PREPARING PUBLIC LEADERS
to Effectively Lead in a Crisis: A Collaborative Experience

June 22, 2022, 9:00 a.m. – Noon
Location: Zoom  |  Cost: $25

Who Should Attend?
Mayors, city managers, elected officials, senior-level appointees. Attendance limited to 30 people.

Questions?
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A Crisis Can Occur Anytime & Anywhere

In the immediate aftermath of a major incident, such as a mass shooting at a mall, restaurant, school, or faith-based location, the police chief and other first responder agencies will likely be lead spokespersons.

But “major incidents” could turn into multi-day or multi-week events. Some of those include massive winter storms, heat waves, tornados, fires, accusations of discrimination or financial malfeasance, mass demonstrations, police shootings, cyber attacks and power outages.

In the days, weeks, and possibly months after a disaster, residents, business owners and media outlets in your community will look to their elected officials, not just for answers, but for leadership.

NEW CHALLENGES

News now breaks on Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms, leaving little time for you to consult with others at length, form consensus and perhaps get the approval from your law director.

You must be prepared to respond to unfolding and changing situations quickly, otherwise you take the risk others will fill the void with information that is incorrect or even misleading.

Especially for mayors who also carry the title of safety director, there are situations where it will be impossible or inappropriate to simply direct citizens and the media to your police or fire chief.

WHEN IT HITS THE FAN, WILL YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO?
Preparing Public Leaders to Effectively Lead in a Crisis: A Collaborative Experience

Overview

This seminar is intended to give elected officials an understanding of their role in disaster recovery and a framework for creating a plan that will serve the needs of the citizens they serve, as well as provide for personal professional growth.

GOAL

Provide a realistic and immersive experience intended to increase participant crisis leadership knowledge and identify areas for improvement.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Upon completion of a self-assessment and action plan for personal and professional readiness improvement, participants will have a greater understanding of political and statutory roles they must play in a crisis.

REQUIREMENTS

- Read the pre-workshop material and overview and complete a brief pre-workshop self-assessment.
- Actively participate in the workshop exercises.
- Complete a post-workshop self-assessment and personal action plan.
- Complete a post-workshop evaluation to help make future sessions better.

9:00 am – 12:00 noon

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While police chiefs, fire chiefs, school superintendents, and federal authorities certainly have operational and communications roles to play in an emergency, there will be many things that can only be handled by elected officials and their staffs.

**Disaster Recovery**
- Who will be assigned the responsibility to begin the recovery planning process?
- How will goals be established for recovery? How will the community be engaged? Will the goals be adopted by council?
- How will recovery progress be reported? What opportunities are there for celebrations or remembrances?
- What organizational structure will be created to resource and sustain the recovery effort to its completion? Who will be in charge and what disciplines and skills will be needed to achieve recovery goals?
- What are the protocols for keeping council and school board members informed?

**Community Finances**
- Who would document disaster expenses and are they trained in FEMA processes?
- What is your fund balance policy?
- At what point would the fund balance be accessed?
- If the fund balance was accessed for a crisis, how would it be rebuilt and what contingency plan would the city have during that time?
- If the fund balance couldn’t support a disaster response, what would the city do?
Media Management

- What do you do when satellite trucks roll into town and how do you feed a 24-hour news cycle?
- Who speaks for the city and in what circumstances? When should the message come from an elected official or a professional expert? How do you avoid fragmented or conflicting messages?
- What would you do if someone sought to pre-empt communications for the city, such as the county, state, or federal government? *(NOTE: this is exactly what happened in 2016 in the aftermath of the Pulse Nightclub shooting where there was great tension between the city and the FBI.)*
- How would you monitor traditional and social media during and after a crisis? Are you prepared to respond to rumors and misinformation?
- How quickly could you create a website for disaster information? Could you sustain it? How would you drive people to it?
- Does the crisis need a “brand”? What would it be? How would the visual image be created? What is the brand intended to convey? Is it authentic and inclusive? If your city doesn’t facilitate the brand, is there a risk that someone else will? *(Example of “crisis branding”: Boston Strong, after the Boston Marathon bombing.)*
**Volunteers & Donations**

- How would you convey what you need?
- Who would manage volunteers? How would self-deployed volunteers—including professionals—be managed?
- How would volunteers be recruited, screened, deployed, and supervised? Is there a nonprofit that can help?
- Where would donations be received and warehoused? How would they be distributed?
- How do you handle donated prepared food and ensure its safety?
- Who would receive cash donations? How would they be distributed?
- How will donations be handled to avoid controversy over disbursement of funds (like what happened after the tragic situations at Chardon High School and New Town)?