

***NEW YORK STATE
COMPREHENSIVE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
PLAN***

HUMAN SERVICES ANNEX

**Donations Management
Appendix**

Effectively Managing Donated Goods and Volunteer Services
in Times of Disaster



**Disaster Preparedness
Commission**

**PREPARED BY THE NEW YORK STATE
DISASTER PREPAREDNESS COMMISSION**

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New York State Donations Management Appendix

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Section I: General Considerations and Planning Guidelines

I. Introduction

Managing a response to emergencies or disasters is a complex undertaking. In doing so, government at all levels applies the required resources to ensure that public health and safety is maintained and that response/recovery efforts can be effectively accomplished. When the required resources are not locally available or controlled, a local government must have a mechanism in place to obtain and properly utilize those resources. The type and quantity of supplies that the public will need in the aftermath of disasters or other crises will vary due to many factors and no one event will be just like another.

The Donations Management Appendix provides information on planning considerations for: 1) formulating a donations management strategy; 2) developing, activating and demobilizing a donations management operation; 3) managing donated monies, goods and services; 4) managing volunteer resources and government agency assistance; 5) coordinating with the media; and 6) miscellaneous housekeeping issues.

A. Purpose

The State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) has been structured into three distinct, but interconnected volumes. These are:

- Volume 1: All-Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Volume 2: Response and Short-Term Recovery
- Volume 3: Long-Term Recovery Plan

The purpose of the CEMP is to identify the State's overarching policies, authorities and response organizational structure that will be implemented in an emergency or disaster situation that warrants a State response. In addition, the CEMP identifies the lines of coordination and the centralized coordination of resources that will be utilized in directing the State's resources and capabilities in responding to and recovering from a disaster. Further, the CEMP serves as the foundational framework for the State's response levels, and serves as the operational basis of which other functional and hazard-specific annexes will build upon.

The purpose of this Appendix is to ensure the strategic and broad-based nature of the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan is more defined and to provide a platform to define and describe the process for managing donated goods and services during a disaster. This Appendix provides guidance concerning donations of goods, materials, services and cash. Topics addressed include the advantages of cash donations, State preparations for receiving, managing and distributing donations, including close coordination with volunteer organizations.

New York State's donations management goal is to provide victims of disasters with as much support as possible by effectively channeling offers and goods from the public. Cooperation among the involved government agencies and volunteer organizations is necessary to accomplish this goal.

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B. Scope

The Donations Management Appendix will serve as an all-hazards supplement to the Human Services Annex of the State CEMP. As such this Appendix:

- Will apply to all incidents that require donations management in response to a disaster or emergency.
- This Appendix outlines the operating structure, duties and responsibilities, and the pre-planning and facilities that are established for a donations management organization. The concept of operations portrays how FEMA, State and local governments work together with volunteer agencies in advance to establish an effective management system and how they execute it during a disaster response.
- The donations management appendix describes the basic process for managing donated goods and services during a disaster. It identifies the basic assumptions of the management strategy, the concept of operations, important planning considerations, and the roles and responsibilities of the major government agencies and donations management organizations.
- New York State's donations management goal is to provide victims of disasters with as much support as possible by effectively channeling offers and goods from the public. Cooperation among the involved government agencies and volunteer organizations is necessary to accomplish this goal.

C. Situation

For the purposes of this appendix, the term donations and donations management refers to the capacity to provide victims of disasters with as much support as possible by effectively channeling offers and goods from the public. Cooperation among the involved government agencies and volunteer organizations is necessary to accomplish this goal.

Donations management involves technical, political and social issues. It is critical to have carefully developed plans in place before disaster strikes, to assure donors that their efforts are appreciated and to guarantee that their donations are being directed as efficiently as possible to serve the disaster's victims.

Disaster response and short-term recovery activities begin and end at the local government level. The local government is responsible for coordinating and managing all response and short-term recovery activities and services, and will use all available local resources in doing so. County and local government emergency management plans, also developed according to Article 2-B, coordinate the local government's response within its borders to ensure that all local resources are fully committed before requesting assistance from the state. At such time as a local government has exhausted local resources required to protect the population from further injury or devastation resulting from a disaster situation, the state CEMP may be activated.

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D. Assumptions

The State Office of Emergency Management (SOEM), acting on behalf of the State, has developed a strategy for collecting, managing and distributing donated goods and services during a disaster, based on the assumptions below:

1. New York State's geographic location, its natural and built environment, and other high-risk factors create the potential for major natural or man-made disasters;
2. The donations management strategy must be a flexible one: the State and local governments are ultimately responsible for the success of the donations management system---including coordinating with the volunteer community---and can implement those parts of the donations management plan that meet their specific needs, taking into account the location, scale and type of disaster;
3. A primary SOEM goal is to assist the activities of local government when disaster strikes; part of that includes managing the flow of solicited and unsolicited donations---volunteers, goods, services and cash---to the disaster scene;
4. Adventist Community Services (ACS) will provide its expertise in donations management and multi-agency warehouse management during emergencies and disasters as part of a memorandum of understanding between ACS and SOEM;
5. Federal government, international and volunteer activities must always support the efforts of State and local governments, and existing volunteer donations management networks or systems are a critical link to an effective program and should be used to the extent practicable;

E. Legal Authority

This authority to develop this Annex and implement specific response actions to effectively respond to a pandemic can be found in a variety of New York State Laws, regulations and Federal authorities, including:

1. State Authorities

NYS Executive Law, Article 2B.

NYS Public Health Law; Multiple Articles and sections.

NYS Code Rules and Regulations; Title 10, multiple citations.

2. Federal Authorities

Section 361 of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act (42 U.S.C. 247d) authorizes the Secretary to make and enforce regulations necessary to prevent the introduction, transmission, or spread of communicable diseases from foreign countries into the United States, or from one state or possession into any other state or possession. CDC administers these regulations as they relate to quarantine of humans. Diseases for which individuals may be quarantined are specified by Executive Order 13375, which amended the Executive Order 13295 to include pandemic influenza. Other provisions permit HHS to establish quarantine stations, provide care and treatment for persons under quarantine, and provide for quarantine enforcement.

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F. Concept of Operations

The State's management of donations encompasses two distinct sourcing pathways: Items that are pre-designated; and items being offered up that are not already pre-designated or sourced. Donations that are pre-designated are sourced immediately to the State EOC upon receipt. For non-pre-designated items, the State uses the assistance of AidMatrix to intake and stage the items until a time when the resource is needed.

- **Donations Team Responsibilities**

New York State does not wish to micro-manage the process by which donations are collected: volunteer organizations are considered the experienced primary receivers, managers and distributors of donated goods and services. However, the State is ultimately responsible for managing disaster response and recovery, including donations, and it has the oversight responsibility to ensure that transportation arteries are not clogged, that volunteers are not overwhelmed, that its citizens receive every opportunity to recover, and that useful goods and materials donated out of generosity are matched with those in need and not wasted. A primary goal is to support the affected community in the short-term and delegate the donations function when the community is capable of accepting it. With this in mind, it is the State's intention to:

- Confer with the involved agencies and volunteer organizations to determine those goods and donations most needed for disaster relief;
- Work with the Public Information Officer to communicate clearly to the public that unsolicited goods can overwhelm an already-stressed infrastructure and create "the second disaster;"
- Publicize, in concert with the involved agencies and volunteer organizations, the items needed and provide a hotline for those who wish to donate;
- Facilitate a prompt response to donors and the prompt allocation of donated equipment, goods, services and cash to the victims of the disaster; and
- Where necessary and appropriate, train the affected government and/or a VOAD in anticipation of handing over donations management responsibilities.

While a Donations Management Plan is clearly needed for very large or catastrophic events, disasters of a lesser scope can also trigger an outpouring of donations that must be managed. This plan is designed primarily for large-scale disasters but is flexible and can be scaled back for moderate or small events that result in fewer donations. Conversely, the concepts behind this Donations Management Plan can be expanded for extremely catastrophic or long-term disasters---like the collapse of the World Trade Center.

SOEM will determine activation and staffing levels based on the location, scale and type of event and the ability of the affected community to manage donations.

- **Staffing for Small-Scale Events**

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These events are small, limited or localized in nature, and generally correspond to SOEM activation Levels 2 or 3. Donations are few and sporadic. The Statewide Volunteer Coordinator may handle donations matters or provide guidance if the Donations Team Leader is not called up, and it is unlikely that additional staff or agencies will be needed. Volunteers may be called or consulted as needed. The Donations Team Leader should brief the appropriate SOEM Operations staff and the Public Information Officer for coordination and information purposes.

- **Staffing for Large-Scale Events**

These events occur when a State and/or Federal disaster declaration is likely, and generally correspond to SOEM activation Levels 1 or 2. Depending on the disaster, donations activity could be significant but may not require the activation of most components of this plan: some functions will be used and others will be combined.

SOEM Operations staff will determine appropriate staffing levels based on the Donations Team Leader's reports regarding donations activity and staff, space and other requirements. The Donations Team Leader will manage the donations function in proximity to the Human Services Team, with additional staff added for support as necessary:

Phone Operator/Data Entry: answers calls and inputs data regarding offers or requests for donations, status reports, shipment tracking, etc. Canvasses volunteers and agencies regarding the need for donations, assists in compiling status reports for SOEM and other agencies. May also facilitate communications and provide basic information to donors (e.g. which transport routes are preferred or closed);

Coordinator/Logistician: If activity levels warrant, supervises phone and data functions and oversees coordination between donors and receiving agencies or organizations and. Coordinates with local, county, State and Federal government agencies and other emergency management, private, voluntary and support organizations.

- **Staffing for Catastrophic Events**

These very large disasters or catastrophic events, which generally correspond to SOEM activation Level 1, generate significant media attention or public interest. Donations can be overwhelming and may not correspond to the needs of the victims or the community. This plan is generally written to manage the donations triggered by events of this magnitude.

Catastrophic events will require full implementation of the Donations Management Plan and full activation of the Donations Team, warehouses facilities, the 800# and the donations database system. The Donations Team is responsible for integrating donations management into the larger local, State and Federal disaster relief effort.

During a catastrophic event, the Donations Team operates from the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). SEOC staff will manage all requests for assistance, provide resources, track damage and fatality reports, and issue public statements. The Donations Team should be located near the Human Services Team and should be organized to maximize efficiency and coordination. The Donations Team will:

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Obtain an assessment of the needs of the affected victims, local government and agencies; this will include collaborating with the Statewide Volunteer Coordinator to collect donations intelligence;

- Assess the capacity of volunteer agencies to help implement the Donations Management Plan, and how that function can be facilitated and streamlined;
- Establish a needs list for the phone bank and staff that operation;
- Coordinate with warehouses and staging facilities established to handle donations;
- Coordinate press releases with the Public Information Officer, ensuring that timely and appropriate information is disseminated.

SOEM Operations staff will determine appropriate staffing levels based on the Donations Team Leader's reports regarding donations activity and staff, space and other requirements. Staffing for Catastrophic Events will include:

Donations Team Leader: a SOEM-designated staff person who oversees all volunteer and donations efforts; this person may have other duties when there is no event to respond to, but should have knowledge of local, State, and Federal emergency management systems, as well as the services and capabilities of a variety of volunteer and social service agencies. During the activation of the SEOC, the Leader will serve as the Donations Team's liaison to the Operations staff. The Donations Team Leader will:

- Represent the Team in all SEOC coordination issues and speak on behalf of volunteer and donations policies in all SOEM decisions;
- Communicate all policy decisions to the Team and communicate the Team's needs to the Operations staff;
- Coordinate with the FEMA Donations Coordinator, the Statewide Volunteer Coordinator and Volunteers Active In Disaster (VOAD) groups;
- Provide the Policy Section and Public Information Office with information appropriate for news releases.

Following EOC deactivation, the Leader may continue to manage the Donations Coordination Team. In a federally declared disaster, the team leader may wish to relocate to the FEMA/State Disaster Field Office.

Phone Bank Group: The Phone Bank Group will consist of phones and operators whose numbers will depend on the magnitude of the disaster and the available facilities. There should be a separate 1-800 line dedicated to incoming donations calls to facilitate their tasks, which include:

- Answering incoming hotline calls and entering basic data about the caller's name, address, phone number and their offer to donate goods, equipment, services, volunteer labor or cash into the donations database;

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- Refer all donations to the Coordination Group (see below) for prompt evaluation and follow through; and
- Refer calls from persons requiring counseling to the appropriate Human Services staff.

The Phone Bank Group should have one Coordinator and may have several managers, depending on total staffing, shifts, hours of operation, etc. The Coordinator will prepare a daily report of donations and human services referrals.

(Note: Not all events will require the State to operate its own 800#; however, phones will still be required to make callbacks.)

Coordination Group: serves as point of contact for requests from Operations and VOAD groups (and possibly the community), maintains record of donations and needs referrals, and makes connections or referrals to fulfill those requests. The Group will match a donation of goods and/or services with an existing need or anticipated need, or refer a donation to another area or State where it can be used. The State should determine on an event-by-event basis whether it will refuse donations of goods for which there is no need (for example, accepting used clothing--which is rarely needed in a disaster--places unnecessary labor, storage and transportation burdens for the Group and the State). The Group will compile a daily report of requests and referrals.

The Coordination Group will liaison with SOEM Operations, any State warehouse or staging facilities, involved VOAD groups, and representatives of State and Federal agencies, including FEMA. The Coordination Group should include the positions below:

Supervisor: oversees the Warehouse, IT and Volunteer Coordinators;

Warehouse Coordinator: responsible for ensuring the smooth operation of the warehouse or staging facilities;

Information Technology (IT) Coordinator: oversees IT issues and liaisons with the Office of Information Technology Services (ITS)

Volunteer Coordinator: manages donated volunteer labor.

The Coordination Group may also include representatives of the VOAD groups who give advice, perform tasks, or both. The Group should conduct regular meetings--or a daily conference call--to discuss donations and volunteer issues, strategies and new ideas and to anticipate potential problems. The Donations Team Leader should chair these meetings or calls, with support from the Coordination Group and Warehouse Supervisor. For large events requiring more than one warehouse or staging area, a daily warehouse conference call chaired by the Warehouse Coordinator is also helpful.

(Note: While managing donations and making referrals can be viewed as two functions--and are dealt with as such in many State Plan--they are integrally related and must be closely coordinated. The State's experience in the World Trade Center event indicates that using teams to manage both processes and make the desired connections worked well. This report assumes that future events will be handled in this fashion.)

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Cash Group: serves as point of referral for callers offering cash donations and should consist of representatives of the state agencies accepting cash contributions. This may be contained within the Phone Bank Group. Callers who identify a specific volunteer organization for cash donations will be referred directly to that group. Callers with no preference will be provided (through mailings or web page) a list of volunteer organizations accepting cash. The Cash Group will compile a daily report.

(Note: This report assumes that a cash donations hotline will not be established for most events and that, when established, cash hotlines will be managed and coordinated by the Department of Taxation and Finance. Close coordination between the Donations Team and the Cash Group, in the form of daily phone calls and a daily report, is encouraged.)

Support Group: provides or coordinates all logistic, technical, administrative, and security assistance for the Donations Team, for the warehouse and staging areas. The size and specific functions of this group will depend on the needs of the team and the size and scope of the disaster.

- ***Donations Team Facilities for Catastrophic Events***

The number and type of facilities will be determined by the location, scale and type of event and the ability of the affected community to manage donations, and may include:

Donations Coordination Center: will be located at the EOC, with the possibility of a Disaster Field Office (DFO) presence for large-scale or prolonged events. It serves as the central location for the Donations Team and supports the functions of the staff, participating volunteer groups, and the State and FEMA donations coordinators. The Donations Center functions as the central point of direction and control by maintaining constant communication with critical supporting functions like the SOEM Operations staff, the Disaster Field Office, the FEMA Donations Coordinator and the Control/Check Points, Warehouses, and Local Distribution Centers.

Phone Bank Center: will be located at an existing 800# phone facility for most events and will take advantage of that facility's equipment, its staff and their training to expedite implementation.

Warehouse: all will be located outside (e.g., 25-50 miles) the disaster area to keep the anticipated traffic congestion in the disaster area to a minimum, and should be located close to highways, air, rail, and water transport routes when possible. Signs directing vehicles and trucks to the reception center should be properly placed and clearly understandable. (In large-scale disasters, or those in congested or rural areas, a checkpoint system may be desirable to inspect, turn back, or direct goods to a designated warehouse or local distribution center.)

Warehouses should be equipped with ramps, lifts and other equipment, covered storage space, flood lights, and conveyor belts to expeditiously trans-load, unload, sort, store, and/or dispatch goods on a 24-hour basis---if need be---to the disaster area and/or local distribution centers. The center can be co-managed by State and Voluntary Agencies. State warehouses, armories, and county fairgrounds may be possible sites. Covered storage (e.g. tents, convention center, or gymnasium) may provide additional storage where weather and

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security issues are not critical. (Approximately 1/4 million square feet of covered space was needed for the Hurricane Andrew relief effort; more than 1.1 million square feet of warehouse space was required for the World Trade Center collapse---these figures should be useful for planning a similar facility.)

Depending on the scale of the event and the anticipated and duration of the warehouse function, the Donations Team may want to consider the access to local labor sources and the availability of parking, shuttle buses, billeting and feeding for warehouse staff. The site should have a first aid station and a safety officer responsible for monitoring all activities, including those involving heavy equipment. Adequate sanitation facilities for volunteers and staff are a must.

Waste disposal operations and procedures should be defined since there may be considerable amounts of cardboard, paper, metal, and spoiled or unsafe containers of goods that require proper disposal.

The warehouse's organizational structure of the center reflect the Incident Command System (ICS) whereby operations, logistics, planning, and finances are separate functions so that outsiders can enter the system at any time and be familiar with the organizational structure.

Local Distribution Center: (if needed) should be a church, community-based organization or volunteer agency facility, or local, State or Federal government site from which goods are dispersed directly to disaster victims or service agencies. These are generally managed locally and resupplied by parent organization and may be directly supplied by unexpected donors.

- **Transportation**

New York State's geography, road, rail and water systems, and the location, type and scale of the disaster will determine how goods are transferred. Logistics will coordinate closely with the New York State Department of Transportation, the Thruway Authority, the State Police, and Federal officials to see that critically needed items are not delayed, less critical items with a designated recipient or use are transferred, and unsolicited goods are directed to those areas of the State or region where they can be used.

In the optimum scenario, all shippers and donors will heed the advice of early press releases, web-page advisories, radio stations, weigh stations or toll booths and call the Donations Center 800# before travelling into the State or the disaster area; with this call, the Donations Center can advise if the goods are needed and either direct the trucker to a designated warehouse or another destination that can use the donated goods.

Volunteer groups sponsoring the shipment of goods into the disaster area should ensure that the goods are needed, that they (and not a third party) are the recipient in the area, that they have labor sufficient to unload the goods, and that drivers know how to reach their facility. These goods should be clearly marked with the agency's name.

State control over traffic traveling to the disaster area will affect vehicles shipping donated goods. Control or check points and weigh or toll stations can be used to regulate trucks, inspect the manifest and determine if the goods are expected by a particular agency or volunteer group. Drivers should have contact personnel at their destinations and should

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carry supporting documents. The State may choose to direct relief goods to a particular staging or distribution area, and escort support may be desirable.

G. Plan Maintenance and Updating

This Annex will be routinely updated and supplemented as Federal, State, and local plans and procedures evolve. Plan changes may be based upon experiences and lessons-learned from exercises, or from real-world events. Ongoing planning efforts will focus on ensuring that the necessary and appropriate contacts with local, State, and Federal officials have coordinated their response.

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Section II: Preparedness

- I. The State's Donations Management Plan is active in each phase of emergency management--Mitigation and Preparedness, Response and Recovery--as described below.
- SOEM will establish, maintain and update annually its donations management plan by canvassing all agencies that are involved in addressing human service needs before and after a disaster. Primary and Assisting agencies and volunteer organizations will collaborate to develop and maintain a list of available support services, including an inventory of warehouse facilities and their attributes;
 - ACS maintains a regional network of community based volunteers that are trained and prepared to provide donations management assistance during a disaster or emergency;
 - Volunteer agencies will coordinate with local chapters and groups to maintain an inventory of available resources, personnel and their experience and skills;
 - SOEM will work with other state agencies--e.g. the Department of Taxation and Finance, the Empire State Development Corporation and the Crime Victims Board--to initiate a central 800-number telephone service for handling inquiries and donations. Where practicable, existing 800-number hot lines and staff trained to deal with specific issues (e.g. "1-800-I♥NY" for affected businesses, or the Crime Victims Hotline for disaster victims) should be mobilized for this purpose to avoid the lag time associated with bringing a new system on-line and training staff;
 - SOEM will work with other agencies---notably the Department of Taxation and Finance---to establish procedures for accepting cash; SOEM will determine on a case-by-case basis whether cash will be accepted or if callers will be encouraged to contact the relief organization or charity of their choice, such as the American Red Cross; (cash donations are preferred, but may require special procedures if managed by the State and may not be prudent for all events);
 - SOEM will work with the Aidmatrix Foundation to utilize the National Donations Management Network (NDMN) program to accept, direct, and track donated monies, goods and volunteer services; although other entities may manage the various components (e.g. the Department of Tax & Finance may administer cash donations). Information about these donations and offers will be provided to local, state and Federal government agencies and volunteers, as appropriate. If necessary, SOEM can work with the Office of Information Technology Services (ITS) for further database development and maintenance to aid in donations management;
 - *SOEM will establish a policy for distributing those goods remaining after the relief effort ends and disposing of those that have no utility to the community or the State; and*
 - *SOEM will develop training programs for volunteers and staff on the Donations Team, and exercise the Donations Annex during all statewide exercises.*

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Section III: Response

- SOEM will activate the Donations Management Plan, advise affected local and county governments, assisting State agencies and the Federal government through established channels, and notify the volunteer community through the Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) network;
- ACS shall provide leadership and training for community based volunteers to coordinate the flow of incoming undesignated goods, provide management of a multi-agency warehouse, and supervise local volunteers and other staff in receiving, sorting, packing and inventorying donated goods and services,
- SOEM will place the Donations Team on stand-by; depending on the location, scale and type of event, the Donations Team Leader may begin to:
 - Establish the short- and long-term staffing and support needs for a Donations operation and identify the roles and responsibilities of staff and other assisting agencies that may participate;
 - Coordinate with assisting agencies to identify warehouse space and staging areas available for donated goods and secure agreements, if necessary.
 - Search the database and inventories to identify on-hand goods or previous offers that may be useful in this event;
 - Coordinate with the Public Information Officer (PIO) to encourage the media to request that goods and services be held locally until further notice; and
 - Initiate an 800 line and phone bank for donated goods.
- The Donations Team will maintain continuous coordination and communication with all involved and assisting agencies and organizations to ensure a smooth flow of goods and services to stricken areas. Depending on the size and severity of the incident, daily or regular coordination meetings and/or conference calls may be necessary. During a Federally declared disaster, the FEMA Volunteer Agency (VOAD) Coordinator and FEMA Donations Coordinator should become part of the Donations Coordination Team.
- To the extent practicable, the Donations Team Coordinator will monitor news accounts and confer with the FEMA VOAD and Donations Coordinators and emergency managers in other states to anticipate the number and type of goods that may arrive and divert them to other parts of the State or country, where appropriate; this may require close coordination with the Public Information Officer and issuing of press releases to educate the public about the problems associated with unsolicited donations;
- The Donations Team will prepare daily status reports that document the issues discussed in the conference calls and tracking the number of truckloads or pallets in and out of the warehouses; and
- The Donations Team will maintain records of all purchases, rentals, loans and agreements to facilitate possible future reimbursement from FEMA.

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Section IV: Recovery

A. Donations Management Team

1. The Donations Team will assess the continuing needs of the agencies and organizations involved in the recovery effort, survey the current and soon-to-be-needed flow of goods, services and cash to determine if the operation's scale is appropriate, and work with the Public Information Officer as necessary to communicate those needs;
2. The Donations Team will reduce hours of operation and prepare to demobilize; this may entail training and handing off operations to a local government agency or a volunteer organization with whom SOEM has executed a Programmatic Agreement;
3. The Donations Team will correct the data base, making callbacks as necessary, as a first step to assisting with thank you letters to all who volunteered, sent goods, equipment or cash, or otherwise helped the relief effort; and
4. The Donations Team, in conjunction with other appropriate S staff, will conduct a post-event evaluation with all involved--including all Donations Team staff and those at the phone banks, the warehouses and in the field--to determine the effectiveness of the response and revise the plan as necessary to address identified improvements.

B. Managing Volunteer and Government Resources

It is the State's policy to take full advantage of qualified volunteer organizations and Federal government resources to the extent that they are consistent with other stated goals. The purpose of this section is to provide guidance for coordinating and utilizing local spontaneous volunteers and taking advantage of the resources of FEMA. This guidance is not meant to be all-inclusive, but should provide advice for the efficient use and management of these under-used resources. To be effective, many of the elements of this plan must be undertaken before a disaster occurs.

Volunteer Resource Assumptions

The following assumptions guide the use and management of volunteers in disaster situations:

1. There is an established and verified need for volunteers and successful recovery efforts in a community impacted by a disaster require their use;
2. Communities in need and agencies using volunteers should have equal access to this important resource;
3. Because VOAD groups must be collaborative and depend on one another for resources and referrals, a strategic and coordinated distribution of volunteers is preferred;
4. VOAD groups accept and manage their own volunteers and should not discriminate in their employment practices;
5. All volunteers must be screened as part of an on-going process; screening is done by individual agencies to various degrees, using a range of methods;

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6. Volunteers come from within the affected area---as well as from regional, state, national, and international origins---and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, recognizing the competence and spirit they bring to the response and recovery effort; and
7. All offers of volunteer services not accepted by the original recipient of the offer should be referred to a central point for wider consideration.

Volunteer Resource Types

It is helpful to recognize that each of the four primary volunteer groups should be approached and managed in different ways.

Professional: This group includes emergency personnel from jurisdictions outside the response area. They may be attached to emergency operations in their home regions. Professional personnel are certified or licensed, and include physicians, EMTs, nurses, and fire fighters. Often regulatory agencies within the affected area may waive or relax local certification requirements when there is a need for these people.

Traditional Affiliated: These volunteers are attached to a recognized voluntary agency. They are pre-trained for disaster response by the agency with which they are affiliated and form the core cadre for para-professional and non-professional volunteers.

Spontaneous From Within the Affected Area: Living in the affected area, these volunteers feel motivated by a degree of community ownership of the disaster. They have no association with recognized voluntary agencies and may have no formal training or relevant skills.

Spontaneous From Outside the Affected Area: These volunteers are not from the impacted area and have no prior affiliation with recognized voluntary agencies. They may or may not have relevant skills. A pragmatic approach dictates whether local volunteers or outside-the-area volunteers are used in a given situation.

(Note: There are two “new” categories of disaster agencies: long-standing organizations without a specific history of disaster relief works, and ad hoc groups that spring into existence after a disaster. Long-standing agencies with 501(c)(3) [not-for-profit] status should be referred to the State VOAD for inclusion in relief operations and mentoring. New ad hoc organizations should not be relied upon as the problems associated with spontaneous groups may include: misusing equipment, misappropriating funds, lax safety and security, and attracting a criminal element. These problems, if present, would reflect poorly on the volunteer community in general and on your efforts in particular.)

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD)

NVOAD is the national consortium of recognized Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD). Its mission is to foster cooperation in mitigation and response and more effective service to people imperiled or impacted by disaster. It does this through cooperation, coordination, communications, education, mitigation, convening mechanisms, and outreach. The New York State VOADs are chartered by NVOAD and collaborate in accordance with national precedents.

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Local VOAD groups with national affiliations are especially helpful and can form the core of an effective Donations Management Team. There are more than 20 recognized agencies, with decades of experience, using volunteers in emergency response and recovery. Each agency has established procedures for managing, recruiting, training, and using volunteers and common among them are systems that include: written enrollment, liability arrangements, formal training programs, command and supervision, and reserves planning and organization. Some agencies have developed special abilities in screening, recruiting, and placing volunteers, while others have specialized in service delivery and organizing significant numbers of volunteers.

The FEMA Regional Volunteer Agency Coordinator (VOAD) and the FEMA Donations Coordinator should also be included in the planning and organizational efforts to lend expertise and assure interface with all aspects of the Federal relief program and the Federal Response Plan, including reimbursement. Regular meetings and specific taskings of a variety of agencies are important for continuity and active participation and will help to ensure a consistent and coordinated response when disaster strikes. In addition to SOEM, the team may include Adventist Community Services, the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, local and regional food banks and shelters, Mennonite Disaster Services and the National Catholic Disaster Relief Committee.

The State's policy is to encourage the use of voluntary agencies that have a responsible method for covering the liability related to volunteers (such as a liability clause in their corporate insurance policy) and ensure that they are signing-in unaffiliated volunteers (obtaining a signature for each) to document liability. A standing policy of not working with organizations that do not have a sign-in procedure is appropriate. The State may wish to arrange for a letter from each voluntary agency, documenting that the agency provides liability coverage for all of its volunteers. The Donations Team should be familiar with the State's Good Samaritan Law and applicable volunteer liability laws.

Agencies prefer to use **affiliated volunteers** because they have a demonstrated commitment of time and effort as well as the orientation, training, and expertise in response and recovery procedures. They are also disciplined and highly responsive to direction from the organization's managers, and they are generally loyal, protective, and supportive of their agency.

Nonetheless, managers should expect that **unaffiliated volunteers**---who are generally driven by the same altruistic motivations that move affiliated volunteers---will present themselves for service in the affected area. Managers should also remember that unaffiliated volunteers may include highly competent, skilled individuals capable of providing quality service. As a result, discouraging this class as a whole is not recommended, and planning and organization are suggested for taking full advantage of this resource.

Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster (VOAD)

It is the State's policy that VOADs bringing donated goods into the disaster area or accepting donations on behalf of the State are responsible for:

1. Accepting only donations needed, or for which they have an identified use;
2. Securing warehouses and distribution centers;

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3. Off-loading, sorting, repackaging, storing, and distributing any donations accepted by the VOAD; and
4. Informing the State of any needs and unexpected shortfalls they experience.

Networking with Local Government Agencies

It is the State's policy to assist Local Government, as requested and as appropriate. The Local Government's role, based on available resources, is to:

1. Assist the VOADs in reporting the needs to the Donations Team;
2. Assist with security at local distribution centers;
3. Communicate with community-level initiatives;
4. Inform Donations Team of donations problems in the field.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

The Federal government's role is to assist the State with additional Federal resources, to facilitate coordination among the State and the VOADs, and to discourage in-kind donations and urge cash donations. Specifically, FEMA's role is to support the State, as requested and required, in:

1. Assessing existing/proposed warehouses and other operational facilities, helping to establish a donations management system after disaster strikes, and supporting the Disaster Field Office donations coordination team;
2. Providing technical assistance, managerial support, enhanced voluntary agency coordination, donations intelligence, facility support, and international donations; and
3. Communicating and reinforcing to the public through the media the donations policy of State government, FEMA, and NVOAD to avoid unwanted appeals of goods and services.

The FEMA Donations Program maintains many valuable contacts in the non-profit sector and disaster voluntary agency communities, in business, labor, and industry and with past donors and several experienced disaster donations individuals. All of this information is available to the Donation Management Team and is part of the FEMA Donations Coordinator's contribution.

The network can provide possible assistance such as road and rail transportation (Gifts In-Kind, America; American Trucking Association; American Association of Railways), guidance (the U.S. Conference of Mayors; Sister Cities, International) and spontaneous volunteers support (Points of Light Foundation, Boy Scouts; Girl Scouts; National Jaycees; Rotary International).

C. Media Considerations

Controlling and managing the information output is critical. It is always helpful to develop a relationship with the media prior to a disaster event and provide information on points-of-contact

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ahead of time. The media can help by broadcasting useful information in public service announcements, affairs shows, and specials. Donations spokespersons must know what they want to say, pass along key SOEM messages and provide frequent access to informed officials.

While facilitating media interviews with victims can help relief agencies, interviews limited to those individuals with particularly traumatic or dramatic experiences can distort the larger picture. Attempting to stonewall, whitewash, or minimize obviously negative situations will destroy the State's credibility for the current event and those in the future. The media are generally responsible and act in the public interest: they can stimulate donations and help insure that donations are appropriate to the needs of the affected community.

The State and affiliated relief agencies should be specific and coordinated in their initial reports to best shape and temper the immediate public response: footage showing the flood of donations helps disseminate quickly the message that cash is preferred. A major disaster is treated as fast breaking news, so plan to answer questions fast. While printed news releases are good for background, situation reports and updates, live interviews are preferred and it is best if the person interviewed is an official and informed source. Because the same questions and areas of interest are generally repeated by the media in every disaster, Public Information Officers (PIO) and SOEM officials can plan some responses and be available prior to the various media deadlines with candid answers.

Messages to the media need to be coordinated by the appropriate personnel at each level before they are released to the press. It is best if the story is consistent at local, State, and Federal levels. An effective method in dealing with the media is to establish a Joint Information Center (JIC), where representatives of the various voluntary and government agencies meet to coordinate media relations. Although each voluntary agency remains responsible for its own media relations, the JIC makes it possible to have accurate and consistent information for the public.

The Donations Team Leader should maintain contact with the JIC Coordinator.

Maintain a regular schedule of information releases to State and local governments, to the volunteer agencies, and to local, State and Federal elected officials, with the understanding that the frequency of these releases will depend on the location, type and scale of the event. Make provisions to provide multi-lingual and hearing impaired capabilities in the area of information dissemination.

Helping the media meet their deadlines is important and will assure more effective use of the media to present your message. TV, radio, local press, national press, and wire service requirements are all different. For large events, expect requests from foreign media for interviews. Millions of dollars in cash donations were received from foreign sources during the World Trade Center collapse, and foreign media shares the credit for that generous response.

D. Other Factors

While others in the organization may have primary responsibility for the items below, the Donations Team Leader should be cognizant of them, understand their importance, and be prepared to assist others with collecting information or maintaining records relating to them

Risk Management

The Donations Team should be in compliance with State and local laws and understand how flexibility in these laws can be used to support the operations. Subjects such as insurance,

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medical coverage, bonding of workers handling cash, workers' safety, workmen's compensation, and other liability issues are important. Similarly, consider local or State laws applicable to disposal of waste, sanitation facilities on site, feeding facilities on site, storage of food and hazardous materials on site, and child labor practice. The most effective method of monitoring these factors is to coordinate with the appropriate State government official with the authority to find quick answers and waive requirements, if possible.

Security

Prepare for security of all personnel and each donations management facility. Each facility is likely to be a 24-hour operation and will require commensurate security. Special security for certain incoming goods such as medicines and syringes, hazardous materials, and firearms may be necessary.

Recycling/Redistribution

There will be an abundance of goods that simply cannot be used in the immediate disaster situation, and arrangements must be made for managing these items. Recycling or redistribution to other needs is the first option to be considered. Contact the VOADs, NVOAD, and/or a voluntary organization with an international assistance focus.

Awareness of the Affected Community

Representation on the response team should reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the affected community. To reach each segment of the community, use appropriate communication mechanisms (e.g., church, synagogue, mosque, established community programs, and leaders). Material translated into local languages should be available for all steps in using volunteers (recruitment, training, maintenance, and follow through). Sensitize volunteers to respect local customs, sensitivities and religious traditions.

Local Economy Issues

One goal of disaster relief and rehabilitation is the restoration of the local economy. Care must be taken to ensure relief contributions do not impede recovery. Large quantities of donated goods have a negative impact on local businesses working to re-establish their pre-disaster vitality.

Environmental Impacts

Disposal of donated goods and environmental concerns are very much matters of public concern that must be taken into account in establishing a Donations Center. Know local laws that apply. Disposal of some items may require a contract with a hazardous material company. In isolated situations a request for waiver of a particular law may be necessary. Center managers must remain aware of environmental clean-up work that remains after a disaster has passed.

Accountability

Accountability is key. While a record of goods dispatched on a daily basis to the disaster area should be maintained, it is understood that perfect accountability may not be possible in situations where there is high volume flow in and out: the top priority is always to immediately deliver critically needed items to the disaster area.

Demobilization

Demobilization is the downsizing of the State's role in the donated goods and services operation, which should be shorter than the involvement of the voluntary agencies.

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Demobilization involves the State's stepping back in terms of its facilities, its coordination, and other activities that can be transitioned to the affected local government or a particular voluntary agency group.

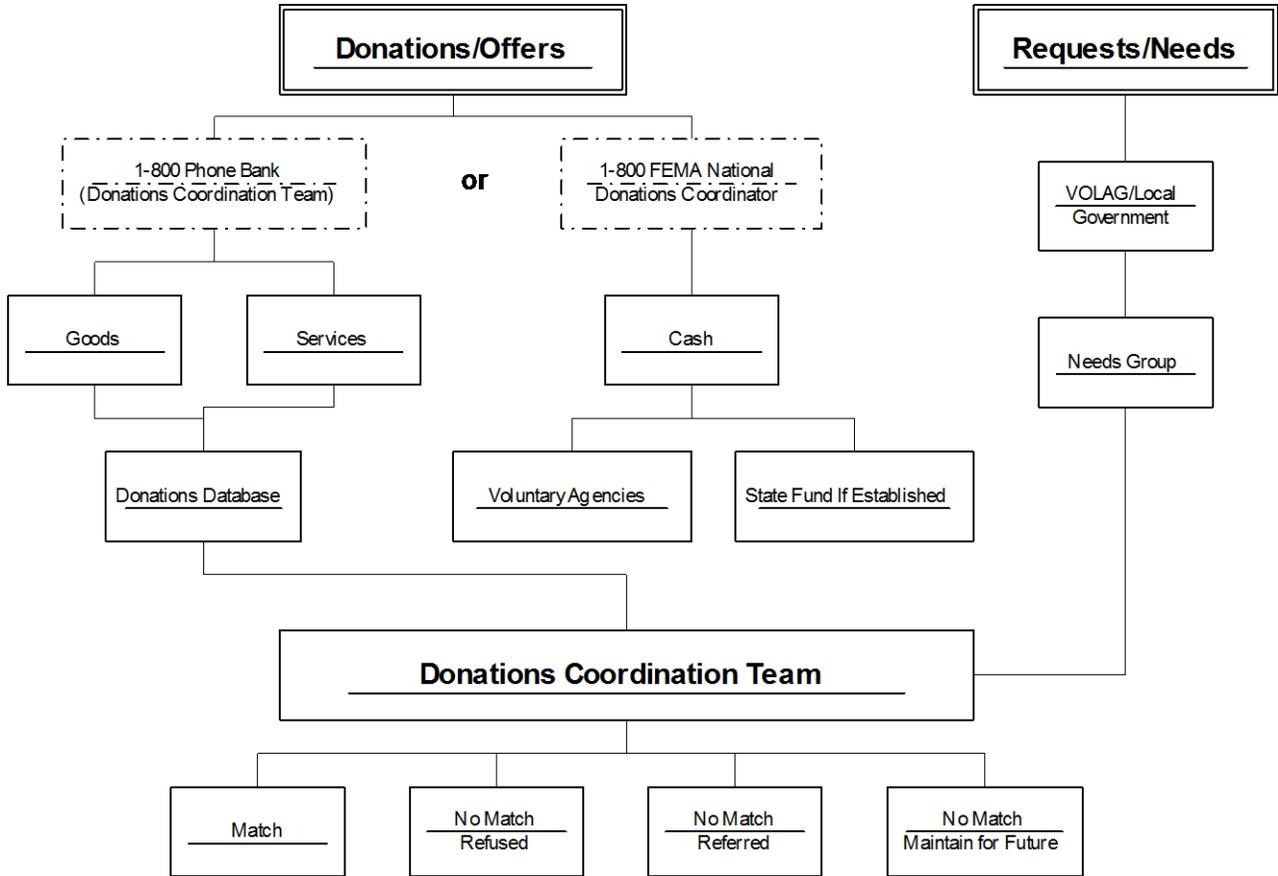
Demobilization should be planned for soon after the operation is underway, and implemented when there are signs of donor fatigue---that is, when the flow of goods starts to ebb. Close consultation with the voluntary agencies will help to determine this critical point in time. State demobilization should begin once the affected volunteer groups are able to handle the flow of goods and services, and the affected local government can oversee all aspects of the donations management program. Ultimately, the State decides when to demobilize or reduce its support.

Generally, transitioning control of a major donations operation back to the voluntary agencies should be straightforward. Voluntary agencies are very familiar with all aspects of donated goods and services and only needed assistance because of the size of the event. If the flow of goods continues, the State may consider requesting and supporting a single (or partnership) organization to handle a certain product. Certain organizations have a traditional interest and much experience in managing any given good (e.g. Goodwill Industries or Adventist Community Services and clothes), and the State can take advantage of their expertise and in-place systems.

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Response Activities: An Organizational Chart

The following figure depicts the donations management process:



Donations Coordination Team

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Call Center Issues

Any call-center should include user-friendly equipment and training for operators. Multi-lingual phone operators will be required. Hearing impaired capabilities should be built into the system.

The phone operator should know when to flag a supervisor. There will be extremely determined donors, Congressionally-driven initiatives, large or unique donations that may require special attention, or donations that include urgently needed items. "Special attention" simply means by-passing the 800-number temporarily and directly informing a member of the donations coordination team of the circumstances of the case. The donor should be assured that direct contact with a donations team member is being made on his behalf but that his information should still be entered into the database. The team member, being fully aware of State policies, the needs, and other pertinent information should always be the person negotiating directly with the potential donor. One advantage of having a State official present is that he or she can most decisively tell a persistent donor that his goods and services may not be needed.

Cash Donations

There are many advantages to making cash contributions to aid the disaster relief effort. Cash helps agencies meet the precise needs of the disaster victims in the community. Spending money in the disaster-affected community will help with the local economy whereas many free donated goods will compete with local businesses struggling in the post-disaster economy. Sending cash rather than truckloads of goods avoids the often difficult, labor-intensive logistical tasks such as off-loading goods, sorting, storing, repacking, and re-shipping the goods.

Consistent with one of the most important underlying principles in donations management, the government role is to support, strengthen, and build upon the existing network or capacity of the voluntary organizations active in disaster response and recovery. The donating public calling a government sponsored phone bank should be given the full list of the well-established voluntary organizations active in disaster that are confirmed to be fully involved in the disaster operation so that it can choose the organization it will support.

Cash Donations to a VOAD

The State may also accept the donation in a fund strictly for disaster response and recovery. It will be important to plan carefully how funds can be equitably distributed **before a disaster occurs**. It should always be remembered that the development of a highly visible State fund for disaster relief may compete directly with the efforts of the traditional voluntary agencies which depend largely on donations of all kinds from the American public.

It is imperative that accurate accounts be kept of monies received and spent. Maintaining a strong sense of public trust is extremely important for all involved in the donations management effort, and the public trust can quickly be eroded if it appears that officials are implementing poor financial practices. Public trust must be maintained to earn the continued generosity of cash donors.

All cash matters should be handled by a financial manager for the facility. From the beginning, it is beneficial for that manager to have an understanding with the Donations Team concerning who is responsible for the bills in operating the facility and generally what are eligible costs, and verbal understandings may have to suffice initially. For example, a

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Governor's office may say "Do whatever has to be done to manage the donations," but clear documentation will always be useful later. Maintain all receipts for expenditures.

Warehouse Considerations

An effective system of receiving and unloading goods needs to be managed by experienced logistics personnel. It may not be reasonable to expect someone to learn this task on the job. Logistics coordinators may come from a State agency or the National Guard.

The facility should include a staging area for trucks ready to unload, and for staff to inspect the cargo to determine the requirements and strategy for unloading. If the goods are critically needed, be prepared to give the driver directions to the proper distribution center in the disaster area or trans-load the goods onto a more appropriate vehicle. When designated goods intended for a specific voluntary agency arrive at the State warehouse instead, the goods should be dispatched as quickly as possible unless the cargo is clearly in an unacceptable form or the driver does not have adequate documentation that the cargo includes needed goods. Ideally, a representative from the sponsoring voluntary agency should be at the State center to advise the agency's facilities of the arrival.

It will be critical to maintain an inventory listing of available goods at each center so that the Donations Coordination Team can match the goods with requests from the affected community.

Equipment is needed at the reception center to unload trucks, sort, reship and temporarily store goods, and manage waste. Following is an important but partial list of those goods:

- 1) Conveyor belts;
- 2) Forklifts;
- 3) Floodlights;
- 4) Pallet jacks or motorized dollies;
- 5) Ramps;
- 6) Boxes - various sizes;
- 7) Shrink-wrapping equipment;
- 8) Extra pallets;
- 9) Racks to warehouse pallets;
- 10) Work Gloves;
- 11) Signs;
- 12) Markers;
- 13) Tables for sorting;
- 14) Fuel and oil supply for forklifts;
- 15) Empty trailers; and
- 16) Refrigeration.

An organized floor plan will be necessary. Locked and secured areas will be needed for controlled items like medicines, syringes and firearms, and hazardous substances like paint and chemicals. Low-priority goods should be stored in such a manner that they are not in the way of item for which there is a high demand.

Volunteer agencies may provide further guidance.

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Truck escort service may be required, even if the State does not require it. This may involve the police and/or local people who know the area. Taxi drivers may also be suitable for this assistance. Appropriate maps and handouts should be made available at the reception center.