



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT USE CASE

Research Title:	Structure and Operation of Long-term Recovery Groups
Author(s):	Michelle Meyer, Mason Alexander-Hawk
Description:	<p>Nonprofits already have a huge presence in disaster recovery efforts. They play a large role in addressing the needs of households and individuals, especially those who are marginalized, low-income, or otherwise have difficulty recovering from disasters on their own. Nonprofit efforts commonly target individual “unmet needs”-- or those needs that remain after insurance and government aid is spent. There are many nationally-known organizations whose missions are devoted to disaster management. Aside from national organizations, an underappreciated aspect of disaster recovery are the efforts of local, grassroots organizations that mobilize to help their own communities recover. Due to the large need created by disasters, these local organizations sometimes form coalitions called “Long-Term Recovery Groups” (LTRGs). LTRGs are a unique phenomenon of the nonprofit sector, providing structured coordination of resources to meet survivors' needs during disaster recovery. These groups are increasingly encouraged by government and national organizations, yet they still remain relatively unknown outside the world of disaster nonprofits.</p> <p>We created a database of LTRGs that exist or existed across the U.S. between 2010 and 2019, reviewed their mission and activities, and assessed where they emerge. The database includes LTRG missions and tasks, links to websites/social media/ and news articles, as well as financial documents. This is the only database of its kind on LTRGs.</p> <p>We found 455 local LTRGs and 4 state-wide LTRGs that cover 649 counties in the U.S. (20.7% of all counties). There has been a sharp increase in the emergence and operation of LTRGs over time. In 2010, only 13 LTRGs formed, but 33 formed in 2019. This result indicates increasing use of LTRGs as a response to acute climate-related crises. LTRGs arose more commonly in flood-prone and coastal areas, like Texas, Florida, the Carolinas, and the greater New York/New Jersey area as well as along the Mississippi River.</p> <p>Our research describes the common structures, tasks, missions, financial arrangements of these organizations. Our interviews with these organizations throughout Texas shows what education needs they have that would improve their speed and operation.</p>
When Applied:	Any disaster that includes a need for Individual Assistance
Who Applies:	EMs, VOADs, and Funders
Disaster Type:	Any that includes damages to individuals (housing especially, but also LTRGs have been used for COVID-19 needs)
Infrastructure Affected:	No



Industry Affected:	No
Where Applied:	Anywhere, but at a local (city or county) level.
Agency Affected:	No
VOAD Affected:	Yes
Who/What Affected:	Local nonprofits, local EM, VOAD partners, philanthropic funders of disaster recovery, and local residents with unmet needs
How Affected:	<p>Use of LTRGs has shown ability to reduce duplication of benefits from government and nonprofit sources.</p> <p>Use of LTRGs have supported efficiency in nonprofit recovery efforts.</p> <p>Use of LTRGs have helped donors know where and who are trusted partners for recovery funding in an area.</p> <p>Use of LTRGs has provided “one-stop shops” for survivors with unmet needs. They have been especially important for appealing FEMA claims.</p>
Timing of Application:	<p>LTRGs are most effective if formed pre-disaster. But they are usually formed post-disaster.</p> <p>The educational materials we are developing for local EM, nonprofits, and funders should be used pre-disaster to support best practices in LTRG formation and procedures.</p>
Critical Points:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LTRGs are becoming an increasingly common organizational strategy for coordinating nonprofit support of individual disaster recovery - Between 2010-2019 at least 455 LTRGs existed across the US. They covered almost 20% of all US counties. - LTRGs occurred in 46 states and are most common in areas with flooding such as near the Gulf and Atlantic coasts and the Mississippi River - LTRGs tend to emerge in response to single disasters. - LTRGs focus mostly on housing needs - Less than half of LTRGs register as official nonprofits through the federal government or their state government (e.g., become a 501c3). This means they either have a fiscal sponsor, are a program under an existing nonprofit (most frequently the United Way), or the organizations that participate maintain their own financial management - LTRGs tend to receive their most funding in the first 2 years post-disaster - LTRGs occur more frequently in states where the state government encourages and financially supports them. For example, Iowa offered flood survivors \$2,500 per household but households had to go through a local LTRG to complete eligibility paperwork. Connecticut mandated each county to form an LTRG. Several states offered additional COVID-19 assistance for renters or unemployed by starting local LTRGs and having LTRGs do paperwork and eligibility assessment. - A very small number of LTRGs are led by government - LTRGs often close after initial recovery for one disaster is complete, though there are some good examples of LTRGs



	<p>becoming local VOADs or other local disaster resource that stays open after recovery ends.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Few LTRGs incorporate hazard mitigation, future disaster planning, or climate adaptation into their missions. <p>Based on research with Texas LTRGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- LTRG participants learned of how to operate an LTRG in one of three ways: from a local EM who had training on recovery; from another LTRG in a neighboring area; or from a national disaster nonprofit- LTRG leaders wish they knew several things before the disaster in their community:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- How to structure the leadership and participant organizations of the LTRG, particularly what skillsets are needed for a LTRG team- How to determine resource allocation such as what needs will exist post-disaster and how to prioritize households based on need- How to deal with media and public scrutiny during recovery, including how to communicate base with the public- LTRGs generally had limited knowledge of disaster management before beginning this process, and they did not use FEMA training for developing their skills- LTRG leaders often wished for better collaboration between themselves and EM.- LTRGs had limited awareness of VOAD processes during the early stages of their operation- Training for local nonprofits about disaster recovery is needed. We are in the process of developing training for local nonprofits, local EMs, and funders based on our research results.
What Benefit:	<p>Local nonprofit efforts to support recovery will be able to start faster post-disaster.</p> <p>Donors will be able to find vetted and trustworthy organizations to contribute resources to that are local rather than national.</p> <p>Donor contributions will have less duplication and more efficiency in use.</p> <p>Organizations will see less duplication of benefits.</p> <p>Survivors will know where to go and what the process is for recovery support.</p> <p>Survivors will receive similar services and opportunities rather than disjointed and unequal efforts if they have to go “Shop around” different nonprofits themselves.</p> <p>Local EM will be able to focus more on public assistance needs by having trusted and vetted organizations handling donations and volunteer efforts.</p>
Where Used:	<p>We have studied LTRGs in Texas in depth, and will be surveying all 455 LTRGs across the US this year.</p>
Additional Research:	<p>None</p>



Additional Information:	Contact the authors. One publication is accepted, but not yet published. An online mapping portal with all 455 LTRGs is available here: https://texas-planning-atlas-tamu.hub.arcgis.com/apps/414965296f4a49418907093fa3ecff9/explore
Expert Contact:	The authors as well as National VOAD leadership.
Original Research:	https://www.wmpllc.org/ojs/index.php/jem/article/view/2421
What Risks:	none
Partner Agencies/Jurisdictions:	Local EM, local nonprofit partners, regional disaster nonprofits (e.g., UMCOR, St. Vincent de Paul, Lutheran Relief Services, Catholic Charities, ICNA Relief).
New Question:	[Add a description of the information to enter.]
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Research with a Technology Component Should Respond to the Following Questions

Research Requested:	[Was the proposed technology in response to a specific request from emergency managers?]
Why Better:	[Why is this idea/technology better than current standard?]
Reliability:	[How reliable is the technology? (Include any failure rate data and consequences of failure like time to repair, viability of practitioner doing repair on site, availability of replacement, availability of tech support, etc.).]
Support Needed:	[What type of support is needed to implement? (i.e. computer networks, specialized software coding, mechanical ability internet access powerful laptops, etc).]
Citizen Impact:	[Does the technology have a potential for negative impact on the public or individuals impacted by adoption of the technology?]
Training Required:	[How much training would the practitioner need to implement the technology?]
Public Accountability:	[Would the technology raise any public accountability and/ or privacy issues?]

Please Note: Questions or suggestions regarding the Use Case Template may be directed to Dr. MacGregor Stephenson at the Texas Division of Emergency Management at macgregor.stephenson@tdem.texas.gov.