



Disaster Mitigation

A Guide for Community-based Organizations





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This guidebook was produced by Volunteer Florida for the Florida Department of Community Affairs, Division of Emergency Management. Volunteer Florida is a 25 member Governor appointed commission whose mission is to strengthen Florida's communities through volunteerism and service. To fulfill this mission the Commission facilitates the development, promotion and implementation of volunteer and community service programs and practices.

Volunteer Florida enjoys a strong partnership with the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM). Since 1997, Volunteer Florida has been designated in Florida's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan to serve as the State lead agency for Emergency Support Function 15 Volunteers and Donations. The Commission provides the following disaster related services:

- Manages the activities and staffing of Emergency Support Function 15 at the State Emergency Operations Center in Tallahassee
- Operates the State Volunteers and Donations Hotline in times of disaster
- Routes disaster donations to local agencies that need them
- Trains Florida AmeriCorps members to assist communities impacted by disaster
- Coordinates the placement of disaster volunteers with local volunteer organizations
- Develops the response capabilities of Florida's voluntary agencies through networking, training and exercises

As a complement to this manual, Volunteer Florida has developed the "Mitigation Station" and disaster related guidebooks, "Unaffiliated Volunteers in Response and Recovery" and "Establishing an Unmet Needs Coalition." These and other resources are available at www.volunteerflorida.org.

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This document is available upon request in Braille, audiotape, large print and computer disk.

Table of Contents

Introduction and Purpose	4
Mitigation: A Definition for Community-based Organizations	5
FDEM Provides Leadership and Incentives	6
FLASH, Inc. - An Advocate for Mitigation	7
CBOs Can Take Cost Effective Measures	7
Developing Pro-active Partnerships	8
Funding a Mitigation Project	8
Sample Mitigation Projects Suitable for CBOs	9
Appendix	19
Mitigation Project Ideas (FEMA)	20
Homeowner's/Resident's/Tenant's Assumption of Responsibilities and Risks Liability Release Form	21
Additional Resources	23

Introduction and Purpose

For decades Florida has led the nation in preparing for disasters, responding to the needs of survivors, supporting relief workers and helping communities return to normalcy after the disaster. Year after year, when major disasters and smaller local emergencies occur, the public outpouring of donations and voluntary assistance is led by local organizations, including private nonprofits, faith-based and civic groups, neighborhood associations and volunteer centers. Collectively, these groups will be referred to here as community-based organizations (CBOs).

To coordinate these voluntary efforts, reduce duplication and address the long-term unmet needs of disaster survivors, many local and statewide coalitions have been developed. Two of the most active are Florida Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (FLVOAD) and Florida Interfaith Networking in Disaster (FIND). Dozens of local affiliates of FLVOAD and FIND have engaged their member CBOs in preparedness and relief efforts that have helped communities to plan for and recover from disasters. These organizations have provided services for many years, some since before Hurricane Andrew in 1992, and have witnessed a repetitive cycle of loss, repair and additional loss due to natural disasters.

According to "Breaking the Cycle 2000," a publication of the Florida Division of Emergency Management, prior to Hurricane Andrew Florida's "formula" for dealing with disasters was similar to that of other states: Rely on insurance and emergency relief dollars to restore conditions to the way they were prior to the disaster. With Florida's dramatic population growth and investment in coastal property, however, just "putting it back the way it was" is no longer a viable solution.



The most effective strategy for breaking the cycle of repetitive loss is to engage in activities that mitigate, or minimize, the effects of disasters. In every Florida county strategic investment in mitigation is paying off. This successful strategy is especially important to community-based organizations. The financial resources they need to help disaster survivors are scarce, especially in lean economic times. Many CBOs have recognized the value of investing a portion of those scarce resources in local efforts to mitigate the effects of future disasters.

When disasters occur, community based organizations respond.

The purpose of this guidebook is to promote increased participation of community-based organizations in local mitigation programs by:

- Defining mitigation in the context of emergency management
- Recognizing the leadership role of the Florida Division of Emergency Management through "Florida Prepares" and the "Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS)"
- Making a clear case for pre-disaster mitigation projects that make homes and businesses more disaster resistant
- Identifying State and local mitigation stakeholders
- Presenting best practices and sample mitigation projects

Mitigation: A Definition for Community-based Organizations

Disaster mitigation is any action taken to eliminate or minimize the impact of a disaster on people, property and the environment.

Since mitigation takes many forms, it means something different to a homeowner or a neighborhood association than it does to a public works department, utility, airport, school or water management district.

A public works department, for example, might place top priority on a construction project to improve drainage and prevent flooding. For a utility company mitigation might mean tightening security at a water plant and other critical facility. To an airport mitigation might require a change in law or policy regarding carry-on baggage. A school district might install video cameras to mitigate injuries or loss of life from an attack on the school. For a water management district the installation of back-up generators to operate overflow valves might be important. While the mitigation actions of each organization are different, the outcomes are the same: reduced injuries, loss of life and damage to property.

For individuals, neighborhoods, and the CBOs that serve them, mitigation can be very simple and cost effective. Any project designed to eliminate or minimize damage from hazards to which a home or neighborhood is vulnerable qualifies as mitigation. Simply keeping a drainage ditch that runs through a low elevation community clear of debris is mitigation. Trimming dead branches from trees mitigates the possibility of a branch becoming a projectile during a storm. Cutting plywood storm shutters and pre-installing the necessary hardware makes mitigating damage from flying debris a quick and easy process. Strengthening an inner room for use as a tornado shelter (safe room) can save lives in an area prone to violent storms.



These relatively low-cost mitigation ideas have caught the attention of many community-based organizations as viable and valuable contributions they can make to increase the safety of their clients and neighborhoods. CBOs have traditionally used donations from their members, faith congregations or the public to provide disaster relief. In many cases, the same families have needed the same kinds of assistance year after year. CBOs now recognize that some of those dollars would be better spent on mitigation to prevent future losses than on repeatedly replacing furniture, soaked drywall and damaged air conditioners each time a neighborhood floods. Such investments in disaster mitigation are the key to breaking the cycle of repetitive loss.

FDEM Provides Leadership and Incentives

The Florida Division of Emergency Management has developed several programs to promote and educate the public about mitigation. Florida Prepares is an “umbrella” initiative that emphasizes the development of partnerships at the local level between emergency management programs, community-based organizations and the private sector for the purpose of developing community plans to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. Under the Florida Prepares umbrella there are several mitigation initiatives and funding opportunities.

“**Breaking the Cycle**” was a landmark State initiative encompassing the following:

- A total review of the State’s building codes that resulted in the creation of a statewide, unified building code;
- The provision of technical and financial assistance to local communities to identify and prioritize vulnerabilities;
- Guidance for homeowners in assessing the weaknesses in their dwellings and strengthening them to be less vulnerable to wind, fire and water.

The Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) is an initiative funded by the Florida Division of Emergency Management to assist counties and municipalities to develop a unified strategy for reducing vulnerability to local hazards. Through the LMS, communities establish public/private/nonprofit partnerships to identify hazards, assess and prioritize mitigation needs, and implement long-term plans to reduce vulnerability.

To ensure that the public becomes and remains involved in the LMS planning process, a working group (also referred to as a steering committee, planning group or task force) has been established in each Florida county. One of the primary purposes of the working group is to ensure that the views of the public are well represented and to encourage public participation in the development and revision of the Local Mitigation Strategy. Working groups may also assist in implementing fundamental mitigation initiatives, such as conducting community outreach presentations on coastal hazards, insurance, retrofitting and other important issues.



These actions are designed to elicit and maintain the necessary public participation in the Local Mitigation Strategy.

The guidelines for Local Mitigation Strategy working groups ensure the broadest possible inclusion of the views, ideas and participation of community-based organizations in the LMS. They encourage and empower non-disaster-related organizations to get involved in mitigation planning and initiatives.

Through the LMS, communities establish public/private/nonprofit partnerships.

Developing a community-wide mitigation plan makes it possible for the community to:

- Save lives and protect property
- Save money – the costs of mitigation are less than the costs of recovery and rebuilding
- Strengthen county and city partnerships through the sharing of resources
- Receive more post-disaster funding more quickly by pre-identifying mitigation projects to be implemented when funding becomes available

Competitive **Federal Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM)** grants assist communities to implement hazard mitigation programs designed to reduce overall risk to the population and structures before disasters occur. While private non-profit organizations are not eligible to apply, they may request a local government to submit an application for proposed activities on their behalf. For more information on application instructions, eligibility and deadlines, please visit http://www.dca.state.fl.us/brm/PDM/PDM_main.htm on the Florida Division of Emergency Management website.

FLASH, Inc. - An Advocate for Mitigation

The Federal Alliance for Safe Homes – FLASH, Inc. is a non-profit, 501(c)3, organization committed to strengthening homes and safeguarding families from natural and manmade disasters. The organization includes an alliance of private, public and non-profit partners dedicated to mitigation through education and awareness.

FLASH began in 1998 as an advertising campaign designed to raise awareness about safety and mitigation options in post-Hurricane Andrew Florida. During 2002, FLASH expanded beyond Florida and today targets its award-winning programs to a diverse and growing audience of consumers, code officials, design professionals, elected leaders, homeowners and homebuilders nationwide.

Working with a blue-ribbon panel of architects, building professionals and engineers, FLASH developed Blueprint for Safety™. This educational program is designed to provide accurate, current and reliable information about disaster-safety building techniques and features to help families become better prepared for floods, hurricanes, wildfires and windstorms. Details on Blueprint for Safety™ along with other mitigation resources can be found at www.flash.org.



The key to meeting the disaster mitigation needs of any community is collaboration.

CBOs Can Take Cost Effective Measures

No matter how carefully we design, locate and build new homes, many older homes will not survive the pounding of another storm like Andrew. While retrofitting or strengthening those dwellings is the most effective way to make them more disaster resistant, such projects are beyond the means of many Floridians.

There are other cost-effective ways to provide homeowners additional protection from storms and other hazards. Community-based organizations may be in the best position to provide this assistance. Human service agencies are generally familiar with the needs of their clients. Neighborhood associations are familiar with their residents most at risk for damage from natural disasters. Civic organizations and volunteer centers have volunteer resources to help meet the needs. The key to meeting the disaster mitigation needs of any community is collaboration.

Developing Pro-active Partnerships

Any community-based organization can initiate a partnership to meet local mitigation needs by taking the following simple steps.

- Contact your County Emergency Management Director or Local Mitigation Strategy Working Group to learn what community mitigation needs have been identified.
- Draw the attention of a variety of community organizations to those needs.
- Identify several stakeholders with which you would like to partner – agencies with similar missions or clients; and organizations, including businesses, with resources that could be applied to a project.
- Show those stakeholders how they and their clients or customers will benefit by participating in a mitigation project.
- Convene a meeting of the stakeholders to discuss the needs, possible projects to meet those needs, and the resources that each organization could bring to a partnership.

To form an effective partnership, encourage potential partners to:

- Listen to all prospective partners' project ideas;
- Together, select the specific need to be addressed by the partnership;
- Jointly, with equal voice, select a project consistent with the priorities of the Local Mitigation Strategy.

The participants will then be ready to discuss the leadership needs of the partnership.

- Does the group need a chairman, secretary/recorder, or someone to provide information to the public about your project?
- Do you need committees responsible for the various aspects of the project development?
- Are all partners comfortable with a "handshake" agreement, or will they feel more secure in this new relationship with a formal Memorandum of Agreement?



Consider all possible stakeholders of the planned mitigation project.

Funding a Mitigation Project

Including in your partnership one or more organizations with cash or in-kind resources is an important step to ensuring that your project can be successfully implemented. Partners should consider all possible stakeholders of the planned mitigation project and attempt to engage them in the planning and implementation process.

For example, an insurance company with several clients located in a flood zone may see the value of investing in a project to elevate outside air conditioner condensing units. A power or phone company may be interested in supporting a community project to trim dead tree limbs on residential property to prevent damage to service lines.

A resource entitled "Potential Funding Sources" is available at the Mitigation Station on the Volunteer Florida website at www.volunteerflorida.org. It contains names and contact information for foundations and other organizations interested in receiving proposals for projects in their areas of focus.

Sample Mitigation Projects Suitable for CBOs

To provide insight on possible needs in your community and potential partners to meet the needs, this section will highlight a variety of projects that have been successfully implemented by community-based organizations throughout Florida and elsewhere. Please keep in mind that selecting a project from this list is not a substitute for the process of building a successful community partnership described above. Contact information has been provided for easy access to available project information, photos, instructions and guidelines.

Disaster Resistant Home Model

Tallahassee, Florida



Background

Over the years disaster education and mitigation organizations have produced and distributed a wide variety of flyers, brochures, booklets and how-to guides to help individuals and families understand how to implement cost effective structural mitigation initiatives on their homes. While these publications are extremely important as technical manuals, a simple visual tool was needed to capture the attention of homeowners and provide a three dimensional model.

Project

In the summer of 1999 the Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross decided to use the structural mitigation techniques described in [Against The Wind: Protecting Your Home From Hurricane Wind Damage](#) to construct miniature Disaster Resistant Home Models. Grant funding was obtained to have seven model homes constructed and placed in plastic viewing cases in various home improvement stores, building inspection departments and other public locations throughout the Capital Area.

Resources

[Against The Wind: Protecting Your Home From Hurricane Wind Damage](#)

www.tallytown.com/redcross/library

Contact

Capital Area Chapter
American Red Cross
187 Office Plaza Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32301
850-878-6080

www.tallytown.com/redcross

Possible Partners

Building Supply Stores
Builders Association
Building Officials Association
Insurance Companies

Smoke Alarm Installation

Ft. Myers, Florida



Background

American Red Cross Disaster Services Volunteers respond to an average of 60 household fires each year in Lee County. Unfortunately the majority of these house fires occur in homes where individual or family income is below the poverty level. These residents often cannot afford smoke alarms.

Project

The Disaster Services Volunteers of the Lee County Chapter of the American Red Cross partnered with the North Ft. Myers Fire Control and Rescue District to identify area neighborhoods most at-risk for household fires – neighborhoods with the highest concentration of low income elderly, single parent families, and large multiple family dwellings with many children. The Disaster Services Volunteers worked with the North Ft. Myers Fire Control and Rescue District to set up appointments for “home-visits” in these neighborhoods to install smoke alarms and batteries or to check existing smoke alarms and replace batteries. In addition, residents received fire safety and disaster education materials.

Resources

[Living In A Home Without Smoke Alarms Is Risky Business](http://www.tallytown.com/redcross/library)
www.tallytown.com/redcross/library

Contact

Lee County Chapter
American Red Cross
2516 Colonial Blvd # 201
Ft. Myers, FL 33907
239-278-3401
www.arclcc.org

Possible Partners

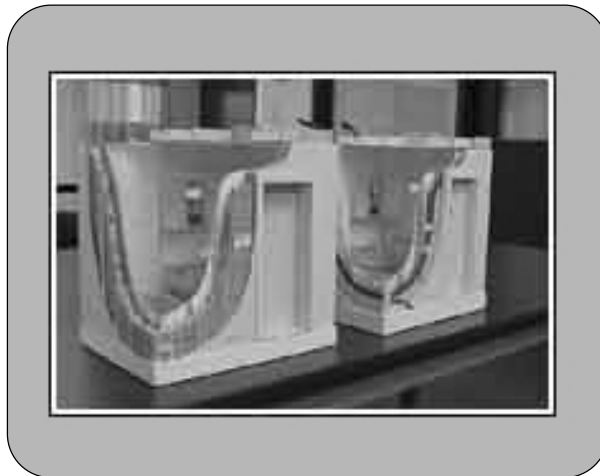
Fire Departments
Building Supply Stores
Home Inspectors
Senior Citizen Councils
Youth Service Organizations
Homeowner Associations
Volunteer Centers

Other Similar Project Locations

Apalachicola, Jacksonville, Pensacola & Bradenton, Florida

Safe Room Demonstration Model

Steele County, Minnesota



Background

A Safe Room is a shelter designed to protect you and your family from tornadoes and other windstorms. The shelter is anchored and reinforced to withstand the impact of flying debris and extreme wind.

Project

At Owatonna High School just outside St. Paul, Minnesota the shop class constructed a model of a Safe Room. Using the "Building A Safe Room Inside Your House" publication, Justin Arndt's shop class decided to construct a Safe Room Demonstration Model that could be used throughout Steele County as a means of encouraging county residents to become better prepared by either adding a Safe Room to their existing home or including one in their plans for new construction.

Resources

[Building A Safe Room Inside Your House](http://www.tallytown.com/redcross/library)
www.tallytown.com/redcross/library
[Safe Rooms Save Lives](http://www.tallytown.com/redcross/library)
www.tallytown.com/redcross/library

Contact

Capital Area Chapter
American Red Cross
187 Office Plaza Dr.
Tallahassee, FL 32301
850-878-6080
www.tallytown.com/redcross

Possible Partners

High Schools
Technical Schools
Building Supply Stores
Builders Association
Building Officials Association
Insurance Companies

Other Similar Project Locations

Kansas City, Missouri
Nashville, Tennessee
Tallahassee, Florida
Sioux City, Iowa

ChildCare Center Disaster Retrofit

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Background

With more than a third of the country's pre-schoolers in child-care centers, no center can be "too safe." In an effort to make childcare centers in the United States even more secure during earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, wildfires and other natural and man-made catastrophes, the "Protecting Our Kids From Disasters" campaign in Tulsa, Oklahoma, has helped retrofit area child care centers.

The "Protecting Our Kids From Disasters" campaign focuses on non-structural retrofits, emphasizing simple modifications, such as securing bookcases, pictures and bulletin boards to walls so they don't fall; latching cabinet doors so they won't swing open and spray their contents; and making window glass shatter-resistant by adding protective film. These are all small projects that a group of volunteers, with a little bit of preparation and training, can handle with ease.

Project

The City of Tulsa, the Tulsa Partners Insurance Committee led by State Farm Insurance, and Sunglow, Inc. conducted a Tulsa area childcare center retrofit using the guidelines outlined in the Institute for Business and Home Safety's "Protecting Our Kids From Disasters" workbook. The workbook contains information on the non-structural approach to making buildings safer.

The Crosstown Learning Center, located in the Second Presbyterian Church in Tulsa, was retrofitted in the following ways. Participants covered all windows with impact resistant film to prevent shattering during severe storms; two vending machines were anchored to the wall; and plastic sleeves were added to fluorescent light bulbs to prevent injuries from shattered bulbs. The project also provided a NOAA Weather Radio to warn caregivers of severe storms approaching Tulsa County and assisted in the designation of the basement as a safe place during weather emergencies.



Resources

[Protecting Our Kids From Disasters](http://www.tallytown.com/redcross/library)
www.tallytown.com/redcross/library

Contact

Tulsa Partners
City Hall # 532
Tulsa, OK 74103
918-596-9626
www.tulsapartners.org

Institute for Business and Home Safety
4775 E. Fowler Ave.
Tampa, FL 33617
813-286-3400
www.ibhs.org

Possible Partners

Building Supply Stores
Builders Association
Building Officials Association
Insurance Companies

Other Similar Project Locations

Johnsonton, Tennessee
Deerfield Beach, Florida

Hurricane Shuttering

Miami, Florida



Background

Florida has almost 1,700 miles of coastline that is very susceptible to damage from the high winds of tropical storms and hurricanes. Many low-income elderly citizens reside in Florida's coastal urban counties, such as Miami-Dade. These individuals represent one of the most disaster vulnerable segments of our population.

Project

The Greater Miami and the Keys Chapter of the American Red Cross partners with Florida Regional Interfaith Interagency Emergency Network in Disaster (FRIEND, Inc.), a coalition of local faith and community-based organizations, to offer free hurricane shutters and installation to elderly low income residents who meet certain eligibility requirements. Elderly low-income homeowners make application for shuttering with the Greater Miami and the Keys Chapter of the American Red Cross. Because funding for this project is limited, eligible applications are placed into a lottery and chosen randomly. The program's goal is to shutter 1,300 homes in eligible areas. If residents cannot install the shutters themselves, FRIEND, Inc. is there to help by identifying volunteers willing to adopt a home and assist with shutter installation.

Resources

[Against The Wind: Protecting Your Home From Hurricane Wind Damage](#)

www.tallytown.com/redcross/library

Contact

Greater Miami & The Keys Chapter
American Red Cross
335 SW 27th Ave.
Miami, FL 33135
305-644-1200
www.miamiredcross.org

FRIEND, Inc.
16201 W. 95th Ave., Ste. 300
Miami, FL 33157

Possible Partners

Faith-based Organizations
Volunteer Centers
Neighborhood Associations
Building Supply Stores
Builders Association
Building Officials Association

Other Similar Project Locations

Tallahassee, Florida

Lay Down Hazard Removal

Tallahassee, Florida



Background

People in Tallahassee love their trees until a severe wind event occurs, blowing dead, dying or sick limbs and trees onto their homes or power lines.

Project

The Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross, working with the City of Tallahassee Neighborhood Services Department, obtained \$120,000 in State Housing Initiative Program funding to help remove threatening trees in low-income neighborhoods. The American Red Cross identified low-income homeowners who needed trees removed, verified income and provided mini-grants of up to \$1,500 to each homeowner to contract with a tree removal company to have the tree cut down.

Resources

[Protect Your Home Against Hurricane Damage](http://www.tallytown.com/redcross/library)
www.tallytown.com/redcross/library
[Trees And Ice Storms](http://www.tallytown.com/redcross/library)
www.tallytown.com/redcross/library

Contact

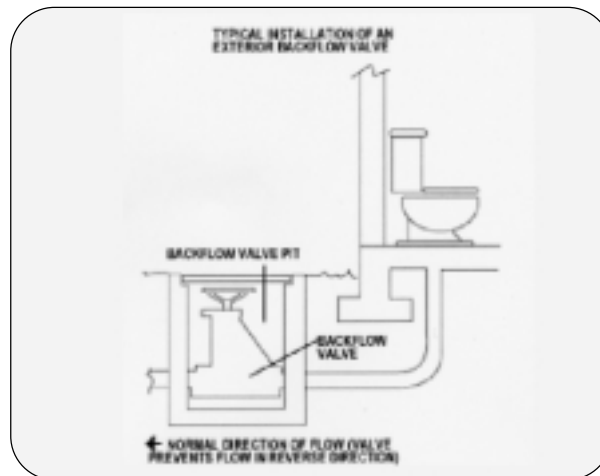
Capital Area Chapter
American Red Cross
187 Office Plaza Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32301
850-878-6080
www.tallytown.com/redcross

Possible Partners

City Neighborhood Services Department
County Neighborhood Services Department
Citizen Corps Council

Backflow Valve Installation

Tallahassee, Florida



Background

In many older Tallahassee neighborhoods storm water from severe rain events infiltrates the sanitary sewage system. This forces sewage to backflow and discharge into homes, causing damage and posing a great health hazard.

Project

The Capital Area Chapter of the American Red Cross, working with Leon County's Neighborhood Services Department, obtained \$60,000 in State Housing Initiative Program funding to work in low income neighborhoods to install Sewer Backflow Valves. Sewer backflow valves are simple devices that automatically prevent sewage from backflowing into a residence and can be installed for approximately \$600 on most homes. The American Red Cross identified low-income homeowners in flood prone areas who were at risk of sewage backflow into their homes. After verifying home ownership and income, the Red Cross provided mini-grants of up to \$1,200 to homeowners to have the sewage backflow valves professionally installed.

Resources

[Sewer Backflow Valve Fact Sheet](#)
www.tallytown.com/redcross/library
[Is Your Home Protected From Water Damage](#)
www.tallytown.com/redcross/library
[Protect Your Home From Water Damage](#)
www.tallytown.com/redcross/library
[Protect Your Home From Flood Damage](#)
www.tallytown.com/redcross/library
[Flood Hazard Maps](#)
www.hazardmaps.gov/atlas.php

Contact

Capital Area Chapter
 American Red Cross
 187 Office Plaza Drive
 Tallahassee, FL 32301
 850-878-6080
www.tallytown.com/redcross

Possible Partners

City Neighborhood Services Department
 County Neighborhood Services Department

Tornado Warning System

Fayetteville, Tennessee



Background

On average the United States experiences 100,000 thunderstorms each year. Approximately 1,000 tornadoes develop from these storms. When a tornado is approaching, you have only a short time to make life-or-death decisions. Advanced warning from a Tornado Warning System and quick response are the keys to surviving a tornado.

Project

The Fayetteville Rotary Club raised \$25,000 for the purchase and installation of Tornado Warning Sirens. Working with the City of Fayetteville, Lincoln County and the Lincoln County School District, the Fayetteville Rotary Club was able to install the sirens near the county's schools.

The Fayetteville Rotary Club also launched a community tornado preparedness education campaign.

Resources

[Are You Ready For A Tornado?](#)

www.tallytown.com/redcross/library

[Protect Your Home Against Tornado Damage](#)

www.tallytown.com/redcross/library

[Tornado Hazard Maps](#)

www.hazardmaps.gov/atlas.php

Contact

Fayetteville Rotary Club

P.O. Box 72

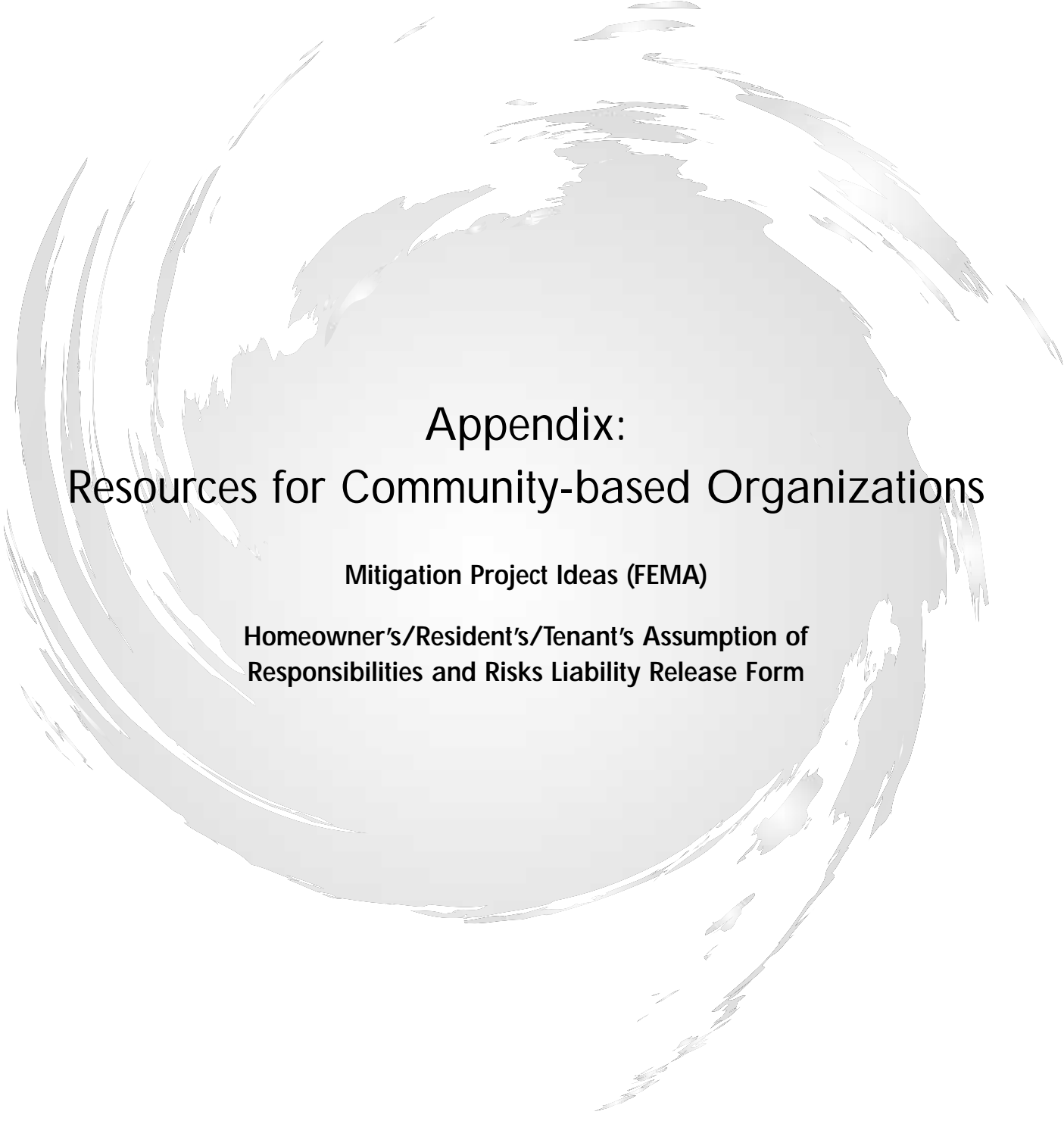
Fayetteville, TN 37334

Possible Partners

Chamber of Commerce

Fire Department

Faith-based Organizations



Appendix: Resources for Community-based Organizations

Mitigation Project Ideas (FEMA)

**Homeowner's/Resident's/Tenant's Assumption of
Responsibilities and Risks Liability Release Form**

Mitigation Project Ideas

(Please keep in mind that selecting a project from this list is not a substitute for the process of building a successful community partnership described on page 7 of this guidebook.)

Flood

- Working with your local planning office, use Global Positioning Systems (GPS) to map the longitude and latitude of structures at risk from flooding. Alert residents and provide information about how they can mitigate.
- To increase public awareness of flood hazards in the community, post markers showing the Base Flood Elevation.
- Post signs showing height of past flooding events. Provide information about how people can prevent damage in a similar event.
- Remove all debris from culverts, streams, and channels to allow the free flow of potential floodwater.
- Clean storm drains and gutters, and remove debris from residential properties to allow free flow of potential floodwater.
- Build or provide platforms for residents to raise their appliances.
- Construct a rain garden to help minimize flooding.
- Rehabilitate abandoned lots into gardens that provide drainage.
- Plant vegetation in areas that are at risk for mudslides/landslides.
- Perform stream restoration activities.
- Help a licensed plumber distribute and install backflow valves.

Fire

- Conduct a wildfire risk assessment.
- Install smoke alarms.
- Distribute smoke alarm batteries and/or reminders to change batteries or check alarms.
- Move shrubs and other landscaping away from the sides of homes, public buildings, businesses – replace with plants that resist or retard fires, where possible.
- Clear dead brush and grass from properties so that it will not be there to fuel a spreading fire.
- Assist licensed professionals in removing trees near homes.

Wind

- Work with a local arborist to identify species of trees that are more resistant to high winds. Help promote the use of these trees.
- Check and repair security devices, such as window and door locks, and other light maintenance work.
- Secure or remove items that could become projectiles in high winds.
- Conduct minor repairs to the homes of the elderly.
- Install and/or secure storm shutters.
- Distribute and/or install hurricane clips and straps.
- Strengthen windows and doors.
- Build a demonstration safe room.
- Assist licensed professionals in removing trees near homes.
- Distribute and/or display FEMA 320, Taking Shelter from the Storm.

Activities for Any Hazard

- Identify and publicize natural hazard risks in the community.
- Distribute disaster mitigation information packages to residents and businesses.
- Identify and disseminate information about easy, cost-effective ways that home and business owners can protect themselves against potential dangers on their properties and in their neighborhoods.
- Help the elderly and/or physically challenged to prepare personal disaster plans.
- Survey area with emergency management officials to identify risks and ways to mitigate against them.
- Create a tool lending library with tools and how-to guides necessary to perform simple, appropriate mitigation activities.
- Research and create a map of elderly, home bound, disabled and less accessible rural citizens who need to be relocated during a disaster.
- Present “Masters of Disaster” modules to younger students.
- Hold classes to educate residents about steps they can take to minimize their risks.
- Retrofit childcare centers, nursing homes or other important facilities for multiple or most threatening hazards.

Source: Community-based Pre-Disaster Mitigation for Community- and Faith-Based Organizations, Department of Homeland Security, FEMA. 2003

SAMPLE: HOMEOWNER’S/RESIDENT’S/TENANT’S ASSUMPTION OF RESPONSIBILITES AND RISKS LIABILITY RELEASE FORM

I, _____, have received an orientation or have read and understand all the information presented about the _____ mitigation project and agree to accept the risks and responsibilities associated with participating in the event.

I authorize _____ volunteers to perform the following work (“Work”) in my home or apartment unit: **(Check the items that are authorized)**

- _____ Conducting a survey of my home or apartment (Hazard Hunt)
- _____ Installing latches on cabinet drawers and doors
- _____ Anchoring/bolting bookcases and/or china cabinets
- _____ Securing safety straps on heavy items such as appliances
- _____ Attaching safety hooks to pictures and/or wall hangings
- _____ Rearranging furniture items for safety purposes
- _____ Using museum wax on breakable/valuable items

I understand that the Work may require drilling holes in the walls of my home or apartment unit; use of museum wax on breakable/valuable items; installing Industrial Velcro on my furniture, equipment, appliances, and walls; and may cause other damage or alterations to my personal property and my unit.

In the event of injury, I give my consent to _____ volunteers and representatives to administer first aid and to secure medical services on my behalf.

I understand that my participation in the _____ event is voluntary and that the Work will be performed free of charge by volunteers. I further understand that all of the supplies used to perform the Work are also free of charge and provided by _____ and/or its supporting partners.

I have been advised and understand that the Work will not guarantee or ensure my safety during an emergency or disaster and that the anchored property may move, fall, injure or damage other property, me or other persons during an emergency or disaster.

Further, I, _____, hereby release and forever discharge _____ its volunteers, representatives, sponsors, partners, and each of their officers, agents and employees from any and all liability, expenses and claims of any kind, nature and character, including attorney fees and costs, for injuries and/or damages that may occur to me or my personal property in connection with the Work.

Tenant's Assumption of Responsibilities and Risks

Liability Release Form

By signing my name below, I agree to the above conditions of participation and acknowledge that I have read and understand the conditions of participation as described above.

Signature of Tenant

Date

Address of Tenant

Signature of Property Owner
Or Landlord on behalf of Property Owner

Date

Address of Property Owner or Landlord

TENANT'S SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF WORK STATEMENT

I, _____, hereby attest that the non-structural mitigation work (the "Work") that was performed by _____ volunteers, meets my approval and has been completed to my satisfaction.

I have been advised and agree that, if I find any discrepancies, I will contact the _____ coordinator immediately and that any discrepancies will be addressed in a timely manner and not later than the last day of the event.

Signature of Tenant/ Date



Additional Resources Available

at the “Mitigation Station” on Volunteer Florida’s Website at www.volunteerflorida.org:

Local Mitigation Strategy Initiatives – Guiding Principles

Potential Funding Sources for Mitigation Projects

Florida Regional Planning Councils

Florida Local Mitigation Strategy Committee Contacts

Community-Based Pre-Disaster Mitigation for Community-
and Faith-Based Organizations Resource Guide (FEMA)

Florida Law Regarding Volunteer Liability



401 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301
Telephone: 850-921-5172 (voice/tty)
www.volunteerflorida.org



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