

Teaching Note: Rebuilding Resilient Homes after the Camp Fire

Introduction

This teaching note is intended to help instructors use this case study in a classroom setting. The teaching note expands on the lessons learned in this case study, which is intended to help emergency management students or professionals learn from a real-world disaster experience. Selection of learning objectives, discussion questions, and activities can be customized based on audience and time allowance. It is suggested that students read the Background and Challenges sections (Part One) and pause to discuss the situation before moving on to read the Actions, Results, and Lessons Learned sections (Part Two).

This case study highlights the recovery efforts of the Town of Paradise. In 2018, the Town of Paradise was severely impacted by the Camp Fire. The fire destroyed over 90% of Paradise within six hours and left most the population without a home or place of employment. Several challenges impeded initial recovery efforts, but the Town of Paradise took a pro-active approach to meeting the community's housing rebuilding needs by developing a Long-Term Community Recovery Plan. Part of the plan included utilizing rehabilitation and rebuilding programs and establishing the Paradise Building Resiliency Center (BRC), an innovative one-stop-shop that assists with all of residents' rebuilding needs and questions.

To become more familiar with relevant concepts before teaching the case, please review the following:

- [Building Resiliency Center | Paradise, CA \(townofparadise.com\)](#)
- [Town of Paradise Long-Term Community Recovery Plan](#)
- [Integrating Community Recovery Solutions](#) (Cal OES)
- [DR-4407-CA | FEMA.gov](#)
- [FEMA's Committed to Butte County's Long-Term Camp Fire Recovery | FEMA.gov](#)

Student Learning Outcomes

- Discuss the importance of interagency partnerships and recovery planning.
- Outline methods for mitigating challenges in the survivor rebuilding process to empower low-to-moderate income residents to rebuild their homes safely and navigate disaster assistance after wildfires.
- Consider how trauma-informed practices can be incorporated into recovery planning and local disaster assistance delivery to serve survivors more effectively in impacted communities.



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Key Takeaways

- A strong network of interagency and intergovernmental partnerships can allow for greater participation in the recovery process, a comprehensive understanding of recovery needs, and open doors for programs, grants, and other technical support for recovery projects.
- Integrating outreach strategies that consider the physiological and emotional impacts of trauma in pre- and post-disaster recovery planning can increase the accessibility and effectiveness of programs being offered.
- Communicating the inter-linkages of homeowner's insurance resolutions, FEMA assistance, and SBA assistance to help survivors recover.
- Recovery policies and outreach strategies that support navigating affordable rehousing and other assistance options, like establishing the Building Resiliency Center, can improve equitable recovery outcomes.

Discussion Activities

Discussion Questions

1. After the President issued a Major Disaster Declaration for California, the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) deployed its Interagency Recovery Coordination (IRC) team to manage the state-led Recovery Support Functions (RSFs) and began supporting the affected local jurisdictions. What are potential benefits of having a state-managed IRC team available to support local jurisdictions?
2. Many homeowners reported confusion around the assistance application process and timelines, specifically regarding homeowner's insurance and how it affected eligibility for potential Individual Assistance from FEMA. What are some communication strategies states and local governments can employ to address this confusion?
3. Why were face-to-face, trauma-informed services beneficial to have available in the aftermath of the Camp Fire? What are some potential consequences for a community that does not provide face-to-face interaction for survivors during the long-term recovery process?
4. The Town of Paradise opened a Building Resiliency Center (BRC) in 2020 to assist homeowners navigating the process of rebuilding. Are there any recent disaster operations that you've experienced or heard of where a similar service may have been helpful, and what resources or services could have been offered there?