



**Crisis Preparedness, Response and Recovery Guide**  
*A Manual for United Ways*



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## Introduction

Crisis work is an important element of a Community Impact United Way. Our efforts in Crisis Preparedness, Response and Recovery directly relate to quality of life and the ability of society to progress.

No matter what your United Way focuses on, when a disaster happens in your community you will be called to help; and your board and donors will expect you to respond. The goal of this guide is to help your organization prepare for that eventuality.

The capacity of United Ways varies significantly throughout the system so this manual will provide levels of engagement from simple low-risk initiatives to fully committed projects.

The term crisis is often used interchangeably with calamity, catastrophe and disaster to describe a severe disruption of personal and community life involving a significant number of people and causing interference of physical, emotional, economic, social and spiritual well-being. Crisis situations often create human needs that victims cannot alleviate without assistance.

Local United Ways have a unique role in assuring a comprehensive response to community crisis. By collaborating with existing disaster organizations, local United Ways can both support them in their mission and help the community identify and provide for a variety of human service needs that might otherwise be unmet.

**“There are two types of United Ways, those that have experienced a crisis and those that will.”**

**Patrick Hanrahan  
President and CEO  
United Way of the Plains  
Wichita, Kansas**

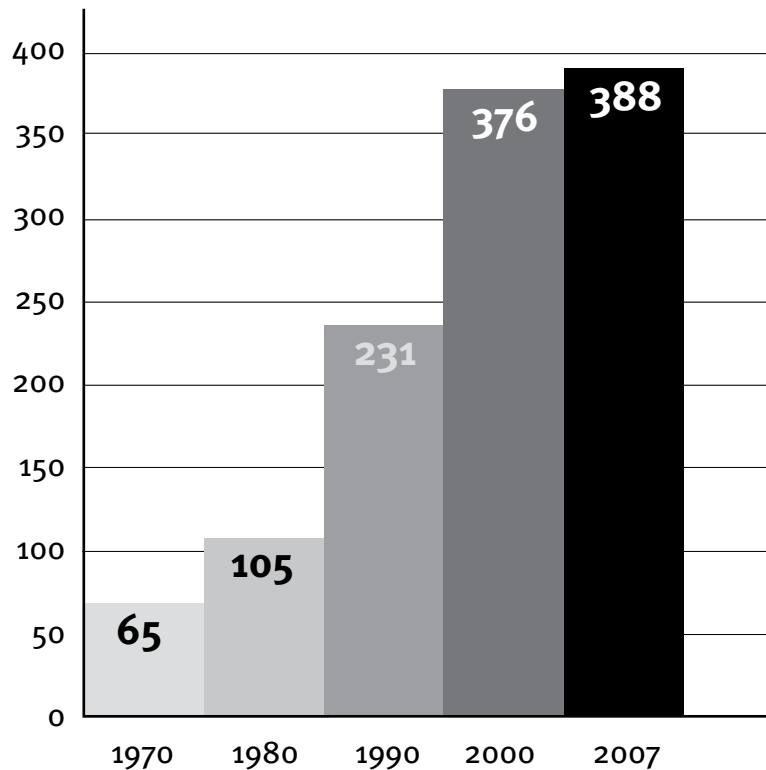
## Why Is Crisis Work Important?

United Ways throughout the world are facing an increasing number of natural disasters. The United Nations, U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency and others predict that unprecedented frequencies of large-scale crises are expected over the next decade. The magnitude and unpredictability of disasters are undermining the ability of communities to effectively respond and recover from crises.

“When disaster strikes, you need to be ready to mobilize. Your community will expect United Way to be a visible force – no matter what size your local association is.”

Judy Green  
President  
United Way of Cass-Clay  
Fargo, North Dakota

## Major Disasters by Year



Source: Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED)

These events affect our work and challenge our efforts to advance the common good. Various researchers have noted that the disaster rate has disproportionately affected the poor and under-served populations. Accessing opportunities for a good life are not possible when basic survival is paramount.

According to Dr. Barbara Reynolds, a Crisis and Emergency Risk Specialist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in an emergency the public seeks:

- Facts
- Tools to empower decision making
- Opportunity to be involved
- A watch-guard over scarce resources
- Ability to recover or preserve well-being and normalcy

Our LIVE UNITED movement — Give. Advocate. Volunteer.— positions us well to address these issues.

**GIVE.** United Ways are trusted in raising donations, assessing needs and allocating community resources. United Ways regularly serve as the voice of the community, particularly for under-served populations, and maintaining and strengthening those roles will help facilitate a successful community-wide recovery.

**ADVOCATE.** United Ways are successful communicators. In the United States, Caribbean and Canada, United Ways utilize 2-1-1, a communications system that provides critical and well-researched facts in a timely manner, including information about ways to take actions. In regions without 2-1-1, your position as a leader in coordinating and sharing information with the community, partners and emergency first-responders becomes even more important.

**VOLUNTEER.** United Ways are training and mobilizing volunteers. Extending training and capacity to include disaster preparedness, response and recovery, United Ways increase their base of advocates that can be rallied for future initiatives and accomplishing goals.

## Emergency Management Cycle

Incorporating a working knowledge of the emergency management cycle will help you determine your United Way engagement strategy.

1. **Preparedness** is a series of planning steps implemented long before a pending or immediate crisis. An example could be developing and maintaining an emergency plan for your local United Way.
2. **Response** is short but intensive, taking place during or immediately after the crisis occurs. An example could be maintaining a seat at the Emergency Operations Center to facilitate communication of needs and abilities between governmental and nonprofit sectors.
3. **Recovery** is carrying out what needs to be done after the immediate crisis is over. It is a long term process lasting several months to several years focused on returning the community to an enhanced state of normalcy. An example is collaborating with partners to rebuild a community resource center or supporting mental health professionals working with victims.
4. **Mitigation** is the effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. This is achieved through risk analysis, which results in information that provides a foundation for activities that reduce risk. An example would be rebuilding a collapsed roof with a steeper pitch to minimize snow buildup in future storms or purchasing appropriate flood insurance coverage.



## Action Steps

Prepare for a crisis in your community by making sure you have the following:

- Full contact information, including cell phone and e-mail for your staff, board members, companies, agencies and volunteers.
- A backup of all your computer files at a safe and secure off-site location.
- A set of bank checks.
- A copy of your business continuity and emergency plan.
- Emergency Supplies Kit
- Develop relationships with the local Office of Homeland Security to make plans and define roles in the event of a disaster.
- Coordinate 2-1-1 with local and state information services to define roles in the event of a crisis.
- Ascertain off-site locations for key United Way services and 2-1-1 should the crisis prevent the use of facilities.
- Identify key staff who need to be able to return soon after an evacuation to assist in the response and initial assessments; secure their return credentials and agency identification before the disaster.
- Work with the local and state VOAD to understand their plans, roles and appropriate interface with United Way.

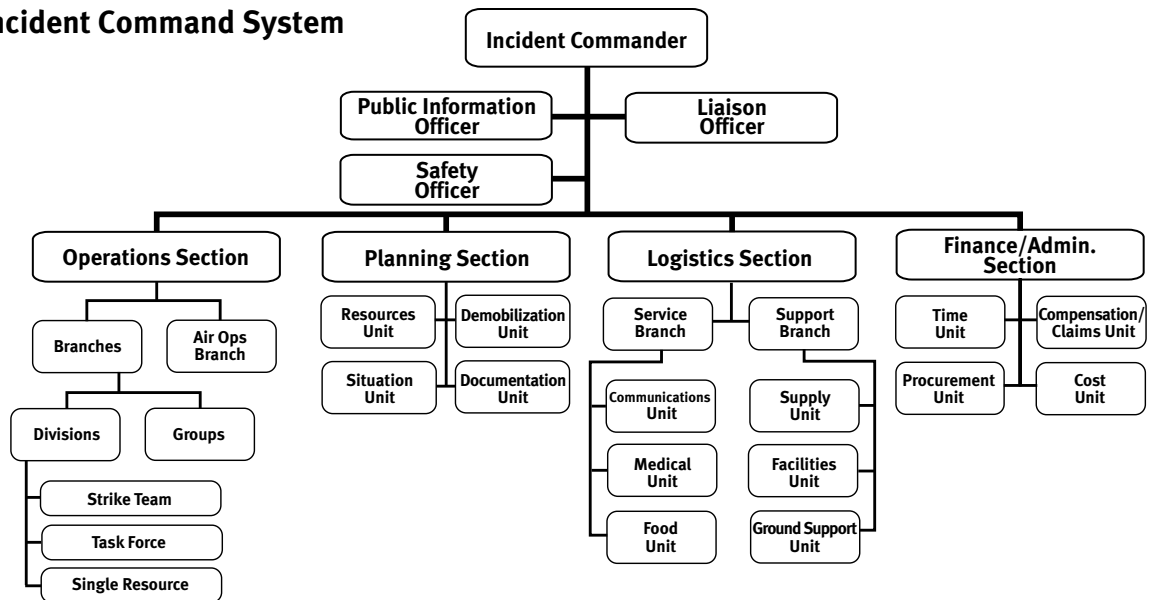
**“We live and work in a quiet, close-knit community. We’d always considered Crisis Preparedness to be reserved for the parts of the country that are prone to hurricanes, earthquakes and other natural disasters. But our community’s sense of security was shattered with the Virginia Tech tragedy and we were needed immediately to be part of the response team. That single experience changed us and how we define ourselves forever. Our United Way and our community now understand why it’s important to be prepared to respond to all aspects of any type of disaster.”**

**Kymn Davidson-Hamley  
Executive Director  
United Way of Montgomery, Radford & Floyd  
Christiansburg, Virginia**

Respond to and recover from a crisis by conducting a critical assessment. United Ways and community social service agencies should quickly take steps to effectively measure damage and operability status of your functions and assets.

- 1) Safety and Whereabouts of Your Staff
  - Mobilize emergency response teams
  - Reassign functions as necessary
  - Follow evacuation procedures if damage assessment indicates
  - Account for all staff, volunteers and clients who were on the premises
  - Emergency coordinator (if you don’t have one, assign one) should get reports from key staff
  - All decision-makers should keep written logs
- 2) Structures
  - Perform damage assessment using qualified personnel
  - Clear debris, make repairs and install safeguards
  - Determine if building is safe to use including ability to withstand another immediate disaster such as an aftershock, additional flooding or wind gusts
- 3) Communication Systems
  - Initiate any emergency communication systems
  - Listen to the Emergency Alert System channel for government disaster information
  - Check phones, fax, email, websites, and pagers
  - Notify United Way Worldwide of the situation in your community
- 4) Equipment
  - Assess damage and make necessary repairs
  - Check computer equipment
- 5) Inventory
  - Assess damage and take corrective action
- 6) Agency Vehicles
  - Assess damage and make appropriate repairs
  - Ensure that vehicles are equipped to handle community conditions
- 7) Utility Systems
  - Utilize emergency power if necessary
  - If power is unavailable, determine when it is expected to be restored
  - Assess damage to utility systems and shut off damaged or dangerous systems (e.g. gas) until inspected
- 8) Vital Records
  - Safeguard critical documents & computer data
  - Inventory files and locations
- 9) Continuation of Services
  - After damage assessment of agency functions and assets, determine possibility of continuing to provide services
  - Prioritize needs
  - Determine how your United Way can help the community

## Understanding the Incident Command System



Source: FEMA

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a standardized management tool, developed by FEMA, for meeting the demands of small or large crisis situations. This system has become the standard for emergency management across the country and may be used for planned events, natural disasters and acts of terrorism.

ICS integrates a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure. ICS is used by all levels of government — Federal, State, local, and tribal — as well as by many private-sector and nongovernmental organizations.

It is recommended that United Ways connect with the Public Information Officer and the Liaison Officer. Depending on the size of your United Way, you may also want to have an agency representative assigned to represent you in the ICS. An agency representative's responsibilities include attending briefings by the Liaison Officer; providing ICS information to United Way staff and volunteers responding to the incident; sharing community information with the Liaison Officer; and advising the ICS of agency restrictions or requirements. This may be an appropriate role for 2-1-1 or your state organization to fulfill in your community.

### Effective Communication During Emergencies

Disaster events bring reports of overwhelming devastation and lead to an outpouring of compassion and a desire to provide immediate help to those affected. Philanthropic organizations are expected to act quickly to address critical needs. United Way's role in crisis efforts may not be clear to the public, partners or community.

Successfully convey your messages by following these simple steps:

- Assess needs, constraints and capabilities
- Develop goals, plans and strategies
- Train designated spokesperson
- Identify targeted audience (community, board, media outlets and potential donors)
- Prepare clear and concise messages
- Deliver timely, targeted messages to maintain visibility
- Evaluate messages and responses to improve performance

Keep in mind that people process information differently during times of high stress. Experts state that crisis-related messages must be very accessible because people under stress lose about four grade levels in their ability to comprehend information. As a rule, messaging should be created to reach a sixth-grade literacy level. In sharing information, utilize both traditional and new-media tools, including timely website updates, email blasts, social-networking sites, telephone calls and face-to-face meetings.



## Potential Roles— Identify What to Do and Who Can Help You Do It

United Way's roles in community crisis preparedness, response and recovery are constantly changing. United Ways that did not believe that they would ever have a role are now being called upon by their communities to perform a broad range of duties. The experiences of Hurricane Katrina — when displaced individuals and families were relocated across the country with limited warning — taught us that crisis events can impact small towns and large cities far from the epicenter of the initial impact.

Your community expects United Way staff and volunteers to deal fairly with each agency and every person they encounter. Remember that you represent United Way and that your actions or inaction will be remembered by the community for days, weeks and years to come.

Typically, local, State and Federal governmental agencies ensure public safety and respond to infrastructure concerns immediately following a crisis. Immediate relief organizations such as the American Red Cross and Salvation Army work hand-in-hand with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to assist affected populations with response and recovery efforts. It is important to know how crisis organizations define their roles and responsibilities and how United Ways fit into the local, state and regional recovery plan.

### Examples of roles for local United Ways and state associations include:

- **Managing the volunteers** who wish to help during a crisis through a United Way sponsored Volunteer Center or by establishing a Volunteer Reception Center to handle emerging disaster volunteers.
- **Advocating for 2-1-1** in your community. The information and referral system, 2-1-1, provides accurate and up-to-date data about existing community resources. During a crisis 2-1-1 provides information about where to give or get help, what types of help is needed, how to evacuate or get food, water or housing services.
- **Restore community services** by assisting affiliate organizations remain in operation. The assistance can be in the form of emergency grants or identifying temporary work sites should agencies' offices be inaccessible.
- **Serve as a convener** by working with the state or local VOAD and FEMA VAL to bring together service organizations to develop a plan that identifies the types of assistance and resources that might be needed and can be provided. Consider convening business leaders to assist in recovery by returning the tax base to its pre-disaster level. Plans should be shared with the local jurisdiction's emergency management.
- **Provide emergency funding** based on need and availability.
- **Establish an Unmet Needs/Long-Term Recovery Committee** in partnership with state and local service providers, funding organizations and community leaders. The purpose of this committee is to ensure that services and resources are provided to individuals and families in a timely way. If Long Term Recovery Committees are in place prior to a disaster, reach out and forge good working relationships.
- **Handle donations** both solicited and unsolicited from donors within and beyond the community. If a crisis fund is established it will be necessary to develop clear criteria to distribute the donations.
- **Host workgroups** on disaster specific issues and policy challenges or networking sessions for government and voluntary agencies to learn about what each is doing and how to better work together in the event of a crisis.

**“United Ways play an integral role in crisis preparedness, response and recovery. As a state association, we serve as a communication conduit for local United Ways and statewide agencies to help Texans get the resources they need when disaster strikes.”**

**Karen Johnson**  
President and CEO  
United Ways of Texas  
Austin, Texas

When you are in public or on television wear United Way collateral. It is said that a picture is worth a thousand words. Wear the United Way logo when conducting disaster response work to remind the public and media that your organization is actively helping the community recover from crisis.

## Establishing a Fund

One of the first responses considered is the establishment of a fund to assist affected communities and individuals. Before committing your organization to launching a crisis fund, stop and ask these questions:

- Have we received requests for assistance from numerous agencies, institutions, groups or individuals in the affected area?
- Are funds being simultaneously set up at multiple banks or agencies?
- Have local or regional corporate partners approached the local United Way to administer the relief funds?
- Is the scale of the crisis of the magnitude that merits a community-wide response?
- Has the Mayor, Governor or other elected official requested United Way to coordinate fundraising efforts?
- Do we have resources and capacity to implement a highly visible fund in a transparent, accountable and professional way?
- Can I coordinate with colleagues in neighboring United Ways to establish a regional fund?
- Could we work with corporate partners and major gift donors to establish a less visible, non-public fund to meet the identified needs?
- Can we be clear and specific about the intended uses of the fund?
- Is it the right thing to do?

**Tip: Set aside a minimum of 25% of donations raised for long-term recovery needs.**

Additional information about establishing a crisis fund, including a protocol manual, can be found online at: <http://online.unitedway.org/crisis>.

## Supporting 2-1-1

2-1-1 is recognized by local municipalities, agencies, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and FEMA as the primary source of information regarding human services resources for victims of crisis.

A 2-1-1's primary mission during times of disaster is to maximize community access to critical resources. To accomplish this mission, 2-1-1s adapt normal information gathering and services delivery procedures to meet the circumstances of specific disasters. Emerging needs are evaluated as they occur and prioritized in relation to the needs of routine operation. Priorities will shift to addressing time-sensitive and disaster-specific issues as needed while maintaining standard service until it is possible to return to full customary operations. An internal, integrated crisis intervention capacity enhances 2-1-1's ability to serve the public in an emergency, assisting them in dealing with the disaster in addition to providing information.

2-1-1s screen callers who may be eligible for federal disaster care management services. Throughout the crisis, 2-1-1s aggressively seek new and updated information and actively disseminate such information to individuals impacted by the disaster, to other agencies, organizations and individuals involved in the disaster response efforts, to the media, and to the general public. Plans should be in place for where 2-1-1 will be located if their normal facilities are not operable.

In addition, the United Way/AIRS Disaster Response Team is available to assist 2-1-1 when call volume and data collection assistance and operational and volunteer management are needed in a region experiencing or recovering from a crisis. Data collected by 2-1-1 can be used by United Way to tell the community's story and advocate for necessary resources.

**“There is an urgent immediacy to this work that is awe inspiring in its challenge... and United Way is uniquely positioned to lead where others often are not. We have harnessed our history of accountability and strong working relationships with business, government, and the nonprofit community with the responsiveness of 2-1-1 and new friendships in the faith-based community to affect a more solid and sustainable recovery — a true rebirth for many of our communities.”**

**Beth Terry**  
Executive Vice President  
United Way for the Greater New Orleans Area  
New Orleans, Louisiana

## **Establishing a Volunteer Reception Center**

It is common for spontaneous volunteers to converge in communities suffering loss and devastation. Managing those people becomes a challenge and in some cases can become burdensome for first-responders.

That is when a Volunteer Reception Center (VRC) becomes a valuable tool in disaster response and recovery. A VRC is the process of registering and screening spontaneous volunteers and placing those volunteers with organizations that have expressed needs for volunteers as part of disaster relief, response and recovery.

Careful planning is required to establish a VRC, including identifying potential locations and staff, coordinating with the local and/or state government and acquiring Memorandums of Understanding between stakeholders.

Additional information and templates for a VRC are located in the appendix and at: <http://online.unitedway.org/crisis>.

## **United Way Alternative Spring Break**

United Way Alternative Spring Break (UWASB) is a week-long immersion service experience for young adults ages 18-24 years old. The program engages participants in meaningful volunteer service, inspiring them and changing communities in the process. Since 2006, more than 1,200 participants have volunteered in communities across the country and many projects are focused on disaster recovery.

United Ways can send a group of students elsewhere to participate in the program or host a UWASB in their own community, bringing in additional volunteers and generating media attention for their own disaster recovery efforts. After the UWASB experience in 2009, 81% of participants indicated they were more likely to volunteer. Students reported an even higher level of satisfaction with United Way. UWASB is a great way to inspire students to come back to your community and get involved year-round.

Many United Way Alternative Spring Break alumni return home to start a Student United Way, the student-led United Way club on college and university campuses. These student leaders LIVE UNITED and can be valuable advocates, volunteers and fundraisers in your disaster recovery work and other efforts.

**“We know from experience that there is a need for engaging nonprofits, businesses, churches and families to regularly discuss community-wide preparedness. A disaster disrupts all facets of everyday life and the entire community will need to pull together for a complete and successful recovery. We found that utilizing volunteers in South Mississippi keeps us energized and brings attention to the continuing needs in our community.”**

**Mary Tell, Director, Volunteer Gulf Coast  
United Way of South Mississippi  
Gulfport, Mississippi**

## Managing Evacuees in Your Community

In the event of a disaster, individuals and families will be forced to evacuate from their homes to communities outside of the impact zone. Your United Way may be called upon to help evacuees who have experienced a traumatic event. Consider these questions when assisting evacuees:

### Labor Engagement

The AFL-CIO has been organizing union responses to natural and man-made disasters in communities across America for many years. Consider coordinating with local or regional AFL-CIO Community Services Liaisons on crisis preparedness, response and recovery initiatives. Utilizing the union's connections, resources and skilled labor may help your United Way better address community needs.

### Lessons Learned from United Ways Experienced in Disaster Work

**Communicate openly and often.** Identify all potential constituents — victims, families, institutions, agencies, volunteers, donors and the media. Determine core messages for each group and repeat them often.

**Manage the flow of information.** Collect information from a variety of sources. Establish a main information contact person. Summarize and succinctly state all vital information. Establish positive and functioning relationships with media entities. Share information with United Way Worldwide to be included in corporate leader reports and leadership updates and posted to the system at large. Sharing this information may help you acquire additional resources and support.

**Take off the organizational hat and put on the community hat.** Do whatever is necessary to move the community forward — convene, lead, follow and partner. Be flexible as you assume and take on new roles in a crisis.

**Never underestimate the demands that will be placed on your organization.** Staff, volunteers, relationships, systems and organizational resources will be put to the test. These demands can last months or even years depending on the severity and scope of the crisis.

**Set the highest ethical standards for your team and organization.** Be truthful, follow through, demonstrate compassion, give credit and share responsibility. Take care of your team. Exceed standards whenever possible and forgive yourself when you fail.

**Be patient, forgiving and occasionally thick-skinned.** Don't get caught between an individual or institution's pain and their need to act on that pain. Grief, anger, denial and fear can prevent effective communications and successful decision-making.

**Know that there are real dangers for your United Way.** In an emotion-packed community crisis, helpers may receive hurtful, and probably untruthful, criticism. Be prepared to confront distrust, paranoia, or even scandal but never let those stop you from doing what's right.



## **Advice to Live By**

### ***Top Ten Tips from United Way CEOs with Crisis Experience***

1. Recognize that in emergencies, conditions change in an instant. Therefore, the best people to have on your team are often the most adaptable.
2. An Executive Director must be able to adapt to a dynamic environment in order to succeed.
3. Maintain excellent listening skills to match your passion for helping people.
4. Being a good leader often means relying on ideas and skills of your coworkers, board members, and partners.
5. Don't forget your manners. Remembering to say thank you, please and good job will serve you well.
6. Be clear on what your United Way will and won't do. Statements that are clear and purposeful are in demand during a crisis.
7. Individuals at meetings don't want to be managed as serfs. They do, however, demand respect, appreciate guidance and expect a chance to add value to the project.
8. Within crisis—and elsewhere too—the primary force reshaping the world is speed, although finance is the key.
9. Maintain relationships to ensure they don't end with cleanup.
10. Plan for the future.

## **Turning Off Trauma—Managing Stress**

The entire community—including United Way staff, their families and volunteers—can be traumatized by crisis. Strong emotional reactions have the potential to interfere with thought processes and functionality. During a crisis it can be harder to remain positive and focused on advancing the common good.

First and foremost, panic is not productive; communication is. During a crisis, feeling a range of emotions is normal and expected. If left unaddressed these feelings may lead to problems in your professional and personal life.

Studies show organizations that address challenges together are most likely to successfully cope with a crisis, so communicating what you are going through is essential. Be open about the situation you and your communities are facing and share challenges and frustrations with your colleagues. Your coworkers may be experiencing the same stress you are.

Emotional stress can take a physical toll on your body, so it is absolutely essential to maintain healthy habits. In order to better cope with stress, take time for yourself, eat balanced meals, get enough sleep, exercise regularly, and celebrate the small successes as you really *do* make progress.

If your problems become too big to handle, find a trained counselor. The following symptoms may indicate a need for outside help:

- Feeling depressed.
- Changing sleeping patterns.
- Irritability with family, friends and co-workers.
- Loss of interest in daily work responsibilities.
- Hallucinating.
- Misusing alcohol or drugs.
- Experiencing isolation.
- Panic attacks.
- Suicidal thoughts.

## Insurance Coverage

Maintaining the appropriate insurance coverage for your facility may speed recovery.

### Pre-Disaster

- Conduct a risk assessment of your facility to ensure you have adequate coverage should those risks become a reality. Think about any possibility, including but not limited to:
  - › Floods
  - › Hurricanes
  - › Earthquakes
  - › Tornadoes
  - › Workplace Violence
  - › Terrorism
- Ask your insurer:
  - › Are there any disasters that my insurance won't cover?
  - › Do I have enough insurance to rebuild my business property and replace all my possessions?
  - › Do I have enough insurance to protect the personal property of my employees?
  - › Do I have enough insurance to keep my business open?
  - › Do I have enough insurance to protect myself from a lawsuit?
- Create an inventory of the office property, including model names and serial numbers. Store the information off premises. A template for office inventory is located in the appendix.
- Do not overlook seasonal items, like campaign materials or special event decorations
- Keep sales receipts.
- Photograph each room.
- Keep your policy number and the telephone numbers of your insurance agent readily at hand.

### Post-Disaster

- If you suffer property loss, contact your insurance company as soon as possible to arrange for a visit from an adjuster.
- Before doing repairs, photograph and list damage.
- Protect your building by making temporary repairs until your insurance company is able to advise you. Save receipts for materials purchased for repairs. Do not throw out damaged property until your adjuster advises you to do so.
- Do not make permanent repairs until your insurance company has inspected the property and you have reached an agreement on the cost of repairs.
- If your claim is denied, review the terms of the policy. You may be able to appeal the decision.

Be careful — use a reputable repair firm by consulting with the Better Business Bureau. It is best to get more than one estimate for your loss, check references and get everything in writing.

## Glossary of Terms

**NVOAD** — National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster is a collaborative organization that supports communication, coordination and cooperation among various national organizations that respond to disasters. There are numerous state and local VOADs that are part of the VOAD network.

**CAN** — Coordinated Assistance Network develops and deploys new technologies to foster inter-agency collaboration, improve service delivery for disaster clients, and increase our sector's efficiency. The CAN system consists of two main databases:

- Client Registry: where information is recorded regarding the client case management activities.
- Resource Directory: a reference for services provided in your community.

**Emergency Management Offices** — Most communities have a tax-supported unit of government whose responsibilities include preparing for and responding to disasters. Emergency Management Offices, also known as Emergency Operations Centers or Disaster Recovery Centers, generally include police and fire departments and medical personnel and have been known to concentrate on keeping order and meeting physical needs. If an Emergency Management group is active in a community, it is strongly recommended that the local United Way establish a formal relationship. United Way's concerns with human needs can be brought to the group through a series of questions: Who will manage spontaneous volunteers? Is 2-1-1 integrated into the community's emergency plan?

**Emergent Groups** — The appearance of persons and/or groups with different ways of giving immediate help and long-term recovery assistance are referred to as emergent groups. These individuals are not invited to become involved but are motivated by a desire to help others in times of trouble. Emergent groups are sometimes referred to as spontaneous or unaffiliated volunteers.

**Alternative Spring Break** — A United Way program that supports young people interested in advancing the common good by volunteering during scholastic breaks. Many projects are focused on disaster recovery. Alternative Spring Break is commonly referred to as ASB.

**United Way Crisis Response Team** — A group within the United Way national office responds quickly when a national crisis is imminent or has struck. Included are the team leader from Community Impact and/or representatives from Field Leadership, Brand, National Corporate Leadership and Finance. When needed, the team can be expanded to include additional staff.

**Coordinated National Response Triggers** — The actions that activate a *national* response to a crisis event(s) are:

- › The President of the United States declares a National Emergency as defined by the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et. seq.) and section 301 of title 3 of the United States Code.
- › The United States Department of Homeland Security Threat Advisory System is raised to Code Red indicating a severe risk of a terrorist attack.
- › Three or more states are impacted by a disaster and are declared by the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 5121, et. seq.).
- › United Way Worldwide's operations are immobilized and prompts the initiation of the business continuity plan.

**Operation Caring Communities** — Operation Caring Communities is a neighbor-to-neighbor mutual assistance project to aid United Ways affected by disaster. Under this program, local United Ways (caregivers) across the nation provide volunteer support and in-kind donations to affected United Ways (beneficiaries). This adopt-a-community approach was initially

developed in response to the 2005 Hurricane Season (Katrina, Rita, Wilma). Following the landfall of Hurricanes Gustav and Ike in 2008, Operation Caring Communities was reactivated to support communities in need. This program remained open throughout the 2008 Hurricane Season. Operation Caring Communities is activated if three or more states are affected by a disaster.

***United Way/AIRS Disaster Response Team*** —

A group of trained information and referral professionals who assist 2-1-1 with call volume and data collection assistance and/or operational and volunteer management are needed in a region experiencing or recovering from a crisis.

***Voluntary Agency Liaison*** —

Commonly referred to as the VAL, these individuals are the Federal Emergency Management Agency's principal connection to the voluntary agency sector. These individuals build and maintain relationships with organizations and government entities; support the management of donations and unaffiliated volunteers; and assist in preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation efforts.

***Long Term Recovery Committee*** —

Sometimes referred to as Unmet Needs Committees and Long Term Recovery Organizations, a Long Term Recovery Committee (LTRC) is a group of local nonprofits and faith-based groups and other community organizations that convene to assess and address the long-term needs of the community recovering from a particular disaster. In many communities, these organizations will be the same as those that are involved with the local VOAD group, although the LTRC is a separate entity. LTRC are self-directing, and some establish internal committees to handle particular needs, such as construction and unmet needs.





### ***External Resources***

American Red Cross

<http://www.americanredcross.org>

Coordinated Assistance Network

<http://www.can.org>

Federal Government Disaster Aid

<http://www.disasterassistance.gov>

National Voluntary Organizations Active in  
Disaster <http://www.nvoad.org>

Salvation Army

<http://www.salvationarmy.org>

### **Sources**

Special thanks to the following for sharing their expertise and knowledge in the development of this manual:

United Way of Anchorage

United Way of the Bay Area

United Way of Cass-Clay

United Way of Central Iowa

United Way for the Greater New Orleans Area

United Way of the Midlands

United Way of Montgomery, Radford & Floyd

United Way of the Plains

United Way of South Mississippi

United Ways of Texas

United Way of Palm Beach County

American Institute of Stress

American Red Cross

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Center for Research and Epidemiology of Disasters

Coordinated Assistance Network

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Insurance Information Institute

International Red Cross

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

Salvation Army

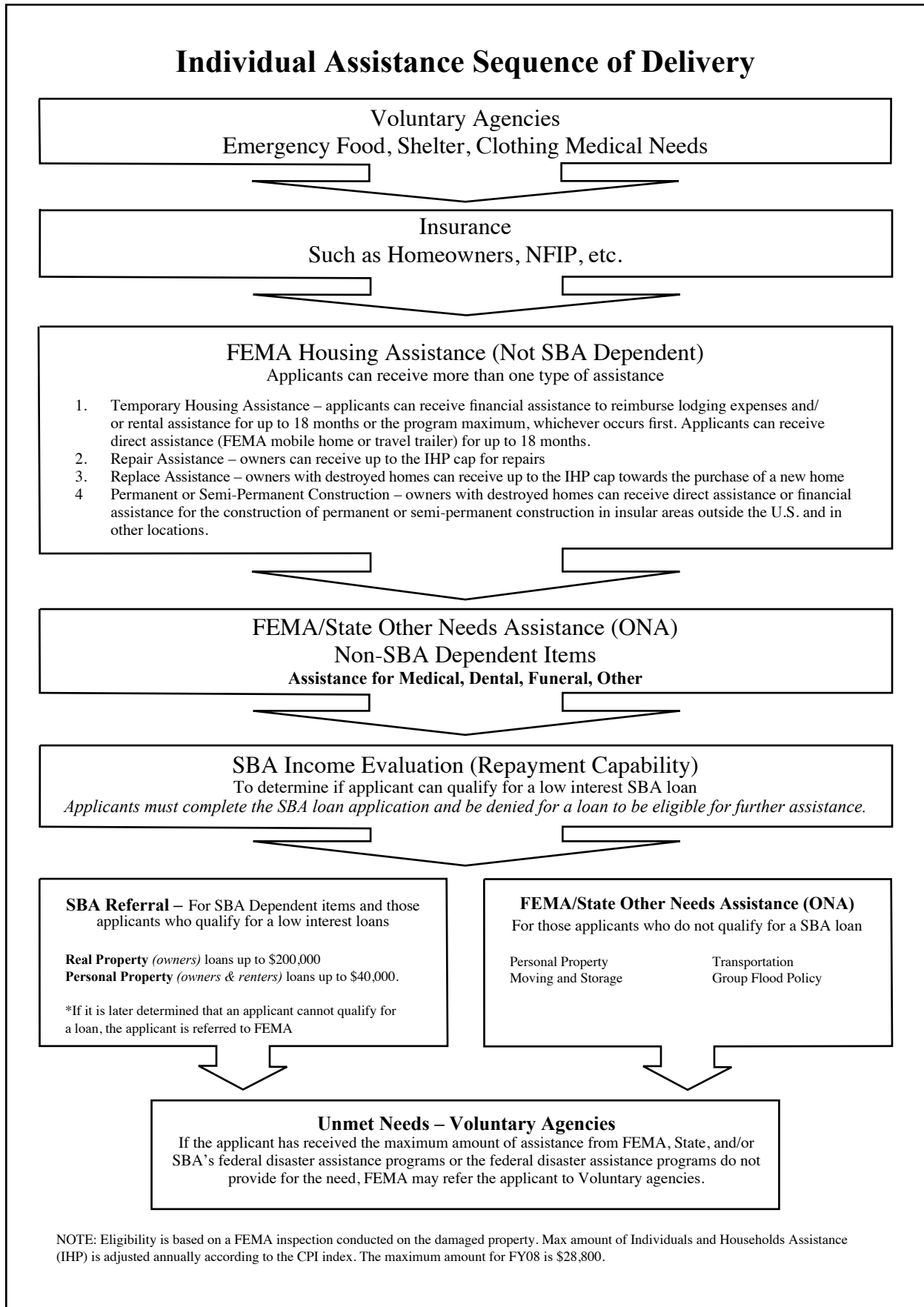
United Nations

United States Department of Health and Human Services

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

United States Department of Labor

World Health Organization



Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency

## Media Release Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby authorize and consent that \_\_\_\_\_, a not-for-profit corporation, its legal representatives, successors or assigns, shall have the absolute right to copyright, publish, use, sell or assign any and all media, including but not limited to photographs, video, internet postings and sound recording, that are made or taken of me as related to this event, whether apart from or in connection with illustrative or written printed matter, story or news item, motion pictures, television or radio spots, advertising, worldwide web publishing, publicity or for any other lawful purpose whatsoever.

I hereby waive all claims for any compensation for such use or for damages. I hereby waive any right that I might have to inspect and/or approve the finished product or the advertising copy that may be used in connection therewith or the use to which it may be applied.

I hereby warrant that I am of full age and have the right to contract my own name in the above regard. I state further that I have read the above authorization and release prior to its execution, and that I am fully familiar with the contents thereof.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
GUARDIAN SIGNATURE (FOR MINOR SUBJECTS ONLY)

\_\_\_\_\_  
DISASTER EVENT

(Example: 2009 Upper Midwest Flooding)

## Volunteer Reception Center

### **Suggested supplies for establishing a VRC**

Agency Referral Forms

Clipboards

ID Badges for VRC employees

Laptop computers & printers

Photo and video authorization forms

Office Supplies

Station Signage

Tables and chairs

Telephones

Volunteer Instructional Handouts

Volunteer Liability Release Forms

Volunteer Registration Forms

Volunteer Training Attendance Record

Volunteer Wristbands

### **VRC Staff Roles**

**Director:** To oversee the operations of the VRC; determine and establish efficient flow of center; assign tasks to center staff; maintain records; and thank volunteers.

**Greeter(s):** To welcome visitors and direct them to the appropriate tables, explain the process, ask for patience and thank volunteers.

**Interviewers:** To screen prospective volunteers and quickly refer them to an appropriate agency in need of assistance; and to complete a referral form and direct the volunteer to the next station.

**Agency Coordinator:** To review the referral form and pull the corresponding agency request form and enter the individual's name as a referral; and to continually communicate with agencies with requests to confirm that volunteers continue to be needed.

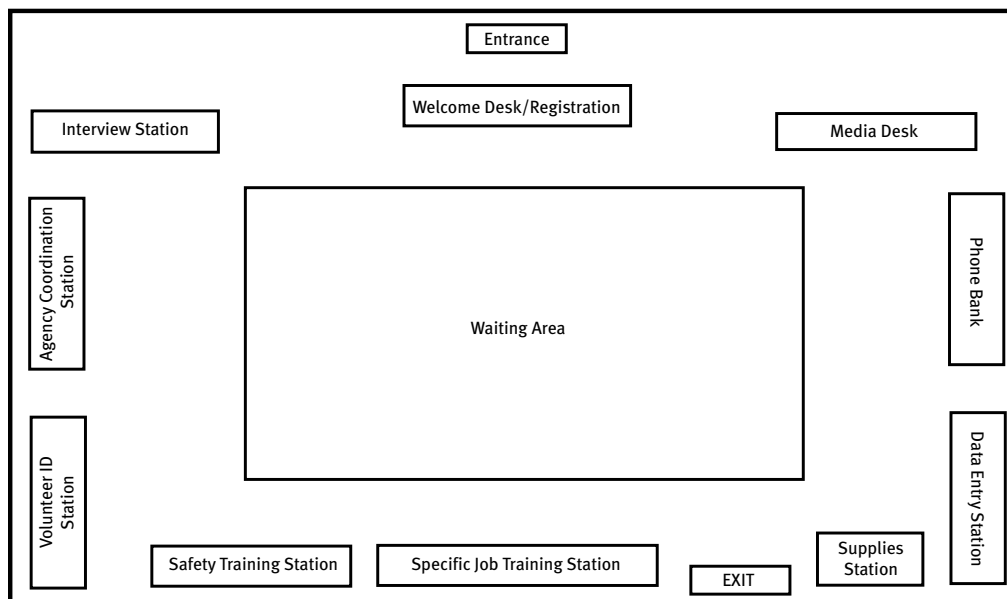
**Phone Bank:** To coordinate with 2-1-1. In those areas without 2-1-1 coverage, staff at the phone bank will collect requests for volunteers from agencies and provide registration options to callers interested in serving as volunteers.

**Data Entry:** To maintain accurate records of who is doing what and when; and to share copies of unfilled requests with colleagues as needed.

**Safety Trainers:** To review basic safety procedures with volunteers, explain to the volunteers what they should expect and retain a copy of the safety briefing attendance sheet.

**Identification:** To provide each volunteer with a wristband that includes the individual's name, name of the agency referral, and the dates the individual will be working in the disaster area.

**Floaters:** To carry information and supplies to stations as needed and escort volunteers through the referral process.



# Insurance

United Way of \_\_\_\_\_ Sheet \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

Detailed Description	Purchased from	How Many	Purchase Date	Purchase Price	Room Located
1.					
2.					
3.					
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23.					
24.					
25.					
<b>Print this form, fill it out and save in a safe place</b>	<b>TOTAL VALUE</b>	<b>\$</b>			

**United Way**

701 North Fairfax Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314-2045  
[www.liveunited.org](http://www.liveunited.org)

