

Project Overview and Lessons Learned

Rhode Island Senior Resiliency Project

The Rhode Island Senior Resiliency Project provides emergency preparedness resources to long term care, assisted living, and independent senior housing facilities to improve their response to climate related disasters. This quick guide introduces you to one such resource.



Project Goal

- The goal of the Rhode Island Senior Resiliency Project is to support long term care, assisted living, and independent living senior housing facilities in preparing for climate related disasters through energy resiliency audits and the development of all-hazards emergency plans that emphasize sheltering in place
- When conducted by facilities that serve seniors, these important emergency preparedness actions will reduce risk to vulnerable senior citizens and increase overall emergency preparedness levels of the facilities that serve them

Project Participants

- The Rhode Island Senior Resiliency Project has engaged nearly 30 sites across Rhode Island that were directly impacted by Hurricane Irene, Super Storm Sandy, or Winter Storm Nemo
- The project has worked with partners, stakeholders, and consultants to assist qualified facilities to reduce risk and increase preparedness to the benefit of seniors, facility staff, and organizations as a whole
- Project resources are now available to long term care, assisted living, and independent senior housing facilities across Rhode Island

Get The Resources

- Download the Rhode Island Senior Resiliency Project resources at health.ri.gov/programs/climatechangeandhealth by clicking on the Senior Resiliency Project link

Project Phases

Phase 1

- In the pilot phase, one long term care facility, one assisted living facility, and one independent senior living facility were engaged. Each site conducted a facility self-assessment, followed by a visit by project staff
- Utilizing the pilot phase findings, project tools and resources were developed in support of project goals

Phase 2

- In Phase 2, the Rhode Island Department of Health secured additional funding to expand the project to include additional site participation

Phase 3

- Once that funding was secured, the project entered phase three, where the project was expanded statewide
- Rollout included the development of multiple resources for all of Rhode Island's long term care, assisted living, and independent senior living facilities

Project Resources

Facility Self-Assessment
to evaluate a facility's energy resiliency and ability to shelter in place in the event of an emergency

Gap Assessment Process
that guides facilities in addressing and prioritizing mitigation activities

Shelter-in-Place Plan
template to facilitate development of formal planning efforts

Staff Training Presentation
that supports facilities to educate and prepare staff members

Technical Assistance Webinar
series geared towards facility emergency preparedness and planning for staff

Quick Reference Guides
in written and electronic format to orient staff members at each type of facility

Lessons Learned

- Facility structure and resources vary greatly from site to site, but because of similarities, resources can be directed to facility types together and adapted to meet individual facility needs
- The level of emergency preparedness maturity from site to site was extremely broad, with facilities differing in their experience and capabilities
- The age of the facility does not necessarily correlate with facility preparedness level
- Implementation can be time consuming, with committed facility staff and engaged senior leadership as essential components to successful program completion
- Training support needs to be highly adaptable, with basic project related training resources needing extensive customization to meet each facility's training needs
- Resident personal preparedness emerged as an important issue for independent senior living facilities, with program resources developed to meet this need
- Smaller public housing authorities differed greatly from other participating facilities due to limited staff and infrastructure
- Project structure can successfully support sustainability and spread of project resources and tools
- Resources, program structure, and lessons learned can be adapted to meet the needs of facilities beyond Rhode Island

For Additional Assistance

- This program is one of a series of resources developed as part of the Rhode Island Senior Resiliency Project, a statewide initiative to support the emergency preparedness efforts of long term care, assisted living, and independent senior housing facilities in the state
- Resources and templates developed for this project (e.g., shelter-in-place plan, training materials) are available for download at health.ri.gov/programs/climatechangeandhealth
- The project is conducted by the Rhode Island Department of Health and supported with subject matter expertise from the Yale New Haven Health System Center for Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Response
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Gap Assessment Process

Long Term Care and Assisted Living Reference Guide

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Description

- After you complete a Facility Self-Assessment, develop a Gap Assessment so your facility can identify, prioritize, and address areas of opportunity highlighted through your Facility Self-Assessment

Process

- Start a Gap Assessment document, such as a Microsoft Word Document
- Refer to your Facility Self-Assessment, and group your strengths and areas of opportunity
- Develop a list of options to consider to address your vulnerabilities
- Prioritize and timeline efforts based on your facility's resources

Assessment Topics

- Your Gap Assessment will be a living document that will guide your facility in determining the way ahead in your emergency preparedness program
- Your facility's next steps will not be based upon assumptions or opinions, but instead upon actual vulnerabilities and priorities

Sample Gap Assessment Format

- There are many effective and efficient formats for conducting a Gap Assessment
- Your facility should use the format that you prefer, or build upon the sample format that follows

Sample Gap Assessment Format

Area of Opportunity	Option to Consider	Resources Required	Timeline	Action Plan

A Gap Assessment Bridges the Assessment and Planning Phases of the Continuum of Emergency Preparedness



Lessons Learned

- Look for the “low hanging fruit,” or opportunities where a vulnerability can be quickly, easily, or affordably addressed, as well as looking for long term projects that that might require complex planning, a large budget and an extensive timeline
- Your facility can prioritize actions based upon all of these important factors
- If you need assistance in how to address vulnerabilities identified in the assessment process, consider seeking support from other facilities within your coalition, your Local Emergency Planning Committee, an appropriate department within the Rhode Island State government, or a reputable consultant
- Don’t overstate your facility’s strengths during the gap assessment process, since the areas you identify as challenges will be the areas where your planning and mitigation efforts are focused, so be as realistic as possible to direct your efforts where they need to go
- There is a spectrum of efforts that can be identified to address most vulnerabilities, ranging from policy and procedure development to complex, expensive and timely facility modifications
- Any effort along the mitigation spectrum will move your facility forward in increasing preparedness, but your vulnerabilities must first be identified

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Facility Self-Assessment Tool

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Get The Resource

- Download the Rhode Island Senior Resiliency Project Facility Self-Assessment Tool at health.ri.gov/programs/climatechangeandhealth by clicking on the Senior Resiliency Project link

Description

- Microsoft Excel tool
- Over 100 questions and scripted answers
- Assesses facility's ability to respond to a disaster that might impact utilities and require a facility to shelter in place
- Conducted by facility staff

Assessment Topics

- Examines multiple areas of the facility including facility location and elevation, facility structure, utilities, resources, food service, clinical and non-clinical staffing and notification, alternate care, and evacuation and movement

Facility Self-Assessment Process

Gather the Team and Resources

Download the Facility Self-Assessment Tool

Assemble your facility's Emergency Preparedness Committee

Involve other multidisciplinary staff to ensure representation in each assessment area

Obtain a FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), if appropriate

Conduct the Assessment

Answer each question completely, making certain information is as accurate and current as possible

If any questions are not applicable to your facility or scope of service, skip them

Pull in additional staff, as needed, along the way

Examine the Results

As a group, examine your facility's Self-Assessment results

Identify your facility's strengths and areas of opportunity

Conduct a Gap Assessment

Develop a gap assessment document to go with your assessment

Group your strengths and areas of opportunity together

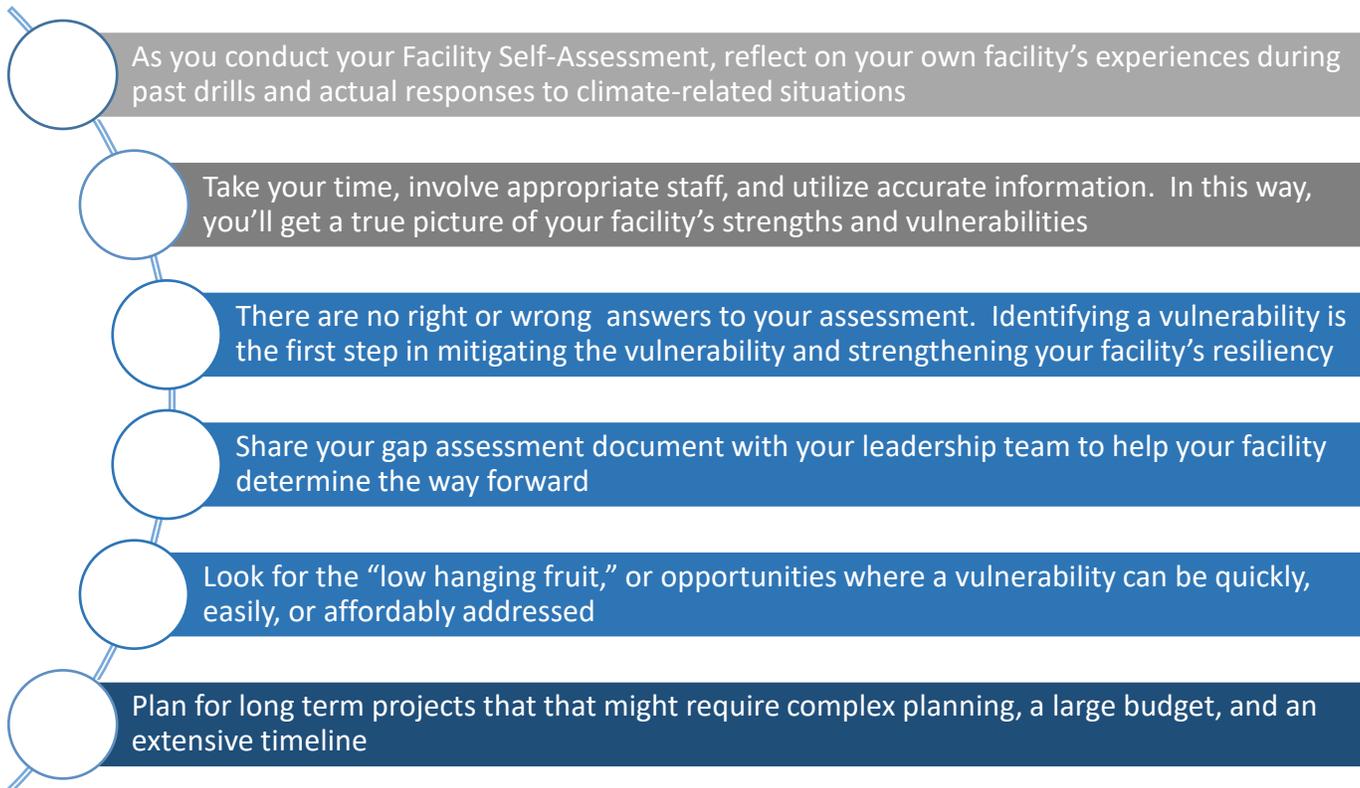
Develop a list of options to consider to address your vulnerabilities

Prioritize and timeline efforts based on your facility's resources

Lessons Learned

- Common Facility Self-Assessment Findings in Rhode Island include lack of stored potable water, generators with insufficient output capability, fuel for generators that might last only one to two days, and lack of devices and training for emergent evacuations
- Pay particular attention to these common problem areas when you conduct your own Facility Self-Assessment

Best Practices

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1. As you conduct your Facility Self-Assessment, reflect on your own facility's experiences during past drills and actual responses to climate-related situations
 2. Take your time, involve appropriate staff, and utilize accurate information. In this way, you'll get a true picture of your facility's strengths and vulnerabilities
 3. There are no right or wrong answers to your assessment. Identifying a vulnerability is the first step in mitigating the vulnerability and strengthening your facility's resiliency
 4. Share your gap assessment document with your leadership team to help your facility determine the way forward
 5. Look for the "low hanging fruit," or opportunities where a vulnerability can be quickly, easily, or affordably addressed
 6. Plan for long term projects that that might require complex planning, a large budget, and an extensive timeline

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Site Walk Through

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Description

- A Site Walk Through is a tour of the interior and exterior of your facility that is conducted by facility staff and leadership
- A Site Walk Through supports you in assessing your facility's ability to respond to a disaster that might impact utilities and require a facility to shelter-in-place

Prepare For Your Site Walk Through

- First assemble your Site Walk Through team, consisting of staff who have a role in emergency preparedness
- Also consider involving members of your leadership team, especially if leadership takes a more hands on approach
- Bring materials such as plans, procedures, and your Facility Self-Assessment, described next

Use Your Facility Self-Assessment as Your Guide

- The Facility Self-Assessment Tool that was developed as part of the Rhode Island Senior Resiliency Project can serve as a guide as you conduct your Site Walk Through
- The topics for your Site Walk Through should be the same as the topics covered in the Facility Self-Assessment Tool

Download a Facility Self-Assessment Tool

- Download a Rhode Island Senior Resiliency Project Facility Self-Assessment Tool at health.ri.gov/programs/climatechangeandhealth by clicking on the Senior Resiliency Project link

Why Conduct a Site Walk Through?

- You walk through your facility all the time, but a Site Walk Through allows your team to formally examine your facility with a focus exclusively on emergency preparedness
- As part of your Site Walk Through, you can verify assumptions and any other information that are part of your plans and procedures to make sure it is both current and correct
- A Site Walk Through can also help you orient new employees, prompt important planning discussions, and identify potential emergency preparedness issues before they arise

Site Walk Through Areas

Consider facility location and elevation by walking through evacuation routes and considering possible obstructions

Consider facility structure by examining areas such as windows, doors, barriers, floor and external drainage and roofing

Consider utilities and resources by examining water supply elements, generators, fuel supply, and power supply

Follow internal, horizontal and vertical evacuation routes, including visiting elevators, stairwells, and reviewing evacuation devices

Tour areas related to food and nutrition and examine potable water storage, onsite or vendor food service areas, and food storage locations

Visit alternate care areas

It's Not Just the Plan, It's the Planning

- A Facility Walk Through illustrates that when considering emergency preparedness, it isn't just the plan that matters, it is the planning process
- The conversations and education that occur during the Facility Walk Through can increase the emergency preparedness knowledge and skills of your team

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Shelter-in-Place Plan Template

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Get The Resource

- Download the Rhode Island Senior Resiliency Project Shelter-in-Place Plan Template at health.ri.gov/programs/climatechangeandhealth by clicking on the Senior Resiliency Project link

Description

- In considering your facility's ability to respond to an event which may impact utilities and prompt residents and staff to remain in the facility, a critical component of your facility's response is referring to your facility's formal plan to shelter-in-place
- The purpose of your facility's Shelter-in-Place Plan is to describe the systems and processes by which the facility will maintain operations prior to, during, and after a disaster that involves residents and staff remaining at the facility
- A Shelter-in-Place Plan is specific in scope only to incidents during which the residents will remain at the facility
- It does not replace any existing plans or policies but provides a ready reference of existing information for staff

Using the Template

- If your facility does not currently have a Shelter-in-Place Plan, begin with the Shelter-in-Place Template and adapt it to the unique needs of your facility
- If your facility already has a Shelter-in-Place Plan, compare your plan with the template resource to identify any gaps in your current plan

Best Practices

- Like all policies, procedures and plans, a Shelter-in-Place Plan should be reviewed and updated at least annually by leadership
- Annual plan review should involve tasks such as assembling your emergency preparedness committee, communicating with leadership, updating staff, educating residents and residents' families, reflecting on facility and area changes, contacting suppliers, vendors and partners, and other preparedness related actions
- These steps not only result in a policy that is current, but also strengthen your facility's emergency response in important ways, such as communication and networking
- Continuously improving your facility's Shelter-in-Place Plan can result in a stronger, more robust plan and a stronger, more responsive team
- In the emergency preparedness field, it's not just the plan that benefits a facility, it's also the planning process

The Shelter-in-Place Plan Template Covers the Following Topics

Authorities and Responsibilities

- Including how and when the plan is activated, the configuration of the emergency management team, and command and control
- Address who has the authority to make decisions when the Senior Leadership is unavailable

Facility Description

- Including number of buildings, population housed, number of staff, and sheltering requirements

Utilities and Resources

- Including emergency power generation, nutrition and hydration resources, ventilation and air conditioning contingencies, supply levels and overstocking options, and waste management processes

Food and Nutrition

- Including alternate methods for meal preparation, identification of primary and backup food vendors, enteral feeding supplies, food storage supplies, and additional storage capabilities upon advanced notification of a disaster

Water Supply

- Potable water supply including currently stored supply and storages plans and capabilities upon advanced notification of a disaster
- Water supply for sanitation

Clinical and Staffing Issues

- Defining the level of care that will be provided, such as adapting your normal staffing ratios or utilizing agreements with other agencies to share staff
- Emergency sheltering plans and capabilities for staff

Evacuation and Movement

- Although separate from shelter-in-place, evacuation and movement is inherently tied to shelter-in-place due to the unpredictable nature of disasters
- A shelter-in-place situation may unexpectedly turn into an evacuation situation
- Triggers or tipping points must be identified that might necessitate a partial or full evacuation
- Any mechanisms in place to assist with evacuation

Additional Tools and Resources

- May be included in the plan, such as personal preparedness checklists for staff, residents and residents' families, pre-storm facility checklists, and hoteling rosters

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Staff Training Presentation

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Get The Resource

- Download the Rhode Island Senior Resiliency Project Staff Training Presentation at health.ri.gov/programs/climatechangeandhealth by clicking on the Senior Resiliency Project link

Description

- The Staff Training Presentation was developed to meet the specific needs of long term care and assisted living facilities in the event utilities are impacted or the facility needs to shelter-in-place
- Designed to support your facility in effectively communicating your preparedness program with your staff
- A Microsoft PowerPoint presentation
- Training time will vary based upon facility customizations, presenter style, and audience needs

Using the Staff Training Presentation

- Modify the Staff Training Presentation to meet the unique needs of your facility and shelter-in-place plan
- Deliver the presentation in the manner that works best for your facility, incorporating it into your facility's ongoing staff training program

Training Topics Include

Emergency Management Configuration

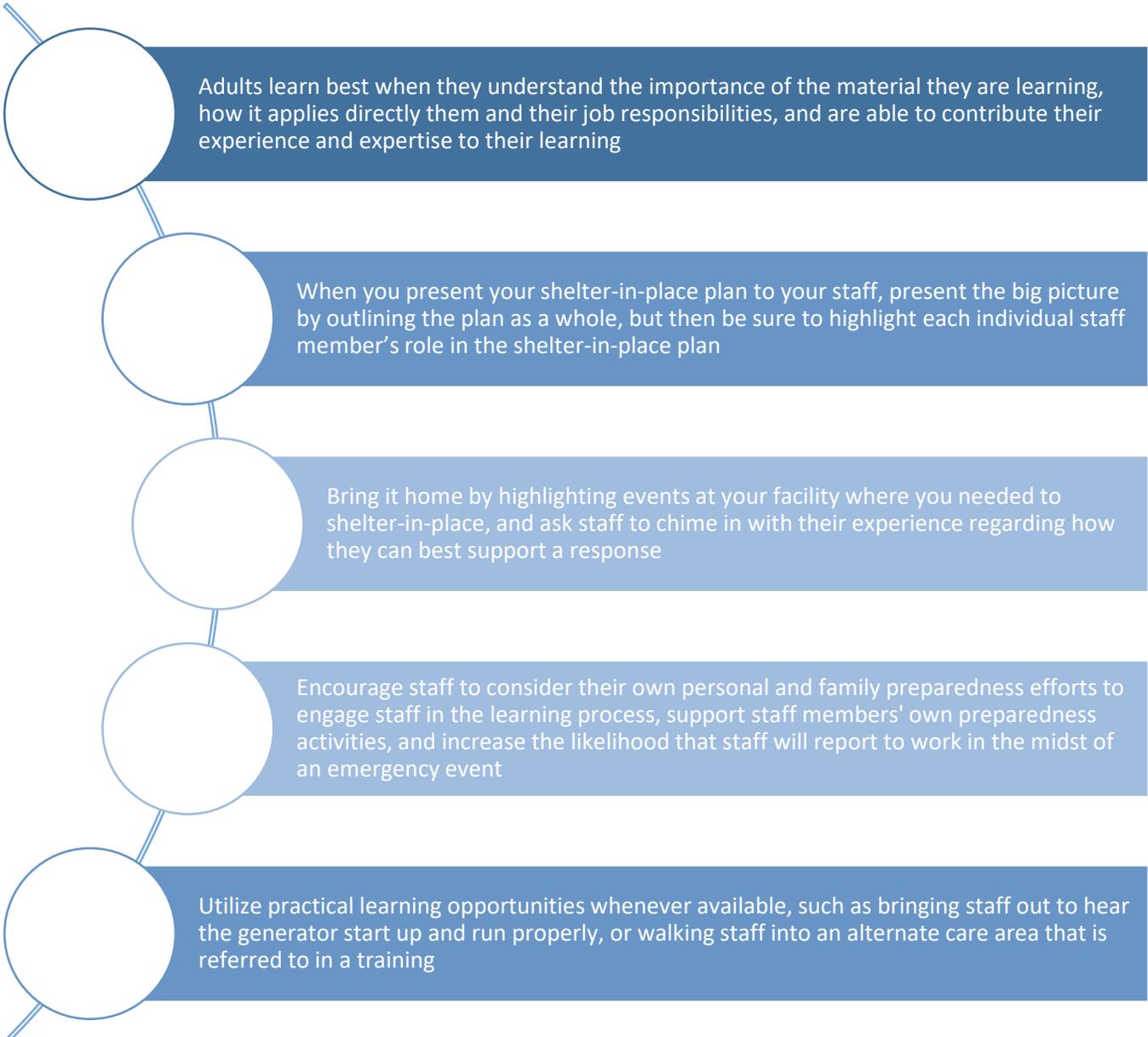
Utilities and Resources

Food and Nutrition

Clinical and Staffing Concerns

Evacuation and Movement

Best Practices



Adults learn best when they understand the importance of the material they are learning, how it applies directly to them and their job responsibilities, and are able to contribute their experience and expertise to their learning

When you present your shelter-in-place plan to your staff, present the big picture by outlining the plan as a whole, but then be sure to highlight each individual staff member's role in the shelter-in-place plan

Bring it home by highlighting events at your facility where you needed to shelter-in-place, and ask staff to chime in with their experience regarding how they can best support a response

Encourage staff to consider their own personal and family preparedness efforts to engage staff in the learning process, support staff members' own preparedness activities, and increase the likelihood that staff will report to work in the midst of an emergency event

Utilize practical learning opportunities whenever available, such as bringing staff out to hear the generator start up and run properly, or walking staff into an alternate care area that is referred to in a training

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