Disaster Resilience
Preparation & Response
Kayutkulluta
“We take care of each other.”
Preparation

The first step in a successful response to emergencies is to prepare our communities to have the confidence in emergency response.
Planning

The first step in a successful response to emergencies is to encourage communities to develop local plans.

- Hazard Mitigation Planning
- Small Community Response Plans

Having these plans in place AND updated yearly not only ensures community leaders know how to respond, but they qualify communities for funding following disaster declarations.

PLANNING ASSISTANCE
- Bering Strait Rural Resiliency Workshop
- Travel to communities for HMP & SCRP planning as well as registering community locations in the National Shelter Program
- Tabletop exercises provided for practice
Training

Training opportunities bolster community knowledge on various disasters, and ensure there are more ‘experts’ in the communities that can confidently address different emergencies.

Providing scholarships and training funds through grants makes these training events accessible for community members.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES
• Oil Spill Response Training
• FEMA Incident Command System/National Incident Management System
• Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response
Partnerships

Funding for training, support before, during and after an emergency, and systems changes all rely on having successful partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organizations.

PARTNERSHIPS EXAMPLE
• Coast Guard – Kawerak received a Coast Guard public service commendation for collaboration in a Port Access Route Study to assist with navigation safety and protecting environmentally sensitive areas.
Advocate

Advocacy starts with building relationships, knowing your community, listening to what challenges and problems your community members face, and gathering together to find solutions you can present to governmental agencies.
Response

Although the most important way to respond to a disaster relies on how we prepare for it, our reaction following emergency events can make a difference in the success of rebuilding our communities.
Alert

If any prior knowledge about a disaster or weather event might occur, ensuring you have channels to communicate with the community is important. The more that know, the sooner that know, the more success the community as a whole will have.

COMMUNICATION
- Kawerak utilized social media channels to share information.
- Kawerak communicated directly with tribal leaders and village employees to inform them of incoming weather event.
- Partnerships with local radio station and weather forecasting agencies ensured information was received and disseminated.
React

While communities enacted their small community response plans and were dealing with the immediate effects of disaster, Kawerak began assessing the communities and identifying the resources needed to assist them.

**ACTIONS TAKEN**
- Kawerak president reached out to political leaders to push for disaster declaration.
- Transportation Director traveled to villages to assess roads and document damages.
- Emergency Preparedness Coordinator connected with multiple agencies to coordinate supplies and deliveries for emergency needs.
- Environmental Director obtained oil spill materials.
- Kawerak’s Building Director traveled out to communities to conduct business assessments.
Communicate

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**ACTIONS TAKEN**

- Kawerak Tribal Affairs Director coordinated multiple regional leadership conferences to ensure the needs of the villages were being met, workgroups were going where needed/wanted, assessments were being done and correct information was going to be passed along.
- Kawerak continued to share information about the disaster which encouraged people to give and many funds were raised by partners and supporters such as the Alaska Community Foundation and Alaska Native Heritage Center.
Resources

Knowing what resources are available, how to access them and who to connect with is essential to gathering the maximum assistance for your community.

ORGANIZATIONS

• State of Alaska National Guard Tribal Liaison, Azara Mohammadi
  • Azara.mohammadi@alaska.gov
  • 907-545-2177

• Bureau of Indian Affairs Alaska Region Office
  • 1-800-645-8465

• FEMA Tribal Liaison, Stacy Gunderson
  • Stacy.gunderson@fema.dhs.gov
  • 907-271-4302
React/Adjust

As response efforts continue, new information, changing environments and new offers or challenges may arise. Communication and flexibility are very important.

**ACTIONS TAKEN**

- Kawerak purchased materials not covered by assistance and as they were needed.
- Kawerak continuously had staff meetings to keep everyone on the same page and share information.
- Kawerak leadership educated and advocated for subsistence cabins and supplies be covered with assistance after learning those were the hardest hit.
- Kawerak spread information regarding looting and trespass, as mining was illegally occurring on Native Allotment property.
- Kawerak hosted political leaders to see damages first hand.
- Kawerak staff received training on assisting people with disaster applications.
Support

Unexpected emergencies can cause a lot of stress on employees, families and communities. We need to take care of each other during these times and focus on what really matters.

ACTIONS TAKEN

• Kawerak authorized and funded employees to travel to Golovin to assist with clean up for their families.
• Kawerak allowed staff the days following the storm to take off, to check their cabins, help clean up their community, and recover from the storm stress
Big Picture

When disaster strikes we have to go into response mode, which forces us to deal with the here and now. But it’s important to not forget some of the larger issues that should be addressed before another emergency and think about what else can be done at a higher level to address issues.
Keep Pushing

Don’t lose sight or forget about the bigger picture issues. Feel free to bring them up as a way of showing perspective when disaster strikes.

BIG PICTURE ISSUES

• Building infrastructure in communities is a challenge, expensive and takes a LONG time.
• Communication problems and lack of reliability with internet and phone systems pose a huge problem for individuals signing up for assistance and communicating during an emergency.
• Native Land Allotments were washed away and continue to erode, access and ownership of land needs to be addressed.
• Sewer and water continue to be an issue in our communities.
• Response gear/capabilities need to be at the local level.
• Communities need up to date and practiced Response Plans (SCERPS)
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