



Disaster Preparedness

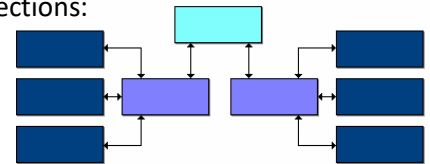
Food pantries exist to meet the emergency food needs of our neighbors. Usually, these emergencies are on an individual level: the loss of a job, lack of money or resources at the end of the month, or an ongoing need for support due to a fixed income. However, you should also be prepared to support your neighbors in the wake of larger emergencies. You should view your disaster preparedness as a natural and necessary extension of the work you already do.



Create an Emergency Phone Tree

One of the easiest ways to combine efforts, especially when responding to a crisis, is to know who to call and how to call them. An emergency phone tree is a tool that tells everyone in a group who to call and organizes the flow of information in an efficient way. An emergency phone tree can work in two different directions:

- Down: to distribute a message from a central starting point
- Up: to report to a central representative the status or needs in a situation



Prepare Your Staff and Volunteers

It's important to know how many staff and volunteers you will realistically have available following a disaster. You may need to have other individuals that you can reach out to if members of your team can't make it to the pantry. Discuss ways that you may need to alter your services in the event of a disaster. Make a plan with your team and review it regularly. It's also important to educate your team on how to prepare their own homes and families, so that they will be more likely to be available to help at the pantry.

Anticipate Your Neighbors Needs

You communicate with your neighbors on a regular basis, and form relationships with them and their families. This puts you at an advantage of knowing what they may need in the event of a disaster. Talk with your team about how you plan to help homebound neighbors or neighbors with disabilities. Make sure your team knows what community resources are available and where emergency shelters are located. Think about the population you serve- is it mostly seniors, families with young children, neighbors that speak a foreign language. Have a plan in place to accommodate your neighbors and meet their needs as much as possible.

Stock Up on Essential Supplies

- First aid supplies
- Flashlights/Batteries
- Radio
- Blankets/extra clothes & shoes
- Garbage bags
- Personal hygiene supplies
- Tools
- Generator
- Rain gear
- Matches
- Utility knife and can openers
- Food- Ready to eat, non-perishable, high protein, high calorie foods- peanut butter, canned goods, granola
- Water- A good rule of thumb is one gallon of water per person per day (drinking, cooking, sanitary needs)

