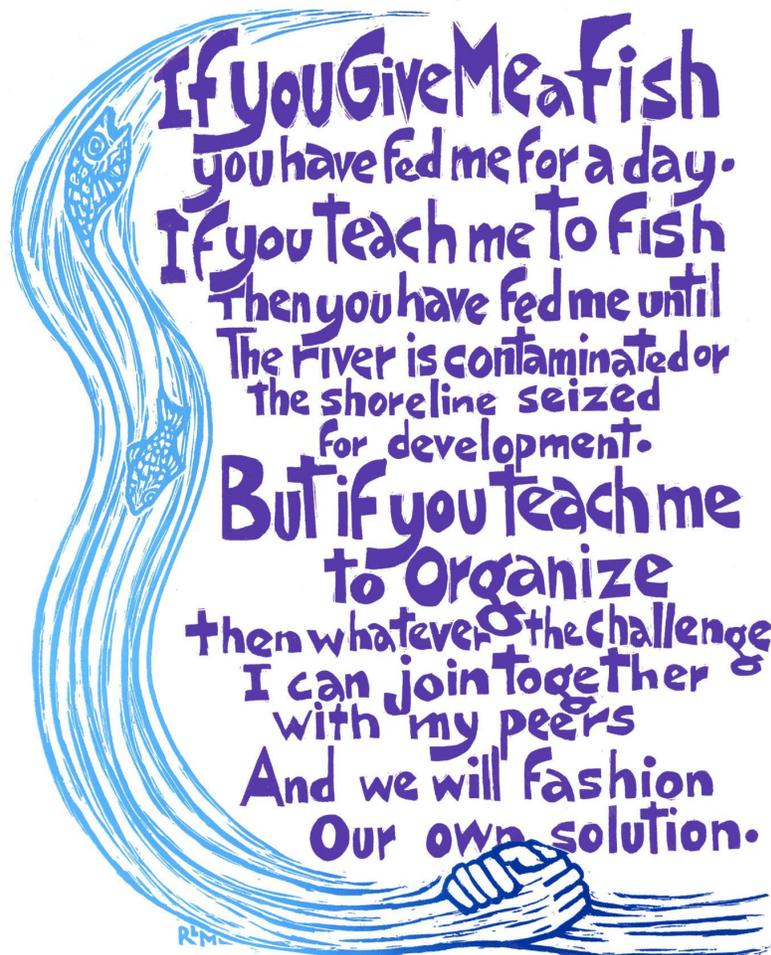


# Emergency Preparedness & Community Self-Reliance ~ Organizer's Guide

This guide was created by Germantown Residents for Economic Alternatives Together. It is a small piece of an initiative *to build a more resilient Germantown community*. Use it to engage in conversations with your neighbors around being prepared for emergencies and major transitions. Use it to develop relationships and new ways of doing things.

**Abundance over Scarcity. Neighbors as Resources for Collective Win, Not Enemies.**



This guide is a living document, last updated on June 5, 2022. Check back for new versions.

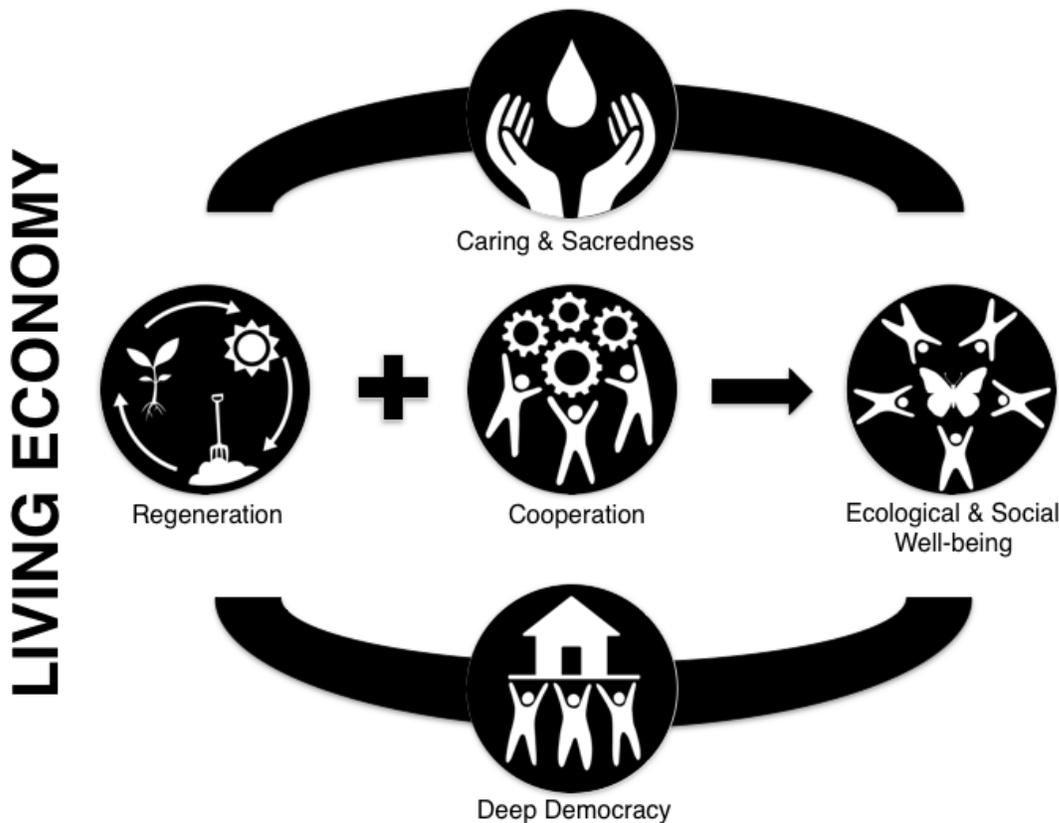
**COMMUNITY ORGANIZING is** where people who live in proximity to each other come together to act in their shared self-interest.

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS is** planning ahead for situations including but not limited to weather-related disasters or economic crises. It is preparing supplies and action plans, and building a network for “weathering the storm,” to save lives and keep people in Germantown.

**COMMUNITY SELF-RELIANCE is** crafting locally-relevant solutions, building new systems and ways of doing things, and, as communities, providing for ourselves. Community self-reliance means that if the systems we usually rely upon fall apart, your community has what it needs.

**GREAT’s approach here is a combination of these terms. We believe this culture shift will build greater community resiliency, so that whatever comes our way, we have the experience and the support network to handle it.**

**Our model applies the principles of the Living Economy to disaster preparedness:**



*Image borrowed from Movement Generation*

## **This guide covers:**

1. Gathering basic information from neighbors - such as contact info and medical needs
2. Developing a communication network
3. Identifying important resources in the neighborhood such as shelter
4. Identifying a Neighborhood Gathering Site and Action Teams
5. What goes into a basic emergency preparation kit
6. Creating a Skills/Knowledge and Supplies/Equipment Inventory - find out what your neighbors offer
7. Nine steps to take immediately following disaster
8. Practical tips for short-term and long-term resiliency
9. Taking things further to build a more deeply resilient community
10. Resources

**Stay connected to us for relevant events, educational opportunities, and more resources: [www.facebook.com/GREATgtown](https://www.facebook.com/GREATgtown)  
[www.greatgtown.org](http://www.greatgtown.org)**

## What kind of emergencies are we talking about here?

Some examples our group has discussed are:

### **Weather / utilities**

Snow or ice storm

Water main break

Power outage

Extreme heat

### **Political / social / economic**

Neighborhood lockdown/police action

Uprising with military/police action

Internet is down or other major communication networks are blocked

Food shortages, supply-chain issues

Strikes affecting major necessities like SEPTA

### **Other**

Fire

What should folks consider?

For each type of situation, basic needs must be accounted for:

- Food and water
- Communications
- Transportation and accessibility
- Health and medical
- Shelter
- Other staple / practical items

Also consider that:

- Some situations require preparation for 2 days, others could be 2 weeks, or more
- Some situations require shelter in place, and others evacuation or safe local shelter

**Gather basic information** in your community and compile it (if neighbors consent) for sharing. Make contact information available in a paper format, so that you don't rely on the internet or electricity. *(This page is adapted from Ready Together by Transition US and NewStories)*

Include:

- Adult names
- Address
- Best phone number
- Best email address
- Pets
- Kids' names
- Any person with specific needs? (such as medical)
- Where is your gas meter located?

**Consider drawing a visual map with this information.**

**Prepare a phone / communication tree.**

Make sure all elderly folks have a "buddy."

**Identify local resources:**

Where are the closest hospitals / medical facilities?

Where's the fire department?

What other local entities / institutions will offer care or support in an emergency? Where are they?

Are there large / community kitchens nearby that will be available?

Where is there local safe shelter?

Where is there an emergency cooling center?

**Identify a Neighborhood Gathering Site** for other neighbors to come in certain emergencies, so folks won't be alone and can be given care.

**As a group, go through procedures, and practice.**

Team 1: Listen to the Emergency Alert System (AM/FM Radio) or NOAA Weather Radio, and keep neighbors informed of what they learn

Team 2: Check on neighbors who are elderly, have disability, or may have children alone

Team 3: Check on gas meters and propane tanks, shut off the gas as necessary

Team 4: Check on homes with a "Help" card in the window. Be prepared to provide First Aid. If it feels unsafe, stay out.

## Let folks know what should go into a Go-Bag / Basic Emergency Supply Kit:

### Basic supplies

- Water- one gallon per person per day, for up to several days (glass or steel recommended over plastic)
- Food- at least a several-day supply of non-perishables
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert
- Flashlight
- First Aid Kit
- Extra batteries
- Pocket knife / scissors
- Whistle (to signal for help)
- Dust mask (to help filter contaminated air)
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape (to shelter in place)
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and ties (for personal sanitation)
- Wrench or pliers (to turn off utilities)
- Manual can opener (for food)
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery

### Additional emergency supplies

- Prescription medications and other medications such as pain relievers
- Eyeglasses or contact lens solution
- Infant formula, diapers, bottles, wipes, and rash cream
- Pet food and extra water
- Cash or traveler's checks
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification, bank account records, saved electronically and/or in a portable waterproof container
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket
- Complete change of clothing and sturdy shoes
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Menstrual products
- Personal hygiene items such as toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo
- Paper cups, plates, napkins, utensils
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles, or other activities for children
- N95 masks
- List of medical devices and supplies and dosages

\*Keep an emergency kit at home, work, and in your car

# Skills / Knowledge / Equipment Inventory

*(Adapted from Ready Together by Transition US and NewStories)*

*Who knows what? Who has what? Who can do what?*

**Write the names of neighbors with these skills/knowledge and equipment/supplies.**

## SKILLS / KNOWLEDGE

## EQUIPMENT / SUPPLIES

First Aid

First Aid Supplies

Child Care

Tents/Spare Bedding

Elder Care

Chainsaw

Search and Rescue

Generator

Crisis Counseling

Fire Extinguisher

Identifying Local Wild Edible Plants

Camp Stove

Growing Food

Walkie-Talkies

Plumber

NOAA Weather Radio

Carpenter

Ladder

Electrician

Crow Bar

Firefighting

Strong Rope

Coordinating and Organizing

Berkey (or other high-quality) water filter

Other:

Rain Barrel

Other:

Solar Panels

## **9 Steps to Take Immediately Following a Disaster**

*(Copied from Ready Together by Transition US and NewStories)*

### **AT HOME:**

1. Take care of your loved ones
2. Dress for safety
3. Check for natural gas or propane at home
4. Shut off water at the house min
5. Place the HELP or OK sign in your window/door
6. Put your fire extinguisher on the sidewalk

### **WITH NEIGHBORS:**

7. Go to the Neighborhood Gathering Site
8. Form Teams at the Neighborhood Gathering Site
  - a. Team 1 will listen to the Emergency Alert System
  - b. Team 2 will check on neighbors who are elderly, disabled, and children
  - c. Team 3 will check on natural gas meters and propane tanks and shut off if necessary
  - d. Team 4 will check on all homes with the “HELP” or no card displayed (Be prepared to give first aid)
9. Return to Neighborhood Gathering Site and report to neighbors

## **Practical tips for short-term and long-term resiliency**

This is not a comprehensive list, but are some of the more important tips we wanted to share:

### **General ways to prepare: FOOD AND WATER**

- Add non-perishable foods to your go-bag
- Stock up your pantry with canned and other non-perishable foods
- Fill up large bottles or containers of water (use old liquor bottles, milk jugs, beer growlers)

#### **(Long-term prep)**

- Grow your own food
- Seek out local and small-scale sources of food
- Get a free-standing water filter like Berkey that can filter rain water to be drinkable
- Use canning, fermentation, dehydration, freezing to preserve larger quantities of food

### **Collective prep: FOOD AND WATER**

- See if neighbors want to...
  - Go in on a chest freezer together
  - Purchase bulk items cooperatively
  - Prep food together

### **General ways to prepare: HEALTH AND MEDICAL**

- Prepare a thorough list of medicines or devices you need for health purposes

- Include quantities, dosages, etc.
- Keep the list updated
- Have a First Aid Kit
- Keep a supply of your medicines in your bug-out bag

### **(Long-term prep)**

- Learn to identify plants that grow in the area which have medicinal purposes

## **Collective prep: HEALTH AND MEDICAL**

- Establish a list of the most medically vulnerable community members, and what their needs are

## **Collective prep: TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESSIBILITY**

- Know who travels where on a regular basis, who drives, who takes public transit... be able to help people get where they need to go if their regular mode of transportation is not an option
- Create community bike repair and share car repair knowledge

## Don't know your neighbors yet?

Host a block party or barbeque.. Or deliver a note about your emergency preparedness initiative.

## If your neighbors want to really invest in collective action, you might try...

- Neighborhood food pantry
- Community garden
- Communal water cistern
- Gather together to preserve excess harvests through canning, freezing, or dehydrating
- Purchase bulk items cooperatively
- Share a large chest freezer
- Community bike and car repair
- Assessing transportation routes, in case some means become inaccessible, perhaps other neighbors can offer a ride that may be on their regular route



**Here are some resources we recommend for digging in deeper:**

<https://cooperationhumboldt.com/resilience-2/>

<https://readytogether.net/>

<https://mutualaid disasterrelief.org/audio-films-and-video/>

<https://huuf.org/building-resilient-communities/> (video series)

<https://dbhids.org/community/public-education-training/healthy-minds-philly/mental-health-first-aid-mhfa/>

<https://emergencyplanguide.org/emergency-communications-for-neighborhood-groups/>

[www.ready.gov/kit](http://www.ready.gov/kit)

<https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/individuals-communities/preparedness-webinars>

Philadelphia Office of Emergency Management

American Red Cross

**If you stay connected with Germantown Residents for Economic Alternatives Together, you'll be looped in as we will be organizing gatherings in Germantown to build more momentum around this initiative.**

[www.facebook.com/GREATgtown.org](http://www.facebook.com/GREATgtown.org)

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