

What is a Readiness Plan?

A **Readiness Plan** is a combination of documents, processes, and training that formulates what your organization will do should the unexpected occur. It follows an “all-hazards” approach, because anything can and will happen to your organization. Creating a Readiness Plan means making decisions **before** a crisis hits about how you will respond, and collecting all of the information and documents that you will need **before** a crisis hits, so you can respond and get your business back up and running smoothly.

An all-hazards Readiness Plan focuses on your critical business functions rather than a specific disaster to cover all aspects of your operations against crises of any type or size. A crisis is a loss of resources or the ability to function normally, whether brought on by theft, natural disaster, major illness, technology failure, or any other unexpected event. Components of your Plan can be any length or size. You decide based on your assets, activities, and the risks of your organization in your particular environment. The scope of your organization determines how complex or layered the Plan should be. There is no one correct design.

Your Readiness Plan should ensure the safety of your people (staff, artists, audiences) through first aid/ CPR training, evacuation drills, etc. Crucial documents for your Plan should be stored on and off site, physically and electronically, so you can access them at any time. To start your all-hazards Readiness Plan, follow the outline below.

- 1) **Identify and describe your Critical Functions.** These are the activities and resources of your organization – internal and external –that are crucial for you to carry out your business. For most arts organizations, these include: 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; and/or Grantmaking.
- 2) **Develop and assign Action Items to increase your readiness.** For each Critical Function, identify what you need to protect. Think about insurance, documentation of your facility and equipment/ artwork, lists, calendars, crisis communications plans, backup systems, and drills. Consider potential risk, and how you can prepare now. When appropriate involve your staff, board, and volunteers in developing and accomplishing your action items.
 - a. **Create a “Plan B” for each critical function.** Using your Action Items create a way to operate if your standard mode isn’t available. Incorporate alternate communications methods, cross-training of staff/ volunteers, remote banking, etc.
 - b. **Collect the Information that will enable functioning during crisis.** This includes 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.
- 3) **Share the Readiness Plan.** Train key individuals and departments in its execution.
- 4) **Review, update, and retrain in the Readiness Plan.** Do so at least once a year, or any time your organization undergoes a significant change including shifts in staffing, the addition of new programs, utilization of new facilities, procurement of new assets, etc.

The ArtsReady.org tool guides you through developing a customized Readiness Plan on line. It offers examples of materials ranging from crisis communications policies to data backup advice, and prompts you to update your information, so your Plan remains current. Then when a crisis hits, ArtsReady connects you to assistance. Visit www.artsready.org to learn how we can help you plan.

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