



# Disaster Planning: Preparing Your Library for the Unexpected

Libraries are vital **community hubs**, yet vulnerable to disasters. Proactive planning minimizes damage, ensures safety, and accelerates recovery.

## Presenters:



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# The Imperative of Preparedness



## Community Hubs

Libraries serve as essential **community resources**.



## Vulnerability

Natural and human-made disasters pose significant threat to Libraries. **95% of all disaster damage is from water**—Illinois State University



## Proactive Approach

Planning transforms reactive recovery into proactive resilience.  
**"By Failing to Prepare, You are Preparing to Fail" – Benjamin Franklin**

# Hooksett Library Flood Case Study



## August 2024

Unexpected major flood during roof replacement project.



## Significant Damage

First floor and lower level affected (mostly infrastructure).



## Immediate Action

Required swift response from library staff, partners, and professionals.



[View Photo Gallery of Flood Damage](#)



# Initial Response

## Safety First

Prioritized safety and salvaging of materials.

## Immediate Remediation

Removed damaged furniture, carpet, ceiling tiles, and equipment.

## Collection Preservation

Relocated collections & inventory to unaffected dry spaces throughout the building.

## Staff Adaptation

Established temporary workspaces in the Hebert Room.





# Recovery Process



## Contractor Challenges

Navigated availability issues and insurance approvals.



## Collaborative Effort

Staff worked alongside contractors to restore services.



## Improved Design

Reopened upstairs with redesigned spaces creating a "bookstore-like vibe." [View photo gallery.](#)



## Facility Upgrades

Installed new flooring and LED energy efficient lighting for better environment.



# What Went Well

## Crisis Response

Immediate action and effective communication with stakeholders.

## Service Adaptation

Quick pivot to "Pop-up Library" with "Browse and Borrow" model.

## Project Management

Implementation of [Jira PM tool](#) to coordinate recovery projects.

## Community Support

Strong public backing and municipal assistance throughout crisis.

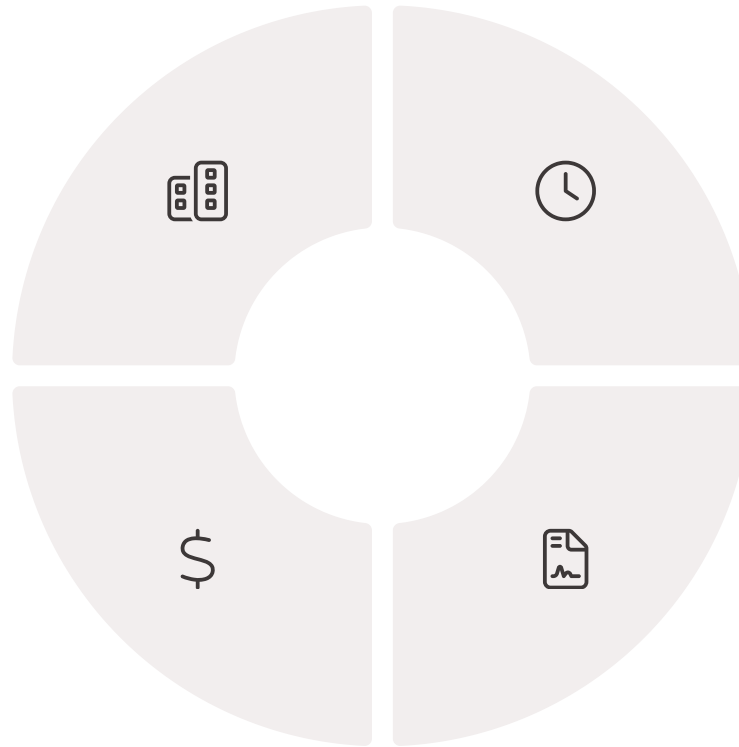
# Uncontrollable Factors

## Building Conditions

Pre-existing issues, like **asbestos**, complicated recovery.

## Cost Fluctuations

Unexpected expenses and depreciation issues arose.



## Contractor Schedules

Limited availability and reliability of service providers.

## Insurance Complexities

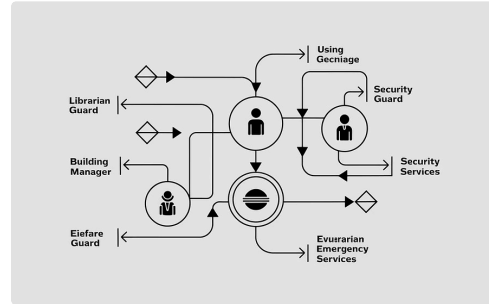
Navigating claim processes created additional challenges.

# Areas for Improvement



## Communication Protocols

Need more robust systems for internal and external updates. You can never share enough.



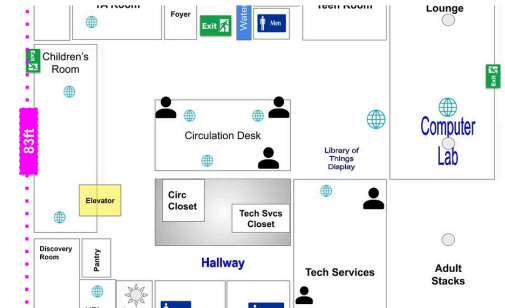
## Role Definition

Clearer responsibilities would improve emergency response.



## Staff Support

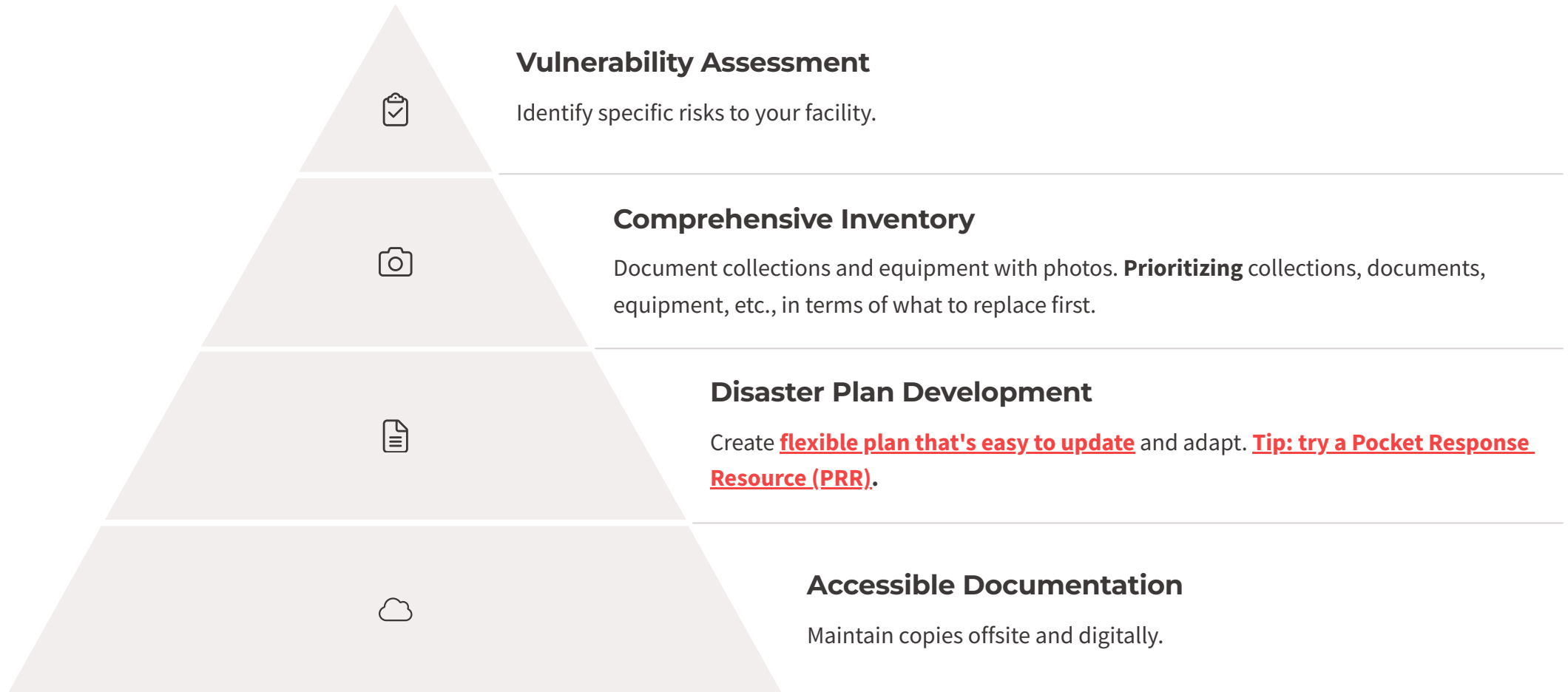
Better systems needed for employee wellbeing during crisis.



## Facility Documentation

Updated floor plans, blueprints (CAD) with dimensions and electrical mapping required.

# Risk Assessment & Planning



# Mitigation Strategies



## Collection Protection

Store materials at least four inches off floors.

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## Detection Systems

Install water sensors in high-risk areas. See [Conserv.io](https://conserv.io)

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## Regular Inspections

Maintain routine schedules for building system checks (HVAC, Fire, etc.).

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## Data Backup

Secure critical information offsite and in cloud.

# Response Preparation



Assemble **disaster response kits** with essential supplies. **Build relationships** with emergency responders and relevant partners (like your town's **DPW Department Head**) before disasters strike.

# Community Engagement Strategies



## Preparedness Education

- Position library as **community resilience hub**
- Host family disaster preparedness **workshops**
- Partner with local emergency management



## Crisis Communication

- Develop **comprehensive** communication plan
- Identify **authorized** spokespersons
- Utilize **multiple media** channels for updates (Note: a **Union Leader** reporter asked us for interview for [article](#))

# Immediate Post-Disaster Actions

## Ensure Safety

Wait for official clearance before entering damaged areas.

## Begin Salvage

Prioritize wet materials (mold risk within 48 hours).



## Prevent Further Damage

Implement stabilization & mitigation measures immediately.

## Document Everything

Take photos/videos for insurance purposes. Log time, labor, electricity, etc. for insurance claims.

# Key Takeaways



## Update Plans

Disaster planning is an ongoing cycle: Prepare» »Respond» Recover» Mitigate» Repeat.



## Build Relationships

Connect with emergency and community partners now.



## Review Insurance

Verify coverage details with your agent, and note the **depreciation numbers** for your inventory.



## Take Action

Implement one concrete mitigation step this year.

# Resources for Libraries

## FEMA

Grants and recovery resources for libraries



## **ALA**

Disaster guides and [LibGuides for libraries](#)



## Northeast Document Conservation Center

Founded in 1973, NEDCC offers an expanded range of services and resources on the conservation of paper, books, and photographs, as well as digital imaging, audio reformatting, and preservation training.



## National Heritage Responders

The National Heritage Responders (NHR) respond to the needs of cultural institutions and the public during emergencies and disasters through coordinated efforts with first responders, state agencies, vendors, and the public.

# Thank you!

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[Link to Disaster Planning Checklist](#)



## Community Preparedness

Thank you for joining us to build more resilient libraries



## Planning Together

Your commitment to emergency preparation makes a difference



## Building Resilience

Together we can protect our valuable community resources