

Preparing and Responding to Natural Disasters: Health Care for the Homeless Perspectives

Wednesday, February 28th

11:00 AM CT



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Disclaimer

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Presenters

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Learning Objectives

- Highlight key findings from Miami-Dade County's assessment of community preparation for and response to Hurricane Irma.
- Summarize issues arising from involuntary commitment of consumers who ignore mandatory evacuation orders prior to disasters.
- Identify currently available resources for health centers and shelters to bolster outreach efforts and to positively engage consumers prior to disasters.
- Recognize the importance of adequate emergency management planning.
- Prepare for both common and unique needs of people who are homeless when responding to a disaster.
- Identify strategies to assist in providing services for people who are homeless during the recovery phase of a disaster.



Hurricane Irma

the Miami consumer perspective

Useful Strategies to Proactively Engage
and
Prepare Consumers for Natural Disasters



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Presentation Overview

1. Background of Irma's impact on Miami;
2. Evacuation orders from the City of Miami as implemented by the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust and City of Miami Police;
3. Issues arising from threatened and actual involuntary commitment (Florida Baker Act) of homeless persons who refused evacuation orders; and
4. Lessons learned, suggestions and resources for engaging consumers prior to future disasters



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HURRICANE IRMA

Irma was the strongest Atlantic hurricane ever recorded in terms of maximum sustained winds.

Irma was the first Category 5 hurricane to strike the eastern Caribbean islands followed by Hurricane Maria two weeks later.

The second-costliest Caribbean hurricane on record, after Maria

Irma caused widespread and catastrophic damage throughout its long lifetime, particularly in the northeastern Caribbean and the Florida Keys.

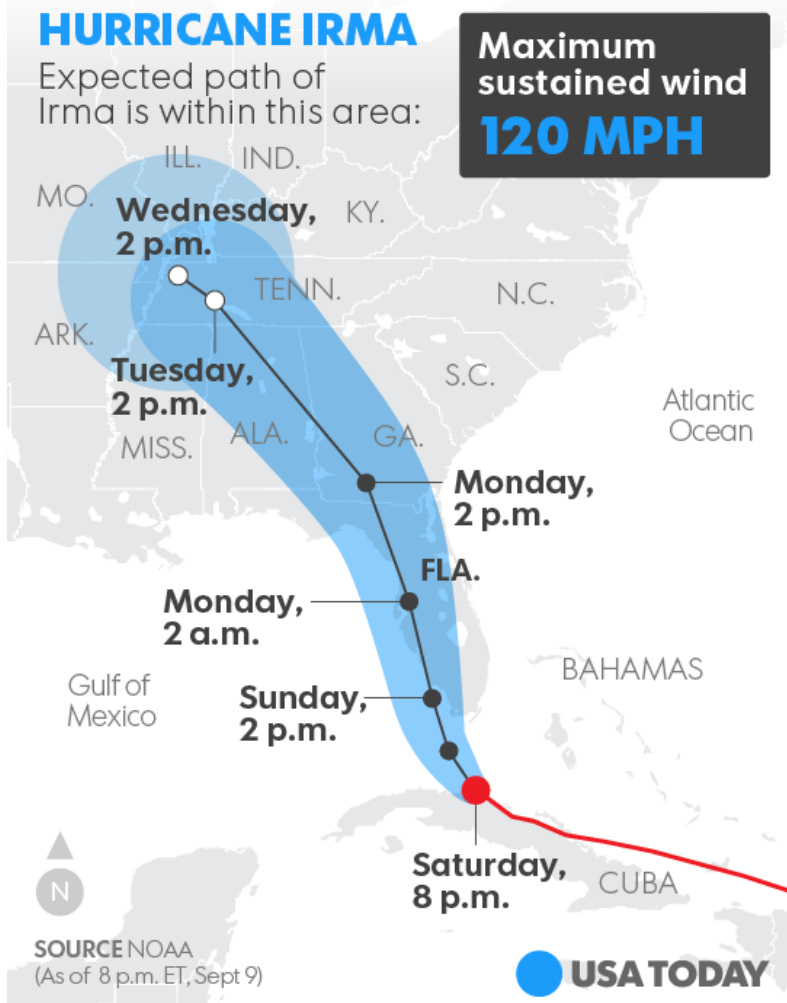
It was also the most intense hurricane to strike the continental United States since Katrina in 2005.,

The first major hurricane to make landfall in Florida since Wilma in 2005



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Hurricane Irma's Impact on Florida

Irma struck Florida twice on September 10, 2017 – the first as a Category 4 at in the middle Florida Keys and the second on Marco Island on the Florida West Coast as a Category 3.

The hurricane weakened significantly over Florida and was reduced to a tropical storm before exiting into Georgia on September 11.

The storm's large wind field resulted in strong winds across the entire state except for the western Panhandle. The strongest reported sustained wind speed was 112 mph on Marco Island, while the highest observed wind gust was 142 mph, recorded near Naples, though stronger winds likely occurred in the Middle Keys.

Miami recorded routine gusts of 90 mph. Sustained winds were from 45 to 60 mph.

Over 7.7 million homes and businesses were without power at some point – approximately 73.33% of electrical customers in the state.

Irma caused at least \$50 billion in damage, making it the costliest hurricane in Florida history, surpassing Hurricane Andrew.

The hurricane left a total of 93 fatalities across 27 counties, including 12 at a nursing home due to sweltering conditions and lack of power in the hurricane's aftermath.



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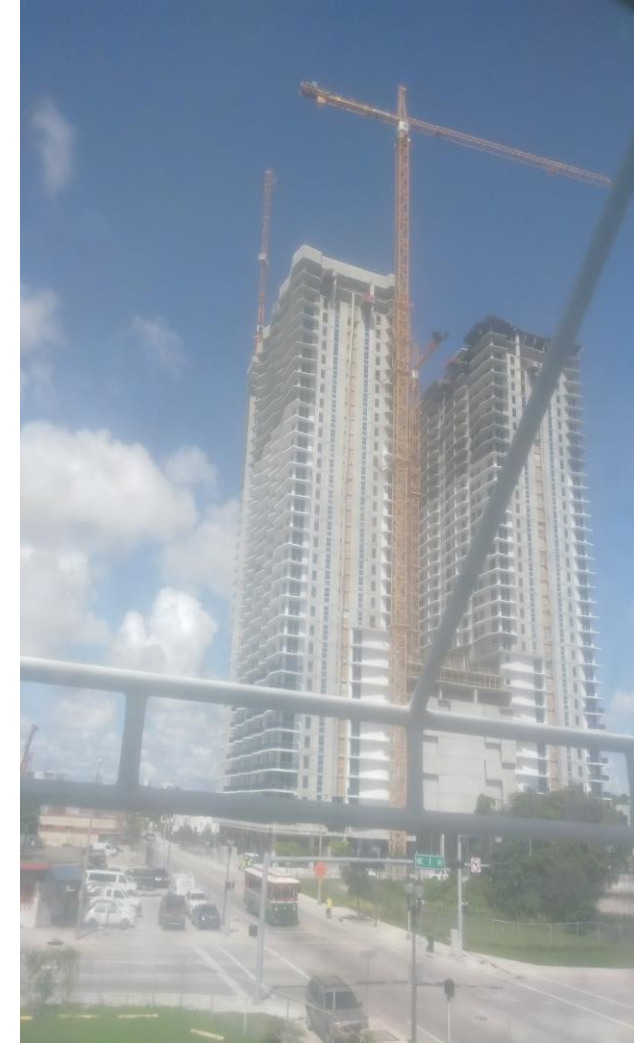
Miami cranes cause concern as Hurricane Irma barrels toward Florida

SEP 7, 2017 9:10 AM EDT CBS THIS
MORNING
CBS NEWS



In Miami, there are big concerns over some 25 construction cranes that cannot be taken down before Irma's expected arrival this weekend. People who live in nearby buildings are being urged to get out.

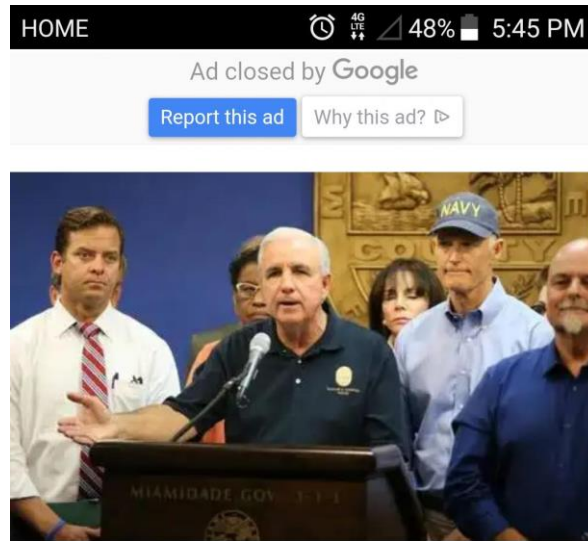
The massive cranes are symbolic of the construction boom reshaping Miami's skyline. The counterbalances alone can weigh up to 30,000 pounds. You don't want to be anywhere near one if it starts to collapse, reports CBS News' Mark Strassmann.



Scene from my bedroom window 9/7/17

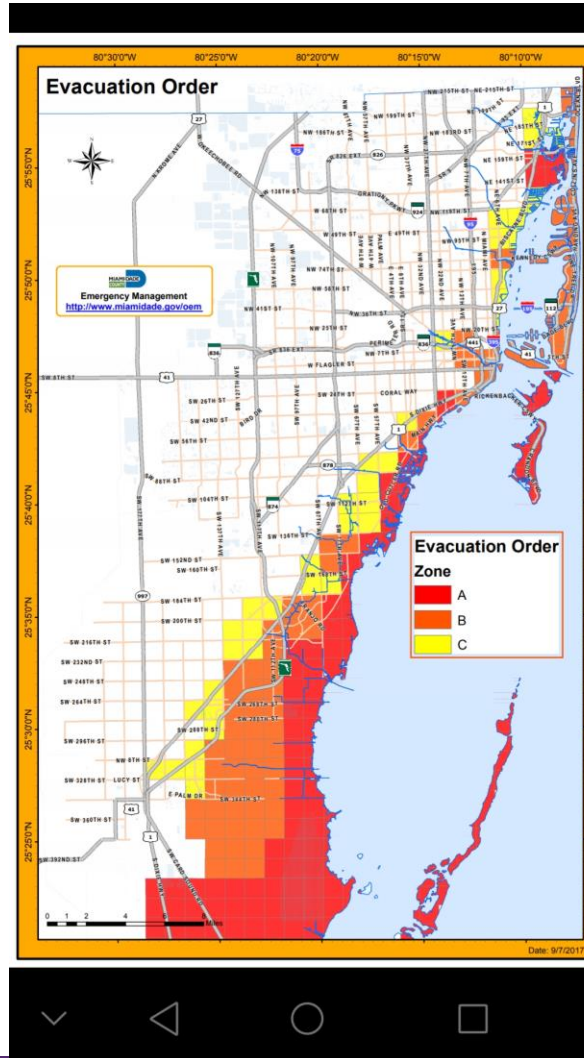


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HURRICANE

Miami-Dade orders coastal evacuation as Hurricane Irma threatens



Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez issued expanded evacuation orders Thursday, September to the county's coast and other inland areas as Hurricane Irma threatened to bring severe flooding to South Florida.

The orders represent the largest evacuation ever attempted by Miami-Dade County, with more than 650,000 instructed to leave their homes ahead of Irma.

While often described as "mandatory," the orders carry no punishment for people who choose to remain in evacuation zones.





HURRICANE

Miami's homeless shelters fill empty beds ahead of Hurricane Irma

Baker Act on the Homeless

In the hours before Hurricane Irma was expected to pummel Florida, authorities were urging homeless people to go to shelters.

For those who refused, police were employing a controversial law known as the Baker Act, which allows officers to send anybody they believe poses a danger to themselves or others to a mental institution, where they can be held for up to 72 hours for an involuntary examination.

The 1971 law has been widely criticized by advocates for the homeless. But with Irma bearing down on Miami-Dade County, some advocates had been urging local authorities to use it.


"It's a bad storm and we needed to take drastic measures," said Ron Book, chairman of the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust, a public-private partnership that aims to end homelessness.

"I'm not going to see our homeless population dead in the streets. I'd rather see this law used than to have them in body bags," he said.



2/21/2018

Miami will Baker Act homeless if they won't seek shelter from Hurricane Irma | Miami Herald



HURRICANE





Miami's homeless to be committed if they won't seek shelter from Irma

BY DAVID SMILEY
dsmiley@miamiherald.com

September 07, 2017 03:49 PM
Updated October 24, 2017 01:29 PM

Miami's homeless men and women who won't seek shelter from Hurricane Irma will be involuntarily committed to a psychiatric ward ahead of the storm, the head of Miami-Dade's public agency in charge of homeless services said Thursday.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/weather/hurricane/article171813132.html>



2/21/2018

Police removing homeless from the streets of Miami as Hurricane Irma approaches

TOPICS

12 WEEKS FOR 99¢
Sale ends 2/28

LOG

SPECIAL OFFER | 12 WEEKS FOR 99¢

Days after Florida massacre, L.A. County authorities raced to thwart a school shooting plot in...





As homeless camps explode in L.A. suburbs, residents fear they will become permanent


How much more hum
Melania Trum

NATION

Police removing homeless from the streets of Miami as Hurricane Irma approaches

By KURTIS LEE and LES NEUHAUS
SEP 09, 2017 | 4:45 PM
MIAMI



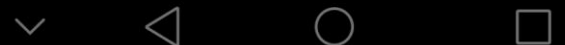


SPECIAL OFFER

12 WEEKS FOR ONLY 99¢
Hurry, offer ends 2/28


SAVE MONEY

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-irma-miami-homeless-20170909-story.html>



72% 6:56 PM




AP



Mental health Health Storms Hurricane Irma Florida Miami Hurricanes U.S. News AP Top News

Miami shelters homeless against their will as Irma closes in

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON
Sep. 08, 2017

<https://apn>


MIAMI (AP) — On what is likely the last clear day in Florida before Hurricane Irma's monster wind and rain, social workers and police officers are giving Miami's estimated 1,400 homeless people a stark choice: Come willingly to a storm shelter, or be held against their will for a mental health evaluation.

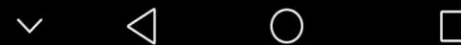
With the outer edge of the storm approaching Friday, these officials — backed by a psychiatrist and observed by an Associated Press team — rolled through chillingly empty downtown streets as dawn broke over Biscayne Bay, searching for reluctant stragglers sleeping in waterfront parks.

"We're going out and every single homeless person who is unwilling to come off the street, we are likely going to involuntarily Baker Act them," said Ron Book, chairman of the Miami-Dade Homeless Trust.

Invoking the "Baker Act" — a law that enables authorities to institutionalize patients who present a danger to themselves or others — is not something law enforcement does lightly, but officers detained at least six people by Friday afternoon. Under the law, they can be held up to 72 hours before the state would have to go to court to prolong their detention.

By then, Irma's howling winds and terrifying storm surge should be somewhere north of the city.





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MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

HURRICANE IRMA

PRELIMINARY REPORT

Preliminary Draft - September 28, 2017



Miami-Dade County Report on Preparation and Response to Hurricane Irma

“On September 8, 2017, Homeless Trust Chairman Ronald L. Book, Trust staff, City of Miami Police and Specialized Outreach Teams with certified mental health professionals took the extraordinary measure of evaluating homeless persons refusing shelter in the face of the hurricane to determine if they were a threat to themselves or others.

In the end, six individuals were certified after an evaluation by a psychiatrist and taken to Jackson’s crisis stabilization unit for care. Of the six, only one ended up remaining after the second evaluation at the crisis stabilization unit.” (page 21)



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According to eyewitness reports and interviews, 18-25 people “voluntarily” went into shelters when faced with the prospect of being involuntarily committed as police stood by ready to ship them to the Jackson Hospital crisis unit.

This means that 18 – 25 persons were handcuffed and sat in police cars before deciding “voluntarily” to enter shelters rather than the crisis unit.

At least one person was cuffed and transported to the crisis unit but released after one hour due to clearing the initial psychiatric evaluation.



Hurricane Irma: High winds cause cranes to collapse in Miami

f Share / t Tweet / r Reddit / F Flipboard / @ Email

Last Updated Sep 10, 2017 3:50 PM EDT

MIAMI -- Two cranes atop high-rise buildings under construction collapsed Sunday in downtown Miami amid strong winds from **Hurricane Irma**.

The cranes were among two dozen such heavyweight hazards looming over the city skyline as the monster storm powered across the state.

No injuries were reported after either crash, said Miami City Manager Daniel Alfonso.

The first crane fell in a bay-front area filled with hotels and high-rise condo and office buildings, near the American Airlines Arena, where the NBA's Miami Heat play.

It was stationary after the collapse, according to the contractor operating the crane.

"All possible preparations and precautions were taken, but we believe that a micro-tornado struck this area, compromising the crane. Again, we're grateful there have been no injuries," said John Leite, Moriarty executive vice president.

Hurricane Irma

Latest

Highlights



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Miami flooding

A car is seen in a flooded street as Hurricane Irma passes through Miami, Florida, on Sept. 10, 2017 in Miami, Florida.

CREDIT: *Joe Raedle / Getty Images*



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Waves crash over a seawall in Miami

Waves crash over a seawall at the mouth of the Miami River from Biscayne Bay, Fla., as Hurricane Irma passes by, Sunday, Sept. 10, 2017, in Miami.

CREDIT: *Wilfredo Lee / AP*



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Scenes from a Red Cross Disaster Shelter

September 11 – 20, 2017



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Scenes From the Red Cross Disaster Shelter at Florida International University



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LESSONS LEARNED



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Use peer support specialists

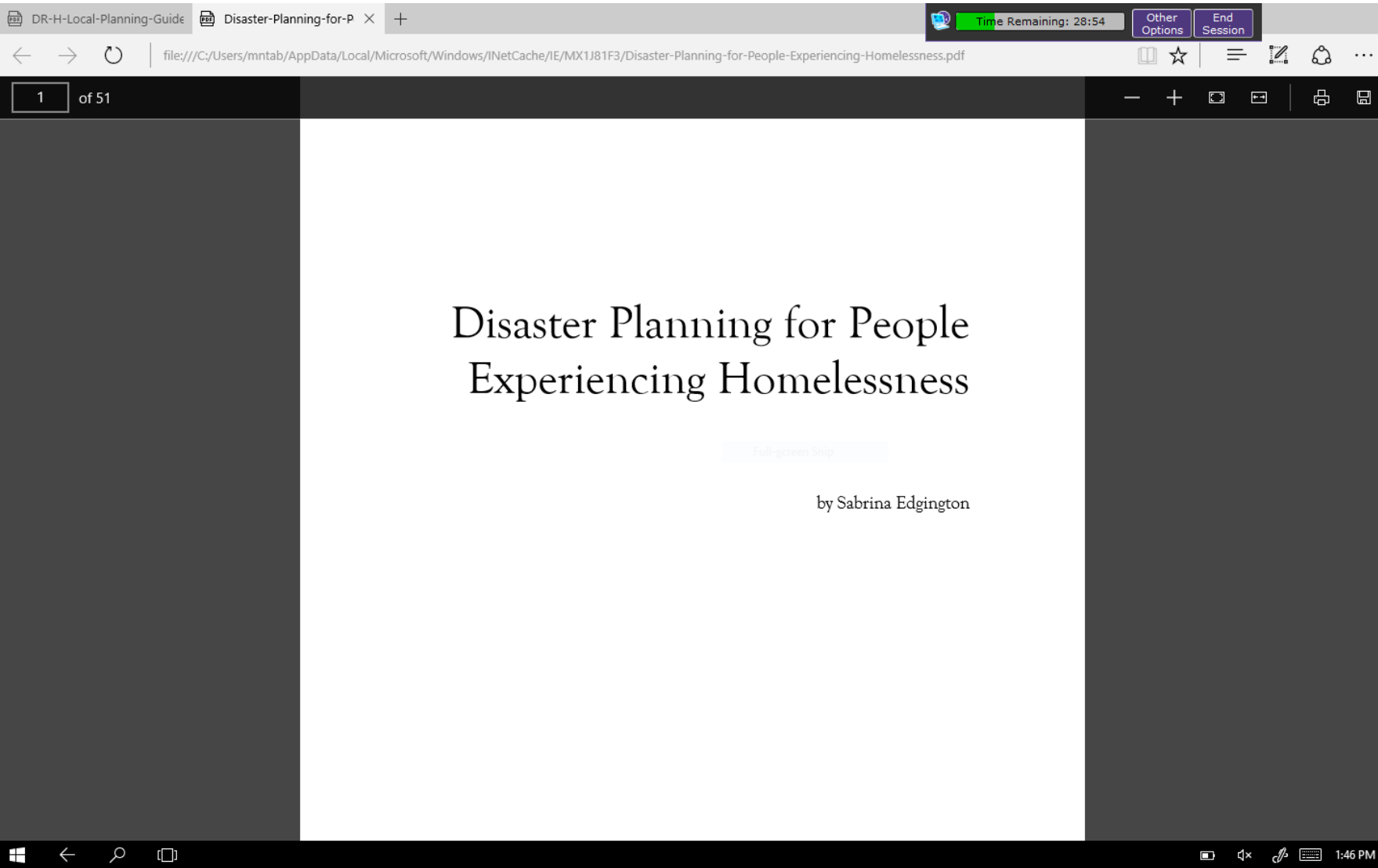
And Consumer Advisory Board

For effective outreach and consumer engagement



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NHCHC disaster planning guide and 2015 issues brief



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DR-H-Local-Planning-G

Time Remaining: 32:39

Other Options

End Session

file:///C:/Users/mntab/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/IE/JK8EENUW/DR-H-Local-Planning-Guide-Steps-At-a-Glance.pdf

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

DISASTER RECOVERY
Homelessness Toolkit



LOCAL PLANNING GUIDE

STEPS	CHECK	INVOLVE	COLLECT	IDENTIFY	IMPROVE	PREPARE
	1: Find out what disaster planning has taken place	2: Get the right people together	3: Obtain data on your homeless population	4: Gather information about your provider network	5: Expand your plan	6: Define roles, maintain the plan, and prepare
Why you should do this step...	Some disaster planning probably has already taken place in your community. No need to reinvent the wheel. Find out who was involved and what was accomplished. Were homeless and vulnerable populations addressed? Were they consulted? Does the plan identify special actions for these populations such as sheltering, mass evacuations for people without vehicles, mental health services? Do not be alarmed if these populations aren't mentioned. Here is your chance to make that happen.	No individual has all the knowledge and skills needed to identify issues and solutions for homeless populations in a disaster. You will need to build a network of people who have deep understanding of your community, disaster planning, and homelessness. All communities have a Continuum of Care (CoC) organization that coordinates work to end homelessness (note that your area could be covered by a "Balance of State" CoC if there is not a CoC in your city or county). Work with the CoC leadership. Let homeless service providers know about existing disaster preparedness plans, involve them and their clients in developing knowledge about persons experiencing homelessness and other vulnerable populations, and gain their commitment to working on plan improvements.	Identify and review existing data from the Con Plan, the Continuum of Care, and qualitative accounts from local service providers, to get a clearer picture of the numbers, characteristics, and locations of homeless people in your community.	Your service provider network has skilled staff, facilities, and protocols for addressing homelessness that can support the disaster response. You will want to take advantage of these assets in your response. But a disaster can disrupt or overwhelm the organizations' operations. You need to understand the assets that are available as well as potential service gaps if a disaster hits.	After analyzing existing plans, creating a network, and using data to understand community needs and resources, you're ready to enhance your community's existing disaster plans to address any gaps that overlook homeless people and other vulnerable populations. You will need to have solutions tailored to your community, but you don't need to come up with everything on your own. Best practices gleaned from other communities are covered in Parts 2 and 3 of this Toolkit.	Do not let all your good work go to waste. Take immediate steps to prepare, including training, outreach, and public education. Clarify roles and sign agreements to codify them. Stay in touch with stakeholders. Community information will change over time, so update your plan regularly.
What you will get from doing this step...	An understanding of your community's gaps in planning for homeless and vulnerable populations in disasters.	A team that has the knowledge, skills, and commitment to plan an effective response to the needs of homeless and vulnerable people after a disaster.	Increased knowledge of your homeless populations, including location of outdoor camps, scope and size of substance use disorders, common mental and physical challenges, and other key information that will help you craft a plan that addresses the real vulnerabilities in the community. Without this knowledge, you risk leaving people out and putting them in danger.	An inventory of the capacity, skills, and services that your service provider network can provide to assist homeless and other vulnerable people during and after a disaster as well as information about potential gaps in the network post-disaster.	An improved disaster plan that effectively integrates the needs of homeless people and other vulnerable people.	A commitment to and practical approach for the community to assist persons experiencing homelessness and other vulnerable people in a disaster.

<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/disaster-recovery-homelessness-toolkit/local-planning-guide/>

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HUD and Continuum of Care



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NO, WE SHOULD NOT INVOLUNTARILY COMMIT THE HOMELESS DURING HURRICANES

Only a broken system locks up homeless people to keep them safe.

DAVID M. PERRY · SEP 15, 2017

As Hurricane Irma bore down on Miami, officials from the Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust fanned out into the city, accompanied by police and mental-health officials. In order to protect homeless individuals from the worst effects of the storm, the Homeless Trust had decided to use the Baker Act, a 1970s-era Florida law allowing for the involuntary commitment of people suspected of mental illness, to lock up any homeless people who wouldn't voluntarily go to shelters. Ron Book, chairman of the Trust, told the Miami Herald: "I'm not going to be the mayor of Houston. I'm not going to tell people to take a Sharpie and write their names on their arm." (It was actually the Mayor of Rockport who told non-evacuees to take this step so that their bodies could be identified.) Instead, Book asserted that anyone who was still on the streets must be mentally ill, and that he intended to "have all of them Baker-Acted." A day later, homeless people were being cuffed and taken away, after psychiatrists working with the Trust stated that the decision to stay outside in the face of a hurricane merited incarceration.

All this might sound like reasonable policy. No one wants homeless people to die for want of shelter. Fred Friedman, however, has questions. Friedman is head organizer of Next Steps, an organization dedicated to ensuring that those with "lived experience of homelessness, mental illness, substance use, or addiction" drive all policy discussions about people with those experiences. Over the phone, he describes himself to me as a person who has experienced both homelessness and "active symptoms of mental illness" at various points in his life.

Friedman is concerned about homeless people in Miami. But he also knows that the risks don't come only from the storm. "It's scary," he says, "when people make decisions that others don't like, they define it as crazy. In this case, they lock them up without any due process." He wonders, now that this precedent has been set, what other moments will justify trawling the streets of Miami to "Baker-Act" homeless residents.

<https://psmag.com/social-justice/we-should-not-involuntarily-commit-the-homeless-during-hurricanes>

1/3



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DISASTER PLANNING AND EXPERIENCE FROM AN AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

Some lessons learned from the flooding and hurricane disasters in Houston, Texas.



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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANNING

- Good resources for developing plan: HRSA/BPHC, FEMA, CMS, NACHC, NHCHC (specific resources applicable for people experiencing homelessness); update regularly with lessons learned
 - HRSA requirements for emergency preparedness plans
- Necessary that staff understand roles & responsibilities, esp. management
- Prioritize staff safety during all phases: preparedness, response, recovery



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/cont.

- Coordinate with other community planning efforts/reduce duplication:
 - City, County, Department of Homeland Security (be a known resource)
 - Other provider agencies with outreach teams
 - HPD & Harris County Sheriff's Office: Homeless Outreach Teams
 - Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD)
 - Primary Care Associations
- Join Direct Relief and Americares *before* emergency – invaluable resource



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/cont.

- Good communication plan essential:
 - significant improvement in technology between Hurricane Ike (2009) and Hurricane Harvey (2017)
 - communication with HCH patients can be more challenging before and after an event, especially in situations without a lot of warning
 - establish post-event planning call times for the leadership team before the event, if possible (example: immediately after Harvey, leadership team had daily 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. calls until clinics could re-open)



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/cont.

- With hurricanes and most floods, there is typically enough warning time to prepare personally and professionally
 - Staff will need time to prepare their families and homes (again, emphasizing that staff safety is the first priority)
 - Medications and medication lists are priorities in early preparation stages: providers went through their patient panels to identify who was at danger of running out of medications and staff tried to get them to the clinic for a refill before the hurricane hit
 - Finding shelter is often a last minute decision (if willing to go at all): outreach teams tried to provide basic necessities if someone stayed outdoors



RESPONSE

- Reinforce the need for safety checks with and between staff (helps reduce anxiety); some staff may be severely affected and need assistance
- Have a plan for staff who may want to volunteer at emergency shelters or other venues – has potential to create scheduling challenges when clinical sites can re-open
 - ☐ HCH staff have expertise in working with SMI and SU, so there were many calls for their assistance by other agencies
- There will be some people who will leave the shelter following immediate danger; how to provide outreach to them?



RESPONSE/cont.

- Working in shelters: with Hurricane Harvey, there were 2 very large shelters run by FEMA and Red Cross, with many smaller shelters in churches, schools, etc.
 - ☐ Loud and chaotic; lots of fear and anxiety
 - ☐ Recognize secondary trauma
 - ☐ From beginning, shelter staff and volunteers treated people who are homeless differently
 - ☐ Volunteers, including professionals, report feeling overwhelmed when trying to assist people who are homeless and do not know or understand resources



RECOVERY

- Assess the well-being of staff on a regular basis – for some of our staff, this was the third time their homes had flooded in three years; everyone in the community was traumatized
- Assess facilities and equipment
- Develop plan to re-open for services based on facility and availability of staff – some of HHH staff had to be out for 2 weeks
- CAB members have invaluable wisdom, so involve them early when possible



RECOVERY/cont.

Become a vocal advocate:

- FEMA and the Red Cross categorized people who are homeless as different; FEMA wouldn't pay for emergency housing when shelters closed
- When seeking assistance inside the shelter, people were often told they should seek assistance from the homeless provider system
- Little understanding that someone living on the streets who may have lost all their possessions or camp, has also lost their home
- Some were prioritized by City housing authority, which was a benefit



RECOVERY/cont.

- Many patients came to HHH for basic needs following the hurricane rather than routine care
- Staff prepared for a spike in behavioral issues; increased BH outreach to several agencies that hosted evacuees
- 3 men who were living on the streets died in the flooding – people needed a way to express their grief



SOME ADDITIONAL LESSONS LEARNED

- As is said, this kind of tragedy is raceless and classless – that is not true of the recovery
- The stress of this kind of trauma takes a long time to lessen for everyone
- “managing” response and recovery consumes an incredible amount of time
- There will always be new lessons to be learned



Q&A

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