

Practising Leadership in a Flood: A Municipal Exercise Workshop

Association of Municipalities of Ontario

August 16, 2026



Ministry of Emergency Preparedness and Response



Ontario 

Ontario Corps Network

Collaborating with partners to enhance capabilities, expand capacity to support emergency response and build resilience.

Ontario Corps Partners



Mobilizing Ontarians with diverse skills and commitment to support communities in times of need.



Individual Volunteers

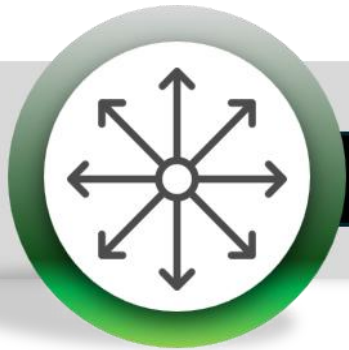


Emergency Response in Ontario

Emergency Situation



Emergency Response



Initial Assessment



Activation of Resources



Deployment



- Municipality / First Nation responds.
- PEOC monitoring 24/7.
- If local capabilities are surpassed, a request for provincial assistance is made.

- Request is received.
- Specific needs and supports are determined and then co-ordinated.

- The Ontario Corps Partner(s) that can best provide the required resources and/or supports are contacted.
- Resource deployment confirmed and authorized.
- Resources are activated and deployed, as required.

- Field Officers deploy within 2-4 hours.
- Ontario Corps supports deploy within 24 to 72 hours.

Tabletop Exercise (TTX)

Association of Municipalities of Ontario

August 16, 2026

Exercise Objectives

1. Enhance leadership's ability to make coordinated strategic decisions by exploring resource-sharing, partner coordination and considerations for emergency declarations.
2. Strengthen leadership's ability to make assessments of critical infrastructure impacts during a severe flooding event by simulating the effects of infrastructure disruptions in a municipal response.



Exercise Guidelines

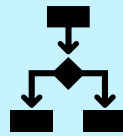
This is an open no-fault environment.
Varying viewpoints and open
discussion is encouraged.



As you solve the fictional scenario,
reflect on your own community's plans,
capabilities, and experiences.



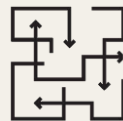
Decisions are not precedent setting;
consider different approaches and
suggest improvements.



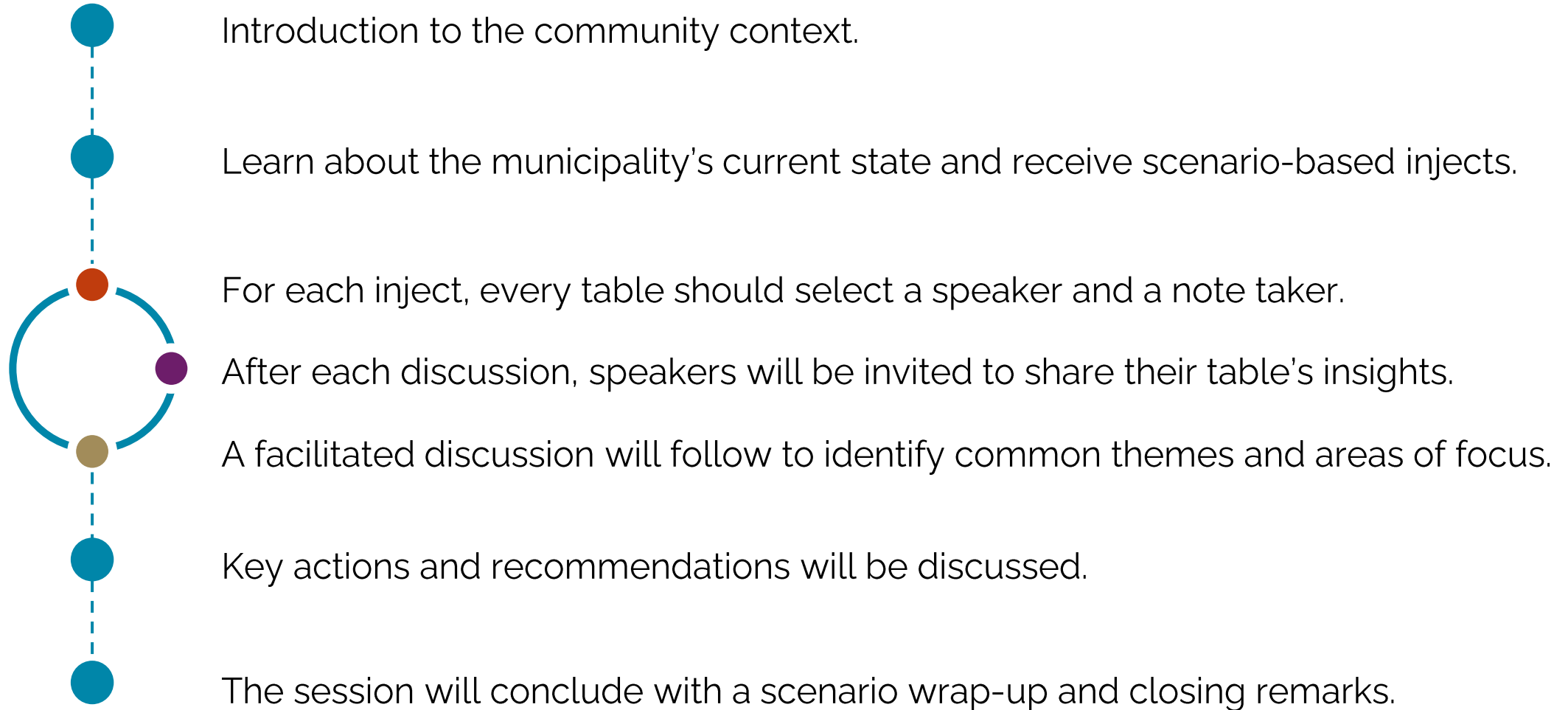
Focus on actionable suggestions to
improve community resilience.



The exercise is based on real life
scenarios, and events occur in
increasing complexity.



Exercise Structure



Touring the Community

During this exercise, you will be working with the fictional

Town of Utopia





TOWN HALL

UTOPIA BOOKS

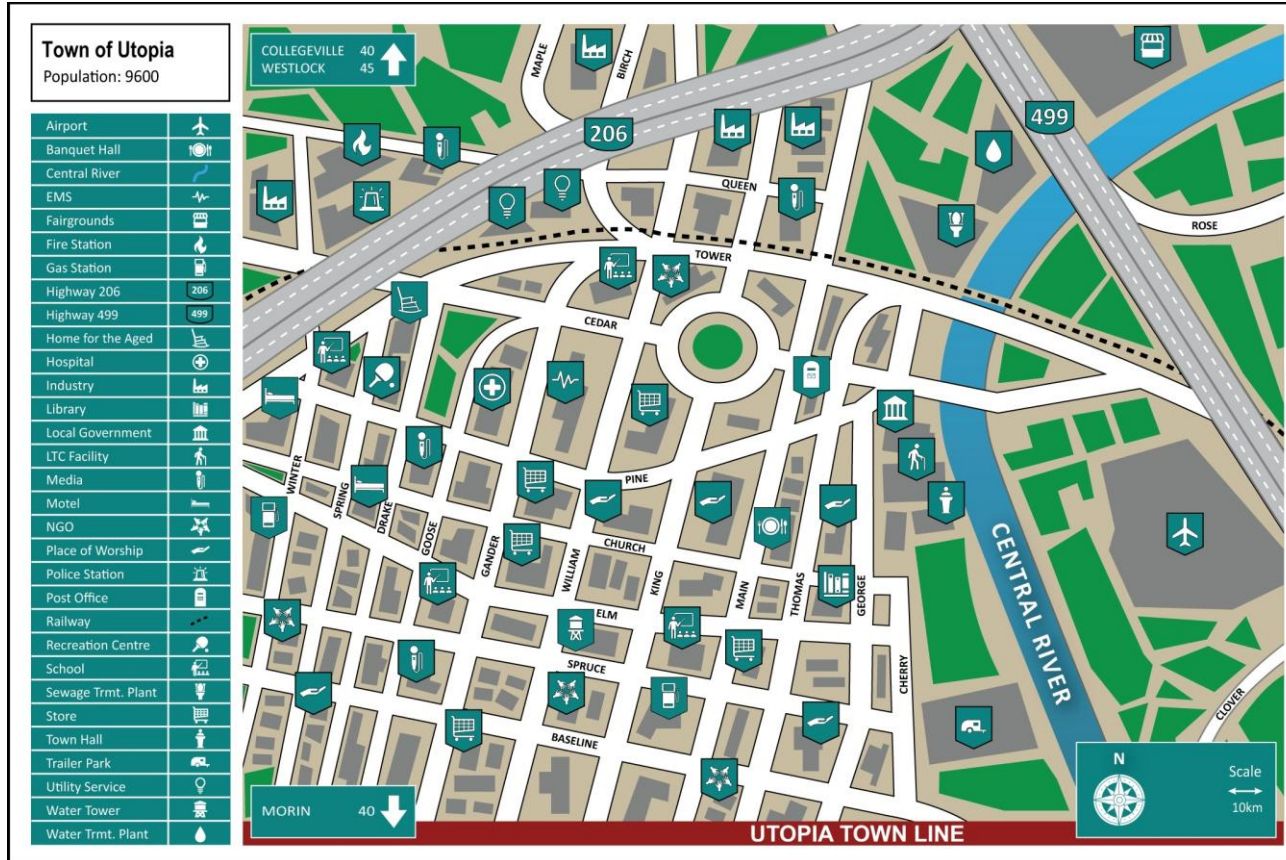
ORIENTAL STORE

MALIBU

Welcome to
UTOPIA

Community Map

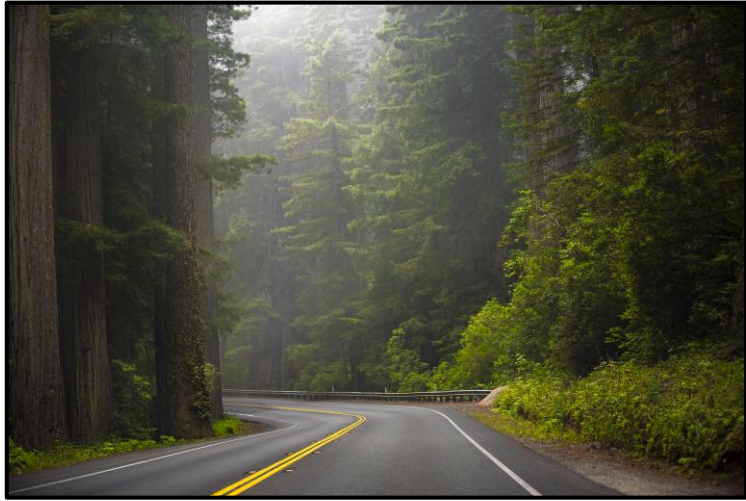
Town of Utopia



Geography

- Located along the **Central River**, supporting recreation and tourism.
- **Main Street** serves as the primary commercial and transportation corridor.
- Bordered on the west by **forested areas** which include a **campground**.
- Nearest small municipality, **Collegeville** is about 30 minutes away.
 - The community maintains close ties for services and mutual aid.
- The nearest urban centre, **Westlock**, is approximately **45 minutes by car**, offering specialized healthcare and major retail.

Community Profile

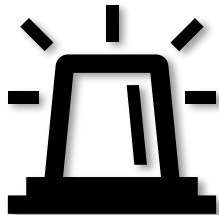
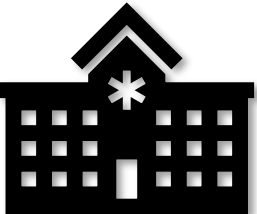


Transportation

- Accessible via **provincial highways and county roads**
 - Connections to Collegeville, Westlock, and Morin
- Local airport provides **cargo and small passenger services**
- **Public Transportation:** Limited to School buses and 1 public bus route to and from Collegeville (residents rely on personal vehicles)

Emergency Services

- Local police station provides policing
- Local fire station serves the community
- A small EMS facility houses emergency vehicles
- A community hospital (small) is located within the core urban area



Community Profile

Communications

- Trusted local radio station and weekly newspaper

Education

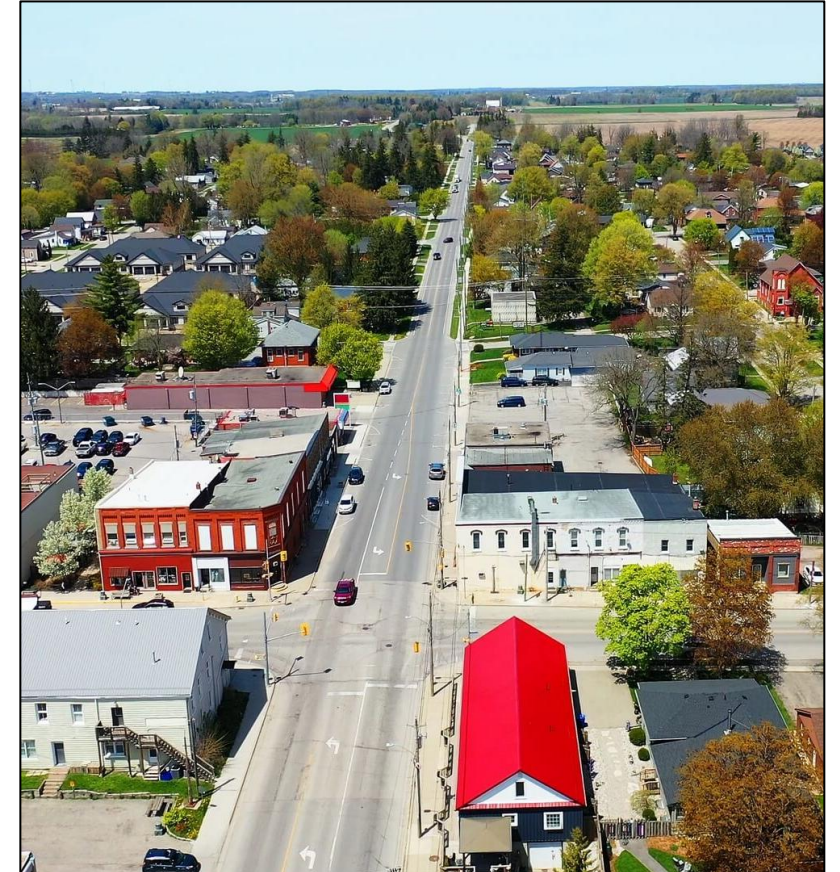
- Two elementary schools and two secondary schools serve the area
 - Public and separate school boards

Business and Industry

- Commercial district is centered around Cedar Street, including retail stores, grocery outlets, and motel accommodations
- Industrial land is located north of Hwy 206

Social and Entertainment

- Community Center hosts: festivals, sports and private events
- Shady Pines Campground
- In summer municipality sees seasonal increase



Scenario (Day 1)

- Record-breaking rainfall over the past 24 hours has exceeded seasonal averages.
- Stormwater and drainage systems are under increasing strain, with standing water reported in several low-lying areas.
- The Central River is now 30 cm above normal levels and continues to rise toward critical flood thresholds.
- Additional thunderstorms, heavy rainfall, high winds, and localized flash flooding are forecast over the next five days.
- Emergency services are responding to increased reports of localized flooding, road closures, and basement flooding.
- Growing concern exists regarding potential widespread flooding, evacuations, power disruptions, and risks to public safety.

Discussion Questions:



 **10 Min**

1. At what point does the situation in Utopia transition from “routine” to a potential emergency?
2. What initial actions should the municipality take at this stage?
3. Are there any critical infrastructure sites that should be prioritized right now? Why?
4. Which internal departments, neighboring municipalities and external agencies should be engaged right now? Why?
5. Is there a need to notify or coordinate with provincial authorities at this stage? What support may be available for Utopia?
6. Based on the forecast, what resources or supports might need to be requested early and what factors would influence that decision?

Scenario (Day 2)

- Flood conditions have significantly worsened following sustained rainfall and overnight thunderstorms.
- The Central River is now over 1 meter above normal levels and flooding multiple areas across the municipality.
- Flood impacts now include:
 - Long-term care home and adjacent floodplain areas
 - Closure of Cedar Street Bridge
 - Commercial and industrial areas experiencing significant water intrusion
- Emergency services have conducted multiple water rescues and issued evacuation advisories for affected neighborhoods.
- Emergency response resources are under significant strain, with mutual aid being considered.
- Power outages are affecting parts of the community, and critical water/wastewater infrastructure is under stress.
- Additional rainfall is forecast over the next 48–72 hours.
- The Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) has been activated and is coordinating a multi-agency response.



Discussion Questions:



 **10 Min**

1. What are your top three priorities right now, and why?
2. Should evacuation advisories be upgraded to mandatory evacuation orders? What factors inform that decision?
3. How are infrastructure priorities being balanced against life safety needs?
4. Which external partners need to be engaged right now (provincial, utilities, neighboring municipalities, NGOs)?
5. When and how should additional resources be requested and deployed?
6. Given the 48–72 hour forecast, how are you planning for sustained operations and potential escalation?

Exercise Summary

Participants worked through a progressive scenario that included:

- Rising water levels, overwhelmed stormwater systems, and early localized flooding
- Escalation to a major flood emergency, including evacuations, infrastructure failures, and EOC activation

Throughout the exercise, participants engaged in decision-making, coordination, and communication activities related to:

- Emergency response escalation
- Public safety and evacuation planning
- Critical infrastructure protection
- Resource allocation and mutual aid
- Public information and recovery messaging

Community Emergency Preparedness Grant



Program Overview

The **Community Emergency Preparedness Grant (CEPG)** ensures municipalities have the tools and resources they need to prepare for and respond to emergencies.

CEPG is a **competitive, application-based** grant, with successful applicants receiving **up to \$50,000**.

The Province will be **accepting applications for CEPG Round 4 (2026-27) starting on August 19** to help communities and organizations purchase critical emergency supplies, equipment and to deliver training and services to improve local emergency preparation and response.



Eligible Applicants

Must have an **emergency management mandate or responsibility**.

Upper, lower and single-tier municipalities with a population under 100,000 people (based on Statistics Canada data from 2021).

- Municipal fire departments or other municipal departments can apply through their municipality

Local Services Boards, established under the *Northern Services Boards Act*

Indigenous Communities including First Nations, Inuit or Metis communities.

Indigenous organizations, including Tribal Councils and other Indigenous service organizations that support emergency management programming.

Fire protection service providers in territories without municipal organization in accordance with *the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 (Ontario)*.

Organizations who have previously received the CEPG grant are **not eligible** for this round of funding.

Eligible Expenses

The following categories have been identified as examples of eligible expenses. Additional items may be considered if aligned with the identified project need.



Supplies

- Sandbags;
- Cots;
- Food kits;
- Emergency preparedness promotional material (e.g. printed brochures, fridge magnet, signage etc.).



Equipment

- Generators
- Chainsaws;
- Two-way radios;
- Mobile communication tower; Weather radios,
- GPS phones; saws
- Water pump and purification systems;
- Air scrubbers
- Drones;
- Sandbagger;
- Response equipment;
- Flatbed trailers.



Training

- Exercises;
- Incident Management System training/licencing;
- Emergency Management training;
- First Aid,
- Specialized equipment training;
- Mental health crisis management and response;
- Emergency evacuation procedures.



Services

- Emergency plan development;
- Exercise planning and coordination;
- Risk assessment;
- Emergency preparedness promotional strategy; Emergency preparedness website.

Key Information

Important Dates

Milestone	Timeline
Applications open	August 19, 2026
Deadline to submit applications	October 7, 2026, 4:00 p.m. ET
Applicants notified of funding decision	February 2027
Project timeframe	March 2027 – August 2027
Project reporting deadline	September 2027 Final date will be provided in the Transfer Payment Agreement.

Support and Resources

For further information about the CEPG, please visit: [Community Emergency Preparedness Grant | ontario.ca](https://communityemergencypreparednessgrant.ontario.ca)

For the list of previous CEPG program recipients, please visit: [Community Emergency Preparedness Grant - Dataset - Ontario Data Catalogue](#)

For any program inquiries, please contact: EMOCommunityGrants@ontario.ca

