U.S. Government Name:

Mrs. Barnes

Federalism Case Study—Hurricane Katrina

Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005. When the storm made landfall, it was a Category 3 storm, with 100-140 mile an hour winds and stretched nearly 400 miles wide. While the storm itself created a significant amount of damage, its aftermath was catastrophic; primarily due to the lack of response or failure of response by the multiple levels of government (local, state, and federal). This storm, that caused more than $100 billion worth of damages, was significant to opening our eyes to the importance of governmental cooperation and initiated major changes in the way our levels of government respond to natural disasters.

The task for today is to use the governmental response to Hurricane Katrina and create a model for effective government cooperation in the wake of a crisis. The events before, during, and after the hurricane elicited a multitude of responses from the local, state, and federal governments. Particularly in crisis situations, the levels of government must depend on each other. Today we will examine how they can effectively depend on each other while simultaneously working together to devise strategies and achieve the best results.

**Phase I: Watch ABC News Primetime, “Moment of Crisis—Hurricane Katrina,” Episode: System Failure**

As you watch, fill in the diagram. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-pqaTO7ofw>

**Phase II: Tasks/Responsibilities Brainstorm**

In this phase, after having viewed the “Moment of Crisis” episode, work together to decide “who should do what?” Create three lists: (1) the tasks the national/federal government should perform; (2) the tasks the state governments should perform; (3) the tasks the local government should perform.

**Phase III: Logistics**

In this phase, you will now act as a member of a larger team: either local, state, or federal. In this new group, you will discuss the tasks to be performed for your particular group. Create a chart with five headings:

* Prioritized list of tasks (before, during, and after the crisis)
* Responsible agencies and organizations
* Private or non-profit organizations involved or needed
* Resources required
* Anticipated problems and recommendations to fix them

**Phase IV: Presentations and Debrief**

Questions to consider:

1. What tasks must be shared by all three levels of government? How should coordination occur to carry out these tasks (ask: who is in charge? Why?)
2. What tasks should only be carried out by each level?
3. Based on the failures you saw from Hurricane Katrina, what is the most important element for success?

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As you watch, create a running list of problems/failures you see at each level of government.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Local Government** (Mayor, Deputy Mayor) |  |
| **State Government** (Governor) |  |
| **Federal Government** (President, FEMA, Military) |  |

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**Cheat Sheet!**

**Government Agencies Responding to a Natural Disaster**

**Federal Government** (includes the President, White House Staff, Cabinet Secretaries, Congress, Independent Agencies)

National Hurricane Center – Tracks, names and predicts the likely behavior of tropical storms and hurricanes and issues appropriate watches and warnings to the public.

Department of Homeland Security – Manages federal assistance and provides resources to effected areas.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – provides supplies, equipment, financial assistance to victims and Disaster Medical Assistance Teams to areas hit by natural disasters.

U.S. Coast Guard – provides aircraft, patrol boats and cutters to conduct search, rescue and humanitarian aid operations.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Plans, designs, builds and operates dams, levees and other civil engineering projects.

Department of Health and Human Services - deploys U.S. Public Health Service Officers to effected areas on standby for deployment to support medical response.

Department of Transportation - dispatches trucks deliver millions of meals ready to eat, water and supplies, mobile homes, generators, etc. to effected areas; assists in long-term repair/rebuilding of roads and other transportation infrastructures.

Department of Agriculture - coordinates damage assessments to area crops, livestock, and other agriculture-related operations.

Department of Defense - Assists FEMA and National Guard after disaster declarations are issued for assistance in security, clean-up, search and rescue.

Department of Labor – provides disaster unemployment assistance and National Emergency Grants and assists in job recovery programs.

**State Government** (includes the Governor, State Legislatures and Agencies)

National Guard – though a federal entity, may be called by governors to provide search and rescue, assisting local law enforcement, and supplies to victims.

State Department of Health – assists in disease control, and management of public health crisis in effected areas.

**State Government (continued)**

State Emergency Management Agencies – helps to coordinate shelters, supplies, health care, transportation for recovery efforts.

State Department of Education – help displaced school children and teachers integrate back into other schools.

State Police – state law enforcement.

**Local Government** (includes Mayors, Municipal or County Boards or Councils, Agencies)

Local Law Enforcement – police, sheriff departments with primary law enforcement responsibility.

Local Fire Department – first responders to carry out search and rescue operations.

Local Emergency Services – first responders to medical emergencies.

Local Public Transportation (buses, trains, subways) – transportation for possible evacuation.

Social Services – provides assistance to families, individuals in need.

**Private or Non-Profit Organizations**

American Red Cross – provides temporary shelter, supplies, relief workers and support to disaster victims.

The Salvation Army - provides services (food, clothing, etc.) to survivors and first responders in the affected areas.

Sources: ABC News, Youth Leadership Initiative, History Channel, FEMA