Disaster Response

A QUICK FUNDERS' GUIDE

Philanthropy New Zealand
Tōpūtanga Tuku Aroha o Aotearoa

Response refers to actions taken immediately before, during or directly after a civil defence emergency to save lives or protect property and help communities recover.

A major event has just happened. You are getting a sense of the immediate impact. Key actions you can take are:

1. Apply your oxygen mask first

Action your business continuity plan and make caring for your team a top priority. Time should be scheduled to support staff as needed and check in on everyone's wellbeing. Consider employing temporary staff to ease the pressure.

2. Activate your disaster grantmaking and donations policy

Gather your team to discuss your policy. Assign tasks and responsibilities and schedule regular check-ins to address any issues arising or policy changes needed. Reach out to your community networks to collect on the ground intelligence.

3. Engage and set expectations with donors

Communicate with donors regularly to inspire their giving and ensure their expectations are met. Develop clear responses to questions such as when funds will be used, and what current needs are best addressed through philanthropy.

Don't create a new fund unless absolutely necessary – a proliferation of funds creates confusion, and you may be best to partner with others with established funds. The titles and descriptions of any new funds should allow for flexibility in the grantmaking timeframe and scope.

4. Work with your funding community and local communities

Utilise your relationships – contact existing grant recipients and wider community contacts to understand how they are affected and their anticipated needs. Consider how you can support community organisations, networks (including volunteers), and marae providing immediate relief.

Engage with a network of funders in your area – identify your specific expertise and knowledge and share ideas and resources as a group. Consider whether you can run joint application and reporting processes, advocate for groups trying to access support, or connect community groups providing similar services.

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5. Flexibility and focus on recipients

If pre-approved funding delegation doesn't exist, board members should consider allocating discretionary funds to senior staff. Consider untagged funding to community organisations where you hold trusted relationships. Move to a simple application and reporting process.

National funders – listen to intelligence shared by local and regional based funders. Adopt a "locally led, nationally supported" and high-trust funding approach to use your funds optimally.

6. Fund intermediaries

Directing funds to an intermediary organisation will benefit you and capitalise on the established relationships local organisations have with their communities.

Intermediaries move money quickly to address local needs and your organisational workload in identifying recipients and undertaking due diligence can be reduced. Funding intermediaries also enables them to pool donations from a range of funders to address bigger requests.

7. Consider who you can fund directly

Donors may be restricted to funding registered charities. Funders can help non-registered groups find registered charities to serve as a fundholding organisation, to ensure the grantmaking is conducted in a way that meets their needs.

8. Communicate, communicate, communicate

The public care about how their money is distributed and transparency is critical. Funders should communicate regularly and via a range of channels if they are distributing public donations.

Be clear to grant seekers and recipients about what you offer and the relevant criteria. Provide options for engagement and consider ways to communicate jointly with other funders.

Read the full guide at www.philanthropy.org.nz/disaster-and-response