



DRCA Works with Key Partners to Address COVID-19 Core Challenges

Background

The dramatic spread of COVID-19 has disrupted lives, livelihoods, communities, and businesses worldwide. Members of the Disaster Recovery Coalition of America (DRCA) www.thedrca.org have come together to innovatively address the urgent, unprecedented public health and economic crisis, putting purpose-driven leadership and stakeholder capitalism into practice. DRCA members have stepped up to support workers, customers, and local communities, with the pandemic showing us the importance of being prepared when crises hit. It has also shown us that postponing bold decisions can have huge costs. As the nation's only trade association representing the majority of organizations federal, state and local agencies rely on for disaster mitigation, response and recovery, we have learned that we must be vigilant in our preparation for future consequences and challenges of the disease. DRCA membership is composed of disaster recovery expert contractors across the nation who are accustomed to facing very difficult challenges and breaking through barriers to overcome them.

DRCA members have joined the federal, state and local government effort, using DRCA-member services, infrastructure, products, equipment, and expertise to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and help their employees and customers get through this crisis.

DRCA Short term Pandemic Response

At the initial onset of COVID-19, DRCA members worked closely with communities to navigate innovative ways to provide support during the pandemic. DRCA member services include standing up alternative hospitals, establishing testing and vaccine sites, launching call centers, leading reimbursement compliance efforts, creating traffic management plans, writing scripts for traveler interviews, processing traveler information, providing FEMA COVID-19 Public Assistance support and working directly with FEMA current disaster hurricane response in a COVID environment by implementing a new, contact-less remote inspection process. DRCA has been, and continues to be, tirelessly working to fulfill the needs of the public health profession, assisting hospitals and other organizations with increasing testing and vaccination patient flow, and ensuring the safety of communities and its citizens.

DRCA understands the important role its members play in providing essential products and services to government officials and first responders, especially in times of crisis. Whether it is a hurricane, flood, tornado, or global health crisis, DRCA is committed to delivering whatever is needed to quickly deploy the right response.

Long term Pandemic Recovery

DRCA continues to focus on how health practitioners, health systems and communities can most effectively respond to this global emergency, while supporting each other during this crisis. We believe part of a successful long term pandemic recovery plan should explore ways to increase production of and access to testing, vaccines, personal protective equipment for medical personnel, and ventilators; raise public awareness of COVID-19 through transparent and immediate communication and combat the spread of misinformation; and maintain mental health and well-being while strengthening communities of support during this time of social distancing. By concentrating on the wide-ranging impacts that COVID-19 has had on all aspects of society, including broader economic, healthcare, and education systems, FEMA and DRCA should explore lessons learned from government, private, and nonprofit sectors to look for better way to prepare for future global health challenges.



DRCA will continue to facilitate communication and work collaboratively with FEMA and with our public and private sector partners and stakeholders to address the following challenges:

- What is the mechanism to implement best practices to involve healthcare professionals in planning and execution of a pandemic response?
- How does the country accommodate remote learning and mitigate the impacts of school closures by ensuring students have access to essential services including meals, housing, and internet access?
- How does our country strengthen national cooperation and support of public health systems around the country, drawing on lessons learned from past disasters to protect against future pandemics?
- How do we support efforts to bolster the economy, strengthen critical infrastructure, and adjust workplace standards so that we are better able to adapt to health challenges in the future?
- What is appropriate to address the disproportionate impact the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable communities— what can we learn from why this happened and protect these communities in the future?
- How does DRCA work with FEMA to create opportunities to address COVID-19 in under-resourced communities to help them combat the virus in populations lack of access to healthcare services?

Resources to meet the Future Need

In the United States, the Coronavirus pandemic is challenging public officials' ability to source the supplies and services needed to provide critical care to patients and protect medical workers. Currently, state and local governments are facing the possibility of shortages of essential supplies and materials. FEMA, in accordance with President Biden's Jan. 21, 2021 Memorandum, will provide reimbursement to states, local, tribal and territorial governments and the District of Columbia for the use of their National Guard to respond to COVID-19 and other assistance, which may include support to vaccination distribution and administration, at a 100% cost share until Sept. 30, 2021.

With many providers being depleted of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for front-line health care workers, as well as crucial cleaning and healthcare supplies, the need for these items has increased tremendously. For example, equipment and services that are being urgently requested include medical services and equipment; health and wellness supplies; cleaning supplies; food and agriculture; information technology; and security and safety services.

This public health crisis will reshape everything we do for some time, if not permanently. And new circumstances demand new strategies. Now is the time, as you have the opportunity, to reevaluate future plans. Here are some factors to consider when planning for future impacts of the current situation:

- Potential near-term budget shortfalls and calls for temporary budget cuts.
- Provide reimbursement to states, local, tribal and territorial governments to support COVID-19 expenses at a 100% cost retroactively to January 20, 2020.
- The possibility that 2021 still will not see a full return to normal operations.
- Reductions in operating budgets due to long-term financial drains.
- Changes in communities altering the demand for housing and other immediate and necessary needs.



- Changes citizens expectations due to social distancing and lack of social interaction.
- What exactly “office space” will mean tomorrow in light of this move to remote working today.
- Whether existing spending priorities and pre-planned capital projects are still valid for the future of communities.

It can be hard to imagine putting time into in-depth strategic planning right now, especially since many of these considerations’ present difficult choices between familiar past operations and new, possibly unexplored strategies. Any of the points above may provide finance and facilities leaders a chance to analyze their current and future progress. No matter the community, there needs to be a dedicated effort to gather the relevant information and begin to explore, model, and strategize around the best ways to prepare for a quickly approaching future. This as an opportunity to be nimbler, more creative, and more effective; it’s an opportunity to make choices in the very near term that can benefit in the long term. It is an opportunity that must not be missed.

Questions? Please contact Casey Long at clong@thedrca.org or at (202) 441-0493 or Lisa Miller at (850) 528-9229.

Sources:

- CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html#anchor_1609682970029
- Disaster Philanthropy: https://disasterphilanthropy.org/disaster/2019-ncov-coronavirus/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMlIdC-ouKj7gIVgP_jBx27BwF1EAMYAyAAEgLp6_D_BwE