

Strengthening Emergency Logistical Resources

Initiative Summary Statement:

Assess emergency logistical resource needs of critical services and identify, strengthen, and maintain existing recovery and response distribution centers to streamline recovery operations after a disaster.

Initiative Description:

Objective: Establishing, strengthening, and maintaining existing recovery and distribution centers is an essential component of disaster recovery management. These centers house and distribute the necessary resources to prepare and protect the public, property, and the natural environment during and after disasters. The function of these centers can be improved through evaluating and updating existing logistics plans that seek to enhance disaster response resources and account for critical community resources. Incorporating facility hardening measures is also necessary to protect supplies during catastrophic events. Large warehouses and distribution centers should have secure perimeters, security checkpoints, alarms, and cameras. Other hardening considerations include maintaining the supply chain through safe and efficient practices that reduce errors, labor time, and increase accuracy and service. A third crucial component of resilient distribution centers is maintaining and bolstering the infrastructure by undergrounding electricity, inspecting systems regularly, and verifying that buildings are safe and reliable. Logistical planning is key to cultivating resilience by ensuring that essential resources can be accessed before, during, and after disasters.

Need: Immediately prior to and after disasters, critical resources often become scarce while demand increases for essentials. A multitude of impacted entities begin to compete for available resources to aid their communities. Existing stockpiles may be quickly depleted, requiring additional resources and supplies that can be more difficult and slower to replenish if supply chain networks are disrupted. Similarly, distribution centers may be directly impacted by a disaster or emergency event (e.g., power outages, flooding). Ensuring that distribution centers are properly prepared for the surge in demand, potential impacts to supply chain, hazard conditions, in addition to having streamlined operations in place is crucial to providing for the community during crisis. Additionally, supply stockpiles, especially at the local level, can be costly to upkeep; jurisdictions should track and replace expiring commodities, cover high storage costs, and potentially compete to hire staff. The common purpose of, and challenges associated with, maintaining these centers indicate

the region may be able to realize benefits through collaboratively implementing improvements at-scale.

Regional Approach: During catastrophic events, it is important for jurisdictions to maintain individual capacity because some supplies need to be readily accessible; however, there are opportunities to share knowledge and improve capacity between municipalities. New regional partnerships can be forged that will address the challenges of sharing resources and building efficiency. For example, an alternate approach to bolstering logistics capacity could include leveraging community partnerships with agencies and organizations that have available storage space. Existing regional networks including schools, universities, and event centers. Established partnerships with vendors that maintain supply inventories is crucial to the success of distribution centers. Currently, United Way and Collaboratory provide third party donation resources, and it could be beneficial for Lee County to establish a nonprofit for these resources or to formalize this relationship. Also, working with Volunteer Organization Active in Disasters and faith-based organizations that sustain the capacity to support logistical needs. Planning and coordinating with the Resilient Hub System as well as the Mobile Health Clinic will bolster the logistics capacity in future activations.

Impact: By integrating facility hardening into the disaster response framework, the region can improve the resilience of its critical facilities and optimize all available resources related to long-term recovery. Extensive planning is required that fosters effective coordination among all stakeholders including non-profits and faith-based organizations, streamlines logistics, provides accessible resources, integrates partners and community groups, and bolsters the availability of vital resources when the community is the most vulnerable. Regional logistics coordination may also be able to leverage additional resources acquisition, transportation, distribution, staging, and supply, creating redundancies by cultivating new community relationships.

Key Considerations:

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of the vulnerabilities and gaps for critical facilities and community resources during a disaster including a comprehensive listing of all current recovery and distribution centers.
- Determine and prioritize hardening measures for recovery and distribution centers and conduct a survey of the logistical needs of the community to develop a comprehensive plan for recovery and distribution centers that also identifies cost-effective ways to enhance resources.

- Establish partnerships within the community that will play an active role in the operation of the distribution centers and can provide insight to the current maintenance and operation procedures.
- Evaluate, plan for, and train staff on the logistics of setting up, managing, and deactivating distribution centers to promote a smooth operational flow of supplies, both inside and outside of the structure.
- Establish a 501c3 for Lee County to provide preparedness and strategic coordination with third parties around disaster donation management
- Maintain continuity plans/procedures for distribution facilities to minimize downtime and potential loss of services to the community.

Co-Sponsoring Branches:

Economic Recovery, Education & Workforce, Health & Social Services, Infrastructure, Housing, Natural Resources, and Cultural Resources

Stakeholders:

- County departmental experts on public safety and social services
- Law enforcement and first responders
- Municipal experts on public safety and social services
- Emergency Services Agencies
- Commercial Suppliers
- Community Based Organizations
- Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Florida Department of Health
- Florida Department of Transportation

Potential Funding Sources:

- United States Department of Homeland Security
- United States Department of Housing and Urban Development
- United States Department of Agriculture
- Florida Division of Emergency Management
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection