

Summary

The Safeguard Iowa Partnership (SIP) is a voluntary coalition of Iowa's private and public sector leaders, who share a commitment to strengthening the capacity of the state to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. SIP partners work to reduce the impact of emergencies on their communities by pledging resources and offering support services.

Background

In 2006, Business Executives for National Security (BENS) recognized that Iowa, like many other states, lacked a system for organizing private sector contributions to disaster response operations. Many state businesses and organizations wanted to provide support but did not have an organized means for doing so. Members of the Iowa Business Council (IBC) also understood the need to be prepared for, respond to, and recover from natural disasters, terrorism, and other types of incidents.

BENS approached the IBC in late 2006 to discuss the need for public-private collaboration for disaster management in Iowa. A designated partner could organize the contribution of private sector resources and personnel to government preparedness and response initiatives. BENS recognized the benefit of employing an existing organization, such as the IBC, which was already involved with Iowa's business sector, to lead the initiative. With support from BENS and representatives from several state agencies, the IBC formally launched SIP on January 29, 2007. Safeguard Iowa Partnership was granted 501c3 nonprofit status by the State of Iowa July 2008. The severe disasters of 2008 were a key testament to the need for a formal public-private partnership as SIP provide assistance with information sharing between public and private sectors and coordinating private sector donations for the response and recovery.

Goals and Objectives

SIP strengthens Iowa's collective capacity to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters through public-private collaboration. The three strategic goals are to:

- Strengthen the communication network for information sharing to carry out the mission.
- Develop educational opportunities focused on facilitating business continuity and leveraging community resources.
- Facilitate growth and value to Iowa businesses and communities.

Description

SIP organizes the various capabilities of Iowa's private sector into a single partnership-based organization. Together, SIP's partners improve the safety of their communities by supplementing government preparedness and response capabilities with their own

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resources and expertise. SIP is governed by a board of 11 directors, both elected and non-elected. The board's bylaws state that nine directors should be elected by the partners themselves: five representatives from the public sector and four from the private sector. The two non-elected directors must include the past chairman of the board (the former leading member) as well as the executive director of the Iowa Business Council. The board conducts annual strategic planning sessions to determine the partnership's current capabilities and to help establish its priorities. SIP utilizes five initiative teams with public-private sector representation to lead its preparedness initiatives.

For-profit businesses, non-profit organizations, public agencies, and associations operating within Iowa are eligible for status as a SIP partner. Out-of-state organizations and Iowa-based vendors may join SIP as an associate partner, even if they do not have employees within the state of Iowa. Any interested private sector organization may apply for consideration by the board of directors through the SIP Web site. Partners may be asked to donate resources including personnel, assets and/or resources during disasters, share information and participate in meetings.

Private and public sector partners as well as associate partners pay annual fees to provide financial support and to secure their partnerships. SIP partnership fees are based upon the organization's number of Iowa-based employees.

SIP uses five categories to classify its partners: private sector partner, public sector partner, associate partner, strategic partner (a non-profit organization declining specific private or public sector status), and honorary partner (an individual or organization selected by SIP's board). At its founding in 2007, SIP had 27 partners. By the summer of 2009, the number of SIP partners had grown to over 160.

SIP undertakes activities in five areas: resources and preparedness, communication and coordination, education and exercises, partnership development and outreach, and partnership marketing and public awareness. These initiatives benefit SIP members, state government agencies, and the public.

Requirements for Success

SIP remains dedicated to increasing the participation of the private and public sector in its programs and therefore increasing the number and variety of assets that it can lend to preparedness and response operations across Iowa. SIP has developed a program to promote the establishment of organizational chapters within regions, counties, and cities. Chapters network between public and private sector partners based in the same area with location-specific initiatives and information. Additionally, SIP actively pursues relationships with public sector agencies, as evidenced by SIP-EOC liaison seat at the state emergency operations center and Polk, Linn and Johnson county EOC and its participation on the Lt. Governor's Homeland Security Executive Committee, Iowa Dept. of Public Health Preparedness Advisory Committee, Fusion Advisory Committee and the Iowa Homeland Security Emergency Management First Responders Advisory Committee.

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The key requirements for success include:

- Shared defined strategic focus: Partnership should establish a vision, mission, strategic goals, and measurable objectives.
- Ownership and accountability: A staffed position is ideal as someone has to be responsible for the ultimate execution of the strategic plan. Since the partnership is a volunteer coalition of public and private partners it is difficult to ensure ownership.
- Sustainability: Funding is necessary to support the execution of the strategic plan. It is the responsibility of both public and private sector partners. There must be flexibility to use government funding in order to achieve the strategic goals.
- Buy-in: There must be buy-in from leadership at all levels – directors of corporate security, business continuity and risk management in the private sector; CEOs and decision makers; directors within the public sector including the Governor’s Office.
- Communication methodology: Quickly establish a means to share accurate, real-time information between public and private partners.
- Marketing and Education - The partnership needs a marketing plan to get the word out on the organization; its benefits; ROI.
- Infrastructure - Having a clearly defined organizational structure will ensure roles and responsibilities are clear and create efficiencies in execution.

Resources

Safeguard Iowa Partnership has the following resources available through its partnership -- A seat in the Emergency Operations Centers; Resources to help prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters; Web resources; Tools and templates.

SIP facilitates the donation of private sector resources and expertise to support disaster preparedness and response operations across the state. SIP supports unified management during incidents, which helps minimize losses, including property loss, economic loss, and loss of life. SIP worked with the Iowa Department of Public Health (DPH) and multiple state, local, and private organizations to develop storage and delivery plans and procedures specific to the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) for Iowa. One of SIP’s partners supported an SNS initiative during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic. The medical supply storage and distribution center helped store, document, and transport flu-related medical supplies across Iowa. The Iowa business used its professional expertise to improve the state’s overall preparedness capabilities. SIP has undertaken other initiatives to help share private sector resources to improve preparedness in Iowa. SIP developed a secure Web-based catalog that identifies the volunteer and for-hire emergency assets of its private sector partners. The business resource registry organizes these assets according to location, availability, and quantity so that they can be procured relatively easily. SIP has created a comprehensive EOC liaison program to train private-sector partners to serve in the state and county EOCs during disasters.

Training and Exercises

Safeguard Iowa Partnership hosts and participates in joint training and exercises with the public and private sectors

Communication Tools

Safeguard Iowa Partnership uses the following methods of communication with your public/private partners -- Email alerts; In-person meetings; Conferences and other events; Teleconferences; Video conferences; Website and Media Outreach.

Links

www.safeguardiowa.org

SIP hosts at a minimum quarterly Leaders Council, initiative team and chapter meetings. This in addition to the annual meeting hosted in conjunction with the Governor's Conference on Homeland Security.

SIP collaborates with Iowa state agencies to offer public-private workshops on business continuity planning and other emergency preparedness and response issues. These workshops help build trust-based relationships among public and private sector officials contribute to the development of common terminology. Public and private sector participants gain an understanding of each other's preparedness capabilities through joint training and exercises. SIP facilitated private sector participation in DPH's 2007 pandemic influenza exercise and HSEMD's Amber Waves exercise. In the fall 2009, SIP, in conjunction with DPH, plans to offer a Webcast on influenza preparedness.

Contact Information

Jami Haberl, Executive Director

jhaberl@safeguardiowa.org

515.246.1707

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