

Strengthening Our Foundation: ● ● Disaster Preparedness, Community Resilience, and the Future of Libraries

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About Us



Dr. Feili Tu-Keefner

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Denise Lyons

 Kentucky Department for
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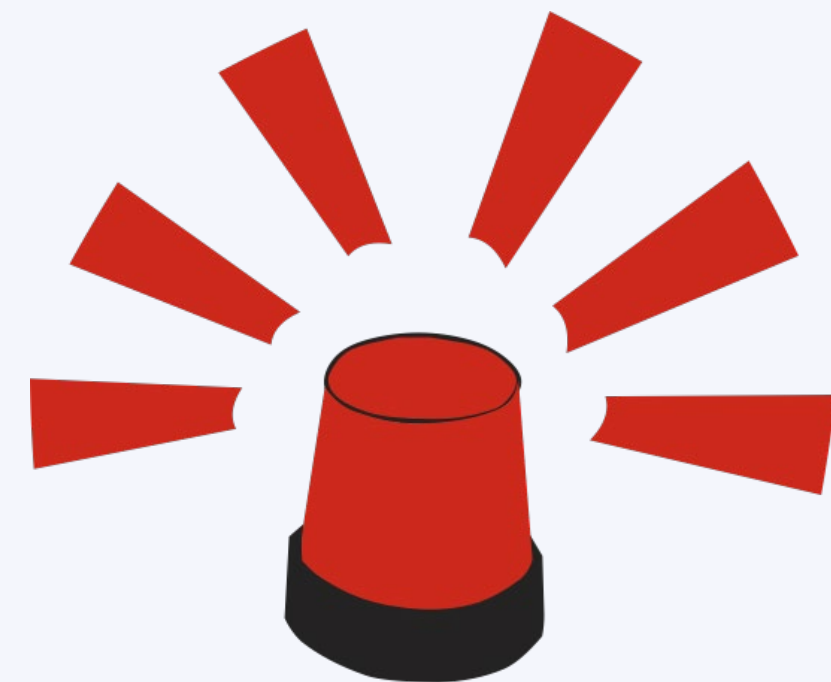


April Hobbs

 **NNLM** Network of the
National Library of Medicine

“Regarding the impact of hurricanes and other natural disasters, **readiness is the key to resilience!”**

**Dwight McInvaill, Library Director,
Georgetown County, South Carolina**





Research Locations

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

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

Building a Culture of Preparedness

Learning from the “Recovery 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.”



Crisis Leadership



- 1. Sense Making: Grasping crises as they unfold**
- 2. Decision Making and Coordinating: Shaping the crisis response**
- 3. Meaning Making: Constructing a crisis narrative**
- 4. Ending a Crisis: Managing accountability**
- 5. Learning and Changing: From Crisis to Reform**

Boin, A., Hart, P., Stern, E., & Sundelius, B. (2005). *The politics of crisis management: Public leadership under pressure*. New York: Cambridge University Press



Emotional Intelligence at Work

1. **Self-Awareness**: The ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions, and drives, as well as their effect on others.
2. **Self-Regulation**: The ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods, the propensity to suspend judgment- to think before acting.
3. **Motivation**: A passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or status, a propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence.
4. **Empathy**: The ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people, skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions.
5. **Social Skill**: Proficiency in managing relationships and building networks, an ability to find common ground and build rapport

Goleman, D. (1998). What makes a leader? *Harvard Business Review* 76 (6):93–102.

● ● Be The Leader: Leadership Qualifications

LEARNING, CHANGING, AND ENDING CRISES

“... 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.



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)

Challenges

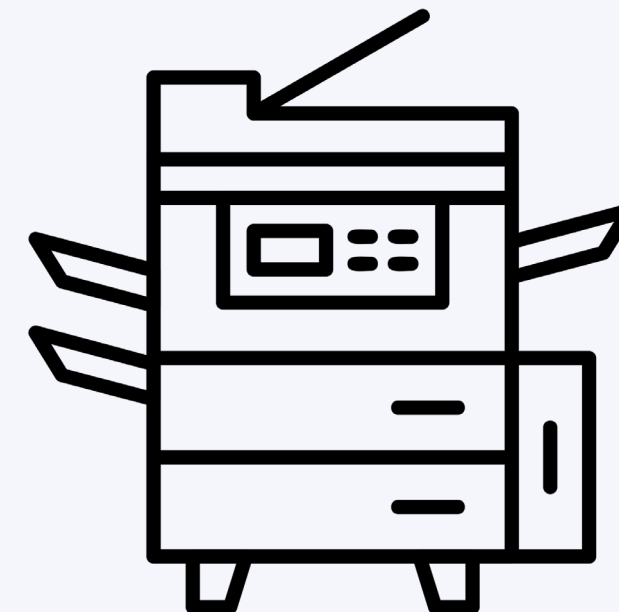
Lack of Technology

“We spent a lot of time helping folks navigate FEMA and upload pictures. That was a big one. They had no idea how to copy machine scans and upload it...A lot of people didn't even have an email address. They didn't know how.” Library staff 1, Perry, 2023



Equity of Access

“...People would stop and I'd be working here and they would need copies or faxing or whatever, and I would do that for them. And if it was tornado related, I didn't charge them anything for it. I still have people that are coming in and doing tornado related business, and I still don't charge them.” Library Staff, 2023





Best Practices



Develop a Comprehensive Natural Disaster Policy

- Establish guidelines and protocols for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery

Conduct Community Needs Assessment

- 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 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 building, 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

Recommendations

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 Broader Context

- For example, understand the library's position in the broader framework to ensure clear communication channels and minimize information duplication



Resource Website

This website project was made possible with funding from the NNLM Region 2 Emergency Preparedness Grant: <https://preparedlibraries.org>

The screenshot shows the website's header with a logo on the left and a navigation menu on the right containing links for Presentations, Publications, Studies, Media, Team, States, Resources, and a CONTACT button. The main content area features a large hero image of volunteers in blue shirts packing supplies into cardboard boxes. Overlaid on the left side of the hero image is the text "Library Disaster Preparedness Project". Below the hero image is a paragraph of introductory text. At the bottom of the page, there are three white call-to-action boxes with icons and text.

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
- Get in Touch**
Please use the following link to get in touch with us.

Essential Competencies



Essential Competencies

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Disaster/Health Information Services

Technology & Information Literacy

Community Engagement & Outreach

Disaster Preparedness, Response, & Recovery

Communication & Advocacy

- Deliver effective disaster health information services in an ethical manner.
- Collaborating with health sciences information professionals to prepare health information resources and deliver these services
- Promoting the utilization of various resources in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery to enhance community resilience

Top Ten Tips



<https://preparedlibraries.org/studies/top-ten-tips-regarding-advocacy-and-community-engagement/>

Top Ten Tips

Regarding Advocacy and Community Engagement

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To assist information professionals in developing strategies for community advocacy, engagement, and outreach, please rank the priorities of these ten tips and create a tailored list appropriate for specific information environments. Once completed, the ranked list can be saved as a PDF for download.

Top Ten Tips Regarding Advocacy and Community Engagement:

Provide education, training, and professional development opportunities

Believe that librarians must take a leadership role

Develop plans for disaster preparedness and recovery

Establish partnerships with organizations and agencies

Facilitate building of community capacity and resources

Disseminate trustworthy resources in multiple languages



Tu-Keefner, F., Hobbs, A., & Lyons, D. (2025) Libraries on the front lines: The imperative for disaster-ready information professionals. *Journal Library Administration*, 65(1), 79-99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2024.2432230>

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Articles

Libraries on the Front Lines: The Imperative for Disaster-Ready Information Professionals

Feili Tu-Keefner , April Hobbs & Denise Lyons

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Cite this article

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Abstract

Libraries, particularly local public libraries, have evolved into hubs for community-first services, extending beyond traditional roles. Library personnel are now expected to act as first responders and crisis leaders during times such as natural disasters. This report documents the critical crisis leadership qualifications required for library personnel, identified through comprehensive research from 2015 to 2023. Findings from these situation-specific case studies call attention to the community's needs for library services during emergencies, underscoring the requirement for LIS

[Libraries Are Re: Midwest >](#)

Lucie Laurian et al. *Journal of the Am...*
Published online: ...

[From Communit Resilience: The](#)

Thank you



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