



FEMA

GOOD STORY

The Safeguard Iowa Partnership

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 is a nationwide, non-partisan organization that aims to use the capabilities of American businesses to enhance the nation's security. BENS has actively pursued the establishment of public-private partnerships nationwide. For more information on BENS, please see the [BENS Web site](#).

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.

The IBC's central concerns are to protect and enhance Iowa's overall economic vitality. IBC businesses jointly identify major issues for generating growth and develop the necessary public-private relationships to support their growth initiatives. For more information on the IBC, please see the [IBC's Web site](#).

GOALS

SIP strengthens Iowa's collective capacity to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters through public-private collaboration.

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 resources and expertise.

SIP Governance

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 IBC. The board conducts annual planning sessions to determine the partnership's current capabilities and to help establish its priorities. SIP utilizes five teams with mixed public-private sector representation to lead its preparedness initiatives. SIP received non-profit status in July 2008, enabling it to devote its resources entirely to serving the state of Iowa.

SIP Partners

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. Applicants must volunteer resources and/or personnel during a disaster and must designate a member to represent the organization at SIP meetings and elections. 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, including but not limited to:

- Allied-Nationwide Insurance;
- American Red Cross;
- Central Community Hospital;
- Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives;
- Iowa Bankers Association;
- Iowa Business Council;
- Iowa Contingency Planners;
- Iowa InfraGard;
- Iowa National Guard;
- Iowa Telecom;
- Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center;
- Principal Financial Group;
- Quaker Foods-PepsiCo;
- University of Iowa;
- Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.; and
- Wells Fargo & Company.

SIP Initiatives

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. SIP's board of directors developed the five

initiatives during a strategic planning session in 2008. These initiatives benefit SIP members, state government agencies, and the public.

Resources and Preparedness

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 during emergencies. SIP has taken efforts to integrate the registry into the Iowa state emergency operation center's (SEOC) WebEOC in response to users' requests for consolidation. SIP is piloting the registry and plans to launch it in the winter of 2010.

WebEOC is a Web-enabled crisis information management software tool that delivers real-time data to emergency managers and responders. The software enables users to share data through message boards, geographic information systems-based maps, resource catalogues, and other tools.

Communication and Coordination

SIP's top priority since its 2007 launch has been to improve communication between private sector businesses and Iowa state and local governments. SIP serves as a liaison to help coordinate private sector support to disaster response operations. A SIP representative coordinated volunteer services and resource donations at the Iowa SEOC during response and recovery operations for the 2008 summer storms. SIP facilitated public-private coordination, which improved the SEOC's overall response efforts. This led to the establishment of a permanent seat for SIP in the SEOC.

SIP has also developed a code of conduct manual for its representatives serving at emergency operations centers (EOC). The manual establishes training to ensure that representatives possess the knowledge necessary to contribute to EOC operations during activations. The Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Division (HSEMD) vets the state-level representatives and allows them to participate in exercises. SIP is working on a model that will incorporate the private sector into county-level EOCs during incidents.

For more information on SIP's code of conduct manual, please refer to *Lessons Learned Information Sharing's Practice Note, [Public-Private Partnerships: Safeguard Iowa Partnership's Code of Conduct Manual for Liaisons Serving at Emergency Operations Centers](#)*.

Education and Exercises

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 and

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.

Partnership Development and Outreach

SIP remains dedicated to increasing the participation of the private 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's business seat at the SEOC and its involvement with the Iowa DPH and the Iowa HSEMD First Responders Advisory Committee.

Partnership Marketing and Public Awareness

SIP works to increase the public's awareness of its endeavors and the private sector's contributions to preparedness in Iowa. By demonstrating the essential role played by public-private partnerships in emergency management, SIP serves as a model for similar partnerships across the country.

SIP's Contributions to the 2008 Summer Storms Response

During the summer of 2008, Iowa experienced a series of severe storms that produced several tornadoes and a large amount of rainfall. Over a 4-week period, flood waters moved across Iowa, which required the state to undertake extensive preparedness, response, and recovery operations. Overall, the 2008 summer storms resulted in 17 fatalities, forced the evacuation of approximately 38,000 Iowans, and impacted over 21,000 housing units.

SIP's contributions during the 2008 summer storms helped bridge the gap between Iowa's public and private sectors. SIP partners spent hundreds of hours during the 2008 summer storms contributing to Iowa's emergency response and recovery process. SIP's executive director coordinated donations of bottled water, plastic sheeting, sandbags, and other critical resources. SIP members also assisted with general resource procurement at the SEOC. It was the partnership's largest disaster response to date.

REQUIREMENTS

Keys to Success

Committed Private Sector

SIP's continued success requires the ongoing commitment of private sector organizations to lend their resources, equipment, and expertise to preparedness and response operations.

Trusted Relationships

SIP's trusted relationships with state and local government agencies enable its members to supplement state response capabilities through volunteer services, resources, and information sharing.

LINKS

Business Executives for National Security.

<http://bens.org>

Iowa Business Council.
<http://www.iowabusinesscouncil.com>

Safeguard Iowa Partnership.
<http://www.safeguardiowa.org>

REFERENCES

Haberl, Jami. Executive Director, Safeguard Iowa Partnership. Interview with *Lessons Learned Information Sharing*, 09 Jul 2009.

Lessons Learned Information Sharing. *Iowa 2008 Summer Storms After-Action Report*. 27 Apr 2009.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=36042>

Safeguard Iowa Partnership. *Safeguard Iowa Partnership After-Action Report, September 2008*. Sep 2008.

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=32905>

DISCLAIMER

Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS.gov) is the US Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency's national online network of lessons learned, best practices, and innovative ideas for the emergency response and homeland security communities. The Web site and its contents are provided for informational purposes only, without warranty or guarantee of any kind, and do not represent the official positions of the US Department of Homeland Security. For more information on *LLIS.gov*, please email feedback@llis.dhs.gov or visit www.llis.gov.