**RDPO Contingency Planning**

1. **Background**

During the spring of 2013, as the RDPO was in its early implementation, the five-county Portland Urban Area (PUA) fell short of the Risk Profile ranking needed to receive a UASI FY’13 grant. This situation marked the first time since 2003 that the PUA had not received a grant. Before then, UASI had been the only significant source of grant funds secured and applied to collaborative disaster preparedness in our region.

Regardless of grant funds, partners in the region had a 20-year practice of contributing their staff’s time to accomplish regional preparedness work, first modestly under the Regional Emergency Management Group, which was established in 1993, then more robustly from 2003 onward under the Urban Areas Work Group (UAWG), which oversaw the UASI grant for the region until the RDPO assumed that role. Sustainment of regional disaster preparedness without federal grants was one of the key goals that emerged from the 2008-2009 regional visioning process that led to the RDPO model.

Prior to the UASI FY’13 surprise, UASI awards to the region were in steady decline: from around $7 million for UASI FY’10 to $5 million for UASI FY’11 to $2 million (UASI FY’10). Between 2003 and 2013, the PUA had received more than $70 million in UASI funds, which the UAWG invested in a range of terrorism prevention and all-hazards protection and response capabilities, including equipping, training and exercising various tactical teams, completing several regional plans/planning frameworks and developing all-hazards coordination systems and tools. Grant-dependent as the region has been, riding the unpredictable wave of funding has challenged our ability to create a consistent program and maintain staffing stability.

When in 2013 the new RDPO Policy and Steering Committees faced zero UASI funding, along with losing all RDPO and PBEM grants/procurement staff that support the RDPO and having to severely contract the regional program, development of the RDPO inter-governmental agreement, along with a local cost share agreement to fund the RDPO Manager’s cost (i.e., to “keep the wheels on the bus”), forged ahead. The RDPO’s Core Group of partners[[1]](#footnote-1) began funding the RDPO manager on July 1, 2014, as UASI FY’12 came to a close and all other RDPO/PBEM grants staff found new jobs elsewhere. Note: during this time Multnomah County submitted an application to the Oregon State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSP) on the RDPO’s behalf, only to find there was not much support around the state to help our region out of a bind until local funding could be secured.

UASI funding came back online for the region in early 2015 with the $1 million FY’2014 award. The last two cycles (FY’15 and FY’16) have yielded around $3 million each. The RDPO now faces its newest challenge to sustainment in the form of 1) the President’s proposed FY’18 federal budget, which calls for a $667 million cut, as well as new recipient requirements, to the Homeland Security Grant Program and other grant programs administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and 2) the “Sanctuary Jurisdictions” Presidential Executive Order, which could impact the RDPO’s ability to secure UASI funds, and RDPO partners from receiving other federal disaster preparedness grants.

As this paper was being finalized, the RDPO received news that our region has received an FY’17 risk profile ranking of 33, six places below last year and in a typically unfunded spot. **While we await news of our federal funding fate, the time is ripe to begin contingency planning to once again explore sustainment of the RDPO and our regional collaborative disaster preparedness work. This paper begins to ask key questions about the desired organizational capacity and program of the future, especially one in which we need to be all or partially self-reliant. It also lays out a work plan/timeline for completing key data gathering and analysis, strategic thinking/visioning and other information-gathering steps to enable the Steering and Policy Committees to make key decisions.**

1. **The RDPO’s Current Capacity and Program Size**

The RDPO’s capacity can be seen as the sum of the human, financial and time resources it amasses and uses to manage and coordinate the RDPO organization, secure and administer its funds, develop its policies and strategies, and develop and implement its work plan/projects to reach its goals and objectives. Hundreds of RDPO partners’ staff, as well as elected officials, participate in the RDPO’s governance structure and in its strategic, organizational and program planning processes. All projects are managed by volunteers – also known as “project champions” – who step forward from their home discipline work groups and home agencies to serve in those roles. They often form project task forces to help with project development, implementation and monitoring, and when feasible, the RDPO provides staff support, either from the RDPO Manager or Planning Coordinator.

The current financial resources of the organization are split between UASI grants and contributions from local partners (i.e., locally contributed grants). The UASI FY’15 award was $3 million and (minus overhead) funds around 24 projects, 100% of the FTE 1.0 RDPO Planning Coordinator, a portion of the part-time RDPO Administrative Assistant’s costs and 100% of both the FTE 1.0 PBEM Grant Program Coordinator and FTE 1.0 Management Analyst; this grant is currently in its last year of implementation. All of these staff are limited-term duration. PBEM also donates around 25% of its finance manager and accountant’s time to manage the grants, and there are many other hidden staff time contributions from within the City of Portland and around the various jurisdictions to support organizational and grant management needs. [See Annex A for a table that reflects the core capacity components of the RDPO.]

Valued at just under $3 million, the UASI FY’16 consists of 12 projects that will be commencing this spring; the grant implementation cycle ends circa May 2019. The RDPO maintains financial contingencies (funds to be allocated) of around $192,272 under UASI FY’15 (expiring circa May 2018) and around $149,470 under UASI FY’16 (expiring May 2019). (All these are preliminary figures.)

For FY’17-’18, the RDPO’s Core Group members have agreed to provide $185,000 to support the RDPO’s operating and administration budget (i.e., 100% of the FTE 1.0 RDPO Manager and a portion of the 0.50 RDPO administrative assistant). Another $55,995 in local contributions is expected to come from other contributing members; those funds are intended to be spent on RDPO projects in the approved pipeline. Total for locally contributed funds for the coming fiscal year = $240, 995.

1. **Preliminary Scenario Planning Considerations and Questions:**
2. If the region is eligible to compete for/receive a UASI grant for FY’17 (and/or in subsequent years) AND the cycle remains three years, AND a 25% match is required, AND FEMA allows the region to use the entire three years to secure the match, then
   * The RDPO could immediately afford to apply for a grant in the amount of around $2.9 million (using current local cost-share funding formula; year-over-year increases not applied).[[2]](#footnote-2) Under this scenario, the RDPO would apply every three years for the grant, contrary to the annual approach now.
   * If the grant cycle reduces to two years: the RDPO would be able to apply for a grant of about $1.9 million (match = approximately $482K).
   * Under either of these scenarios, a review of the staffing (type, function, length of funding) will be needed to ensure it aligns with organizational and program needs.
3. If the region is not eligible for UASI FY’17, RDPO partners would do well to
   * Thoroughly review the program and capacity it would like to/can afford to maintain together. Key questions:
     + Which regional capabilities are the most critical to continue building and maintaining beyond the end of UASI FY’16 (circa May 2019)? [Examples of common areas of our preparedness work and investments: planning, operational coordination, public information and warning, community resilience, risk and disaster resilience assessment, threats and hazards identification, intelligence and information-sharing, critical transportation, fire management and suppression, operational communications, mass care services, etc. Note: The [RDPO 2017-2021 Strategic Plan](https://www.portlandoregon.gov/rdpo/article/588542) is a good reference for recalling priorities, goals and objectives, but does no or low grant funding change any of these?]
     + How would these critical capabilities be built/maintained? What financial resources could be brought to bear? Who would maintain the capabilities?
       - How might partners change the way they develop, fund and implement their own programs that could serve both their own objectives and those of the region – i.e., identify cost share options?
     + How would the loss of UASI funding impact participation at all levels of the RDPO?
     + What, if any, changes would the RDPO partners make to the RDPO organization (staffing, committee/work group structure) or program strategies/implementation approaches given potential new financial constraints?
   * Consider how to maximize the use of the UASI FY’15 and UASI FY’16 contingency funds while ensuring adequate RDPO capacity.
     + While we know we have $341,742 UASI in grant contingency to allocate, there may be more (expecting some additional FY’15 project savings to add to the pot). By the end of May 2017 we will be in a better position to present options to the Steering Committee, so that they can make decisions on allocating these funds.
4. **Proposed RDPO Contingency Planning Work Plan and Timeline (In the event of disruption to UASI grant funds)**

**May – September/October 2017:**

1. **Estimate funding reserves for reallocation (UASI FY’15, UASI FY’16 and RDPO Local Contributions) – PBEM Finance by May 2017**

At present and up to May 2019):

* 1. FY’15 = $190,272
  2. FY’16 = $141,740
  3. RDPO local contributions (est. FY’ 17-’18; FY’18 – ‘19= around $110 K

**Total estimated reserves available to reallocate to staffing and priority projects (July 2017 – May 2019): $442,012** (Note: preliminary figures; final reserve totals will be calculated as part of Steps

1. **Conduct risk assessment of losing federal funding; using the lens of the RDPO’s 2017 – 2021 Strategic Priorities – RDPO Program Committee, with support from RDPO and PBEM staff, by May 31, 2017**
   1. Identify current projects that align with the RDPO’s 2017-2021 priorities that require follow-on support after May 2019;
   2. Identify other priority capabilities that would decline without regional funding;
   3. Identify organizational risks (e.g., organizational disengagement; RDPO-PBEM staff flight); and
   4. Assess the status of UASI/RDPO-funded assets, including maintenance, capitalization/depreciation, around the region to determine which capabilities are secured for the future. [This may need more time.]
2. **Adjust the two-year work plan to ensure highest priority work is supported - Program Committee (recommends to SC by June 5); Steering Committee (adjusts and approves on June 5)**
   1. Using the 2017-2021 RDPO strategic priorities lens, identify FY’16 funded projects that could be delayed or eliminated, generating more funding reserves for reallocation to higher priority projects;
   2. Identify pre-approved pipeline projects (originally intended for FY’17) that are of high priority and, where possible, fund them with grant fund reserves; and
   3. Review and, when practical, improve sustainability strategies for all projects.
3. **Develop a two-year staffing plan that aligns with the adjusted work plan (functions/positions, phasing, cost) – RDPO Manager, PBEM Finance/Director by July for review by Steering Committee in August 2017**
4. **Conduct an emergency strategic planning/organizational change process that envisions an RDPO without federal funding – (Engage all Committees and Work Groups. Policy Committee approves final revised strategic plan by September or October 2017)**
   1. Organizational mission, vision review
   2. Program strategy/foci
   3. Funding (local cost share; other funding sources)
   4. RDPO structure and staffing re-alignment
   5. **Policy work – Policy Committee considers options for advocating for federal funding (for subsequent cycle; grant funding system changes, etc.)**

**Annex A**

The table below summarizes the current human resources capacity of the RDPO:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **RDPO Core Staff (2.5 FTE)** | | |
| **Position** | **Core Functions** | **Funding Status** |
| **RDPO Manager – 1.0 FTE** | * Executive direction of the RDPO * Management of the Policy and Steering Committees; coordination with other RDPO committees, work groups and task forces * Strategic planning / change leadership facilitation; technical support to program development and implementation * Development and maintenance of policies, standard operating procedures and agreements * Technical and/or administrative support of some project task forces * Coordination of RDPO advocacy and communication | Funded annually by RDPO Core Group (for FY ’17 – ’18: $163,354 of the $185,000 in Core Group contributions will support this position 100%). |
| **RDPO Planning Coordinator – 1.0 FTE** | * Manages the annual THIRA Update * Provides technical support and helps coordinate several planning projects and other RDPO initiatives in the RDPO work plan * Manages the RDPO Program Committee * Supervises Administrative Assistant | UASI funding for this position currently budgeted 100% through September 2018. |
| **RDPO Administrative Assistant – 0.5 FTE** | * Provides administrative services to the RDPO, including scheduling meeting rooms, preparing meetings minutes, maintaining contact lists, updating the RDPO website, etc. | Funding expected to be available to fund this 0.5 FTE position 100% through circa May 2019 (combination of UASI and RDPO local contributions). |
| **PBEM Finance and Grants Unit Staff (2.0 FTE fully funded)** | | |
| **Position** | **Core Functions** | **Comments** |
| **PBEM Finance Manager** | * UASI and RDPO local contribution grants: oversight of financial accounting, procurement and grants services to the RDPO; also provides human resources services | PBEM voluntary contribution: around 25% of 1.0 FTE |
| **PBEM Sr. Accountant** | * UASI and RDPO grants: financial accounting and billing | PBEM voluntary contribution: around 25% of 1.0 FTE |
| **Grant Program Coordinator** | * Coordinates and manages all steps in the UASI/RDPO grants management cycles (e.g., the RDPO projects pipeline; UASI grant applications and inter-governmental agreements; grant/project performance monitoring; budget development and tracking; coordinating grant reporting; assets tracking; etc.) * Provides technical guidance to RDPO committees, work groups and project managers on grant compliance | Currently funded 100% by UASI (projected through March 2018) |
| **Management Analyst** | * Coordinates/facilitates City of Portland procurement and contracting processes for UASI- or RDPO-funded projects, in partnership with associated project managers; * Provides technical support/training on the City of Portland’s procurement and contracting processes to project managers under the RDPO | Currently funded 100% by UASI (projected through February 2019) |
| **RDPO Partners** (i.e., elected leaders and staff from member jurisdictions/agencies) | | |
| **Position** | **Core Functions** | **Comments** |
| **Committee/work group/task force leaders and participants (all combined)** | * Contribute leadership/representation and subject matter expertise * Make organizational, program and financial decisions * Participate in strategic planning, assessing regional need, program development/work planning * Develop/approve budgets, policies, procedures, etc. | Voluntary contributions (“force account”) |
| **Project Managers** | * Project design, implementation, contractor oversight and monitoring | Voluntary contributions (“force account”) |

**Annex B**

**2017-2021 Strategic Priorities Recall**

1. **Continue to cultivate the RDPO’s voice on key issues that advance disaster preparedness and resilience efforts.**

* **Fuel resilience** (e.g., mitigating CEI Hub in Portland)
* **Community Resilience** (e.g., statewide mass displacement task force)
* **Critical infrastructure resilience** (e.g., transportation system funding, including for seismic resilience)
* **Other regional hazard mitigation action planning/risk reduction** – e.g., mitigate flood risk in our region by supporting the efforts of the Levee Ready Columbia Project); and
* **Funding to sustain local and regional (i.e., RDPO) preparedness efforts** - e.g. Homeland Security Grant Program, including UASI, State Homeland Security Program; federal and state funding for natural hazard mitigation/pre-disaster recovery planning and community resilience programs; and RDPO contributing member contributions.

1. **Keep strengthening response capabilities, including for incidents with high/critical impacts (e.g., disruptions to energy/fuel, water, sanitation, communication systems, etc.; mass displacement, mass casualty, and mass fatality, etc.).**
2. **Expand mitigation mission area work, including community resilience (e.g., Citizen Corps programming), risk and threat assessment, hazard mitigation projects, etc.**
3. **Expand recovery mission work** (i.e., pre-disaster recovery planning and organizing)
4. **Advance equity efforts in the region** (i.e., ensuring the recommendations in regional disabilities, access and functional needs report are implemented)
5. **Increase the RDPO’s capacity to sustain regional coordination, collaboration, and governance**

1. The five counties, the City of Portland, Metro, TriMet and the Port of Portland. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The math: 3 years of local contributions at current rate of $240,995 / annum = $722,985, which is 25% of $2,891,940. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)