

Emergency Management Fact Sheet – Highlighting Research to Practice

Research Article: Building Community Capacity and Resilience Through Improvements in Economic Recovery

Citation: McMahan, Kevin D. (2019). "Building Community Capacity and Resilience Through Improvements in Economic Recovery" (Master's thesis). Retrieved from <https://www.hsd.org/?view&did=831029>

Background:

In introducing this research, Col. McMahan first emphasized how the economic impact on a community can linger long after the disaster is over. His goal was to use input from local, state, and federal governments, along with businesses to identify recommendations to improve economic recovery in the community. A literature review easily established that without resiliency a community may not survive following a disaster. Input from those actually involved in economic recovery, led to the need for leaders to build resilience by improving economic recovery. Significantly more time, funding, and effort are put into planning for response rather than long-term economic recovery. Col. McMahan's research question was "How do we improve economic recovery to mitigate the impacts a disaster has on a community?" Though there are many definitions for "economic recovery", most recognize it involves some degree of returning a community to support its citizens. The roles of FEMA, states and localities, and the private sector comprise the economic recovery triad, but their efforts are not synchronized. Efforts need to be made to fully utilize the services each can offer for long-term economic recovery improvements.

Practitioner Takeaways:

Col. McMahan identified three issues that currently hinder economic recovery in our communities: limited unity of effort, unrealistic objectives, and a lack of emphasis on economic recovery. He also provided the following general recommendations:

- Adopt and publicize a universal definition of economic recovery
- Revise essential elements of economic recovery
- Implement Small Business Association loan programs
- Increase training opportunities for economic recovery
- Establish pre-disaster funding as a part of a mandated economic recovery plan
- Conduct additional research on economic recovery

Specific research takeaways include:

- Table 2, pages 51-52 – Skills, Training, and Knowledge for Economic Recovery Practitioners
- Table 3, page 53 – Ques 2: List of Government Services -- ranked from most important to least important in influencing economic recovery goals and success following a disaster.
- Section V. – Net Assessment Analysis. This section of the research helps leaders identify issues to be resolved through longer-term changes. These three categories represent all the components used to implement economic recovery: 1) the National Disaster Recovery Framework, 2) the operational environment that supports economic recovery, and 3) governance. Each was evaluated with these criteria: flexibility, standardization, and unity of effort. And while there were gaps in how each would positively impact economic recovery, the local emergency management practitioner will still demonstrate a proactive approach with these public-private partnerships.

Where to find this item: For more specific details about this topic, review the full article, which may be publicly available at: <https://www.hsd.org/?view&did=831029>

Bulletin provided by the International Association of Emergency Managers in partnership with the research author.

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Revised May 2019