



STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES FOR SUCCESSFUL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: A TOOLKIT FOR STATE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

NASCA-NASPO STATE COLLABORATIVE

2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each level of government is impacted by the rise in occurrences of natural and human-caused disasters. Agile state government operations within emergency response can only be achieved through the collaboration of state Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) and Chief Procurement Officers (CPOs), among other critical officials in government operations. CAOs oversee the operations of state government and many direct emergency management teams and develop a detailed continuity of operations plan for each agency under their purview. CPOs direct all purchase orders, manage the state's supplier portfolio, and facilitate emergency procurement procedures so that products and services are delivered in a timely fashion for disaster relief.

The National Association of State Chief Administrators (NASCA) and the National Association of State Procurement Officials (NASPO) - two strategic partner associations - came together on a State Collaborative to assess critical communication strategies and collaborative techniques in emergency preparedness for state governments. Collectively, the State Collaborative sought to identify key stakeholders within state government operations that are integral to the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of emergency preparedness. The collaboration among CAOs and CPOs is essential to the successful implementation of emergency preparedness that ensures all stakeholders can jointly address various emergency types. Moreover, these two senior leadership groups ensure the resources needed are available and delineate a collaboration framework to deliver the goods and services of greatest need to the citizens of the state. Identifying the nuances associated with each individual state's government operating structure, delineating stakeholders responsible for action items, and establishing a routine cadence for emergency plan review are all vital within emergency preparedness. This toolkit highlights the feedback and recommendations that arose from townhall discussions focused on the communication and collaboration framework within localities and statewide enterprises. ▶▶▶

In compiling this toolkit, NASCA examined existing NASPO resources and performed an analysis of state practices for emergency response followed by selected interviews with NASCA member states to highlight their emergency preparedness learning model for their colleagues around the country. The interviews examined the current challenges with emergency response planning and the strategies implemented to effectuate change by collaborating with peer states and leveraging networks to confer upon recent disaster relief. As a result of this research and inquiry, recommendations for action include:

Communicate and collaborate with CAOs and CPOs in other states to learn from their experiences. This offers a valuable state perspective from those who have experiences similar emergencies.

Ensure quality assurance checks with suppliers and manufacturers, cross reference quality and quantity of assets and thoroughly investigate options while communicating directly to reduce the risk of fraudulent entities.

Partner with internal and external stakeholders who serve essential functions in a state government emergency response and ensure a deep understanding of the chain of command within emergency management teams.

Vet processes and procedures to safeguard state government central procurement and administrative services from challenges related to rapid pace emergency response and conduct rigorous examinations of practices.

Create deliberate tandem relationships between CAOs and CPOs working within emergency operations centers during an emergency to facilitate the best opportunity for purchasing oversight and aid in data and details necessary for post-crisis audits.

Leverage association membership to convene with CAOs and CPOs across the U.S. that can provide guidance on recently experienced emergency response to lean into their experience and resources.

Document all challenges that were experienced for each emergency as they arise. Stockpiling records for reporting provide the content necessary to create a training curriculum that will prepare CAOs and CPOs for emergency response for different disasters.

Develop back up plans and contingency contracts while in the emergency procurement process with approved suppliers who can provide assets in a timely fashion when a disaster occurs.

Utilize after-action reviews and evaluations that detail the challenges, successes and areas for improvement for any given emergency response.

Routinely engage in simulation training and table-top exercises during times when there are no emergencies and offer risk-free training exercises so participants learn new ways of addressing any type of disaster.

INTRODUCTION

Natural disasters have caused incalculable damage to human life and property historically but have especially wreaked havoc on the United States in recent years. According to the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#), the U. S. experienced 20 distinct weather and climate disasters in 2021 which marks the calendar year for second most disasters behind 2020 with 22 separate billion dollar events. Additionally, these disasters have caused at least 688 direct or indirect fatalities which is the most

\$742.1 billion
- the five-year annual
average cost of natural
disasters in the U.S.
(2017-2021).

disaster-related fatalities since 2011. Two more historical records for U.S. disaster costs are that the total cost of U.S. billion-dollar disasters over the last five years (2017-2021) reached an unprecedented \$742.1 billion total and that there was a five-year annual cost average of \$148.4 billion.

Beyond natural disasters increasing in frequency, death toll, damage and cost, the type of disasters experienced in 2021 was also much more diverse than in previous years. Parts of the deep South experienced a cold wave with a winter storm, wildfires tore through large parts of

the western U. S., and a derecho, a long lived and damaging thunderstorm, occurred in December in the Midwest. Additional disasters that occurred in 2021 included several tornado outbreaks, multiple tropical cyclones, extreme heat waves, extreme drought, hailstorms, flooding, and hurricanes.

All types of human-caused emergencies have also been increasing lately. Human-caused emergencies include three broad types: social, technological, and environmental disasters. One example of a social disaster is cybersecurity attacks. Cybersecurity attacks have increased drastically over the past twenty years. [According to a 2021 Forbes report](#), the average number of cyber-attacks and data breaches increased by 15.1 percent from the previous year. Cybercriminals are becoming increasingly technologically savvy and developing new ways to cause emergencies for governments across the U. S. State government has bolstered budget outlays for cybersecurity; yet 41 percent of executives don't think their security initiatives have kept up with digital transformation, according to a [2022 study by ThoughtLab](#).

15.1% - Increase in average
number of cyber-attacks and
data breaches from 2020 to 2021.

Civil unrest has also become more prevalent over the past three years as the public has taken to the streets to express their grievances towards their elected/appointed government officials for various reasons. As such, there are instances in which bad actors can spark violence and this creates great risk for human life and property. The civil unrest that took place from May 26 to June 8, 2020 marked the costliest multi-event catastrophe in U.S. history with over twenty states experiencing significant losses estimated at over two billion dollars according to the [World Economic Forum](#). Additional examples of social disasters include warfare, genocide, hyperinflation, terrorism, and environmental disasters including deforestation and climate change. While not a major issue in the United States, deforestation is a large concern globally. If nothing is done to reduce the current trends of deforestation, 11 of the world's most ecologically important forest landscapes will account for over 80 percent of forest loss globally by 2030, according to a 2015 report done by the [World Wildlife Fund](#).

Another human-caused disaster that can produce significant losses both physically and financially is technological disasters. Technological disasters can include industrial accidents like chemical spills, nuclear radiation, toxic waste, dam failures, transportation accidents, factory explosions, and mining accidents, according to the [Global Disaster Preparedness Center](#). ▶ ▶ ▶

With the increase in the prevalence of natural disasters and human-caused emergencies, there is a heightened need for emergency preparedness. Along with the increase in frequency, emergencies are becoming more complex. One of the best ways for states to effectively respond to these more frequent and more complex emergencies is through consistent communication and collaboration of state government officials. CAOs and CPOs can help their state governments operate and respond effectively to emergencies by working hand in hand.

This toolkit is the outcome of NASCA and NASPO working together on a State Collaborative where state teams of CAOs/CPOs met during a series of multiple town hall discussions. The recommendations synthesized from those town hall discussions were then vetted by a larger group of state officials. The toolkit examines the CAO/CPO collaboration processes and provides a checklist for emergency preparedness for CAOs and CPOs that helps frame the importance of communication and collaborative within the larger emergency preparedness process.



EMERGENCY DESCRIPTIONS

Emergencies come in all shapes, sizes, and durations. A state or locality’s response to an emergency varies depending on the duration and type of emergency. Emergencies can be short- or long-term and can be either natural or human-caused disasters. The short- and long-term emergency descriptor is focused on the length of time CAOs, and CPOs have between the onset of a natural or human-caused disaster and the last task or process associated with emergency response.

SHORT-TERM EMERGENCIES

Short-term emergencies are generally 30 to 90 days in length with the recovery process beginning immediately following the declaration of the emergency. Depending on the type, short-term emergencies can include the following people and priority items: emergency management teams, CAOs, CPOs, emergency task forces, the department of public safety, Homeland Security, highway patrol, and the office or department of emergency services. Possible priority items include:

- Mission tasks, submission of requests
- Disaster and contingency contracts
- WebEOC or other similar software systems for localities to submit requests for disaster assistance
- Emergency operations centers
- Expenditure reports that include justifications and reports of lessons learned from each agency involved in the response

EXAMPLES OF SHORT-TERM EMERGENCIES

Natural Disasters	Human-Caused Emergencies
Severe Thunderstorms	Civil Unrest
Tornadoes	Terrorism
Snow/Ice Storms	Biological/Chemical Threat
Tropical Storms	Active Shooter

Short-term emergencies tend to occur more frequently and can occur back-to-back or simultaneously. State emergency teams, including CAOs and CPOs, may need to figure how to prepare for future emergencies while managing a current disaster. There may not be “blue sky days” for a long period of time. ▶▶▶

LONG-TERM EMERGENCIES

Long-term emergency types often extend past 90 days, and relief can span for years after the original onset of the disaster. Long-term emergencies should include the same people and priority items as would be involved for short-term emergencies. In addition to the short-term emergency people and priority items, emergency preparation for long-term disasters might involve the department of health and Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs) as well as include formal requests for additional state aid for procuring emergency items. With long-term disasters, fatigue is important for CAOs and CPOs to consider when engaging in actions of the Emergency Operating Centers (EOCs) as the volume and expected timeline for procedures might overwhelm emergency management teams. Rotating specific state agents from the department of general services and the central procurement officer through emergency operations centers can mitigate the risk of burnout while also maintaining effectual disaster relief.

EXAMPLES OF LONG-TERM EMERGENCIES

Natural Disasters	Human-Caused Emergencies
Floods	Cybersecurity Attacks
Hurricanes	Epidemics
Fires	Pandemics
Earthquakes	

CAO-CPO COLLABORATION

CAOs are the governor-appointed, cabinet-level officials that oversee the operations of state government. During an emergency response these high-ranking state government officials offer guidance and oversight on specific activities related to the implementation of continuity of operation plans (COOP) and emergency operations center (EOC) activities and emergency purchase orders, among many other daily strategic implementations. CAOs leverage their communication networks to collaborate with state departments under their purview, often enterprise-wide, to delineate the communication and collaboration framework for emergency response and disaster relief to mitigate the costs of both natural disasters and human-caused emergencies. Integrating CAOs in the formation of emergency management teams, emergency operations centers, and unified command centers streamlines disaster relief efforts by using pointed activities to deliver products and services to localities that request additional assistance once their purchasing allocation is near depletion. CAOs play a vital role in facilitating the state response for emergencies and should consider working closely with their CPO and central procurement office to acquire assets and services necessary to address various emergency types.

CPOs are the executive level officers within state government that are responsible for all pertinent details regarding procurement processes for goods and services. Each state has distinct procurement processes, and there is variance in the approval process for procurement of products and services needed for the different natural disasters and human-caused emergencies. Supply chain management, supplier portfolio management, and communication with all state agencies for purchase orders fall within the purview of CPOs.

In this toolkit, CAOs and CPOs are encouraged to work in tandem to direct all emergency response efforts within state government administration. Local jurisdictions generally manage the initial emergency response efforts until they require additional assistance from state governments or even the federal government depending on the systems impacted and the scale of the natural disaster or human-caused emergency. From this, CAOs and CPOs can leverage their emergency declarations, emergency operations centers, and their central procurement offices to distribute products and services to the local jurisdiction in need of additional assistance to address a natural disaster or human-caused emergency.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMPONENTS

Disaster relief can be local or statewide in response to short- or longer-term events. To accurately prepare for and adequately address these events, CAOs and CPOs must have open lines of communication, plans in place to address events, and purposefully collaborate on necessary actions to protect citizens of the state and ensure continuity of government operations. The checklist provided below highlights key components critical to emergency response for CAOs and CPOs as they develop, revise, and execute emergency preparedness processes.

COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION FRAMEWORK

Knowledge of the organizational structure and the rules for emergency management is critical so that state governments can perform effectively in tandem with local jurisdictions. A communication and collaboration framework creates awareness and understanding of who is responsible for which tasks at every stage of an emergency. That shared awareness and understanding is vital to the timely delivery of products and services that will minimize the loss of human life and damage to property. Communication and collaboration frameworks should be established, ideally, before a disaster strikes and developed with input from every department involved. Each natural disaster and human-caused emergency is unique in its nature, size, and the systems that are impacted by the emergency. As such, the emergency preparedness addressing each emergency type must be strategically sound to ensure the correct key stakeholders are in place. Key stakeholders within state government emergency management include but are not limited to:

- CAOs
- CPOs
- Chief Information Officers (CIOs)
- Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs)
- Emergency Management Teams
- Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Management
- Department of Public Safety

The emergency plans that are part of the communication and collaboration framework have specific actionable items for each of the key stakeholders that advise emergency response teams with the information required to address each disaster as they arise. After an event has occurred, an established communication and collaboration framework encourages the sharing of after action or evaluation reports that include lessons learned from each agency involved in that emergency's response.

CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLANS

Natural disasters and human-caused emergencies can damage systems that are critical to state and local government operations. It is essential for states to have a continuity of operation plan (COOP) in place before emergencies occur to alleviate the damage that can occur. A COOP should identify a baseline of preparedness for a full range of potential emergencies to establish a sustainable capability to perform essential functions during any emergency or other situation that disrupts normal operation. Each state is unique in how a COOP is created and reviewed, but most, if not all states have a COOP in place. These COOPs identify the chain of command for emergency response teams to follow and define specific action items for different emergency types.

According to the [Florida Division of Emergency Management](#), a COOP should include the following elements:

- Identification of essential functions, programs, and personnel
- Procedures to implement the plan and personnel notification and accountability
- Delegation of authority and lines of succession
- Identification of alternative facilities and related infrastructure, including those for communications
- Identification and protection of vital records and databases
- Provisions regarding the availability of, and distribution plans for, personal protection equipment
- Schedules and procedures for periodic tests, training, and exercises

The **Maryland** Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) and the Department of General Services (DGS) have developed templates where they have built continuity of operations plans. MDEM works to guarantee it is coordinated in all efforts for emergency response and convenes annually in October to review emergency preparedness plans. Maryland has implemented an integrated preparedness strategy by which the MDEM disseminates templates to all the departments regarding an array of emergencies. Leveraging collaboration and functional expertise in different fields ensures there are no disjointed emergency plans. Maryland maintains coordination with each of the state departments and prepares by training individuals through tabletop exercises to execute emergency plans in the event of an emergency.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTERS

Emergency operations centers (EOCs) function as the central hub for state and local government executives during statewide emergency responses for natural disasters and human-caused emergencies. EOCs provide a central intelligence arena for decision makers and response team personnel to gather critical information, coordinate response activities, and manage personnel as the emergency situation dictates. The EOC should be centrally positioned in a safe location with effective technology and systems that allows for reliable communication with multiagency staff members and response teams. The facilities should be built to withstand the common disaster types for that area, such as including impact-resistant windows in areas that frequently experience hurricanes. Through EOCs, CAOs and emergency management teams share vital information and directives from the governor and providing real-time requests for assistance for products and services from local jurisdictions. Additionally, emergency purchase requests from local jurisdictions are shared with the emergency response teams at EOCs. Central procurement is positioned within the EOC, and through EOCs, CPOs coordinate all purchasing orders for products and services for emergency response. ▶▶▶

Most emergencies that the State of **Florida** experiences are short-term, repetitive, frequent, and sometimes overlapping. Pivoting from the current emergency to the next oncoming emergency is common. To provide effective support for each emergency, the Governor's office has a Division of Emergency Management that plans for and responds to both natural and human-caused disasters. The division maintains a primary Emergency Operations Center (EOC) that serves as the communications and command center for reporting emergencies and coordinating state response activities. The EOC was built to withstand 200 mile per hour winds and includes back-up water, electrical, and communication systems. The division also operates the State Warning Point, a state emergency communications center staffed 24 hours each day that is in constant communication with Florida's 67 County Warning Points and emergency management staff, nuclear power plants, the State Emergency Response Team members, federal partners, and the Governor's Office.

CONTINGENCY CONTRACTS

States that experience frequent emergency declarations should establish contingency contracts that are triggered automatically once a state emergency is declared. Contingency contracts streamline the process for emergency procurement with a pre-established portfolio of suppliers that have been vetted to provide products and services that are relevant to a particular emergency response. Each state is unique in their emergency declaration and the procurement rules that govern the activities of emergency operations centers. States that implement contingency contracts for emergency response and disaster relief experience natural disasters routinely, so the standard procurement rules may not be required for specific purchasing orders.

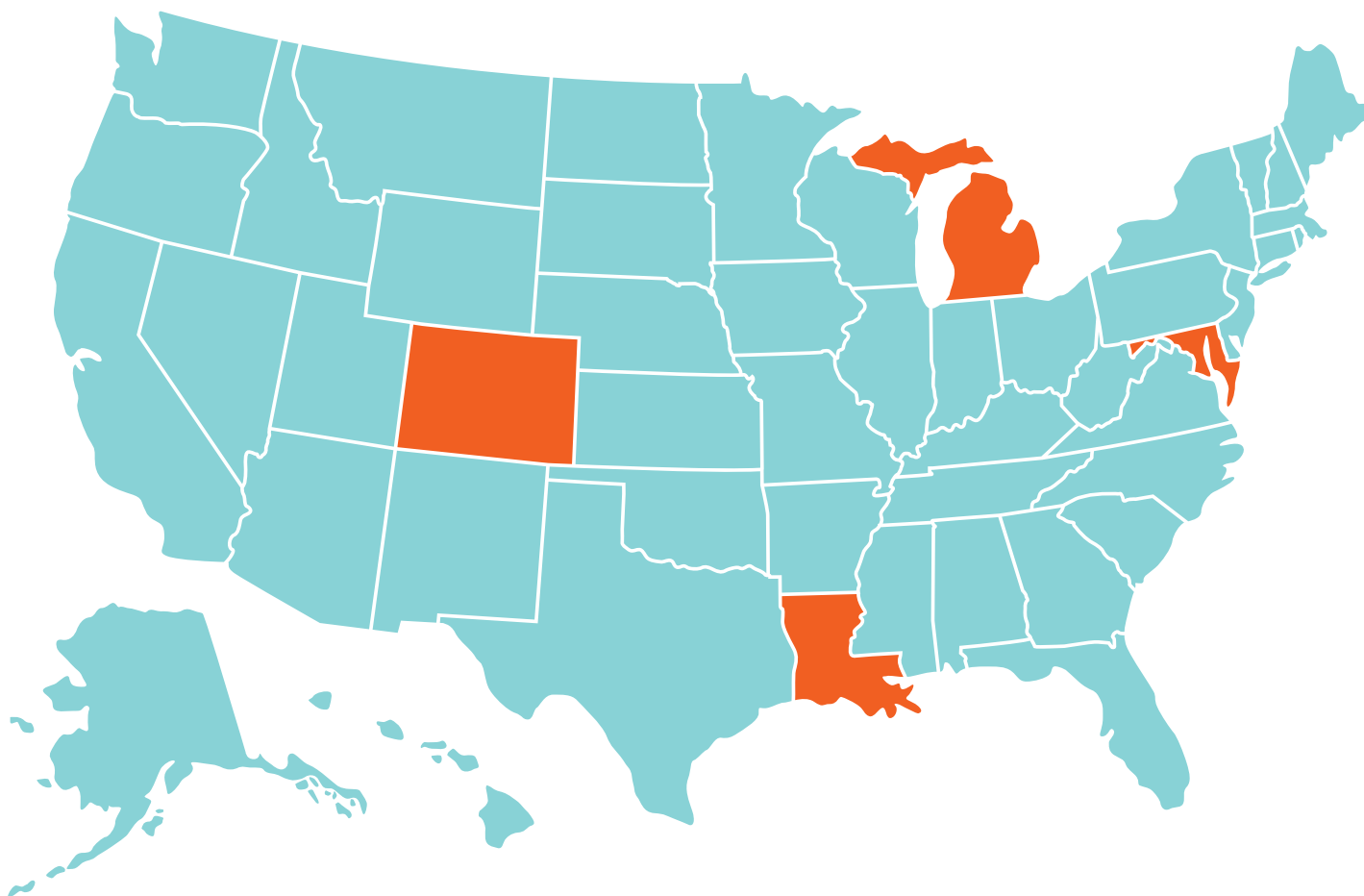
Louisiana has consolidated procurement and has developed both disaster contracts and contingency contracts that expand each year parallel to the frequency of disasters. During disasters, the governor issues an emergency proclamation to allow emergency procurement procedures. Through the State EOC resource request process, the state emergency management agency receives resource requests from localities that have exhausted all their resources, and then work with their central procurement office to contract for and provide those resources. The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) provides annual training in addition to one-on-one training as requested for the localities. Consistent training with local governments enabled the execution of approximately 500 different field contracts valued at over \$500 million dollars.

PROCUREMENT

Central procurement is the state department that manages all purchase orders, supplier portfolios, and defines rules for procurement during emergency response. CPOs positioned in EOCs provide real-time feedback and facilitation of mission tasks associated with state government emergency declaration. CPOs and central procurement staff should work directly with accounting/finance officials within an EOC to provide real-time justification for purchase orders as they will require documentation for reimbursement of FEMA grants that will offset a portion of the cost for disaster relief. CPOs are essential to the state response of natural disasters and human-caused emergencies and their collaboration with CAOs presents the opportunity to perform effective emergency response in a coordinated effort within EOCs.

STATE VIGNETTES

Four states were interviewed to gather information around state continuity of operations plans and emergency preparedness. Each state is unique in their organizational structure and the communication and collaboration framework varies based upon which departments are responsible for which specific activities within emergency response. The process for purchasing approvals is also distinct in each state. The diversity in emergency types and length require unique emergency response activities no matter which state is responding; yet several states have identified similar strategies for emergency response. This shows that each state can take a piece of helpful information away from the four state vignettes presented.



LOUISIANA ▷

MARYLAND ▷

COLORADO ▷

MICHIGAN ▷

LOUISIANA

The CAO of Louisiana is directly involved within emergency declaration and disaster relief as the mediator between the governor and the state agencies responsible for emergency response. The centralized organizational structure of their emergency operations center allows the CAO the ability to hear the urgency of requests from state and local agencies in real time with a direct line to the governor to facilitate an emergency declaration. Once an emergency is declared by the governor, which includes a suspension of the standard procurement processes, the CPO is able to conduct emergency procurement at a rapid pace to address any natural disasters or human-caused emergencies.

Louisiana experiences natural disaster declarations on a frequent basis each year during hurricane season, occurring from June 1 through November 30. During the fiscal year 2020-2021, Louisiana experienced 13 different state disaster declarations, 11 of which were also declared as federal disasters. Each individual agency has their own COOP for whenever there are system outages. Natural disasters occur so frequently in Louisiana that there is no ideal “blue sky day” for teams to evaluate and train for future disasters. Table-top exercises and simulation training are often conducted during a disaster. Despite the frequency of disasters, the Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness runs a progressive training exercise series with at least one full-scale event held annually.

The CAO and CPO - along with the emergency management department - operate more effectively when they are together in one setting, either in person at the emergency operations center or virtually in a unified command center during times of social distancing, both working within a unified command structure. Louisiana also receives and provides mutual aid to the neighboring states in the gulf coast of Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida and others, and they lean on those peers to share their lessons learned from disaster relief, best practices for emergency response, and resources for emergency response.

I found that the COVID experience was particularly challenging for us. During the height of COVID, there was a group of eight to ten state agency representatives that operated out of the emergency operations center in-person. We made sure to be very intentional with wearing masks and social distancing in a large room, but remarkably none of us got covid. Hurricanes didn’t pay attention to whether COVID was here or not. We had a job to do and that was to help the people of Louisiana during hurricane season despite COVID.

*~ Jay Dardenne, Commissioner
Louisiana Division of Administration*

Having the EOC working closely with the office of state procurement is critical to emergency response and disaster relief. These guys trust me, and I value their input for emergency management. Central procurement has a hand in many different agencies in the enterprise-wide operation. So many agencies are timid of central procurement because of the rules and regulations around the procurement processes. Building trust and establishing relationships is important to communicate effectively.

*~ Christina Dayries, Deputy Director/Chief of Staff
Louisiana Governor’s Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness*

MARYLAND

The Maryland Department of General Services (DGS) provides Maryland residents, organizations, and emergency management partners with expert information, programmatic activities, and leadership in the delivery of financial, technical, and physical resources. The Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) is the designated source of official risk reduction and consequence management information. The CAO and DGS provide resources and access to resources that local subdivisions may need in the event of an emergency.

The eMaryland Marketplace Advantage (eMMA) maintains statewide contracts, as well as companies and organizations that are under contract and respond on an as-needed basis. eMMA is a one-stop shop for all state of Maryland procurement staff. Local jurisdictions are generally responsible for immediate disaster response, and they are equipped with the knowledge and resources necessary to address various emergency types that include natural disasters and human made emergencies as well. Additionally, MDEM serves as the liaison between local jurisdictions and federal assistance for emergency events that have far-reaching impacts within Maryland.

Each Maryland department has a \$50,000 dollar purchasing limit authorization. Purchase orders that exceed this dollar amount must be shared with the Chief Procurement Officer (CPO) to authorize purchasing any products or services that will be shared with localities in their emergency response efforts. The organizational structure is designed so that the CPO handles all executive services within DGS.

CAO and CPO-collaboration is at work through the provision of guidance and resources within their respective networks, which demonstrates the necessity of the collaboration to provide disaster relief to local jurisdictions within and outside their state borders.

The State of Maryland is an active member of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) through MDEM to share and receive mutual aid with states that are experiencing natural disasters. Most recently, Maryland sent 15 people to Jackson, Mississippi to assist in the water system infrastructure failure that caused a seven-week boil-water notice to residents after heavy rains caused flooding.

Our plans understand the same language. We're speaking the same language, and it keeps everybody coordinated. While we took the big template continuity of operations plan, I made it as general as possible so that it covered every department and this is basically the orders of succession for each department.

*~ Jennifer Edwards
Director for DGS EM Office*

Before 2020, our procurement department was not actively engaging with other procurement arms across the nation. So, 2020 helped realign the perspective to share types of procurement, leasing, and best practices in any joint procurements. We would normally rely on an intergovernmental plan that could have already been authored or was asking for active participation from states.

*~ Ellington Churchill
Secretary for the Department of General Services in Maryland*

COLORADO

The State of Colorado maintains a decentralized, risk-based procurement process. Three state agencies are involved in emergency procurements:

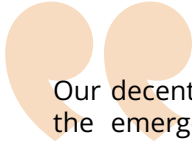
- The Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM), which is centrally responsible for the state's emergency response
- The Department of Public Safety, which has administration oversight over DHSEM
- Office of the State Controller in the Department of Personnel and Administration, which is responsible for state accounting and procurement rules

Colorado is unique in that their procurement rules do not require the governor to declare an emergency to initiate emergency procurement rules. Colorado procurement rules require market competition at \$50,000 and above unless the state procurement official declares an emergency based on emergency conditions. Emergency conditions are "...a threat to public health, welfare, or safety such as may arise by reason of floods, epidemics, riots, equipment failures, or such other reason as may be identified by the using agency and approved by the procurement official or his or her designee (see Colorado State Procurement Rule R-24-103-206)..."

The Colorado emergency procurement process starts with DHSEM notifying the Department of Public Safety procurement official of an emergency condition and an emergency procurement request. These sorts of requests often originate from local jurisdictions to provide products and services to respond to specific emergencies. The Department of Public Safety procurement official approves these verbally or by a quick email as "emergency procurements" and authorizes the DHSEM to proceed with the necessary expenditures.

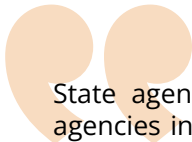
It is important to note that while a governor's emergency declaration certainly justifies an emergency procurement, the State may still seek to conduct market competition solicitations in certain circumstances. Governor emergency declarations can last years, which provides time to conduct a public solicitation for goods and services. Also, Colorado now conducts proactive solicitations, such as for medical staffing services and PPE, to be better prepared for emergencies.

The State of Colorado maintains a disaster emergency fund that is used to pay for costs of the State's emergency response, including emergency procurements and National Guard pay. This fund is automatically replenished every year in order to ensure that the State has funds for emergencies. One of the lessons learned from past emergency responses came when the State of Colorado deployed National Guard troops for wildfires and other emergencies. Troops were not always paid in a timely manner. Therefore, the State conducted a process improvement project that simplified the disaster emergency fund spending approval process and ensured troop deployment pay always makes it to the next available payment cycle.



Our decentralized system allows agencies to respond quickly. It places the emergency procurement approval in the hands of the agency procurement officer. This ensures compliance with state rules while still meeting the business need for efficient and effective decision making.

~ Tobin Follenweider, Deputy Director
Colorado Department of Personnel & Administration



State agencies need to think about the whole process. Often state agencies involved in approvals only consider their own part. A process improvement project gets everyone in the room to solve the problem.

~ Tobin Follenweider, Deputy Director
Colorado Department of Personnel & Administration

MICHIGAN


Most emergencies within the state of Michigan are individual in nature and they are self-contained. Normally, small emergencies such as flooding, water issues with algae blooming, and forest fires are the most common emergency types that occur in Michigan. Emergencies in Michigan are generally small in nature and when they are small in nature the CPO provides a consultant role.

The emergency management team will reach out and notify the CPO of needs in a specific local jurisdiction with specific asks on purchasing and request guidance on which contracts to use. The COVID-19 pandemic was a much larger, longer, and more complex emergency, so central procurement was involved in the direct emergency procurement process. Post-COVID-19 response, the central procurement team developed a matrix stating what the central procurement role will be depending on the size and type of emergency.

For most emergencies, the CAO has a very small role for most emergency responses. Commonly, the role of the CAO is to look to the CPO and the emergency management partners to define which products and services are needed for emergency response and provide additional support when necessary. During the pandemic, the CAO led the charge for emergency task force teams, helping drive the direction of where procurement was going and helping to remove barriers for Michigan. The CAO ensured they had a very hands-on approach and was active in supporting central procurement.

Every department within each area of the enterprise-wide operation is required to have a COOP. The Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget (DTMB) reviews their COOPs on an annual basis and makes all necessary adjustments. Two years prior to COVID-19, central procurement tested their COOPs offsite and moved the operation to laptops and cellphones. When the pandemic hit and everyone was sent home, the central procurement team was well prepared to continue operations remotely. DTMB and the state of Michigan laid the additional groundwork to have those remote work plans in place and acted upon them immediately so the transition to remote work and working from home was seamless.

Despite still being finalized, the after-action evaluation report for the COVID-19 emergency response includes major impacts on how the state will address emergencies in the future. Specifically, Michigan made changes to the emergency policies that clarified specific items to ensure people are aware of roles and responsibilities.



Developing those relationships early is critical so that when you do get into a challenging situation, you've already built that trust and that relationship to rely on each other for emergency response.

*~ Jared Ambrosier, Chief Procurement Officer
Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Emergency preparedness checklists, COOPs, and after-action evaluations are all examples of emergency preparedness in action. CAOs and CPOs implementing emergency management teams, collaborating with peer states, and leveraging appropriate associations are all indicative of the strategies necessary to address both natural and human-caused disasters. The **NASCA – NASPO Emergency Preparedness** toolkit provides state government officials that are looking to improve their emergency response operations, a blueprint to increase awareness on the vast array of emergency types, championing agile state government operations. Through townhall discussions and interviews, CAO and CPO experts provided key insights that would be helpful for their colleagues that are seeking guidance on emergency response initiatives. Recommendations regarding emergency preparedness include:

Communicate and collaborate with CAOs and CPOs in other states to learn from their experiences. This offers a valuable state perspective from those who have experiences similar emergencies. Convening with other states on their experience with the suppliers and manufacturers they use to provide valuable resources that are required for specific emergency types is helpful to conduct quality assurance checks with reputable state officials that will confirm if they have received the items procured from specific suppliers in a timely manner.

Ensure quality assurance checks with suppliers and manufacturers, cross reference quality and quantity of assets, and thoroughly investigate options while communicating directly to reduce the risk of fraudulent entities. One state encountered a supplier who claimed to have a stockpile of PPE assets, but this supplier ultimately shared misleading information and images in an attempt to defraud their procurement processes. States should cross reference the quantity of assets available, investigate the images/videos from supplier warehouses, and communicate directly with suppliers to avoid dealings with fraudulent suppliers.

Partner with internal and external stakeholders who serve essential functions in a state government emergency response and ensure a deep understanding of the chain of command within emergency management teams. Knowledge of the communication and collaboration framework and understanding the chain of command provides emergency management teams with key stakeholders who are responsible for emergency response within their states.

Vet processes and procedures to safeguard state government central procurement and administrative services from challenges related to rapid pace emergency response and conduct rigorous examinations of practices. States have indicated their collaboration with the department of commerce, department of labor, and homeland security department to conduct rigorous vetting processes for suppliers to confirm they have the assets required for emergency responses, discussing the distinction between short-term and long-term emergencies.

Create deliberate tandem relationships between CAOs and CPOs working within emergency operations centers during an emergency to facilitate the best opportunity for purchasing oversight and aide in data and details necessary for post-crisis audits. Working relationships between these two groups ensures that all assets required for an emergency response are acquired, while additionally providing justifying information that will be necessary for audits that will be requested once an emergency has subsided.



Leverage association membership to convene with CAOs and CPOs across the U.S. that can provide guidance on a recently experienced emergency response to lean into their experience and resources. Some examples of appropriate associations can include National Association of State Chief Administrators ([NASCA](#)), National Association of State Procurement Officers ([NASPO](#)), and National Emergency Management Association ([NEMA](#)). Responding to an emergency alone can feel overwhelming, but the response can feel more endurable with support, expertise and resources from others that have experience.

Document all challenges that were experienced for each emergency as they arise. Compiling records for reporting provides the content necessary to create a training curriculum that will prepare CAOs and CPOs for emergency response for different disasters. Additionally, the documentation collected during emergency procurement processes will assist in the rigorous audit requests to provide justification for purchase orders, selection of suppliers, and indication of authorization.

Develop back up plans and contingency contracts while in the emergency procurement process with approved suppliers who can provide assets in a timely fashion when a disaster occurs. Localities submit requests to the state and to FEMA to assist with procurement of resources in order to address any emergency type. Being certain of several suppliers that can provide the assets a locality requires and the sources of funding available is critical when a disaster occurs.

Utilize after-action reviews and evaluations that detail the challenges, successes, and areas for improvement for any given emergency response. States have contracted consultants to conduct these evaluations to extrapolate lessons learned from emergency response. Internal evaluations are also helpful to provide insights to emergency management teams to become more effective with communication and collaboration whenever a disaster arises.

Routinely engage in simulation training and table-top exercises during times when there are no emergencies and offer risk-free training exercises, so participants learn new ways of addressing any type of disaster. These risk-free training exercises allow participants to innovate new ways of addressing several emergency types and educate emergency management teams on the chain of command.

CONCLUSION

The cost of disaster relief for both natural disasters and human-caused emergencies has increased significantly within the last five years. According to the [National Centers for Environmental Information](#), weather and climate disasters cost the United States \$788.4 billion in the last five years (2017-2021) or \$157.7 billion per year. In 2022 alone, there have been 15 natural disasters with losses exceeding \$1 billion each. Minimization of the loss of human life and property damage is central to the efforts within emergency preparedness planning for state governments to distribute products and services to the local jurisdictions at every stage of an emergency. It is impossible to forecast exactly when and where a natural disaster or human-caused emergency will arise. Yet, consistent communication and collaboration between CAOs and CPOs builds a network of trust that can strengthen a state's emergency preparedness. Additionally, CAOs continually training their state departments during "blue sky days" is critical to simulate the activities associated with emergency response.

Emergency preparedness training should include COOP plans, table-top exercises, and after-action evaluations. These training tools are each vital for CAOs to enforce for emergency preparedness. CAOs should work with CPOs to train state departments and agencies on procurement rules, the chain of command, and communication framework. The evaluation of individual emergency response creates the opportunity for CAOs to define areas of advancement and improvement within their state emergency response plans. Another tool that can help prepare for emergencies that occur frequently are contingency contracts. CAOs and CPOs should work together to establish these contracts where appropriate.

Leveraging mutual aid, association membership, and networks can also be beneficial for CAOs and CPOs in their efforts to address natural disasters and human-caused emergencies. Several states shared that they experienced weather-related emergencies that were not customary to their geographic region, and they did not have the contracts in place to respond immediately. Sharing best practices, lessons learned, and resources with other states demonstrates the humanity to take care of our neighbors in need. Several states have disclosed specific incidents in which they provided mutual aid to states that are experiencing natural disasters. Strong and consistent community and collaboration among these state executives ensures that the best practices are implemented to address the needs of state residents for emergency response and disaster relief.

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About NASCA

Founded in 1976, the National Association of State Chief Administrators (NASCA), is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 association representing chief administrative officers (CAOs)—public officials in charge of departments that provide support services such as human resources, information technology, procurement, risk management and general administrative services to other state agencies. NASCA provides a forum for CAOs to exchange information and learn new ideas from each other and private sector partners. NASCA engages states in transforming government operations through the power of shared knowledge, operational excellence and thought leadership. More information at www.nasca.org.



About NASPO

Founded in 1947, NASPO is a non-profit association dedicated to advancing public procurement through leadership, excellence, and integrity. It is made up of the directors of the central purchasing offices in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the territories of the United States. With 75 years of experience, NASPO helps its members achieve success as public procurement leaders through promotion of best practices, education, professional development, research, and innovative procurement strategies. For more information, visit us at naspo.org.

APPENDIX

ASSOCIATION RESOURCES

NASCA

[NASCA TV Presents: Emergency Preparedness Webinar](#)

Rapid Response to Restored Government Operations Series

NASPO

[Procurement Tabletop Exercise: 'Playbook' and Recommendations for Emergency Response](#)

[Emergency Preparedness Guide](#)

[Emergency Preparedness Guide: Case Study](#)

[Emergency Preparedness Guide: Reading List](#)

[Assessing State PPE Procurement During COVID-19: A Research Report](#)

NEMA

[Role of Emergency Management in Public Health Emergencies](#)

[Addressing State Emergency and Disaster Authorities](#)

