

The Long Branch Community Emergency Response Basic Plan

- **Introductory Material** – This plan was prepared by the Emergency Preparedness Working Group of the Long Branch Partners network at meetings held since January 2017. List of participants in these meetings can be found in appendix A

- **Purpose:** The purpose of this emergency operation plan is to:
 - Provide personal support and comfort to all Long Branch Residents who have been subjected to the trauma of a disaster regardless of their race, culture, language,
 - Effectively Coordinate resources among organizations, so that needs are quickly made known, and those with assets to offer can make them available.
 - Provide for a communications process that enables all organizations to know what information they should provide their constituents regarding where to go, what to do, where to get information, and where to send people. Additionally, to assure that all organizations get and use the same information and that information is accessible to all who need it.
 - Enable Long Branch community organizations to engage with County, Police, Fire, American Red Cross, and other institutional responders, to make community resources available to support Long Branch community residents
 - Enable community organizations to participate in the development and implementation of recovery efforts.

- **Scope:**

This plan is intended to encompass all- hazards, and is scalable according to the size, magnitude and needs of the incident. The plan is intended to serve the Long Branch community which is geographically defined as the area within Montgomery County, which includes everyone who lives South of Route 495 between Colesville Road and Sligo Creek on the west side, and Northwest Branch on the East side, and University and Carroll Avenue on the South side. This area includes many people from all over the world of racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. Many different languages are spoken and many do not speak English well. The community is also diverse in terms of income and wealth, so that many lack resources and the means to prepare for and cope with disruptions and trauma. This plan is intended to address the needs of all community members so that no one suffers needlessly or disproportionately.

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- **Situation Overview** Long Branch is a diverse community with diverse needs and capabilities. Just over half of the population is foreign born and nearly a third of the population speaks English less than very well. The estimated median income of households in Long Branch estimated from US census data is about \$64,700, which is 59% of the area median income. Almost a quarter of households have extremely low incomes defined as 30% of area median income (less than \$32,760). Low income households and limited English speakers are among the most vulnerable during emergencies. For these people advanced preparation for emergencies is particularly important.
- **Planning Assumptions –**

The following assumptions with regard to disaster emergency situations may be made: (the sequence does not denote the order of importance of these assumptions.)

An emergency or disaster (natural, human caused or national security) can affect Long Branch at any time.

A hurricane, tornado, wind storm, electrical storm, severe ice and/or snow storm, blizzard, etc. affecting the community can cause the loss of power, telephone service, and other utilities and result in a major threat to property health and safety of people in Long Branch.

Emergencies and disasters may affect specific locations, such as a fire, explosion, a water main break, or civil unrest, resulting in criminal or civic threats etc. A local emergency or disaster may disproportionately affect some people more than others.

There may be interruptions in service of any or all utilities during a disaster emergency. Normal channels of communication may be disrupted or destroyed. Internet, cell phone and land lines may not be available.

- **Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities –**

The Long Branch Partners sponsors this basic plan and will provide for the organization structure described below.

Long Branch Emergency Preparedness Committee - Creates and manages the Long Branch Community Disaster Plan, recruits participants to fulfill roles in the plan, coordinates disaster preparation activities, raises funds for disaster preparation. This will be a committee within Long Branch Partners.

Long Branch Emergency Coordinator – one person with multiple back ups, acts as single point of contact and liaison to County and other emergency response agencies. Before an emergency or disaster, this person is responsible for maintaining emergency response readiness and capacity and communicating this to County and other emergency response agencies. During disasters, this person collects information/data from Long Branch emergency response teams on needs and conditions in community,

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relays information on needs and conditions to County and other agencies, and coordinates community emergency response efforts.

Long Branch Emergency Response Teams – There are two types of teams; Function Teams- that perform a specific function throughout the community; and Language/Culture Teams who support families and individuals who speak a specific language or are part of a particular cultural group. Below is a preliminary list of suggested emergency response teams:

Function Teams:

- Volunteer Coordination Team - creates the networks and links that can be activated in the event of an emergency. Prior to emergencies it will provide training and education on emergency preparedness and promote this through the networks as much as possible. During emergencies it will get information from the networks and bring volunteers to where help is most needed.
- Shelter and Feeding –When the County provides shelter and food This group will provide cultural/language competent volunteers to work in the shelters and support services needed, such as child care and case management . This group will also provide for access to personal emotional/ spiritual supports. Since many community members fear government contact and will avoid government provided shelter or for people for whom a shelter is impractical or inaccessible, This team will also provide back up services as needed and as resources permit.
- Communications - Provide timely, accurate, and reliable information to community and among Long Branch Partners to facilitate coordination of emergency response. Develop and use multiple technologies and methods for facilitating communication.
- Health – Provide for physical and mental health services to all who need it during and after the disaster.
- Legal Services – Protect community members’ property and legal rights and ensure just compensation for damages. Promote awareness and prevention of fraud and scams from predators that typically follow a disaster to take advantage of vulnerable people.
- Neighbors with Special Needs – Ensure people with special needs, such as elderly, disabled, etc. are prepared for emergencies and able to get their needs met in the event of an emergency.
- Reunification – Assist in reuniting families that may be separated, and helping individuals obtain identification and other documents, they may need. For example, after Flower Branch Fire, CASA helped get people to buses that took them to the Department of Motor Vehicles to replace ID cards.
- Transportation – Provide for transportation as needed to get people to needed services, or to get services to where people are.

Language/Culture Teams: The Volunteer and Coordination Team will establish language/culture teams to promote emergency preparedness among people in their category and establish the personal relationships that can be instrumental in the event of a disaster in facilitating communications, providing comfort and support, and offering advocacy. This might include the following:

- Ethiopian (Amharic speaking Team)

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- Hispanic Language Teams (One team for each major dialect or culture group in the area) – These may be organized by or around certain Churches, such as St. Camillus, etc.
 - French Language Team (African Immigrants and others)
 - Muslim Teams (Arabic, Somali, etc.)
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- Direction, Control, and Coordination –

Notification

The Long Branch Emergency Coordinator will activate the emergency response plan by sending an email alert through the Long Branch Partners List serve and through a group text message (which needs to be set up). This may be triggered by media reports, personal contact, or any other means that indicate that an emergency or disaster is happening or has taken place. The message will indicate the nature of the emergency with immediate response instructions, including any messages that have been provided by emergency response agencies. The Long Branch Emergency Preparedness Volunteer Coordination team will conduct an initial assessment of needs and capacities as needed among the affected networks. All information will be conveyed to the Long Branch Emergency Coordinator who will be in communication with external emergency response agencies.

Response

The Long Branch Emergency Coordinator will assemble the necessary teams and network representatives to gather information and coordinate responses. The response will be dependent on the nature and scale of the emergency. The coordinator may notify the specific teams that are needed to respond to a specific incident, or the coordinator may call all of the Long Branch Emergency Preparedness Committee together. The primary objective is to gather as much detailed and specific information on needs as possible, and to mobilize community resources needed to fulfill those needs. The emergency coordinator will share information and coordinate response with external emergency response agencies (fire, police, County DHHS, etc.) as appropriate. In the event that email, text, and phone communications are not operative, communications will be done in person as much as possible. The primary designated meeting place for coordinating emergency responses is the Pine Ridge Community Center, 8615 Piney Branch Road.

Tracking

Teams will report their activities to the emergency coordinator and document their actions by recording how many people were helped and how, and quantifying inputs, outputs, and outcomes. This information will be needed to guide recovery efforts, and to learn how to improve the emergency response plan and system for future emergencies.

Information Collection, Analysis, and Dissemination – The Long Branch Emergency Preparedness Committee will prepare information forms to be used in the event of disasters. The committee will select data elements and data gathering instruments, and specify information processing methods, and information sharing protocols. This information will be coordinated with County and other external agencies so that it can be provided in the format and that substance that will be useful for emergency response, recovery activities, and for the assessment of emergency responses and recovery activities.

- **Communications** – The Long Branch Emergency Preparedness Committee will determine communications protocols and coordination procedures to be used. The basic communications media most effective in this community include a List Serve, Group text messaging, and Facebook. The communications function team will be responsible for maintaining the communications functions in the event of an emergency with backup methods and redundancies as needed when systems fail or become impractical.
- **Administration, Finance, and Logistics** – During emergencies The Long Branch Emergency Coordinator is responsible for administration of this plan and has the authority to make policy decisions, resource allocation decisions, and request resources needed to implement this plan and implement emergency response and recovery activities. Outside of emergencies decisions will be made with the consent of the Long Branch Emergency Preparedness Committee. A nonprofit fiscal agent will be selected by the Long Branch Emergency Preparedness Committee to administer funds allocated to the implementation of this plan and emergency response and recovery activities. The Long Branch Partners Emergency Preparedness Committee will collaborate to raise funds, recruit volunteers, and collect donations on behalf of the community for emergency response and recovery.
- **Plan Development and Maintenance** – The Long Branch Emergency Preparedness Committee will raise funds and recruit volunteers to staff each of the function teams. Each of the function teams will develop a work flow process to be implemented in response to emergencies. The Long Branch Emergency Preparedness Committee will also conduct a public education and outreach campaign to raise awareness and help community members be prepared for emergencies and facilitate the creation of Language and culture teams. Long Branch Partners will support community emergency preparedness by integrating education and outreach into their normal services to raise awareness among their clients. A community emergency drill will be conducted within six months of the adoption of this plan, and repeated every six months thereafter. An assessment will be conducted after each drill and after each real emergency to identify and correct problems and weaknesses in emergency responses. At least once a year an assessment will also look at recovery activities from prior emergencies.

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- APPENDIX A: LONG BRANCH PARTNERS' EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WORK GROUP PARTICIPANTS

CASA: Delia Aguilar, Mario Menendez, Hellen Dominguez, Gail Melson, Ana Martinez

CHEER: Vineda Myers, Vanesa Pinto, Bruce Baker, Lucia Zegarra

Montgomery College: Anita Mwalui, Jacquelyn Williams, Alex Valencia,

Long Branch Library Febe Huezo

IMPACT Silver Spring: Carlos Iglesias

Centronia: Dayana Muniz

Gilchrist Center: Zainab Hassan

TP Emergency Preparedness Committee: Claudine Schweber

Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Community Health

Nurses: Pat Wellington, Rebecca Smith

Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services: Martine Kirwin, Roshitha

Paul, Josue Canas

Mary's Center: Gaby Rivas

Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security: Netta Squires

Spanish Speaking Community of Maryland: Maria Herrera, Natalie Cioffi