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## What is the BENS Business Force?

The BENS Business Force is an innovative model for regional public-private partnerships, designed to help close gaps in disaster response and homeland security that neither government nor business can fill alone. Currently BENS Business Force partnerships are mobilizing private sector support in four general categories:

- **Organized Collaboration:** Businesses link to state and local government emergency operations centers and information “fusion centers” to improve communication before, during and after a crisis. This collaboration helps identify threats and minimize bureaucratic roadblocks to get the right resources to the right places faster;
- **Surge Capacity/Supply Chain Management:** Businesses pledge their resources (warehouse or office space, trucks, equipment, skilled personnel, etc.) on a pro bono basis through regional, web-based registries that can be quickly tapped by first responders (see [www.businessresponsenetwork.org](http://www.businessresponsenetwork.org));
- **Mass Vaccination/Treatment:** Business Force companies contribute volunteers and skilled management to assist state and local governments in the design, testing, and execution of plans to dispense vaccines and medical supplies in the event of a pandemic or biological attack;
- **Leadership and Strategic Support:** Business Force partnerships offer best business practices and civic leadership from some of the nation's top executives to help government improve homeland security capabilities.

## Where is it operating?

The New Jersey Business Force launched in early 2003, and the Georgia Business Force and MidAmerica Business Forces, based in Kansas City, started in late 2004. Massachusetts deployed an accelerated Business Force project prior to the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston. BENS began managing the Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC) in Los Angeles and Orange Counties in 2006, and BENS is building the San Francisco Bay Area Business Force. BENS also assists partnerships in other regions.

The White House's *Katrina: Lessons Learned* report encouraged expansion of the BENS Business Force model (see [www.whitehouse.gov/reports/katrina-lessons-learned](http://www.whitehouse.gov/reports/katrina-lessons-learned)), and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has provided partial funding.

## Why do we need it?

Government alone cannot secure the nation. Business understands that it needs to help maintain “continuity of community” in order to ensure its own business continuity. Companies responded admirably during 9/11, Katrina and other catastrophic events, but business-government collaboration has often been chaotic, with little or no advanced planning, training or exercising.

The BENS Business Force mobilizes and organizes the resources and expertise of the business community in advance, to improve security capability in states or regions, where it is most needed. Business and government need such a partnership to better prepare for threats such as a terrorist attack, flu pandemic or natural disaster.

## Why BENS?

BENS is a national, non-partisan, non-profit organization comprised of more than 500 business executives committed to volunteering their time and talent to improve the nation's security. BENS has a 24-year track record of applying business skills and best practices to achieve measurable, demonstrable improvements in government practices.

BENS is led by retired Air Force General Chuck Boyd, formerly the Executive Director of the Hart-Rudman Commission. Senior VP Ern Blackwelder and VP Lynne Kidder lead the BENS Business Force nationally. Experienced managers, with complementary backgrounds in business, government and the military, lead BENS Business Force regions.

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## Programs and Regions\*

| Program   | Description   | NJ | GA | KC | SF | LA | MA |
|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| <b>Organized Collaboration</b>                  |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <b>Business Operations Center</b>               | * Businesses link to state and local government Emergency Operations Centers to improve communication before, during & after a crisis                         | X  | X  | X  | X  | X  |    |
| <b>Information/Intelligence Fusion Center</b>   | * Businesses link to state and local Fusion Centers to improve information sharing with law enforcement and intelligence communities                          | X  | X  | X  | X  | X  |    |
| <b>Surge Capacity/Supply Chain</b>              |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <b>Business Response Network</b>                | * Businesses make needed resources (e.g., trucks, warehouses, people with certain skills) available on a pro bono basis via web-based registry                | X  | X  | X  | X  | X  | X  |
| <b>Emergency Preparedness Training</b>          | * BENS recruits companies to create Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs)  | X  | X  | X  | X  |    |    |
| <b>Mass Vaccination/Treatment</b>               |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <b>Strategic National Stockpile Partnership</b> | * Businesses assist in distribution and dispensing of vaccines and other medical supplies in a major medical emergency  | X  | X  | X  | X  | X  |    |
| <b>Workplace Sentinel</b>                       | * Large employers report spikes in illness to state epidemiologists   | X  |    |    |    |    |    |
| <b>Strategic Support</b>                        |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| <b>Exercises</b>                                | * BENS designs and conducts exercises to identify program opportunities and to ensure that each program is operational. Active participants in Topoff 3 and 4 | X  | X  | X  | X  | X  |    |
| <b>Public Service Announcements</b>             | * Companies create PSAs to help educate the public on emergency preparedness  |    |    |    |    | X  |    |
| <b>Ad Hoc Projects</b>                          | * Operating Groups of senior business and government leaders in each region enable collaboration on an as-needed basis  | X  | X  | X  | X  | X  |    |

### \* Regions

**NJ:** New Jersey – started February 2003

**GA:** Georgia – started October 2004

**KC:** MidAmerica (Kansas City) – Missouri & Kansas started October 2004; Iowa planned for 2006 and Nebraska for 2007

**LA:** Los Angeles & Orange Counties – management of Homeland Security Advisory Council began January 2006

**SF:** San Francisco Bay Area – ramping up operations

**MA:** Massachusetts – DHS project for Democratic National Convention in 2004

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