

## SA 4: Volunteer & Donations Management

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### 1.0 Introduction

#### Coordinating Agencies:

- Lewis & Clark County Disaster & Emergency Services (LCCO DES)
- American Red Cross (ARC)

#### Cooperating Agencies:

- Local Churches
- Functional Needs Facilities
- United Way
- Salvation Army
- Capital City Amateur Radio Club (CCRC)/Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES)
- Local Volunteer Organizations (VOAD, NGOs, CBOs, FBOs etc.)
- Montana Governor's Office of Community Services (MTOCS)
- Montana Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) (*and its affiliated organizations*)
- Montana Disaster & Emergency Services (MTDES)
- Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services (DPHHS)

#### 1.1 Purpose

This annex describes the coordination processes used to ensure the most efficient and effective utilization of unaffiliated volunteers<sup>1</sup> and unsolicited donated goods during incidents requiring a local response.

#### 1.2 Scope

This annex pertains to the management of unaffiliated volunteers and unsolicited donated goods. Volunteers affiliated with recognized agencies and organizations as well as donations requested as part of incident response and recovery are governed by the plans, policies, and procedures of the respective agencies and organizations.

This annex does not supersede the plans policies and procedures of voluntary organizations nor does it affect donations or volunteer assistance offered directly to voluntary agency partners.

#### 1.3 Activation & Plan Maintenance

This annex may be activated independently or in conjunction with other Annexes, depending on the needs of the situation.

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<sup>1</sup> Unaffiliated volunteers, also known as spontaneous volunteers, are individuals who offer to help or self-deploy to assist in emergency situations without fully coordinating their activities. They are considered "unaffiliated" in that they are not part of a disaster relief organization. Although unaffiliated volunteers can be significant resources, because they do not have pre-established relationships with emergency response organizations, verifying their training or credentials and matching them with the appropriate service areas can be difficult. (NRF, 2008)

## Section III: Support Annexes

The primary responsibility for development and maintenance of this annex is that of LCCO DES with support from all supporting agencies and departments.

This annex should be reviewed and revised annually, unless significant changes warrant earlier revision. Continued and regular revision and updating should keep this document valid and useful. Regular testing and exercising should establish the groundwork for efficient and expeditious delivery of assistance in times of emergency or disaster.

### 1.4 Policies

- ❖ All organizations are responsible for the development and maintenance of their own internal operating and notification procedures. No part of this annex is intended to supplant agency SOP/SOGs.
- ❖ All organizations are responsible for filling any important vacancies; recalling personnel from leave, if appropriate; and, alerting those who are absent due to other duties or assignments.
- ❖ Personnel designated as on-scene responders or representatives to the EOC should make prior arrangements to ensure that their families are provided for in the event of an emergency, so to ensure a prompt, worry-free response and subsequent duty.

## 2.0 Situation & Assumptions

### 2.1 Situation

- ❖ During emergencies, unsolicited goods and services may jam distribution channels, overwhelm government and volunteer agencies, and hamper operations.
- ❖ Offers of assistance from unaffiliated volunteers are often underutilized and even problematic for established response agencies, despite good intentions of citizens that emerge to help their neighbors.

### 2.2 Assumptions

- ❖ Donations of unsolicited, non-useful, and unwanted goods can be expected.
- ❖ Lack of an organized system of management for establishing needs, and receiving, sorting, prioritizing, and distributing donations could result in chaos.
- ❖ Careful planning should reduce or eliminate problems associated with unsolicited donations and spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers.
- ❖ Volunteer organizations such as the American Red Cross, Church groups, Salvation Army, United Way, and other locally established volunteer groups are the most appropriate organizations to support the management of volunteers and donations.
- ❖ The timely release of information to the public regarding needs, and collection points is essential to the management of donated goods and services.
- ❖ Government and volunteer agencies have, or should activate, personnel to support operations in this plan.

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- ❖ Personnel from coordinating and cooperating agencies will be adequately trained and prepared to conduct operations.
- ❖ Public offers of assistance may be in the form of money, food, clothing, products, equipment, in-kind services, or volunteered time. Monetary donations, staple goods, and items specifically requested best serve the needs of victims.

### 3.0 Concept of Operations

#### 3.1 General

- ❖ The County should coordinate the provisions of this annex cooperatively with local and state agencies and organizations that are affiliated with volunteering. Because private relief and community based organizations (CBOs) are experienced in managing volunteers and donations, the County will rely on these organizations for their resources and expertise and support their efforts to minimize and best utilize unaffiliated volunteers and undesignated donations.
- ❖ **Volunteer Coordination** involves a process for matching volunteers with established voluntary organizations and procedures/guidelines for effectively channeling offers of assistance from unaffiliated citizens to meet disaster-related needs. The County encourages individuals to affiliate with a local or other recognized organization to facilitate their involvement in relief activities. When implemented, this volunteer coordination system should be supplemental to, and not duplicative of, established volunteer coordination systems in local volunteer centers, VOADs, Citizen Corps Councils, or other existing programs.
- ❖ **Donations Management** involves coordinating a system that receives and distributes unsolicited, undesignated donated goods, matching them with victims who demonstrate a need. The County looks principally to those private voluntary organizations with established donations systems already in place to receive and deliver appropriate donated goods to disaster victims. The County encourages the donation of cash to these organizations rather than clothing, food or other goods. Donations management activities include: providing guidance to citizens, managing a telephone registration and database system, establishing one or more collection facilities, creating a system to sort and distribute donated items, and storing donated resources until they are needed.
- ❖ Disaster and Emergency Services (DES) may seek donations to address specific unmet needs in coordination with volunteer organizations and the Public Information Officer (PIO).
- ❖ The County may advocate cash as the best, first alternative for donors to optimize the usefulness of their assistance. DES may not accept cash donations, but should encourage cash donations to organizations during emergencies.
- ❖ Where appropriate, the County should encourage donors to donate cash, goods and volunteered time to and through VOAD member agencies and other local organizations that have established systems for utilizing volunteers and receiving, processing, and distributing donated cash and goods.

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- ❖ Donations management activities should be activated by the DES Coordinator based upon the probability of unmet needs of disaster victims and will be deactivated based upon the diminished needs of disaster victims.
- ❖ The volunteer and donation management process must be organized and coordinated so that the citizens of the County are able to take advantage of the appropriate types and amounts of donated goods and services in a manner that does not interfere with emergency operations.
- ❖ The County must also ensure that volunteers are properly registered and account for, utilized in the safest manner possible, and that donated goods are received accounted for and equitably dispersed and otherwise go through a proper disposal process.
- ❖ The EOC may coordinate with state and local organizations to identify, activate, and operate a donations warehouse where voluntary agencies can pick up donated goods and deliver them to the site of the emergency.
- ❖ Persons offering to donate unsorted goods should be directed to charitable organizations of their choice.
- ❖ A *Donations Management Coordinator* should actively address donations management requirements in the EOC and at the site of the emergency.
- ❖ Shipments of donated goods from outside of the jurisdiction should be coordinated through the Donations Management Coordinator in the EOC.
- ❖ Persons and organizations volunteering services will be responsible for their own logistical support.
- ❖ A *Volunteer Coordinator* may be appointed in the EOC to address unaffiliated volunteer reception, screening and coordination.
- ❖ A *Volunteer Reception Center* may be established to serve as the coordination point for unaffiliated volunteers, to develop partnerships with community and responding agencies, to identify volunteer opportunities, and to fill staffing needs.

### 3.2 Notifications

- ❖ In an event requiring activation of this Annex, the coordinating agency or designee should implement procedures to notify and mobilize all personnel, facilities, and physical resources likely to be needed, based on the emergency circumstance.

### 3.3 Preparedness

- ❖ Review and update this Annex annually.
- ❖ Conduct planning with cooperating agencies and other ESF groups to refine volunteer and donations operations.
- ❖ Encourage individuals interested in volunteering to directly affiliate with a voluntary organization/agency of their choice.
- ❖ Conduct related training and involve volunteer and donations management in exercises.

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- ❖ Prepare and maintain Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs), resource inventories, personnel rosters and resource mobilization information necessary for implementation of the responsibilities of the lead agency. Ensure key agency personnel are trained in their responsibilities and duties.
- ❖ Coordinate with the PIO to brief the local media so they understand how the donations program will work so they can be prepared to advise the public of specific donation needs, discourage donations of unneeded items, disseminate information on the availability of donated goods, and provide information for potential volunteers.
- ❖ Coordinate with the PIO to brief citizen groups on how they can contribute to disaster relief with their donations and through volunteer efforts.
- ❖ Establish mutual aid agreements and memorandums of understanding with local agencies and neighboring jurisdictions that can provide additional resources and assistance.
- ❖ Ensure systems are in place to identify and validate the credentials of volunteers, particularly medical personnel, who volunteer their services during an incident.

### 3.4 Response

- ❖ Agency Representatives report to the EOC as requested.
- ❖ Appoint members of the Volunteer & Donations Management Units.
- ❖ Activate Donations Hotline.
- ❖ Identify and prepare specific sites for donations management facilities, and begin assembling needed equipment and supplies.
- ❖ Identify and activate staff for donations management facilities.
- ❖ Encourage individuals interested in volunteering personal services to directly affiliate with a voluntary organization/agency of their choice.
- ❖ Encourage donations from the general public to be made as cash to voluntary, faith-based, and/or community organizations providing services to disaster victims.
- ❖ Provide the media (through the PIO) with information regarding donation needs and procedures, and regularly update with information.
- ❖ Catalog and update local unmet needs and communicate those needs to volunteer and donations primary support staff.
- ❖ Continually assess donations management operations, and determine when the donations management facilities should close down or be consolidated and when the donations management program can be terminated.
- ❖ Keep records of donations received and, where appropriate, thank donors.

### 3.5 Recovery

- ❖ Transition to demobilization based on indicators including, but not limited to, immediate needs being met and when donor fatigue becomes apparent.

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- ❖ Release volunteers and staff no longer needed to support operations.
- ❖ Close facilities no longer needed to support operations.
- ❖ Properly distribute or dispose of surplus goods.
- ❖ Coordinate with PIO to update public on unmet needs.
- ❖ Ensure public “thank-you’s” are published and broadcast to recognize the generosity of those donating goods and services during the incident.
- ❖ Coordinate with [ESF 14 \(Recovery\)](#) .

### 3.6 Mitigation

- ❖ Identify agencies and resources that may support volunteer and donations management in the community.
- ❖ Develop a volunteer and donations management training program.
- ❖ Disseminate PSAs on how to donate and/or volunteer appropriately during an incident.

## 4.0 Organization & Responsibilities

### 4.1 Organization

Our normal emergency organization, described in Section 4.1 of the Basic Plan and depicted in Attachment 3 to the Basic Plan, should plan and carry out volunteer and donations management functions.

### 4.2 Responsibilities

#### Coordinating Agency

- ❖ Assist in identifying personnel and resources to support this Annex.
- ❖ Work to keep this Annex up-to-date
- ❖ Appoint Donations Management and Volunteer Coordinators.
- ❖ Coordinate the identification and establishment of a Volunteer Reception Center (VRC).
- ❖ Coordinate the activation of Cooperating Agencies in support of emergency operations in the jurisdiction.
- ❖ Coordinate communications (ESF 2) support to the donation staging areas and distribution points and VRC as necessary and available
- ❖ Request outside assistance to support this annex, when required

#### Cooperating Agencies (All)

- ❖ Develop applicable guidelines and/or checklists detailing the accomplishment of their assigned functions.
- ❖ Activate volunteer organizations during emergencies, as directed by the EOC.

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- ❖ Identify and activate donations management personnel.
- ❖ Identify potential sites and facilities to manage donated goods and services being channeled into the disaster area.
- ❖ Solicit specific resources from donors that are needed by disaster victims.
- ❖ Coordinate with the PIO for county-wide press releases related to donating goods or services.
- ❖ Conduct regular meetings of volunteer organizations during activation.
- ❖ Assist the DES Coordinator in carrying out the provisions of this Annex, to include establishing needs; and collecting, sorting, and distributing donated goods during an emergency situation.
- ❖ Keep accurate records of donated, stored, and distributed goods; or expenditures in support of this Annex.

### 5.0 Authorities and References

#### 5.1 Authorities

- ❖ See [Section 5.1](#) of Basic Plan.

#### 5.2 References

- ❖ See [Section 5.2](#) of Basic Plan.
- ❖ **Lewis & Clark County Montana EOP. May 2011:** SA 4 – Volunteer & Donations Management.
- ❖ **National Response Framework.** January 2008.
- ❖ **Core Capabilities List. October 2015.**

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**6.0 Attachments**

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## Section III: Support Annexes

### Attachment 1: Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
ARC	American Red Cross
ARES	Amateur Radio Emergency Services
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCRC	Capital City Radio Club
DES	Disaster And Emergency Services
DESC	DES Coordinator
DPHHS	Department of Public Health & Human Services
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
ESF	Emergency Support Function
FBO	Faith Based Organization
LCCO	Lewis & Clark County
MTDES	Montana Disaster & Emergency Services
MTOCS	Montana Governor's Office of Community Services
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NRF	National Response Framework
PIO	Public Information Officer
SOG	Standard Operating Guideline
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
VDM	Volunteer & Donations Management
VOAD	Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
VRC	Volunteer Reception Center

## Section III: Support Annexes

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### Attachment 2: Definitions

None Identified