



The Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS) program team identifies common themes from whole community after-action reports (AAR) and presents them in a trend analysis for emergency managers to consider when developing plans and exercises. The team analyzed federal policy guidance, 18 AARs (12 exercise and 6 real-world), and the 2013 State Preparedness Reports. The team identified recurring topics in housing preparedness, response, and recovery, and then analyzed the aggregated topics to identify trends in advances and capability gaps. This trend analysis provides a framework and guide for the LLIS Housing Core Capability research effort.

FEMA Core Capability: Housing

Housing is one of the core capabilities under the Recovery Mission Area, as defined by the National Preparedness Goal and calls on emergency managers to “implement housing solutions that effectively support the needs of the whole community and contribute to its sustainability and resilience.”¹ Research and analysis indicated the need for capability improvements in both short- and long-term housing post-disaster, as well as pre-disaster preparedness.

¹ FEMA.gov - Core Capabilities List

Average State Housing Capability Rating vs. Average Rating Across All Core Capabilities

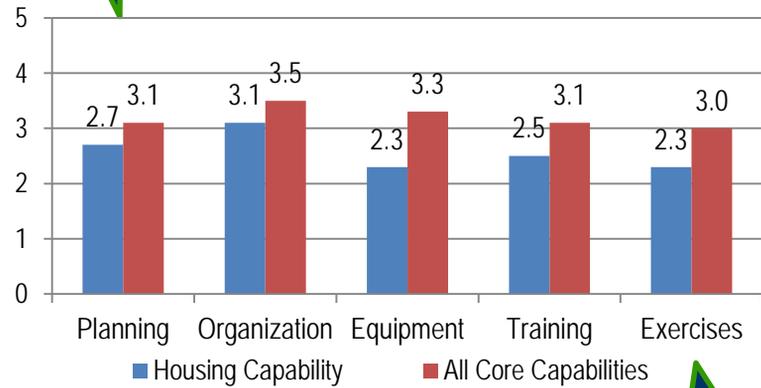


Figure 1 illustrates how states rated their housing capabilities on a scale of 1-5 (1 being the lowest, 5 the highest).

Identified Themes and Trends



Providing Temporary Housing: From Evaluation to Demobilization

One of the biggest issues that emergency managers faced immediately following a disaster was preparing for the entire life-cycle of the use of temporary housing. The AARs and SPR data indicated additional improvements needed in every step of the life-cycle, in order to ensure sufficient availability of resources like housing stock; survivor access to information about funding and housing provided by existing programs; and evaluative or functional resources and tools for getting survivors into housing. Areas most frequently cited by emergency managers included: evaluating available housing stock; conducting damage assessments to determine asset suitability; identifying the need for deployed temporary resources; finding sites for deployed resources; evaluating community needs; matching individuals to appropriate temporary housing; addressing the needs of individuals with access and functional needs; and managing the logistics and eventual demobilization of temporary housing resources.



Developing, Updating, & Exercising Housing Plans

Emergency managers described the importance of developing and updating disaster housing plans prior to disasters. As they developed housing plans they needed to account for elements such as on-scene housing for emergency responders, planning for individuals displaced to other communities, and helping localities develop plans. The AARs and SPR data also emphasized the need for emergency managers to use exercises to test and validate existing plans and to incorporate lessons learned from exercises and real-world events into updated disaster housing plans.



Improving Whole Community Coordination

The SPR data and AARs revealed a number of areas where improved coordination enhanced disaster housing capabilities, particularly coordination between federal and SLTT personnel. Emergency managers also described how to improve coordination efforts through the development of disaster housing task forces, improved interagency coordination, public-private partnerships, and coordination with non-profit organizations, VOADs, and community groups.

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Identified Themes and Trends (cont.)



Facilitating Transitions Between Housing Options

Emergency managers identified a number of challenges in the transition from evacuation shelters into temporary housing, as well as the transition out of temporary housing. They reported that they needed to help temporary housing occupants develop long-term plans for permanent housing and that some individuals required intensive casework in order to leave temporary housing. Conducting the assessments needed to return disaster survivors to their own homes was a key element to these transitions. These assessments include evaluating if a structure is sound; determining if it can be sufficiently repaired to be habitable again; determining what repairs are necessary; and communicating that information to owners. The data identified that having sufficient engineers and properly trained personnel to conduct these assessments is a key need for emergency managers.



Addressing Long-Term Housing Recovery

SPR data and the AARs indicate that providing for long-term housing recovery needs was a central element of housing preparedness as emergency managers worked to guide efforts to rebuild and reestablish communities. Long-term recovery plans helped shape decisions on repairs to existing housing stock compared to development of new, more resilient housing options, often requiring balancing immediate housing needs against long-term resiliency concerns. Long-term recovery efforts also included housing for new residents and any regulation changes needed to drive a more efficient, resilient recovery. The data show that emergency managers encountered the persistent challenge of developing exercises that could effectively simulate long-term recovery issues.



Improving Education and Outreach Efforts

Throughout the AARs and SPR responses, emergency managers cited confusion and miscommunication regarding potential housing options, processes for applying for housing assistance, and the role of various agencies. Emergency managers considered how to improve awareness of housing options and programs among evacuees, volunteers, response personnel, and planners. This included educating evacuees on potential housing options, teaching local agencies and responders about federal regulations, and providing training to response personnel on guiding individuals through the process for signing up for disaster housing assistance.



Providing Sufficient Funding and Resources

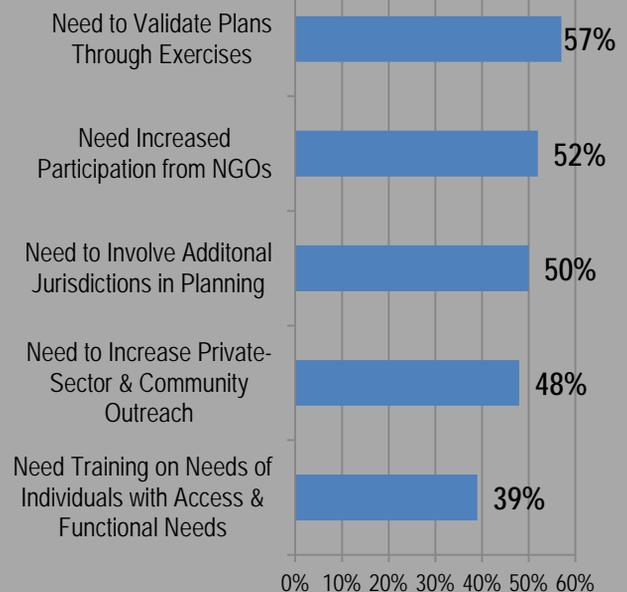
Emergency managers reporting that insufficient funding and personnel shortages created capability gaps by impeding employee training, the development of institutional knowledge, and response capacity.

Plans and Resources

To learn more about the Housing Core Capability and associated trends, please see the following documents:

- ◆ [National Disaster Housing Strategy](#)
Describes how the Nation currently provides housing to those affected by disasters and sets out new priorities and guidance for improving disaster housing options going forward.
- ◆ [FEMA Housing Portal](#)
Helps individuals and families, who have been displaced by a disaster, find a place to live. The portal consolidates rental resources identified and provided by federal agencies, private organizations, and the public to help individuals and families find available rental units in their area.
- ◆ [FEMA State-Led Housing Task Forces Information](#)
Provides information from FEMA regarding responsibilities and the composition of state-led disaster housing task forces. There is also a list of the key activities for those task forces.
- ◆ [FEMA Local Mitigation Planning Handbook](#)
FEMA's official guide for local governments to develop, update and implement local mitigation plans.

State Preparedness Report Responses – Standardized Capability Gaps



In the 2013 SPRs, states responded to standardized questions regarding capability gaps. This shows the percentage of states that reported a capability gap to selected questions.

(Source: 2013 State Preparedness Reports)