

# IT Disaster Planning 101

*Michael Hernandez / Director of Client Services at [Just-Tech, LLC](#)*

*Juan J. Ocasio / Director, Office of Information Systems [Puerto Rico Legal Services, Inc](#)*

*Liz Keith / Program Director at [ProBono Net](#)*

*Joseph Melo / Director of Engineering [Just-Tech, LLC](#)*

## **Puerto Rico Legal Services, Inc.**

- Non profit corp providing free civil legal services to eligible low income individuals and groups
- LSC funded group
- Established in 1966, largest legal aid provider in Puerto rico
- 15 branch offices and 14 satellite offices
- Special projects: Tele-lawyer, special education, foreclosure Prevention, Domestic Violence, Community Work, Court Improvement, Compensated Practice Program

## **Challenges for Overcoming the Hurricane Disaster**

- Telecommunication services shut down
- Employee emergency line down
- Payroll due following week
- Gas and diesel shortages
- Central office security
- Data center daily shutdown
- Office 365 migration
- Manati branch office closed 4 months - personal relocated
- No internet in a lot of branches

## **Preparing for the Future:**

- Revision of business continuity and disaster recovery plan
- Moving to the cloud
- Our Website
- Case management system - migrating to legal server
- Financial system - dynamic GP
- Telephone System
- Internet redundancy in branch offices
- Acquisition of laptops for attorneys
- Solar powered portable office
- Evaluation of alternative communication system ([www.gotenna.com](http://www.gotenna.com))

## **Lessons Learned**

- Business continuity Plan not current
- Need to be mobile
- Provide internet redundancy in branch offices
- Trash bags over computer equipment does work

## **Pro Bono Nets Mission**

Pro Bono Net is a nonprofit leader in increasing access to justice through innovation tech and expertise in building and mobilizing justice networks. Our programs:

- Enable legal advocates to make a stronger impact
- Increase volunteer participation
- Empower the public with resources and self advocacy tools to address legal issues

## **Rapid Response Protocol**

- Regardless of the precipitating cause, an effective rapid legal response requires the following:
- Collaboration: Strong and early collaboration among key stakeholders;
- Leadership: An early determination of key leaders with clearly defined responsibilities; and
- Resources: A marshaling of a wide variety of resources, including both legal and non-legal organizations and individuals, as well as on-line resources.”

## **Envisions “Coordinator” roles forming the leadership team of a rapid response effort - and outlines these responsibilities in detail**

1. Legal Volunteers Coordinator
2. Client Coordinator
3. Public Communications Coordinator
4. Facilities Coordinator
5. Technology Coordinator

## **State or Regional Justice Community Planning**

- Designated hotline and intake channels with contingency plans if lead program(s) are impacted
- Centralized information resource and sign up for pro bono volunteers (+ ability to screen, manage and distribute volunteer capacity where it is needed most)
- Authoritative online source with information for the public, including KYR resources, clinics and referral resources to direct services
- There are many good nationally-relevant resources available on DisasterLegalAid.org and statewide websites in regions impacted by disasters -- ask if you need suggestions!
- Get key content translated in advance
- Consider role for LiveHelp if your statewide website already provides this service
- Plan digital marketing strategies in advance (e.g. branded URL redirects, Google AdWords, social media etc.)

## **Tech Building Blocks for Disaster Response**

1. Listservs / networking tools for advocates working in the affected region
2. Centralized resource (password-protected, if needed) with resources for practitioners:
3. Disaster legal services manuals
4. Training and webinar materials
5. Sample forms and pleadings

6. Tools to facilitate remote, unbundled services and remote pro bono engagement
7. Social media & digital marketing strategy (including person appointed to “listen”)

## Resources available

- ▶ <https://www.disasterlegalaid.org/preparedness/>.
- ▶ [Disaster Checklist for a Legal Services Program](#)
- ▶ [Louisiana State Bar Association Access to Justice Committee’s Disaster Plan](#)  
(statewide plan)
- ▶ [State Bar of California – Steps to Disaster Planning for Legal Services Providers](#)  
(organizational plan)
- ▶ [ABA’s Lawyer’s Guide to Disaster Planning](#)
- ▶ [Video: Why Do You Need a Business Continuity Plan?](#)
- ▶ [Disaster Preparedness Toolkit](#)
- ▶ [IT Disaster Recovery Plan](#)
- ▶ Just-Tech’s [Creating a Technology Disaster Plan](#)
- ▶ Crisis Communication Training [Crisis Management: Controlling the Chaos by Pierpont Communications](#)

## Resources available on DisasterLegalAid.org:

- ▶ [Disaster Assistance Manuals](#)
- ▶ [FEMA Appeals Brief Bank](#)
- ▶ [Trainings and Resources by Topic](#)

► [LSC Disaster Counseling Videos](#)

► [New York Rapid Response Protocol](#)

Last updated on December 06, 2024.

[Disasters](#) [Tech Policies](#) [Tech Tips](#)

Links

[Watch on YouTube](#)

Print

Table of Contents

NEWS

## News & publications

The news about recent activities for needed peoples.

[More News](#)

14 Feb 2025

New AI Guide Empowers Legal Aid Organizations to Navigate Emerging Technology

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE New AI Guide Empowers Legal Aid Organizations to...

[Continue Reading](#)

17 Dec 2024



Call for Speakers: Project Management, Second Chance Conference Sessions, and More

LSNTAP is planning our training sessions for 2025 and would like to hear from...

[Continue Reading](#)

## Our Partners

