

Civil Legal Issues of Natural Disasters: Libraries Can Help



Kathy Grunewald

Disaster Coordinator Attorney
Legal Services of North Florida, Inc.



Sara Pic

Head of Public Services
Law Library of Louisiana

Chat activity

What natural disasters has your community faced or are you preparing for?

Agenda

- Trauma-informed care
- Library preparation is critical
- Immediate needs and legal issues
- Ways to get assistance
- Most common patron legal questions in a disaster
- Cultivate disaster response network
- Help patrons prepare
- Where to start

September is National Preparedness Month

BE DISASTER AWARE

SEPTEMBER
IS NATIONAL
PREPAREDNESS
MONTH



TAKE ACTION TO PREPARE

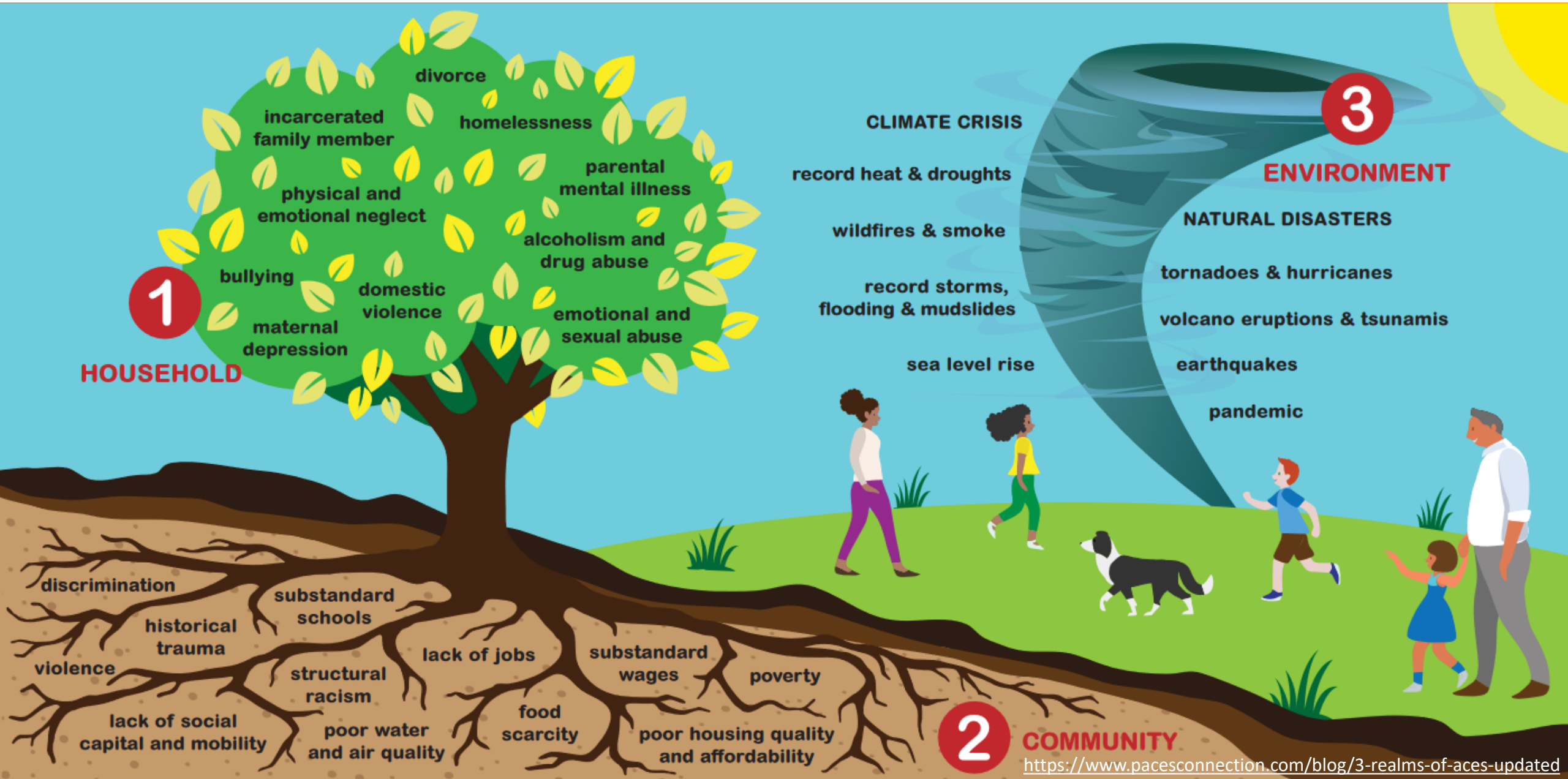


AMERICA'S
PrepareAthon!SM



<https://www.ready.gov/september>

Trauma-Informed Care



Trauma-Informed Care

- Patrons may need to talk first before getting to their need
- No choice in much of process
 - Offer choices if you can
- Slow down, listen empathetically, break things down into simple steps
- You might need to take breaks and process hearing traumatic stories over and over



Library preparation is critical



Want to reopen quickly



Continuity of operations plan



Can even assist if not open

Immediate needs and legal issues



Food,
shelter,
water



Power,
wifi

Immediate needs and legal issues

Landlord / tenant issues
surface fast

Finding information, e.g. deed
to my house

Ways to get assistance



FEMA – safe and habitable standard



Insurance – if patron has, must use it first



SBA – Small Business Administration

Homeowners and renters can get low-interest, long-term loans for losses not fully covered by insurance



Dependencies between these 3 are complex and important

Ways to get assistance

- Encourage patrons to document everything
- Appeals are possible
- Many resources to help library staff and patrons



Most
common
patron legal
questions in a
disaster

Landlord-tenant issues

FEMA applications

Insurance queries

Legal issues timeline – the first 6 weeks

Housing

- Lease termination
- Utility shutoffs
- Security deposits
- Repair issues
- FEMA applications
- Insurance claims
- FEMA Appeals

Document Replacement

- Birth certificates
- Driver's licenses
- Social security cards
- Deeds

Income Protection

- Wage theft issues
- Unemployment application/appeals
- Public benefits application/appeals
- U.S. Small Business Administration disaster loan applications

Legal partners

Partners: find your local legal aid – lawhelp.org

Disaster Legal Services– Central hotline 888-743-5749

ABA's Free Legal Answers – freelegalanswers.org

Cultivate disaster response network

Start in blue sky times

Local emergency management

COADs (Community Organizations Active in Disaster) and
VOADs (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster)

Local bar association – volunteer lawyers specializing in disasters

Help patrons prepare

Disaster preparation events with
partners

[Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov)

[LADRC.org](https://www.ladrc.org)

Legal Aid Disaster Resource Center

Being prepared can prevent legal
headaches later

Where to start



1

Reach out to key
players



2

Build a disaster
resource collection



3

Plan a disaster
preparation event

WebJunction's free 3 course series

- **Course 1: Disaster Response Network** launched!
- **Course 2: Trauma Response and Disaster Assistance** launched!
- **Course 3: Ongoing Issues and Mitigation**, coming soon!
- If civil legal reference is new to you – try our foundational 4 course series, **Creating Pathways to Civil Legal Justice**

oc.lc/legal-justice-project

Improving Access to Civil Legal Justice through Libraries

Through OCLC's [partnership with Legal Services Corporation \(LSC\)](#) and consultation from law librarians, WebJunction continues to design and deliver national training for U.S. public library staff to strengthen their

ability to identify

Through this project, we serve communities

Since the project began, we have created a series, [Creating Pathways to Civil Legal Justice](#), WebJunction

New Courses

A new course series addresses legal issues that a community can help.

Learning Opportunities

- [Creating Pathways to Civil Legal Justice](#): Series of four **on-demand courses** for library staff. Learn more [about the courses](#), including a short video introduction.
- [Navigating Civil Legal Issues of Natural Disasters](#): Series of three **on-demand courses** focused on the civil legal issues that community members encounter as a result of a natural disaster.

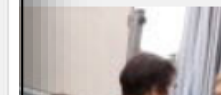


Learn More

- [Creating Pathways to Civil Legal Justice](#) library

- **September 22 webinar**, [Civil Legal Issues of Natural Disasters: Libraries Can Help](#), to learn more about the newest course series.
- [Learning Groups for Creating Pathways for Civil Legal Justice Courses](#): How to lead a group of colleagues taking the courses together.

information that





Navigating Civil Legal Issues of Natural Disasters

- ▶ Getting Started
- ▶ Introduction to Natural Disasters, Civil Legal Issues, and Library Roles
- ▶ Building the Library Disaster Response Network
- ▶ Help Patrons Be Prepared for Natural Disasters
- ▶ Course Evaluation
- ▶ Final Activity and Course Completion

These are blue-sky days

—
This is the best time to plan.

- Identify legal providers
- Assemble resources
- Connect with partners



Disaster is
sudden and
disruptive



Everybody feels the impact in some way

Questions?

Brooke Doyle, Senior Project Coordinator
WebJunction
doyleb@oclc.org

Kathy Grunewald, Disaster Coordinator Attorney
Legal Services of North Florida, Inc.
kgrunewald@lsnf.org

Sara V. Pic, Head of Public Services
Law Library of Louisiana
svpic@lasc.org

Thank you!

This project is made possible by a partnership with
the Legal Services Corporation and
OCLC's ongoing support of the WebJunction program

