New Year’s Resolutions for Disaster Preparedness and Response

If a disaster such as a major storm or an act of violence struck your community this year, would your congregation be able to restore its ministries and help its vulnerable neighbors recover?

Episcopal Relief & Development's US Disaster Program is ready to help with resources to help you prepare for and respond effectively to crises in 2016. Download them for free from our Resource Library,[**episcopalrelief.org/resourcelibrary,**](http://www.episcopalrelief.org/press-and-resources/resource-library)and use them to adopt a few of these New Year's Resolutions for 2016:

## 1. Create or update a disaster plan for your congregation

An effective parish disaster plan explores how a congregation's many physical and human assets can be mobilized to respond to the needs of vulnerable people throughout the lifecycle of disaster. Episcopal Relief & Development' *Preparedness Planning Guides* help a parish committee plan and practice an all-hazards disaster response strategy. Resources include:

[**The Comprehensive Preparedness Planning Guide For Congregations and Parishes:**](http://www.episcopalrelief.org/uploads/EducationFileModel/84/file/ComprehensiveJune2015.doc)Includes steps for inventorying, protecting and mobilizing physical and human assets; identifying vulnerable people; anticipating response activities, and testing the first steps of a response.

* [**Facilitator's Guide for the Comprehensive Planning Guide:**](http://www.episcopalrelief.org/uploads/EducationFileModel/108/file/Facilitator's%20Guide%20New%20Format.pdf) Packages the work of the comprehensive guide into four meetings, with suggested language for facilitators.
* [**Silver-Level Preparedness Planning Guide:**](http://www.episcopalrelief.org/uploads/EducationFileModel/83/file/SilverJuly2015.doc) A more abbreviated version that collects less information.
* [**Bronze-Level Preparedness Planning Guide:**](http://www.episcopalrelief.org/uploads/EducationFileModel/69/file/BronzeJuly2015.doc) Gathers only the most basic information to use after a disaster.

2. Create or update a disaster plan for your diocesan office

If a diocesan office is directly affected by a disaster, valuable records can be lost and the ability to communicate with parishes and guide response can be hampered. Diocesan staff can use Episcopal Relief & Development's [**Preparedness Planning Guide for Diocesan Offices**](http://www.episcopalrelief.org/uploads/EducationFileModel/127/file/DiocesanofficePlan1.4.docx) to protect documents, property and people, and make plans for continuing diocesan activities should the diocesan office be relocated.

## 3. Be prepared to minister to young people and adults in the first days after a disaster

Children, youth and adults who have been through a disaster experience unique emotional and spiritual needs in the first days after the crisis. Episcopal Relief & Development's

*Ministering After a Disaster* curricula provide age-specific lesson plans, activities and tips for developing church-based programming that provides spiritual and emotional support during those crucial early days. Reproducible handouts for parents and teachers are also included. Modules include:

* [**Ministering to Children After a Disaster (Grades K-5)**](http://www.episcopalrelief.org/uploads/EducationFileModel/73/file/Ministering%20to%20Children%20Grades%20k-5.fr.final.pdf?utm_source=January+Lamplight+2014&utm_campaign=January++Lamplight+2014&utm_medium=email)
* [**Ministering to Youth After a Disaster (Grades 6-8)**](http://www.episcopalrelief.org/uploads/EducationFileModel/74/file/Ministering%20to%20Children%20middle%20school.fr.final.pdf)
* [**Ministering to Teens After a Disaster (Grades 9-12)**](http://www.episcopalrelief.org/uploads/EducationFileModel/75/file/ministering%20after%20disaster%20teens.FR.final.pdf)
* [**Ministering to Adults After a Disaster**](http://www.episcopalrelief.org/uploads/EducationFileModel/133/file/Ministering%20After%20Disaster%20Adults%20final%202.pdf)

## 4. Send volunteers to help communities recover

Once responders have left the scene and those affected begin to rebuild their lives, volunteers are often essential in helping vulnerable people apply for resources, rebuild homes and establish a new normal. Use our [**Ready to Serve with Compassion**](http://www.episcopalrelief.org/uploads/EducationFileModel/123/file/ready%20to%20serve%20with%20compassion%20PDF.pdf) curriculum to prepare volunteers from your congregation to respond with understanding, empathy and sensitivity to the needs of people recovering from a disaster. This adaptable curriculum is appropriate for a teen or adult volunteer group responding to a disaster in a distant community.

## 5. Learn from other Episcopal congregations and dioceses Check out the best practices section of our [Resource Library](http://www.episcopalrelief.org/press-and-resources/resource-library?q=&category=5&topic=&perpage=25&useFullQuery=&yt1=Apply+%E2%96%BA&utm_source=January+Lamplight+2014&utm_campaign=January++Lamplight+2014&utm_medium=email) for success stories from congregations like yours. Downloadable 2-3 page handouts feature stories, tips and best practices from US Episcopal congregations and dioceses that have responded to disaster. More are added each month.

*Episcopal Relief & Development’s US Disaster Program inspires, connects and equips leaders of US dioceses in The Episcopal Church to prepare for hazards that might affect their communities, to mitigate the impact of disasters and to help vulnerable people make a full and sustained recovery.*