



Rapid Response in Real Time: Suggested Approaches

It's no longer a question of if, but rather when, an emergency might occur in the United States, whether that is targeted violence, a pandemic, climate disasters, or human-made systems breaking down, from unsafe drinking water to power grid failures. While nonprofit organizations strive to address unanticipated community needs, they are not always prepared or resourced to meet the demands. And the current environment of cyclical and compounding crises means that many organizations are continually operating in emergency mode.

For nonprofits that may be responding to an immediate crisis, building rapid response infrastructure takes time—a scarce resource during emergencies. *Rapid Response in Real Time: Suggested Approaches* offers a starting point for groups who are called to provide frontline crisis response.

Rapid Response in Real Time is excerpted from an underlying report from Building Movement Project and Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Asian Law Caucus titled, *Balancing Act: Asian American Organizations Respond to Community Crises and Build Collective Power*. The report provides a more in-depth examination of what is needed to build rapid response infrastructure in advance of crises, as well as recommendations to build infrastructure for the long-term. Check out the full report at bit.ly/balancing-act-report.



Building Movement Project



ASIAN AMERICANS
**ADVANCING
JUSTICE**

ASIAN LAW CAUCUS

FOR GROUPS AND NETWORKS DEALING WITH COMMUNITY CRISES: Suggested Approaches for Navigating the First 48 Hours

1 ASSESS the scope of the community crisis.
Gather as soon as possible to assess what has happened and agree to meet daily at a set time to share information for at least one week after the incident. These regular conversations can be a space to provide updates on changing community needs; monitor, preempt, and respond to media narratives; create and share messaging points with organizational partners, and more.

2 EXPRESS care and support for victims, survivors, families, and community at large.

Often, it is not clear in the immediate aftermath whether an act of targeted violence has happened. In those instances, groups can say that they are monitoring the situation and will provide updates; or provide contextual information about community demographics or history of community in the area. For groups outside of the local area, consider amplifying voices of local groups first.

8 REFLECT, evaluate, and course correct as needed.

7 IDENTIFY long-term needs for survivors and families, i.e., mental health, legal, financial, and healing.

3 CONNECT with affected community members and local organizations

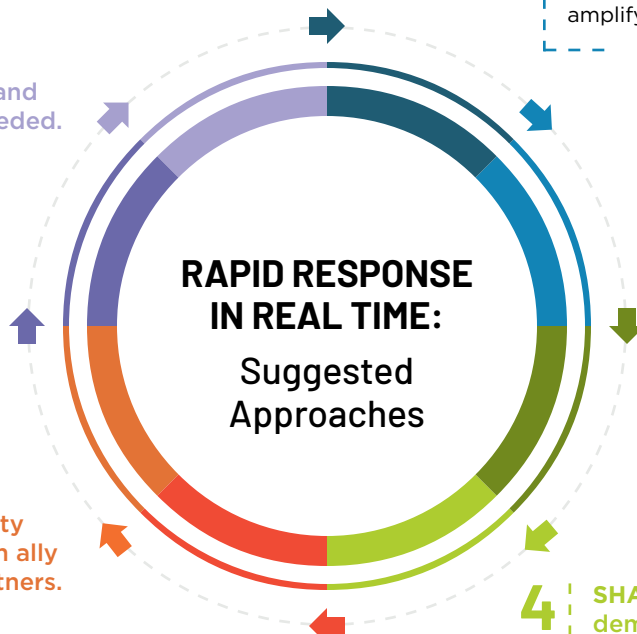
through a posture of humility and curiosity. Ask for permission to support various needs.

6 ASK for solidarity statements from ally groups and partners.

5 MOBILIZE the rapid response ecosystem to respond to community needs via culturally competent and linguistically appropriate methods.

4 SHARE information and demands for media, policy stakeholders, and allies publicly,

grounded in needs and demands of community members most directly harmed. As needed, revise and share additional statements if more information becomes available and community demands shift. It can be helpful to acknowledge that systemic change is necessary to address harm and create safety and healing for the long run.



The ecosystem includes: Crisis Coordinators; Victim and Survivor Advocates; Trained Interpreters and Translators; Mental Health Counselors, Therapists, Social Workers, and Community Healers; Pro Bono Lawyers and Trained Legal Advocates; Coordination of Emergency Funds and Administration; Media Liaisons; Government Liaisons; and Community Liaisons.



RECOMMENDED ROLES AND PROMISING PRACTICES FOR RAPID RESPONSE

Although this is not a comprehensive “checklist” for mapping out staff roles in a crisis, these recommendations are drawn directly from interviews with nonprofit leaders who have been coordinating and providing rapid response over the past several years.



Crisis Coordinators are the point persons who manage the entire infrastructure of rapid response within organizations or taskforces.

- Organize daily and weekly calls to share and exchange information, delegate tasks, and understand how the various parts of rapid response infrastructure are working together.
- Serve as the go-to person for others within the rapid response ecosystem, including victim and survivor advocates, liaisons, and pro bono legal and mental health providers, and serve as a link between government stakeholders and partner groups.
- Assess community comfort with rapid response.



Victim and Survivor Advocates conduct intake and ongoing case management that responds to the various needs of the families of victims, as well as survivors and witnesses.

- Connect with affected community members within 12–24 hours after a community crisis, and center their needs.
- Consider long-term support for victims and survivors.
- Consider the attitudes and experiences that affected community members have with law enforcement and the justice system.



Trained Interpreters and Translators support monolingual or limited English proficient victims, survivors, and community members.

- Ensure that monolingual or limited English proficient victims, survivors, and community members can understand the array of resources available to them and can communicate fully with government agencies, law enforcement, media, and public officials.
- Consult with the crisis coordinators and rapid response ecosystem to develop translated materials in accessible, everyday language.



Mental Health Counselors, Therapists, Social Workers, and Community Healers

support victims, survivors, community members, and staff throughout the different stages of processing and healing.

- Ensure mental health providers have the skills and training to understand and respond to varied cultural and faith-based values, beliefs, attitudes and communications approaches to trauma, loss, grief, and healing.
- Develop and share tailored resources for young children from impacted communities, as well as their caregivers and educators.
- Provide grief counseling for all staff, including leadership, from the outset.



Pro Bono Lawyers and Legal Advocates assist victims and survivors to navigate complicated and bureaucratic legal processes and systems.

- Create and translate know-your-rights resources in the languages used by impacted community members.
- Appoint an organizational point-of-contact to coordinate help from private attorneys and local bar association members.



Emergency Funds and Administration Coordinators set up mechanism to receive, allocate and administer funds in the wake of the crisis.

- Lay out the various options that arise for survivors and victims, from workers' compensation to state and federal government victim assistance funds that may cover medical, funeral, or mental health treatment costs.
- Delineate which organizations or committees will be responsible for receiving, allocating and administering funds, which could be in the form of individual donations via a Go Fund Me or large contributions from foundations, corporations and government agencies.



Media Liaisons are the first point of contact in responding to media requests, ensuring that names are correctly pronounced, and sharing press releases.

- Identify appropriate spokespersons and stay connected with regional and national communications staff at partner organizations.
- Develop a process to handle media intake, fact check statements, approve public communications, and monitor media stories. Hold off on talking to the media until it's clear what to say.
- Preempt inaccurate or divisive narratives with inclusive and comprehensive ones.
- Consider how and when to make organizational statements that take policy positions or make demands.



Government Liaisons interact with government officials and elected leaders in order to share information and advocate for those affected by a crisis.

- Connect with the local victim advocate office to support impacted community members more quickly with publicly available resources.
- Advocate for appropriate responses from agencies and elected officials.



Community Liaisons are responsible for interfacing with the communities who are connected to victims and survivors as well as with organizational partners and allies.

- Curate the mutual flow of information among and between community groups.
- Prepare for conflicts and disagreements among impacted community members and stakeholders. Identifying healing justice practitioners with culturally relevant experience in conflict mediation might be a useful approach.
- Engage with organizational partners and allies offering support and solidarity.



Building Movement Project

For more information, please visit
The Building Movement Project at
www.buildingmovement.org

or contact us at
info@buildingmovement.org



2023