AmeriCorps Disaster Services Blueprint

A Framework for Assisting State Service Commissions with Disaster Services Engagement

Contents

Introduction

State Service Commissions are valuable assets in times of disaster helping their communities and state with preparing for, responding to, and recovering from natural and man-made disasters. Since1995 national service has been there to assist after hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, mudslides, and more. National service supports nonprofits, faith-based, and government agencies with their most critical needs before, during, and after a disaster event.

Building, maintaining, and growing disaster service capabilities can be challenging for State Service Commissions. The **AmeriCorps Disaster Service Blueprint** has been created to provide a framework to assist State Service Commissions in learning, engaging, promoting, and leading in disaster services more effectively.

In this Blueprint, you will find:

- Milestones Goals
- Recommended Actions and Resources
- Disaster Services Engagement Examples

Milestones

This Blueprint outlines four milestones with prescribed actions and resources for each milestone level.

Additionally, you will find a self-assessment tool to help you better understand where your State Service Commission is in the framework and resources for each milestone to help you succeed in completing the milestone.

Milestone 1: Educate and Promote

Goal

Every State Service Commission understands common roles of national service in disaster and can share that information with their partners.

Internally educate staff on:

- Common roles of national service in disaster.
- Roles and functions of AmeriCorps and the Disaster Services Unit (DSU).
- Emergency management partners and how they organize.
- Importance of engaging Board Members and other stakeholders in this education.

Share knowledge with partners:

- Connect with and educate local/state partners (such as emergency management agencies and nonprofit, and faith-based partners who work in emergency management/disaster services) on how national service may be able to support disaster preparedness, response, recovery, & mitigation locally.

Learning Path

- Online Training Courses
  - [Introduction to AmeriCorps Disaster Services - DS101](#)
  - [National Service and Disaster Response and Recovery – DS102](#)
  - [Principles of Emergency Management and Disaster Services – DS103](#)
    - *NOTE: You must already be signed into AmeriCorps Litmos for direct links to work. You can also search inside of AmeriCorps Litmos for these courses. If you don't already have an AmeriCorps Litmos account, you can find the directions for registering [here.](#)*
- Get Connected
  - For State Service Commissions: Email DSU@cns.gov to request being added to the DSU distribution list and Disaster Services Commission Workgroup.

Optional Recommended Actions

- Schedule a time with the AmeriCorps Disaster Services Unit (DSU) for a consultation
- Schedule meeting with Regional AmeriCorps NCCC campus to build strong relationships

Resources

- Documents
  - [At A Glance: National Service Assets in Times of Disaster](#)
- Additional Technical Assistance
  - Initial and annual consult with DSU Staff through a check-in call
  - America's Service Commission Mentor Program

Milestone 2: Identify and Assess

Goal
State Service Commissions identify gaps in services within their state and assess their ability to support.

Recommended Actions

Identify gaps in service by:
- o Have conversations with DSU, AmeriCorps Regional Offices, AmeriCorps NCCC Regional Campus, VISTA & Senior Corps programs in your area.
- o Have conversations with emergency management agency personnel, nonprofit, and faith-based partners to learn what gaps currently exist in support for disaster survivors within your community and/or state.
- o If your state has a higher education institute that operates a school, college, or training program focused on emergency management, reach out to them and discuss their impressions of local or state gaps in services.
  - o *NOTE: If you have a disaster focused program, connecting with these institutions can also be helpful for member recruitment.*
- o Review any data from partners that support their identified needs.

Assess interest and ability to support by:
- o Review National Service Disaster Services Engagement Examples to identify what actions or capabilities other national service programs or State Service Commissions have provided within their state/communities.
- o Identify criteria for performance and assess available resources on-hand and identify needed resources to perform.
- o Assess interest in involvement from:
  - o Board, commissioners, leadership, partners, stakeholders, and constituents.

Resources
- o Documents
  - o [Disaster Services Self-Assessment](#)
  - o [National Service Disaster Services Engagement Examples](#)

- o Find mentorship:
  - o Reach out to a State Service Commission that did not previously have a role in disaster services, identified gaps within their state, and now has defined disaster services roles and responsibilities.
    - ▪ Reach out to the DSU and America's Service Commissions to make these connections.

Milestone 3: Select, Build, and Perform

Goal

State Service Commissions select, build, and begin to perform the disaster service engagement they identified in Milestone 2.

Recommended Actions

Select Disaster Service Engagement:

- Use analysis from Milestone 2 to select most appropriate disaster service engagement to develop.

Build Disaster Service Engagement Action

- Perform planning:
  - Create program outline that provides overview of anticipated mission, policies, procedures, data collection tools, budgets, and other supporting documents.
- Acquire needed resources such as:
  - Funding sources to support program development and implementation.
  - Staff to perform the disaster service engagement.
  - Specialized knowledge and skills through additional staff training with experienced organizations, consultants, or through the hiring process.
  - Create and build partnerships and formalize with MOU, MOA, or other agreements.
  - Hard resources such as equipment, supplies, technology services, and/or equipment, etc.
  - Engage portfolio in the service engagement action.

Perform Disaster Service Engagement

- Once all program building is complete, perform the disaster service engagement and take note of what is and is not working.

Resources

- Task Books
- Position Descriptions
- Operational Plans
- Funding Resources
  - [AmeriCorps Funding Opportunities](#)
    - Commission Investment Fund
    - Commission Support Grants
    - Volunteer Generation Fund
  - State Emergency Management Agency grant opportunities (varies by state)

Milestone 4: Evaluate and Lead

<u>Goal</u>

State Service Commissions will continually evaluate and improve their disaster services engagement, develop, and document best practices/lessons learned, and share outcomes and expertise with partners, stakeholders, and fellow State Service Commissions.

Recommended Actions

Evaluate work within the disaster service engagement example by:

- Internally and externally (with partner organizations) identify performance in disaster engagement activity by:
    - Conducting after action reviews (if disaster service engagement activity is within the disaster response or recovery phase)
    - Hold regular review meetings (can be structured quarterly, semi-annually or annually) to review performance within disaster service engagement activity.
    - Review situational data.
    - Review annually:
        - Agreements, roles, and expectations
        - Plans
        - Policies
        - Procedures
        - Needed resources

Improve and Innovate Disaster Service Engagement Support by:

- Identify internally and externally (with partners) where improvements can be made and where innovative solutions can be added annually or on an as needed basis.
- Update the following documents if improvements/innovations are made:
    - Agreements
    - Plans
    - Policies
    - Procedures
    - Data collection tools and methods
    - Restock or add new resources, if needed.

Lead from established disaster service engagement knowledge by:

- Document and share best practices/lessons learned with partners, stakeholders, and fellow State Service Commissions.
- Provide trainings on your disaster service engagement experiences at conferences, convenings, workgroups, or webinars.
- Support and provide technical assistance to other commissions or national service programs.
- Promote successes to partners and stakeholders.

Resources

- [After action templates and processes](#)

Disaster Services Engagement Examples

Disaster Preparedness Examples

Disaster Preparedness
- Volunteer Reception Center, mass care support services, or other training
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training, program development, or preparation
- Readiness campaigns for the general public

Disaster Preparedness Training
- Coordinating training – bringing in external partners to conduct training for staff, members, community partners.
- Delivering or co-delivering training with partners to staff, members, or community partners.
- Amplifying training information and training opportunities from external partners.

Disaster Preparedness Technical Assistance
- Support portfolio (for State Service Commissions and AmeriCorps National programs), partners, and/or stakeholders with disaster preparation knowledge.

Disaster Preparedness Messaging
- Amplifying preparedness message, information, and/or opportunities from other organizations.
- Creating and distributing your own preparedness messaging, information, and/or opportunities.

Disaster Preparedness Program/Grant Management
- Managing programs or grants focused on disaster services.

Disaster Response Examples

Disaster Response Actions

- Disaster Philanthropy Coordination/Administration
- Volunteer and/or Donations Management
- Public Information Officer
- National Service Response Support Functions

Disaster Response Technical Assistance

- Consulting, providing subject matter expertise, and/or sharing response-related information to your portfolio, partners, and/or stakeholders.

Disaster Response Coordination

- Mobilizing resources or assets to support disaster response actions.
- Managing resources or assets to support disaster response actions.
- Supporting resources or assets as they provide disaster response actions.

Disaster Response Messaging

- Amplify disaster response messages, information, and/or opportunities from other organizations to staff, members, or stakeholders.
- Creating and distributing your own response messaging, information, or opportunities to staff, members, or stakeholders.

Disaster Response Program/Grant Management

- Managing programs or grants focused on disaster services for response.

Disaster Recovery Examples

Disaster Recovery Actions

- Volunteer Recruitment
- Managing/Amplifying Recovery Resources
- Disaster Case Management
- Philanthropy Fund Management
- Long Term Recovery Groups

Disaster Recovery Training

- Coordinating training for staff, members, other organizations, and/or stakeholders.
- Delivering or co-delivering training for staff, members, other organizations, and/or stakeholders.
- Amplifying disaster recovery training provided by partner organizations.

Disaster Recovery Technical Assistance

- Supporting portfolio, partners, and/or stakeholders with disaster recovery knowledge, tools, services, and/or resources.

Disaster Recovery Messaging

- Amplify recovery messages, information, and/or opportunities from other organizations.
- Creating and distributing your own recovery messages, information, and/or opportunities.

Program/Grant Management

- Managing programs or grants focused on disaster services for recovery.

Resources

AmeriCorps Disaster Services Blueprint Self-Assessment Tool

Use this tool to identify when you have achieved a Milestone. You'll need to answer yes to all of these questions to achieve each Milestone.

Milestone 1: Educate and Promote	Yes	No	Comments
We know the roles of national service in disaster.			
We understand the roles and functions of AmeriCorps and the Disaster Services Unit.			
We know emergency management partners and how they organize.			
We engage board members and other stakeholders in this education.			
We connect with and educate local/state partners on how national service may be able to support disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.			

AmeriCorps Disaster Services Blueprint
Self-Assessment Tool, cont.

Milestone 2: Identify and Assess	Yes	No	Comments
We have conversations with DSU, AmeriCorps Regional Offices, AmeriCorps NCCC Regional Campus, VISTA & AmeriCorps Seniors on occasion.			
We have conversations with emergency management agency personnel, nonprofit, and faith-based partners to learn what gaps currently exist in support disaster survivors within your community and/or state.			
We regularly assess and review any data from partners that support their identified needs.			
We review and identify what actions or capabilities other national service programs, or our Commission has provided within our state/communities.			
We regularly assess available resources on-hand and identify needed resources to perform.			

AmeriCorps Disaster Services Blueprint
Self-Assessment Tool, cont.

Milestone 3: Select, Build, and Perform	Yes	No	Comments
We create a program outline that provides overview of anticipated mission, policies, procedures, data collection tools, budgets, and other supporting documents.			
We have the following resources available:			
• Funding sources to support program development and implementation.			
• Staff to perform the disaster service engagement.			
• Specialized knowledge and skills through additional staff training with experienced organizations, consultants, or through the hiring process.			
• Create and build partnerships and formalize with MOU, MOA, or other agreements.			
• Hard resources such as equipment, supplies, technology services and/or equipment, etc.			
• Engage portfolio.			

AmeriCorps Disaster Services Blueprint Self-Assessment Tool, cont.

Milestone 4: Evaluate and Lead	Yes	No	Comments
We conduct after action reviews			
We hold regular review meetings to review performance within disaster service engagement.			
Review situational data.			
We review the following annually:			
• Agreements, roles, and expectations			
• Plans			
• Policies			
• Procedures			
• Needed resources			
We document and share best practices/lessons learned with partners, stakeholders, and fellow State Service Commissions/national service programs.			
We provide trainings on our disaster service engagement experiences at conferences or convenings.			
We support and provide technical assistance to other commissions or national service programs.			
We promote successes to partners and stakeholders.			

After Action Review Process and Template

Overview of After-Action Review Process

An After-Action Review is a project review and is a vital tool in continuous improvement. This review asks:

- What did we expect to happen?
- What actually happened?
- What went well and why?
- What can we improve on and how?

This review helps us identify where we're succeeding and where we can improve. There are a few steps to completing a successful After-Action Review:

- Gather and compile input from everyone engaged in planning, performing, and/or benefiting from the disaster service engagement.
- Review information and decide on corrective actions.
- Document the information and corrective actions and keep on hand for the next After-Action Review.
- Revise planning, replenish and/or gather new resources, modify training and job-aid resources, etc.

Best Practices

- *Make it a Priority* – As soon as you and your team complete the disaster service engagement schedule and hold the After-Action Review. Don't wait to perform this process – memories can quickly fade and you want as much reliable input as possible. Ideally, you'd perform this at least within two weeks of completing the disaster service engagement.

- *The Right People* – you want to ensure that this review includes input from those who planned, resourced, conducted, and benefitted from the engagement.

- *Setting Positive Atmosphere* – You want to ensure that everyone providing input feels safe to speak honestly about their experiences, views, and recommendations. Remind everyone at the start of the input gathering session(s) that this is for the continued improvement, and this is a learning environment where everyone's voice will be respected.

- *Designate a Facilitator and Notetaker* – You want to ensure that you have an unbiased facilitator for the After-Action Review. Ideally, someone that hasn't been directly involved in the disaster service engagement and who's role is solely to get the most valuable insights from the participants. If you're conducting the review in-person, identify someone from outside the focus group to take notes. If you're conducting the review virtually, consider recording the session but only after you've informed the participants and gained their consent.

After-Action Template

After-Action Review			
Project Start Date:		**Project End Date:**	
Project Location:			
Title of Project:			
Brief Description of Project:			

What did we expect to happen?

What actually happened?

What went well and why? (Include processes, tools, resources, training, experience, etc.)

What can be improved and how?

Next Steps Target Dates	Next Steps Description

Creating an AmeriCorps Litmos Account

Using the token code to access the Introduction to AmeriCorps Disaster Services training:

- Navigate to the Self Sign-Up URL https://americorpsonlinecourses.litmos.com/self-signup/
- Enter your First Name, Last Name, Email address and token Code **IntroDSUTR22**
- **(You will be locked out for 2 hours if an incorrect code is entered more than 10 times from the same IP).**
  - The log in email will be sent to you with the log in details.
  - Email serviceresources@cns.gov if you have any issues.
  - Once you log in, you will have access to the Introduction to AmeriCorps Disaster Services Training

Note:

- If you don't receive the log in email, please check your spam/junk folder.
- Hyperlinks to other DSU trainings work only when you are signed into AmeriCorps Litmos.

Contact Information

Disaster Services Unit – DSU@cns.gov

America's Service Commissions – Chad Driscoll, cdriscoll@statecommissions.org