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| **Track** | **Session type** | **Name** | **Description** |
| Wednesday, January 29 |
| All | General | Foundations of Disaster Ministry | Why engage in disaster ministry? What are the phases of disaster? Who are the players? What are the functions and opportunities for volunteers? Where do the resources come from? What are our mission and values? We will address these questions and more! This session is the foundational training that grounds all our efforts in disaster ministry. All academy attendees should start with this class on Wednesday as a prerequisite to the other classes. |
| Thursday, January 30 |
| Local Church | Breakout 1 | Connecting Neighbors – Introduction and Ready Congregants | Learn about the context of disaster ministry and how this curriculum can be useful to inspire congregations and communities to be better able to prepare for disaster and respond to their neighbors in helpful, cooperative and caring ways on behalf of the church and in the spirit of Jesus Christ."Ready Congregants" is the module of Connecting Neighbors that focuses on preparing individuals and families to be disaster-ready. Participants will be inspired to take action to prepare themselves, their households and others before and immediately following a disaster. |
| ERT | Breakout 1 | ERT - Site Evaluation | Site Evaluation is designed for both team leader and logistics members and is appropriate for the whole team. This class explores ways to evaluate a site for safety and suitability for an ERT. It helps teams assess damage and outline what ERTs can do to prevent further harm. ERT site evaluation teams could be very helpful in the earliest days after an event to pave the way for other teams. (This class is not designed for use in rebuilding or repairing.) Basic Early Response Team training (offered pre-academy on January 11 for those who haven’t taken it) is a prerequisite for this session. |
| LTR | Breakout 1 | Long-term Recovery Group Development | The recovery of many individuals and families may depend on a well-functioning group effort. This session will provide participants an opportunity to explore ways they might participate in a community group's development on behalf of the church. Foundations of Disaster Ministry, offered on Wednesday afternoon, is a prerequisite for this session. |
| Leadership | Breakout 1 | Disaster Response Ministry Committee and Leadership Training | Members of the conference Disaster Response Ministry Committee are responsible for supporting the development of the conference’s disaster response plan and for providing support and oversight of those who implement the plan. This session will prepare the committee for this important task in all phases of disaster. Relevant concerns will be covered, including fiscal management, personnel, materials management, and sound policies and guidelines. Participants will review the recommended flow of communication for initial disaster response, drawing on the strength of the connectional United Methodist Church and will look at the roles of the incident coordinator/conference disaster response coordinator, conference volunteer in mission coordinator, and district coordinator(s). Participants will discuss strengthening disaster response capabilities, baseline and best practices for early response coordination and communication strategies, training plans, disaster plans and ways to generate cabinet and conference committee support for disaster ministries. Foundations of Disaster Ministry, offered on Wednesday afternoon, is a prerequisite to this class. |
| Local Church | Breakout 2 | Connecting Neighbors – Ready Churches |  "Ready Churches" is a module of Connecting Neighbors that emphasizes the importance of protecting church property and the people within the property, before and after a disaster, and of appropriate use of church property in disaster response. |
| ERT | Breakout 2 | ERT Team Leader | Team Leadership, designed for leaders and assistant leaders, is also appropriate for the whole team. This class will explore more of what those functions involve as well as the responsibility of all functions. Basic Early Response Team training, offered pre-academy on January 11, is a prerequisite for this session. |
| LTR | Breakout 2 | Disaster Case Management Overview & Case Management and Construction | Learn about the person-to-person partnership between a dedicated disaster case manager and survivor and how this partnership is critical for many survivors in order to achieve their "new normal." This video begins with the history of disaster case management and includes information about disaster casework, the intersection between disaster case management and community recovery and partner agencies. In this session, participants will learn ways to expedite survivor recovery through the implementation of effective coordination strategies between the functions of disaster case management and volunteer construction. Prior experience in one of these recovery functions is helpful but not required. |
| Leadership | Breakout 2 | Disaster Response Committee and Leadership Training (Continued) | See description above. |
| Local Church | Breakout 3 | Connecting Neighbors – Ready Response & Presenting Connecting Neighbors | Ready Response is a module of Connecting Neighbors that encourages churches to explore their capacity for various disaster response ministries and to consider ways to engage community partners. |
| ERT | Breakout 3 | ERT On-Site Management | On-Site Management (OSM) is a designed to help communities receive ERTs by knowing what should to be in place before the invitation is issued. Assessments, forms, and other arrangements can speed up the invitation of ERTs to a disaster area. Basic Early Response Team training, offered pre-academy on January 11, is a prerequisite for this session. |
| LTR | Breakout 3 | Volunteer Hosting and Coordination in Recovery | Learn to effectively coordinate and support volunteers who are willing to come to your community after a disaster to repair and rebuild. |
| Leadership | Breakout 3 | Transitioning from Relief to Recovery & Recovery Project Development | This advanced training, specifically designed for disaster ministry leaders, explains how the transition from relief to recovery can be daunting, particularly as roles evolve and resources ebb and flow. Participants will explore similarities and differences between relief and recovery, identify ways to provide leadership in developing recovery coalitions, and ways to resource recovery of individuals and families. Participants will review the recovery functions and design a recovery project based upon a case scenario. This session is helpful for those who would participate in crafting conference recovery ministries. |
| Friday, January 31 |
| All | General | Ministry of Caring in Disaster | Disaster emotional and spiritual care is a versatile ministry that is vital in *all phases of disaster*. From the chaos of immediate disaster response through the seemingly long road to recovery, this session provides the theological underpinnings of a caring ministry. Gain an overview of the ministry of presence with an emphasis on listening as a vehicle for healing and the importance of self-care. |
| All | General | Plenary Panel | A panel of experts, partners (non-profit and government), and others. How do we work together with other organizations and agencies? Who depends on us for what? Why is it important that you and your local church include disaster response as a ministry in your community and beyond? |
| All | General | Asset Mapping | Asset Mapping is a focused way of identifying conference, district and local church resources. What do we have? Where is what we have? How do we access what we have when a disaster occurs? This session will help participants begin to map current assets while discovering strengths and uncovering gaps.  |
| All | General | Train to the Plan  | Do you know if the Arkansas Conference has a disaster response plan? How do United Methodists roll when disaster happens? Who are the conference, district, and local church responders? How do we organize to respond? How are teams from Arkansas deployed? What about donations? This session will introduce participants to the plan and answer these questions and more about Arkansas United Methodist Disaster Response. |
| ERT | Breakout 4 | Chainsaw Safety | Disaster Response Ministries strive to do no harm. We want our volunteers to be as safe as possible when responding for their benefit, their family’s benefit, the team’s benefit, and the benefit of the community we are serving. Early response often requires the use of chainsaws. Disaster Response Ministries offers Chainsaw Safety training. In doing so, we follow UMCOR’s Chainsaw Safety and Operations Guidelines. The training follows UMCOR’s Course Requirements, and **we ask that any volunteer wishing to operate a chainsaw**: own the chainsaw you operate, have verification of this training, meet OSHA requirements for personal protective equipment and saw safety equipment. |
| Saturday, February 1 |
| All | General | Exercise the Plan | See the plan and the roles of individuals and groups in action by working through a tabletop exercise based on a disaster scenario. Then review how it went: the good and the not so good. Debriefing will include an opportunity for discussion and questions. |
| All | General | Volunteer Navigators | Volunteer Navigators is a portion of outreach ministry opportunities in Connecting Neighbors: Ready Response module. This activity gives participants an experience of practicing the ministry in a classroom or neighborhood setting. Previous experience with Connecting Neighbors is recommended but not required. |
| ERT | Breakout 4 (Continued)) | Chainsaw Safety | See description above. |