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Northern California Grantmakers Disaster Preparedness and Response Initiative

Strategic Plan *April 1, 2007*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Northern California Grantmakers (NCG) launched the San Francisco Bay Area Disaster Preparedness and Response Initiative in September 2006 to support and mobilize the Bay Area's philanthropic sector to effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from a major, local, natural disaster. Since September, NCG has:

- Launched a Disaster Preparedness Task Force, comprised of 15 NCG members representing a broad range of funders and interest areas. To date, the Task Force has convened three times to advise the needs assessment and strategic planning process (September 2006, November 2006, and January 2007).
- Conducted a needs assessment of NCG members. The *Disaster Preparedness and Response Needs Assessment Report*, prepared by Putnam Community Investment Consulting, outlines key findings and recommendations based on data gathered from an online member survey, key informant interviews, and a literature review. Initial findings were reviewed and vetted by the Task Force in November 2006, and the final report provided critical information to inform and guide the Task Force in January 2007 as it began its strategic planning.
- Educated NCG members by convening an all-member gathering, *Katrina: Lessons for Bay Area Philanthropy*, and launched an online clearinghouse of information related to disaster preparedness in October 2006.

At its January 2007 meeting, the Task Force engaged in facilitated activities to collectively review and prioritize key findings and recommendations from the needs assessment and begin creating a logic model for a strategic plan. The Strategic Plan presented below builds upon this logic model. It also incorporates additional needs assessment findings and recent data and recommendations from the United Way of the Bay Area and Fritz Institute, which are also undertaking major efforts to support disaster preparedness in the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors of the Bay Area. The focus of this strategic plan is in disaster preparedness and response; it is less focused on disaster *recovery* at this time.

This Strategic Plan represents a vision, goals, strategies and outcomes that are larger than Northern California Grantmakers can achieve alone. It is essentially a plan for the Bay Area philanthropic sector. However, Northern California Grantmakers plays a critical role within this plan and is well-positioned to tackle particular strategies that focus on best practices dissemination, collaboration, and coordination.

In addition to this written plan, the NCG Logic Model provides a one-page overview of the plan and should be reviewed in conjunction with this document.

II. VISION, GOALS, AND ROLE OF NCG

Vision Statement

The Bay Area philanthropic community will have the capacity to effectively respond to a major, local disaster by being internally prepared, leveraging regional resources for disaster preparedness grantmaking, and collaborating with other sectors to strengthen the regional emergency management system.

Goals of the NCG Disaster Preparedness and Response Initiative

1. Bay Area philanthropic organizations are prepared internally to respond to disaster.
2. Bay Area philanthropic organizations are able to quickly and efficiently disseminate funds to critical anchor institutions and community-based first responders following a disaster.
3. Bay Area philanthropic organizations are involved in disaster preparedness grantmaking to build the capacities of nonprofit organizations to effectively respond to disasters.
4. Bay Area philanthropy is squarely tied into broader regional preparedness efforts.

Resources

Resources will be needed to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Therefore, it is assumed that strategies will be carried out not only by NCG staff, but by members of the NCG Disaster Preparedness and Response Task Force, other existing NCG resources (e.g., Corporate Contributions Roundtable, Public Policy Committee, and the Member Education Committee), and other member foundations. To build the capacity of the Task Force, adequate staffing and resources will need to be provided to carry out the goals of the Initiative.

Strategies for Northern California Grantmakers

A series of educational, best practices, and collaboration strategies are presented in detail in Section IV of this document. Within the context of this larger Strategic Plan, NCG is best positioned to implement the following strategies:

1. Cosponsor forums for sharing best practices and resources.
2. Develop and launch an online tool kit of best practices, standards, and resources.
3. Via the NCG Task Force, provide linkages with regional disaster preparedness planning efforts for NCG members (e.g., United Way of the Bay Area and Fritz Institute).
4. Collaborate with regional disaster preparedness emergency management systems.

III. KEY FINDINGS INFORMING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Key findings from the Disaster Preparedness and Response Needs Assessment Report were discussed and vetted by the Task Force in January 2007. Based on this discussion, additional key findings were developed and priorities were offered. Below we summarize the 10 key findings that were generated from this meeting. These findings inform the remainder of this Strategic Plan.

- 1. Preparedness must be reframed as an immediate asset that strengthens organizational capacity, as well as a long-term safeguard in case of a disaster.** When the Task Force reviewed the needs assessment findings, this emerged as the number-one priority. Strategically, it will be critical to have a larger proportion of NCG members shift their perception about the importance and organizational benefits of preparedness before many of the subsequent strategies can be effective.
- 2. Philanthropic organizations in the Bay Area are inadequately prepared for a major disaster.** Far fewer than half of philanthropic organizations surveyed in the needs assessment have more than one or two components of a comprehensive disaster plan in place. Examples of such components include, an identified person responsible for developing the organization’s plan for operating during disasters, a process for testing the plan, a list of staff and board members’ home contact information distributed to all employees and board members, hard copies of important legal documents stored at an off-site location, and computer files regularly backed up to an off-site location.
- 3. There is a lack of clear definitions and standards of practice for disaster preparedness and response.** The Fritz Institute, in its research, found a profound lack of clarity and coherence among the various sectors in the Bay Area with regard to emergency response. While this lack of clarity is not unique to the Bay Area, it is critical that definitions and standards of practice be developed and agreed to in order to develop coordinated and cohesive strategies and outcomes.
- 4. Preparedness and response plans must be tested and practiced effectively.** Only 18% of philanthropic organizations surveyed have a plan in place to test their disaster preparedness plan; likely fewer regularly test their plans with staff and board members. Good emergency response exercises include “functional” and “tabletop” exercises that provide real-time experiences to practice and evaluate plans. A functional exercise is a fully simulated, interactive exercise that tests the capability of an organization to respond to a simulated event without actually moving people and equipment to a new site. A tabletop exercise is a focused practice activity that places the participants in a simulated situation requiring them to function in the capacity that would be expected of them in a real event. Its purpose is to promote preparedness by testing policies and plans and by training personnel.
- 5. Nimble grantmaking processes need to be developed, allowing emergency response funds to be quickly disseminated.** Typical grantmaking procedures involve grantees submitting proposals, site visits, docket preparation, board approval of funding recommendations, contracts signed, and checks mailed. Such procedures—which could easily span six months—simply take too long for effective disaster response grantmaking. Nimble grantmaking procedures might include having a plan for supporting grantees during major local disaster; providing formal discretionary authority to an appropriate person to make immediate grants; clear, simple communication to grantees describing disaster expense

tracking expectations; signed MOU or preapproved grants for quick funding to agencies that will likely take a lead in disaster response; or signed MOU or preapproved grants for quick funding to community or faith-based organizations.

6. **Philanthropic organizations can play an important role in building grantee capacity for preparedness and response, but few are currently doing so.** Between one-half and two-thirds of philanthropic organizations surveyed have not yet and are unlikely to communicate with grantees about disaster preparedness, offer training or assistance on this topic, or offer funds to develop and/or test grantee preparedness plans. Building capacity among local nonprofit organizations (NPOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) needs to be a priority simply because so many become first responders in their communities following a disaster.
7. **Regional planning among Bay Area philanthropic organizations is needed to coordinate education, advocacy, and resources.** Currently, only 21% of philanthropic organizations surveyed by NCG were aware of disaster planning and preparedness activities in the Bay Area philanthropic community, and only 13% of were involved with such activities. Components of such planning might include coordinating policy advocacy (including local and state policy changes that incorporate the voices and meet the needs of the most vulnerable populations), preidentification of organizations that should be funded in the event of a disaster, knowledge of who will be “on the ground” providing services following a disaster, preidentification of those likely to be in greatest need and where are they likely to be located, and practice sessions of drills and exercises for disaster response.
8. **The development of regional pooled resources, including adequate levels of funding, for disaster preparedness and response is needed.** Under this system, organizations would commit funds and agree upon one set of guidelines and nimble application and fund allocation procedures so that resources could be quickly directed to the needs of affected communities.
9. **Philanthropy must have a seat at the broader emergency management table.** According to the United Way of the Bay Area, which recently conducted its Nonprofit Collaborative Preparedness Survey, both the nonprofit and government sectors are poorly prepared for a major catastrophic event in the Bay Area. There has been little leadership from within the nonprofit and public sectors to prioritize and articulate the expectations of the nonprofit sector in an emergency. Similarly, the Fritz Institute noted, in its Bay Area Disaster Preparedness Initiative research, the lack of collaboration across silos.
10. **Large corporations often have resources mobilized for disaster response and can make unique contributions. Philanthropy needs to enhance coordination with this sector.** Corporations, through their business units, have the ability to help communities affected by disaster. For example, information technology companies could play a huge role in coordinating information, and the pharmaceutical industry now warehouses disaster recovery kits that could be immediately distributed. During the tsunami disaster, American Express was able to trace lost family members through their credit cards. The philanthropic sector could enhance collaboration to leverage some of those resources.

IV. STRATEGIES

As a result of its review of the needs assessment and subsequent discussions, the Task Force identified and/or vetted a number of strategies to address the key findings above. While NCG will continue convening the Disaster Preparedness and Response Task Force four times per year, some of these strategies should be addressed by the overall Bay Area philanthropic community and are broader than NCG’s role. They likely require funding and collaboration that don’t currently exist. To implement these strategies and provide cohesion, adequate staffing and funding will be needed.

There are four categories of strategies: Education, Best Practices Dissemination, Regional Philanthropic Coordination, and Cross-Sector Collaboration. This section describes each set of strategies, followed by examples of *potential* process outcomes. The following sections describe the intermediate and long-term outcomes that might be expected as a result of the implementation and synergy of all strategies.

Education

Strategy 1. Design and launch a targeted educational campaign among Bay Area foundations to reframe preparedness as an immediate asset to philanthropic organizations as well as a long-term safeguard. This could be done through the creation of a targeted “mini” social marketing campaign, educational presentations, a peer mentoring or “buddy” system among CEOs, trustee forums, collateral materials, and the distribution of flashlights and whistles with key messages.

Potential Process Outcomes:

- ▶ The work of “first adopters” is highlighted via NCG-sponsored events and the NCG website.
- ▶ Mechanisms are created for peer mentoring among senior executives.
- ▶ Simple awareness-building activities are implemented, such as disseminating whistles and flashlights at all NCG-sponsored meetings.
- ▶ Educational forums aimed at reframing preparedness are hosted.

Best Practices Dissemination

Strategy 2.* Cosponsor forums for sharing best practices and resources. These could be peer-led to highlight successful practices among Bay Area foundations, highlight best practices used by other philanthropic organizations (such as the San Diego Foundation Regional Disaster Fund), or draw on expertise outside the sector.

Potential Process Outcomes:

- ▶ ___ forums are held each year for NCG members.
- ▶ Participants report increased knowledge of best practices.

* Denotes a strategy NCG is well suited to implement.

- ▶ Participants report intention to develop or improve disaster preparedness and/or business continuity plans.

Strategy 3.* Develop and launch an online tool kit of best practices, standards, and resources, including sample preparedness plans, sample protocols for testing and practicing plans, sample MOUs, protocols for disaster grantmaking (including the development of funding mechanisms and triggers to be in place for disasters), training resources, links to intermediaries and business continuity consultants, and consolidation of research and recommendations.

Potential Process Outcomes:

- ▶ Best practices resources are identified and uploaded onto website.
- ▶ Tool kits are downloaded from website.
- ▶ Increasing numbers of philanthropic organizations develop nimble grantmaking processes to quickly disseminate funds.

Strategy 4. Develop clear definitions and standards of practice for disaster preparedness and response in the Bay Area philanthropic community. (This might be accomplished by the efforts of the Fritz Institute, which is developing an initiative that would provide a structured framework within which standards of preparedness are developed and assessed.)

- ▶ Definitions and standards of practice are developed.
- ▶ Definitions and standards of practice are uploaded to website and disseminated to NCG members.
- ▶ A clear, simple tool to regularly assess foundation and nonprofit preparedness is developed.

Regional Philanthropic Coordination

Strategy 5.* Via the NCG Task Force, provide linkages with regional philanthropic disaster preparedness planning efforts for NCG members. Currently, NCG’s needs assessment and strategic planning process is one of several such initiatives in the philanthropic and nonprofit community (e.g., such as those led by United Way Bay Area, Fritz Institute, and The San Francisco Foundation.)

Potential Process Outcomes:

- ▶ Opportunities for supporting and participating in regional disaster preparedness planning efforts are identified.
- ▶ Coordinated meetings among Fritz Institute, United Way of the Bay Area, Northern California Grantmakers, and The San Francisco Foundation continue; NCG participates in other regional efforts.

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- ▶ Progress of regional preparedness planning efforts is communicated to NCG members.

Strategy 6. Via the NCG Task Force, coordinate philanthropic support for policy advocacy to ensure adequate support for vulnerable populations.

Potential Process Outcomes:

- ▶ White paper(s) are written that articulate the advocacy issues relevant to the Bay Area philanthropic community (e.g., policies recognizing faith-based and community-based organizations as first responders, legislation to facilitate reimbursements to these organizations in the event of disaster, and others).
- ▶ Intermediary organizations are identified and funded to engage the philanthropic sector in advocacy efforts.
- ▶ Cosponsored forums are held to educate NCG members on disaster-related policy needs and advocacy efforts.

Strategy 7. Develop strategic grantmaking resources (e.g., pooled funds, common RFPs, and funding partnerships) to support critical anchor institutions, community- and faith-based based first responders, and providers serving vulnerable populations.

Potential Process Outcomes:

- ▶ Discussions are convened by NCG to plan for the development of coordinated grantmaking resources.
- ▶ Key components of a pooled fund, such as the purpose, organizational structure, funding level, and geographic reach, are developed.
- ▶ An entity is identified to house this fund.
- ▶ Policies, procedures, and operational and grantmaking guidelines are developed for a pooled fund.
- ▶ Formal and informal partnerships are created to focus on components of the Strategic Plan.

Strategy 8. Develop a communications system for the Bay Area philanthropic community, including an Incident Command System (ICS) that coordinates with public ICS systems, as well as external communications with state, national, and international philanthropic organizations and donors. ICS is the system used for commanding, controlling, and coordinating the efforts of individual agencies as they work toward the common goal of stabilizing an emergency. Traditional emergency response teams such as fire, law enforcement, and public health agencies typically use ICS; however, the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors could use it as a model for coordinating communication in the event of an emergency as well.

Potential Process Outcomes:

- ▶ The Bay Area philanthropic community identifies best ICS practices and best external communication systems.

- ▶ Key state, national, and international organizations are made aware of how to contact Bay Area philanthropic organizations to provide support in the event of an emergency (e.g., Southern California Grantmakers, Giving Forum, Council on Foundations, etc.).
- ▶ An intermediary is identified and engaged to develop approach.

Strategy 9. Coordinate and implement region-wide drills and exercises for the philanthropic community. This is a strategy that would be implemented after increasing numbers of foundations have implemented and tested their own plans, and after clear standards have been developed. This type of undertaking would best be developed under the guidance and expertise of an intermediary organization. Although this would be a significant undertaking, it is important to be able to test the ability of the philanthropic community as a whole to respond, and to learn from and make improvements based upon this experience.

Potential Process Outcomes:

- ▶ Best practices for drills and exercises are identified.
- ▶ An intermediary is identified and engaged to develop an approach.
- ▶ Agendas for drills and exercises are developed.

Cross-Sector Collaboration

Strategy 10.* Via the NCG Task Force, collaborate with regional disaster preparedness emergency management systems. These include state and county Offices of Emergency Services as well as voluntary efforts, such as Coordinated Assistance Network (CAN), Collaborating Agencies Responding to Disasters (CARD), National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD), Prepare Bay Area (PBA), and Ready to Respond (United Way of the Bay Area). (See Appendix A for brief descriptions of each of these voluntary disaster preparedness efforts).

Potential Process Outcomes:

- ▶ Meetings of the leaders of the state and nine-county Offices of Emergency Management, NCG, and philanthropic organizations focus on a better understanding of emergency preparedness and response plans, including discussion of the efforts within the Bay Area philanthropic community and opportunities for ongoing communication and coordination.
- ▶ Meetings of voluntary emergency management partnerships, NCG, and philanthropic leaders focus on a better understanding of their efforts, including discussion of efforts within the Bay Area philanthropic community and opportunities for ongoing communication and coordination.
- ▶ Opportunities for collaboration are identified and pursued.

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V. INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

As a result of implementing these strategies, the following intermediate outcomes can be expected within one to three years:

- ▶ Bay Area philanthropic organizations will recognize preparedness as a short- and long-term asset.
- ▶ Greater numbers of NCG members will report having developed comprehensive internal preparedness plans based on standards of practice.
- ▶ Greater numbers of NCG members will report testing and exercising their plans regularly.
- ▶ Greater numbers of NCG members will report engaging in disaster preparedness capacity building with their grantees.
- ▶ Individual and pooled philanthropic resources for disaster preparedness and response will increase. Therefore, community-based organizations will have increased funding for disaster preparedness and response, providers serving vulnerable populations will be trained, critical safety net providers (e.g., food banks) will have plans and money to respond to disasters, and greater numbers of critical anchor institutions and community-based first responders will have signed MOUs for emergency grantmaking.
- ▶ Local philanthropy will have representation on regional emergency management bodies.

VI. LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Over the long term (three to five years), the Bay Area philanthropic community can expect to find that:

- ▶ Disaster preparedness will be an integral part of everyday organizational life among NCG members.
- ▶ Bay Area philanthropy will be adequately prepared to respond to a major local disaster.
- ▶ Community-based organizations will have an increased capacity to respond to disasters.
- ▶ Low-income and “vulnerable” communities will be significantly better prepared with training and supplies.
- ▶ Funders will have a proven track record of collaboration on disaster preparedness.
- ▶ Stable, ongoing partnerships with government and corporate sectors will exist.
- ▶ Updated local and state policies will better meet the needs of vulnerable populations in a disaster.
- ▶ A communications infrastructure will be in place and tested among Bay Area philanthropic organizations.

Appendix A: Voluntary Disaster Preparedness Partnerships in the Bay Area

The partnerships listed below were identified through the NCG Disaster Preparedness and Response Needs Assessment. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but rather a set of examples of existing resources. Additional partnerships have recently been identified by United Way of the Bay Area and will soon be provided in a forthcoming report available at www.uwba.org.

Coordinated Assistance Network (CAN) supports coalitions of nonprofit disaster agencies, including the development of shared databases of survivors and clients. National CAN is made up of national entities and players (United Way, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, American Red Cross, Office of Emergency Services, and others) that support six cities across the country in the creation of citywide plans (see www.can.org).

Collaborating Agencies Responding to Disasters (CARD) was created after the Loma Prieta earthquake and the Oakland Hills firestorm to provide disaster preparedness/response support to Alameda County community-based organizations (CBOs). CARD helps service providers get prepared, stay prepared, and be better able to keep staff and clients calm, safe, and ready to respond appropriately in an emergency. CARD identifies as the “First Victims” those members of the community who are seniors, children, disabled, homeless, non-English speakers, low-income, or otherwise in need of ongoing support, because they often have little or no ability to address their own preparedness, response, and recovery needs. Further, the loss of trained and trusted local service providers during and after a disaster leaves them without critical support. CARD trains organizations that provide disaster services to the general public to address or accommodate special-needs communities.

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) coordinates the planning efforts of many voluntary organizations responding to disaster. Member organizations provide more effective and less duplicative services by getting together before disasters strike. Once disasters occur, NVOAD or an affiliated state VOAD encourages members and other voluntary agencies to convene on-site.

Prepare Bay Area (PBA) is a new initiative at the American Red Cross Bay Area (ARCBA) that will bring organizations and leaders in the public and private sectors together to plan and execute an extensive community preparedness campaign. The mission is to reach one million Bay Area residents, with a concentrated effort on vulnerable populations. PBA will guide Bay Area residents in this process to “Make a Plan, Build a Kit, and Get Trained” for disasters and other unexpected events.

Ready to Respond (United Way of the Bay Area) aims to strengthen, increase, and diversify volunteer action after a disaster in the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond. Serving Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties, Ready to Respond has been the San Francisco Bay Area’s leader since 1994 in mobilizing and deploying spontaneous volunteers in response to disasters. Ready to Respond works to strengthen coordinated planning throughout the Greater Bay Area through its relationships with local government, major relief agencies, and community-based organizations.