

Preparedness is Knowing

League-Red Cross Partnership Offers Communities a 'Ready Rating'

By Ben Brown, NCLM Advocacy Communication Associate



Disaster takes many forms and can consume resources quickly. Recovery can be exhaustive. Photo credit: iStock

Huge wins are seldom ever this easy. But when the League joined with the American Red Cross (ARC) to talk disasters – a topic the League found fresh perspective on in early 2017 – a vital program with minimal required effort became available to cities and towns across the state.

And it's free.

Called the Ready Rating program, it helps communities (and organizations

in those communities) assess whether and how prepared they are for the unexpected, a category that by nature includes just about anything -- fire, widespread illness, an active shooter, freak weather, a cyber attack. Fill in the blank. They're events that an individual organization might rarely experience, but they have plenty of unfortunate precedent for the corporate and municipal worlds.

And those that aren't ready for the

unexpected can have a tough road ahead. Up to 40 percent of businesses fail after a natural or manmade disaster, according to ARC.

"It's important to understand how your municipal employees and your municipal organization would react in disasters," said League Director of Business and Membership Development Services Jennifer Cohen, who noted that the losses a city government may sustain depends on how prepared it is



Disaster struck the League in March 2016 when a structure adjacent to its downtown Raleigh offices caught fire and displaced the tenants of surrounding buildings.
Photo credit: Raleigh News & Observer

to react or avert. “Do you have all those mechanisms in play?” she posed.

Ready Rating isn’t just a primer on preparedness. We’ve all heard that. What makes the League’s partnership a win for cities and towns is how specific it is for municipal functions and assets.

Cities and towns can learn more about Ready Rating at readyrating.org, but the new partnership will unfold in the coming months for members, with workshops being planned across the state. Also in the hopper are wellness fairs, blood drives, and hazard and vulnerability assessments that ARC would conduct for certain risks.

Another plus is that cities and towns can roll Ready Rating participation down to residents and their employers.

Ready Rating members have increased their readiness levels by 42 percent, ARC says.

“It’s really important to assess how ready you are, as a city, a town or a

village, to respond,” Cohen said. “What’s going to happen to you? What’s going to happen to municipal operations? Because you need to be up and running. You can’t afford to be down.”

Ready Rating participation is “a value-add,” Cohen continued. “It just makes your city, town, or village safer, healthier.”

The League’s Board of Directors approved the ARC partnership during CityVision 2017 in September following

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lots of study about disaster recovery and prevention. The League of course was healing from a structure fire that displaced its entire staff in early 2017.

But the partnership’s approval was also about the League’s goal to engage in new relationships that give members valuable, new opportunities.

Be on the lookout for more specifics about the League-ARC Ready Rating program. For more immediate information, contact Cohen at jcohen@nclm.org or Brittney Hunter at bhunter@nclm.org. SC

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