

Abstract:

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) can effectively achieve mutual goals by sharing resources and information and building on partners' strengths. Although PPPs are used in emergency management, little documented research exists on how they are used to support a Whole Community approach to emergency management. This article reviews literature on how such partnerships can support a Whole Community approach to meeting children's needs before, during, and after disasters. Recent examples of PPPs supporting planning and response to children's needs in disasters are provided; and these examples demonstrate effectiveness in planning and advocacy at local, regional, and national levels. Public-private partnerships should continue to be developed and assessed in the context of Whole Community planning to ensure that community, and specifically, children's needs in disasters are identified and addressed.

Keywords:

advocacy; children; collaboration; disaster; emergency partnership; public-private partnerships; Whole Community

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1522-8401

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Public-Private Partnerships: A Whole Community Approach to Addressing Children's Needs in Disasters

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After their recognition that government could not solely meet all of a community's needs in a catastrophic event, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) released guidance on the concept of the Whole Community approach to emergency management in 2011. The Whole Community approach aims to ensure that all the needs of a community are addressed in disaster planning. "Whole community is a means by which residents, emergency management practitioners, organizational and community leaders, and government officials can collectively understand and assess the needs of their respective communities and determine the best ways to organize and strengthen their assets, capacities, and interests."¹ Simply put, a community cannot solely rely on their emergency

management professionals to plan for emergencies or disasters through mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery activities. Instead, the planning process must incorporate a diverse collection of individuals and groups from across the entire community if all their needs are to be identified and met in a crisis.

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are one method to support a Whole Community approach. In this article, we discuss the literature on existing PPPs and their role in achieving shared objectives in the emergency management field. In addition, we review how PPPs can support a Whole Community approach and how PPPs are improving awareness, planning and response, and advocating for changes at the federal, state and/or local levels to improve disaster planning and response for children.

WHOLE COMMUNITY APPROACH TO MEET CHILDREN'S NEEDS

For decades, emergency managers typically overlooked care for children in disasters due to a lack of awareness of their needs and little institutional guidance on how to care for children when disasters or large emergencies occurred.² However, organizations are beginning to rectify this knowledge gap by developing and making available child-focused trainings and guidance. For example, individuals can now take courses such as FEMA's online IS-366: Planning for the Needs of Children in Disasters, Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service's Pediatric Disaster Response and Emergency Planning, and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Pediatric Education in Disasters. Internet searches for "children and disaster training" result in many additional quality training courses and resources. Guidance has also been documented in resources such as the Homeland Security Grant Program Supplemental Resource: Children in Disasters Guidance,³ the AAP Pediatric Preparedness Resource Kit,⁴ and New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Children in Disasters: Hospital Guidelines for Pediatric Preparedness,⁵ among others.

Training and guidance alone cannot provide a solution to meeting children's needs in a disaster. The systems and groups that provide support to children are spread across numerous sectors including pediatric medical and behavioral health, emergency management, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, schools, and child care providers. Complicating the multitude of organizations that play a role in meeting children's

needs are the specific needs, strengths, and existing structures of the state or territory and local community within which children live. These community intricacies would be supported by taking a Whole Community approach to meeting children's needs.

Using PPPs to Support a Whole Community Approach

One approach that could be pursued to achieve a Whole Community approach is PPPs. The PPP definition centers on the idea of the public and private sectors forming an arrangement to obtain a mutual goal.⁶ Federal Emergency Management Agency defines a PPP as a collaborative relationship built upon three components: needs, capabilities, and two-way communication.⁷ The purpose of PPPs is to increase efficiency and improve the quality and delivery of services and goods.

Existing PPPs in Emergency Management

Although research has demonstrated that PPPs have been effective in leveraging resources, studies relating to PPPs and emergency management often focus on the concept of resilience, although not all studies highlight the Whole Community angle or specifically use the term PPP.⁸⁻¹⁰ One example of an existing PPP is the Strategic National Stockpile program,¹¹ a collaborative effort involving state public health agency representatives and local businesses in Georgia. This partnership is based on a mutual objective to protect public health and reinforce community cohesion in a large-scale emergency or disaster situation. In this example, the business partners provide access to various business networks throughout the state and permits dispensing sites onto their company grounds to increase public access to stockpiled medical countermeasures. In addition to establishing agreements for distribution of the Strategic National Stockpile, the business and public health partners attend and participate in each other's meetings, which support open communication and improve trust and understanding, as the partnership continues.¹¹ Together, these elements are critical for successful PPP development and effectiveness.

Another example of an effective PPP includes the relationship between Walgreens, the largest drug-store chain in the United States, and local governments for the purpose of disaster preparedness and response. Walgreens has partnered with local governments in two ways. In the first case, the organization's employees respond to local and state emergency operation centers during disasters. They are provided advanced training and credentials to

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