

Incident preparedness and response

The 4Rs to navigate disaster events: response, rebuild, recover and resilience

Forensic & Integrity Services
Insurance & Federal Claims Services

Part 3 of 6 in a series that focuses on lessons learned and leading practices in COVID-19 disaster cost recovery

The initial moments, days and weeks following an emergency are critical, as there are quick decisions that must be made that will directly affect recovery timelines and the scale of the incident's financial impact. A lesson learned from the COVID-19 pandemic is that navigating the complexities of a disaster event, while responding to the public safety concerns, requires a considerable number of involved steps to establish the right protocols for responding, rebuilding and returning to "normal" operations as quickly and safely as possible. As we discussed in [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#) of this series, the response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in new and innovative approaches to emergency preparedness and response. Recovery can be a daunting task when public funding (e.g., Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act) is involved because there are laws and regulations, rigorous procurement steps, application processes, complex damage calculations and intense administrative burdens that come with the potential receipt of funds.

The organizational objectives, responsibilities and focus of the impacted community or business often differ from the grant-funding organization or the insurer, but the ultimate goals of involved parties should be the protection of lives and the financial recovery to pre-disaster operations.

Individuals and teams tasked with managing disasters for state/local entities and private sector organizations face three phases of incident preparedness and response. Pre-emergency, emergency response and post-emergency actions are all important to make certain your organization is in position to respond appropriately and recover effectively from a disaster event, similar to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Planning/preparedness

- ▶ **Emergency response vendor pool** – Establish pre-qualified vendor pool to accelerate procurement and avoid rushed contracting and unfavorable terms.
- ▶ **Procurement tools** – Modify existing procurement policies and controls to allow for streamlined award of contracts while maintaining adequate oversight of bidding and contracting processes.
- ▶ **Incident response plan** – Develop high-level policies, procedures, tools and templates to consider potential regulatory requirements and the impacts of the disaster using federal agencies and state/locality guidance.
- ▶ **Accounting considerations** – Implement controls to track disaster-specific costs.
- ▶ **Technology enablement** – Review the use of technology to accelerate data collection and enable decision-making.

Emergency response

- ▶ **Activate incident response plan** – Utilize internal staff, external resources and vendor response pool task orders to stabilize emergency.
- ▶ **Damage and needs assessment** – Perform damage assessment in order to identify funding needs give.
- ▶ **Emergency funding compliance** – Develop accounting and procurement considerations/protocols to maintain funding compliance, track transactions and support decision-making.

Rebuild, recovery, and resiliency

- ▶ **Project prioritization** – Develop a prioritized list of projects aligned to funding requirements that considers (1) building back smarter, (2) mitigation/resiliency to mitigate future potential incidents and (3) building code/regulation updates.
- ▶ **Streamline procurements** – Implement procurement framework to streamline contract awards; maintain adequate documentation to demonstrate prudence, competitiveness and compliance with funding requirements.
- ▶ **Funding requirements** – Evaluate specific requirements of the funding programs regarding procurement, monitoring, and reporting and align governance and control framework accordingly to support compliance and reporting requirements.
- ▶ **Reporting** – Require contractors and vendors to provide the requisite data to align with broader funding reporting requirements; establish and implement key performance indicators and metrics to track compliance at all levels.

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