

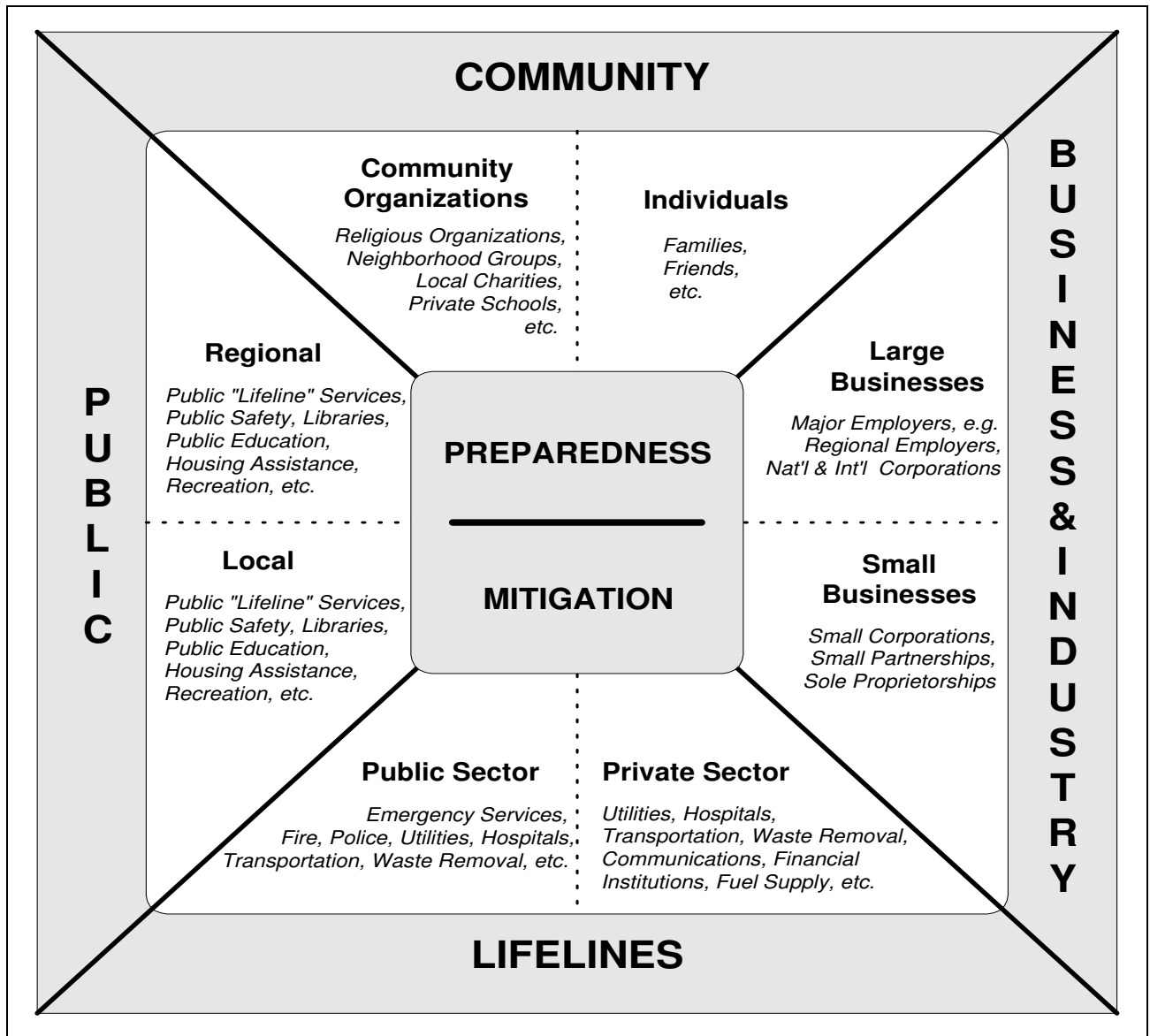
The Critical Role of Private/Public Alliances to Ensure Community Disaster Preparedness

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A rapid and coordinated disaster response by the public and private sectors is essential to community recovery. The immediate response after a disaster is of paramount concern, but is not enough. The long-term durability of a community depends on the ability of local businesses to recover. The reason is clear. If businesses do not survive a disaster, people are out of work, a community's revenue stream is severely disrupted, and the impact prolongs the recovery process. Business is the lifeblood of the community. When businesses fail, a community loses its people and the tax base that a community needs to provide lifeline services.

While many organizations have performed "internal" contingency planning and mitigation, an increasing number of communities are examining the feasibility of establishing a "business recovery alliance" to promote "external" contingency planning and mitigation for *Community Preparedness*. The objective is to bring together the leadership and expertise of businesses, emergency preparedness organizations, the engineering and scientific community, and others to develop a public/private partnership approach to reducing the vulnerability of businesses and communities to flooding, tornadoes, severe weather, earthquakes and other hazards. To this end, many communities have formed business alliances to aid in *Community Preparedness*.

Community Preparedness looks at the external aspects of the community and is driven by the organizations and individuals that live and have a stake in the economic sustainability of the community. These organizations include non-profit agencies, religious groups, neighborhood groups and volunteer organizations. It is essential that these local organizations work with businesses to develop External Contingency Plans that enhance the economic sustainability of the community.



Local and Regional Public Agencies support their communities by providing services that ensure public safety through regulations that monitor building practices, health concerns, environmental and safety requirements. They enhance the quality of life within the community by supplying public education, library facilities, mass transportation, housing assistance, and recreational facilities. These agencies must be prepared and all of these services must be included in the External Recovery and Mitigation Plans to protect the citizens and the culture of the community.

The private and public sectors have two very different cultures that have coexisted but seldom commingled when it comes to economic or financial matters. The public sector tends to be funding and budget-driven and often looks for ways to expand its sphere of influence and control. The private or business sector tends to be driven by the bottom line in an effort to make a profit. Taxes are paid to support government activities and any new initiatives driven by the government are often viewed as a direct hit to the bottom line in the form of increased taxes. The role of a business alliance is to provide cross-cultural leadership. The staff associated with a business alliance needs to be able to understand the two different cultures and “bridge the gap” between them to make an effective alliance.

Awareness of the need for Public/Private partnerships has been growing. This increased awareness is due to an expansion of the traditional focus of emergency response.

Experience from the many recent disasters in the 1990's has shown that communities fail

when their businesses fail. The intimate relationship between the public and private sectors has been the focal point of several programs in recent years.

Program Name	Sponsor(s)	Program Description
Project Impact	Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	Provides federal funding to communities to promote disaster mitigation projects.
Public Private Partnership 2000 (PPP2000) series	Public Private Partnerships 2000 (PPP 2000) is a cooperative effort of the 19 agencies comprising the Subcommittee on Natural Disaster Reduction (SNDR), the Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS), and other private sector organizations.	Works at the national level to identify opportunities and develop public policies for promoting disaster mitigation. The goal of PPP 2000 is to "seek new and innovative opportunities for government and nonprofit, private sector organizations to work together to reduce vulnerability to and losses from natural hazards in communities across the Nation."
Showcase Communities Program	Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS)	Works at the local level to promote community disaster preparedness and mitigation. A "Showcase Community" is used to demonstrate the benefits of taking specific, creative steps within an entire community to reduce deaths, injuries, property damage, economic losses and human suffering caused by natural disasters.
Disaster Recovery Business Alliance (DRBA SM)	The National Association of Contingency Planners (ACP), the Department of Energy (DOE), the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), IBHS, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Central United States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC), and the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA)	Promotes the formation of local private/public organizations to conduct pre-planning and organizational development to provide mutual support and coordinated response to regional disasters.

These programs are not mutually exclusive and can operate jointly. For example, Evansville/Vanderburgh County, Indiana was the first "Disaster Recovery Business

Alliance” (Southwestern Indiana DRBASM) and has also been designated as a “Showcase Community”. The Southwestern Indiana DRBASM/Showcase Community has been at the forefront of community-based mitigation and disaster preparedness projects in the U.S. For example, a Regional Business Impact Analysis (RBIASM) was performed that identified area economic and infrastructure dependencies and a DRBASM Representative has been provided with a “seat” in the County Emergency Operations Center.

General areas of collaboration for community mitigation and preparedness programs include:

Category	Potential Areas of Mutual Support
Communication Infrastructure	Streamlining the permit process to set-up and operation of emergency telephone switching offices and cellular sites. Sharing resources such as generators and fuel. Providing food and shelter to workers. Access to disaster areas.
Emergency Power Generation	Electric utility supplied emergency generators for lifeline services and key businesses (such as food and gasoline distributors).
Food and Water Supplies	Development of mutual assistance agreements between food distributors as well as with other local lifelines and government agencies.
Business Recovery	Provide financial incentives for business mitigation projects. Develop disaster area access procedures for local businesses. Develop “fast-track” construction permit processes to enable local businesses to rebuild quickly.

Business preparedness, mitigation, and recovery programs must start at the grass roots level and are needed in every community. Responsible public and private leaders understand that if businesses do not survive a disaster, the community will not survive. Disasters not only effect one community, but also have far-reaching economic effects throughout the nation. In this era of ever increasing costs of recovering from disasters, it

is ever more important that we put aside our differences and work together to ensure the continuation of communities and the safety of our citizens.