

# Disaster Planning Tools for GPD Grantees

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Password: Homeless1!

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**GPD National Office Webinar**  
**July 10, 2024**



## Veterans Emergency Management Evaluation Center (VEMEC)

- Research and evaluation center within the VA
- Works to apply the evidence base in emergency management to help VA implement best practices, strengthen its capacities, and bolster its ability to care for our Nation's Veterans during and after disasters.

# VA GPD Disaster Plan Requirement (2014 Handbook)

The VA GPD Inspection Handbook (#27) requires: “a **written disaster plan encompassing natural and human caused disasters coordinated with local emergency management entity**”.

But there are many obstacles to disaster planning:

- Not enough staff time, busy, overwhelming staff demands
- Resource shortages, lack funding for planning
- Competing priorities
- Lack of concrete guidance, information not tailored to non-profits’ needs\*

\*2019 GPD grantee study

**We created a tool to help!**

(5) **Disaster Plan.** GPD regulations include a requirement that GPD-funded projects have a written disaster plan that has been coordinated with the emergency management entity responsible for the locality in which the project resides. The plan encompasses natural and manmade disasters. *NOTE: It is not the intent of this regulation to require a certification from a local emergency management entity rather that GPD-funded projects access and utilize information from local emergency management to develop such plans (i.e., hurricane evacuation zones, disaster preparedness).*

(a) Disaster Plans for GPD-funded Projects in General. GPD projects have a variety of program designs resulting in a variety of housing settings, staffing or service supports, and Veteran living situations. These range from congregate living settings with the GPD-funded program staff on site, to Veterans residing in an apartment while receiving supportive services with no staff onsite. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that there are procedures that promote safety during emergency situations. The plan must prepare GPD staff and Veterans as to how to respond during a disaster. The review of the plan should take into consideration the setting of the program (i.e., apartment with supportive services versus congregate site with program staff on site). *NOTE: GPD-funded programs should be encouraged to consult with local emergency management organizations within their community as a resource for planning purposes.*

(b) Community-based Programs with the Veteran Living in Housing in Which no Staff is on Site. The disaster plan should document how the GPD-funded program educates Veterans as to how to respond during a disaster, including emergency contact numbers for the Veteran with local emergency responders and contact procedures with GPD-funded program staff.

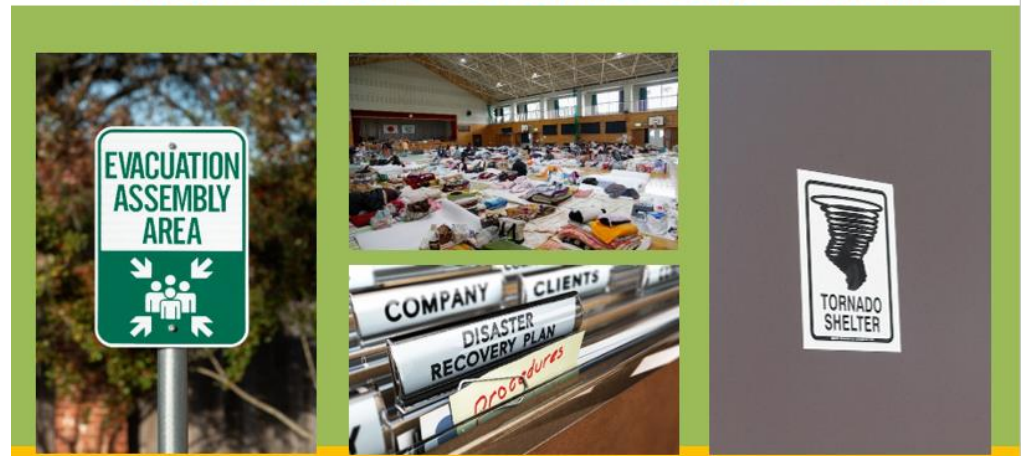
(c) GPD-funded Programs that have Facility-based Programming and Staff. The disaster plan should include planned responses to various types of disasters (i.e. hurricane, earthquake, and power outages) and evacuation procedures (if required) for Veterans and staff, procedures to communicate with GPD-funded program leadership. The process should also include a communication procedure with the local VA medical facility to provide status updates and/or to request assistance with coordinating Veteran placement if needed.

# VA GPD Organizational Disaster Plan Workbook

- Development began in 2019
- Offers guidance to help GPD homeless service providers create disaster plans for the most likely emergencies and make sure existing plans include all required elements to be more fully compliant.
- Provides instructions, suggestions, and templates for organizations to create disaster plans.

## VA GRANT AND PER DIEM ORGANIZATIONAL DISASTER PLANS

WORKBOOK AND TEMPLATES FOR HOMELESS SERVICE PROVIDERS



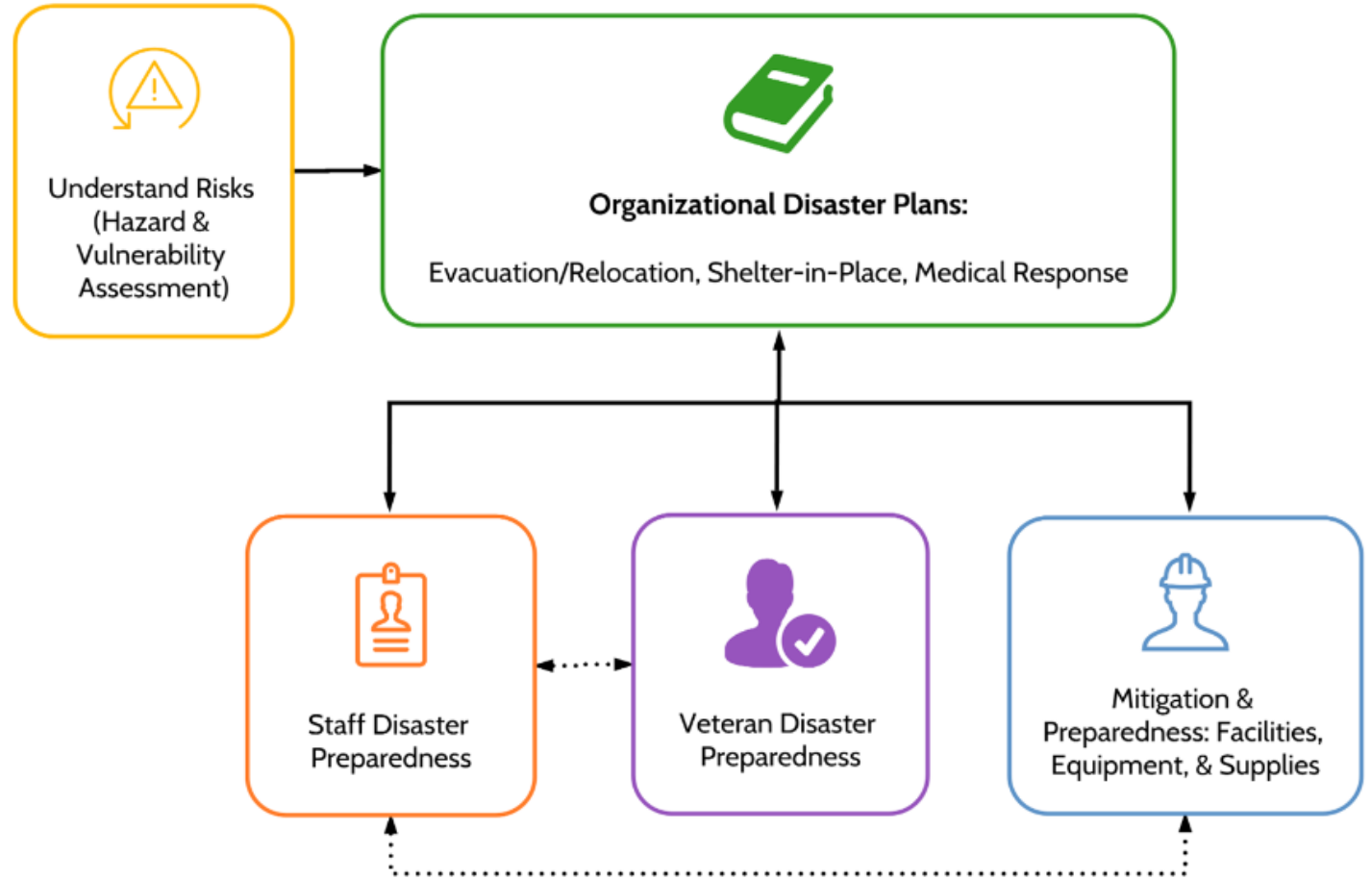
# The Workbook's Format

- The Workbook is divided into **five** sections, each including a different disaster planning activity.
- Each section includes instructions for completing its respective Disaster Plan Templates.
- GPD organizations compile the individual Template files into a single document- this can become their Organizational Disaster Plan.
- There are also Annexes that include example template content and additional resources with more information.

Sections of the Workbook	Corresponding GPD Requirement / Why It's Important	Components
Introduction / Main Page		
<b>Section 1: Understand Risks</b>	<p>The GPD Inspection Handbook requires a risk assessment: <b>Chief of VA Police Service or designee has coordinated with the organization to conduct a comprehensive risk assessment of the project. Organization adequately addresses safety and security concerns based on location, population(s) served, and facility structure</b> (<i>VA GPD Inspection Checklist #59 &amp; 66</i>).</p>	<p>Workbook Instructions            Templates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hazard Vulnerability Analysis (HVA)</li> </ul>
<b>Section 2: Organization Disaster Plans</b>	<p>GPDs must have a written disaster plan that has been coordinated with the emergency management entity responsible for the locality in which the project resides. The disaster plan should <b>include planned responses to various types of disasters (i.e., hurricane, earthquake, and power outages) and evacuation procedures.</b></p>	<p>Workbook Instructions            Templates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evacuation &amp; Relocation Plan</li> <li>• Shelter-in-Place Plan</li> <li>• Emergency Medical Response Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Section 3: Disaster Preparedness for GPD Staff</b>	<p><b>The plan must prepare GPD staff as to how to respond during a disaster.</b> The disaster plan should include procedures to <b>communicate with GPD-funded program leadership. The process should also include a communication procedure with the local VA medical facility to provide status updates and/or to request assistance with coordinating Veteran placement if needed.</b></p>	<p>Workbook Instructions            Templates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personnel Emergency Contact &amp; Availability</li> <li>• Staff &amp; Volunteer Roster</li> <li>• Emergency Contact List</li> <li>• Emergency Communication Policies</li> <li>• Emergency Communication Call-Tree</li> <li>• Emergency Communication Plan</li> <li>• Disaster Preparedness Training List</li> <li>• Calendar for Disaster Preparedness Training and Maintenance</li> </ul>

Sections of the Workbook	Corresponding GPD Requirement / Why It's Important	Components
<p><b>Section 4: Disaster Preparedness for Veteran Participants</b></p>	<p>The plan must <b>prepare Veterans as to how to respond during a disaster</b>. The disaster plan should document how the GPD-funded <b>program educates Veterans as to how to respond during a disaster, including emergency contact numbers for the Veteran with local emergency responders and contact procedures with GPD-funded program staff</b>. The disaster plan should <b>include planned responses to various types of disasters (i.e. hurricane, earthquake, and power outages) and evacuation procedures for Veterans</b>.</p>	<p>Workbook Instructions            Templates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disaster Plan for GPD Participants handout</li> </ul>
<p><b>Section 5: Mitigation &amp; Preparedness: Facilities, Equipment &amp; Supplies</b></p>	<p>While the GPD Disaster Plan Requirement does not explicitly state that organizations must complete disaster mitigation actions for property or have disaster supplies, several of the preparedness activities included in this section are requirements in the VA GPD Inspection handbook.</p>	<p>Workbook Instructions            Templates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Property &amp; Equipment Inventory</li> <li>Mitigation/Preparedness Tracking</li> <li>Supplies Inventory</li> <li>Preparedness Budget Proposal</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disaster Plan Annexes</b></p>	<p>Annex 1: Sample content for drafting sections 2-3            Annex 2: Additional resources (websites) for drafting sections 1-5            Annex 3: Optional additional resources for disaster planning, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finding Others to Help You</li> <li>Psychological Wellness for Staff and Participants</li> <li>Introducing Preparedness to Employees: The Launch Meeting</li> <li>Practicing Disaster Response: The Tabletop Exercise</li> </ul>	

# How the Sections Connect





# Feedback & Training on Workbook

- Feedback obtained from 30 reviewers
  - 2022-2023
  - 10 GPD grantee staff representing 8 GPD grantee organizations
  - 20 VA GPD & VAMC/VISN Homeless Program staff (including 15 GPD Liaisons)
  - VA San Francisco, VA Connecticut, VA Providence, Wyoming VA, Columbia VA, Ralph H. Johnson VA, and VISN 2 (New York/New Jersey VA Healthcare Network)
- Developed and piloted 2 training sessions with FEMA Region 2
  - Hazard & Vulnerability Assessment Webinar
    - 120 virtual attendees- Oct 2022
  - Emergency Response Plan Training with FEMA & VISN 2
    - 65 in-person attendees- Newark, NJ- August 2023



# VA GPD Organizational Disaster Plan Website

- Feedback from VAMC Homeless Program staff and GPD grantees
  - Wanted something more interactive
  - Disliked scrolling back and forth in the large Word document
  - 508 compliant
- Developed by VHA Homeless Programs Office and Aptive Resources
- Launched June 25, 2024

<https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/GPD/VA-GPD-Organizational-Disaster-Plans-Introduction.asp>

VA » VA Homeless Programs » VA GPD Organizational Disaster Plans

## VA Homeless Programs

### VA GPD Organizational Disaster Plans

[Link to Section 1](#)

Created by [the Veterans Emergency Management Evaluation Center \(VEMEC\)](#), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

[View Authors and Acknowledgements](#)

As a VA Grant and Per Diem (GPD) funded provider, your role of caring for our nation's Veterans is vital to the lives of the individuals you serve. The VA GPD program also cares about your organization's success and wants to make sure you can safely care for Veterans during disasters and emergencies. The GPD Inspection Handbook (#27) requires **"a written disaster plan encompassing natural and human caused disasters coordinated with local emergency management entity."** Disasters can happen anytime; this is a good time to review your plan, make sure it covers the most likely emergencies, and think about what needs to be added. This Guide helps GPD providers create plans for the most likely disasters and emergencies and ensure existing plans include everything that is required.

#### What Is This Guide and How Do I Use It?

This Guide walks GPD providers through the steps of creating disaster plans that meet the disaster preparedness the VA GPD program expects. The Guide is divided into



# Thank you so much!

For additional information, please contact:

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