

Contingency Planning for Nonprofits during Pandemics

Alliance of Local Service Organizations

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**GRANTS FOR OUTREACH
AND SERVICES TO
UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS**
THROUGH THE OFFICE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Agenda

- Welcome
- Why is Planning Important?
- Principles of Contingency Planning
- Wellness supports
- Closing

Learning Objectives


- Describe Principles of Contingency Planning and ALSO's approach to implementing these during the current Pandemics.
- Explore how agency policies and practices can support staff wellness and be built into planning.



Learning from Crises

“The struggle you’re in today is developing the strength you need tomorrow.” – Robert Tew

“What I treasure most in life is being able to dream. During my most difficult moments and complex situations I have been able to dream of a more beautiful future.” – Rigoberta Menchu





Why is planning important?

Always important for nonprofits to engage in strategic planning.

1. Scenario planning involves looking at different trajectories and outcomes (positive and negative), and studying the outcomes to assist with decision-making.
 - Now, critical due to pandemics, and economic uncertainty in the current climate.
1. Intentionality: Staff, clients, & communities who would be **most impacted** by pandemics and economic downturns are also those most affected by racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, xenophobia, & ableism.




Why is planning important? (cont'd)

3. Contingency planning is one type of scenario planning, and it involves looking at sudden changes.
 - Contingency planning is critical for ensuring that core operations continue during a crisis, and minimizing or mitigating loss and damage.
 - The advantage of a contingency approach to planning is the understanding that what works in one setting, or at one point in time, may not work in another. ([Bradshaw, 2009](#))



Principles of Contingency Planning for Nonprofits

- Mission-centered decision making
 - Case scenario planning
 - Financially protecting your core programs and staff
 - Engaging staff & board
 - Handling remote operations/returning to “normal”
 - Wellness
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Mission Centered Decision Making

- **Agency beliefs and values should guide your decisions as much as concern for your bottom line.**
- Case scenario:
 - Recognizing various privileges within staff (related to role/position, job activities, race, education, gender, etc.) and related risk levels re: COVID-19 and otherwise
 - Mission-commitment bonus payment for essential nonprofit workers (vs hazard pay)



Case Scenario Planning

- Financial and program planning
 - Best case
 - Most likely case
 - Worst case
 - Applying an equity lens



Core Programs and Staff

- Financially protect your core.
 - What programs support your mission and bring in revenue?
 - Who are your key staff?
- If downsizing must occur, start with consultants and “non-core” programs (balance both mission and finances).



Finance Planning

- Talk with funders
 - CARES Act
- Reserve funds (maintain liquidity)
- Financial program projections (short term and long term)
- Case scenario planning for finances
 - Modify budgets based on new needs and conditions
 - Personnel considerations (hazard pay, bonuses, furloughs, layoffs)




Engaging Staff and Board

- Use Data along with staff and client narratives
- Regular communication and transparency
- Shared decision making
 - Layoffs, furloughs and other hard decisions
 - Remote operations and safe in-person practices
 - Wellness of staff members




Handling Remote Operations

- Joint decision making to protect health and safety
 - Involve various levels of the agency
 - Use of data to inform when/how to “go back”
 - Include staff and client narratives
 - Logistical and technology concerns and needs
 - Remote staff supervision
 - Attending to agency culture and ongoing connection
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Handling Return to “Normal” Operations

- Treat this as a fluctuating situation, not a static event
- Analyze data from multiple sources
 - Including talking with staff and clients
 - Use equity lens




Handling Return to “Normal” Operations (cont’d)

- Balancing programmatic excellence with the staff’s and clients’
 - health
 - safety
 - well-being
- Considerations around accessibility



Handling Return to “Normal” Operations (cont’d)

- Maintain transparent communication and shared decision-making
 - Track expenses related to COVID modifications/current climate
 - How can increased accessibility be sustained?
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Wellness

Agency Policies & Practices

- Benefits (vacation, sick, comp, etc.)
- Board support & additional time off
- Liability Insurance
- Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)
- Employment Assistance Program (EAP)
- Leaves of Absences
- Transparent processes related to accountability
- “Piecing out the difference between overworked and overwhelmed” (Dr. Darlene Perry, Owner/ P&S Evolutions, LLC)
 - job descriptions & evaluation processes



Prioritize Your Own Health and Well-being

- This is a marathon, not a sprint!
 - This is stressful work on a good day, and extremely stressful during pandemics.
 - This work needs you to strive to remain safe, healthy, clear-headed, and rooted in person-centered values.
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Wellness

Personal

- When was the last time you took a break from work?
- Are you able to find times when work is not on your mind?
- What are you doing to find joy and nourishment during this time?
- How are you incorporating care into your own routine?
 - Doctor Appointment? Therapy? Consultation? Community?
- What communities are you a part of that are of great value to you and bring you feelings of connection?
- How is your workspace and schedule if at home/with children/youth/other dependents?
- Grounding techniques and mind/body awareness.

"I can't be there for other people
unless I'm there for myself...
By investing in yourself you're also
investing in your community."

- Dior Vargas, MS, MPH,
Creator of the People of Color
and Mental Illness Photo Project



From [@dior_vargas](#), Reposted by [@counseling4allseasons](#)



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