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Emergency Response Activation Instructional Handbook for Fundraising Organizations

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this document is to provide instructions and recommendations on how nonprofit, fundraising organizations can effectively mobilize resources in preparation for and during long-term emergency response and recovery. There are four key phases to these efforts:

1. **Preparedness:** Ensuring your organization is ready to respond in an emergency.
2. **Activation:** Transitioning your organization into emergency response operation quickly and smoothly.
3. **In-progress:** Continuing resource mobilization through institutional and individual donors.
4. **Close-out:** Identifying lessons learned and creating an after-action report.

PHASE 1: PREPAREDNESS

Ensuring that your organization is ready to respond in an emergency.

- Create an "Incident Action Plan" that includes an internal business continuity plan and an external emergency response plan (with plans for staffing, communications and funding mechanisms).
- Prepare and provide supplemental staff training to those asked to perform additional roles.
- Create a set of templates and boilerplate documents to allow for quick resource mobilization.
- Ensure technological platforms are set up to maintain unified communications between staff.
- It is recommended to have an emergency response expert on staff or on call.

PHASE 2: ACTIVATION

Transitioning your organization into emergency response operation quickly and smoothly.

- Perform situational assessments to understand the organization's position in the response.
- Create a cross-departmental emergency response task force and activate related key staff positions.
- Review after-action reports and results of past emergency responses within your organization to brief on the lessons learned and potential areas of improvement.
- Ensure that funding mechanisms are prepared to take in opportunities for emergency response.
- Determine your solicitation strategy and begin communication with prospective donors.

PHASE 3: IN-PROGRESS

Continuing resource mobilization through institutional and individual donors.

- Conduct regular debriefings with response team to discuss rate-limiting steps and accelerators.
- Adjust key staff positions as needed.
- Mobilize and develop relationships with key private, corporate and philanthropic partners to secure financial and in-kind opportunities.
- Explore giving opportunities in areas such as cause marketing, crowdfunding, matching gifts, workplace giving, challenge grants and government funding.
- Regularly communicate impact through newsletters, social media, etc.

PHASE 4: CLOSE-OUT

Identifying lessons learned and creating an after-action report.

- Ensure there are designated staffing roles for the completion of final reports and deliverables.

- All contacts should also be recorded in your donor database.
- Conduct internal debrief meeting(s) to include all departments engaged in response to discuss lessons learned.