Rapid Assessments: Companion Guide

Introduction

States have diligently responded to public health emergencies and other disasters with flexibility, creativity, and strength. In response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, states created leadership teams, identified populations most in need, responded to workforce capacity and safety issues, and continued providing essential services, to the degree possible.

This tool was developed as a **checklist** to help [No Wrong Door (NWD) Systems](#) assess their current operations and adapt to meet new needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic or similar emergency situations. The overarching goal is to align the workforce to provide services most helpful for people in need. This assessment can help NWD systems identify organizational steps needed to **respond** to emergencies, as well as to **recover** from them, to **mitigate** barriers, and to **prepare** for future emergencies.

This package includes four sections, each focusing on a different aspect of NWD System crisis response:

1. Establishing a **rapid response team and response plan**, and assessing IT and communications (Items 1-10),

2. **Assessing** people in need of NWD System supports, available services, and workforce (Items 11-13),

3. Modifying the **services** available to address identified needs (Items 14-20), and

4. Appropriately adjusting the **workforce** to provide the services people need (Items 21-24).

Who should complete the rapid assessments, and when?

State NWD System entities and their partners can complete the rapid assessment. **It is recommended that each state or local entity initially complete all four sections of the rapid assessment.** As appropriate, states and local sites may choose to **periodically reassess** to identify gaps in people who receive and/or need help, the services they need, and the capacity of the workforce to meet those needs.

What information is needed to complete the rapid assessment?

Gather Information	When starting the assessment, it will be useful to have the following available:
	✓ Emergency Preparedness Plan
	✓ Any state specific declarations and guidance
	✓ Pre- and post-emergency or disaster data from information, referral, and assistance (IR&A) and person-centered counseling (PCC) calls, such as:
	    ○ Individuals receiving NWD System services
	    ○ Individuals calling the NWD System toll-free number for the first time who may remain on NWD System caseloads
	✓ High-level descriptions of the pre-emergency services the NWD agencies deliver
	✓ Areas in the state that have been most heavily impacted

Talk with Partners	As you complete the assessment, it may help to talk with the following people and organizations. It may be helpful to collaborate with many of these groups when developing your strategy and as responding to the emergency.
	  ✓ ADRCs and partner organizations providing direct services to individuals
	  ✓ Emergency Response Leadership Team, including State Medicaid Agency, State Unit on Aging, and other state health agencies
	  ✓ Hospitals
	  ✓ Nursing facilities
	  ✓ LTSS community-based service providers
	As you gather information, it will also be helpful to talk with individuals in the target population and their caregivers.

Review your assessment findings

Each assessment includes a series of items; check "yes", "no", or "in progress", or "not applicable" to indicate whether your state or local site has accomplished that item.

- Yes: The state or local entity has fully completed the item

- In Progress: The state or local entity has partially completed the item

- No: The state or local entity has not begun completing the item

- Not Applicable: The state or local entity does not plan to address the item, or the item does not apply to the state or local operations or structure

For each question, there is no "right" or "wrong" answer. Instead, this assessment is meant to foster state and local reflection and lead to positive action, when appropriate. These items are suggestions and starting points for dialogue around effective emergency response.

What's next?

Responding to an emergency or disaster requires a strategy which includes four phases of emergency management: **response, recovery, mitigation and preparedness**. The majority of this rapid assessment includes considerations for the *response* phase. States will also need to consider how they will mobilize for recovery, mitigation, and preparedness. Section 1 of this assessment addresses considerations for the recovery and mitigation phases.

You may also find the [Capacity-Building Toolkit for Aging and Disability Networks in Emergency Planning](#) helpful as you consider the four stages of emergency management. The Capacity-Building Toolkit was by The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, and ACL.