



How to use HEART

3. Take Action: Strategies for Inclusive Planning



Include People Experiencing Homelessness as a Priority Population in Emergency Operations Plans:

Review and update plans to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness.



Formalize Roles and Responsibilities:

Establish clear responsibilities through agreements between emergency response agencies and homelessness response systems. Host regularly scheduled check-in meetings, email updates, and shared communication documents. Keep the emergency operations plan updated with names, positions, agencies, and role clarity about who is responsible for what in a disaster or emergency.



Invest in Dedicated Support:

Consider establishing a salaried, county-funded position to provide ongoing assistance in disaster planning for people experiencing homelessness. Someone with lived experience of homelessness can fill this role.



Expand the Emergency Operations Center:

Appoint a homelessness lead in the Emergency Operations Center to ensure coordinated action and resource sharing.



Map Resources:

Identify emergency shelters, food banks, transportation, and essential services for people experiencing homelessness during disasters and emergencies.



Develop a Joint Communications Plan:

Share information and resources with people experiencing homelessness before, during, and after emergencies.



Conduct Preparedness Education:

Provide information and resources in advance about emergency preparedness measures for people experiencing homelessness.



Expand Training Topics:

Explore the feasibility of disaster preparedness exercises. Provide training on emergency services, trauma-informed care, de-escalation, and cultural humility for responders and providers.



Plan for Post-Disaster Support:

Ensure access to Coordinated Entry and connection to case management whenever possible. Provide resources to existing shelters for after emergency shelters have closed.