

TOGETHER NASHVILLE

DOMESTIC DISASTER RESPONSE
AND RECOVERY ECOSYSTEM





AGENDA

Introductions & Getting to know the room

Session Goal

What's a disaster?

Grounding principle of disasters

Knowing the Players

Nashville VOAD: Roles & Goals

Small Group Time

Moving Toward Collective Action

Audience Q&A and wrap!

WHO'S IN THE ROOM?



Who's in the room?

Antioch Church of Christ

AWC Family Foundation

Belmont Univ Flourish Health Clinic

Brentwood Baptist Church

Brentwood United Methodist Church

CarePortal

Chainsaws for Jesus

Charis Foundation

Christ Church Latina

Corner to Corner

Church of the City

Crosspoint Church

East TN Nazarene Disaster Response

Ebenezer United Methodist Church

Episcopal Relief & Development

Ethos Church

First Presbyterian Church

Governors Faith Based and
Community Initiative / Human
Flourishing Initiative

GraceWorks

Healing Hands International

Hispanic Family Foundation

Hope Force International

International Leadership Coalition

Mercy Chefs

Midtown Fellowship

Nashville Institute for Faith and Work

Nashville Rescue Mission

National Christian Foundation

Siloam Health

Southeast Christian Church

Tennessee-Western Kentucky
United Methodist Disaster Recovery

The Belonging Co

The Branch Of Nashville

The Church at Lockeland Springs

The N.E.T. Church

The Salvation Army

The Village Chapel

Tennessee Baptist Disaster Relief

United4Hope

Vanderbilt University

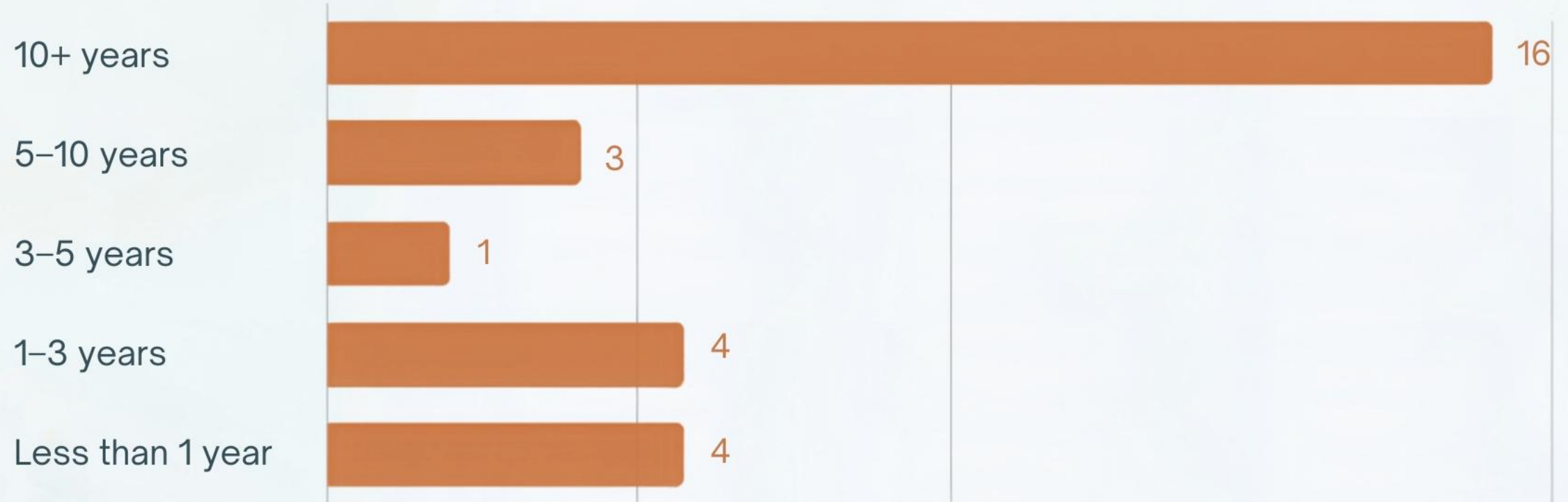
Volunteer Network

Wellspring Franklin

West End Community Church

Who's in the room?

Years in Disaster Response





SESSION GOAL

To develop a shared understanding of the players involved in the disaster response ecosystem

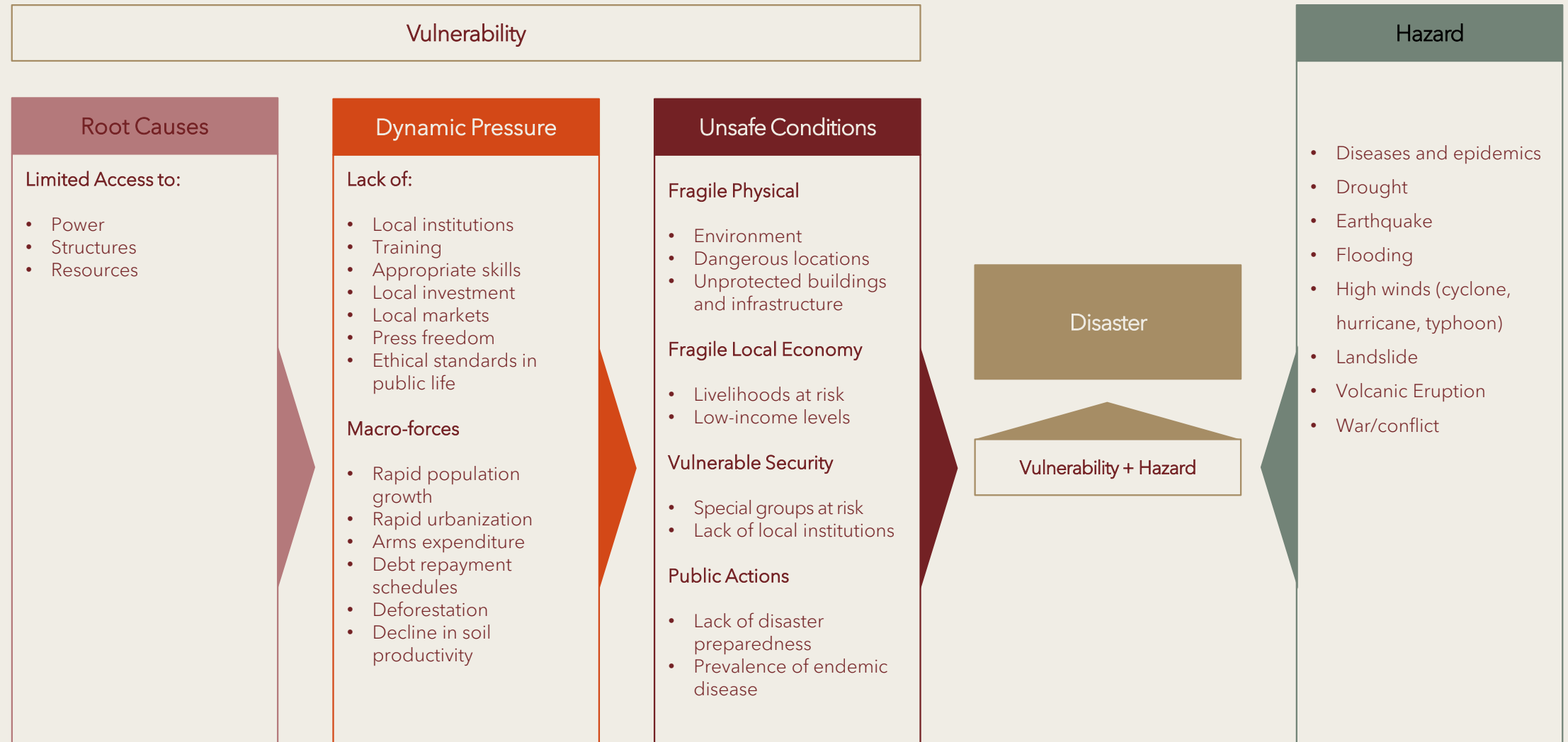
This is **NOT** a “Training”...

but we **DO** need a shared foundation of actors and actions





What is a disaster?

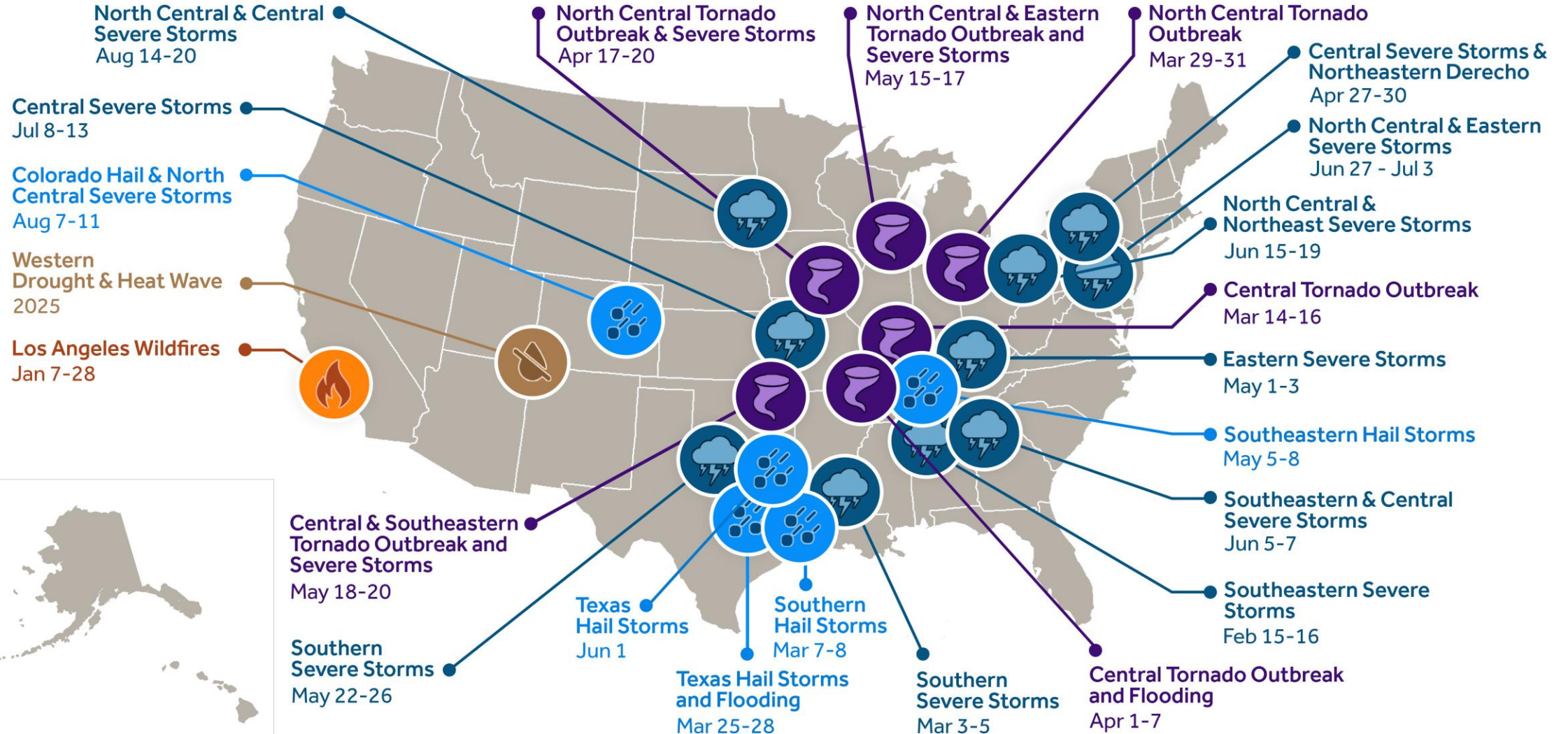




IF YOU ARE
VULNERABLE
BEFORE A
DISASTER,

YOU ARE MORE
VULNERABLE
AFTER A
DISASTER

U.S. 2025 Billion-Dollar Weather & Climate Disasters



This map shows the approximate location for each of the 23 separate billion-dollar weather and climate disasters that impacted the United States from January-December of 2025.



DISASTERS BEGIN
AND END LOCAL

AUDIENCE
PARTICIPATION
TIME!



WHO'S COMING TO TOWN AFTER A DISASTER EVENT?



LOCAL ACTORS

- *The MAJORITY of disasters are not federally declared.*
- It is increasingly difficult to get a federal declaration.
- City & county emergency managers
- Resilience managers
- COADs or VOADs





STATE-LED RESPONSE

- **Primary Responsibility:** Governors have the primary responsibility for the safety of their citizens. They coordinate the four phases of emergency management: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.
- **State of Emergency:** A Governor must first declare a State of Emergency to activate state resources, such as the National Guard or state emergency funds.
- **Exhaustion of Resources:** Federal assistance is only requested when a disaster's severity exceeds the state's fiscal and logistical capacity.

WHAT IS THE NDRF?

- Definition: A conceptual guide that defines how the nation works together to restore, redevelop, and revitalize communities after a disaster.
- The Shift: Moves focus from short-term emergency response to long-term sustainability and resilience.
- Key Goals:

Align roles and responsibilities across all levels of government.

Provide a flexible structure for coordination.

Capitalize on opportunities to rebuild "stronger, smarter, and safer."



GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF RECOVERY: THE 8 CORE PRINCIPLES

"Recovery is a whole-community process that requires local primacy and inclusive participation."

Principle	Description
Individual & Family Empowerment	Focus on the needs of survivors.
Leadership & Local Primacy	Recovery is locally led, state managed and federally supported.
Pre-Disaster Planning	Success depends on planning before the event occurs.
Partnership & Inclusiveness	Engaging the whole community, including vulnerable populations.
Public Information	Clear, consistent, and culturally appropriate messaging.
Unity of Effort	Coordination between NGOs, private sector, and government.
Timeliness & Flexibility	Scaling support to meet the specific speed and size of the disaster.
Resilience & Sustainability	Reducing future risk through smart rebuilding.

Recovery Support Functions (RSF) Structure

Organizing Federal Resources for Community Recovery



Support for Locally Led Recovery

RECOVERY SUPPORT FUNCTIONS (RSFS)

THE NDRF ORGANIZES
FEDERAL RESOURCES
INTO SIX FUNCTIONAL
AREAS TO SUPPORT
LOCAL NEEDS

**Community Planning &
Capacity Building:**
Helping local
governments lead and
manage their own
recovery.

Economic Recovery:
Returning the business
climate to a state of
health and resilience.

Health & Social Services:
Restoring healthcare,
education, and social
service networks.

Housing: Focusing on
sustainable and
affordable permanent
housing solutions.

Infrastructure Systems:
Repairing and improving
public engineering and
utilities.

**Natural & Cultural
Resources:** Preserving
and restoring
environmental and
historic assets.



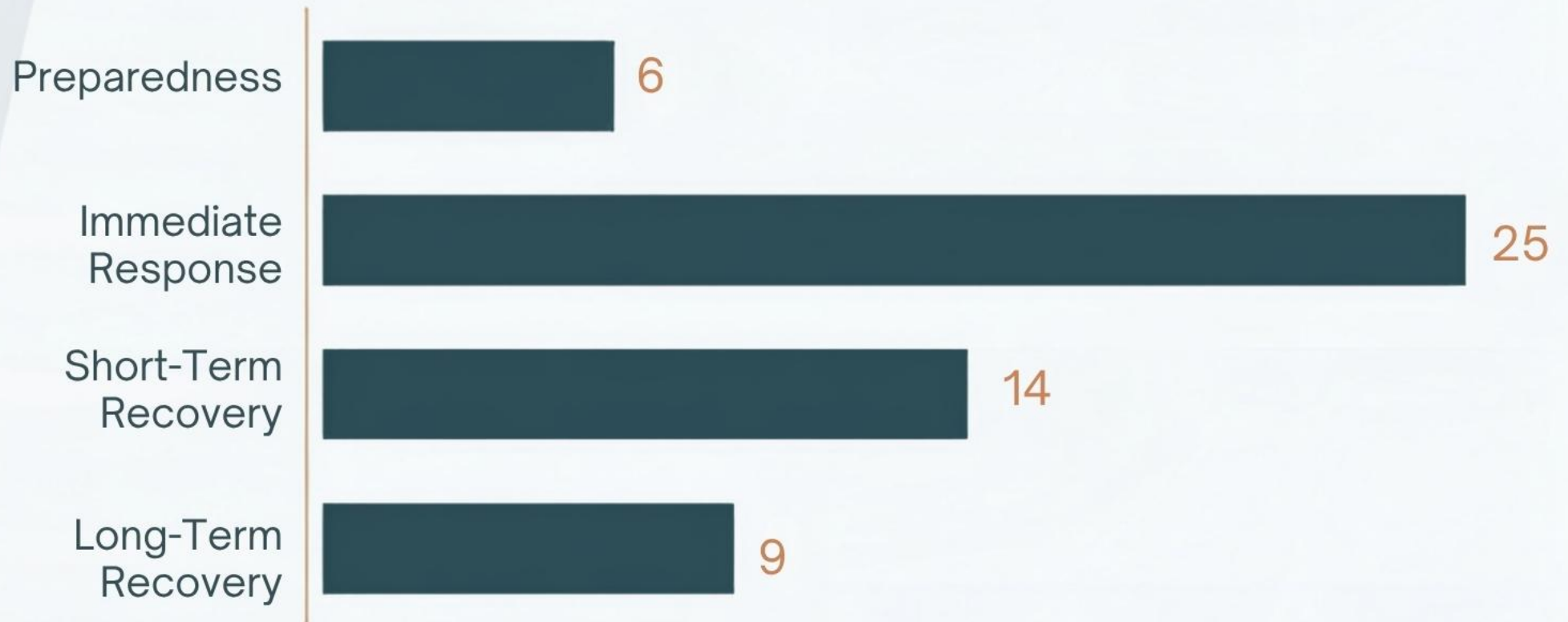
THE RECOVERY CONTINUUM: TIMELINE OF SUCCESS

Short-Term: Immediate needs like mass care, debris removal, and emergency restoration of services (Days to Weeks).

Intermediate: Re-establishing businesses, temporary housing, and infrastructure planning (Weeks to Months).

Long-Term: Permanent housing, redevelopment of the economy, and implementation of mitigation projects (Months to Years).

Where organizations work across the disaster cycle



RECOVERY IS NOT A RETURN TO
THE STATUS QUO; IT IS A STEP
TOWARD A MORE RESILIENT
FUTURE.

POLICY SHIFTS IN 2026

Current 2026 federal policy emphasizes **state and local self-reliance**. New directives aim to streamline federal response by recognizing that preparedness is most effectively managed at the state level, with federal agencies acting as an "efficient support" rather than the primary lead.



TYPES OF DECLARATIONS

Major Disaster Declarations

- Issued after a disaster occurs and after preliminary damage assessment (PDA) has taken place.
- Declared by the President under the Stafford Act
- **Individual Assistance – Note that programs are authorized *selectively***
 - Individuals and Households Program;
 - Crisis Counseling Program
 - Disaster Case Management
 - Disaster Unemployment Assistance
 - Disaster Legal Services
 - Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- **Public Assistance Categories A – G**

- A - Debris removal	B - Emergency protective measures
- C – Roads and bridges	D – Water control facilities
- E – Buildings and equipment	F – Utilities
- G – Parks, recreational and other facilities	

FEDERAL ACTORS – LEAD AND COORDINATION AGENCIES

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): Serves as the lead federal agency for coordinating the overall interagency response to domestic disasters. FEMA provides financial assistance, manages the **National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)**, and deploys specialized teams such as **Urban Search and Rescue (US&R)** and **Incident Management Assistance Teams (IMATs)**.

Department of Homeland Security (DHS): Provides a unified command structure. Components such as the **U.S. Coast Guard** handle maritime search and rescue and oil spill response, while **CISA** focuses on protecting critical cyber and physical infrastructure.

FEDERAL ACTORS – RESPONSE SUPPORT AGENCIES

Department of Defense (DoD): Provides Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) for large-scale operations, including logistics, search and rescue, and heavy equipment for debris clearing through U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM).

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE): Assists with debris removal, restoring public infrastructure, and providing emergency power and water.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS): Leads the public health and medical response, coordinating services like the **National Disaster Medical System (NDMS)** to provide doctors, paramedics, and mortuary services.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): Manages the response to hazardous materials, contaminated water, and inland oil spills.

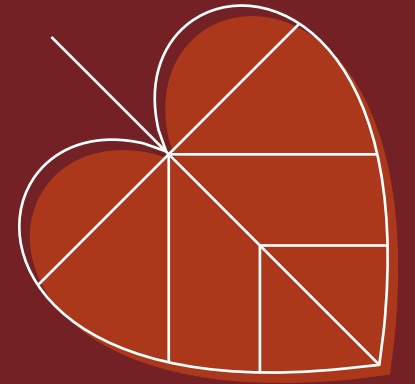
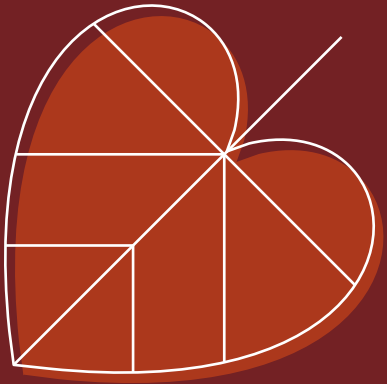
Small Business Administration (SBA): Provides low-interest, long-term disaster loans to homeowners, renters, and businesses to repair or replace property.

TURNING NOW TO THE NONPROFIT
SIDE OF THE EQUATION!

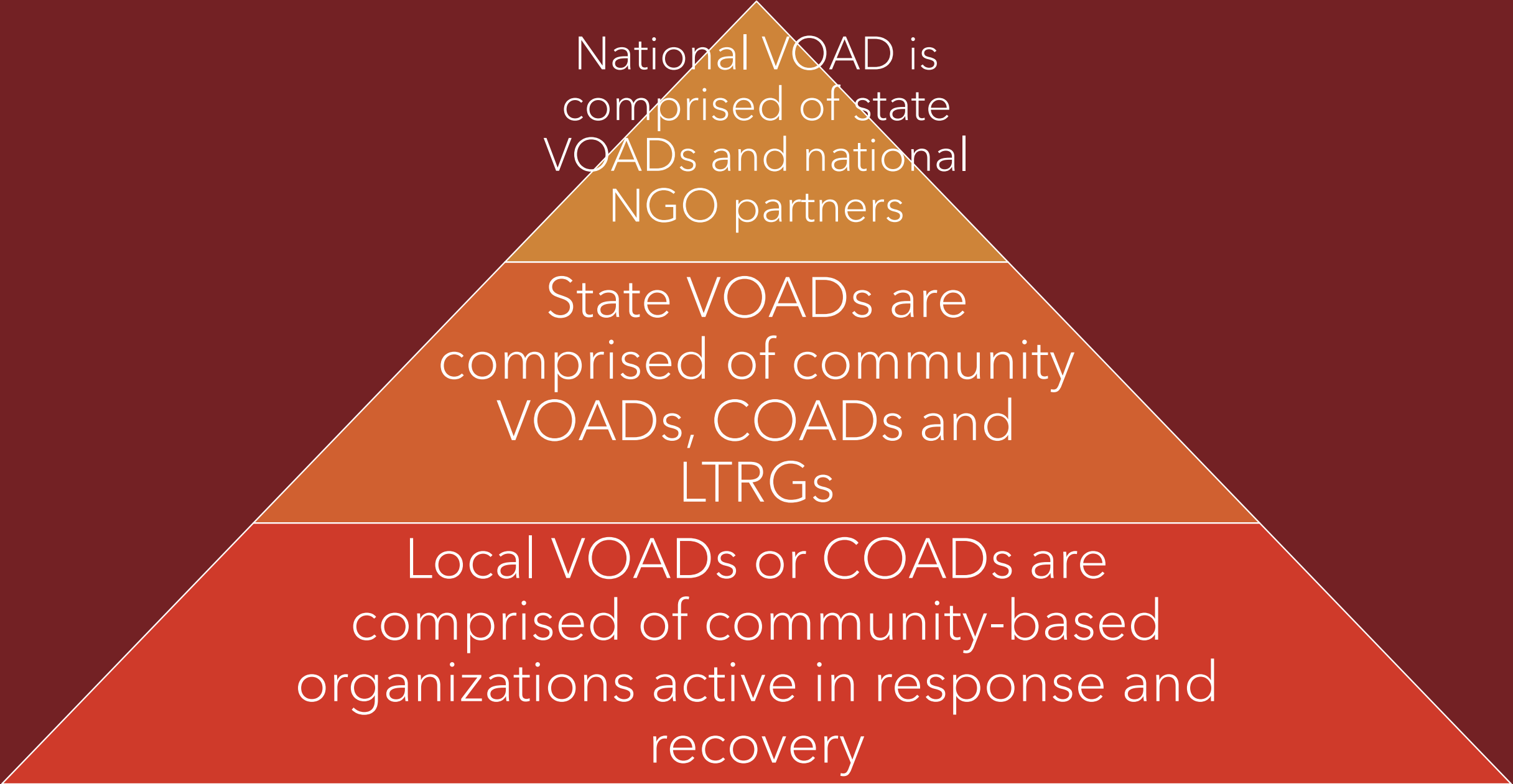


WHAT'S A... ???

- VOAD
- COAD
- Long-Term Recovery Group



DISASTER RESPONDING ORGANIZATIONS – NATIONAL STRUCTURE



National VOAD is
comprised of state
VOADs and national
NGO partners

State VOADs are
comprised of community
VOADs, COADs and
LTRGs

Local VOADs or COADs are
comprised of community-based
organizations active in response and
recovery



National VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) coordinates over 70 national member organizations and 56 state/territory affiliates to foster "4 C's": Cooperation, Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration. They streamline disaster response and recovery by sharing resources, reducing duplication, and aiding with services like feeding, sheltering, and rebuilding.

Key aspects of their role include:

- **The 4 C's:** Promoting communication, coordination, collaboration, and cooperation among organizations to ensure effective, non-duplicated service delivery.
- **Comprehensive Support:** Covering the entire disaster cycle, from preparation and mitigation to response and long-term recovery.
- **Resource Coordination:** Managing resources (money, material, "muscle") to assist survivors efficiently.
- **Long-Term Recovery:** Organizing Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs) to assist communities in rebuilding.
- **Members:** Includes major non-profits, faith-based groups, and affiliates like FEMA.
- National VOAD provides a forum for these organizations to work together, ensuring that assistance is provided efficiently and without duplicating efforts.

NASHVILLE VOAD 101



with Robert Craig





@oklahoma_indian_legal_services

NATIONAL NGO PARTNERS

- First responders
- Food
- Communication
- Warehouse and Donation Management
- Animals
- Volunteer Management
- Case Management

A HANDFUL OF RELEVANT RESPONSE ORGANIZATIONS

- American Red Cross
- Feeding America
- All Hands and Hearts
- Catholic Charities
- Give360
- CORE
- Team Rubicon
- United Way / Hands On Network
- UMCOR



PRO TIP – RELATIONSHIPS DRIVE RESULTS

Pre-established relationships are critical to an effective disaster response and recovery – you don't exchange business cards during a disaster.

Develop local, community-based relationships as well as relationships with national players well in advance of a disaster.

Communicating across the ecosystem is important. And communicating across the ecosystem is critical.

Be a part of the team – 'rogue actors' aren't appreciated and don't add to the collective good.

WHAT'S NEXT IN PART 2?



AN INTERACTIVE AND HANDS-ON SESSION THAT MOVES FROM LANDSCAPE TO APPLICATION.



CONVERSATION DESIGNED TO CONNECT EXISTING NETWORKS AND STRUCTURES.



EXPLORE HOW THE NASHVILLE FAITH COMMUNITY CAN BE MORE CONNECTED WITH EACH OTHER AND MORE COORDINATED WITH THE BROADER NETWORK OF DISASTER RESPONSE ACTORS - BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER A DISASTER

Q & A



Superpowers & Kryptonite

Superpowers

Trust

Credibility in communities that institutions can't reach

Speed

First meals and deployments within 24-48 hours

Presence

Practical help paired with emotional & spiritual care

Mobilization

Congregations that produce 100+ volunteers overnight

Kryptonite

Coordination and Logistics



Volunteer Pipeline



Capacity and Funding



Underprepared Phases



Hard-to-Reach Populations



What would make the biggest difference in how the faith community responds to the next disaster?



81%

named greater coordination, collaboration, or proactive relationship-building



48%

called for shared communication systems, platforms, or clearer pathways to respond



33%

emphasized clarifying organizational roles, strengths, resources, or capacity



29%

identified training, preparedness, or practicing together



29%

specifically addressed breaking down silos, competition, or territorialism

||

The biggest difference would be greater collaboration and coordination among churches, nonprofits, and community partners before a disaster occurs. By developing a shared response strategy, clearly defining roles, and communicating regularly, we can reduce duplication of services, identify unmet needs more quickly, and ensure resources are distributed where they are needed most. A coordinated faith community has the ability to respond more efficiently, steward resources wisely, and ultimately serve more people with greater impact.

What would make the biggest difference in how the faith community responds to the next disaster?

Now that you've been part of today's conversation:

**Would you answer this question differently than you did originally?
(If you haven't completed the survey, how would you answer it?)**

Based on your response, how could you and your organization / congregation / network lean in and be part of that difference?

THANK YOU



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Disaster Relief Convening 2

August 31, 2026



Scan to Register

Faith Leaders Forum November 5, 2026



Scan to Register