Kansas State Library Conference

Nov 1, 2023

Disaster Asset Library Worksheet

We will break into smaller work groups to discuss the following topics and start to create a way for each of you to move your library toward being a Disaster Asset in your community.

Please, take notes and designate one person as the group speaker to share the important parts of your discussion with the larger group.

First Small Group Session 15 minutes

Physical Space: As a group discuss the physical space of your libraries. What are the strengths and weaknesses? List any physical assets such as access to the internet, specific program spaces.

Everyday Patrons: List who the daily or regular users of your library are. Is there a list of clubs who use the space? Certain age groups?

Volunteers: Does your library use volunteers? What do they do? Have you done any trainings beyond general library work? What other activities might they help with?

Partners: Do you currently work with any other community groups? Make a list of possible community partners. Be creative!

Second Small Group Session 15 minutes

Discuss who in your communities you already collaborate with and who you would like to collaborate with in the future keeping the idea of being a Disaster Asset Library in mind. Pick a couple of collaborative plans that your group is interested in. Be prepared to share a list of collaborators and a couple of plans to work on.

Third Small Group Session 20 minutes

Within your group designate who will play the role of the library and who will play the roles of the identified collaborators.

Work as collaborators in this small group offering encouragement, communicating and learning about each other. Discuss what your mission is and how you will practice your new plan and collaborations.

Steps to Take

* As you design your plan to be part of the Community Recovery consider the library’s basic day to day protocols and revamp them to fit the disaster recovery plan. For example: hours of operation, staffing concerns, utility concerns.
* Remember, this plan includes your collaborating partners. They will have good suggestions, questions and solutions to add to the mix.
* Brainstorm with staff, others about the assets the library has and that are close to the library facility.
* Create a list (or copy the one from the Library COOP document) which contains contact information of helpful people/entities in your community.
* Brainstorm with staff, others, ways the library could be an asset to the community in preparing for, responding to and recovering from a disaster.
* Create a basic outline of what the library and staff can offer to the community and invite a group of community leaders to a meeting where you can present this and get their input.
* Consider inviting representatives from the first responder community, local politicians, emergency manager, city/county manager to look over the plan. This gives everyone a chance to see what you have come up with and will be an aid to the emergency response effort for your community.
* Once you have had the initial meeting with stakeholders you can draft a basic plan using the additional input you received in that first meeting.
* With the draft in hand, reach out to other potential partners identified perhaps during the first meeting or other brainstorming sessions. These partners will be able to help the library gather more input from the community, perhaps provide volunteer support. This could include local school groups, scouts, baby sitting club, any group which could help during a disaster.
* Once the library has started the process, has buy in from the community and the people ready and willing to help, keep working the plan to make it fit your own community. Remember to test your plan, make it a fun annual event.
* Share preparedness materials for severe weather, earthquake, flooding or hurricane in the library. This could be as simple as having materials out on a table for folks to pick up or might include presentations from local experts.

RESOURCES

* <https://reimaginelibraries.ischool.umd.edu/>

This group, led by Mega Subramaniam, has some great suggestions which can be used to create a plan for a Community Asset in Disaster prepared library. They created their plan as a response to the Covid Pandemic and the need they saw to help the young people of their community. Many of the plan elements are transferable to other events which will disrupt a community.

* Your local Emergency Management office. They can help you with identifying local disaster possibilities, share information on best practices for storm sheltering and so on.
* FEMA: the ready.gov site has a lot of preparedness information which can be downloaded and printed out to be shared with your community.
* Other libraries in your area. Connecting with them allows sharing of info and possible help if needed in the future.

Finally, feel free to reach out to Kate Dinneen kdinneen@douglascountyks.org or kdi2n2en@gmail.com

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