

Annex J - Volunteer and Donation Management

PURPOSE

Donations of funds, supplies, equipment and voluntary labor are often made in response to perceived needs during and after a disaster. Donated goods and services can meet critical needs; but if not properly coordinated and managed, they can become a tremendous burden. Unsolicited donations and individual volunteers will be managed by this plan. Supplies, equipment, financial assistance, and volunteers that are affiliated with an organization will be managed by that organization. This plan will address coordination with those organizations.

The Volunteer and Donations Management Support Annex describes the coordinating processes used to ensure the most efficient and effective utilization of unaffiliated volunteers and unsolicited donated goods during disasters.

- Identify all of the key organizations and individuals,
- Describe the roles and responsibilities of these organizations and individuals, and
- Identify policy and procedures to follow in managing volunteers and donations.

The overall responsible party for implementing and amending this annex is Human Services.

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

Volunteer management in a disaster may be overall handled by nonprofits such as the Red Cross, but Houston County wants to make sure there is a plan in place in case nonprofits aren't available following a disaster. Human Services will be in charge of volunteer management.

- a. Any unaffiliated emerging volunteers during a disaster will need to report to a central location to get work assignments. Volunteers may also need a place to sleep, eat, and relax after working. There are many facilities in the county which can take on volunteer sheltering. Houston County will make mutual aid agreements with current Red Cross approved shelters to use as volunteer sheltering if not being used for victim sheltering.
- b. All volunteer registration, assignment, and supervision will be overseen by Human Services. Volunteers will be registered at a designated site near the disaster zone and will receive assignments based on priorities (life-saving will always come first). Supervision of volunteers may need to happen based on which departments and officials are available. In some cases, municipal officials may be the supervisors. In others such as debris management, the supervision may happen through the Highway Department or Environmental Services.
- c. Partner agencies with Houston County who can handle volunteer management include the Southwest Wisconsin chapter of the American Red Cross and other Minnesota VOADS (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster).

During and after a disaster event, donations may come pouring into the county from elsewhere around the state and country. Oftentimes, if the national media is covering the disaster, people from all around the country will feel the need to give monetary and physical donations of goods and items as their way of assisting during the crisis. Houston County recognizes that during a disaster, there may be many unsolicited donations given in staggering quantities. As such, donations management

will be overseen by Human Services and may take many volunteers from the county including nonprofits and self-deployed volunteers to take care of sorting and dispersing of donated items.

- a. There are many facilities that could work as potential donations centers. It's important to recognize a possible location for donations to go prior to an event due to the nature of donated goods (clothes and shoes could get wet, food could spoil, etc). Potential facilities include churches, food banks for donated food, community centers, and other large open spaces. Houston County will work on mutual aid agreements within the county for potential donations center facilities.
- b. Donations will need to be collected at specific locations that the media can provide information to the public for, in order to avoid donations stacking up near or around the incident site. Houston County will need to work with local media in order for possible donors to know of facilities where they can drop off their donations. Sorting of donations will require volunteer assistance from the community or emerging parties in order to be done effectively, as Human Services does not have the staff capacity to handle too many donations sorting or distributing. Distribution may be done based on an affected community's needs, and can be transported by local law enforcement, recognized volunteer organizations, school bus transport, or other means.
- c. Houston County will require assistance of partner agencies to coordinate and distribute donations after a disaster. Possible agencies to assist include the Red Cross, Salvation Army, and local church organizations.
- d. The media will need to be briefed frequently on which items are needed and where to bring donations. Houston County will need to work with local media to provide this information to assure that only items that are needed are donated and there isn't an abundant excess of donated goods that will not be used after an incident's response phase is over.
- e. Cash donations are the preferred donation method from other parts of the country to Houston County. A bank trust account may need to be opened for easy deposit of donation funds by any well-wishing individuals. Any cash donations that are deposited at donations facilities may need to be handled with great care and security, and local law enforcement may need to have representation at a donations center in order to ensure cash donations make it safely from the donations center to a bank.

SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

Situation

- Donations will be needed in a major disaster.
- Unsolicited donations can be a resource drain. It can pull resources from other relief efforts. If not handled properly this issue may create negative public relations. Donations must be managed.

Assumptions

- Controlling the flow of goods and services into a disaster is necessary to minimize the interference with other ongoing disaster response operations.

- Donations are best managed by a team of local government officials, volunteer agency representatives and State/Federal officials. The local Incident Commander will remain in charge.
- Donations come from a wide variety of sources: individuals, families, municipalities, businesses, volunteer organizations and possibly other states and counties.
- Cash is often the preferred type of donation because it is easier to meet the precise need of the disaster victims. Also, spending money in the disaster-affected community will help the local economy. It also minimizes transportation and warehousing issues.
- For donations management effort to be successful, all donors must be treated with respect but need clear guidance.
- Public information is a key component to donations management. This ensures that those wishing to donate know what is needed and where it needs to go.

Concept of Operations

The donation management process must be organized and coordinated to ensure people are able to take advantage of the appropriate types and amounts of donated goods and services in a manner that does not affect other disaster response operations.

Volunteer and donations management operations may include the following:

- A Volunteer Coordinator
- A Physical Donations Coordinator
- A Financial Donations Coordinator
- A phone bank
- A coordinated media relations effort
- Information technology component such as web site for gathering volunteer/donation offers and needs and a database from managing this information.

The policy for volunteer and donations management in Houston County will:

- Ensure coordination includes other agencies so that goods and resources are used effectively;
- Encourage contribution by organizations with established volunteer and donation management structures
- Encourage cash donations to recognize non-profit voluntary organizations;
- Encourage individuals to participate and/or affiliate with a recognized organization; and
- Encourage the use of existing nongovernmental organizational volunteer and donations resources before seeking governmental assistance.

Donated Goods (Physical) Management Function

Management of unsolicited donated goods involves a cooperative effort by local, voluntary, and community based organizations; the business sector; and the media.

The Human Services Director, in conjunction with support and voluntary organization partners, is responsible for developing donations management plans and managing the flow of donated goods during disaster operations.

Volunteer Management Function

Management of unaffiliated volunteers requires a cooperative effort by local, voluntary, and community based organizations; faith-based organizations; the private sector; and the media.

Human Services, in partnership with voluntary organizations, are responsible for developing plans that address the management of unaffiliated volunteers during disaster response and recovery.

Financial Donations Management Function

Management of unsolicited donated monetary donations shall be coordinated by the responsible city department if just one city is involved. If the incident involves more than one city or involves significant rural damage, the county will coordinate.

The Auditor/Treasurer's Office is responsible for developing financial donations management plans and managing the funds according to city, state, and federal laws.

Organization

The Human Services Director will work with support organizations to identify sites and facilities that will be used to receive, process, and distribute the unsolicited donated goods that will be sent to the disaster area. The necessary equipment, staff, communications, and security support to these facilities and sites will be provided by local government and volunteer organizations, as required. The American Red Cross has been incorporated into the emergency services organization providing food and clothing to displaced persons at the designated shelters within the county.

Another person will coordinate the disaster relief actions of quasi-public and volunteer relief agencies and groups. This is necessary to ensure maximum effectiveness of relief operations and to avoid duplication of effort and services.

Standard operating procedures will be developed to address screening, processing, training, and assignments of volunteers who will show up once recovery efforts begin. The service to which personnel are assigned will provide the necessary training. Persons who already possess needed skills or have received specialized training, such as heavy equipment operators, should be assigned duties, which allow for the maximum benefit of their skills. Each individual volunteer will be registered, and a log will be maintained of man-hours worked. Accurate records of all incurred expenses will be maintained. All volunteers working for the county must be registered and may be issued an ID card. Each work period the volunteer should log in and out with an appointed supervisor with hours of work tracked.

ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

Logistics Officer

The Logistics Branch Director oversees volunteer and donations management efforts when this plan is activated. The Logistics Director will:

- Activate this plan when appropriate
- Activate the Donations Coordination Team and Disaster Coordination Center (preferably located close to EOC)
- Chair the Donations Coordination Team (DCT)

- Support the DCT through the Service Branch as needed (i.e. communications, collection/warehouse locations, transportation, office supplies, security, information systems, feeding, portable toilets, parking)
- Coordinate with the Public Information Officer for disseminating information and establishing hotlines
- Identify potential sites and facilities to manage donated goods and services being channeled into the disaster area
- Identify the necessary support requirements to ensure the prompt establishment and operation of these facilities and sites
- Assign the tasks of coordinating auxiliary manpower and material resources
- Identify and be prepared to set up and staff a Receiving Point, staging areas, and distribution points, if required
- Develop procedures to manage donated goods and services to include receiving, sorting, prioritizing, sorting, and distributing them during an emergency
- Coordinate with volunteer organizations in the County and surrounding area to support this Annex and assist with staffing the Receiving Point and Points of Distribution
- Coordinate with the Emergency Management Director for communication support to the Receiving Point, staging areas, and Points of Distributions, as a primary or backup method of communication
- Keep accurate records of donated, stored, and distributed goods; or expenditures in support of this Annex for possible reimbursement or auditing requirements
- Develop a critical resources list and procedures for acquisition in time of crisis
- Develop procedures for the management of donated goods
- Assist with emergency operations
- Coordinate emergency operations with the EOC, when activated

The Donations Coordination Team is comprised of local voluntary organizations active in disaster (MNVOAD) members, business representatives and government personnel all with an interest in managing unsolicited goods and services.

The Donations Coordination Team will:

- Identify goods and services that are needed and those that are not
- Help PIO coordinate public information message regarding donation and volunteer requirements
- Manage donations phone bank
- Process the offers from the public
- Receive donated goods
- Ensure effective logistics procedures are in place
- Ensure effective communications procedures are in place
- Work to include emerging relief organizations

Support Departments

The Volunteer Coordinator will:

- Be the primary coordinating agency for matters pertaining to volunteers
- Develop procedures for identifying requirements for volunteers during emergency operations and a process to register, account for, manage, and assign volunteers to appropriate positions
- Be prepared activate a system to register and assign volunteers during emergency operations, as required
- Assign volunteers to tasks that best utilize their skills
- Maintain a comprehensive list of volunteers that are available to assist in support of this annex
- Establish procedures to manage spontaneous volunteers

City Administrators will:

- Work with Social Services to pre-identify potential sites and facilities to manage donated goods/resources being channeled into the disaster area within their cities
- Identify the necessary support requirements to ensure the prompt establishment and operation of these facilities and sites

The Emergency Management Director will:

- Assist in identifying personnel and resources to support this annex
- Coordinate with the Volunteer Coordinator in maintaining a list of volunteers, by name, address, telephone number, and if applicable special capabilities, that may assist with emergency operations, when needed
- Coordinate with the Minnesota Volunteers Organizations Active in Disaster (MNVOAD) in setting up a registration point for registration of additional volunteers (that are not already registered members of volunteer organizations) that wish to donate their services in support of emergency operations
- Provide communication options including working with the Amateur Radio Emergency Services Coordinator to potentially provide support to the EOC, Receiving Point, staging areas, and distribution points, as necessary and available
- Request outside assistance, when required

American Red Cross will:

- Assist in supporting volunteer needs to include collecting, sorting, and distributing goods during an emergency
- Maintain a list of trained volunteers that are available to assist in support of this annex

The Sheriff's Department will:

- Provide security for the Receiving Point, staging areas, and distribution points, as required
- Establish mutual aid agreement to provide additional security as needed

All volunteers are required to register before beginning any activities related to a disaster or emergency. Registration will be coordinated through the Logistics Branch.

It is also important that the Public Information Officer (PIO) disseminate clear information stating whether or not volunteers are needed and for what purpose. Coordination between the PIO and Logistics Director and then clear direction to the media is vital to maintain control of a situation. If volunteers are requested it is important to have facilities, e.g. staging and registration areas, mass transportation (to control entry and exit of affected areas), sanitary facilities, feeding facilities, etc., arranged in conjunction with requesting volunteers. Additionally, needed work equipment, e.g. gloves, shovels, rakes, bags, etc., must be provided. Staffing must be available for a first aid station to care for minor cuts or scrapes. It is crucial to have adequate supervision for the volunteer workers within the ICS guidelines of 3 to 7 personnel per supervisor.

It is also common to have shipments of non-requested goods of nearly any description, quantity and quality show up at a disaster. Some items are usable, and some are not appropriate for the situation. Storage, dispersal and disposal then become a problem and should be considered as part of the logistics planning.

ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS

Forms are located in SOG and attachment 1 to this document.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

This annex will be reviewed in accordance with the procedures listed in the basic plan and the schedule determined by the EMD and the Emergency Management Committee.

The procedures in this annex will be exercised at least once every 4 years. The Social Services Director in coordination with the EMD will develop an exercise schedule for this annex and its associated operating procedures and plans.

AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

None.

Attachment 1

Donations Management Recommendations

- Conduct donation intelligence to determine what the need is.
- Emphasize that cash contributions are best.
- Plan transportation in advance. (refrigerator truck, pallets, storage)
- Ensure that donated items are packed well and clearly labeled.
- Small items and clothing are difficult to handle and may be best given to local charity, homeless shelter or food bank.

Guidelines for Donors

- Confirm there is a need.
- Donate through an organization.
- Have rummage sale and donate money (not used items).

Attachment 2

Sample Volunteer Registration Form

MUNICIPAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM Work Release Form

VOLUNTEER’S AGREEMENT AND RELEASE FROM LIABILITY

1. Voluntary Participation: I acknowledge that I have voluntarily applied to serve as a volunteer for the City/County of _____ through the Municipal Volunteer Program (MVP), in which volunteers assist municipal departments. I understand as a volunteer that I will not be paid for my services, and should I be injured while performing duties on behalf of City/County, the City/County provides insurance which offers limited medical benefits. This insurance has a \$ _____ limit, is strictly excess and will only respond to expenses after all other insurance is exhausted.

2. Release: In consideration of the opportunity afforded me to serve as a volunteer for the City/County through the Municipal Volunteer Program (MVP), I hereby agree that I, my assignees, heirs, guardians, and legal representatives, will not make a claim against the City/County, or their officers or directors collectively or individually, or the equipment that is used by the City/County, or any of the volunteer workers, for the injury or death to me or damage to my property, however caused, arising from my participation in the Municipal Volunteer Program (MVP). Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, I hereby waive and release any rights, actions, or causes of action resulting from personal injury or death to me, or damage to my property, sustained in connection with my participation in the Municipal Volunteer Program (MVP). I further consent to the unrestricted use by City/County’s Municipal Volunteer Program (MVP) and/or person(s) authorized by them of any photographs, recordings, interviews, videotapes, motion pictures, or similar visual recording of me.

Signed this day of , 200 , in , MN

 Volunteer Signature (Please print)

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Telephone:

 Volunteer Coordinator Signature Name