CHECKLIST FOR UNITED WAY BUSINESS CONTINUITY
BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER A CRISIS EVENT

The following are recommended steps to take both in advance of and following a crisis event.

Early Action

✓ Call staff meeting to discuss pending emergency and review Emergency Plan.

✓ Identify back-up facilities:
- If severity warrants, identify and recruit a contact point at United Way not affected by the emergency.
- Notify Board Chair and officers of status of United Way operations.
- Announce suspension of normal operations and initiation of pre-crisis emergency action steps.

First-Level Priorities

✓ Safety of personnel.
- Identify person who will stay on duty, and inform of status.
- Release non-essential staff with instructions/directions on checking-in at back-up location and/or call-in site. Use 1-877-UWALINK (892-5465), a nationwide toll-free United Way staff check-in number.
- Contact family members, advise of status.

✓ Secure exterior of facility.

✓ Secure interior of facility.
- Shut down computers and office equipment
- Prepare to move file server to off-site location.
- Move computers, peripherals and other equipment (using labels to identify what pieces belong where) to supply room and if necessary, hallways.
- Central files (2 years) & Finance files (complete) secured and/or prepared for transport.
- Gather essential office supplies, secure and/or prepared for transport.
- Clear desks of loose items, gather personal effects and secure and/or prepare for transport.

✓ Anticipate request from the Community Crisis Response Committee for assistance.
- Notify Crisis Assistant volunteers recruited by Volunteer Center, confirm availability.
- Check on status of back-up communications system.
- Verify operational status of generator.

✓ Anticipate need for additional cash resources and withdraw $500 from operating account to enhance petty cash.

✓ Contact 211 with access phone number changes.

- ✓ If building evacuation is necessary:
  - Reconvene staff, determine essential staff, and prepare for relocation.
  - Release any additional staff.
  - Determine shelter facility for essential staff if alternate operations site is inadequate.
  - Determine transportation and routes to alternate sites/shelters.
  - Coordinate alternate site preparation and material/equipment transfers.
  - Arrange phone operations at alternate site.
  - Change auto attendant message.
  - Evaluate building and confirm that facility is empty and secure.

- ✓ If no evacuation is necessary:
  - Establish headquarters staff schedule.
  - Change auto attendant greeting as necessary.

Second-Level Priorities

- ✓ Gather and box/secure non-essential files and supplies.

- ✓ Activate bank account for special donations and communicate information to Information Director.

- ✓ Assess manpower needs for United Way operations and schedule accordingly.

- ✓ Schedule crisis volunteers in coordination with appropriate Community Crisis Response Committee requests.

Actions in Aftermath of Emergency

First of All…

- ✓ Take copious notes throughout the entire crisis recovery. Write EVERYTHING down. Keep all documents, notes, business cards, etc.

- ✓ Many agencies may need a temporary line of credit or an immediate cash influx to meet immediate needs. The United Way CEO needs to have Board authority to authorize these emergency funds from United Way reserves up to predetermined limitations (i.e., up to $5,000 per agency with a $50,000 total limit).

- ✓ Make sure that the emotional needs of the United Way staff are taken care of. Work with either your EAP or one of your mental health partners (agency or corporate donor) to insure that mental health professionals will be available for individual and group counseling sessions for at least a month after the event.

- ✓ You cannot take care of your community if you don't care for yourselves first. The trauma of a crisis event is incalculable. It will profoundly affect everyone involved in recovery.

- ✓ Remember, whatever it takes, the entire United Way system will be there for you. Really. Don't forget.

- ✓ Phone calls to check on safety and status of:
  - All employees.
  - Partner agencies.
  - Board members/key volunteers.
  - Major firms.

- ✓ Reconvene staff to coordinate aftermath actions.
  - Revise work schedules as needed.
  - Secure alternate sites as needed.

- ✓ Assess facility.
  - Report broken water and electrical lines to authorities.
  - Document damage. Relay information insurance providers.
  - Reoccupation (if evacuated).
  - Reactivate suspended power/utility systems.
  - Reassemble/install personal computer stations.

- ✓ Consult with Chairman of Board and other volunteer leaders to develop timetable for resumption of normal activities.

- ✓ Activate Crisis Relief Fund.

- ✓ Prepare/send out media releases.

- ✓ Notify United Way of America Regional Director of status of operations and community needs.

- ✓ Coordinate with UWA Crisis Response Team.

Crisis Relief Fundraising Strategy

- ✓ In the event of a national-level disaster, United Way of America will activate the national Disaster Response and Recovery Fund, which you may prefer to direct donors to rather than creating your relief fund.

- ✓ A crisis relief fund should be a community fund, not just a United Way fund.

- ✓ Consider partnering with another community fundraising organization to administer fund when it makes sense strategically.

- ✓ Donations to the crisis relief fund should be solicited as donations above and beyond a donor's normal contribution to United Way (or other agencies conducting campaigns).

- ✓ United Way can pull community and especially business leaders together and urge them not to start their own relief funds. This will have enormous tax and processing consequences down the line when 80 different companies come to United Way to administer funds without appropriate documentation. This message may have to come from the Governor or mayor.

- ✓ Make a determination up front to cooperate and join forces with other crisis recovery funders.

Governance

- ✓ There should be a standing executive governance committee for the fund. This core group will be prepared to recruit and familiarize additional members if called into action.

- ✓ The fund chairperson(s) should be strong, well-respected community leaders with the ability to make public and press presentations.

- ✓ Governance board members should sign a pledge of service.

- ✓ Eligibility requirements including a definition of victims, physical area(s) covered, and types of response services (burial/funeral assistance, rent and utility assistance, emergency food, transportation for family members either to or from the area, counseling, day care assistance, debt assistance, scholarships/higher education, physical health/disabilities, medical expenses, occupational services, tax assistance, miscellaneous assistance, etc.) funded should be determined by the governance committee.

- ✓ Governance committee should include at least one accountant, one lawyer, and one victims assistance representative acting in their professional capacities.

- ✓ Governance committee is responsible for determining when to stop soliciting funds.

Administration

- ✓ Have a bank account set up ahead of time and ready to receive funds, or an agreement with a financial institution to have an account opened within hours.

- ✓ Have a database set up to receive information about donors.

- ✓ Track and monitor receipt of all funds in a timely manner.
- ✓ Ways to give should be easy and encompass a variety of giving methods—check, credit card, phone, internet, etc.
- ✓ Do NOT take pledges from individuals (leadership gifts may be exceptions).
- ✓ Corporate and foundation pledges should be followed up with a signed pledging agreement outlining pay-out dates, conditions, and circumstances.
- ✓ Direct cash assistance to victims should not be handled by the United Way, but needs to be assigned to a trusted agency with experience in cash assistance to clients.

Suggested Allocations & Disbursement

- ✓ All, not just United Way agencies, are eligible to apply for funds. Ad hoc groups formed specifically to respond to the attack should also be considered eligible.
- ✓ A verification procedure should be established for groups who are not registered as 501[c].
- ✓ Applications should be publicized widely and readily available in a variety of formats to all eligible agencies.
- ✓ Agencies need to sign a grant agreement before receiving funds which includes a mandatory reporting process and outlines consequences for non-compliance.
- ✓ The allocations process must be broad and general enough to allow for unusual and unexpected requests to be considered.

Suggested Eligibility for Agency Requests for Funding

- ✓ Must be actively providing services to victims or families of tragedy.
- ✓ Must be willing to share service information for tracking and reporting purposes.
- ✓ Must be able to attend Resource Coordination meetings on a regular basis.
- ✓ Must be willing to participate in the shared case management system.
- ✓ Lost revenue due to tragedy.
- ✓ Determine general parameters. Some needs may arise that were not considered during the initial stages. You want to have flexibility in order to respond appropriately.

Suggested Eligibility for Individual Requests for Funds **
*** Consult with your legal counsel to be sure that assistance to individuals is permitted under IRS regulations in the event of a crisis.*

- ✓ Victims are responsible for providing proof of their eligibility. However, case managers should be prepared to assist victims in gathering this proof.
- ✓ Families/individuals must be willing to participate in case management system and sign cooperative agreement in order to be eligible for funding.
- ✓ First choice for fund disbursement will be to pay provider of service or material directly as opposed to providing payment amount to a victim.

Long-Term Recovery Committee

- ✓ United Way will need to get agency directors together as soon as possible to address mutual needs and avoid – as much as possible – duplication of efforts.
- ✓ The committee should be composed of representatives of the key service providers that agree to the above outlined parameters.
- ✓ All fund providers should be invited to participate.
- ✓ The committee develops its own guidelines for discussion of cases, decisions about funding sources.
- ✓ The committee selects its own leadership.
- ✓ The committee must have internal support for central files, records of the minutes, mailings or meeting notification and meeting set-up. United Way often takes the lead for administration.
- ✓ The committee should compile reports of services to the community on a regular basis.
- ✓ Determine lead agencies for all major crisis response activities (mental health, in-kind gift management, communications, etc.) as soon as possible and widely publish this information.

Communications

- ✓ Must be willing to compile reports of services to community on a regular basis.

- ✓ Following an event, the affected community will be FLOODED with donations of all sorts. As soon as possible, have community leaders and the media get the message out that in-kind donations are NOT immediately needed. Financial assistance is the best way to help until other needs can be identified. If this message doesn't get out loud, soon and often, the community will soon face the prospect of warehousing 10,000 teddy bears.

- ✓ Crisis relief fund literature should clearly state the following:
    - Intended fund recipients and use of funds
    - Policy on administrative costs
    - How fund disbursement information will be reported
    - General timeline for disbursement

- ✓ Fund applications should be announced through area media outlets throughout the entire application period.

- ✓ A standard reporting form should be created for recovery agencies to complete on a monthly basis.

- ✓ Press Releases on disbursements should be made available to the media as soon as possible after checks are distributed.

- ✓ Generate a monthly report on crisis recovery activities on the anniversary date of the event every month for at least 12 months.

- ✓ Provide donors with an option for receiving reports via email.

- ✓ Produce and widely distribute a "Help for Hard Times" agency and service brochure.

Centralized Case Management Coordination

- ✓ Training for case managers by all participating agencies.

- ✓ Shared database for client tracking will be utilized by all participating agencies.

- ✓ System in place for Resource Coordination Committee.

- ✓ Case managers will be responsible for presenting victim needs and funding requests to the Long-term Recovery Committee.

General Information Regarding Terrorist Attacks or other Violent Crisis Events

- ✓ In a terrorist attack, the area becomes a crime scene and most agencies except Red Cross and Salvation Army will not have immediate access.

- ✓ Establish a positive relationship with the Victims Assistance representatives. They will have the most comprehensive, accurate list of victims. It is unlikely that they will be able to share their victim database with other agencies, but they can distribute contact and services information to victims on your behalf.
- ✓ Gifts-in-Kind International can assist with in-kind donations management as can several of the other disaster organizations.

Mental Health and Other Services

- ✓ Mobilize counseling agencies as early as possible. The psychological impact of this kind of incident cannot be overstated.
- ✓ Convene school and youth organization representatives as soon as possible to discuss unique needs of children and youth.
- ✓ Convene special needs population advocates to brief responding agencies about service provisions for the various populations.
- ✓ Include animal welfare organizations in response and recovery activities.