

Great Volunteer Management System

Managing Volunteers During Times of Crisis

Agenda

- Icebreaker
- Preparing Your Organization
 - Organizational Disaster Preparedness
 - COOP Planning
- Disaster Volunteer Management
 - Who Are Disaster Volunteers?
 - Should My Organization Engage Volunteers Post Disaster?
 - Activity: Engaging with Volunteers Post Disaster
 - Managing Disaster Volunteers
 - Communication During Disaster
- Questions & Wrap-Up

Icebreaker

In the event of a disaster, how would your organization utilize volunteers?

Organizational Disaster Preparedness

- Ensure that your staff is prepared both personally and professionally
- Create a plan to communicate with staff during disaster
- Develop a Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan for your organization
- Staff safety is key. Advanced disaster planning and preparedness discussions will make sure you are ready to engage disaster volunteers, should you choose to do so.

Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan: 4 Parts

- Introduction
- Preparedness
- Essential Functions
- Things To Consider

Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan: Introduction

- Start with your plan's purpose
- Focus on “If/Then” statements to clearly define how and when your plan will activate. For example, “**If** a local emergency occurs that disables the location of our office, **then** we will activate specific aspects of the plan.”
- Include key definitions and terminology, such as internal jargon, naming of specific events, or department acronyms
- Outline important relationships or partnerships that you have established pre-disaster that will be critical in continuing your operations, such as network organizations, or counterparts at other nonprofits who are key to your work

Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan: Preparedness

- Outline staff roles and responsibilities, including if and how those responsibilities change during disaster
- Define your pre-established best practices, so staff is prepared and understands how things should happen
- Provide a regular schedule for training of staff and reviews or updates to the plan
- Hold annual exercises with staff to review the procedures and make sure everyone knows what to do.
- Remember, this is always a test of the plan, not of your staff members. Remind them of this so they know that honest feedback will help make your plan stronger.

Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan: Essential Functions

- Prioritize what is essential to your work
- Create a numbered list in order of importance. Below is an example. Keep in mind, priorities for your organization may be different.

Priority	Essential Functions
1	Ensure Staff Safety
2	Communications and Technology
3	Accounting and Human Resources
4	Existing Programs
5	Citywide Response Plan and New Response Programs
6	Fundraising

Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plan: Things To Consider

- Writing a COOP plan is a lengthy process
- Develop a working group of staff members from all levels and departments
- Keep your Senior Staff and Board informed
- Include essential information that all staff should have access to
- Provide a copy to new staff and review with them when they start
- Update the plan annually, or as your organization changes

Who Are Disaster Volunteers?

Individuals who...

- May have limited or no experience as a volunteer
- May not be informed about your organization
- Have a strong desire to help the impacted community in response to crisis

Should My Organization Engage Volunteers Post Disaster?

- Disaster volunteering is not right for every organization
- Consider whether the volunteer work is aligned with your organization's mission
- The decision to engage volunteers may depend upon the location of the affected area. Was your organization affected? Are you able to accept volunteers? Conversely, are you too far away to provide meaningful assistance to those in need?
- Think about your own organization's ability to function post disaster
- Consult your Board of Directors regarding any financial or risk management implications

Should My Organization Engage Volunteers Post Disaster?

If Your Answer Is Yes:

- Consider seeking external funds
- Begin planning to manage the surge of volunteers
- Make plans for dedicated staff to manage disaster volunteers

If Your Answer Is No:

- Find out what local organizations are currently recruiting or managing disaster volunteers
- Post messaging on your website or social media to direct volunteers where they are needed most

Activity: Worksheet- Engaging With Volunteers Post-Disaster

Ask yourself the following questions when considering your organization's readiness to manage disaster volunteers:

1. Organizational Readiness

- Do you have a plan for your office and staff in an emergency were to happen during business hours?
- Does your staff have a check-in plan to contact you if an emergency were to happen outside of business hours?

2. Volunteer Engagement

- How would you reach out to volunteers if an emergency occurred? Who is responsible? How and what would be communicated?
- What critical programming do you run that would still take place during a disaster?
- Do you have a plan to prioritize programming during disaster? If so, what is the plan? How is it communicated to your staff? To your volunteers?
- Do you have additional volunteer needs during a disaster? How would you recruit for them? Do volunteers know their role might be different?

Managing Disaster Volunteers

- Set clear expectations from the beginning
- Volunteers may expect to work directly in affected areas or with victims, but this isn't always possible- make sure they know and understand that
- Make sure volunteers understand the impact of their work
- Establish safety procedures for all volunteers and share them widely
- Make a plan for volunteer self-care, especially for long term volunteers
- Recognize the signs of volunteer burn-out, and be prepared to rotate volunteers as needed

Communication During Disaster

- Respond to volunteers promptly, and give them as much information as possible
- Even as you are still mobilizing and gathering information on needs, keep volunteers in the loop
- If the event provides pre-notice, like a weather event, communicate with volunteers beforehand to let them know how and when they will be needed
- Be open and honest about your needs and how quickly it will take you and your staff to mobilize



Questions

THANK YOU!