

CDP Webinar Responses and Resources

[Hidden Gems: Funding Long-Term Recovery Groups](#)

Aug. 12, 2021

It is difficult to get to all questions posed during the webinar, but it is important to us that we provide responses and share resources. Similar questions are grouped together, however questions answered by the panelists are not included here but can be accessed in the recording of the webinar.

Presentation slides and recordings are available [on our website](#).

General LTRG

What formal role do faith communities play in long-term disaster recovery?

- Faith communities play many roles in long-term disaster recovery. Often, especially in rural communities, faith leaders step in and lead efforts. Along with leadership, faith leaders can provide the long-term recovery group (LTRG) with access to regional and national fundraising platforms through synods, denominations and regional associations. Another role they play is providing spiritual and emotional care, helping the group and the community remember that recovery is not just about buildings and homes but also about wellness and resilience.

It's important to invite any ministerial alliances and inter-faith alliances into the LTRG conversation. Faith-based nonprofit organizations (e.g., United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP)) are often integrally involved in many aspects of the recovery, including as leaders of the disaster case management process.

Is there a place for youth and youth-serving programs or older adult programs in LTRGs?

- Absolutely, as much as possible, the LTRG should represent the community, and groups that serve youth or older adults can be invaluable to the process.

Where can people in small and low-resource communities learn about models that other similarly situated communities have tried in the past?

- The best place to learn these models are from the communities themselves. Many local recovery leaders are happy to pass on what they have learned through recovery. Some organizations, like the Disaster Leadership Team (DLT), have recovery coaches from small, low-resource communities. Please feel free to reach out to Cari (cari.cullen@disasterphilanthropy.org) for more specific connections.

Who gets to call themselves an LTRG?

- An LTRG typically has these components: leadership, fiscal and governance policies, and a collective mission that works towards the recovery of a disaster. While there is no governing body or a one-size-fits-all definition of an LTRG, there are many resources about LTRGs available from [National VOAD](#).

How do I get my local emergency management agency to become an active partner in our LTRG?

- Make sure that you regularly share updates with the local emergency management agency. Develop a relationship with agency members and invite them to attend your meeting and activities so they understand why you want them involved and what valuable role they can play. Depending upon the size of your community and the disaster, there may be a local or state organization.

How did they go about deciding who got the 40 homes? (Referring to Hope Meadows home building project)

- The homes were chosen through a process and criteria developed by the LTRG in coordination with Disaster Case Management.

Long-haul funding or LTRG/COAD

Is it true that in many communities, LTRGs respond to repeated disasters so they end up functioning as year-round Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)/Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) that do preparation and immediate response in addition to recovery?

- In some cases, this makes sense for the community. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to how to sustain -- or whether to sustain -- the existence of an LTRG.

How long should a foundation expect to support an LTRG? Sometimes pulling away at the wrong moment can create even more damage. When do you know that recovery has occurred and you can free up resources to assist the next community? What might a foundation's "exit strategy" look like going in?

- There is not an easy answer to this question. It's a struggle, for sure. For example, we funded some of the LTRGs working in recovery from Hurricane Harvey recovery more than once. And some of those same groups have since been funded for other disaster recovery projects. We also helped connect them to other resources (funders and other goods and services), and we provided them guidance and mentorship from the DLT. Our hope is always that they set up a model to sustain themselves for as long as there is work to be done.

The Orange County Disaster Rebuild LTRG that was mentioned in the webinar holds regular fundraising events and has become a major staple in the community for local funding. Some are more successful at that than others. And, it's often said that recovery ends when the funding runs out. This is an unfortunate truth about long-term recovery.

How can we create a true model that can stand up? How do people stay active over years of no need?

- We advocate for local funders – community foundations or United Ways, maybe – to step up and help maintain at least a basic system of training, communication and planning. Often this can be done in coordination with local emergency management. If there are local social service agencies that do regular case management, you can engage them in a COAD that meets quarterly and help train a staff member or some staff members in [disaster case management](#), for example. Reach out to your local VOAD or National VOAD for other ideas.

Disasters take years to recover from and yet when the next one comes along – i.e., right now with COVID-19 – funder attention shifts. What should funders be doing to support LTRGs in blue skies and is there a rationale to support a director on a more permanent basis?

- See the answers above. Maybe consider a COAD or local VOAD option. Each community is different and will have different needs. If the community is one that is regularly responding to disasters, then, yes, there's value to sustaining some staff leadership on a more consistent basis.

How possible is it for traditional disaster coalitions to integrate with climate resiliency coalitions and this combo be funded for preparation, mitigation, adaptation, immediate disaster response and recovery? Aligning with the climate resiliency movement might be the best way to fund local disaster services.

- There are definitely areas of overlap and alignment. Center for Disaster Philanthropy (CDP) has a webinar coming up in October on Climate Justice that will examine some of these issues. Watch for an announcement in September.

Great information! I'm wondering if your panel could share any more observations about the importance (or not) of COADs and other evergreen groups from which LTRGs can quickly spring forth. How important is "blue skies" coordination (especially staffing) and preparation and how can the case be made for this?

- Blue skies coordination is critically important, but it is hard to argue for staffing if located in an area without a lot of disasters. This may be more palatable in Louisiana or Texas compared to New Hampshire.

As we know, every state will face a disaster and should be prepared. Staffing may need to be a seconded piece of someone's work. In some communities, disaster response organizations authorize their staff to spend X amount of hours staffing a VOAD/COAD even in blue skies. In other communities this is done by local emergency management or United Way staff.

With the impact of climate change on disasters (frequency, magnitude), should we be thinking of LTRGs generally as more permanent organizations, rather than temporary? Are you seeing many of the LTRGs transforming into preparedness organizations, then back to LTRGs? Do LTRGs that form in one county or area ever "move" to other areas to respond to a disaster so that the organizational infrastructure doesn't have to be recreated?

- LTRGs are based in one particularly community because they're made up of organizations from that community. If they do not serve another area they cannot just relocate there. However, the skills, forms, templates, etc. could be shared between communities to reduce startup time.

There are several organizations who also assist in starting up LTRGs and provide mentoring services. A local VOAD/COAD is probably the closest to a more permanent organization. Funders should also support those to ensure every organization is ready when a disaster hits.

Working under one of the top 20 destructive wildfires in California, my biggest concerns in funding long-term recovery have to do with the interplay between small, local service groups and the big national relief groups that often end up working at cross purposes for whatever reason, and how long-term recovery links up with and supports the establishment of active mitigation against future disasters. I would like to see social service organizations do the administering of cases that are critical for wildfire mitigation servers like fire safe councils, and firewise communities identify who among their residents qualifies for financial assistance towards home hardening or lot-clearing.

- This is why it is critical for LTRGs to be inclusive. All of these organizations should be at the table when planning for and coordinating recovery. Sometimes, it's hard to work collaboratively, but when it's what is best for the community, it's what should be done.

If a trusted organization or funder or even government agency acts as the convener of the LTRG or supports the network in some way, you can often mitigate the cross-purposes work.

What should we fund? Why?

Why should funders look at overhead and back-office costs versus rebuilding bricks and mortar support?

- Funders should look at overhead and back-office costs as well as bricks and mortar support. The two pieces go hand-in-hand. Staffing to fill roles like disaster case management, recovery coordination and administration, and reconstruction project management keep the LTRG moving forward efficiently. Without these capacities, the bricks and mortar resources may not be used efficiently or distributed effectively. When we fund capacity there are dedicated people to verify client need, decide how and when to assist homeowners, write the check and/or manage the warehouse full of donated, in-kind materials.

How can funders better support mutual learning and capacity-building across communities?

- Funders can support LTRGs to share what they have learned during their process with other communities. Funding organizations at the regional or state-level to maintain recovery capacity and create and maintain learning networks can also be helpful.

On the point of maxed-out staff capacity, I am noticing my staff who are committed to our long-term COVID recovery are finally starting to wear thin on their ability to stay engaged and motivated. My funder requires self-care and team-building in our contract but in no way supports that requirement with guidance, and more importantly, funding. I am wondering if you are seeing any shifts in funders putting money where their mouths are for ensuring staff wellness and integrated self-care in their workplace. I lead our team and authentically prioritize my team's wellness, but it is unbelievably hard to achieve without any funding to support those initiatives. Would love any insight or thoughts you have on ensuring future funding includes staff wellness initiatives.

- As a funder, we understand that wellness is an important aspect of community recovery and keeping service providers motivated and encouraged. Building wellness and health has been a priority for CDP's leadership throughout the pandemic. Talk to your regular funders and see if this is something they would consider funding. Think about no-/low-cost activities you could do. CDP implemented no-Zoom Fridays to encourage a more relaxed day. Ensure 1:1 check-ins include a wellness touch base. Give a few hours off here and there if you can. "Close early" even if virtual.

How can funders address the lack of equity in the leadership and practices of many long-term recovery groups?

- Some funders (i.e., Ford Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation) ask potential grantees to provide a diversity report on their board, leadership and staff team. This is one way of indicating your commitment to equity as a funder. Guidestar also collects this information for those organizations who choose to provide it.

It is important that equity is embedded in the recovery process so a funder can ask all LTRG applicants to indicate how an equity lens will be used to select recipients in need. A funder engaging in this process will also want to be doing an internal review of its own processes and commitments.

Fundraising

What would you say to communities who are concerned that long-term recovery fundraising will compete with annual giving campaigns from their agencies or with the community other agendas?

- Having the right data to share with those concerned is important. Part of being able to negotiate these seemingly competing priorities is to show that they are not competing at all. The ability for a household to fully recover impacts all sectors of the community recovering. Make the connections to the number of workers who may leave an area because they can't rebuild/repair their housing. Also, consider how the loss of housing and the subsequent loss of wage-earners impacts the entire community, including tax-base, school enrollment and donors.

In the less populated rural communities/areas, what have you found to be the most useful form of generating the necessary funds to support a satisfactory recovery?

- The most useful form of generating necessary funds is persistence and a focused plan. In many communities, especially small ones, the best fundraising happens through networks and relationships. Develop a case statement and keep sharing the need.

How important is leveraging funding with volunteer labor to funders?

- This greatly depends on the funder. Volunteer labor is very important for many federal/government options. Volunteer labor can also reflect community buy-in and commitment to recovery.

Hi! What grants are available for LTRGs? Where should we be looking?

- Look to your local, regional and state community foundations and United Way. When a disaster occurs, see where the mayor, council, police jury or governor direct funds and get in touch with those folks.

Look to the big corporations and industries in your community. Many of them will have a charitable arm. As mentioned above, they risk losing workers if homes and infrastructure can't be rebuilt.

Some funders require past audits. Many LTRGs don't have these available because they are created in response to specific disasters. Do you have suggestions for LTRGs on how to apply for grants from funders such as these?

- First, ask the funder what the potential work-around for the requirement is. What do they need to see evidence of, and is there another way to provide it? Second, find another organization with past audit records that can serve as the LTRGs fiscal sponsor for that grant.

Would love advice and recommendations for how funders can manage the controversy that often follows disasters when communities want to raise funds to support individuals impacted by the disaster.

- Raising funds for an individual is always going to happen after a disaster or emergency. Sometimes these funds pay for immediate needs – food, shelter, funeral costs - faster than an LTRG can even be formed. A community foundation or LTRG getting its messaging and fundraising campaign out in the public eye can reduce the number of individual campaigns by focusing on the importance of supporting the whole community, not just individual people.

What kinds of success metrics should funders use when evaluating a grant to an LTRG?

- Successful LTRGs have leadership that understands, represents and is supported by the community. They have fiscal and governance processes (or a willingness to set these up) that ensure equitable access to resources.

CDP Funding

Does CDP also help with/manage grant compliance and management if the NGO doesn't have the capacity for them? Can CDP help with grant matching to grants?

- CDP does not help with/manage grant compliance and management for non-CDP grantees. CDP can help funders identify disaster recovery funding opportunities.

How does someone new to CDP reach out to inquire about applying for grants? How does someone new to CDP reach out to inquire about being a funder?

- Anyone on the CDP team is happy to help connect you to the CDP person or resource you need. Please see our [Leadership & Staff](#) page.

If I am out supporting emerging LTRGs, where do I tell them to find an application for funding from the CDP? Is there someone specific in the CDP that the LTRG should connect with?

- CDP's application process is invitation only. Reach out to one of our grantmaking staff members to find out more.