



Haley & Aldrich develops a plan to keep drinking water flowing after an emergency

Description

Summary

- After a [major natural disaster](#) in the Portland, Oregon, region, millions of people could lose access to clean drinking water. The area's Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization (RDPO) Steering Committee needed to plan for how to keep drinking water flowing immediately after an emergency and while the region recovered, a process that could take months or even years.
- The committee needed to understand potential gaps in water availability and how to fill those gaps – a complex endeavor that meant coordinating with as many as 70+ local water providers, state agencies in Oregon and Washington, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- The RDPO contracted Haley & Aldrich's [resilience team](#) to work with these stakeholders and develop a plan. Our team has served as trusted partners to RDPO and many of the other groups involved, and we also brought expertise in the natural disasters most likely to hit the region.
- We surveyed and interviewed over 40 water providers, emergency managers from RDPO counties, and other local, state, and federal officials – a task made easier by our strong relationships with many of these partners.
- We also knew that the stakeholders had varying experiences with and understanding of the region's natural hazards and water provider infrastructure, so we conducted workshops detailing roles and responsibilities, and included the results of a current gap analysis.
- Ultimately, we presented the results of our survey and recommendations for stronger water infrastructure, ranging from how much drinking water to have in reserve, how to develop relationships and communications plans, and how to prioritize water needs after a disaster.
- Data we collected early in the project shaped a tabletop exercise that tested our regional policy recommendations. We also successfully worked through leadership changes at RDPO, pivoting to anticipate new leaders' needs and achieve project goals.

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