to move quickly to address urgent needs**
- **Long-term perspective to address rehabilitation needs**
- **Ability to call attention to factors that exacerbate vulnerability to disasters and to advocate policy changes**

# **Eight Principles of Good Disaster Grantmaking:**

- 1. First, do no harm.**
- 2. Stop, look and listen before taking action.**
- 3. Don't act in isolation.**
- 4. Think beyond the immediate crisis to the long-term.**

# **Eight Principles (cont'd)**

- 5. Bear in mind the expertise of local organizations.**
- 6. Find out how prospective grantees operate.**
- 7. Be accountable to those you are trying to help.**
- 8. Communicate your work widely and use it as an educational tool.**

# Good Practices from the League of California Community Foundations:

- ✓ Be prepared for the foundation to operate away from the office for a period of at least 72 hours.
- ✓ Develop a business continuity plan detailing how the foundation will operate in a variety of possible disaster scenarios.
- ✓ Maintain copies of all computer files and important documents at a site other than the foundation office.
- ✓ Develop a disaster plan outlining what actions the foundation will take in a disaster.
- ✓ Consider giving discretionary authority to the foundation executive to make immediate grants up to a certain amount after a disaster.

# Good Practices (cont'd)

- ✓ **Maintain an dialogue with leading organizations that can respond to any disaster; create an MOU giving them authority to spend up to a pre-approved limit activated by a phone call.**
- ✓ **Identify special needs groups or vulnerable populations in your area such as the elderly, homeless, migrant workers, people on life support systems or with disabilities.**
- ✓ **Develop a webpage to serve as a centrally located community resource for disaster preparedness, response and recovery information.**
- ✓ **Establish relationships before a disaster occurs with local and regional government officials responsible for assessing the immediate needs in the wake of a disaster.**

# Useful Disaster Resources

## ***Disaster Grantmaking: A Practical Guide for Foundations and Corporations (COF and EFC)***

<http://www.usig.org/PDFs/disasterguide.pdf>  
or call 1-703-879-0746 for a hard copy

## ***Disaster Preparedness: A Guide to Planning for California Community Foundations***

The League of California Community Foundations, 2001,  
[www.lccf.org/pdf/disaster\\_prep.pdf](http://www.lccf.org/pdf/disaster_prep.pdf)

## ***Establishing Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Plans***

<http://www.cof.org/Action/content.cfm?ItemNumber=6511&navItemNumber=9850>

## ***Disaster Relief: Providing Assistance Through Charitable Organizations***

[http://www.cof.org/files/Documents/Legal/IRS\\_Disaster\\_Relief.pdf](http://www.cof.org/files/Documents/Legal/IRS_Disaster_Relief.pdf)