Emergency Preparedness for Newcomer-Serving Agencies: 5 Ways to Get Ready

Why it matters: Newcomers may face language barriers, unfamiliar emergency systems, and limited local networks—factors that can put them at higher risk in a crisis. As frontline service providers, your agency plays a vital role in ensuring newcomer communities stay informed, safe, and connected.

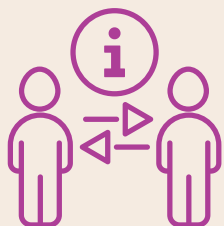**Here are 5 ways your agency can strengthen its emergency preparedness—no budget required!**

1. Review or Create an Emergency Plan for Your Team

Have a basic plan that outlines:

- What staff should do in a fire, flood, or local emergency
- Where to meet if you must evacuate
- Who contacts whom (e.g., phone tree)
- Who coordinates with landlords or local authorities

Use Alberta's Emergency Plan Template as a base and adapt it for your workplace.
Link: https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/emergency-preparedness

2. Share Simple Information with Clients

Many newcomers are unfamiliar with Canada's emergency systems.
Print or email basic info in plain language or use translated materials if available.
Try this 72-Hour Emergency Kit Checklist (PDF) Post local emergency contact numbers
Link: https://www.alberta.ca/build-an-emergency-kit

3. Know the Risks in Your Area

Do newcomers in your region need to prepare for wildfires? Winter storms? Flooding?
Encourage staff and clients to sign up for local alerts and understand the risks unique to your location.
Link: https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-emergency-alert.aspx

4. Include Emergency Planning in Orientation or Workshops

A quick 10-minute mention in a workshop or one-on-one intake can go a long way.
Consider adding:

- What to do in a fire or flood
- Where to find reliable alerts
- Who to call in an emergency

5. Connect with Local Partners

You don't have to do this alone. Many municipalities and emergency agencies welcome collaboration with immigrant-serving organizations. Reach out to:

- Local fire or police departments
- City or town emergency planning teams
- Community disaster response networks

Prepared agencies help build prepared communities. Let's work together to make sure no one is left behind in a crisis.