

Request for Information

As part of an interagency response to the Deepwater Horizon event, the Louisiana Department of Social Services is seeking information on methods, capacity and costs regarding the conduct of a comprehensive analysis of individual, family, business and community short term and longer term needs across multiple need areas that will include an ongoing process to monitor levels and emergence of need due to a temporary or prolonged loss of livelihood or community infrastructure in the oil spill impacted parishes of Louisiana.

Introduction

The reality of current and future economic losses for the people and businesses of Louisiana as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill poses a formidable challenge. The impacts will not only be detrimental to our ecological assets and businesses which are closely aligned with the maritime economy but to other coastal industries and to the overall economic viability of our coastal communities and the state.

Impacted parishes and communities are already experiencing significant increases in unemployment, and facing fewer opportunities for short- and long-term employment. Contracts for planned activities are being suspended or cancelled as the full impact of this event is still not known. The potential loss of industry-based economies for long periods of time is particularly damaging to commercial and recreational fishing, tourism in our coastal parishes, and the oil and gas industry, along with the support services that support these industries. In addition, the need for public health and social services has already increased and will continue to increase in the impacted parishes for a long time to come as the impacts of the oil spill on the physical and mental health of our citizens are monitored and addressed. With the continued migration of large volumes of oil across the Louisiana coast, all coastal Louisiana parishes are feeling the direct effects of this spill. Commercial fishermen, vessel owners, wholesale-retail seafood dealers, the charter and recreational fishing industry and marinas, oil and gas firms and related commercial establishments across the region are already seeing decreased revenues due to area closures and moratoria necessitated by the spill.

This disaster has also caused emotional stress to our citizens as these coastal communities have already endured five years of recovery from four catastrophic hurricanes that began in 2005 with Katrina, which was the largest natural event in FEMA's and the nation's history. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill now qualifies as the largest man-made catastrophic event in the nation's history. While the full scope and scale of this event's impact is yet unknown, significant numbers of people are already experiencing recurrent trauma reactions. It is anticipated that the children and youth of impacted families will need ongoing counseling to adjust to the loss (grieving) and changes in family lifestyle and future work orientation as a result of incomes and traditional ways of life in South Louisiana. These impacted populations are at increased levels of risk for suicide and other risk-taking behaviors including increased prevalence of alcohol and drug abuse especially among middle-aged men and adolescents.

From the Exxon Valdez experience, we understand that victims of technological disasters often suffer long-term, recurring impacts that produce a variety of direct and indirect consequences that lead to continuing social conflicts, disruptions and intensify stress for residents of impacted communities. Indirect consequences can include increased media scrutiny of community activity

and responses by residents, considerable legal advice and positions brought forth by attorneys, dueling scientific analysis, supply and housing shortages, along with conflicts among politicians and government agencies.

Again from the experience in Alaska, we know that, “Results of Exxon Valdez oil spill studies indicate that mental health impacts still persist 10 years post-spill. These impacts include disruption of family structure and unity, family violence, depression, alcoholism, drug abuse and psychological impairment. The extent of chronic mental health patterns appears to be correlated to the extent that a community is dependent on its natural resources for survival.”

Through an initial review of local experience and of the impact of other disasters in Louisiana , it is recognized that an initial comprehensive analysis combined with long term ongoing tracking of individual, family and community needs across multiple domains (including food supplies, cash assistance, housing, employment placement and job re-training, industry support and business development, etc) is critical to best ensure that those who suffer a loss as a result of the spill receive the benefits and services that are needed through the phases of recovery so that individuals and businesses are made whole. This analysis must include identifying the appropriate resources that are needed and available for social, mental health and workforce placement and retraining efforts to prepare people and communities respond to the spill and become self-sufficient in light of the long terms effects of this event.

Individual, Community and Economic Impact Assessment

The state is working with parish, community and industry leaders in impacted parishes to be proactive in determining and responding to the short, medium and long-term needs that will arise as a result of this incident. A coordinated needs assessment will allow local and state agencies to work with community partners to not only identify resources and roles in meeting the individual, family and community needs, but to align the identified needs and gaps with existing and potential services while identifying new resources as they are needed. A coordinated approach will also further streamline and assist communities so that as information is developed and becomes available, the location, scheduling and appropriate channel for delivery and/or distribution of resources can be triggered in appropriate areas and with sufficient resources to assist impacted persons and businesses.

The state will assist regional/local leadership in defining initial and projected individual and community needs through conducting a multi-tiered short and long term, community based needs assessment that will inform immediate and future service delivery and resource allocation in the impacted communities.

Specifically, local leadership with the state’s assistance will lead a comprehensive impact and needs assessment that includes:

- an initial assessment of immediate consequences of loss of income and job opportunities and the mechanisms that are available to replace recoverable income;
- community asset and capacity inventory to identify any gaps in human service delivery infrastructure to meet current and projected demand;

- population needs assessment that captures short, mid, and long term needs across multiple human impact domains;
- economic needs assessment that captures short, mid and long term needs for businesses and economic development and community infrastructure necessary to support a strong business and economic environment in the impacted parishes;
- resource gap assessment to meet identified and projected resource needs as a consequence of this event; and,
- ongoing assessment of the impact on the state as a whole and communities that may see increases in service demands, job seekers, resettlement, and other factors due to population migration patterns that may arise from the disaster.

This assessment should include consideration of special populations with unique requirements including significant Vietnamese and Native American populations that rely on our coastal resources for their livelihoods.

*Note: While a specific timeline of activities and deliverables may be negotiated to some extent prior to conduct of assessment, it is expected that a preliminary set of **identified needs and recommendations will be provided within 30 days of project onset** and additional analysis and recommendations will be provided at regular 60 day intervals to reflect the immediate needs identified and ongoing surveillance results.*

Assessment Scope and Methodology

This comprehensive analysis of individual, family and community short term and longer term needs across multiple need areas will include an ongoing process to monitor the communities of individuals and families who will potentially need assistance of some sort due to a temporary or prolonged loss of livelihood. This includes identifying traditional services specific to populations served by state, local and community organizations and those that are being activated/adopted specific to the spill's impact. From this assessment, several key outcomes are expected.

- This needs assessment should identify clearly the individuals, families and communities impacted at various levels from this disaster.
- This needs assessment should provide guidance for short term, coordinated delivery of services and allocation of resources to impacted individuals, families and communities. *This may be as specific as informing agencies of where to locate outreach centers, where to launch prevention and treatment programs (for mental health needs for instance), or how to staff existing or planned service centers based on short and longer term demand projections.*
- This needs assessment should provide guidance for mid and longer term business and economic development of communities in the impacted region.
- This needs assessment should provide guidance for longer term delivery of specific human services and the tools to track and address the possible emergence of individual and family needs such as mental health, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect prevention, and substance abuse.
- This process should inform the coordination of a regional service network that can provide individuals and communities with a credible and single source of assessments.

The assessment should include basic assumptions of economic impact and cross key service domains. The basic assumptions should include best-case and worst-case scenarios of the impact on specific economic sectors vital to the impacted areas, particularly those sectors that rely on lost natural resources, the oil and gas sector itself, and multiplier effects. The assessment should also be conducted into phases that include assessing the immediate impact and need as well as mid and longer term needs currently identified or anticipated. The domains of need to assess include but are not limited to:

- Physical/Mental Health
- Food/Household Supplies
- Case Management
- Housing (Rent/Mortgage/Temp Shelter)
- Utilities (Deposit/Service)
- Restricted Cash Assistance (insurance/car note/etc)
- Unrestricted Cash Assistance
- Job Training/Re-Training
- Employment Placement
- Industry Support and Development
- Prevention/Investigation of Child Abuse and Neglect
- Prevention/Investigation of Domestic Violence
- Impact on the Criminal Justice System

Note: This scope of work does not include an ecological environmental analysis or a comprehensive economic development assessment as being conducted by LED (though it must complement and utilize information provided through such as available)..

It is expected that this assessment will consist of several basic components that include:

- Assessment Preparation
 - Stakeholder identification (scope of target population) and partners in assessment
 - Review and evaluate results of past or current assessment activities including alignment with ongoing or planned assessments (i.e. economic impact study in development currently and the many smaller assessments being conducted by community service organizations and associations)
 - Scan of ongoing assessment and coordination efforts with non profits, foundations, and local providers
 - Identify and define the nature and types of chronic symptoms that may experienced by individuals (defining high risk groups)
 - Identify and define the scope of domains being assessed short, mid and long term
 - Literature and program/response review (including discussions with representatives from Exxon Valdez community response efforts)
 - Identify ultimate consumers of assessment data
 - Define communications/dissemination strategy of results
 - Define incentives, sampling techniques, and marketing of information gathering activities
 - Local and technical review of all sampling and research methods and tools to ensure continuity and applicability to local communities
- Data Collection - Methodologies may include:
 - Individual and community surveys (initial and follow up)

- Locally driven focus groups
- Local government and community service organization surveys and service demand levels
- State agency service data tracking and projections
- Consultation with Alaskan counterparts
- Public forums
- Demographic and population descriptors
- Community asset analysis
- Data Presentation and Evaluation
 - Feedback from representative stakeholders
 - Verification and Clarification
- Summarizing and disseminating survey results
 - Includes local leadership and “expert” review and validation of results prior to release of analysis
 - Implementation of results communication strategy
- Public forum discussions and action planning around results (for short, mid and long term results as they are available)
 - Facilitate public forums
 - Identify resources and services available to meet identified needs
 - Develop local-based community action plans

Key Deliverables Include:

- Initial set of identified needs of impacted populations and communities within 30 days of project onset
- Report on individual and population perceptions and attitudes of the direct effects of the disaster short and long term
- Project impacts report summarizing the potential consequences across multiple domains
- Guidance on targeting resources and interventions
- Community and regional economic impact mitigation plans
- Community infrastructure action plans based on results of assessments
- Tracking Impact Measures - assessment tool to monitor continued economic impact of oil spill on local businesses to understand the impacts of the spill on local businesses, workers, and communities, as well as the overall state economy.

If your organization is interested in conducting part or all of such described assessment, please provide a very brief response that includes anticipated methodologies employed, 30, 90, and 120 day costs (and potential annual beyond that) associated and a description of capacity to conduct this assessment. You may submit this to Michael Dailey at michael.dailey@la.gov by close of business Wednesday, June 9, 2010. This is not a formal solicitation for bids but an attempt to receive information that will allow us to better understand the capacity and means that may be available to conduct such assessment. Please email or call 225.454.5118 if you have any questions.