

The Public Benefit Coalition

Building a Resilient America

A proposal to strengthen public-private collaboration

March 3, 2009

COMMUNITY BASED PREPAREDNESS

The product of public-private collaboration, the cornerstone of American Resilience

Our Nation faces many security challenges – and consequently, a great opportunity to build a stronger, more resilient nation. In recent years, Americans have witnessed the cascading consequences of disasters – a bridge collapse, other frightening failures of our aging infrastructure, and natural disasters like flooding, tornadoes, hurricanes and wildfires. We read reports of a dramatic increase in cyber crime and security breaches, and we contemplate the impact of pandemic disease.

The events of 9-11 shattered any perception that our nation was protected from harm by two large oceans and friendly neighbors to our north and south. While almost eight years have passed since we experienced first-hand the impact of a terrorist attack on our soil, the 2008 attacks in Mumbai, and other events around the globe remind us that we continue to face significant new risks to our homeland, our citizens, and our way of life.

Each of these catastrophic events has underscored the need for Americans and their communities to become resilient to a variety of threats across the full spectrum of potential disasters. As a nation, we can no longer afford the financial or human cost of complacency.

Our security challenges are ever changing. “Just as our challenge is new so must we think anew and act anew.” The words of President Abraham Lincoln spoken years ago seem timeless.

To strengthen our nation, we must create a culture of preparedness that begins at the grass roots level. Individuals must take responsibility for doing everything they can to prepare themselves and their loved ones for the inevitable disaster – whatever its cause. Communities must organize in a way that brings together individuals, families, civic organizations and the private sector with the common purpose of ensuring self-reliance and continuity of community – at least for the early days following disaster.

If we are to achieve even a basic level of preparedness, we must begin with effective community partnerships that identify and leverage the collective capabilities of all local stakeholders. Resilient communities, grounded by effective cross-sector partnerships, will build a stronger, better-prepared, and more resilient nation.

While there is broad support for the *concept* of public-private collaboration, there are many reasons why these partnerships are not a simple endeavor. Some reasons are rooted in our Constitution and system of government; others concern the sharing of sensitive information that might be classified or competitive; and there are numerous other legal, regulatory, and cultural barriers to effective public-private collaboration that must also be addressed. However, particularly in light of our nation’s current economic crisis, we ignore the imperative of community-based preparedness at our own peril.

Collaboration cannot be mandated by government, but rather is grounded in trusted, tested relationships and common purpose. To increase communication and learning in any partnership, its participants must work together as equals. Each stakeholder brings specific perspective, capabilities, and expertise to a partnership, but each has its own interests, motivations and obstacles to overcome. Many times, it is only through an honest broker that businesses, agencies, civic organizations, and citizens can come together, do the risk analysis, and make the trade-offs necessary to collaborate effectively in their mutual

interest – community preparedness, and in turn, a resilient nation. Today, this honest broker does not exist.

Such a neutral facilitator would enable collaboration – providing industries, private organizations, government agencies and citizens a neutral, non-political venue to mediate practical solutions for the barriers to partnerships. This entity would help establish trust amongst all stakeholders. It would operate outside of government, providing a safe, neutral environment in which to share lessons learned without the fear of reprisal or blame – but rather to advance national progress toward best practices and resilience.

It would help identify and mobilize the collective capabilities of all sectors in local communities and the nation – leveraging a minor investment into an exponential return on investment and ensuring continuity of community. This organization would be unique in its structure, scope and responsibilities. It is a new way of thinking about what we have to do to “form a more perfect union, establish justice, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Prosperity...”

The following proposal provides additional detail on such an organization.

Building a Resilient America

A Proposal to Strengthen Public-Private Collaboration

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 experienced homeland security practitioners proposes a national mechanism to enable effective, sustainable private-public partnerships.

The Coalition

The proposal outlined herein is the product of a voluntary coalition that shares a commitment to strengthening American preparedness and resilience through public-private partnerships. The coalition and its supporters include state and local homeland security advisors and emergency managers, retired Army general officers with experience and expertise in private-public collaboration, a former governor, senior officials from U.S. Northern Command, representatives of large businesses, public health and medical professionals, bio-terrorism experts, career federal employees from relevant agencies, scholars from academia and think tanks, professional staff of existing private-public regional alliances, philanthropists, and senior staff or officers from a half-dozen national professional associations.

Business Executives for National Security (BENS) facilitated the coalition's work, providing a neutral forum for subject matter experts and practitioners to build consensus around practical, effective, and scalable solutions. The coalition's desired goal is a resilient America.

Background

Securing the homeland is a unique challenge that requires the participation of every level and function of government, the business sector, non-governmental organizations, civic leaders, and individual citizens. In a recent report, *The Top Ten Challenges Facing the Next Secretary of Homeland Security*, the independent Homeland Security Advisory Council concludes, "Ultimately, homeland security is about synchronizing efforts with multiple partners across the landscape of America."

The initial impact of any disaster is local. Americans have witnessed the cascading consequences of natural disasters, pandemic scares, and other catastrophic events – including the September 11 attacks, the 2001 anthrax letters, the bridge collapse in Minneapolis, Hurricanes Katrina and Ike, and California wildfires. Communities across the nation recognize the inter-dependencies that exist between public and private

Even though the nation has invested \$8.2 billion in bioterrorism preparedness initiatives, public health cannot yet assure the capability, following an aerosolized anthrax attack, to deliver & dispense medical countermeasures within the 48-hour treatment window to prevent widespread death.

Consensus input by the Institute of Medicine Forum and Workshop for Countermeasures Delivery in Public Health Emergencies has established that investing the response capability in the human infrastructure and the corporate community is the only solution to reduce catastrophic casualty rates. Corporate stakeholders have expressed uniform sentiment that they must have a non-governmental, neutral environment for the proper investment of their efforts. The proposed platform/entity has been recommended by that stakeholder community and also by stakeholder representatives from the IOM's forum on Mass Casualty Management, in Oct 2008.

sectors, among multiple public agencies, non-governmental organization service providers, multiple industry sectors and critical infrastructure – and the fundamental role each plays in ensuring America’s economic vitality and quality of life.

This complexity underscores the imperative of a paradigm shift: diverse community stakeholders working in partnership toward the 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; instead, they reflect local realities and bring to bear private sector resources, capabilities and expertise that complement, support, and strengthen those of government. Partnerships can provide a foundation of resilience in local communities and states, and can leverage federal assistance to greater effect.

The Challenge

Effective, lasting public-private partnerships require coalitions among numerous stakeholders across the government 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, private businesses, and other organizations are looking for guidance on the “how-to” of building partnerships.

Collaboration cannot be mandated by government, but rather is grounded in trusted, tested relationships and common purpose – often more easily established at the local level. Experience has shown that when partnerships are government-funded and proscribed, top-down, businesses do not remain engaged at a meaningful level over the long term. There are numerous legal, regulatory, and cultural barriers to effective business-government collaboration that must also be addressed.

It is critical that partnerships reflect the needs, priorities, and the economies of the regions they serve; however, given many diverse models and programs across the country, partnerships cannot always communicate with one another and coordinate their efforts effectively. The challenge remains to scale successful programs and partnerships nationwide, while respecting regional differences and the need for the partnerships to be driven by local stakeholders – not Washington.

One of the fundamental and challenging aspects of effective public-private collaboration is the timely sharing and management of sensitive information across industry sectors, civic enterprises, and myriad agencies from all levels of government. The mechanism for information sharing must engender the confidence of the private sector in terms of managing and protecting proprietary information, providing reliable and timely information from relevant agencies, providing secured connectivity, and serving the information needs of agencies. The proposed PBO will foster the partnerships, technologies, and business models for a collaborative system of information sharing by vetting and replicating the most effective solutions employed across the country.

What is the best mechanism to facilitate this process and enable a nationwide network of partnerships?

The Solution

The Coalition proposes a nationally-recognized, independent public benefit organization (PBO), dedicated to facilitating and sustaining public-private collaboration toward the goal of American resilience. The PBO will be an independent, non-partisan, not-for-profit corporation that serves as a national resource for supporting businesses, government, private organizations, and communities in establishing and sustaining private-public partnerships that strengthen American preparedness and resilience. The following description of this proposed entity is guided by the coalition's strong consensus on mission, guiding principles, and objectives.

Mission:

To enable, facilitate, and scale private-public collaboration so as to strengthen the Nation's preparedness and resilience.

Guiding Principles

- The PBO will be a **neutral, independent, non-governmental facilitator** of public-private collaboration, with the objective of American resilience.
- The PBO will **protect the interests of private sector stakeholders** willing to partner with government, and it will support government efforts at all levels to effectively engage the private sector.
- The PBO will serve as a **safe, trusted venue for sharing information**, best practices, mistakes, and lessons learned. It will be a national repository of subject matter expertise, innovative programming, illustrative partnership models and business plans, resources for resilience education, and information on 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 identify and mediate resolution to legal and regulatory barriers that prevent the private sector from partnering with government during all phases of disaster management.

Resilience: The ability to absorb the blows and quickly snap back from the consequences of any event – natural or manmade. Resilience can be measured by the time to reconstitution of everyday services and routines.*

*Defined in the report of the Homeland Security Advisory Council, September 11, 2008

Businesses require a predictable legal regime in which to operate and contribute efficiently during an emergency, whether engaged in charitable or commercial aspects of disaster-related activities. The current legal and regulatory environment is conducive to neither.

Whether addressing a heterogeneous patchwork of states' Good Samaritan laws, reviewing the need for a body of federal disaster law, or helping a regional partnership resolve local or state regulatory barriers, the PBO will serve as a neutral advocate that enables public-private collaboration.

Concept of Operations:

The Public Benefit Organization (PBO) will be located in the Nation's Capital, and through a system of regional liaisons and technology, will serve the private sector and appropriate levels of government as a facilitator of resilience-focused public-private collaboration.

There will be a small staff at the PBO headquarters, with liaison personnel located in every FEMA region across the country, and a virtual connection to any interested community. The headquarters will have a national focus – supporting regional efforts by working with the nation's largest businesses and other private sector partners, with federal agencies and policymakers to promote effective collaboration and address legal and regulatory barriers. The PBO's regional personnel will concentrate on developing community-based efforts, identifying and documenting best practices in the regions, and encouraging interoperability amongst local, state, and regional partnerships.

The PBO will serve as an honest broker to protect the interests of those private sector organizations and companies willing to partner with government, and will also support government agencies' efforts to engage the private sector as partners.

The PBO will serve as a national repository of lessons learned, good ideas, and best practices that can be utilized by all stakeholders interested in furthering their community's preparedness for and resilience to disasters. Users can draw on the PBO's online resources and literature, or use the PBO to identify subject matter experts and neutral facilitators who can work with communities on developing partnerships, conducting risk analysis and related programs.

The PBO will designate and/or develop several model partnerships in each region that will become laboratories for new programs and provide consultation to other prospective partnerships in the region. Each model partnership will be designed to integrate private representation inside local/regional EOC's during activation. (Federal funding would be directed to the PBO to establish these model partnerships in each region.)

During the pre-disaster phase, the PBO will assist communities in establishing partnerships and procedures to coordinate private sector resources and capabilities with those of government. That process will encourage bringing private sector stakeholders into the early stages of risk analysis, disaster planning, preparation, exercising, etc., as well as planning for coordinated mitigation, response and recovery efforts.

During disasters, while not playing a primary operational role, the PBO could serve as a reach back resource to help partnerships with cross-sector communication, coordination of additional private sector resources, and troubleshooting.

Following disasters, the PBO will share lessons learned, good ideas and best practices, so that all can benefit from the experience. In that regard, the PBO may sponsor seminars and/or conferences to build consensus on common doctrine and approach to public/private collaboration and National Resilience.

In the future, the PBO could potentially serve as resource or an entry point to help coordinate private sector support to overseas humanitarian responses provided by the United States government.

The key to this concept of operation is for the PBO to maintain independence, objectivity, and credibility. In that regard the PBO should be patterned after the National Academies – using a small staff to draw from the best experience and expertise the Nation has to offer, and then providing objective, apolitical and credible solutions to the difficult challenges that face the nation.

Strategic Goals:

- Create a culture of preparedness and resilience across the Nation.
- Strengthen public-private partnerships to enable the most efficient and timely use of our nation’s collective capabilities and resources – before, during, and after any disaster.

Objectives:

- Raise awareness of the importance of safe, resilient communities and impart a greater understanding of infrastructure interdependencies that cross public, private, and multiple industry sectors in every American community.
- Expand the number and efficacy of resilience-focused partnerships, with a goal of building a nationwide network of self-governed local, state, and regional partnerships.
- Collect and share best practices, lessons learned, innovative programming, and new technologies, to enable improved communication and collaboration across all sectors.
- Encourage coordinated resource management among public and private stakeholders before, during and after disasters.
- Provide expertise, education, and training to develop and sustain “all-hazards” preparedness and resilience through public-private partnering; undertake select projects in states or local communities to pilot new programs, technologies, or partnership models.
- Serve as an objective, independent broker that can draw on professionals from all sectors and specialties to address the barriers to effective collaboration with pragmatic, workable solutions.
- Complement existing industry-specific programs with a network of cross-sector, community-based partnerships.

Many American communities, state and local agencies, private businesses and other civic and professional organizations are looking for guidance on the “how-to” of building all-hazards public-private partnerships. There are many different partnership programs, but no widespread interoperability or consistency in their approach, and most are not sustained long term. In addition, the wide variation in partnership programs makes inter-governmental and inter-agency coordination with the private sector all the more challenging during disasters.

The PBO will serve to dramatically shorten the development cycle for establishing community-based or statewide partnerships by collecting and providing subject matter expertise, innovative programming, illustrative partnership models and business plans. PBO resources and services will be available to any city, state, or federal government agency, any business, professional organization, or non-profit entity seeking assistance.

Scope and Methodology

To ensure the PBO is implemented consistent with the mission and concept of operations above, its legal structure, governance, and funding mechanisms must be consistent with the following principles:

- The PBO will neither mandate, nor enforce regulation of partnerships
- The PBO will collaborate with, but operate independent of federal agencies and departments

Proposed Funding Model

The Coalition envisions a nationally recognized, not for profit public benefit corporation, drawing elements from organizational models including the U.S. National Academies, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and other service organizations. The cost of the PBO's start-up and initial five years of operation will be supported by a combination of private donations and matching federal funds – thereafter sustained by private donations and select project-based or agency user-fees. The PBO may accept grants from private organizations and government agencies, as well as hire consultants or other experts to carry out the purposes of the organization. Federal grants to address specific technology, program, or policy challenges would not mandate prescribed methods or pre-determined findings. (Examples of government-funded projects might include the PBO establishing its model partnerships in each FEMA region, or DHS funding for the PBO to help implement a program like the voluntary Private Sector Preparedness Standards (PS-Prep) in a more cost-effective, and truly voluntary way.)

Governance

The Coalition recommends the PBO be governed by a Board of Directors, comprised of no more than 22 – to include the following:

- City managers or relevant local government officials from a small, mid-sized, and large city (3)
- Three State officials representing Emergency Management, Public Health, and Homeland Security
- Two individuals from federal government, representing DHS, WH, or other agencies
- Two from academia
- Two from military/National Guard
- Two from the NGO community
- Two representing small or mid-sized businesses
- Six representing large businesses

Eligibility criteria, processes for appointments to the Board, election of officers, provision for staggered terms, term limits, and other governing/administrative under development.

The PBO will also have a National Advisory Committee, to include representatives from a broad range of stakeholder groups, homeland security practitioners, existing regional alliances and partnerships, business and professional trade organizations, NGOs, etc. The Advisory Committee will help ensure the PBO framework reflects the needs and priorities of the constituents it serves.