

# PREVENTING A DISASTER

**WITHIN THE DISASTER:**

**The Effective Use and Management  
of Unaffiliated Volunteers**



WHETHER YOU REPRESENT BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT, PHILANTHROPY or the nonprofit sector, you can play an important role in supporting efforts to engage volunteers more effectively in times of disaster. The recommendations outlined in this report show how you can contribute to the safety, security and well-being of our nation and local communities.

**"On September 11, 2001, spontaneous volunteers hit the country's radar screen. We need a national agenda to include volunteer management in every community's emergency plan."**

- Margaret Melsh  
Disaster Response Program Manager  
The Volunteerism Project

**"It is a paradox — people's willingness to volunteer versus the system's capacity to use them effectively."**

- Tom Weidemeyer  
Chief Operating Officer of  
United Parcel Service and President,  
UPS Airlines

**"Volunteer management is too often an afterthought. A more structured approach is required, particularly when hundreds or thousands of volunteers want to be engaged."**

- Scott Ingram  
Director of Community Services  
Volunteer Center of Tucson

**"Volunteers, especially disaster volunteers, face challenges similar to members of the emergency management community — being unable to give as much as they wanted."**

- Jim Schwartz  
Deputy Assistant Chief of Operations  
Arlington County Fire Department  
and Incident Commander  
September 11, 2001, Pentagon site



**Disaster volunteering** refers to all volunteer activities performed during any phase of the emergency management cycle.

**Disaster Site** refers to the general area in community damaged by the disaster.

**Spontaneous or unaffiliated volunteers** are individuals or groups that:

- arrive unsolicited at the scene of a disaster
- may or may not be a resident of the affected community
- may or may not possess skills necessary to respond to the current disaster
- are not associated with any part of the existing emergency management response system

No community is immune to the havoc and devastation caused by disaster, whether natural or man-made. When disaster strikes, emergency management and voluntary agencies automatically mobilize. Each has a specific role to help ensure a community's successful response to and recovery from the disaster's devastation. Yet, one element within the present system continues to challenge this process: **Spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers.**

These volunteers — our neighbors and everyday citizens — are eager to respond and contribute to the community's recovery, but usually lack the training to help them be effective in these roles. Unaffiliated volunteers often arrive on-site in numbers too great for traditional disaster responders — emergency management, disaster relief agency staff, and affiliated volunteers — to manage as they try to meet the immediate needs of communities affected by disaster. The challenge, therefore, is reconciling the desire to help felt by unaffiliated volunteers with the need of responder's to do their jobs unencumbered by the responsibility of managing volunteers.

THOUGH SPONTANEOUS, UNAFFILIATED VOLUNTEERS HAVE BEEN A significant obstacle in past disaster response operations, *our society can ill afford to ignore the potential capacity of its citizens to help improve conditions in their communities, especially in times of disaster.* It is critical that these volunteers have meaningful and constructive opportunities to assist their communities in preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disaster. Collaborative planning by disaster groups and other organizations can help ensure that we avoid creating a "disaster within the disaster."



## National Leadership Forum on Disaster Volunteerism

In April 2002, UPS, the Points of Light Foundation & Volunteer Center National Network, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) convened the National Leadership Forum on Disaster Volunteerism. The meeting brought together volunteer and emergency management leaders and operations experts to explore ways to strengthen our nation's ability to engage volunteers appropriately and effectively in all phases of disaster.

Over 90 people representing more than 45 organizations participated. Attendees identified challenges and opportunities associated with unaffiliated volunteers, developed initial recommendations for addressing the challenges and leveraging the opportunities, and committed to work toward the recommendations proposed. This report grew out of their experience, knowledge, and insight.

### VISION FOR DISASTER VOLUNTEERING

- Created by participants of the National Leadership Forum on Disaster Volunteerism, April 2002.

**Disaster Volunteering** is necessary for the recovery and healing of people and communities.

**Disaster Volunteer Coordination** is an essential management function within emergency management and should be fully integrated into emergency management systems at all levels. It is most successful when the full range of community resources and knowledge is leveraged, and when roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

### Benefits of Effective Disaster Volunteer Management

- First responders can fulfill their duties without the added responsibility of managing volunteers.
- Experienced volunteer coordinators can manage volunteers, to ensure meaningful and quality volunteer experiences. As a result, volunteers are more inclined to seek future community service opportunities.
- Voluntary organizations that are active in disasters can quickly and appropriately direct volunteers who became affiliated through mitigation and preparedness activities to additional areas of need in the disaster cycle.
- Communities will know how to effectively engage citizens as volunteers in all phases of disasters.
- Communities can respond to and heal from disasters more effectively when volunteer efforts are well managed.

## Emergency Volunteer Management

Effective and planned emergency volunteer management provides the opportunity to capture the inspiring, yet overwhelming, volunteer energy and interest that surfaces during the response phase. The envisioned disaster volunteer management process is consistent with the comprehensive emergency management cycle and includes roles for volunteers in each phase — mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. Moreover, the approach to volunteer management in any given phase of the cycle supports efforts in the next phase.

This holistic approach engages volunteers in the mitigation and preparedness stages to help build more disaster-resistant and well-equipped communities. Potential volunteers are introduced to the emergency management system prior to a disaster and, therefore, are likely to become trained and affiliated with an experienced voluntary agency. This approach is designed to generate volunteers that are more effective during response and recovery.



### THE FOUR PHASES OF THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CYCLE

**Mitigation** — Disaster mitigation includes a wide range of activities at the household, community, state and national level, that aim to reduce the damaging effects of all kinds of disasters.

**Preparedness** — Disaster preparedness refers to proactive efforts undertaken by individuals, families, groups or whole communities to place themselves in a better state of readiness to withstand or avoid the immediate impact of any kind of disaster.

**Response** — Disaster response occurs from the moment an incident takes place (*fire, hurricane, tornado, earthquake or man-made*) through the time that basic emergency human and community needs have been met through rescue operations, mass shelter, mass feeding and overall stabilization of the disaster-affected community.

**Recovery** — Disaster recovery follows the disaster response period and may extend for several years after a disaster. Disaster recovery relates to the collaborative efforts of individuals, communities, all levels of government, the private sector, the nonprofit sector, and others to re-establish a sense of normalcy, development, and growth in a community affected by a disaster.





## RECOMMENDATIONS

There are many challenges to realizing the vision for more effective and appropriate involvement of unaffiliated volunteers in all phases of disaster. The following recommendations for addressing those challenges are framed in an Issue/Discussion/Recommendations approach, which follows the format most often used within the emergency management community. Specific recommendations are listed under each issue in order of priority.

### VOLUNTEERS AND DISASTER MITIGATION



#### Issue 1

Insufficient public awareness of the needs and opportunities for appropriate disaster volunteering often prevents the emergency response system from involving citizens in mitigating or reducing the impact of disasters.

#### Discussion

Volunteers have an important role to play in strengthening the capacity of local communities to resist the effects of disaster. Information exists to facilitate increased citizen involvement in disaster mitigation but has not been effectively communicated to help individuals and organizations identify and embrace appropriate volunteer opportunities.

#### Recommendations

1. FEMA, the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA), and National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) should promote disaster mitigation efforts and develop a plan to educate the media, government, elected officials, the private sector, and the general public regarding the importance of effective use of volunteers in disaster mitigation.
2. Government agencies should leverage mechanisms, such as Citizen Corps Councils, to promote disaster mitigation by exploring and expanding volunteer activities in conjunction with first responders, including police and fire departments.
3. NVOAD should facilitate greater cooperation and collaboration among voluntary agencies, emergency management groups, government, and the private sector to provide expanded volunteer opportunities in disaster mitigation.
4. Voluntary agencies, using their large networks and established public goodwill, should promote disaster mitigation messages and share information about how volunteers can make a difference. These agencies should identify and leverage opportunities to recruit, train, and involve volunteers in disaster mitigation activities between disasters, thus helping build safer communities and stronger volunteer networks.
5. Organizations that provide service learning opportunities should incorporate disaster mitigation messages into these projects. Examples of such groups might include youth development efforts, scouting projects, campus service programs, workplace volunteer programs, and community environmental activities.
6. Academic institutions should support disaster mitigation by increasing applied research to study the effectiveness of volunteers in promoting disaster mitigation and to provide technical assistance to interested agencies or organizations.
7. As part of a general community needs assessment, voluntary and emergency management agencies should assess their service delivery regions to determine the specific needs of people

(cont. on page 7)

## RECOMMENDATIONS



### VOLUNTEERS AND DISASTER MITIGATION *cont.*

representing vulnerable populations such as the elderly, people with disabilities, or non-English speakers, and the ways volunteers can help meet those needs. They should also explore opportunities to involve members of these populations as volunteers.

### VOLUNTEERS AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS



#### Issue 1

There is neither a national strategy nor accepted standards to prepare for the management of unaffiliated volunteers during times of disaster.

#### Discussion

Without clear national policies concerning disaster volunteers, there is no foundation from which to develop and launch an effective public education campaign or an effective volunteer management training program.

#### Recommendation

NVOAD should develop and convene a Volunteer Management Committee to create a national volunteer management strategy and to identify roles and responsibilities of key players. The committee should include representatives from Volunteer Centers, all levels of government, the private sector, the media, and other concerned entities, as well as volunteer resource managers, disaster volunteer planners, and operation managers from the voluntary agency sector.

#### Issue 2

There is insufficient national guidance to help emergency management professionals prepare for the influx of large numbers of unaffiliated volunteers and to incorporate procedures to address this issue in emergency management plans.

#### Discussion

Recent disaster experiences both large and small have demonstrated the need for the early implementation of a disaster volunteer management plan. Without a plan to manage volunteer resources, there is:

- confusion on the part of the public on how to volunteer appropriately
- frustration on the part of first responders regarding how to work with volunteers while attempting to meet basic human needs, and
- recognition on the part of community leaders of missed opportunities to organize and leverage the surge of spontaneous volunteers

#### Recommendations

1. FEMA, NEMA, and NVOAD should identify, document, and facilitate discussions around lessons learned about the volunteer management issue from recent disasters. These can be incorporated into emergency planning guidance provided to state and local government agencies responsible for working with their voluntary agency partners.
2. FEMA should urge, if not require, state and local governments to develop an annex to their

(cont. on page 8)



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### VOLUNTEERS AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS *cont.*

Emergency Operations Plans that addresses the management of unaffiliated volunteers. This can be done in conjunction with the Emergency Support Function (ESF) that many states have already developed to address donated goods management, or it can be addressed separately but be closely linked to the donation ESF.

3. Local emergency management planners should identify a local lead organization with the expertise, resources, and capacity to coordinate the unaffiliated volunteers and involve that organization in emergency response planning.
4. Emergency management planners in all levels of government and non-governmental organizations should enhance the level of volunteer management training to a higher level to improve planning as has been done recently with the issue of donated goods.
5. Emergency management planners at all levels in government and in non-governmental organizations should develop and conduct disaster volunteer management exercises and drills as a part of their routine emergency exercises.

### Issue 3

Members of the general public are confused about the appropriate roles they can play during the four phases of the emergency management cycle: mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

### Discussion

Despite a strong desire to help out, citizens who arrive at a disaster site can actually impede rescue and recovery efforts if they are unaffiliated and untrained in disaster operations. Researchers have found that spontaneous volunteers face many challenges in getting involved during a disaster. At the site, they may find long lines, uncoordinated leadership, and vague directions and information about what to do. These negative experiences may discourage volunteers from serving in the later recovery phase when their help may be desperately needed.

### Recommendations

1. The NVOAD Volunteer Management Committee should convene a joint team of government, voluntary agencies, and private sector representatives to identify and develop messages on how to be an effective disaster volunteer. The joint team should then include these messages in a multi-media public education campaign that might include outreach tools such as videos, brochures, joint web site messaging, public service announcements, and speaker bureaus.
2. The NVOAD Volunteer Management Committee should seek funding from the federal government, the private sector, and other sources to support the development and implementation of the public education campaign.

## VOLUNTEERS AND DISASTER RESPONSE



### Issue 1

Responsibility for the on-site coordination of unaffiliated volunteers needs to be clearly designated by state and local leadership.

(cont. on page 9)



## RECOMMENDATIONS



### VOLUNTEERS AND DISASTER RESPONSE cont.

#### Discussion

Experienced and identifiable volunteer resource managers are needed on-site to work with members of the public and to manage unaffiliated volunteers. The individuals who possess expertise in the management of volunteers can then coordinate citizen activities and contribute to a more productive and successful response effort. The absence of such on-site leadership leads to self-deployed individuals attempting to manage disaster response activities.

#### Recommendations

1. Local governments should designate responsibility for volunteer coordination in times of disaster and ensure training and guidance to prepare on-site volunteer resource managers for this role.
2. State and local emergency response plans must include the activation and deployment of on-site volunteer resource managers early in the disaster response plan.
3. Emergency management planners should leverage the expertise of local volunteer management professionals in planning and executing disaster volunteer coordination. Volunteer Centers, CityCares affiliates, and voluntary agencies have trained volunteer professionals who may be able to assist in this effort.

The Points of Light Foundation & Volunteer Center National Network, the Association for Volunteer Administration, NVOAD, and CityCares can connect local jurisdictions to affiliates.

4. Emergency planners should develop a strategy for unaffiliated volunteers that includes creating a central volunteer registration area located outside the perimeter of the disaster-impacted zone when necessary.

#### Issue 2

There is no functioning information management system for coordinating unaffiliated volunteers in response operations.

#### Discussion

There is a need in disasters for a central phone bank that will combine with a web-portal to provide the public with access to information on volunteer opportunities and provide volunteer coordinators with the capacity to match volunteers skills with volunteer opportunities. This capacity would allow volunteer managers to redirect some volunteers to ongoing needs in the community.

#### Recommendations

1. The NVOAD Volunteer Management Committee should create a Data Management subcommittee to research available software applications and to make specific recommendations regarding the best approach to address this need.
2. The subcommittee should create standardized processes, procedures, and forms for use by emergency planners and others to facilitate the timely deployment and effective use of volunteers in times of disaster.
3. The subcommittee should develop plans for training and outreach to all appropriate sectors on system use and protocols for submitting data on volunteer opportunities. (cont. on page 10)



## RECOMMENDATIONS

### VOLUNTEERS AND DISASTER RESPONSE cont.

#### Issue 3

Risk management issues at disaster scenes provide evolving challenges for emergency planners and volunteer managers. When disaster scenes are also crime scenes, such as with the Oklahoma City bombing or September 11th terrorist attack sites, additional challenges exist.

#### Discussion

Man-made disasters introduce unique security concerns for the management of unaffiliated, and therefore, unknown volunteers. In addition, such sites may present threats to the safety of professional responders and volunteers. Terrorism disaster scenarios may present extraordinary and life-threatening safety issues for emergency responders and volunteers, requiring stronger volunteer management safeguards for unaffiliated volunteers interested in assisting in or near a disaster area.

#### Recommendations

1. FEMA, NEMA, and NVOAD should collaborate to develop and adopt an identification system that certifies volunteers affiliated with experienced and registered voluntary agencies and approves them for access to the disaster sites to perform their disaster response and recovery responsibilities.
2. Local jurisdictions are encouraged to develop appropriate security procedures to allow unaffiliated volunteers, when advisable, access to designated areas of the disaster site.

### VOLUNTEERS AND DISASTER RECOVERY



#### Issue 1

Often there is a lack of careful planning aimed at mobilizing sufficient numbers of volunteers to help during the recovery period which may last for several years.

#### Discussion

The long-term recovery period in disaster situations presents volunteer management challenges that include maintaining the motivation of disaster response volunteers, developing strategies to mobilize new volunteers for the recovery period, and organizing large-scale volunteer efforts for clean up and rebuilding.

#### Recommendations

1. Points of Light and NVOAD should compile a compendium of models of successful volunteer management in recovery and disseminate them as useful guides for communities.
2. Volunteer Centers and designated voluntary agencies should collect and organize contact information from interested volunteers who responded during the earlier phases of disaster preparedness and response. These individuals and groups should be informed of volunteer opportunities available during the recovery period when their help may also be needed.

## ORGANIZATION-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



While some organizations who may take leading roles in supporting these recommendations have already been identified within this booklet, everyone has a part to play in turning these recommendations into real practices.

Listed below are suggested ways different organizations or sectors of the community can support the development of effective volunteer management strategies for addressing unaffiliated volunteers in all phases of disaster.

### NVOAD

- Participate in educating all sectors regarding the importance of effective use of volunteers in all phases of disaster.
- Facilitate greater cooperation and collaboration among voluntary agencies, government, and the private sector to provide expanded volunteer opportunities in all phases of emergency management.
- Leverage mechanisms such as Citizen Corps Councils to expand roles of volunteers in public education, training, and support to responders.
- Initiate a Volunteer Management Committee to develop a national volunteer management strategy, identify roles and responsibilities of key players and secure commitments.
- Convene a joint team of government, voluntary agency, and private sector representatives to identify and develop a set of key public education messages on how to be an effective disaster volunteer.
- Seek funding from the federal government, the private sector, and other sources to support development and implementation of the public education campaign.
- Create a Data Management subcommittee to research available software applications and make specific recommendations for a national information management system for management of unaffiliated volunteers in disaster operations.
- Compile models of successful volunteer management in each phase for dissemination to communities.
- Collaborate with FEMA and NEMA to develop and adopt an identification system for the certification of volunteers affiliated with registered voluntary agencies providing disaster services.

### FEMA

- Participate in developing and promoting a plan for educating all sectors regarding the importance of effective use of volunteers in all phases of disaster.
- Leverage mechanisms such as Citizen Corps Councils to promote all phases of emergency management.
- Document and facilitate discussion of lessons learned in recent disasters.
- Incorporate lessons learned into sound emergency planning guidance for state and local governments.
- Urge, if not require, state and local governments to develop an annex to their Emergency Operations Plan that addresses the management of unaffiliated volunteers.
- Enhance the level of training on volunteer management to a higher level as has been done recently with the issue of donated goods.

(cont. on page 12)



## ORGANIZATION-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- Collaborate with NVOAD and NEMA to develop and adopt an identification system for the certification of volunteers affiliated with registered voluntary agencies providing disaster services.

### State and Local Emergency Management

- Participate in developing national volunteer management strategies.
- Participate in joint public education campaign.
- Enhance the level of training on volunteer management to a higher level as has been done recently with the issue of donated goods.
- Develop volunteer management plans in conjunction with Donations plans.
- Develop and conduct disaster volunteer management exercises and drills as a part of routine emergency exercises.
- Designate responsibility for disaster volunteer coordination in disaster.
- Include the activation and deployment of on-site volunteer resource managers early in the disaster response plan.
- Leverage the expertise of local volunteer management professionals in planning and executing disaster volunteer coordination.
- Provide planning guidance to community-based organizations in developing local emergency management plans.
- Collaborate with FEMA and NVOAD to develop and adopt an identification system for the certification of volunteers affiliated with registered voluntary agencies providing disaster services.
- Participate in state and local VOADs.
- Participate in state and local Citizen Corps Councils.

### The Points of Light Foundation & Volunteer Center National Network

- Develop strategies for the coordination of unaffiliated volunteers in disaster.
- Gather and maintain volunteer resource information on skills needed in disaster and volunteer contact information for those willing to help.
- Provide outreach to voluntary organizations developing their disaster plans.
- Develop inventory of local business resources available in disaster.
- Convene or participate in local VOADs and Citizen Corps Councils.
- Participate in joint public education campaigns.
- Promote volunteer opportunities for all phases of disaster.
- Work with local organizations to develop additional roles for volunteers in disaster.

### Voluntary Agencies

- Develop strategies for the coordination of unaffiliated volunteers in disaster.
- Participate in public education campaigns.

(cont. on page 13)

## ORGANIZATION-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



### Voluntary Agencies cont.

- Participate in a local VOADs and Citizen Corps Councils.
- Participate with NVOAD Volunteer Management Committee to develop expanded roles for the use of volunteers in all phases of disaster.
- Recognize and use opportunities between disasters to recruit, train, and involve volunteers in disaster mitigation activities.
- Survey service delivery regions and determine needs for vulnerable populations in times of disaster, i.e. elderly, disabled, non-English speaking, etc. Develop plans to respond to needs with volunteers.

### Private Sector

- Participate in developing national volunteer management strategies.
- Participate in state and local VOADs.
- Participate in state and local Citizen Corps Councils.
- Provide appropriate in-kind and financial contributions.
- Coordinate and cooperate with emergency management in disaster operations.
- Where possible, provide employee expertise to support voluntary agency needs in disaster.
- Participate in joint public education campaign.
- Where possible, provide financial resources to expand disaster services programming in communities.

### Other Federal Agencies

- Participate with NVOAD Volunteer Management Committee to develop expanded roles for the use of volunteers in all phases of disaster.
- Participate in development of joint education public campaigns.
- Coordinate with FEMA to develop a coordinated federal approach to volunteer management issues.
- Coordinate with Citizen Corps to expand the role of volunteers in all phases of emergency management.

### Media

- Participate in public education campaigns.
- Provide outlets for broadcast of messaging regarding disaster volunteering.

### Associations and Civic Organizations

- Engage their networks in public education campaigns.
- Work with membership to identify appropriate roles in disaster and facilitate necessary training before a disaster occurs.
- Participate in a local VOAD and Citizen Corps Council.



## PROVIDING FOLLOW-UP TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

### What Some Groups Are Doing

The NVOAD Volunteer Management Committee, led by Points of Light, will convene a working group charged with the development of strategies to accomplish the implementation of these recommendations. This group will represent a broad cross-section of interested organizations including NEMA, FEMA, International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM), voluntary agencies, and the private sector.

### What You Can Do

Throughout the emergency management cycle, there are appropriate and often simple ways that citizens can volunteer to strengthen their communities. Some of these activities are listed below. Individuals and organizations should check with local emergency management to clarify these roles and identify other appropriate volunteer opportunities. While reading through the following suggested activities, keep the following questions in mind.

1. Which of the recommendations apply to my position and/or my organization?
2. What can I or my organization do to support the implementation of the recommendations?
3. With whom should I share this report?
4. Who are my community leaders in volunteer or emergency management?

## POTENTIAL DISASTER VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES BY PHASE



### Mitigation

- Survey community sites with Emergency Management officials to identify risks and ways to mitigate against them.
- Identify and disseminate information on easy, cost-effective ways that home and business owners can protect themselves against potential dangers to property and neighborhoods.
- Retrofit child care centers, nursing homes, or other important facilities to help minimize the most threatening hazards.
- Clean storm drains and gutters and remove debris from residential properties to allow the free flow of potential floodwater.
- Construct a rain garden to help minimize flooding. Rehabilitate abandoned lots into gardens that provide proper drainage.
- Plant vegetation in areas that are at risk for mudslides and landslides.
- Install smoke alarms in all properties within the community.
- Distribute smoke alarm batteries and/or reminders to change batteries and check alarms.
- Move shrubs and other landscaping away from the sides of homes, public buildings, and businesses — replace with brush that resists or retard fires, wherever possible.
- Clear dead brush and grass from properties so it does not fuel a spreading fire.
- Conduct minor repairs on the homes of the elderly to protect against wind damage.
- Install and/or secure storm shutters on all appropriate properties.
- Install cabinet locks, secure televisions, computers, or other heavy appliances and equipment using flexible straps to reduce loss in earthquakes, and strap water heaters to walls.

## PROVIDING FOLLOW-UP TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS



### Preparedness

- Obtain necessary training and participate in disaster exercises by joining established disaster relief groups.
- Contact your Volunteer Center, local emergency management agency, or VOAD to learn if there are community disaster preparedness projects offering volunteer opportunities.
- Contact your state or local Citizen Corps Council to learn about outreach for citizen preparedness activities, including neighborhood response planning.
- Learn about disaster preparedness and first aid training opportunities available locally or through web-based programs, such as FEMA independent study courses.
- Work to raise your awareness (and that of your family) by educating yourself about emergency management issues through best practices, newsletters, and publications.
- Develop personal, family, and business emergency response plans including the assembly of disaster supply kits for home, work, and vehicles.



### Response

- Contact your Volunteer Center or designated voluntary agencies to learn more about volunteer needs and opportunities during the response period.
- Contact the state or local volunteer coordination hotline, if available, before traveling to the area of a disaster to determine current needs for volunteers and information on how to register.
- Help is often needed for the following response activities:
  - Sorting donated goods at a donations management warehouse
  - Clean-up efforts that might include debris removal
  - Sandbagging during floods
  - Support of voluntary agencies in organized collection drives, **based on identified needs**
- Find creative ways to raise money for the disaster relief effort. These can include garage sales, local charity drives, etc.
- Provide moral support to first responders by sending thank you cards, flowers, etc., or by volunteering with the many groups that provide support to the families of first responders when they are away on emergency duties.
- Check in with your own family, friends, and neighbors, especially those who are elderly or infirm, to see if they need assistance, support, or someone to talk to.
- Follow guidelines set by local officials on the scene as to what volunteers can and cannot do at the disaster sites.



## PROVIDING FOLLOW-UP TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS



### Recovery

- Help is often needed for activities during the recovery phase. Volunteers can contribute by participating in the following organized and supervised operations:
  - Organizing community clean up projects
  - Repairing and rebuilding projects
  - Closing down donations management operations
- Support the efforts of local voluntary agencies to meet needs identified by local Unmet Needs Committees generally formed by local disaster recovery leaders.
- Check with your Volunteer Center, local or state VOAD, or voluntary agency affiliates to learn how you or your organization can become involved in the activities above or in other specific recovery efforts.



## DEVELOPING A NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR MANAGING UNAFFILIATED VOLUNTEERS IN DISASTER SITUATIONS: A BRIEF HISTORY



After Hurricane Andrew in 1993, FEMA convened a meeting to address the need for a national strategy on the management of unsolicited donated goods and unaffiliated volunteers in disasters. Representatives were invited to join the planning process from local and state emergency management, nonprofit voluntary agencies involved in disaster work, the private sector, other federal agencies, and select international organizations.

The outcomes of the meeting included development of a 10-Point National Donations Management Strategy, a comprehensive Donations Training program, public education materials, and an information management system. Although some progress was made concerning the subject of managing unaffiliated volunteers, the general consensus of the group emphasized issues relating to unsolicited donated goods as the first priority.

While several voluntary agencies have since made important strides in improving their capacity to manage unaffiliated volunteers in disaster operations, and there are several good examples of their success, there remains a need for a national effort to fully address the issue. Indeed, there may well be a need for a National Volunteer Management Strategy to complement the National Donations Management Strategy.

A parallel effort to increase the effectiveness of volunteering and volunteer management was undertaken by The UPS Foundation in the late 1990s. Through its Volunteer Impact Initiative, The UPS Foundation supports the efforts of its nonprofit partners to develop and implement strategies for addressing recurring challenges in effective volunteer management.

Concurrently in the 1990s, the Points of Light Foundation & Volunteer Center National Network were founded and began working together to engage more people more effectively in volunteer service that helps address serious social problems. The Points of Light Foundation & Volunteer Center National Network strive to increase the quantity and quality of volunteer service related to all types of needs and convene appropriate organizations at the national and local levels to focus their energies on addressing critical community issues through voluntary service.

FEMA, UPS, and Points of Light have worked together in the last year to bring their joint expertise to bear on the question of how to engage unaffiliated volunteers effectively during disasters.



## NATIONAL LEADERSHIP FORUM ON DISASTER VOLUNTEERISM

Adventist Disaster Response  
Grayson, GA

Alliance of Information and  
Referral Systems  
Seattle, WA

American Association of State  
Service Commissions  
Washington, DC

American Red Cross Disaster  
Services  
Falls Church, VA

America's Second Harvest  
Chicago, IL

American Society of Association  
Executives  
Washington, DC

AmeriCorps Alums, Inc.  
Washington, DC

Arlington County Fire  
Department  
Arlington, VA

Association of Information  
and Referral Systems  
Roanoke, VA

Association for Volunteer  
Administration  
Richmond, VA

Catholic Charities USA  
Alexandria, VA

City Cares of America  
Atlanta, GA

Claire B. Rubin and Associates  
Arlington, VA

Community Foodbank of  
New Jersey  
Hillside, NJ

Corporation for National and  
Community Service  
Washington, DC

Cross Cultural Solutions  
New Rochelle, NY

DC Commission on National &  
Community Service  
Washington, DC

DC VOAD  
Darnestown, MD

Department of Health and  
Human Services  
Washington, DC

District of Columbia Emergency  
Management Agency  
Washington, DC

FEMA Headquarters  
Washington, DC

FEMA Region Five  
Chicago, IL

FEMA Region IX  
Fort Shafter, HI

Grantmakers for Effective  
Organizations  
Washington, DC

Greater DC Cares  
Washington, DC

Humane Society of the  
United States  
Washington, DC

International Association of  
Emergency Managers  
Falls Church, VA

International Association of  
Fire Chiefs  
Fairfax, VA

Kentucky Division of Emergency  
Management  
Frankfort, KY

Mayor's Voluntary Action Center  
New York, NY

National Assembly of Health &  
Human Service Organizations  
Washington, DC

National Emergency  
Management Association  
Lexington, KY

National Urban League  
New York, NY

National Voluntary Organizations  
Active in Disaster (NVOAD)  
Washington, DC

New York Cares  
New York, NY

New York City Office of  
Emergency Management  
Brooklyn, NY

North Carolina Commission  
on Volunteerism &  
Community Service  
Raleigh, NC

Office of Citizen Corps  
FEMA Headquarters  
Washington, DC

Points of Light Foundation  
& Volunteer Center  
National Network  
Washington, DC

Public Solutions  
Catonsville, MD

Salvation Army  
Des Plaines, IL

Salvation Army National  
Headquarters  
Alexandria, VA

Society of Trauma Nurses  
Springfield, IL

Telephone Pioneers of America  
Denver, CO

UMCOR Emergency Services,  
USA  
Washington, DC

United Jewish Communities  
Washington, DC

United Way of America  
Alexandria, VA

US Chamber of Commerce  
Washington, DC

UPS  
Atlanta, GA

USA Freedom Corps  
Washington, DC

US Department of Justice: Office  
for Domestic Preparedness  
Washington, DC

Veterans of Foreign Wars of the  
United States  
Washington, DC

Volunteer Center National  
Network & Bergen County VOAD  
Hackensack, NJ

The Volunteer Center of  
Greensboro, Inc.  
Greensboro, NC

Volunteer Center of Central  
Oklahoma  
Oklahoma City, OK

Volunteer Center of Tucson  
Tucson, AZ

Volunteer Houston  
Houston, TX

The Volunteerism Project  
San Francisco, CA

## RESOURCE LIST: NATIONAL RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS



- Alliance for Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) — [www.airs.org](http://www.airs.org)
- America's Fraternal Benefit Organizations — [www.nfcenet.org](http://www.nfcenet.org)
- American Red Cross — [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)
- Association For Volunteer Administration (AVA) — [www.avaintl.org](http://www.avaintl.org)
- Citizen Corps — [www.citizencorps.gov](http://www.citizencorps.gov)
- City Cares of America — [www.citycares.org](http://www.citycares.org)
- Corporation for National and Community Service — [www.nationalservice.org](http://www.nationalservice.org)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency — [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)
- Humane Society of the United States — [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org)
- International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) — [www.iaem.com](http://www.iaem.com)
- International Association of Fire Chiefs — [www.iafc.org](http://www.iafc.org)
- National Association of Planning Councils — [www.communityplanning.org](http://www.communityplanning.org)
- National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) — [www.nemaweb.org](http://www.nemaweb.org)
- NVOAD — National Voluntary Organizations Active In Disaster — [www.nvoad.org](http://www.nvoad.org)
- Points of Light Foundation & Volunteer Center National Network — [www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org)
- The Salvation Army — [www.usn.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.usn.salvationarmyusa.org)
- United Way of America — [www.unitedway.org](http://www.unitedway.org)
- The UPS Foundation — [www.community.ups.com](http://www.community.ups.com)
- US Chamber of Commerce — [www.uschamber.com](http://www.uschamber.com)
- USA Freedom Corps — [www.usafreedomcorps.gov](http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov)
- USA Initiative — [www.usa.pointsoflight.org](http://www.usa.pointsoflight.org)
- Volunteer Center National Network — [www.1800volunteer.org](http://www.1800volunteer.org)

If you have any questions, please contact [disastervolunteering@pointsoflight.org](mailto:disastervolunteering@pointsoflight.org) or 202-729-8161.

For additional copies of the report, you may download them at [www.pointsoflight.org/disaster/disaster.cfm](http://www.pointsoflight.org/disaster/disaster.cfm)

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