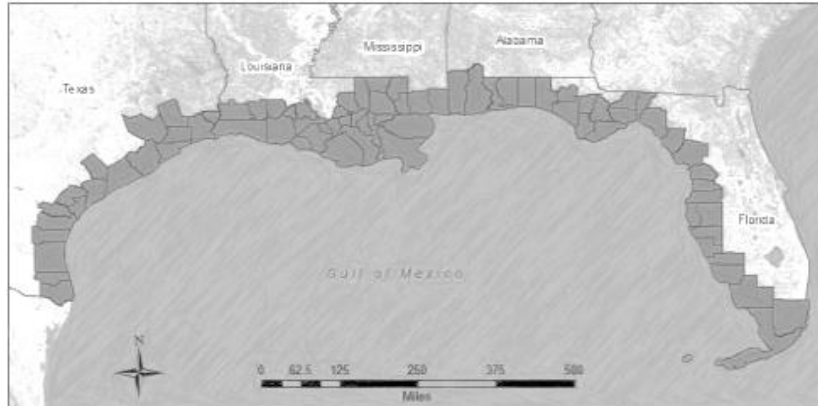


---

# THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN DISASTER RESILIENCY



FINDINGS FROM SURVEYS OF GULF COAST MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS  
AND COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTORS

---

## *Summer Internship Training*

---

### **PROJECT LEAD:**

Dr. Ashley Ross  
Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi

### **SUPPORT AND FUNDING PROVIDED BY:**

The Department of Homeland Security  
Analysis and Response for Coastal Hazards  
at Jackson State University

Disasters, Coastal Infrastructure, and Emergency Management  
at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi

---

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

|                                  |       |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| Research Description .....       | Tab 1 |
| Contacts .....                   | Tab 2 |
| Teamwork & Meeting Agendas ..... | Tab 3 |
| Scheduling & Phone Script .....  | Tab 4 |
| Interview Best Practices .....   | Tab 5 |
| Survey Questionnaire .....       | Tab 6 |
| Codebook .....                   | Tab 7 |
| Accounting Paperwork .....       | Tab 8 |

---

# RESEARCH PROJECT DESCRIPTION

---

This research project endeavors to expand our understanding of disaster resilience by focusing on local level. Using an original survey, this project explores the perceptions held by local government officials – municipal and county–across the Gulf Coast. This project has the goal of identifying commonalities among Gulf Coast localities in an effort to enhance our collective knowledge on disaster resiliency and offer practical ways to build coastal resilience from the bottom-up.

Your role in this project is to administer Wave 2 of the project survey to county emergency management directors. These officials have considerable knowledge of their county’s capacity for resilience; their role also imbues them with an understanding of the county as collective – which areas are most vulnerable and which are more resilient, for example. County emergency managers are responsible for coordinating disaster response among multiple agencies both public and private, and these individuals highly influence their county’s disaster resilience.

## **What is resilience?**

Generally understood as “bouncing back,” resilience refers to the ability to resist, absorb, or adapt to disruption or shock. The term originated in the field of physics to define a quality of a material or system that returns to equilibrium after stress rather than breaks. Today it has been adopted by a variety of disciplines to describe the adaptive capacities of entire societies, communities within these societies, and individuals.

In academic and policy circles, the application of resilience to disasters emerged in the last decade. Mileti’s *Disasters by Design* (1999) introduced resilience as sustainable hazard mitigation, implying that resilience is defined by a locality’s ability to tolerate and overcome damages and losses without significant outside assistance. Among US federal agencies, disaster resilience was first recognized as priority issue in *The Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction’s (SDR) 2005 Grand Challenges Report*. Numerous government agencies, including The Department of Homeland Security, The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and The Gulf of Mexico Alliance, have adopted resilience as a guiding principle with the understanding that:

---

“The policy goal is clear and pragmatic – if communities can increase their resilience then they are in a much better position to withstand adversity and to recover more quickly than would be the case if there were few or no investments in building resilience.” (Cutter, et al. 2010. “Disaster Resilience Indicators for Benchmarking Baseline Conditions.” *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management*, Volume 7, Article 51.)

---

Since the introduction of resilience, a myriad of definitions have developed. While the nuances of these definitions vary, there is a common underlying component:

---

“The notion of *adaptive capacity* – the idea that it is not simply possible or even desirable to return to a former condition; that entities (people, organizations, communities) should strive to learn from and creatively respond to disasters and disruptive events and trends; and that they should evolve and move from a crisis or disaster to a new and perhaps improved (but undoubtedly different) set of circumstances – is often a key feature in definitions of resilience.” (Beatley. 2009. *Planning for Coastal Resilience: Best Practices for Calamitous Times*. Island Press.)

---

Adaptive capacities largely refer to the social and economic characteristics of a community as well as its natural and built environments. Generally-speaking, resilient communities are those that have a well-connected, trusting, and participatory society. They also have a robust and diversified economy. Their natural environment is protected and incorporated into development in ways that buffer hazard impacts rather than make the community more vulnerable to disasters. Their built environment involves infrastructure that can withstand storm impacts and will not make the community more susceptible to damage and losses if a disaster hits.

A community, however, is not simply resilient if it exhibits adaptive capacities. The willingness and capability to transform these capacities into creative responses to disasters through learning and cooperative efforts is a critical part of resilience as well.

---

“Neither a capacity to adapt nor a capacity for post-disaster growth and development will happen by chance. Achieving these outcomes requires a conscious effort on the part of people, communities and societal institutions to develop and maintain the resources and processes required to ensure this can happen and that it can be maintained over time.” (Paton and Johnston. 2006. *Disaster Resilience: An Integrated Approach*. Charles C. Thomas Publisher.)

---

### **For More Information**

Visit the project’s blog: <http://localgovt.wordpress.com>

---

# CONTACT INFORMATION

---

## Partner's Contact Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## Faculty Emergency Contacts

Dr. Ashley Ross, Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi

Phone Number: (361) 947-8100 or (361) 825-2696

Email: ashley.ross@tamucc.edu

Dr. Sam Brody, Texas A&M University at Galveston

Phone Number:

Email:

Dr. Rachel Dowty, Louisiana State University

Phone Number: (225) 578-2685

Email: rdowty1@lsu.edu

Dr. Jim Garand, Louisiana State University

Phone Number: (225) – 578-2548

Email: pogara@lsu.edu

Dr. Meherun Laiju, Tougaloo College

Phone Number: 601-977-7888

Email: mlaiju@tougaloo.edu

Dr. Ann-Margaret Esnard, Florida Atlantic University

Phone Number: (954)762-5646

Email: aesnard@fau.edu

---

# 10 WAYS TO BE AN EFFECTIVE TEAM

---

**GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER** The atmosphere should be comfortable and relaxed, so that you can work with your teammate without any tension. You should trust and respect your teammates' actions and ideas.

**KNOW YOUR TEAM'S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES** The group should be aware of what skills each member has in order to best divide tasks. Identify group resources and use them.

**ESTABLISH EXPECTATIONS** Team members should be respectful of each other by arriving on time, coming to meetings prepared, completing tasks, etc. Each member should be responsible for their actions.

**DISCUSS GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES** Make sure team members have a clear understanding of the role they will play during interviews.

**SHARE LEADERSHIP** Each member of the team is a leader in their own right. Leadership roles should shift from time to time in order to utilize every member's talents. The roles should be balanced and shared to help accomplish goals and build confidence within the team.

**OUTLINE WORK PROCESS** Before beginning a project or interview it is important to strategize as a group. Each team member should have a role and be familiar with what is expected for that role. After deciding on roles, it is important to practice the roles through interview simulations.

**STAY ON TASK** It is important for the team to stay focused on getting all goals accomplished in a timely manner. Team members should motivate each other to do well and to focus on their work.

**FREQUENTLY DEBRIEF** The team should regularly hold self evaluations. Discuss what works for the group and how the group can improve. Be specific, honest and constructive. Take time to talk through any issues the team is having and ways to solve those issues.

**IDENTIFY AND SOLVE PROBLEMS** If problems arise, they should be discussed openly within the group along with possible solutions. Team members should work effectively together by listening to one another, respecting all ideas and opinions, and compromising when necessary.

**HAVE A GOOD ATTITUDE** Working together as a team can be very effective and rewarding if all members have a mutual respect for one another, communicate well, are polite and stay positive.

**SOURCES:**

<http://www.stanford.edu/class/e140/e140a/effective.html>

[http://www.drexel.edu/oca/l/tipsheets/Effective\\_Team.pdf](http://www.drexel.edu/oca/l/tipsheets/Effective_Team.pdf)



---

# MEETING AGENDA

---

## Meeting 1

- Get to know one another if you don't already.
  - Exchange contact information.
  - Tell each other a little about yourselves.
- Discuss your internship dates, and note:
  - any conflicts each of you may have with the schedule (mark out those dates/times so that interviews are not scheduled then),
  - any personal preferences (i.e. work between 9-5pm in general),
  - and any other limitations on scheduling.
- Decide how to organize scheduling interviews; discuss:
  - the schedule you have just agreed upon and how to best fit interviews into that time frame,
  - dividing up the counties between group members BUT keep in mind that you may have conflicting schedules,
  - and consider assigning scheduling to one person so that there are not scheduling conflicts.
- Discuss travel to/from interviews; think about:
  - traveling together to save gas and allow for discussion/meeting in the car,
  - who will drive,
  - how to split the costs of gas/hotel,
  - and general guidelines for allowing plenty of time for traveling.
- Review the survey questionnaire together. Plan for:
  - practice reading the survey aloud so that you are familiar with it and that the interviews are as conversational as possible
  - and dividing up the questions (if you would like) during the interview.
- Decide how to approach coding the interview. Your team has two options:
  1. Code the survey responses together.
  2. Divide the coding and have your partner check your work.
- Discuss backing up your files as you work. Possibilities include:
  - email yourself and team member the file
  - or copy to USB/other external device.
- Decide who will be the official team contact with Dr. Ross; this individual should send completed data files via email ([ashley.ross@tamucc.edu](mailto:ashley.ross@tamucc.edu)).
  - Everyone is welcome to email Dr. Ross at anytime with any issue. Just make sure only one team member sends the final data.

- Schedule a follow-up meeting and/or timeline for contacting one another.

***After your first meeting it is up to your team if you would prefer to meet and discuss team tasks and issues or contact one another through email, phone, and/or text. Make sure everyone is on the same page with the interview schedule and how the team responsibilities are divided.***

### **Final Meeting**

- Discuss any issues you had during the internship, including those related to:
  - team work,
  - scheduling,
  - the survey instrument,
  - coding responses,
  - and feedback from county emergency management directors.
- Together write a short (2-3 page) summary of your team's internship experiences. Make sure to address the following:
  - How did the team work together?
  - Were there any major obstacles? Did this prevent your team from being successful?
  - How did the interviews go? Were there any problems with the survey?
  - How did coding the responses go? Were there any major issues here?
  - What have you gained from this experience?
  - What would you suggest to improve similar internships in the future?

---

# SCHEDULING FORM: TAMUCC

---

County: **Aransas**

Disaster Management Coordinator: Rick McLester

Phone Number: 361-790-0100

Address: 301 N. Live Oak St

Rockport, TX 78382

County: **Calhoun**

Disaster Management Coordinator: Ladonna Thigpen

Phone Number: 361-553-4400

Address: 221 S. Ann Street Suite 301

Port Lavaca, TX 77979

County: **Refugio**

Disaster Management Coordinator: Stan Upton

Phone Number: 361-526-2820

Address: 808 Commerce, Room 104

Refugio, TX 78377

County: **San Patricio**

Disaster Management Coordinator: William Zagorski

Phone Number: 361-364-9650

Address: 300 North Rachal

Sinton, TX 78387

---

# SCHEDULING FORM: TAMU G

---

County: **Brazoria**

Disaster Management Coordinator: Steve Rosa

Phone Number: 979-864-1801

Address: 111 E. Locust, Suite 102

Angleton, TX 77515

County: **Chambers**

Disaster Management Coordinator: Ryan Holzaepfel

Phone Number: 409-267-2445

Address: P.O. Box 957

Anahuac, TX 77514

County: **Galveston**

Disaster Management Coordinator: John Simsen

Phone Number: 281-309-5002

Address: 1353 FM 646 West, Suite 201

Dickinson, TX 77539

County: **Matagorda**

Disaster Management Coordinator: Doug Matthes

Phone Number: 979-232-0707

Address: 2200 7<sup>th</sup> Street, First Floor Room 2

Bay City, TX 77414

---

# SCHEDULING FORM: LSU 1

---

Parish: **Ascension**

Emergency Management Coordinator: Rick Webre

Phone Number: (225) 621-8360

Address: 828 S. Irma Blvd. Building 3

Gonzales, LA 70737

Parish: **Calcasieu**

Emergency Management Coordinator: Dick Gremillion

Phone Number: (337) 721-3800

Address: P.O. Drawer 3287

Lake Charles, LA 70602

Parish: **Lafourche**

Emergency Management Coordinator: Chris Boudreaux

Phone Number: (985) 532-8174

Address: 4876 Hwy 1

Mathews, LA 70375

Parish: **Livingston**

Emergency Management Coordinator: Mark Benton

Phone Number: (225) 686-3066

Address: P. O. Box 1060

Livingston, LA 70754-1060

Parish: **Terrebonne**

Emergency Management Coordinator: Earl Eues

Phone Number: (985) 873-6357

Address: 112 Capital Blvd

Houma, LA 70360

---

# SCHEDULING FORM: LSU 2

---

Parish: **Plaquemines**

Emergency Management Coordinator: Guy Laigast

Phone Number: (504) 274-2476

Address: 8056 Hwy 23, Suite 308

Belle Chasse, LA 70037

Parish: **St. Charles**

Emergency Management Coordinator: Scott Whelchel

Phone Number: (985) 783-5050

Address: 15045 River Road

Hahnville, LA 70057

Parish: **St. James**

Emergency Management Coordinator: Eric Deroche

Phone Number: (225) 562-2364

Address: P. O. Box 106

Convent, LA 70723

Parish: **St. John the Baptist**

Emergency Management Coordinator: Kathryn Gilmore

Phone Number: (985) 652-2222

Address: 1801 W. Airline Hwy.

LaPlace, LA 70068

Parish: **St. Tammany**

Emergency Management Coordinator: Dexter Accardo

Phone Number: (985) 898-2359

Address: 510 East Boston Street

Covington, LA



---

# SCHEDULING FORM: TOUGALOO

---

County: **Hancock**

Disaster Management Coordinator: Brian Adam

Phone Number: 228-466-8320

Address: 6069 Cuevas Town Rd

Kiln, MS 39556

County: **Harrison**

Disaster Management Coordinator: Rupert Lacy

Phone Number: 228-865-4002

Address: 1801 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

Gulfport, MS 39501

County: **Jackson**

Disaster Management Coordinator: Donald Langham

Phone Number: 228-769-3108

Address: 600 Convent Street

Pascagoula, MS 39567

County: **Pearl River**

Disaster Management Coordinator: Danny Manley

Phone Number: 601-795-3058

Address: 200 South Main St

Poplarville, MS 39470

---

# SCHEDULING FORM: FL ATLANTIC

---

County: **Charlotte**

Emergency Management Coordinator: Wayne P. Sallade

Phone Number: 941-833-4000

Address: 26571 Airport Road

Punta Gorda, FL 33982

County: **Collier**

Emergency Management Coordinator: Dan Summers

Phone Number: 239-525-3600

Address: 8075 Lely Cultural Parkway

Naples, FL 34113

County: **Lee**

Emergency Management Coordinator: David Saniter

Phone Number: 239-533-3622

Address: PO Box 398

Ft. Myers, FL 33902

County: **Monroe**

Emergency Management Coordinator: Irene Toner

Phone Number: 305-289-6065

Address: 490 63<sup>rd</sup> Street

Marathon, FL 33050

|             | Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|-------------|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| <b>May</b>  |        |        | 1       | 2         | 3        | 4      | 5        |
|             | 6      | 7      | 8       | 9         | 10       | 11     | 12       |
|             | 13     | 14     | 15      | 16        | 17       | 18     | 19       |
|             | 20     | 21     | 22      | 23        | 24       | 25     | 26       |
|             | 27     | 28     | 29      | 30        | 31       | 1      | 2        |
| <b>June</b> | 3      | 4      | 5       | 6         | 7        | 8      | 9        |
|             | 10     | 11     | 12      | 13        | 14       | 15     | 16       |
|             | 17     | 18     | 19      | 20        | 21       | 22     | 23       |
|             | 24     | 25     | 26      | 27        | 28       | 29     | 30       |

---

# INTERVIEW BEST PRACTICES

---

## **Before the Interview**

- Confirm the appointment by email one or two days before it is scheduled.
- Know the address of the place where you are meeting for the interview, and have direction mapped out if necessary.
- Know how to pronounce the interviewee's name.
- Familiarize yourself with the survey so that the interview goes smoothly.

## **The Day of the Interview**

- Dress nicely – business casual is appropriate.
- Plan your travel so that you arrive to the city about 30 minutes earlier than the appointment and to the interviewee's office 10 minutes early.
- Have all interview materials ready and on-hand, including:
  - survey questionnaire,
  - business cards,
  - and exit letter.

## **During the Interview**

- Address the interviewee formally (Dr., Mr., or Mrs.), changing to a more informal title (first name) only if insisted upon by the interviewee.
- Speak clearly.
- Stick to the survey questionnaire but allow the interviewee to fully express him/herself in answering.
- Be patient and respectful of both the interviewee and your team member.

## **After the Interview**

- Write down any pertinent interview notes that will guide you in coding the responses or that you think you should share with Dr. Ross.
- Send an email no later than three days after your interview to the interviewee on behalf of your team thanking them for their time and insight.
- Reflect on the interview; discuss with your team member what went well and how you can make the next interview go better.

County:

Interviewee Name:

Position:

---

1. This research project is focused on the issue of community resilience. What does the term *community resilience* mean to you? [Write in answer.]
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Resilience in the context of disasters is often thought of as the ability of a community to “bounce back” from disasters. If your county experienced a severe disaster this year, how easy would you say it would be to bounce back from the damages incurred?
  - very easy
  - somewhat easy
  - average – not difficult or easy
  - somewhat difficult
  - very difficult
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Let’s talk about the disasters your county has experienced. Think about the worst disaster your county *has ever experienced*...
  - a.) What was this disaster? [Write in answer.]
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b.) How would you rate the severity of this disaster in terms of physical, economic, and psychological damages? Would you say it was...
    - very severe or unprecedented
    - somewhat severe
    - severe
    - not very severe

c.) How easy was it for your county to “bounce back” from this disaster?

very easy

somewhat easy

average – not difficult or easy

somewhat difficult

very difficult

4. Now think about the worst disaster your county experienced in the *past ten years*...

a.) What was this disaster? [Write in answer.]

*If the same disaster is cited as in 3a, skip to question 6.*

b.) How would you rate the severity of this disaster in terms of physical, economic, and psychological damages? Would you say it was...

very severe or unprecedented

somewhat severe

severe

not very severe

c.) How easy was it for your county to “bounce back” from this disaster?

very easy

somewhat easy

average – not difficult or easy

somewhat difficult

very difficult

5. What has changed between these two disaster events – *the worst disaster ever and the worst in the past ten years* – that you would say influenced the resilience of your county? [Write in answer.]

6. Now let's talk about disaster response and recovery. What would you say is the *primary role* of emergency managers when dealing with disasters? [Write in answer.]

7. How routinely would you say you do the following...

|  | Very often<br>(almost daily) | Often<br>(weekly) | Sometimes<br>(monthly or quarterly) | Once in a while<br>(yearly) | Almost never |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| a.) Grant writing, paperwork, and record keeping.  |                              |                   |                                     |                             |              |
| b.) Design standard operating procedures and other guidelines for various disaster scenarios.                                      |                              |                   |                                     |                             |              |
| c.) Develop communication with citizens, first responders, public and private entities.  |                              |                   |                                     |                             |              |
| d.) Work on collaboration with public and private partners.  |                              |                   |                                     |                             |              |
| e.) Examine county vulnerabilities to assess risk.   |                              |                   |                                     |                             |              |
| f.) Generate public awareness for disaster preparedness.   |                              |                   |                                     |                             |              |
| g.) Work on zoning ordinances and other policies that steer development away from areas at high risk for flooding and wind damage. |                              |                   |                                     |                             |              |
| h.) Engage the public or community organizations in disaster planning.   |                              |                   |                                     |                             |              |

8. Overall, how would you rate the disaster responses capabilities of the municipalities within your county? By capabilities we mean financial resources, training and expertise of first responders, and available technology, to name a few.

a.) Would you say the capabilities of your county’s municipalities are...

- Excellent
- Good
- Adequate
- Need improvement

b.) How would you characterize the differences in capabilities among municipalities? Would you say that there are...

- Large differences
- Some differences but not big
- Very little differences

c.) To what degree would you say municipal capability affects your county’s overall resilience to disasters?

- A lot
- Some
- A little

9. A large part of emergency management is coordination between public entities. To give us a better idea of the coordination efforts you undertake, please tell us approximately how many...

|   | [Write in answer.] |
|---|--------------------|
| a.) Municipalities are within your county |                    |
| b.) Independent law agencies              |                    |
| c.) EMS service districts                 |                    |
| d.) Fire departments                      |                    |
| e.) Public utility providers              |                    |



10. Still thinking of coordination, do you have mutual aid agreements with neighboring counties?

Yes

No

11. Now thinking of planning...

a.) Does your county have a formalized disaster plan?

Yes

No

b.) How many municipalities in your county have adopted it (or do they all have their own plans)? [Write in answer.]

c.) In general, would you say that the plan is followed?

Yes

No

12. Communication is a key component of disaster management. How often would you say that you communicate with the following...

|   | Almost daily | Weekly | Monthly | Quarterly | Yearly | Rarely |
|---|--------------|--------|---------|-----------|--------|--------|
| a.) Average citizens and citizen groups                                   |              |        |         |           |        |        |
| b.) Private partners, for example grocery stores and other key industries |              |        |         |           |        |        |
| c.) Non-profit partners, for example faith-based or volunteer groups      |              |        |         |           |        |        |
| d.) Municipal elected officials, for example mayors and council members   |              |        |         |           |        |        |
| e.) County elected officials, for example county commissioners            |              |        |         |           |        |        |
| f.) Neighboring county emergency management directors                     |              |        |         |           |        |        |
| g.) State emergency management officials                                  |              |        |         |           |        |        |
| h.) Federal emergency management officials                                |              |        |         |           |        |        |

13. Based on past disaster response experiences, how would you rate coordination and collaboration with the following...

|   | Poor | Adequate | Good | Excellent | No experience |
|---|------|----------|------|-----------|---------------|
| a.) Average citizens and citizen groups                                   |      |          |      |           |               |
| b.) Private partners, for example grocery stores and other key industries |      |          |      |           |               |
| c.) Non-profit partners, for example faith-based or volunteer groups      |      |          |      |           |               |
| d.) Municipal elected officials, for example mayors and council members   |      |          |      |           |               |
| e.) County elected officials, for example county commissioners            |      |          |      |           |               |
| f.) Neighboring county emergency management directors                     |      |          |      |           |               |
| g.) State emergency management officials                                  |      |          |      |           |               |
| h.) Federal emergency management officials                                |      |          |      |           |               |

14. In these final questions, we would like to ask a few questions about your position and professional background.

a.) Is your position appointed?

Yes

No

b.) Is emergency management your full-time job or are you responsible for other county tasks or work another job?

Full-time

Part-time

15. How many years of experience do you have in the field of emergency management?

[Write in answer.]

16. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Some high school

Completed high school

Some college

Completed technical or vocational school

Completed college

Some graduate school

Completed graduate school

17. Approximately how many individuals work in your Emergency Management office?

[Write in answer.]

18. [*Do not read.* Note the gender of the respondent.]

Male

Female

Parish:

Interviewee Name:

Position:

---

1. This research project is focused on the issue of community resilience. What does the term *community resilience* mean to you? [Write in answer.]
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Resilience in the context of disasters is often thought of as the ability of a community to “bounce back” from disasters. If your parish experienced a severe disaster this year, how easy would you say it would be to bounce back from the damages incurred?
  - very easy
  - somewhat easy
  - average – not difficult or easy
  - somewhat difficult
  - very difficult
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Let’s talk about the disasters your parish has experienced. Think about the worst disaster your parish *has ever experienced*...
  - a.) What was this disaster? [Write in answer.]
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b.) How would you rate the severity of this disaster in terms of physical, economic, and psychological damages? Would you say it was...
    - very severe or unprecedented
    - somewhat severe
    - severe
    - not very severe

c.) How easy was it for your parish to “bounce back” from this disaster?

- very easy
- somewhat easy
- average – not difficult or easy
- somewhat difficult
- very difficult

4. Now think about the worst disaster your parish experienced in the *past ten years*...

d.) What was this disaster? [Write in answer.]

*If the same disaster is cited as in 3a, skip to question 6.*

e.) How would you rate the severity of this disaster in terms of physical, economic, and psychological damages? Would you say it was...

- very severe or unprecedented
- somewhat severe
- severe
- not very severe

f.) How easy was it for your parish to “bounce back” from this disaster?

- very easy
- somewhat easy
- average – not difficult or easy
- somewhat difficult
- very difficult

5. What has changed between these two disaster events – *the worst disaster ever and the worst in the past ten years* – that you would say influenced the resilience of your parish? [Write in answer.]

6. Now let's talk about disaster response and recovery. What would you say is the *primary role* of emergency managers when dealing with disasters? [Write in answer.]

7. How routinely would you say you do the following...

|  | Very often<br>(almost daily) | Often<br>(weekly) | Sometimes<br>(monthly or quarterly) | Once in a while<br>(yearly) | Almost never |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| a.) Grant writing, paperwork, and record keeping.  |                              |                   |                                     |                             |              |
| b.) Design standard operating procedures and other guidelines for various disaster scenarios.                                      |                              |                   |                                     |                             |              |
| c.) Develop communication with citizens, first responders, public and private entities.  |                              |                   |                                     |                             |              |
| d.) Work on collaboration with public and private partners.  |                              |                   |                                     |                             |              |
| e.) Examine parish vulnerabilities to assess risk.   |                              |                   |                                     |                             |              |
| f.) Generate public awareness for disaster preparedness.   |                              |                   |                                     |                             |              |
| g.) Work on zoning ordinances and other policies that steer development away from areas at high risk for flooding and wind damage. |                              |                   |                                     |                             |              |
| h.) Engage the public or community organizations in disaster planning.   |                              |                   |                                     |                             |              |

8. Overall, how would you rate the disaster responses capabilities of the municipalities within your parish? By capabilities we mean financial resources, training and expertise of first responders, and available technology, to name a few.

a.) Would you say the capabilities of your parish’s municipalities are...

- Excellent
- Good
- Adequate
- Need improvement

b.) How would you characterize the differences in capabilities among municipalities? Would you say that there are...

- Large differences
- Some differences but not big
- Very little differences

c.) To what degree would you say municipal capability affects your parish’s overall resilience to disasters?

- A lot
- Some
- A little

9. A large part of emergency management is coordination between public entities. To give us a better idea of the coordination efforts you undertake, please tell us approximately how many...

|   | [Write in answer.] |
|---|--------------------|
| a.) Municipalities are within your parish |                    |
| b.) Independent law agencies              |                    |
| c.) EMS service districts                 |                    |
| d.) Fire departments                      |                    |
| e.) Public utility providers              |                    |



10. Still thinking of coordination, do you have mutual aid agreements with neighboring parishes?

Yes

No

11. Now thinking of planning...

a.) Does your parish have a formalized disaster plan?

Yes

No

b.) How many municipalities in your parish have adopted it (or do they all have their own plans)? [Write in answer.]

c.) In general, would you say that the plan is followed?

Yes

No

12. Communication is a key component of disaster management. How often would you say that you communicate with the following...

|   | Almost daily | Weekly | Monthly | Quarterly | Yearly | Rarely |
|---|--------------|--------|---------|-----------|--------|--------|
| a.) Average citizens and citizen groups                                   |              |        |         |           |        |        |
| b.) Private partners, for example grocery stores and other key industries |              |        |         |           |        |        |
| c.) Non-profit partners, for example faith-based or volunteer groups      |              |        |         |           |        |        |
| d.) Municipal elected officials, for example mayors and council members   |              |        |         |           |        |        |
| e.) Parish elected officials, for example parish commissioners            |              |        |         |           |        |        |
| f.) Neighboring parish emergency management directors                     |              |        |         |           |        |        |
| g.) State emergency management officials                                  |              |        |         |           |        |        |
| h.) Federal emergency management officials                                |              |        |         |           |        |        |

13. Based on past disaster response experiences, how would you rate coordination and collaboration with the following...

|   | Poor | Adequate | Good | Excellent | No experience |
|---|------|----------|------|-----------|---------------|
| a.) Average citizens and citizen groups                                   |      |          |      |           |               |
| b.) Private partners, for example grocery stores and other key industries |      |          |      |           |               |
| c.) Non-profit partners, for example faith-based or volunteer groups      |      |          |      |           |               |
| d.) Municipal elected officials, for example mayors and council members   |      |          |      |           |               |
| e.) Parish elected officials, for example parish commissioners            |      |          |      |           |               |
| f.) Neighboring parish emergency management directors                     |      |          |      |           |               |
| g.) State emergency management officials                                  |      |          |      |           |               |
| h.) Federal emergency management officials                                |      |          |      |           |               |

14. In these final questions, we would like to ask a few questions about your position and professional background.

a.) Is your position appointed?

Yes

No

b.) Is emergency management your full-time job or are you responsible for other parish tasks or work another job?

Full-time

Part-time

15. How many years of experience do you have in the field of emergency management?

[Write in answer.]

16. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Some high school

Completed high school

Some college

Completed technical or vocational school

Completed college

Some graduate school

Completed graduate school

17. Approximately how many individuals work in your Emergency Management office?

[Write in answer.]

18. [*Do not read.* Note the gender of the respondent.]

Male

Female



Ashley D. Ross, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Political Science  
Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi  
6300 Ocean Drive Unit 5826  
Corpus Christi, Texas 78412-5826  
(361) 825-5781  
ashley.ross@tamucc.edu

Dear Interview Participant,

Thank you very much for participating in this interview. Your responses along with dozens of others from county emergency management directors across the Gulf Coast will help us to identify common problems and solutions faced by localities with regards to disaster management. It is our goal to contribute to the collective awareness and understanding of Gulf Coast disaster resilience, and your interview significantly contributes to this work. We will be sharing our research findings in August on our website: <http://localgovt.wordpress.com> and by mail. We hope that you will find the conclusions helpful.

Please note that all your interview responses will be kept confidential, and the only identifying factor we record is the name of your county. If you have any concerns about your interview or the integrity of research project, please contact me personally at the number/email given above. You may also contact my university's research compliance officer:

Erin Sherman  
Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi  
Institutional Review Board Office  
(361) 825-2497  
erin.sherman@tamucc.edu

Again, many thanks for your time in participating in this research. Do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns regarding this project.

Best regards,

*Ashley Ross*

---

# CODING INSTRUCTIONS

---

## What is coding?

Coding is substituting a number for a word or phrase. Because statistical packages do not speak English, we translate survey responses into numbers. These numbers represent the response we have assigned to it, and these numbers also reflect the degree of the response in many cases. For example, we assign a higher number to responses of “severe” disaster experience to represent that the disaster we are speaking of is more severe than other cases, which would be coded as a lower number.

## How to code?

You use the codebook to translate the responses from each interview into numbers. You will use the Excel file provided by Dr. Ross to record all survey responses. Open-ended questions are not assigned numbers; rather, you will summarize and paraphrase these responses. Simply make sure to include key words and phrases when typing in these answers into the data file.

## How to use the Excel file?

In the Excel data file, each variable (question) is listed in the columns. Each county case is reported in the rows. For example, the table below reports that the response to question 1 for County 1 was “bouncing back”. The response to question 2 was “2” or “somewhat easy”. The response for question 3a is “Flood of 1992”; the response to question 3b is “3” or “severe” while the response to 3c is “4” or “somewhat difficult”.

|                 | <b>1</b>                    | <b>2</b> | <b>3a</b>         | <b>3b</b> | <b>3c</b> |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>County 1</b> | bouncing back               | 2        | Flood of 1992     | 3         | 4         |
| <b>County 2</b> | communication               | 3        | Hurricane Katrina | 4         | 5         |
| <b>County 3</b> | neighbors helping neighbors | 5        | Hurricane Cecelia | 3         | 3         |
| <b>County 4</b> | ability to adapt            | 4        | BP Oil Spill      | 4         | 4         |

When coding interview responses you will work across one row and substitute interview responses with the numbers specified in the coding table except where the response is open, which requires you to type in the answer. It is always a good idea to check your work! And remember to back up your file often.

If you have a concern about a survey response or coding scheme, note it in the worksheet labeled “Notes” in your data file. Make sure to record the date and clearly explain your concern. Dr. Ross will carefully review these notes and take appropriate action with regards to the data.

Finally, in the "Interview" worksheet, you are prompted to fill in key interview information for each county case, including the date of the interview, the name of the interviewee, the job position of this individual, and the each team members' name who conducted the interview. This information ensures that appropriate records are kept with regards to each interview, which is important for research compliance.

# CODE BOOK

| Question Number | Coding  | Notes  |
|-----------------|---|--|
| 1               | Type in answer.   |  |
| 2               | 1 = very easy<br>2 = somewhat easy<br>3 = average - not difficult or easy<br>4 = somewhat difficult<br>5 = very difficult |  |
| 3a              | Type in answer.   |  |
| 3b              | 1 = not very severe<br>2 = somewhat severe<br>3 = severe<br>4 = very severe/ unprecedented                                |  |
| 3c              | 1 = very easy<br>2 = somewhat easy<br>3 = average - not difficult or easy<br>4 = somewhat difficult<br>5 = very difficult |  |
| 4a              | Type in answer.   |  |
| 4b              | 1 = not very severe<br>2 = somewhat severe<br>3 = severe<br>4 = very severe/ unprecedented                                | Skip questions 4b, 4c, and 5 if 3a and 4a have the same responses. |
| 4c              | 1 = very easy<br>2 = somewhat easy<br>3 = average - not difficult or easy<br>4 = somewhat difficult<br>5 = very difficult |  |
| 5               | Type in answer.   |  |
| 6               | Type in answer.   |  |
| 7a              | 1 = Almost never  |  |
| 7b              | 2 = Once in a while (yearly)  |  |
| 7c              | 3 = Sometimes (monthly or quarterly)  |  |
| 7d              | 4 = Often (weekly)  |  |
| 7e              | 5 = Very often (almost daily)   |  |
| 7f              |   |  |
| 7g              |   |  |
| 7h              |   |  |



| Question Number | Coding  | Notes |
|-----------------|---|-------|
| 8a              | 1= Need improvement<br>2= Adequate<br>3 = Good<br>4 = Excellent                         |       |
| 8b              | 1 = Very little differences<br>2 = Some difference but not big<br>3 = Large differences |       |
| 8c              | 1 = A little<br>2 = Some<br>3 = A lot   |       |
| 9a              | Type in number.   |       |
| 9b              |   |       |
| 9c              |   |       |
| 9d              |   |       |
| 9e              |   |       |
| 10              | 0 = No<br>1 = Yes   |       |
| 11a             | 0 = No<br>1 = Yes   |       |
| 11b             | Type in number.   |       |
| 11c             | 0 = No<br>1 = Yes   |       |
| 12a             | 1 = Rarely<br>2 = Yearly<br>3 = Quarterly<br>4 = Monthly<br>5 = Weekly<br>6 = Daily     |       |
| 12b             |   |       |
| 12c             |   |       |
| 12d             |   |       |
| 12e             |   |       |
| 12f             |   |       |
| 12g             |   |       |
| 12h             |   |       |
| 13a             | 1 = Poor<br>2 = Adequate<br>3 = Good<br>4 = Excellent<br>99 = No experience             |       |
| 13b             |   |       |
| 13c             |   |       |
| 13d             |   |       |
| 13e             |   |       |
| 13f             |   |       |
| 13g             |   |       |
| 13h             |   |       |
| 14a             | 0 = No<br>1 = Yes   |       |
| 14b             | 1 = Part-time<br>2 = Full-time  |       |
| 15              | Type in number.   |       |

| Question Number | Coding  | Notes |
|-----------------|---|-------|
| 16              | 1 = Some high school<br>2 = Completed high school<br>3 = Some college<br>4 = Completed technical or vocational school<br>5 = Completed college<br>6 = Some graduate school<br>7 = Completed graduate school |       |
| 17              | Type in number.   |       |
| 18              | 0 = Male<br>1 = Female  |       |