



## Steering Committee Meeting Notes

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

December 20, 2022

**Present:** Doug Babcock, Michele Bailey, Sally Blanchard-O'Brien, Taiga Christie, Carrie Cleveland, Eileen Corcoran, Amy Cunningham, Jamie Duggan, Brinker Ferguson, Carolyn Frisa, Tom McMurdo, Rachel Onuf, Ben Rose, Joseph Watson.

### Top 10 Priorities Discussion

The top ten priorities were established in September 2019 at the VACDaRN launch. We felt that many of the priorities were still relevant, that we have done some good work towards some of them, and that we could choose a couple to focus on in the next 1-3 years. It's also important to see where these priorities intersect and where we could put them together to be more effective. We discussed each of the priorities in turn:

- 1) Offer hands-on "real world" training in responding to emergency scenarios.

This has been done. Two collections salvage workshops were done in 2022, and the Crisis and Mitigation training will be done in spring of 2023. Some things to consider: should offerings be expanded? If so, what other trainings? Or, should the same offerings be offered annually? Do we want to look into trainings that come with certifications?

- 2) Provide a list of required and desired trainings and how to get them.

We're not sure exactly what this means. What trainings would be required? We don't want to say that members have to take a training to be involved with VACDaRN. We could, however, list more specific trainings on the website, beyond the existing listed resources.

- 3) Provide a virtual space in which organizations can share plans, policies, and procedures and where resources can be promoted.

This priority is more about the interaction between members and ties in with priority 9. The VACDaRN website already shares many resources. The Alliance for Response (AFR) community chat platform that

we signed up for could serve this purpose, but we haven't been using it. It would be an opportunity for that kind of interaction, but it can be challenging to get people to go to a specific site in order to engage. We also have not formally reached out to organizations to share plans or policies.

- 4) Create an emergency management primer/glossary and tips for connecting with local emergency management directors and regional planning commissions.

This has not been worked on at all, and while it would be nice to do one day, it doesn't hit the high priority and highly doable boxes at the same time; we might need more resources to do it well from scratch. Or, we can look to see if there's already something that exists that could be adjusted to be Vermont-specific. As with priority 3, the hard part is making sure it's used, and that people are actually connecting with their local emergency management. Some sort of funding could be useful for the promotional aspect.

- 5) Share information about grants, loans, and fundraising ideas.

We do currently send out information about this (and other relevant topics) in email blasts. The next step in VACDaRN's maturity may be going for grants ourselves, not just telling people about available opportunities. This may mean we need to acquire non-profit status to allow VACDaRN to be a fiscal agent. The next AFR Advisory Committee meeting (1/26/23 at noon) will be discussing the pros and cons of having nonprofit status. Rachel will attend, Tom will try to; other steering committee members are welcome to participate. Please let Rachel know and she will send you registration information.

- 6) Promote the use of risk assessment checklists and processes (like THIRA: Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment).

We've already done this through the resources shared on the website. But as discussed with other priorities, we have to get people to use them.

- 7) Identify partner organizations for mutual benefit and support.

We are already doing this, as the steering committee represents many statewide and other important organizations invested in doing this work. We've also connected with folks in New Hampshire who are launching their own network. We can continue to think about other organizations that would be good to connect with, and we could also more proactively connect with regional emergency management committees and regional planning commissions.

- ~~8) Facilitate peer-to-peer mentorship.~~

We are already connecting peer-to-peer, but we do not have formal mentorships. We want to scratch this one because it's already implied in other priorities that talk about connecting and sharing.

- 9) Sharing/saving community wisdom: tell our stories and offer opportunities for others to tell their stories of disasters.

We feel this priority is important to continue and is ripe for artistic expression and interpretation. There could be a great opportunity for VACDaRN to meet in person again and share stories and notes about the pandemic (an "after action review" in EM-speak).

- 10) Identify regional point people for the network.

The steering committee consists of the point people. Are there other people who should be invited, particularly performing and visual artists who are underrepresented? The Creative Network has a regional structure with six zone agents responsible for networking and collaborating. Is this a structure that would work for VACDaRN? The zone agents have a monthly virtual meeting and it might be good to present to them about VACDaRN at the March or April meeting.

We decided that a good replacement for priority 8 might be **using creativity to support emergency planning**. We need to be more engaging with our trainings and the promotion of resources to get people to use them, and artists have a unique way of articulating the relevance of topics. How can we bring the creativity of that sector to the service of emergency management?

### **Strategic Planning Logistics**

The Vermont Arts Council has money that can be used for a facilitator for our strategic planning meeting. We will aim to meet in-person in the **Vermont Historical Society** conference room on a **Tuesday or Thursday in March**, around **10-2** with a lunch break and VHS tour afterward. A poll will be sent out to solidify the date.

Rachel will make updates to the priorities list and will pass it to the facilitator. This will be the jumping-off point for our strategic planning discussion.

### **Updates**

*Rachel & Sally:* The Vermont Historical Records Program received its NHPRC funding for next year, and it includes money for a strategic planning retreat to prioritize potential statewide historical records projects. Some of VACDaRN's work may intersect. The grant also funds a chest freezer, to be stored at the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration, to hold wet records when organizations have disasters.

*Ben:* \$529 million has been identified as refundable COVID needs in Vermont.

*Carrie:* CERF+ has its new executive director in place. Carrie will be traveling to Louisiana to run a Crisis and Mitigation Training in March. We agreed that having the VT CAM training in April makes sense.

*Tom:* The Vermont Department of Libraries will be launching a subscription to two new free platforms (one for legal forms, one with tutorials about all kinds of subjects) that could be helpful in some of our work.