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As the frequency and destructiveness of natural disasters increases due to climatic changes and expanding development in vulnerable areas, the study of resilience offers possible solutions for minimizing losses from disasters. Much academic attention in the field of resilience focuses on community and organizational resilience generally; however, the specific resilience factors essential to emergency response organizations (EROs) have not been identified in previous research. When natural disasters occur, EROs must provide critical services in challenging and often dangerous environments, and disasters place increased demand on emergency services and their resources and personnel. For the purposes of this study, "emergency response organizations" (EROs) include fire departments, emergency medical services, police departments, public works departments, and Emergency Management Agency (EMA) departments. The critical functions provided by EROs are essential for community resiliency, and hence must be addressed in order to minimize and mitigate the costs of impacts from disasters. The concept of organizational resilience is directly applicable to EROs as their services are required throughout natural disasters and major emergencies. The resilience of EROs is also a critical component of community resilience due to their provision of key life-safety services including medical, fire and rescue, and emergency response. This study, building off of previous research in the organizational resilience field and proposing a model of ERO resilience factors, provides recommendations for improvements in the resilience of emergency response organizations that will ultimately result in enhanced community resilience to current disasters and projected climate change impacts in the future. Using the Delphi method, this research developed a list of expert-derived factors contributing to ERO resilience, then ranked and rated the factors to develop an expert consensus-based set of ERO resilience factors. The factors ranked by the expert panel as most important with high levels of consensus provide a framework to apply organizational resilience principles to EROs forming the Emergency Response Organization Resiliency Framework. This framework supports decision making and planning priorities to develop stronger, more resilient, emergency response agencies. Resilience of emergency response organizations directly contributes to community resilience, leading to stronger communities and organizations that are better able to survive and thrive in an age of increasing threats and natural disasters.

Organizational learning and change during the "Blue Skies"