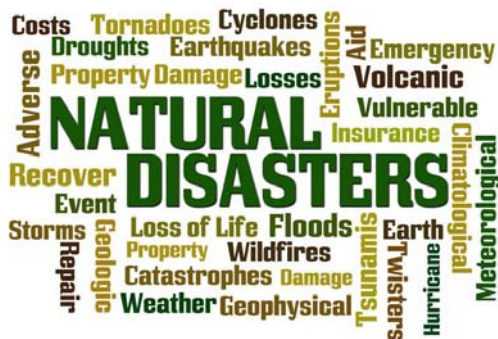




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IDEAS TO BUILD CAPACITY AND RESILIENCE



It's evident across the country that states are experiencing an increased frequency and severity of disasters and weather events. From wildfires in the West, to winter bomb cyclones in the Midwest, to flooding in most states, and hurricanes along our coastlines. These events are also becoming more complex, and with cascading consequences.

2017 was the costliest disaster year on record in the U.S. Scientists are predicting that we'll continue to see more costly disasters in the future, not less.

State and local governments are keenly focused on increasing their capacity to effectively respond to and recover from the increasing number of events impacting communities. Here are just a few ideas on how states can build capacity and resilience.

- **Disaster Trust Fund** – A separate source ensures funds are immediately available for disaster response and recovery. Thirty-five states have a disaster trust fund.
- **State Funded Disaster Assistance Program** - In the absence of federal funding or when there are unmet needs even with federal assistance, it's an excellent idea for states to have their own state-funded assistance programs to help citizens and businesses – 26 states have such programs. They range from loans, grants, matching funds and direct assistance to citizens.
- **Insurance** - It's proven that individuals, businesses and communities that manage risk through insurance recover more quickly. Building Codes - Adoption and enforcement of building codes is one of the most tangible and effective ways to incorporate resilience into the built environment. Study after study of areas with stringent building codes withstand disasters much better and with less property loss.
- **EMAC** - The use of mutual aid is a readily available and proven way to increase state and local capacity during large scale events. With the ever-increasing number of disasters occurring annually, the use of mutual aid and EMAC will continue to grow.
- **Emergency Alerts and Notifications** - The ability to warn the public about impending threats and provide clear instruction for action is a very important part of a resilient

community. The ability to get as many people as possible out of harm's way in advance of a disaster, and to protect property means less loss and devastation.

One area that emergency management must pay greater attention to as part of a comprehensive resilience strategy is social resilience. Over the years, we've learned that every major disaster or emergency has a health and wellness component to the recovery. Research on communities affected by natural disasters show that they often lead to spikes in mental-health challenges, particularly for people who face the most adverse impacts from the disaster or are already vulnerable in other ways. People with pre-existing conditions – older adults, children, those medically vulnerable.

Communities with an aging population also become more vulnerable to natural hazards because older people usually suffer greater physical consequences, are less capable of implementing emergency measures effectively, and are often dependent on assistance. Individuals and families who are struggling emotionally leave communities also struggling to recover for longer periods of time. They can't bounce back. Communities can mitigate the impact with messaging and communication before, during and after the disaster, public officials stressing confidence in preparations, getting citizens involved in their own community activities i.e. filling sandbags, volunteering - it gives people a sense of purpose and control. Beyond government, states can utilize nonprofits, schools, faith-based groups to strengthen connections between citizens, leaders and disaster response groups. A strong, supportive social network increases social resilience.

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