



Disaster Discovery Center Executive Summary

Disaster preparation is a **lifesaving** topic relevant to every man, woman, and child, yet common knowledge is incredibly lacking and/or inaccurate. The sheer volume of preparedness material available coupled with conflicting information makes preparedness a daunting task. Condensing this information into best practices would simplify the process and get more people taking the correct actions to prepare, and thereby create resilient communities. We believe a discovery center could provide easy access to quality information and teach lifesaving skills in a fun way for multigenerational audiences and all demographics. With the potential to reach a wide audience and provide lifesaving education to casual, recreational users as well as interested planners, hands-on practice will allow visitors of all ages to be exposed to the emergency planning process in a way that empowers and motivates action.

If current efforts were working, people would be preparing; but a 2006 American Red Cross survey shows 60% of Americans are wholly unprepared for any disaster (American Red Cross (ARC), 2016) with more recent statistics still not showing improvement. With natural and human-caused disasters increasing, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) supports a whole community approach, recognizing the need to **educate** the general public and get people involved in preparing for disasters. Periodic neighborhood and community preparedness fairs and expos are not enough; attendance is sparse and distributed information lacks any consistency or quality control. A permanent facility for learning about and practicing preparedness, like the DDC, would lessen the gap between what emergency management experts know and our collective level of citizen preparedness.

The creation of a Disaster Discovery Center (DDC) would be instrumental in achieving our vision of "a confident and cooperative community that prepares for and responds positively in a disaster situation." The DDC, as part of the museum field, realizes its social responsibility in meeting the needs of the communities we serve. A 2001 public opinion survey found Americans view museums as one of the most **trustworthy** sources of objective information and one of the most important resources for educating children (American Alliance of Museums (AAM), 2016). At a time when public trust is shifting to social networks and belief in government and large institutions is waning (FEMA, 2012), the neutral environment of a discovery center can endorse and share the best preparedness information.

The Disaster Discovery Center is focused on preparing families, individuals, students, and small businesses for disasters. Our innovative, **interdisciplinary** approach will combine:

1. The best hands-on, multigenerational learning platforms of the **museum industry**.
2. The best practices on how to prepare from the **emergency management** field.
3. The methods that motivate people to prepare from **social science** research, like teaching actionable steps with their benefits and linking what people value to their desire to safeguard it.

While some science centers explore the science of various disasters or history center memorials recount past disasters, no U.S. discovery centers or museums are comprehensively dedicated to teaching disaster **preparedness**. The only site we can find already doing this is in Taiwan, so a site visit was made in June 2014 to the Fire Safety Museum of Taipei City Fire Department, where they teach people what to do for various natural disasters. Simulations include a smoke maze, typhoon, and shake room to practice drop, cover, and hold on. A similar facility, also in Taiwan, the Hsinchu City Fire Museum offers education on fire protection, escape experiences, practice in ways to extinguish fires, and CPR training.

The Disaster Discovery Center will reinforce Utah's goal of leading the way in cutting-edge innovation as it **centralizes** public disaster preparedness in creative ways. The DDC is already collaborating with existing organizations, such as the State's *Be Ready Utah Campaign*, Utah Valley University (UVU) School of Public Services, Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) Homeland Security/Emergency Management Department, Utah National Guard (UTNG), and other private and public agencies. Consistent messaging, including educating the media to share correct actions for disasters and look for stories of how these actions save lives, is paramount to getting the public preparing.

Bringing emergency management professionals and DDC patrons together can provide a unique opportunity for both to **interact** with each another. Experts will have a platform to share their knowledge as they view and research public response, while the public gains direct access to expertise and personal experiences from individuals in the emergency management industry.

The research and concept development behind the Disaster Discovery Center has been ongoing since its organization in 2011. The physical space will be a 30,000-square-foot facility with a 5,000-square-foot Universal-Studio-style backlot. Immersive exhibits, displays, meeting spaces, and related amenities will accommodate the 160,000+ visitors anticipated annually. The full build of the DDC is estimated at \$20 million. The DDC plan is being developed by a diverse group of highly qualified professionals in museum administration, emergency management, education, and design who are dedicated to making this vision a reality.

Anticipated operating expenses are approximately \$2 million annually. The average admission price is estimated around \$8–10 per person for the main facility and \$6 per person for the backlot experience. Additional earned income will be generated through program fees, annual memberships, food services, and gift shop merchandise designed for the preparedness market. Ongoing fundraising will include grants and corporate sponsorships along with public and private donations.

Exhibits and programs are being developed to highlight techniques to **mitigate** the effects of disasters and change the way people live, work, and think about disaster preparedness, making **preparedness a lifestyle to protect what we value**. Experiences at the DDC will support consistent, correct messages providing participants with the knowledge they need to survive and resources to take the next steps.

Through our public outreach workshop, *Rebound in 72™: Your Preparedness Plan for Resiliency*, we have already taught hundreds of participants and will continue to offer free workshops as a **precursor** to the facility. Based on 400 hours of research condensed into 72 minutes of lifesaving information, we discuss immediate responses for different disasters, condition assessment, utility shutoff procedures, 8 basic needs, and tips for a preparedness lifestyle, emphasizing many free and low-cost steps which can be taken. Realizing preparation ensures the well-being of our loved ones brings resilience and peace of mind, helping us better cope with everyday stresses as we anticipate and prepare for a bright future.

The Disaster Discovery Center has an MOU and is in conversation with the Utah National Guard (UTNG) to serve as the public portion of a future state-of-the-art **training campus** for emergency responders. When completed, this will position the DDC to be a viewing portal for patrons to learn more about first responder roles and responsibilities and reinforce the need for everyone to be personally prepared.