



What Is A Readiness Plan?

There is no one correct design for a Readiness Plan, since you need to address the particular size, assets, activities and risks for your own organization in your own particular environment. However, there are basic components all Readiness Plans should include. Creating your Readiness Plan means making decisions **before** a crisis hits about how you will respond, and collecting **before** a crisis all of the information and documents that you will need to respond and get your business operations back up and running. A Readiness Plan can be any length – you need to decide, based on your own highest risks and scope of your organization, how complex or layered the Plan should be. The ArtsReady web-based application guides you through the development of a customized plan for your organization and offers examples of tools ranging from crisis communications policies to data backup advice to emergency succession plans. It prompts you to ensure your information is kept current, and connects you to assistance when a crisis hits. Whether you use this online tool or develop your plan on your own, here are basic readiness/business continuity planning principles to keep in mind.

Your Readiness Plan should be both a physical document, and stored on- and off-site electronically so that you can retrieve it remotely. All individuals and departments that are responsible for any aspect of the Plan should be trained in the Plan, and leadership should regularly review the Plan to update it as needed, and to train/retrain people in the Plan.

A Readiness Plan focuses on your **critical business functions**. You should also, of course, have emergency plans to ensure the safety of your people (staff, artists, audiences) such as first aid/CPR training, evacuation drills, etc. Your Plan should be “all-hazards” – because any crisis, interruption or emergency involves the loss or unavailability of resources. Whether you experience a theft, major illness, natural disaster or other unexpected event, **the crisis is the loss of resources**. The outline below allows you to think about planning in an “all-hazards” way. These steps can be helpful in creating your Readiness Plan:

- 1) **Identify and describe your Critical Functions**. These are the activities – internal and external – of your organization that must be functioning for you to carry out your business. For most arts organizations, Critical Functions can include these, but you may add critical functions specific to your organization: Productions (the performances/presentations/installations/screenings); Ticketing & Messaging (including communications with staff, volunteers, artists, patrons and stakeholders); People (roles of volunteers, staff, board and vendors); Facilities (event area); Finances and Insurance; Technology; Exhibits; Programs; Grantmaking
- 2) **Determine a “Plan B” for each critical function**. What method will you use to operate if your standard mode isn’t available (alternate communications methods, cross-training of staff/volunteers, remote banking, etc.)?
- 3) **Collect the Information that will enable functioning during crisis**. Everything from data backups in a remote site, to contact information/phone trees, to copies of insurance documents, to workplans/ action calendars that alternate staff can access – collect key information for every Critical Function.
- 4) **Develop and assign Action Items to increase your readiness**. Go through each Critical Function and identify places you can be more prepared. Insurance, documentation of your facility and equipment/artwork, lists, calendars, crisis communications plans, backup systems, drills – find those areas where you have potential risk and can prepare now.
- 5) **Share the Readiness Plan and train key individuals** – staff, board, volunteers.

Premiering Fall 2011, ArtsReady is a web based emergency preparedness platform designed to provide arts organizations with customized business continuity plans for post crisis sustainability. A national initiative of South Arts, the ArtsReady readiness, response and recovery tool was developed in partnership with the University of California/Berkeley and Fractured Atlas with support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Henry Morrison Flagler Museum, Mississippi Arts Commission and National Endowment for the Arts.

This document is available in alternate formats; contact South Arts at 404/874-7244.



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12 Readiness Must Haves – For more help, become an ArtsReady member at www.ArtsReady.org

1. **Your Phone Tree** – Document a way to contact your immediate stakeholders (staff/board/artists/webmaster) post-crisis. Include their cell phones and personal email addresses as alternative ways to contact them; diagram the order of contact to minimize duplication of efforts.
2. **Your In-Case-of-Emergency Contact List** – Have your people tell you two emergency contacts, one who might be nearby to answer immediate questions (health, allergies, etc.) and one who lives further away and might serve as a safe harbor in the case of a community-wide evacuation.
3. **Your Crisis Communications Plan** – Identify who is authorized to speak to the media and the general public about your organization post-crisis, how they will communicate/message your situation, and also set a goal for the timeframe in which your organization would release a statement.
4. **Your Important Account Numbers** – Know contact information and account/policy numbers for your bank, insurance company, utilities/telecommunications providers, security/alarm companies and building maintenance.
5. **Your Old-fashioned Credit Card Slide and Carbon Paper**– Process payments even when the power goes out, the phone line gets disconnected, or the website goes down.
6. **Your 360° view** – Video/photograph the state of your facilities, equipment and collections before an emergency. Use this documentation to help support your post-crisis insurance claims and requests for donations/support.
7. **Your On-site Camera** - Select post-crisis images/footage before anyone else does. Not only good for a before and after contrast to provide your insurance company, but also good for including in future communications/appeals for donations with your constituents.
8. **Your Documented Refund Policy** - Train your people to manage cancellations and less-than-optimal event conditions. Make sure this policy is shared with your visitors in printed materials and electronic communications or on your website.
9. **Your Standard Contingency Clause** - Include this clause in all contracts or see how you can negotiate to make the language in an existing contract match your standard contingency clause more closely to prevent misunderstandings post-crisis.
10. **Your Alternative Facilities/Equipment List** - Pre-determine one or more locations that could serve as alternative facilities for your business and/or what alternative resources you could use. Could your people work remotely? Would your event work in a different space or given different equipment?
11. **Your Alternative Staff Structure document** – Delegate key responsibilities and train alternate people in the event that one of your key people become incapacitated (e.g. payroll processing, authorized signatories on official documents and checks etc.)
12. **Your Commitment** – Readiness planning requires training and ongoing updates to your information. Additionally, it requires electronic (backed-up) copies and hard copies. Cover your bases. Be ArtsReady. Join at www.ArtsReady.org.



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