Community Rise Foundation

Crisis Communication Plan 2025

Department of Communications

Quinn Conrey

Community Rise Foundation

A letter from the President and Chief Executive Officer of Community Rise Foundation, Marissa Ellington.

To all Associates of Community Rise Foundation,

I am incredibly honored to serve as President and CEO of Community Rise Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening underserved neighborhoods and empowering families with the resources they need to thrive. Every day, many of the communities we serve face challenges that make it difficult to prioritize their well-being. It is our mission and responsibility to be present, dependable, and compassionate in addressing their needs.

It would be unrealistic to assume that our organization is immune to crisis. This is why having a clear, actionable Crisis Communication Plan is essential. I urge each of you to review it carefully, understand your responsibilities, and offer any suggestions or concerns that might strengthen our preparedness and response.

I am proud to work alongside each of you, and your dedication, professionalism, and heart make Community Rise Foundation effective and inspiring. Together, we will remain ready for whatever challenges arise and continue building stronger, more resilient communities.

Sincerely,

Marissa Ellington

President & CEO

Community Rise Foundation

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Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the Community Rise Foundation (CRF) Crisis Communication Plan is to minimize and ultimately prevent further damage caused by a crisis that may impact the organization, our programs, or the communities we serve. This plan exists to ensure that Community Rise responds swiftly, accurately, and responsibly to protect the well-being of our clients, maintain public trust, and preserve strong relationships with our stakeholders. As an organization dedicated to strengthening underserved neighborhoods, we must remain prepared to address unexpected challenges with clarity, compassion, and professionalism.

The goal of this plan is to establish strategies that guide CRF through a variety of crises. Effective communication with both internal and external stakeholders is essential for maintaining transparency, credibility, and community confidence. This plan outlines the steps needed to assess a crisis, release accurate information, engage with the media, and restore trust following a disruptive event. In the following pages, the Crisis Management Team will be detailed, alongside primary and secondary stakeholder groups, potential crisis types, and strategic communication procedures.

The Objectives of the Crisis Communication Plan are as follows:

- Gather all necessary and accurate details of the situation
- Acknowledge any damage in the crisis and release an apology statement at the soonest possible time if an apology is deemed necessary
- Notify stakeholders and have open communication with the media
- Ensure that 95% of media coverage has accurate details of the situation
- Have no more than 20% decrease in the company's reputation

Community Rise Foundation has a responsibility to the families, volunteers, staff, community partners, and neighborhoods we serve to promote safety, stability, and trust at all times. Communication is essential in every crisis event, and we must be prepared to take ownership of any mistakes, address issues with transparency, and take meaningful action to restore confidence and strengthen our relationships with stakeholders.

This document is to be reviewed annually, so all personal information and contacts are up to date.

Acknowledgement

I, _____, an employee of Community Rise Foundation, acknowledge that I have read and understand the Crisis Communication Plan. I understand my responsibilities and designated role in crises as outlined in this plan. I accept responsibility for my actions and contributions to the organization's crisis response. If I become aware of any information relevant to a potential or active crisis, I will immediately notify a member of the Crisis Management Team to ensure the organization can respond accurately and thoroughly. I understand that as a representative of Community Rise Foundation, I share in the responsibility to protect the organization, support effective communication, and adhere to all established policies and procedures.

_____ _____

Signature Date

Crisis Management Team

President & CEO – **Marissa Ellington**
mellington@communityrise.org | (202) 555 - 4101

Chief Operating Officer – **Daniel Hughes**
dhughes@communityrise.org | (202) 555 – 4102

Director of Communication/Public Information Officer – **Clarissa Nguyen**
cnguyen@communityrise.org | (202) 555 – 4103

Director of Community Programs – **Javier Morales**
jmorales@communityrise.org | (202) 555 – 4104

Human Resources Director – **Erica Bennett**
ebennett@communityrise.org | (202) 555 – 4105

IT & Data Security Manager – **Thomas Walker**
twalker@communityrise.org | (202) 555 – 4106

Chief Financial Officer – **Linda Price**
lprice@communityrise.org | (202) 555 – 4017

Facilities & Safety Manager – **Malik Foster**
mfoster@communityrise.org | (202) 555 – 4109

Board Liaison/Representative - **Dr. Helen Porter**
hporter@communityrise.org | (202) 555 – 4110

Legal Counsel (External) - **Andrea Collins**
acollins@communityrise.org | (202) 555 – 4108

Medical & Community Heath Advisor (External) – **Dr. Maya Corwin**
mcorwin@communityhealth.org | (202) 555 – 4111

Crisis Type Identification

As a community-focused non-profit organization, we face challenges related to supporting vulnerable families, the delivery of essential services, and community programming. We must remain aware of potential risks that could disrupt our operations or the communities we serve, as we rely on partnerships, funding sources, volunteers, and public trust. Our number one priority is the safety, well-being, and stability of the individuals and families who rely on our programs as well as our staff.

Below are examples of crisis types we may face as an organization:

Operational & Service

Program Interruption: A community center or housing support must suddenly close due to safety concerns, contamination, or structural damage.

Resource Shortage: A sudden loss of staff, volunteers, or supplies leaves families without resources and prevents the organization from performing services.

Health & Safety Emergencies

Community Illness Outbreak: An illness spreads within one of the neighborhoods CRF serves, prompting community members to seek immediate aid, guidance, or referrals from the organization.

On-Site Injury: A participant, volunteer, or staff member is injured during an event, requiring medical attention and immediate reporting.

Financial & Organizational Stability

Funding Loss: A major donor withdraws support, or a grant is unexpectedly denied, directly impacting the continuation of core programs.

Human Error

Spread of Misinformation: Incorrect or harmful information circulates online about one of CRF's programs, causing confusion and concern among families and stakeholders.

Misuse or Misallocation of Funds: An internal audit reveals improper spending or financial discrepancies that endanger the organization's credibility.

Other Potential Crises

Criminal Activity: A staff member, volunteer, or community partner engages in illegal behavior that threatens CRF's reputation or operations.

Partner Organization Misconduct: An organization that CRF works with closely becomes involved in a scandal or harmful incident, and CRF is associated with the partnership, impacting public trust.

These are just a few of the possible crises we may face. There is always a crisis that "no one sees coming," so it is critical to always be aware of what is happening both within our organization and in our community. These are not the ONLY crises that Community Rise may face, but it is best to be prepared under any circumstances.

Credible Sources

In the event of a crisis, the following sources should be contacted so experts in the various fields of their expertise may be consulted. These sources should be used in order to verify how much of a threat the crisis is and may give suggestions on what actions should be taken during the crisis.

Department of Public Health – **Dr. Lena Marwood**,
Director of Community Health Response
(202) 555 – 6001 | www.citypublichealth.gov

Department of Housing & Community Safety – **Thomas Greer**
Chief Housing Safety Officer
(202) 555 – 6002 | www.housingsafety.gov

Local Police Department – **Lieutenant Naomi Herrea**
Community Safety Liaison
(202) 555 – 6003 | www.metrocitypolice.gov

Community Emergency Services & Fire Department – **Captain Jordan Mallory**
Emergency Operations Lead
(202) 555 – 6004 | www.metrofire-rescue.gov

Stakeholder Contact List

The Crisis Management Team will notify stakeholders of the crisis and give them any information needed. The following is a list of stakeholders who should be the first ones notified of the situation before any news release reaches the media. It is our responsibility to ensure the safety of our stakeholders and give them all the necessary information during any events.

The following stakeholders should be notified via telephone in a major crisis, followed by a written, detailed news release. This should include all important information and is easy to share among their own internal offices. In the case of a less serious crisis, email can be used for communication. The information sent should include accurate details of the crisis and any actions the following stakeholders should take. Any information that is revealed throughout the crisis should also be sent to the stakeholders as we receive it.

City Council Community Affairs Liaison – **Karen Douglas**
Organization: City Office of Community Development
kdouglas@citygov.org | (123) 456 – 7890

Local School District Partnership Coordinator – **Dr. Brian Keller**
Organization: Selinsgrove School District
bkeller@selinsgroveSD.org | (123) 456 – 7891

Community Health Center Director – **Alicia Ramos**
Organization: Selinsgrove Community Health Center
aramos@selinsgroveCHC.org | (123) 456 – 7892

Neighborhood Association President – **Renee Thompson**
Organization: Selinsgrove Neighborhood Alliance
rthompson@selinsgroveNA.org | (123) 456 – 7893

Major Donors and Business Partners - list of donors in external document

Secondary Stakeholder Contact List

Secondary stakeholders are groups that are still affected by us, but more indirectly than our primary stakeholders previously listed. They should still be notified of the crisis and given information that pertains to them as needed. The Crisis Management Team will consult with these stakeholders in the event of a crisis.

These stakeholders should be contacted based on the severity of the situation. Email or social messaging can be suitable in most situations; however, if needed, a phone call can also be used. Any information discovered during the crisis that is specific to a certain stakeholder should be shared with them.

Volunteer Network Coordinator – **Hannah Li**
Organization: Community Volunteers United
hli@cvunetwork.org | (123) 456 – 7894

Youth Outreach Advocate – **Serena Brooks**
Organization: Youth Forward Coalition
sbrooks@youthforward.org | (123) 456 – 7895

Faith-Based Community Partner – **Pastor Jonathan Miles**
Organization: New Hope Community Church
jmiles@newhopecc.org | (123) 456 – 7896

Local Business Partner – **Marcus Ellery**
Organization: Ellery Market & Goods
mellery@ellerymarket.com | (123) 456 – 7897

All Donors - list of donors in external document

News Release Template

Community Rise Foundation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Your Name

youremail@communityrise.org

Your Phone Number

Main Headline

Sub-Head

[Selinsgrove, PA – dd/mm/year] - Your first paragraph should include the crisis and stakeholders that were affected. Write clearly and concisely with a strong statement about your news. The purpose of the news release is to explain the situation from the source, i.e., Community Rise Foundation.

In this paragraph, provide context for your readers. What is its impact? Ensure that our stakeholders are aware of the situation and understand what our plans are to deal with the crisis. Continue open communication with the media so as not to appear secretive.

In the remaining paragraphs, include the company's plans for solving the crisis and what we are doing to rebuild our reputation and relationships with stakeholders. Give a time frame as to when we believe we will be back to business as normal, or how long we believe the crisis will last, and give a time frame for our response plan.

A news release should be kept on one page. The paragraphs should be short; it is not important to tell the entire story.

Community Rise Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening underserved urban neighborhoods through housing stability programs, family support services, and community revitalization initiatives. Through partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and civic leaders, CRF works to create sustainable solutions that uplift families and foster long-term neighborhood growth. To learn more about CRF and its programs, visit CommunityRise.org.

# # #

Incident Report Form

Incident Date: _____ Incident Time: _____

Location: _____

Name: _____

Position: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please describe the incident(s) and give as much detail as possible:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Have there been any similar past incidents? If so, please describe them.

_____

_____

_____

Was there an injury or illness involved? If yes, describe it.

_____

_____

Witnesses (if any): _____

Witness Contact Information (if given):

Phone: _____ Email: _____

By signing this Incident Report Form, you believe to the best of your knowledge that the information is all true and reflects a real incident that you encountered during the time working at Community Rise Foundation.

_____ _____

Signature Date

_____ _____

HR Signature Date

Appendix

The Community Rise Foundation, founded in 2020, provides stable housing, essential support services, and resources for individuals and families facing hardship. Our mission is to empower community members to build healthier, more sustainable lives through access to safe housing, wellness programs, financial education, and personalized support.

CRF collaborates with local health departments, housing and safety authorities, and community partners to ensure the needs of our residents and program participants are met. Open communication with these partners, as well as ongoing outreach to residents, volunteers, and stakeholders, is key to building trust and fostering strong relationships. This approach enables us to deliver high-quality services, including mental health support, community education, and emergency assistance, tailored to the unique needs of those we serve.

During a crisis, our top priority is the safety and well-being of our residents, staff, volunteers, and community. We must be prepared to quickly respond to building hazards, public health concerns, safety incidents, and environmental threats. Strong, transparent communication at every stage of a crisis allows us to maintain public trust, provide accurate information, and take responsibility for our actions. Through this approach, CRF reinforces its commitment to supporting a safe and healthy environment for everyone we serve.

Our internal crisis management structure is just as important. Staying well-organized ensures that staff understand their roles, communication flows efficiently, and decisions can be made quickly and effectively. By maintaining protocols, leadership, and team communication, CRF can respond to emergencies with greater accuracy and reduce confusion. You are encouraged to report any suspicious activity to your manager so that they can respond accordingly. All staff should feel confident to speak up when something appears unsafe, irregular, or potentially harmful to ensure a safe and productive work environment. Staff safety is just as important as the safety of the community we serve.

Notes

Please provide any notes, comments, concerns, or suggestions you may have for this Crisis Communication Plan here. The Crisis Management Team encourages you to reach out via email with any other questions or comments at any time.

Developed Crisis Response Scenario

Heating System Malfunction:

During a severe winter storm, a heating unit at a CRF housing facility malfunctioned, resulting in low indoor temperatures. Several residents experienced symptoms of cold-related illness and required medical attention. The facility must be evacuated, emergency responders have been notified, and a temporary shelter must be arranged.

Strategic Plan

Steps: Use as an outline when adapting to other crises

Immediate Response: First 0-5 Hours

1. Notify the Crisis Management Team as soon as you learn of the heating system malfunction and possible injuries.
2. Ensure all staff and residents' safety
    a. This includes physical and mental health.
    b. Notify Dr. Maya for immediate medical guidance.
        i. She coordinates with local hospitals, advises on health risks, and ensures proper follow-up care for all affected individuals. Also helps draft medically accurate statements and reviews public health-related messaging.
    c. Dr. Marwood (Department of Public Health) can be contacted as a credible source if needed.
    d. Captain Mallory (Community Emergency Services) should be contacted as a credible source if needed.
3. After residents are evacuated, shut down the facility.
    a. Malik Foster (facilities & safety manager) will secure the building, turn off the malfunctioning system, and prevent re-entry until the building is secure.
    b. Thomas Geer (Department of Housing & Community Safety) can be contacted as a credible source if needed.
4. Document all damages and injuries
    a. Someone working under Malik Foster will record symptoms, witnesses, times, and photos for accuracy and liability protection.
    b. Work with Andria Collins (external legal counsel) to ensure all documentation is gathered
5. Draft initial statement for the media and stakeholders
    a. Contact stakeholders before the initial statement is released to the media.

b. Clarissa Nguyen (director of communication/public information officer) will begin the draft for President Marissa Ellington's review. She is the spokesperson since potential injuries are involved.

Draft

"Community Rise Foundation is responding to a heating system malfunction in one of our housing facilities. Residents have been safely evacuated, and individuals are receiving medical evaluations as a precaution. As we continue to work with emergency responders and city health officials, more information will be provided. Our top priority is the safety of our residents and staff."

6. Find temporary housing
    a. Javier Morales (director of community programs) will reach out to stakeholders and community members to find safe temporary housing for the residents. Thomas Geer (Department of Housing & Community Safety) should be immediately notified and contacted for suggestions.

Short-Term Response: First 24-48 Hours

1. Medical follow-up
    a. Ensure all affected residents receive medical care and are in safe, temporary housing.
    b. Linda Price (chief financial officer) will work closely with Dr. Corwin to see what medical expenses Community Rise can afford to help with.
2. Begin repairs
    a. Malik Foster and his team should initiate repairs and hire outside sources if needed.
    b. Ensure licensed technicians are working on the heating system.
    c. Conduct an inspection to ensure code compliance.
3. Internal communication
    a. Brief the rest of the staff and secondary stakeholders on the status of the situation. Correct rumors if needed.
    b. This should come from Clarissa and Marissa.
4. Media and community updates
    a. CEO Marissa will hold a press conference once all resident injuries and safety measures have been confirmed.
    b. This will be held at the site.

Long-Term Response: Weeks following

1. Conduct a full facilities audit on all Community Rise housing locations.
2. Offer support to residents and staff.
    a. Provide counseling, wellness resources, and follow-up case management.
3. Issue a final report.
    a. Work with the legal team or document the cause, actions taken, costs, and prevention recommendations.
4. Rebuild trust
    a. Release transparency reports, host community Q&A sessions, and share improvements made.

Key Messages and Talking Points

1. Resident and staff safety is our highest priority. We acted immediately to protect those affected.
2. The house will not be reopened until it is fully safe and operational.
3. We responded immediately by evacuating residents, contacting emergency services, and securing temporary housing.
4. We're working closely with emergency responders to ensure all residents receive proper medical attention.
5. CRF remains committed to transparency and provide updates as we work to implement long-term safety improvements.

Key Communication Processes to Notify All Stakeholders

- Staff & Volunteers
    - Internal email alert
    - Text message system
    - Emergency staff meeting
- Board of Directors
    - Direct phone calls from the CEO
    - Email summary with next steps
- Residents & Families
    - Phone calls to the emergency contacts of those injured
    - Texts to all residents in Community Rise housing
    - Printed notices in all Community Rise facilities
- Stakeholders
    - Phone call and personalized email
- Secondary Stakeholders
    - Inform as needed over personalized email

- Media
    - Initial statement emailed within the first 2 hours
    - Schedule a press conference
    - Updated statements as facts are confirmed
- Donors
    - Email updates from the CEO or Clarissa
    - Personalized messages for major donors
    - Formal statement reassuring our continued mission of integrity

Spokesperson

- CEO Marissa Ellington
    - Since there are medical examinations involved, the CEO should be the spokesperson. In other cases, the COO, Daniel Hughes, can be the spokesperson.
    - They will speak at press conferences, on-camera interviews, and formal statements.
- Secondary Spokesperson
    - Clarissa will handle media inquiries, manage social media communication, and provide updates between formal briefings.
- Subject Expert
    - Malik will provide a technical explanation on building systems and safety procedures.

Social Media Component

- Monitor social media
    - Since our organization is most popular on Facebook and we don't have a huge online following, it is more important to post on our website and Facebook as more information is provided.
- Website information
    - A dedicated section on the Community Rise website will provide updates, FAQs, and safety instructions.
    - Upload documents, including incident timeline, official statements, and community resources
- Dark Site
    - Probably not necessary for this crisis, but good to have if the crisis escalates.
- Stakeholders
    - A special page that residents, donors, and stakeholders will be directed to through an email. Additional information or direct contact options will be available.

Crisis Control Center Designation

- Since this crisis is fully contained, we will hold an on-site news conference. It's important for the media to see the housing unit, and it allows the Crisis Management Team to remain close to the incident location.
- Most things like Wi-Fi and electricity can be from the house itself. Portable printers, copiers, and scanners will be needed for document processing, and a large display screen for document processing.
- A designated media briefing area will be set up to ensure the safety of staff and reporters and for reporters to see the facility without entering sensitive areas.