

Public Markets in Disaster Planning

12th International Public
Markets Conference

June 13, 2025
Milwaukee, WI

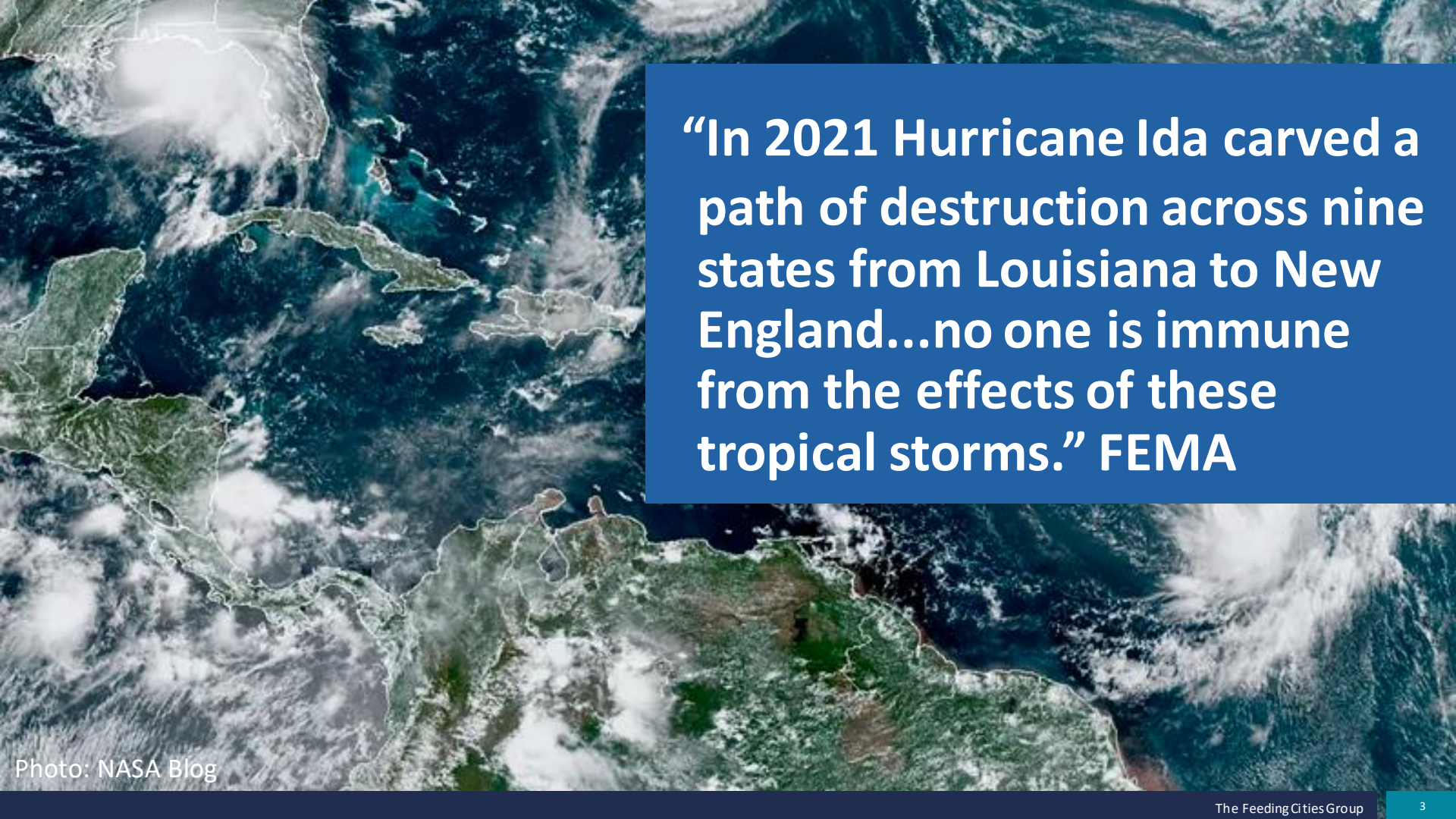


THE FEEDING CITIES GROUP



Consulting group dedicated to improving disaster response and recovery planning around food systems, especially in the U.S.

When disasters strike, we want cities ready to mobilize an efficient disaster feeding response and to support a fast recovery of the food system.

A satellite image showing Hurricane Ida as a large, well-defined cyclone over the Gulf of Mexico. The storm's eye is visible, and its spiral bands extend across the Gulf. The coastline of the United States is visible, with the Gulf of Mexico to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. The text is overlaid on a dark blue rectangular background in the upper right quadrant.

“In 2021 Hurricane Ida carved a path of destruction across nine states from Louisiana to New England...no one is immune from the effects of these tropical storms.” FEMA

Photo: NASA Blog

CRITICAL READINESS GAP

Local governments are not prepared for the severity and frequency of today's disasters.

FEMA was already stretched to breaking point and local emergency management under resourced.

Food planning is not a priority and is complex.

FEMA Report Acknowledges Failures In Puerto Rico Disaster Response

JULY 13, 2018 · 2:36 PM ET

By [Laura Sullivan](#), [Emma Schwartz](#)



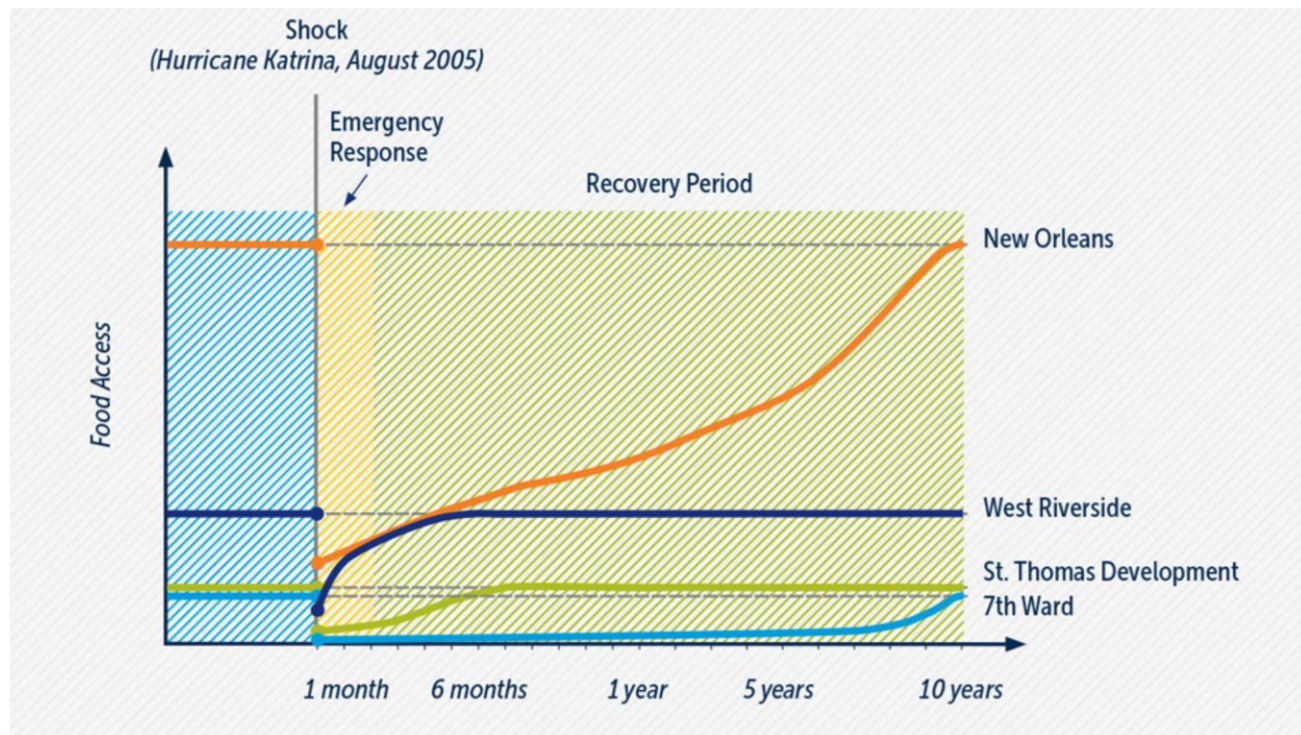


Photo: San Antonio Express News

EXPANDED TIMELINES

Food system recovery is a function of the disaster, resilience of food system and resilience of households.

Chronic food insecurity extends emergency response period from days and weeks to months and years.



2020 OREGON WILDFIRE RESPONSE

More than
4,457 survivors
sheltered

2,375 families
received disaster
case management
services

More than **3.1
million meals**
delivered

1,244 survivors
transitioned to
long-term housing

79 hotels provided
shelter under
ODHS contracts

Disaster feeding
lasted **2 years**

Public markets are part of a community's mutual aid response. Being integrated into a formal emergency response plan increases impact.



What would your market have been able to do better if you would have been able to predict and plan for COVID with community and government agencies?



EMERGENCY PARTNERSHIP IMPACT



- Shape your role in the plan (likely already in it)
- Leverage your resources and prevent redundancies and gaps in community support (avoid the scramble, start faster)
- Funding justification for market sustainability (intersection of economic development x emergency management)

Public markets offer many critical resources for disaster feeding



Space
Food Supplies
Community

SPACE ASSETS

- Central location with access to multiple transportation modes for food delivery and distribution to residents
- Food and equipment storage (weight and volume)
- Cold storage
- Equipment for moving food (e.g., pallet movers)
- Equipment for preparing and storing food (meal prep and cold storage)
- Skilled labor for moving, storing and preparing food

FOOD SUPPLY ASSETS

Emergency management problems:

- Food delivery systems
- Private supply chains
- Lack of dependable statewide food network/collaboration

Public markets know how and where to get food!



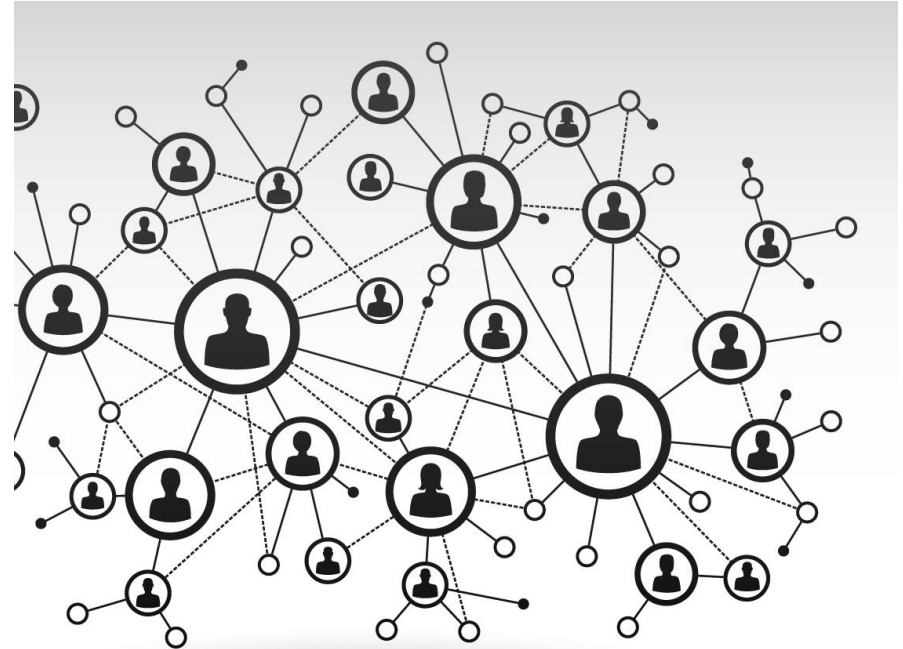
FOOD SUPPLY ASSETS

Local and regional food supply chain

- Milwaukee market example:
18 independent merchants, each with their own suppliers

Strong vendor relationships

Logistics expertise



COMMUNITY ASSETS

Public markets are trusted community partners and spaces

They are positioned to provide leadership of community groups during disasters

They have collaborative expertise that is valued within emergency management




"How a Public Market Saved Me During the Pandemic"

PUBLIC MARKETS as RESILIENCE HUBS

Resilience hubs are physical places that “support residents and coordinate resource distribution and services before, during, or after a natural hazard event.

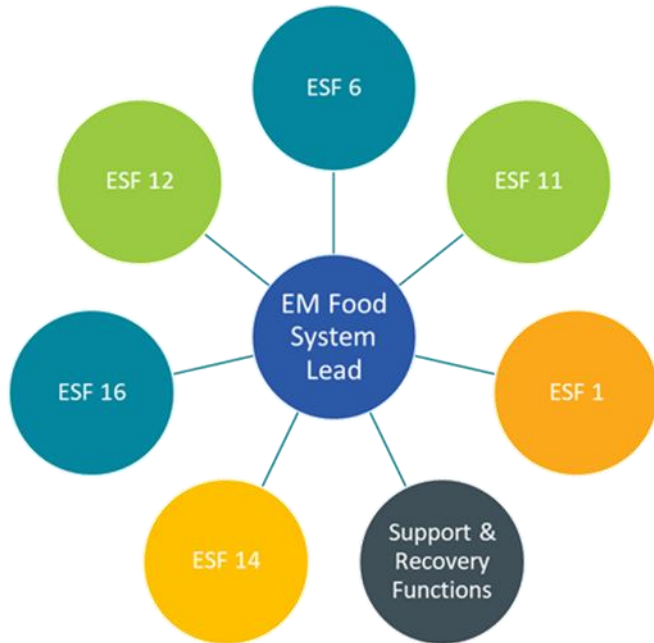
They leverage established, trusted, and community-managed facilities that are used year-round as neighborhood centers for community-building activities.”

Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN)

An aerial photograph of a group of people sitting around a large, dark, circular table in a meeting room. The people are dressed in business attire, including white shirts and blue shirts. The room has a neutral-toned wall and floor. A semi-transparent teal box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing white text.

The road map to disaster feeding preparedness starts with tapping into public market DNA and adding new partnerships with emergency management.

ROAD MAP: Find access point



Emergency Support Function (ESF 6) is how most emergency management agencies organize “mass care feeding and shelter” response

Lead is usually at State and County emergency management. Often in Human Services or Public Health

PREPARE YOUR PUBLIC MARKET FIRST

- Understand your market vulnerabilities and prepare for disasters
- Long-term investments (e.g., new roadways, generators)
- Become a state vendor
- Develop or strengthen network of food markets for disasters (like Feeding America)



THANK YOU!

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