

ALA Annual
Conference & Exhibition

**20
25**

PHILADELPHIA • JUNE 26 – 30

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**Is Your Library Ready?
Strengthening Community Resiliency
with
Inclusive Public Library Disaster
Planning**

**Dr. Marcia Mardis, Dr. Denise Gomez,
Dr. Feili Tu-Keefner, Denise Lyons, and April Hobbs**

ALA American Library Association

Our Agenda

Overview and Introductions (presenters and participants) 9:00-9:10

Research Foundation 9:10-9:25

Group Activity Intro 9:25-9:30

Small Group Work 9:30-9:50

Discussion Questions

Debrief and Close 9:50-10:00

What did you learn? What will be your next steps?

About Us

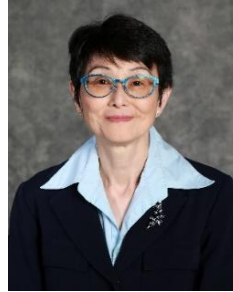


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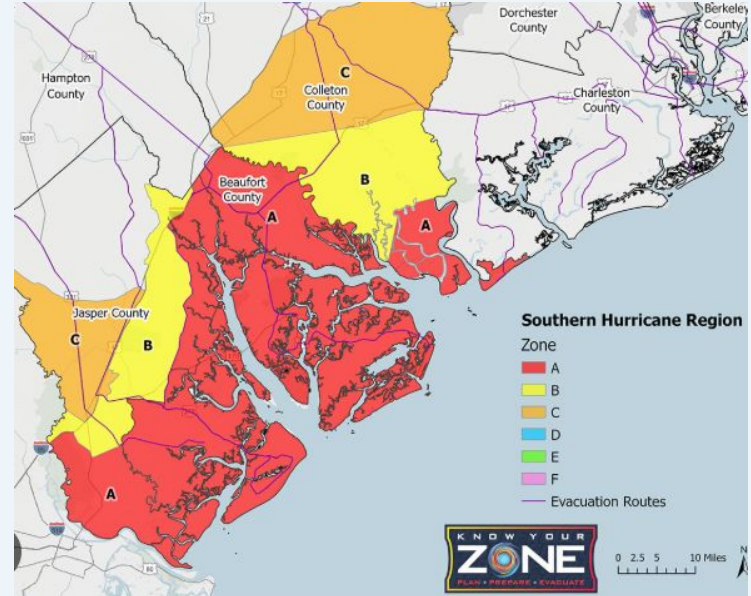
April Hobbs
Research and Data
Strategist
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Denise Lyons
Commissioner/
State Librarian
Kentucky
Department for
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“Regarding the impact of hurricanes and other natural disasters, readiness is the key to resilience!” Dwight MacInvaill, Library Director, Georgetown County, South Carolina



Building a Culture of Preparedness

Learning from the “Recovering Together” project, NorthNet Library System: <https://libraryrecovery.org>

“Organizations that fare best during a disaster are those that prepare ahead of time and train all staff members to take action. These organizations also create a culture of preparedness. They encourage shared responsibility and build preparedness activities into regular routines. Preparedness becomes a facet of “business as usual” instead of a singular event or yearly exercise.”



Research Locations

Studies from 2015-2024: Focused on People, Partnerships, and Communications

<u>South Carolina (2015-2017)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Focus group meetings</u>• <u>Survey</u>	Flooding, Hurricanes
<u>South Carolina (2015-2017)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Survey</u>	Community members' use of public library disaster information services
<u>Houston, TX (2018-2019)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Focus group meetings</u>	Hurricane Harvey
<u>Northern California (2022)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Focus group meetings</u>• <u>Interview</u>• <u>Informal discussions</u>	Wildfires
<u>Kentucky (2023)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Focus group meetings</u>• <u>Interviews</u>• <u>Informal discussions</u>	Tornadoes (West) Flooding/Mudslides (East)
<u>Southern California (2024)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Focus group meetings</u>• <u>Interviews</u>• <u>Informal discussions</u>	Multiple disasters including floods, fire, extreme heat, earthquakes, etc.

Leadership Qualifications: Learning, Changing, and Ending Crises

The logo features the words "BE AWARE" in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. Below this text is a horizontal bar with a black and yellow diagonal hazard stripe pattern. Underneath the bar, the words "BE PREPARED" are written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

BE AWARE
BE PREPARED

“... it would be beneficial for us to start looking at ways to be prepared if this should ever happen again. And maybe looking at organizations that we could connect with now, so that if this should ever happen, we are better prepared to provide services and information. ...”
(Library Administrator Subject – 2015)

Learning, Changing, and Ending Crises

“... In between [Hurricane] Ike and [Hurricane] Harvey we had started doing Camp STREAM which is our norm now our normal summer day camp offering.

So we had more experience with administering and all the logistical stuff that goes into taking care of kids and keeping them engaged for an entire day that we’re able to bring to that experience with Harvey that we didn’t have that experience when we did this for Ike. ...”

(Library Administrator – 2018)

“...Teaching them [community members] little preparedness things like have a list of local numbers and emails, just in general having a plan made beforehand. ...”
(Library staff – 2023)

Strengthening Library Disaster Preparedness and Community Resilience



- **Develop a Comprehensive Natural Disaster Policy**
 - Establish guidelines and protocols for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery
- **Conduct Community Needs Assessments**
 - Create a detailed community profile informing disaster planning and services
- **Integrate Resilience Hub Infrastructure into LIS Programs**
 - Support libraries to serve as resilience hubs and centers for disaster-related community support
- **Provide Staff Training in Emergency Services and Disaster Response**
 - Ensure library personnel are prepared to assist during emergencies through specialized training programs
- **Expand Technology Lending Services**
 - Offer resources such as laptops, hotspots, and other essential technology for community use during disruptions
- **Develop a Disaster Recovery Resource Collection**
 - Collect resources on home rebuilding, wildfire-resistant landscaping, and other recovery-focused topics



Recommendations



Educate the Public on Personal Preparedness

- Encourage practices such as scanning important documents and storing critical information in multiple secure locations
- *"Survivors will tell you to prepare."* (Library Staff, 2022)

Support Ongoing Professional Development for Staff and Managers

- Provide training in areas such as emergency services, de-escalation techniques, human resources, self-care, and technology

Establish Strategic Partnerships Before a Crisis Hits

- Identify systems and structures that offer flexibility and assess available resources to strengthen collaboration during emergencies

Understand the Library's Role Within Government Structures

- Understand the library's position in the county or municipal framework to ensure clear communication channels and minimize information duplication

Research Locations

Studies 2018-ongoing: Focused on People, Partnerships, and Communications

<u>Florida Panhandle (2018-2020)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Focus groups</u>• <u>Interviews</u>	<i>Rural Libraries and Disasters: Investigating Resiliency in the Digital Environment and Beyond</i> Hurricane Michael (Calhoun, Bay, Gulf Counties)
<u>Florida (2020-Ongoing)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Surveys (Library Directors & EOC County Managers)</u>• <u>Focus group meetings</u>• <u>Interviews</u>• <u>Inclusive Disaster Planning Support</u>	<i>iSmart for Disasters: Exploring Smart and Connected Disaster Planning for Small and Rural Libraries</i> (IMLS LG-246371-OLS-20) Hurricanes, Hurricane Ian (Statewide, Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Hillsborough, DeSoto Counties)
<u>Florida, Calhoun County (2020 - Ongoing)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Secondary Analysis</u>• <u>Interviews</u>• <u>Resiliency hub co-design and planning</u>	<i>CIVIC Innovation Challenge</i> Hurricane Michael, Resiliency Hub (Calhoun County libraries, government, nonprofits, citizens)

Elements of a LIBRARY DISASTER PLAN

Elements of a LIBRARY DISASTER PLAN

I. Introductory Material



- Approval & Implementation**
Who approved the plan?
How is the plan activated?

II. Purpose, Scope, Situation Overview & Planning Assumptions



- Purpose**
Identifies the purpose of the plan
- Scope**
Identifies people, physical areas, and functions or activities the plan encompasses

3. Situation Overview

a. Hazard Analysis	Breaks down hazard and how it relates to the geographic area
b. Facilities Information / Floor Plan	Information on the library system's physical facilities (including setup for sheltering)
c. Population Assessment	Information on population demographics, location, and vulnerability of patrons
d. Dependencies on Other Jurisdictions	City/County departments and outside agencies that assist the library system with disasters
e. Capability Assessment	Information on the strengths and weaknesses of the library system
f. Mitigation Overview	Actions taken by the library system to minimize a hazard's impacts, related to the facility and/or collection (not steps taken just before storm)



- Planning Assumptions**
A statement about how conditions are expected to exist during plan implementation

III. Concept of Operations

Overview of the structure or overall approach of the plan, who activates the plan, any coordination with city or county, and accommodations for vulnerable populations



IV. Organization & Assignment of Responsibilities



Identifies response team and functions expected of libraries and library staff during emergencies

V. Direction, Control & Coordination

Identifies chain of command



VI. Information Collection, Analysis, & Dissemination



Identifies information sources, internal briefing, and information dissemination

Elements of a LIBRARY DISASTER PLAN

VII. Communications



Identifies communication channels/modes during emergencies (e.g., phones, social media, cell/text); **contact list maintenance** (employees, government partners, utilities, community partners, vendors); or **specific communication plan** (employee phone tree)

VIII. Administration, Finance, & Logistics

1. Cooperative Agreements

Identifies cooperative agreements with other libraries or outside agencies



2. Policies on Financial Records & Tracking Resources

Identifies guidelines for payroll, timesheets (post-disaster), budgets and accounting, purchasing insurance coverage and claims, and FEMA claims for the library



IX. Planning Development & Maintenance

1. Planning Process & Participants

Identifies the planning team and planning-related duties



2. Training Cycle & Plan Review

Identifies training frequency, what staff is trained on, frequency of plan review, and plan review process



X. Authorities & Reference

1. Related laws, statutes, ordinances

Legal justification relevant to disaster planning



2. Delegation of authority

Delineates who has the authority to make decisions



3. Orders of succession

Delineates the new chain of command if leaders are incapacitated



XI. Supporting Annexes

1. Functional Annexes

Identifies standard operating procedures (SOP) or checklists for an emergency management function (e.g., specific supplies or kits, recovery of materials in the library collection, assessment checklists, inventory lists, shelter intake instructions)

Identifies standard operating procedures (SOP) or checklists for a specific hazard, threat, or incident



XII. Additional Documents to Support Disaster Plan

1. CEMP	Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan submitted to Florida EOC by each county
2. COOP	Continuity of Operations Plan - how operations will continue at alternate facility
3. Recovery Plan: Facilities, Collections, & Serving Community	Identifies the recovery strategies in place for the library system and how the library will support the community following the disaster

IV. Organization & Assignment of Responsibilities



Identifies response team and functions expected of libraries and library staff during emergencies

What positions are expected to be part of the library staff's disaster response team, and what duties are they expected to complete?	
What functions are expected of libraries and library staff during emergencies?	

VI. Information Collection, Analysis, & Dissemination



Identifies **information sources**, **internal briefing**, and **information dissemination**

What are the relevant information sources the library system will use during disasters?	
How is the library staff briefed during disasters?	
What kind of information is disseminated to the public and who is ultimately responsible for dissemination?	

VII. Communications

Identifies **communication channels/modes during emergencies** (e.g., phones, social media, cell/text); **contact list maintenance** (employees, government partners, utilities, community partners, vendors); or **specific communication plan** (employee phone tree)



What type of communication channels will the library system use during emergencies (e.g., phones, social media, cell/text, 2-way radios)?	
How often will the contact list (employees, government partners, utilities, community partners, vendors) be maintained and who will maintain it?	
How often will the employee phone tree be maintained and who will maintain it?	

XII. Additional Documents to Support Disaster Plan

3. Recovery Plan: Facilities, Collections, & Serving Community	Identifies the recovery strategies in place for the library system and how the library will support the community following the disaster
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a. Facilities: What procedures will the disaster response team follow in assessing damage to building and technology infrastructure?	
b. Collections: What are the library system's priorities for recovery of each of the library's collections (by format, type, department, floor, or building)?	
c. Serving Community: What procedures will library staff follow in assisting with community recovery in relation to: Resources, Technology, Aid, Workspace, Information, Legal aid, Volunteer vetting	

Group Activity (20 mins)

1. Each table will have an assigned theme: **New Roles**, **Communication**, or **Technology**
2. Take **3 minutes** to discuss who has a story related to that theme they'd like to share.
3. As the group member tells the story (**5 minutes max**), other group members actively listen either taking notes or listening closely. Consider the similarities and differences between that story and group members' own experiences, as well as access and equity for all community members.
4. After the story is complete, please ask the storyteller any clarifying questions to make sure everyone understands the story and how it relates to the theme. Then, as a group, discuss:
 - What went right? How can that effort be recreated or sustained in the next disaster?
 - What went wrong (there may be multiple answers and/or viewpoints on this question)?
 - What should be adapted to prevent similar crises from happening again?
 - What are the “must haves” vs the “nice to haves” in this solution? How do they relate to your own disaster plan or planning practices?

Be sure someone has been appointed your **scribe and speaker** to share this information!

5. **Report to the group!**

Debrief Questions

- What went right? How can that effort be recreated or sustained in the next disaster?
- What went wrong (there may be multiple answers and/or viewpoints on this question)?
- What should be adapted to prevent similar crises from happening again?
- What are the “must haves” vs the “nice to haves” in this solution?



Library Disaster Preparedness Project

For nearly ten years, the research team of Dr. Feili Tu-Keefner, Denise Lyons, and April Hobbs have been studying libraries during disasters. There have been many examples of how libraries served their communities through response and recovery.



Media

Find videos and photos showcasing key moments from the project.



Resources

Find a curated selection of resources to help organizations and communities prepare for disasters and emergencies. Some



Get in Touch

Please use the following link to get in touch with us.

Contact Us

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Kentucky Department for
Libraries and Archives



Network of the
National Library of Medicine

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