



# Introduction

**D**isasters, whether natural or man-made, usually strike quickly and without warning. You and your family may have little or no time to decide what to do next. That's why it is so important to plan for the possibility of disaster—and not wait until it happens.

Taking measures to avoid or prepare for a disaster in advance—called “mitigation” in technical terms—reduces the likelihood of injury, loss of life, and property damage far more than anything you can do after a disaster strikes. Part of disaster planning should include financial planning, which is why this booklet was written.

In this booklet, you will find suggestions on steps you can take now to:

- ◆ Protect your family's health, life, and property with adequate insurance.
- ◆ Consider disaster vulnerability and mitigation before making decisions about relocating and making major purchases.
- ◆ Pay for a mitigation project.
- ◆ Plan financially for the possibility of a job loss or disability.
- ◆ Safeguard your important financial and legal records.
- ◆ Prepare your loved ones to weather a disaster even if you are not there to care for them.

While this booklet may not answer all your questions, it will answer many of them and, we hope, enable you and your family to avoid a financial crisis if you ever experience a disaster.

*Disasters and Financial Planning: A Guide for Preparedness* is offered to you as a public service of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), AICPA Foundation, the American Red Cross, and the National Endowment for Financial Education® (NEFE®).

