

Iowa Disaster Recovery Tabletop Exercise

# After Action Report/Improvement Plan

August 2010

Exercise Date: June 24, 2010



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## **HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS**

1. The title of this document is the Iowa Disaster Recovery Tabletop Exercise After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP).

2. The information in this AAR/IP is classified as public.

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**After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP)**  
**Iowa Disaster Recovery Tabletop Exercise**  
Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On June 24, 2010, the Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO) held a discussion-based tabletop exercise for the purpose of creating a framework to support disaster recovery coordination within the State of Iowa. The exercise design team was composed of RIO and Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (HSEMD) staff.

Initial planning for the Iowa Disaster Recovery Tabletop Exercise began in February 2010, in response to recommendations by the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission and the Rebuild Iowa Coordinating Council. Both of these groups were organized in direct response to the 2008 Iowa disasters to help establish a path for Iowa's recovery and monitor progress toward meeting established goals. Recommendations included formalizing the responsibilities of the RIO as they relate to 2008 disasters, capturing lessons learned, and determining what a recovery model should look like for Iowa's future disasters.

Through subsequent planning meetings and an exercise rehearsal, the team clarified the purpose and narrowed the focus of the exercise. Planning of the exercise also included consideration of the National Disaster Recovery Framework currently in development through the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) to ensure consistency. After several discussions, the following goal and objectives were developed for the Iowa Disaster Recovery Tabletop Exercise:

**GOAL:** To design and establish a lasting framework for the State of Iowa for coordination of long-term disaster recovery efforts including:

- Identification of long-term recovery issues.
- Continuous, ongoing prioritization and goal-setting.
- Identification of gaps, duplications and timelines in programs and funding.
- Development of policies and procedures, prior to disbursement, to ensure timely, effective and transparent use of funds in recovery.
- Implementation of a communication strategy to ensure accountability, transparency and effective real-time information sharing for statewide recovery.
- Recommendation of state policy.

**Objective 1:** To design an effective, coordinating framework which includes the identification of roles and responsibilities of the entities involved.

**Objective 2:** To identify the protocols for rapid activation and deactivation of the state disaster recovery framework.

**Objective 3:** To develop and maintain a process to update the state disaster recovery framework and provide interagency exercise training programs.

## **After Action Report/Improvement Plan Leads to Proposed Framework**

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the tabletop exercise, summarize and analyze exercise results, identify strengths which should be maintained and built upon, identify areas for further improvement, and support development of recommendations and corrective actions.

After reviewing written participant feedback gathered at the conclusion of the tabletop exercise, the majority of the group thought the tabletop exercise was a success. The majority of participants stated they “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the statements listed below. For more details, see Appendix C.

- The exercise was well structured and organized.
- The facilitators were knowledgeable and kept the exercise on target.
- The Situation Manual developed for the exercise was a valuable tool.  
The Manual is available at this link:  
[http://www.rio.iowa.gov/news/releases/2010/062410\\_working\\_to\\_recover.html](http://www.rio.iowa.gov/news/releases/2010/062410_working_to_recover.html)
- Participation in the exercise was appropriate for someone in my position.
- Participants understood the goals of the exercise.
- The exercise met the stated objectives.

**The RIO will use this report as the basis for designing a framework for the State of Iowa to adopt as a model for future disasters.** In September, a conference will be held with all exercise participants to review the final AAR/IP and provide feedback on a State Disaster Recovery Framework. Between September and December, the proposed Framework will also be distributed to multiple stakeholders for review and comments. The final State Disaster Recovery Framework will be submitted to the Governor and Iowa Legislature on Dec. 30, 2010.

## **Major Strengths**

The major strengths identified during this exercise are as following:

- The formation of the Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO) and the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission via executive order by Governor Culver following the 2008 disasters allowed Iowa to capitalize on the knowledge of state experts in various fields and use the opportunities presented after a major disaster to rebuild safer, stronger and smarter.
- Iowa recognizes that disasters and recovery occur at the local level. State systems are designed to support local leadership, manage their recovery and provide input into state disaster recovery programs.
- There are many lessons learned, including best practices, from the 2008 disaster recovery effort that can be institutionalized to ensure future disaster recoveries can be coordinated effectively.



## **Primary Areas for Improvement**

Throughout the exercise, opportunities for improvement in the State of Iowa's ability to coordinate long-term disaster recovery efforts were identified. Based upon input by participants during the exercise, the five primary areas for improvement are listed below. Comments to support each recommendation can be found throughout participant notes in Appendix A.

1. The State of Iowa lacks a formal, permanent system designed to coordinate long-term recovery following a major disaster.  
**Recommendation:** The State of Iowa needs to formulate and adopt a scalable, flexible State Disaster Recovery Framework.
  
2. Immediately following a major disaster, there needs to be a group charged with the responsibility to set recovery goals and oversee progress toward meeting those goals.  
**Recommendation:** A State Recovery Council comprised of state and local leaders should be established to collect, analyze and share damage assessment data, seek input from those impacted by disaster, set recovery goals and expectations, and monitor and report recovery progress.
  
3. While Iowa is well-versed in disaster response planning and preparedness, Iowa needs to improve long-term recovery preparedness and planning.  
**Recommendation:** A State Recovery Coordinator position needs to be created to lead recovery planning and preparedness efforts and serve as the Recovery Coordinating Officer during major disaster events.  
**Recommendation:** The State of Iowa needs to create a system to collect and share comprehensive, standardized damage assessment data to be used to inform decisions and track recovery progress.
  
4. A lack of coordinated communication and messaging causes time delays, confusion, frustration and overall inefficiencies in recovery efforts.  
**Recommendation:** A centralized communication team must gather and disburse information about damage assessments, funding, programs and progress to ensure a highly coordinated message at the local, state and federal level, and to minimize delay times and maximize efficiencies.
  
5. The State of Iowa does not have a disaster emergency fund with resources readily available for allocation to disaster recovery programs.  
**Recommendation:** The State of Iowa should finance an emergency disaster fund so that resources are available to fund long-term disaster recovery programs.

## SECTION 1: EXERCISE OVERVIEW

### Exercise Details

**Exercise Name:** Iowa Disaster Recovery Tabletop Exercise

**Type of Exercise:** Discussion-based tabletop exercise focused on long-term recovery following a major disaster in the State of Iowa.

**Exercise Date and Time:** June 24, 2010, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Location:** State Emergency Operations Center located in the lower level of the Joint Forces Headquarters, 6100 NW 78<sup>th</sup> Ave, Johnston, Iowa

**Sponsors:** Rebuild Iowa Office, Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division

**Goal:** To design and establish a lasting framework for the State of Iowa for coordination of long-term disaster recovery efforts including:

- Identification of long-term recovery issues.
- Continuous, ongoing prioritization and goal-setting.
- Identification of gaps, duplications and timelines in programs and funding.
- Development of policies and procedures, prior to disbursement, to ensure timely, effective and transparent use of funds in recovery.
- Implementation of a communication strategy to ensure accountability, transparency and effective real-time information sharing for statewide recovery.
- Recommendation of state policy.

**Objective 1:** To design an effective, coordinating framework which includes the identification of roles and responsibilities of the entities involved.

**Objective 2:** To identify the protocols for rapid activation and deactivation of the state disaster recovery framework.

**Objective 3:** To develop and maintain a process to update the state disaster recovery framework and provide interagency exercise training programs.

**Capabilities:** Target capabilities addressed within the exercise include:

- Economic and Community Recovery
- Communications

**Scenario Type:** Major flooding

## **Exercise Design Team, Evaluators and Support**

The following staff participated in designing the tabletop exercise, serving as evaluators during the exercise, preparing the AAR/IP and providing administrative support to the process:

From Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division:  
Cathleen Atchison and John Halbrook

From the Rebuild Iowa Office:  
Adam Bartelt, Jacqui DiGiacinto, Susan Dixon, Emily Hajek, Susan Judkins Josten, Annette Mansheim, Tina Potthoff, Ron Randazzo, Julie Struck, Aaron Todd and Lynn Zook-Slagg

## **Participating Organizations**

Listed below are the organizations and agency representatives who participated in the Iowa Disaster Recovery Tabletop Exercise as facilitators, players and observers.

### **Facilitators**

Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division – John Halbrook  
Rebuild Iowa Office – Emily Hajek

### **Players & Observers**

City of Waverly – Richard Crayne  
FEMA Iowa Recovery Center – Chris Rolleston  
Iowa Association of Regional Councils – Joe Myhre  
Iowa College Student Aid Commission – Jeremy Davis  
Iowa College Student Aid Commission – Keith Greiner  
Iowa Dept of Cultural Affairs – Doug Jones  
Iowa Dept of Cultural Affairs – Jeremy Ammerman  
Iowa Dept of Economic Development – Bret Mills  
Iowa Dept of Economic Development – Tim Waddell  
Iowa Dept of Education – Gary Schwartz  
Iowa Dept of Human Services – Marvin Shultz  
Iowa Dept of Natural Resources – Tammie Krausman  
Iowa Dept of Public Defense – Col Derek Hill  
Iowa Dept of Public Health – Mary Jones  
Iowa Dept of Public Safety – Capt Michael Vanberkum  
Iowa Dept of Transportation – John Haas  
Iowa Dept on Aging – Mabelle Shaffer  
Iowa Finance Authority – Joe O'Hern  
Iowa Finance Authority – Joseph Jones  
Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division – John Benson  
Iowa Office of Energy Independence – Kerri Johannsen  
Iowa Office of Governor and Lt Governor – Matt Unger  
Iowa State Association of Counties – Mary Beth Mellick

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Iowa State Association of Counties – Terrence Neuzil  
Iowa State Legislature – Rep Tom Schueller  
Iowa Utilities Board – Chuck Seel  
Iowa Workforce Development – Joe Mowers  
Linn Area Long-Term Recovery Coalition – Lori Widhalm  
Linn Area Long-Term Recovery Coalition – Steve Schmitz  
Linn County Board of Supervisors – Ben Rogers  
Lutheran Services in Iowa – Pastor Michael Stadie  
Rebuild Iowa Office – Lt Gen Ron Dardis  
Rebuild Iowa Office – Susan Dixon  
Safeguard Iowa Partnership – Jami Haberl  
Senate Caucus Staff – Theresa Kehoe

### **Number of Participants**

A total of 46 people participated in the exercise in the following roles:

- 26 Players
- 9 Observers
- 2 Facilitators
- 9 Evaluators and Administrative Support

## SECTION 2: EXERCISE DESIGN SUMMARY

### Exercise Purpose and Design

On June 24, 2010, the Rebuild Iowa Office (RIO) held a discussion-based tabletop exercise for the purpose of creating a framework to support disaster recovery coordination within the State of Iowa. The exercise design team was composed of staff from the RIO and Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (HSEMD).

Initial planning for the Iowa Disaster Recovery Tabletop Exercise began in February in response to recommendations by the Rebuild Iowa Advisory Commission and the Rebuild Iowa Coordinating Council. In April, the RIO design team attended a three-day Exercise Design training session sponsored by HSEMD in Ames, Iowa.

Through subsequent planning meetings and an exercise rehearsal, the team clarified the purpose and narrowed the focus of the exercise. Planning of the exercise also included consideration of the National Disaster Recovery Framework currently in development through the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) to ensure consistency. The following goal and objectives were developed for the Iowa Disaster Recovery Tabletop Exercise:

**GOAL:** To design and establish a lasting framework for the State of Iowa for coordination of long-term disaster recovery efforts including:

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- Recommendation of state policy.

### Exercise Objectives, Capabilities and Activities

Capabilities-based planning allows for exercise planning teams to develop exercise objectives and observe exercise outcomes through a framework of specific action items derived from a Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Target Capabilities List (TCL). The capabilities listed below form the foundation for the organization of all objectives and observations in this exercise. Additionally, each capability is linked to several corresponding activities and tasks to provide additional detail.

Based upon the identified exercise objectives below, the exercise design team has decided to demonstrate the following capabilities during this exercise:

**Objective 1:** To design an effective, coordinating framework which includes the identification of roles and responsibilities of the entities involved.

**Objective 2:** To identify the protocols for rapid activation and deactivation of the state disaster recovery framework.

**Objective 3:** To develop and maintain a process to update the state disaster recovery framework and provide interagency exercise training programs.

**Target Capability: Economic and Community Recovery Activities**

- Develop and maintain plans, procedures, programs and systems
- Develop and maintain training and exercise programs
- Direct economic and community recovery operations
- Activate economic and community recovery
- Assess and prioritize recovery needs
- Provide monetary and non-monetary relief
- Demobilize economic and community recovery

**Target Capability: Communication Activities**

- Develop and maintain plans, procedures and systems for recovery communications
- Develop and maintain training and exercise programs

## **Scenario Summary**

This tabletop exercise used a major flood as the scenario to set the stage for discussion. The agenda for the exercise included three Discussion Sets which incorporated scenarios staged at different points in time. The timeline for the first scenario is in the early stages of the disaster unfolding. The second scenario takes place several months into the event, and the third scenario occurs two years after the disaster. Two short flood-related video presentations were included to provide visual images of the flood's impact. Each Discussion Set scenario is included below followed with a list of the questions asked by facilitators to drive discussion. The questions directly relate to one of the three stated objectives of the exercise.

Evaluators recorded observations, issues, concerns, thoughts, ideas and recommendations expressed by Players during the discussions. A composite summary of those comments following each Discussion Set questions are outlined in Appendix A.

### **DISCUSSION SET ONE**

**Scenario: Tuesday, April 8, 2022.** It's a rainy spring day in Iowa. Central Iowa has experienced severe flooding for the last two weeks with more rain in the forecast. Today, a total of 25 counties have been declared federal disaster areas. *(The first video presentation was shown here.)*

**Scenario: Three Days Later.** At this point, 67 counties have been declared federal disaster areas; two major urban centers have been substantially impacted. Many acres of agricultural crops were destroyed. It is estimated that more than 50 Iowans were killed and/or injured and another 60,000 have been displaced from their homes. The Governor calls a special meeting to discuss the status of the storms and on-going response efforts, and assess the state's capacity to address long-term recovery. Later that day, at a special press conference, the Governor announces that the State Disaster Recovery Framework has been put into place. She set a few high-level goals including returning displaced residents to their homes quickly or providing suitable temporary housing, reopening businesses in a timely fashion, and repairing critical infrastructure as soon as possible.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What thresholds trigger activation of the recovery Framework?
2. What Framework elements are necessary to support overall coordination and communication among long-term recovery partners?
3. How are long-term recovery partners identified?
4. How are the roles and responsibilities of these partners determined?
5. What resources are needed to support the Framework?
6. Is there anything else that needs to be considered to ensure an efficient and flexible recovery Framework is established to support recovery from all future major disasters?
7. What else needs to be considered in activating the Framework?

**DISCUSSION SET TWO**

**Scenario: Four months later.** Congress just appropriated \$500 million in recovery funds to the State of Iowa. This amount is less than was requested and will take some time to be available to the state. Considerable additional funding will be needed to fully recover, but for the time being priorities need to be set for this funding and programs established. *(The second video presentation was shown here.)*

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How are long-term recovery issues and needs identified at this point?
2. How can issues and needs be quickly prioritized and addressed on an ongoing basis?
3. How and when will case management systems be launched and administered?
4. How are assistance programs designed to meet recovery needs?
5. How is interagency communication and public communication/messaging coordinated?
6. How is active participation from various partners maintained throughout the recovery?
7. How will progress toward meeting needs and implementing programs be collected and reported?
8. How will individual-level information be shared to effectively manage duplication and unmet needs issues?



9. Is there anything else that needs to be considered in the identification of roles and responsibilities to ensure effective recovery programs are implemented in a timely manner?

### **DISCUSSION SET THREE**

**Scenario: Two years later.** Many displaced residents are now in permanent housing. New housing construction is still underway. Infrastructure repair and rebuilding continues. Eighty percent of businesses have reopened but some still struggle. Programs are ongoing and additional funding requests are still pending. The Governor has asked for a transition plan over the next year from recovery back to normal operations.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What are the triggers for the deactivation process?
2. What is needed to ensure seamless deactivation?
3. Is there anything else to consider regarding deactivation?
4. How do we ensure that the State Disaster Recovery Framework is kept current and relevant?
5. How will the State Disaster Recovery Framework be evaluated?
6. How will the State Disaster Recovery Framework be exercised?
7. What else needs to be considered to make sure the Framework remains current and relevant?



## SECTION 3: ANALYSIS OF CAPABILITIES

This section of the report reviews the performance of the exercised capabilities, activities and tasks. In this section, observations are organized by capability and associated activities. The capabilities linked to the exercise objectives of the Iowa Disaster Recovery Tabletop Exercise are listed below, followed by corresponding activities. Each activity is followed by related observations and recommendations.

### Capability 1: Economic and Community Recovery

**Summary:** Economic and community recovery is the capability to implement short- and long-term recovery and mitigation processes after an incident. This will include identifying the extent of damage caused by an incident, conducting thorough post-event assessments, and determining and providing the support needed for recovery and restoration activities to minimize future loss from a similar event.

#### Activity 1.1: Develop and maintain plans, procedures, programs and systems

**Observations:**

- All sectors need to be represented in a Framework.
- Data and program information needs to be shared among agencies providing disaster programs and services.
- A funding stream should be accessible to start recovery efforts.
- One identified party/entity is needed to coordinate Framework partners and information.
- Partners and programs will be different for every disaster recovery.

**Recommendations:**

- A Recovery Council should be established that includes relevant state agencies, local governments, non-profits and business.
- A system for real-time data sharing should be established and institutionalized prior to a disaster.
- A Recovery Coordinator position should be established within state government (possibly Homeland Security) to provide overall coordination of the Framework.
- The Framework needs to be scalable and flexible to adapt to different disasters.

#### Activity 1.2: Develop and maintain training and exercise programs

**Observations:**

- There are regular exercises for response, but not recovery.
- The State needs to keep the plan current and stay up-to-date on federal rules, regulations and resources.

**Recommendations:**

- Representatives from agencies on the Recovery Council need to be trained in disaster recovery, especially their agencies programs and policies.

- Annual recovery exercises should be held and the Framework and plan updated accordingly.

### **Activity 1.3: Direct economic and community recovery operations**

#### **Observations:**

- Operations need to be coordinated at the state level.
- Goals, objectives and metrics need to be established early.

#### **Recommendations:**

- There needs to be enough capability to identify and address unmet needs through the continuous collection and analysis of recovery data.
- A minimum of one staff person is needed to coordinate recovery planning and preparedness activities including gathering 28E agreements for additional staffing. (Chapter 28E Joint Exercise of Government Powers of Iowa Code which states, “Any public agency of this state may enter into an agreement with one or more public or private agencies for joint or cooperative action...” is commonly referred to as a “28E agreement”.)
- Funding is necessary to support disaster recovery planning and preparedness, emergency programs, and other recovery needs of the state.

### **Activity 1.4: Activate economic and community recovery**

#### **Observations:**

- The Governor has primary responsibility for activation.
- Local input and data is needed.
- Recovery needs to begin during the response phase.
- Every disaster is different and has different recovery needs.
- The decision to activate needs to be widely communicated.

#### **Recommendations:**

- The state Recovery Coordinator should have a seat at the table during response and should begin convening recovery partners as needed.
- Those impacted, including individuals, local governments, non-profits and businesses should be consulted from the beginning of the response phase for information and recommendations on recovery needs.

### **Activity 1.5: Assess and prioritize recovery needs**

#### **Observations:**

- Complete and consistent data is critical to identifying needs and designing programs.
- All partners need to be involved in data collection and analysis.
- Clear and specific objectives are needed during recovery.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Complete damage assessments should be a priority for state and local partners.

- A system for real-time data sharing should be established and institutionalized prior to a disaster.

### **Activity 1.6: Provide monetary and non-monetary relief**

#### **Observations:**

- Federal rules, regulations and resources need to change and be more flexible during times of disaster recovery.
- The state needs to remain up-to-date on federal changes.
- The state's Framework needs to adapt to federal changes.
- The Governor needs to have a flexible funding source to draw upon before and during disaster recovery.

#### **Recommendations:**

- At least one position in state government needs to be responsible for remaining up-to-date on federal recovery rules and regulations, and updating the states' plans.
- A recovery Framework should be exercised annually and adapted to changes.
- The state needs to continue to advocate for federal disaster recovery changes.
- The state should have a pool of disaster funds that the Governor can draw from quickly to get recovery programs started and ramp up staffing.

### **Activity 1.7: Demobilize economic and community recovery**

#### **Observations:**

- Recovery cannot end all at once, but needs to scale down as needs are met and programs end.
- Communities should have input into demobilization.
- Priorities need to be evaluated and shifted throughout recovery.

#### **Recommendations:**

- The Recovery Council should continuously discuss needs and priorities and demobilize specific programs and elements when possible.

## **Capability 2: Communications**

**Summary:** Communications is a fundamental capability within disciplines and jurisdictions that practitioners need to perform the most routine and basic elements of their job functions. A continuous flow of critical information needs to be maintained among recovery partners throughout the recovery process.

### **Activity 2.1: Develop and maintain plans, procedures, and systems for recovery communications**

#### **Observations:**

- Coordinated messaging is needed to reduce confusion.
- All recovery-related messages should go through one central point.

- Messages to those impacted need to be delivered many times and in a variety of formats to ensure they get through to stakeholders.
- It is important for messages to be coordinated and expectations be managed.

**Recommendations:**

- The Recovery Council and Coordinator should establish a system for coordinating and vetting all recovery-related messages.
- Case managers at the local level should be provided with all messages so that they can help to distribute the right information to clients.

**Activity 2.2: Develop and maintain training and exercise programs**

**Observations:**

- Agency Public Information Officers are often trained in disaster response communications, but not recovery.
- Training should include the best messages and the best means to convey those messages in disaster recovery.

**Recommendations:**

- Messaging throughout the recovery should be coordinated through one central point.
- Training and exercise programs should include information on messaging and communications.

## **SECTION 4: ACTION ITEMS AND CONCLUSION**

Iowa's first-ever Disaster Recovery Exercise was a vital first step in ensuring that the state is better prepared for future disaster recovery. It also helped capture the lessons learned and best practices to date from the 2008 disaster recovery effort.

Participants in the exercise came to clear consensus on several action steps going forward. This includes:

1. Utilizing the recommendations in this report to complete and implement a State of Iowa Disaster Recovery Framework
2. Ensuring that this Framework is exercised and updated annually
3. Continuing efforts to achieve changes at the federal level through the National Disaster Recovery Framework

These steps will be undertaken at the Iowa Disaster Recovery Framework Review on Sept. 23, 2010. Participants in this exercise will reconvene to review the final AAR/IP and an initial draft of the proposed State Disaster Recovery Framework. Following that, recommendations for the Framework, as well as implementation steps, will be shared with state leaders through a final report due on Dec. 30, 2010.

In conclusion, this group agrees that while the state has been able to achieve elements of success in past disaster recovery efforts, it is necessary to institutionalize those elements so best practices can be replicated and even improved upon in the future.

## **APPENDIX A: EXERCISE NOTES SUMMARY**

During the Iowa Disaster Recovery Tabletop Exercise, Evaluators recorded observations, issues, concerns, thoughts, ideas and recommendations expressed by Players. A composite summary of those comments following each Discussion Set is outlined below.

### **DISCUSSION SET ONE**

#### **1. What thresholds trigger activation of the recovery Framework?**

- A. Guidelines should be set for the Framework. Some players believed a threshold should be set to activate a recovery Framework. Those include:
  - i) Infrastructure damage should be at least \$50 or \$100 million
  - ii) Large numbers of people should be displaced from their homes (approximately 100 families)
  - iii) Massive job loss is evident
  - iv) Multiple counties request assistance
  - v) Numerous businesses have been impacted
  - vi) When the federal government is called in for assistance
  - vii) When local response workers ask for assistance
  
- B. Every disaster is different and should be handled on an individual basis. No hard or fast trigger should be set for a recovery Framework to be activated. Thresholds should be looked at and considered subjectively, rather than objectively.
  - i) Recovery plan needs to be scalable and flexible.
  - ii) State should be wary of imposing a rigid guideline for activation.
  - iii) Vague language should be used in the recovery Framework to allow for the most flexibility in activation.
  - iv) Activation considerations can include the number of displaced residents, affected businesses and infrastructure and job loss; however every disaster must be handled differently.
  - v) Activation depends on the community's ability to handle recovery. Are resources (personnel, volunteers, funding, etc.) lacking that are necessary for recovery? Communities can become quickly overwhelmed and burnt out during and following a major disaster and may need additional help.
  - vi) Activation depends on an assessment of local services and needs. A comprehensive review of damage assessment data may be required to assess loss and understand the long-term impacts of the disaster. When there is a strain on local services, external assistance from the state may be needed.
  - vii) Activation should rely on local jurisdictions, emergency managers and non-profits to provide information to the state. Non-profits and local entities serve as the state's "boots on the ground" and can provide immediate assessments on various areas, neighborhoods and local families.

**2. Who makes the decision; based upon what?**

- A. The Governor should make the decision to enact the recovery Framework by Executive Order. The Governor's decision should be based upon:
- i) Public health/safety threats and concerns
  - ii) Number of households displaced and projection of how long they will be displaced
  - iii) Number of multi-jurisdictional areas (counties, communities, etc) impacted
  - iv) Infrastructure damage
  - v) Loss and damage to transportation mechanisms (roads, bridges, etc.) and how that impacts getting supplies in and out of impacted areas
  - vi) Number of impacted businesses and their ability to return to normalcy
  - vii) When state funds are allocated to disaster recovery, there must be coordination & accountability through a recovery system

**3. How is that decision communicated and to whom?**

- A. The Governor would issue an Executive Order, which would be widely communicated throughout the state via the media. The Governor should be encouraged to consult with the following groups before and during enactment of a Framework:
- i) State Coordinating Officer
  - ii) Homeland Security Advisor
  - iii) Local emergency manager/management
  - iv) City and county officials
  - v) Non-profits, Long-Term Recovery Committees and COADs
  - vi) Local legislators
- B. An Emergency Operations Center concept should begin to help negate duplication of services, identify long-term unmet needs and maintain accurate information sharing among recovery partners.

**4. What Framework elements are necessary to support overall coordination and communication among long-term recovery partners?**

- A. Overall Structure
- i) If all entities are a part of the Framework, then that consistency makes it easier to organize.
- B. Recovery Operations Center
- i) One might be to have a person staff the "recovery seat" in the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) when a disaster is taking place. This person would also be the designee for deciding what agencies to "activate" for a recovery operation.
  - ii) Staff a "recovery operation center." Anytime the SEOC is activated, a small recovery team would also be activated until it is fully determined whether long-term recovery is necessary.



- C. Coordinated Messaging with Public Information Officers (PIOs)
  - i) A central entity must be responsible from the beginning of a disaster recovery to communicate with all recovery partners to ensure messaging is coming from a centralized location.
  - ii) Similar to how PIOs operate during a disaster, in activating a Joint Information Center (JIC), this same structure should be put in place during times of recovery where one agency or entity is coordinating all messages from the state and vetting information before it is dispersed to the general public.
- D. Education During Non-Disaster Times
  - i) Planning and coordination for recovery must also take place prior to when a disaster strikes.
  - ii) Several representatives from various agencies having ongoing dialog throughout the year with federal officials to stay current with programs, laws, issues, key contacts, etc. for both disaster and non-disaster programs.

**5. How are long-term recovery partners identified?**

- A. Recovery needs need to be identified before various partners become involved in a particular recovery process.
- B. Damage assessments performed during the response phase should identify what needs exist, allowing the Governor's Office to then invite the necessary agencies to the table to assist in recovery.
- C. Look at state and federal funding sources that might serve as a resource in the recovery, and identify which state agencies would administer those programs and funds. Those agencies would then be partners in the recovery Framework.
- D. Not every agency on the "recovery list" will be involved in every disaster recovery effort. It simply depends on what has been impacted and which agency is best suited to handle that particular area.

**6. Who provides leadership and direction to the coordinating Framework?**

- A. Iowa's Homeland Security Advisor will have a huge role in the Framework.
- B. A group of State Coordinating Officers (SCOs) could be established to oversee the Framework at the state level. One SCO could work on the response phase, while the other SCO strictly works on recovery.
- C. Form a Coordinating Council with one point person from the Executive Branch, and one point person from each agency identified with a role in recovery programs/funding. This group would then report to the Governor.
- D. Institutionalize a permanent recovery office or recovery function in state government to assist in coordination, accountability and transparency.



- i) Once the RIO sunsets, Iowa will lack a coordinating body to keep track of programmatic changes and maintain relationships with those working recovery programs at the federal level.
- E. A core group of state government representatives from various agencies should stay current on disaster regulations and recovery issues. They should attend conferences, research what is going on in other disaster recoveries across the country and maintain a database of best practices that will allow for an efficient and effective recovery.
- i) Once a person has worked on a recovery operation, it is crucial that the state find a way to maintain his/her internal knowledge.
- 7. Who is included in the Framework and how are they identified?**
- A. The state must first identify what recovery needs must be addressed, such as business, housing, transportation, etc. during the response phase and then bring the necessary agencies to the table to assist.
  - B. The Governor can then start to put a recovery group together. The same agencies may not be involved in every recovery.
  - C. Local agencies and governments must be involved from onset.
  - D. Long-Term Recovery Committees, emergency managers and the Iowa Disaster Human Resource Council (IDHRC) will also play an important role no matter what the level of recovery.
  - E. IA (Individual Assistance) and PA (Public Assistance) contacts, as well as state historic preservation officers, are also important partners that should be involved with recovery.
- 8. How do we ensure that this Framework includes partners from all levels of government and all sectors?**
- A. This recovery Framework should be just like response, driven from the bottom up and not the top down.
  - B. We should also use the same Framework as WebEOC so questions and answers can be addressed.
  - C. Have an office established or individual identified where it's their responsibility to continually develop and maintain recovery connections with stakeholders.

**9. How are the roles and responsibilities of these partners determined?**

- A. Framework should include people to help coordinate between state agencies/local and federal partners, communicate a coordinated message, and identify/establish and implement a long-term recovery plan.
  - i) The plan or Framework should identify what the abilities are for the state and who is responsible.
  - ii) The plan should address who is responsible for various aspects of recovery after “normal” conditions have been exceeded.
  - iii) The long-term recovery structure should be staffed by each agency.

**10. What resources are needed to support the Framework?**

- A. Staffing
  - i) Many local and state agencies don't have the necessary back-up for response or recovery events, making it very difficult to do additional work during these desperate times.
  - ii) There should be enough flexibility for the use of 28E agreements with various agencies so staff can immediately be ramped up during times of disaster.
- B. Data Sharing
  - i) Quality data is needed for a successful recovery, however the acquisition of this data can be one of the most difficult things to accomplish in a timely fashion.
  - ii) There is a definite need for a common database which can be shared with local, state and federal officials, as well as non-governmental agencies.
  - iii) Right now, it is difficult for the state to know the names/addresses and numbers of those that have been impacted and to what extent since various databases are restricted to certain agencies.
  - iv) Better data sharing would significantly reduce the burden of paperwork that must be filled out by each impacted family or individual.
  - v) If agencies could deal with one form for funding versus multiple versions, it would also cut back on wasted time and unnecessary paperwork.
  - vi) A system similar to GIS or CAN needs to be established so multiple agencies can tap into one centralized database system to understand an individual or a community's need.
  - vii) Shared database privacy is critical.
  - viii) Non-governmental agencies/non-profits should have a vetting process to go through in order to access the data.
- C. Repository for Recovery Information
  - i) An office or location should be designated as a repository for information and lessons learned from past disasters and recoveries.
  - ii) House staff members with previous disaster experience or those which are educated on recovery programs.
  - iii) Group should be held accountable for the coordination of future recovery funds and/or duplication of benefit issues.

D. Funding

- i) A funding stream must be put in place at the state level.
- ii) Funding should be available not only during times of disaster, but also non-disaster times to fund educational opportunities for recovery leaders and additional recovery exercises.
- iii) Funding should be accessible throughout the year, not just during the Legislative session.

**11. Is there anything else that needs to be considered to ensure an efficient and flexible recovery Framework is established to support recovery from all future major disasters?**

- A. Do we keep a core group funded at the state level or do we pay consultants every 15 years?
  - i) Consultants developed critical useful reports that provided the foundation of the recovery process.
  - ii) There may be a need for consultants that are “up-to-speed” on federal recovery policy and programs, if state does not stay up-to-date.
  - iii) The Framework should work in a way that minimizes consultant services.
  - iv) Individual agencies may not be able to retain and maintain information regarding disaster recovery.
- B. The state should maintain copies of past disaster documents at the state library for all to access.
  - i) Documents need to be organized and stored, with information that can be easily accessed about what documents exist and where they are.
  - ii) We need to create a state plan for record archival.
- C. Normal programs will not apply to catastrophic disasters. A recovery Framework should also be based on funding sources.

**12. What else needs to be considered in activating the Framework?**

- A. Every disaster will be different.
  - i) With a tornado – most people have insurance and within a day they are outside cleaning up.
  - ii) A flood – not everyone has insurance and recovery cannot be started immediately.
  - iii) With a tornado you can start rebuilding right away, but with flood, it may be weeks before you can assess the situation and truly start a full recovery operation.
- B. Individuals and local communities may start suffering from burnout.
- C. There needs to be sufficient time to make good decisions; don’t consider that a delay – rather, consider it good planning and decision-making.

- D. A delivery mechanism must be put into place with this Framework.
  - i) Once needs have been identified that the existing response/recovery systems cannot address, identify agencies that can coordinate efforts and identify resources to meet the needs.
  - ii) Once the resources are exhausted, the knowledge and mechanisms will atrophy. The consultants were current on federal law and regulations and disaster response/recovery. We will have to learn over again unless there is a core group that stays current.

## **DISCUSSION SET TWO**

### **1. How are long-term recovery issues and needs identified at this point?**

- A. Secure and evaluate damage assessment data that includes geographic location and scope of damage.
  - i) Conduct door to door damage assessments.
  - ii) Coordinate collected data with local government levels so they can create priorities for their community and then pass it up to the state level.
  - iii) Communities need to be engaged in providing input into their own recovery.
  - iv) Need to come to a consensus regarding the way in which data is collected to ensure we are following a common protocol consistent at the federal, state, and local levels in both urban and rural settings.
  - v) FEMA could offer limited information that they collect. Case management organizations can provide some information. Local evaluations/assessments of those affected should be utilized to gather initial information. Engage communities to learn what is important for each. Put all of this information into a standardized statewide database.
  - vi) FEMA, who has the most resources to bear, collects damage assessment information. They have personnel with expertise at the national level.
  - vii) Conduct joint preliminary damage assessments.
  - viii) Current HSEMD assessments are completed to determine the threshold of turning on programs. When that is accomplished, they move on to another location.
  - ix) IDALS must be involved in data collection.
- B. Gather input from affected Iowans and communities, including businesses.
  - i) Case work management will be a large part of identifying and addressing issues.
  - ii) Long-Term Recovery Committees (LTRCs) can provide data mining for assessments.
  - iii) Voluntary agency assessments – “Green Shirts”, Christian Reform World Relief Committee (CRWRC) conducts assessments that compliment FEMA. They follow the sequence of delivery and show the scope of needs.
  - iv) Based on those impacted by the disaster, use historical data to estimate.
  - v) We ultimately need a grassroots effort. However, a big issue frustrating to disaster victims is when they have to retell their story over and over again

before they can qualify for various programs.

- C. Create a uniform platform for collecting disaster damage data and a system for sharing this information.
- i) Determine what forms to use for local, state, and federal damage assessment. These forms should be uniform/standard.
  - ii) Share data and use common measurements.
  - iii) Agreement should be reached on standardized forms and methods to secure data before a disaster occurs.
  - iv) Need to come to a consensus regarding the way in which data is collected to ensure we are following a common protocol.
  - v) Need to recognize federal rules, laws.
  - vi) Shared database is critical to capture damage assessments done by a various entities and for various purposes.
  - vii) Continue data collection and assessment beyond response; make sure that data can be shared.
  - viii) Need to determine what data is already being collected and how best to share that information.
  - ix) How do we “de-conflict” the data?
  - x) Establish regulatory clarity to identify the best database.
- D. State Recovery Coordinating Officer should have the brainpower and authority to assemble all the state programs and related information.
- i) Recovery point of contact at State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) should be a different person than the response point of contact.
  - ii) History tells you what the problem is – expertise in the recovery field.
  - iii) There needs to be a group that plans for the needs and service delivery.
  - iv) Individual assistance has multiple assessments and multiple streams of funding. Need to determine the level of recovery we want to shoot for.
  - v) Would the Federal Coordinating Officer/State Coordinating Officer (FCO/SCO) be in charge of the recovery? Can the FCO/SCO be the same person for response and recovery?
  - vi) Determine who is coordinating the data to share with other agencies. Use local community members and engage them in the process.
  - vii) There is no federal coordinating voice in recovery.
  - viii) Develop cadre of state coordinating officers with authority to make decisions.
  - ix) Need to keep in mind the needs of public infrastructure and this will directly impact the ability to provide aid to individuals.
  - x) Housing assessments for FEMA buy-outs are wholly structured by FEMA.
  - xi) Recovery is more than just getting someone back into their house – you need to figure out how to prevent future disasters.
  - xii) The federal government needs a disaster recovery office modeled on RIO to be a federal coordinating voice for disaster recovery.
    - (1) Current federal disaster aid comes from congressional earmarks, it results in paperwork diversity and conflict.

**2. How can issues and needs be quickly prioritized and addressed on an ongoing basis?**

- A. What level/extent of recovery should be targeted?
  - i) Prioritize based on the order in which they need to be completed.
  - ii) We need a process for collecting information/input from “survivors” of the disaster to identify issues and better understand the magnitude of the needs.
  - iii) To what level do we help homeowners recover? Safe and sanitary? Energy efficient?
  - iv) Situational awareness of client assessment, collect/aggregate at point of recovery coordination, determine the priorities.
  - v) Use the National Incident Management System (NIMS) model or National Disaster Recovery Framework.
  
- B. No quick decisions can be made until priorities are determined from a coordinating voice.
  
- C. There must be regulatory clarity in defining programs and overlap.
  
- D. The Framework should factor in an advocacy piece for disaster recovery.

**3. How and when will case management systems be launched and administered?**

- A. Contemplate funding staff and systems to institutionalize case management at the state level to ensure this resource is available to individuals and businesses early on.
  - i) Coordinate with LTRCs and Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD).
  - ii) State must fund case management immediately to get it up and running quickly. Cannot wait for the discussion or decision to use federal funding.
  - iii) Iowa now has a case management system that is being created through DHS. Developing standards, forms, processes, program triggers, etc., however this is an unfunded mandate.
  - iv) State needs coordinating capability at state/local/federal level. Pass legislation for funding. Fund staff and assistance on the state level to coordinate response.
  - v) Need case management standards. Need to fund a staff and system for coordination at the state level.
  - vi) Coordination of agencies and organizations is critical at the local and state level.
  - vii) Use a common database.
  - viii) Federal funding available but needs to be coordinated at the state level.
  - ix) Iowa needs personnel/FTE to manage the case management system. Assemble all the different programs. Coordinator for individual assistance that works across the agencies to help keep informed keeps lines of communication open.



- x) Institutionalize and streamline case management sooner and before disasters strike. Coordination role and link at the state level.
  - xi) A few things need to happen quickly. We need a common database and we need to fund a case management system as soon as possible. We also need to get business recovery going for small businesses as soon as possible.
  - xii) Reduce the number of funding streams supporting case management. We have 24 different funds that we manage. Case management initially came from local donations, then Embrace Iowa and then the state's grant.
- B. Need to start with the grassroots via case management; need to try to minimize program development from the "top-down."
- i) Case management must have input and determine needs as well.
  - ii) Case managers tell you what the issues are and how they should be addressed.
  - iii) Coordinated Assistance Network (CAN) database is used by non-government organizations (NGOs) but not available for Government entities
  - iv) There are many groups that are willing to assist; the problem is that there is no one that is organizing them. There are a lot of agencies willing to help, but it's the coordination of the efforts that are needed.
  - v) Case workers will be huge help in gathering data and assessing needs. They are your boots on the ground.
  - vi) Efficiency of case management service delivery is desirable - develop value stream mapping events.
  - vii) Program flexibility is encouraged such as existed with the Iowa Unmet Needs Disaster Grant Program (IUNDGP).
- 4. How are programs designed to meet recovery needs?**
- A. A long-term recovery strategy needs to be created following a catastrophic disaster. Clear and specific recovery objectives need to be identified and approved. This will help to establish and management expectations.
- i) While it is important to get the money out fast, it is also important to make good decisions and take the time to determine the right decision.
  - ii) One team or person assembles all the programs.
  - iii) Go through a value stream mapping event to identify points of pain and "lean them up," similar to streamlining but more complex.
  - iv) Have someone serve as a coordinator between agencies; key is getting people communicating before the disaster.
  - v) Need someone who oversees the recovery process and "strikes the ax," assembles the programs together; would not make the SCO for the response and recovery the same person.
- B. Provide quality customer service incorporating: tangibles, reliability, responsive, trustworthy/assurance, empathy.
- i) Reduce the delays of getting funding out the door.
  - ii) Measured by the clients receiving services and how quickly their needs are

- responded to and their needs met.
- iii) Programs must be designed from the bottom up.
- C. Business case management with a common data system is also needed.
- D. Business recovery dollars are needed immediately.
- i) Immediate access to dollars for businesses to make payroll – not every business had six months worth of income to meet the needs for running a business
- 5. How are interagency communication and public communication/messaging coordinated?**
- A. Recovery council should help determine and oversee messaging. One coordinating entity should make all information available, issue all press releases.
- i) Use unconventional means, such as sending people door-to-door, to ensure that technology is not a barrier.
  - ii) There is a need for coordinated messaging, which will also help with prioritization of messages going out to the public.
  - iii) Use an emergency allocation from the Executive Council to cover costs.
  - iv) Community Recovery Councils would be responsible.
  - v) Agencies must talk with one another in order for this Framework to be successful.
  - vi) FEMA does a good job of publicizing numbers, repeatedly. A recovery coordinating council could assist with messaging.
  - vii) The Framework should include a means for outreach and public information. This should be built into the coordinating entity's budget. Communication should also be driven through the local level through councils, etc.
- B. Need to be sure the messages can get to those who might be displaced during emergency times.
- i) Coordinated communication.
  - ii) We must repeat the information continuously in order for disaster victims to hear it and understand what's available. The RIO continuously put out press releases and local governments continued to work on publicity too.
  - iii) We simply need to make them aware of where they can get the money, and then program managers can discuss details.
  - iv) Hold neighborhood meetings and fasten signs on utility poles with information about recovery programs.
  - v) Tell positive stories.
  - vi) Diverse, repetitious communication is needed to reach displaced individuals.
- C. Centralized reporting
- i) One centralized clearinghouse for press releases.
  - ii) The "Working to Recover" press releases issued by RIO have been very



- helpful because it demonstrates how the dollars are being used.
- iii) Messaging needs to be coordinated for effective success.
- iv) We need to do a better job of having a coordinated approach to press releases. Not every agency should be sending out random press releases instead it should be a coordinated messaging effort. Also, when messages are inconsistent and coming from various agencies, it can cause confusion.
- v) We need to have a joint information center during recovery phase, like we have in the response phase, so media messages can be monitored and addressed.

**6. How is active participation from the various partners maintained throughout the recovery?**

- A. A steering committee maintains participation for services from different agencies.
  - i) Ensure sufficient funding of recovery activities.
  - ii) Numbers diminish as needs change and lessons are learned.
  - iii) Require buy-in from agencies as the recovery moves forward; come to agreement on roles and responsibilities; capacity is a real issue; need funds for staffing, such as through the Emergency Public Jobs (EPJ) program. Utilize Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) and Memorandum of Agreements (MOA).
  - iv) Education, communication and preparation – recovery exercises, building the Framework.
  - v) There must be continuing education, exercise and communication all done ahead of time. At times of disaster, EPJ program should be utilized to assist participating agencies.

**7. How will progress towards meeting needs and implementing programs be collected and reported?**

- A. Benchmarks for recovery need to be established based upon metrics.
  - i) Introduce metrics for performance management/benchmarks early in the recovery process.
  - ii) Success or failure – should be defined by pre-identified expectations. Establish reasonable expectations.
  - iii) Evaluate the length of time it takes to respond to meeting people’s needs.
  - iv) Business and landlord issues are an important component of recovery. Need to understand the big picture of a recovery, both in the beginning and longer term (other economic implications such as the recession can have a lasting impact).
- B. Gather input from those impacted.
  - i) Track, analyze and report the number of incoming calls from those impacted. A decrease in calls might mean you are meeting the needs.
  - ii) Efficiency of deliver is an important objective. Get input from corporations on how they might address this. A good evaluation component is reduced delay times and focus on what customer needs.

- iii) When unmet needs are addressed.
- iv) The recovery belongs to the client and if they don't return calls, paperwork, etc. -there is nothing you can do about it.
- v) We need to take an initiative to do surveys; there are five components of surveys – tangibles, reliable, responsible, trustworthy and empathy.
- vi) Possibly hold surveys with those you are serving to see if their needs are being met.

C. Report funding progress

- i) Dollars out the door is very important to some stakeholders and we need to be aware of that.
- ii) Must reduce time delay on getting money to those in need.
- iii) Dollars out the door is a measure of success for state issues, not for recovery of citizens.
- iv) There is an issue with just reporting dollars out the door, rather than the impacts of those dollars.

### **DISCUSSION SET THREE**

#### **1. Is there a trigger for the deactivation process?**

- A. The executive order calling for implementation of the recovery Framework should list objectives that detail goals or benchmarks to be achieved which will serve as the basis for the recovery agency's planning of their closing strategy.
- B. Legislation should have enough specificity of mission to know when it has been accomplished. It is questionable if a time limit should be identified at the beginning.
- C. The process is really a de-escalation, not a deactivation.
- D. One guideline will be a majority of families having returned to permanent housing. Individual Assistance cases typically take two years.
- E. Business recovery and infrastructure restoration is also important. Public assistance projects can take 5-10 years to be completed.
- F. One suggestion was to consider the percentage of cases that have been closed; perhaps start discussing closing the office/Framework when 50 percent of the cases are closed, with a goal of closing when 75 percent of the cases are handled.
- G. Percentage of money "out the door," feedback from lowans and progress of synchronization of streamlining efforts are indicators of readiness to de-escalate.
- H. Availability of resources, including funding, will have an effect on de-escalation. Policy makers will decide this.

**2. What is needed to ensure seamless deactivation?**

- A. Someone or entity should be responsible and accountable for long-term recovery.
- B. Communities should have input on their recovery progress. This will differ by community. Communication must occur to ensure they are prepared for Framework deactivation.
- C. Capacity and funding both play a role. Once programs have been developed, decisions made, and resources allocated, the coordination function can wind down.
- D. There may be a shift of focus and staff expertise during the recovery and de-escalation process. Following the 2008 disaster, once individual needs were being met there was a continued need to coordinate with federal agencies and focus on new housing production and public assistance projects.
- E. As agencies have the capacity to absorb the tasks, transition should occur.

**3. Is there anything else to consider regarding deactivation?**

- A. Advocacy is a critical role of the recovery coordination entity; the value can be difficult to quantify but the continuing need for advocacy should play a role in consideration of the timing of de-escalation.

**4. How do we ensure that the State Disaster Recovery Framework is kept current and relevant?**

- A. Federal partners should be incorporated regularly into training exercises to provide updates on changing federal policies and programs so the state knows what to expect and can incorporate these details into the Framework.
- B. The Framework won't be triggered with every presidentially declared disaster. A distinction needs to be made between catastrophic and "normal" disasters, federal vs. state declarations, etc.
- C. A formal Framework will outline goals, roles and responsibilities.
- D. A catastrophic event involves activities not part of a normal response, whether declared at the state or federal level.
- E. We need to define and establish a relationship between response, mitigation and recovery.
- F. Metrics should be developed.

- G. Determine the scalability of ramping up/down.
- H. Legislation should be attached indicating where responsibility lies - possibly with the disaster recovery coordination body, the SCO, or the legislature.
- I. The Framework needs to be exercised. Options could include incorporating recovery into a response exercise or having a stand-alone recovery exercise. Including recovery requires a cultural shift.
- J. Recovery should be an item in the "Incident Action Plan"
  - i) The Governor should require exercise participation -- then state agencies will be sure their people show up.
- K. There must be a financial commitment, either to maintain minimal staff on an ongoing basis or to hire consultants at the time of a major disaster.
- L. 2008 showed there is value in having consultants show us what opportunities are available in federal recovery.
- M. Having access to people with current information about federal appropriations is critical.
- N. The Framework won't be triggered with every presidentially declared disaster.
- O. A downturn in the economy following the 2008 disasters means good people were available to join the RIO staff.
  - i) Good people are an important part of an organization's success and may not be as readily available at the time of the next disaster; we need to prepare for that.
- P. Resources are needed if the state wants to maintain federal appropriation knowledge in-house; consider continued staffing at a minimal level.
- Q. Keep recovery staff on to keep the lines of communication open – maybe 2-3 staff members, or some middle ground between current staffing of 20 and nothing.
  - i) These core people could continue to work on things and coordinate and advocate for years to come.
  - ii) Examples of the value they will bring include preserving institutional memory, providing advice and counsel to local governments while awaiting the next disaster, providing a state coordinating officer role to keep lines of communication open, continuing an advocacy role, and helping to provide visualization of what took place which can be more helpful than written documentation.

R. Some federal agencies have representatives in the state on a permanent basis while other programs have representatives here only during a disaster. There needs to be ongoing lines of communication established during down time.

**5. How will the State Disaster Recovery Framework be evaluated?**

A. Conduct a survey asking for feedback on whether services are tangible, reliable, and responsive.

B. We will be successful if we reduce delay time and focus on getting service to people who need help.

C. Speed of money "out the door" is a measure.

D. Monitor complaint calls and number of people needing assistance.

E. Look at lessons learned in other states too.

F. Consider the lean/six sigma process; scalability of ramping up and down is similar to the process of opening a new business and then closing it down.

G. Maintain some recovery staff on an ongoing basis.

H. A group, agency, or council needs to hold the key to the Framework. The return on investment in a RIO-like office is high.

I. The Framework can provide guidance for less severe disasters also.

J. A state coordinating officer should work year round, rotate as necessary.

K. A central coordination point should be identified.

L. The state's Individual Assistance Officer is currently housed with DHS; this should be centralized with other response and recovery personnel.

M. Ensure the recovery Framework is up-to-date technologically.

N. The recovery Framework needs to be flexible and usable; ensure it doesn't become a burdensome bureaucracy so reactivation becomes difficult.

O. The Framework needs to meet the needs at the time of a disaster.

P. Needs change throughout the recovery process so the Framework needs to prepare to adjust to that.

Q. Evaluation of recovery efforts by communities and individuals is important in

determining success and when to wind down coordination.

R. Engage agencies that aren't the typical disaster response/recovery agencies.

S. Communication is vital before, during and after a disaster.

T. Much is changing at the local, state and federal level regarding handling of the transition from response to recovery; Iowa needs to stay on top of this and be ready to implement programs that take those changes into account.

U. We need a recovery plan and the structure and staffing should be protected from legislative interference.

V. Don't let the important role of locals be ignored or allowed to atrophy; frequent exercises will be beneficial.

**6. How will the State Disaster Recovery Framework be exercised?**

A. Recovery needs to be imbedded into the process of response exercises.

B. Separate exercises focusing only on recovery can also be beneficial.

C. The Governor calls the exercise and HSEMD is responsible for carrying it out.

D. Include agencies that don't always participate in a response or recovery.

E. People show up when the Governor calls an exercise.

F. Agencies will participate when value is perceived; a need should be identified and metrics attached.

G. Drills need to be written and exercise needs to take place.

**7. Is there anything else that needs to be considered to make sure the Framework remains current and relevant?**

A. The After Action Report should prioritize the fact that remaining recovery tasks are monumental.

B. Louisiana found a need to extend the presence of their recovery office; we may need to do the same.

C. A focus on planning and mitigation will reduce the need for response and recovery in the future.

## **APPENDIX B: HOT WASH EVALUATION SUMMARY**

During the final session of the Iowa Disaster Recovery Tabletop Exercise, each person was asked to share their thoughts about the Exercise, what they learned and/or what they would like to see happen. Here is a brief summary of comments.

- I am very comfortable with this Framework during a catastrophic disaster recovery; however, I am very interested to hear what this Framework would do when not activated.
- There is a need for a common database and improved communication.
- We need visual documentation about what happened to illustrate how things could work in the future. I believe RIO is national model. It is good to get local input.
- We need to discuss with utilities the practicality of being part of the shared database. We also need to find a way to hold expertise/continuity over time.
- It is important to emphasize scalability of recovery (instead of just flipping the switch to catastrophic) and transition from response to recovery.
- There is a common language issue regarding response versus recovery.
- We need an ongoing funding mechanism to exercise and train entities to work together.
- Some of the federal agencies are here for good, others, like FEMA, leave when their work is complete. However, there needs to be ongoing communication between all agencies during disaster times and not. There are resources that could be tapped into before disasters (FEMA hazard mitigation) to avoid certain situations.
- The state needs to find a way to stay current with changing federal policy/perspective regarding disaster recovery. It will make it much easier if we know the rules on the front end.
- There is a lot of work yet to be done. Looking at RIO's termination date, there is still a large amount of work that needs to be done. There is a monumental task ahead of us.
- I would like to see this Framework kept up to date regarding new technology to ensure compatibility. It needs to be a living, working document.
- Let's not forget about businesses when we think about disaster recovery.
- We must figure out a way to capture all of RIO's lessons learned and be able to rapidly activate a recovery Framework in the future.
- I'm surprised at how little discussion occurred around mitigation. Federal and state agencies provide the muscle to get the response effort going and the locals are the legs – they need to be exercised.
- We must remember the constant training for local and county levels, and maintain a core group if RIO deactivates to stay current on federal disaster recovery and ensure technological compatibility.
- The plan must be flexible and usable to match any given disaster and all levels.

**After Action Report/Improvement Plan (AAR/IP)**  
**Iowa Disaster Recovery Tabletop Exercise**  
Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP)

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- I really liked the conversation regarding expectations around recovery and what our goals might be. If we have good goals, we can create appropriate programs.
- It is essential that the state must keep some organization to stay current with the federal programs.
- Agencies should continue to look for symbiotic relationships with other agencies.
- Whatever structure comes out of this discussion needs to not become a burdensome bureaucracy.
- We need to be proactive about mitigation and good decision-making (referenced 1967 map of Cedar Rapids that predicted a flood similar to 2008).
- We need to be sure to address the need to get “good people” for recovery work.



## APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

### Exercise Feedback Form Results

#### Part I: Assessment of Exercise Design and Conduct

Please rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, your overall assessment of the exercise relative to the statements provided below, with 1 indicating strong disagreement with the statement and 5 indicating strong agreement. Additional comments can be explained in part III.

Assessment Factor	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		
The exercise was well structured and organized. <b>Responses</b>	1	2	3	4	5
			4	10	12
The 2022 exercise scenario helped me understand the goals and objectives of the exercise. <b>Responses</b>	1	2	3	4	5
		4	6	13	4
The video presentation helped me understand and become engaged in the scenario. <b>Responses</b>	1	2	3	4	5
	3	5	12	5	1
The facilitator(s) were knowledgeable about the material, kept the exercise on target, and was sensitive to group dynamics. <b>Responses</b>	1	2	3	4	5
			1	10	14
The Situation Manual was a valuable tool throughout the exercise. <b>Responses</b>	1	2	3	4	5
		1	5	17	1
Participation in the exercise was appropriate for someone in my position. <b>Responses</b>	1	2	3	4	5
		1	3	8	14
The players included the right people in terms of level and agencies represented. <b>Responses</b>	1	2	3	4	5
	1		5	11	8
I understood the goals of the exercise. <b>Responses</b>	1	2	3	4	5
			4	12	10
The exercise was designed to meet the stated objectives. <b>Responses</b>	1	2	3	4	5
			1	14	11

#### Part II: Top 3 Long-Term Recovery Recommendations

- The amount of time devoted to the exercise was:
  - TOO MUCH (0)
  - TOO LITTLE (2)
  - JUST RIGHT (21)

**2. Do you think any other agencies should have participated:**

YES (14)

NO (4)

If yes, which agencies?

- a. Iowa County Emergency Managers Association (4)
- b. FEMA (3)
- c. IDALS (2)
- d. Economic Development Organizations (2)
- e. Flood affected businesses (2)
- f. Local EMA directors
- g. Red Cross/Salvation Army (2)
- h. IGOV
- i. IDOM
- j. Chamber of Commerce
- k. Corps of Engineers
- l. Federal railroad administration
- m. USDA, HUD, SBA, EDA
- n. FSA
- o. Rural Development
- p. Department of Energy
- q. Telephone company
- r. Local folks

**3. Based on the discussions today, list your top three long-term recovery recommendations:**

- a. A shared database and information clearing house (13).
- b. Implementing a Framework and keeping it alive, who turns it on and how? (6)
- c. Staying current with regulations (5)
- d. Exercise repeatedly (3)
- e. Communicate (3)
- f. Funding for local needs (2)
- g. Focus on client (individual & business) (2)
- h. Design a seamless system between response and recovery (2)
- i. Case work management available immediately
- j. Funding for future disasters
- k. Maintenance of institutionalized knowledge by agency
- l. Retention of expertise
- m. Lessons learned
- n. Define recovery expectations
- o. Lack of jobs and tax base
- p. Maintain the RIO
- q. The RIO runs training
- r. State coordinator for recovery
- s. Capture data

- t. Ongoing recovery activity
- u. Create SCO position
- v. Impacted community rep in state recovery group
- w. Set longer-term goals
- x. Insurance
- y. A plan that is exempt from politics
- z. Visual documentation of best practices for each process

**4. What potential barriers exist in implementing a long-term recovery program?**

- a. Lack of funding/long-term funding (8)
- b. Lack of shared data (3)
- c. Federal agency operating differences (2)
- d. Common forms and standardized damage assessment forms (2)
- e. Lack of training at local/state level (2)
- f. Not focused on mitigation (2)
- g. Shelf dust
- h. No training program
- i. State dollars with minimum strings
- j. Pre-existing program adaptability
- k. Institutional knowledge
- l. Joint effort between local, state, federal and volunteer agencies
- m. Make the Framework simple, easy to use and accessible
- n. Lack of funding flexibility
- o. Politics
- p. Continuity of expertise
- q. Duplication of effort

**5. What questions, concerns or issues were not addressed or answered during the exercise?**

- a. Mitigation efforts (4)
- b. Who will be in charge? (2)
- c. Prioritizing essentials (2)
- d. Proactive planning (2)
- e. RIO's future
- f. Centralized services for the recovery phase
- g. Lead agency
- h. Other disasters besides flooding
- i. Volunteer coordination
- j. Media communications strategy– non-English speaking
- k. Specific benchmarks to success
- l. Communicating success stories
- m. Responsibility of homeowners/business owners have.
- n. Rural Iowa
- o. Actual customers for input

**6. What long-term recovery issues need attention during the next legislative session in order to get a state recovery Framework implemented?**

- a. Dedicated recovery funding (4)
- b. Develop plan to maintain RIO or agency that serves the role (3)
- c. Recovery staffing (2)
- d. Creation of a 1 or 2 person recovery position in HSEMD or IDED
- e. Maintain a core group for recovery
- f. Incentives to spur regional type disaster mitigation.
- g. Recovery at the county and local level
- h. Who is in charge from local on up?
- i. Flood damage prevention
- j. Structure of recovery council
- k. Funding for emergency management infrastructure
- l. Develop long-term strategy to prevent future disasters
- m. Better training
- n. Tax abatements
- o. Updated floodplain maps
- p. Identify roadblocks that stop or slow recovery
- q. Funding for long-term mitigation
- r. Ensure federal regulations are followed
- s. Business recovery
- t. Invest in a staff structure to not have to recreate the wheel
- u. Who is responsible for the Framework?
- v. Set up SCO position in HSEMD
- w. Advocacy for natural disaster recovery policy and funding
- x. Ability to stay current on disaster recovery best practices