

## Planning Checklist

### Emergency managers should use a planning process that:

- Is capabilities based.** This approach focuses on a jurisdiction's capacity to take a course of action. Capabilities-based planning answers the question, "Do I have the right mix of training, organizations, plans, people, leadership and management, equipment, and facilities to perform a required emergency function?"
- Is community based.** Planning must be representative of the actual population within the community and must involve the whole community in the planning process. Understanding the composition of the population—such as accounting for people with disabilities or others with access and functional needs, and for the needs of children—must occur from the outset of the planning effort.
- Includes senior officials** throughout the process to ensure both understanding and approval. Senior official buy-in helps the planning process meet requirements of time, planning horizons, simplicity, and level of detail.
- Manages risk.** In the risk management process, we define context; identify and assess risks; and analyze, decide upon, implement, monitor, and evaluate courses of action for managing those risks. As part of the process, planning is a tool that allows for systematic risk management to reduce or eliminate risks in the future.
- Considers both the art and the science.** Planning is influenced by time, uncertainty, risk, and experience. Successful planners are able to draw from both operational experience and an understanding of emergency management principles, but also are intuitive, creative, and have the ability to anticipate the unexpected. Because this activity involves judgment and the balancing of competing demands, plans should not be overly detailed—to be followed by the letter—or so general that they provide insufficient direction.
- Uses a logical and analytical problem-solving process** to help address the complexity and uncertainty inherent in potential threats and hazards. By following a set of logical steps that includes gathering and analyzing information, determining operational objectives, and developing alternative ways to achieve the objectives, planning allows a jurisdiction to work through complex situations.
- Considers all threats and hazards.** While the causes of emergencies can vary greatly, many of the effects do not. Planners can address common operational functions in their basic plans instead of having unique plans for every type of threat or hazard. An all-threats/hazards approach ensures that, when addressing emergency functions, planners identify common tasks and those responsible for accomplishing the tasks.
- Is flexible enough to address both traditional and catastrophic incidents.** Scalable planning solutions are the most likely to be understood and executed properly by the operational personnel who have practice in applying them.
- Does not unnecessarily start from scratch.** Planners should take advantage of the experience of other planners, as well as plans generated by other jurisdictions and the State. Examples of available resources include Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessments (THIRAs), State standards and guidance, FEMA-provided guidance and training, and plans produced by key infrastructure owners.