

# Building a Resilient America

## The Challenge

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Our recent national experience in dealing with disasters has demonstrated a complexity that underscores the need for diverse community stakeholders to work in partnership toward a common goal: ensuring continuity of community – and by extension, a resilient nation. The nation’s preparedness and response policies must be informed by the realities of life in local communities, as well as by the federal perspective.

This rationale is borne out by the demonstrated effectiveness of numerous broad, cross-sector partnerships at the local, state, and regional level. Resilience-focused partnerships do not supplant government, with its unique legitimacy, constitutional authority, and resources; instead, community partnerships reflect reality on the ground and bring to bear private sector resources, capabilities and expertise that complement those of government.

Effective, lasting public-private partnerships require coalitions among numerous stakeholders across the political and commercial spectrum. While there is broad support for the *concept* of public-private collaboration, the resources and expertise required to implement and sustain all-hazards partnerships too often fall short. Hundreds of communities, state and local agencies, and private businesses and other organizations are looking for guidance on the “how-to” of building partnerships.

## The Coalition

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In response to the demonstrated value, unique challenges, and the critical role of public-private collaboration in strengthening homeland security and national resilience, a coalition of homeland security practitioners, businesses and academics has proposed a national mechanism to enable effective, sustainable public-private partnerships. BENS has served as the convener and facilitator of this coalition, with the objective of providing a neutral forum for subject matter experts and practitioners to build consensus around practical, effective, scalable solutions. The coalition’s desired end state is a resilient America.

## The Solution

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The Coalition recommends a nationally-recognized, independent public benefit organization (PBO) to serve as a resource for helping businesses, government, private organizations, and communities establish and sustain private-public partnerships that strengthen American preparedness and resilience.

- The PBO will be a neutral, independent, non-governmental facilitator of public-private collaboration – helping to protect the interests of private sector stakeholders willing to partner with government, and supporting government efforts at all levels to effectively engage the private sector.
- The PBO will serve as a trusted venue for sharing information, best practices, past mistakes, and lessons learned, and will be a national repository of subject matter expertise, innovative programming, illustrative partnership models and business plans, resilience education, and related technology solutions.
- The PBO will build consensus on common operating principles and expectations for public-private collaboration and partnerships, but it will not enforce compliance, nor serve as a grant-making entity to partnerships.
- The PBO will serve as an objective, independent broker that can draw on professionals from all sectors and disciplines to address the barriers to effective collaboration with pragmatic, workable solutions.

The coalition envisions funding the PBO through a combination of public and private sources. For further information, contact: [Publicbenefit@bens.org](mailto:Publicbenefit@bens.org).