

# **Spontaneous Volunteer Management Plan**

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**GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND  
OPERATIONAL AREAS**

**11/15/04**

**Template for Spontaneous Volunteer Management**  
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## Introduction

Local government is often the first point of contact (POC) for volunteers who want to help after an emergency. Past experience has demonstrated that volunteers will congregate at city halls, fire stations, community centers, incident sites and any other places where they believe there may be opportunities to volunteer. While well intentioned, these volunteers can often hinder the efforts of first responders. Local government typically bears primary responsibility for responding to local citizens seeking disaster volunteer opportunities.

The purpose of this guidance document is threefold:

- To provide a guide to cities, counties and Operational Areas for adapting the accompanying Spontaneous Volunteer Management Template for Local Government and Operational Areas
- To address specific adaptation and implementation issues
- To provide ancillary information that is useful but not appropriate for inclusion in the plan template

### **About The Spontaneous Volunteer Management Template**

The Spontaneous Volunteer Management Template provides an adaptable framework for local government that enables utilization of local resources and partnering with local organizations. Because of the geographic, demographic and resource diversity in communities throughout California, the template provides elements that can be tailored to fit the individuals needs of each community, for example:

- The template can be utilized by cities, counties and Operational Areas. Ideally, all are working together to develop a countywide strategy for addressing the convergence and coordination of spontaneous volunteers.
- The template can be implemented by government in partnership with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to leverage resources in the community. Collaboration with a volunteer center or other NGO can address volunteer coordination in a single city, in multiple cities and/or in the entire county.
- The template has been developed to help provide for the coordinated involvement of spontaneous volunteers and unaffiliated service programs in the event of any size of disaster—from a small, local event to a catastrophic disaster.

The template has been created in the format of a supporting plan to a city, county or Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). As a supporting plan, it has two distinct advantages:

- It will be easier and faster to complete and to get approval from the governmental authority than if it has to be approved as part of the EOP.
- Jurisdictions that plan to task a volunteer center or similar organization with executing part of the spontaneous volunteer management plan can provide a complete picture of the plan as well as specific instructions.

The target audience for the template includes cities, counties and Operational Areas. In order to meet needs unique to volunteer management, the template is necessarily detailed and provides checklists, plans and procedures required for these entities to be fully operational. Operational Areas that plan to limit their role to coordination only may find the template too detailed for their needs and can eliminate the parts that are not needed.

### **Adapting the Template**

*Date.* This document was created using Microsoft Word. From the View menu, select Header and Footer. Add draft date (change later to final date) and any other identifying information you wish to the Footer. The page numbers have already been inserted in the Footer.

*Local Information.* There are a number of places in the template where local information is required. After addressing these, look for other areas where local information would enhance the utility of the document.

### **Benefits to Local Government of Having Spontaneous Volunteer Management Plan**

*Economic.* After a disaster, the initial estimate for professional cleanup alone can be in the millions of dollars. The efforts of organizing spontaneous volunteers and other groups can greatly reduce the actual cost and time of cleanup. The effective use of volunteers can also enable trained professionals to attend to those tasks that most require their skills.

*Logistic.* Spontaneous volunteers will come, whether you have planned for them or not, so planning ahead is to everyone's advantage. Organizations responding to the disaster need people with particular skills or experience to help meet their commitments to the community. With an effective intake and referral process in place, people who want to help will have somewhere to go, their skills will become a resource rather than a missed opportunity and agencies will get help in serving the community.

*Public Perception.* Well-managed volunteers contribute to the positive public perception of an agency's response and recovery efforts. In past disasters, where there was no system for incorporating spontaneous volunteers in relief efforts, disgruntled volunteers and bad press have resulted. Effective planning increases the positive and effective deployment of spontaneous volunteers.

### **Disaster Volunteer Definitions**

For the purposes of the spontaneous volunteer management plan, the following definitions are used:

- *A volunteer* is someone who willingly provides his/her services without receiving financial compensation.
- *A spontaneous volunteer* is an individual who comes forward following a disaster to assist a governmental agency or NGO with disaster-related activities during the response or recovery phase without pay or other consideration. By definition,

spontaneous volunteers are not initially affiliated with a response or relief agency or pre-registered with an accredited disaster council. However, they may possess training, skills and experience that can be useful in the relief effort. Spontaneous volunteers may also be referred to as unaffiliated, spontaneous unaffiliated and convergent volunteers.

- *An affiliated volunteer* is one who is affiliated with either a governmental agency or NGO and who has been trained for a specific role or function in disaster relief or response during the preparedness phase. Examples of affiliated volunteer groups include Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), the Volunteers in Police Services (VIPS) program, Search and Rescue teams and American Red Cross' Disaster Action Teams (DAT). The category of affiliated volunteers may be further broken down as follows:
  - Volunteers in *ongoing* programs. Such groups typically meet regularly and have other responsibilities in addition to their disaster response roles; for example, many are engaged in community disaster education, family preparedness and public safety efforts year-round. Many ongoing programs utilize Disaster Service Worker volunteers. Pre-disaster registered volunteers are typically utilized before spontaneous volunteers.
  - Volunteers in *reserve* programs. These volunteers are called up at the time of a disaster. They may participate singly or in teams, depending on the program.
- *An impressed volunteer* includes any unregistered person impressed into service during a state of war emergency, a state of emergency, or a local emergency by a person having authority to command the aid of the citizens in the execution of his or her duties. This occurs very rarely and usually involves law enforcement or fire department personnel.
- *A Disaster Service Worker (DSW) volunteer* is any person registered with an accredited Disaster Council, in accordance with prescribed legal procedures, for the purpose of engaging in disaster service without pay or other consideration.
- *Service programs* are national, state and locally administered programs that provide organized opportunities for both full- and part-time service. The term "service program" refers to a wide range of programs, including AmeriCorps and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). In California, many tens of thousands of individuals participate in service programs every year. For the purposes of this plan, participants in service programs will be referred to as members.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Key Players**

### **Local Government**

Most cities and all counties in California have an ordinance creating an official emergency organization. The ordinance establishes a local disaster council charged with creating an emergency plan that structures an emergency organization for the preparedness for and response to any emergency. The ordinance provides for leadership of the organization, a process for proclaiming a local emergency pursuant to state law, and for emergency powers.

Most jurisdictions are also signatory to the California Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement (California Master Mutual Aid Agreement). This agreement provides that governmental entities that could enter into joint power agreements will provide mutual aid to each other when requested for emergencies that pose a peril to life and property. Local emergency plans that are prepared in compliance with local ordinances also serve as mutual aid operational plans required under the California Mutual Aid Agreement.

Some, but not all, local governments in California have developed plans for volunteer involvement at the time of a disaster. Levels of planned volunteer involvement vary, from having a few trained volunteers to inclusion of large numbers and types of trained volunteers and incorporation of spontaneous volunteers. The level of preparedness also varies, from brief references to volunteer management in the jurisdiction's EOP to more developed plans. A number of jurisdictions delegate all or part of their volunteer management responsibilities to a local volunteer center.

### **Volunteer Centers**

Volunteer Centers are year-round clearinghouses for recruiting and referring volunteers throughout a given geographical area. They work with a wide array of agencies in their respective communities to identify volunteer opportunities and are skillful at matching people who want to volunteer with opportunities that match the volunteers' abilities and interests. Many Volunteer Centers will recruit and refer volunteers in response to a disaster. Some have established disaster programs and are well prepared and some have recent experience responding to a disaster.

### **American Red Cross**

The American Red Cross is a national nonprofit organization that provides relief to victims of disasters and helps people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. Red Cross provides a wide variety of programs at the time of a disaster, such as Disaster Welfare Inquiry, Family Assistance and Mass Care, including sheltering and feeding. Red Cross relies heavily on trained volunteers but also incorporates spontaneous volunteers in its operations, especially for larger disasters.

### **Service Programs<sup>1</sup>**

People of all ages and backgrounds are involved with local affiliates of national service programs designed to solve problems and strengthen communities. These local projects are sponsored by community- and faith-based organizations, schools and local agencies. Service activities vary widely but include local homeland security efforts, response to disasters, and recruitment and management of volunteers. The major national service programs with some potential to respond to disasters are:

- Senior Corps programs which include Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions and Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

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<sup>1</sup> For more details on service programs, see section entitled Overview of National Service Programs in California

- AmeriCorps programs, including AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps\*VISTA and AmeriCorps\*National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC)

### **Community-Based Organizations and Non-Governmental Agencies**

Community-based organizations (CBOs) run the gamut in size from large agencies such as Salvation Army to so-called mom-and-pop enterprises. All are nonprofit organizations that serve the community in some capacity. They typically serve a specific group, such as seniors, people with disabilities or low-income people. Because they provide critical services such as housing, meals or mental health services, many of these CBOs could be drawn into providing disaster relief services. In past disasters in California, many CBOs have done so. CBOs are part of a larger universe of nonprofit agencies that are often referred to as non-governmental agencies, or NGOs.

### **Media**

Media organizations play a critical role in providing disaster news and information to the public. All forms of media are useful for providing information, including radio, television and newspapers. One of the most challenging tasks in emergency management is that of getting timely and accurate information to the media and the general public. Public Information Officers (PIOs) attached to the emergency response organization are responsible for managing relationships with the media, preparing media releases and ensuring that published information is accurate.

### **Information and Referral Agencies**

Information and referral (I&R) services assist people in need at all times, including disasters, by providing them with information and contact information for agencies that may be able to help them. I&R services may be either nonprofit or governmental programs and vary in terms of topic area. Some provide comprehensive assistance on the entire gamut of human needs, such as HELPLINK in the San Francisco Bay Area and INFO LINE in Los Angeles. Others specialize and limit their information to certain topics, such as services for seniors or child care.

### **2-1-1 System**

2-1-1 is a recent development in California and the rest of the nation. Its goal is to make information about community resources accessible and available for free, 24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year to anyone who dials 2-1-1. The hope is that every county in California will eventually have a designated 2-1-1 provider; candidates are current I&R agencies and the process is competitive. 2-1-1 providers must be able to provide a wide variety of information and in languages that reflect those spoken in that particular community. They must also have the capacity and willingness to coordinate with local emergency service providers.

### **Faith-Based Organizations**

Historically faith-based organizations (FBOs) have been active in disaster relief and recovery activities. Most are members of National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD). FBOs typically draw on locally trained volunteers to create teams that can respond throughout the nation. Most FBOs specialize in one or more service

areas, such as child care, mass feeding or donations management. These groups activate and send resources when invited to do so by a government agency, American Red Cross or other key player.

### **Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)**

National VOAD is an umbrella organization of the major disaster response organizations in the United States. Through its mission of fostering cooperation, coordination, communication and collaboration, National VOAD works to assure that members of the disaster response community meet and communicate before the next disaster strikes. National VOAD's 39 members include the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, Adventist Community Services and Church World Service.

NVOAD has a network of state VOADs that cover 56 states and US territories. California is unique in that it has two state-level VOADs, one for Northern California, NorCal VOAD, and one for Southern California, SCVOAD. When a disaster occurs, the state VOAD typically convenes one or more meetings of its members and other cooperating agencies in order to share information about what each is doing, to identify gaps in service and solve problems.

### **Citizen Corps Councils**

While not a response type of organization, Citizen Corps Councils are included here because they convene key players at the local city or county level for the purpose of emergency preparedness. Citizen Corps is still in its early stages of development but growing in California and throughout the nation. A Citizen Corps Council brings together leaders from the relevant sectors of the community to help make the community safer, stronger and better prepared. Citizen Corps Councils manage existing volunteer resources, leverage mutually supportive endeavors among the represented groups and direct overall local plans for implementing Citizen Corps in the community. Citizen Corps programs include Neighborhood Watch, Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS) and Medical Reserve Corps.

### **Citizen Corps Volunteer Programs**

*Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT).* Typically administered by fire departments, CERT offers training to citizens on fire suppression, light search and rescue and many other skills that will help them be better prepared to help themselves, their families and their neighbors in emergencies.

*Medical Reserve Corps.* Local sponsors of Medical Reserve Corps teams train volunteers so they can assist the emergency medical response community during large-scale emergencies. Team members can also help meet pressing public health needs throughout the year. Volunteers include currently practicing and retired healthcare professionals and others who are interested in public health issues.

*Volunteers in Police Service (VIPS).* Program provides training for volunteers so they can perform administrative and non-intervention policing activities, thus freeing up law enforcement professionals for frontline duty.

*Neighborhood Watch Program.* Neighbors are trained together to become the eyes and ears of their neighborhood for the purposes of preventing crime, increasing safety and security in the area and being better prepared for local emergencies.

## **Overview of National Service Programs in California**

### **Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)**

The CNCS, a federal agency, connects Americans of all ages and backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation through volunteer service. More than 2 million Americans serve their fellow citizens each year through the Corporation's three main programs: AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Learn and Serve America. The CNCS headquarters is located in Washington, D.C. The CNCS also maintains state offices. The CNCS California State Office is located in Los Angeles.

### **California Service Corps (CSC) [formerly Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism (GO SERV)]**

California Service Corps (CSC) is California's national service commission, charged with administering the AmeriCorps\*State, Citizen Corps, and Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning programs in California, and promoting service and volunteerism statewide. Since its inception, CSC has secured and disseminated more than \$235 million in grants. CSC's office is located in Sacramento.

### **AmeriCorps\*State and National**

More than two-thirds of AmeriCorps grant funding goes to Governor-appointed State Commissions such as CSC, which in turn distribute and monitor grants to local nonprofits and agencies. The remainder goes to national nonprofits that operate in more than one state. The organizations receiving grants are responsible for recruiting, selecting, and supervising AmeriCorps members. AmeriCorps grantees include national groups like the American Red Cross and Habitat for Humanity, as well as many smaller community- and faith-based organizations. Approximately 5,000-6,000 AmeriCorps members are expected to serve in AmeriCorps\*State and National programs in California in the coming year including several homeland security/emergency management programs such as the National Preparedness and Response Corps, California Safe Corps, Fresno Safe and Proud Neighborhoods, and Los Angeles Conservation Corps Strike Teams.

### **AmeriCorps\*VISTA**

For more than 35 years, AmeriCorps\*VISTA members have been helping programs serve low income communities. Members serve full-time for a year in nonprofit organizations, public agencies and community- and faith-based organizations throughout the country. In 2004, hundreds of AmeriCorps\*VISTA members will serve in local programs in California. Since its inception, VISTA members have helped communities respond and recover from devastating disasters. A homeland security VISTA program sponsored by the Mendocino County Operational Area will launch later this year.

### **AmeriCorps\*National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC)**

AmeriCorps\*NCCC is a 10-month, full-time residential program for men and women between the ages of 18 and 24. AmeriCorps\*NCCC combines the best practices of civilian service with the best aspects of military service, including leadership and team building. Members serve in teams of 10 to 15 members. Priority is given to projects in homeland security, public safety, public health, and disaster relief. Teams are based at five campuses across the country but are sent to work on short-term projects in neighboring states. In 2004, more than 500 members will serve at the Sacramento-based Western Region Campus. NCCC teams have provided assistance to FEMA on major operations, fought wildland fires, assisted state emergency management agencies including California OES, and served on more than 100 American Red Cross national disaster relief operations in Mass Care, Family Services, Damage Assessment and Logistics.

### **Senior Corps**

Senior Corps is a network of programs that tap the experience, skills, and talents of older citizens to meet community challenges. Through its three programs – Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and RSVP (the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program)—more than half a million Americans, age 55 and over, assist local nonprofits, public agencies, and faith-based organizations in carrying out their missions. Following major disasters, Senior Corps programs have assisted in disaster relief and recovery. There are approximately 35,000 Seniors Corps members serving year round in California.

### **Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)**

One of the largest volunteer efforts in the nation, RSVP engages people 55 and over in a diverse range of volunteer activities. Volunteers organize neighborhood watch programs, tutor children, renovate homes, teach English to immigrants, assist victims of natural disasters, and serve their communities in myriad other ways. Following the Northridge earthquake, RSVP volunteers helped in a number of ways—working with the Red Cross, answering telephones, helping with casework, and teaching preparedness and safety to seniors. Every year, thousands of senior volunteers serve through RSVP sponsors in California.

## **Suggestions for Use by Local Government in Developing Partnership with Volunteer Center or Other NGO**

Start with an introductory meeting. Invite representatives from the volunteer center or NGO to meet with one or two people from your staff. Try to involve at least one other person from your jurisdiction, ideally whoever will be tasked with volunteer management responsibilities in a disaster. Ask to meet with the volunteer center's executive director and perhaps a second person from the center who has program responsibilities and/or a board member.

Use this first meeting to find out their interest in and experience with disasters, to get an overview of their resources and to learn their interest in pursuing a relationship with your

jurisdiction. Discuss your agency's role in disasters and the goal of the Emergency Volunteer Center. Look for areas of common ground.

In future meetings explore more deeply their level of commitment, their preparedness, their resources and any other relevant issues. The following is a partial list of suggested discussion topics:

- Is the staff prepared for disasters – at home? In their personal vehicles? At the office?
- Is the organization's facility prepared with equipment and supplies?
- Has the organization assessed and mitigated any hazards?
- What are the organization's communications resources, including backups?
- Does the organization have a written emergency operations plan, procedures, etc.?
- Has the organization instituted evacuation drills and other tests of emergency procedures?
- Does the organization possess or have access to appropriate space and amenities for the services, e.g., phone bank, under discussion?
- How committed is the organization's board of directors?
- What is the level of interest or commitment on the part of the organization's funders?

Be prepared to offer in return training, technical support and other resources that could enhance the organization's ability to partner with you. This could include training for staff on SEMS and other aspects of emergency planning and management; assistance with hazard identification and mitigation; suggestions on appropriate equipment and supplies to stock; assistance in planning and executing drills and exercises; opportunities to participate in government and multi-agency exercises; and information about funding resources. If the volunteer center or NGO does not currently participate in local emergency management meetings, invite its staff to attend. Look for additional opportunities that will help acquaint them with the emergency management community and with other providers.

At all times be clear about what is expected of voluntary organizations. Does the jurisdiction need to establish a citywide or countywide Emergency Volunteer Center? Does it need to be a walk-in center or would a phone bank suffice? Who will provide the leadership for developing the Emergency Volunteer Center?

As the relationship develops in a positive way, it would be appropriate to begin developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the organization. Typically an MOU would include a description of each partner organization and its role in disasters, how the two organizations plan to cooperate, cost recovery and the terms (length) of the agreement. Other topics may be included.

## **Collaboration Examples**

### **Santa Clara County, CA**

The Santa Clara County Emergency Managers Association (SCCEMA) and the Volunteer Center of Silicon Valley (VCSV) have developed a partnership to create a

countywide system and plan for the coordination of spontaneous (unaffiliated) volunteers. Because spontaneous volunteers often come forward locally, the plan provides for service delivery in most cities and also allows for overall countywide coordination of spontaneous volunteers. The Santa Clara County model leverages the technical expertise of the Volunteer Center and the facilities and staffing resources within local jurisdictions.

The program model conceptualizes three levels of activation:

- In a local activation, each participating city will establish an Emergency Volunteer Center (EVC) for involving volunteers in the city's disaster-related activities and for referring excess volunteers to NGOs in the community.
- In a multi-city activation, neighboring cities team up to establish a multi-city EVC.
- In a countywide activation, the Volunteer Center establishes a phone bank for referral of volunteers to both local government and NGOs. Volunteers referred to local government will visit the appropriate jurisdiction's EVC for screening and placement.

A subcommittee of the SCCEMA, formed by the Volunteer Center to lead the project, includes emergency managers, human resources personnel and volunteer services managers from the different cities, the county, and the American Red Cross. The workgroup meets quarterly and has developed a standardized plan, forms, equipment and supplies utilizing best practices from throughout the county. The group also explores issues of effective coordination, service delivery and resource allocation. The Volunteer Center provides annual training to local government staff on how to set up and operate an Emergency Volunteer Center, thereby preparing cities to meet citizen needs in their jurisdictions immediately following a disaster.

This project began when the Volunteer Center conducted a post-9/11 countywide assessment of disaster volunteers and organizational systems that support them. The results of the assessment provided the foundation for SCCEMA and the Santa Clara County Emergency Preparedness Council to fund the VCSV with Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) money to develop this project. The Volunteer Center just received a third round of Homeland Security funding from the Santa Clara County Terrorism Approval Authority to continue this project. The third phase of the project will focus on developing public education materials and additional resources for jurisdictions registering and utilizing spontaneous volunteers.

### **Sonoma County, CA**

The County of Sonoma, recognizing the importance of an effective response to citizens' offers to help in times of disaster, has assigned this responsibility to the Volunteer Office in the County's Human Resources Department. The Volunteer Office is staffed with the equivalent of two positions. Given a cooperative working relationship already in place and the magnitude of the potential problem, the Volunteer Office has formed a partnership with the Volunteer Center of Sonoma County, a local nonprofit.

When a disaster strikes, the Volunteer Office by written agreement acts as the liaison with the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), while the Volunteer Center stands ready

to open and operate a Volunteer Reception Center (in person or by phone) for registering and referring volunteers. When the agreement is activated, the Volunteer Office Liaison collects information from agencies and departments represented in the EOC regarding their volunteer needs and passes those requests to the Volunteer Center's Volunteer Reception Center (VRC). The VRC also receives requests directly from agencies in the community. Potential volunteers contact the VRC and are referred to the most appropriate opportunities.

Because the river that runs through it often floods, Sonoma County has had many opportunities to test the disaster volunteer partnership, and it works well. Per the written agreement, the Volunteer Center bills the County for volunteer coordination costs incurred during a declared disaster. These expenses can then be considered for applicable/appropriate state and/or federal reimbursement.

The Volunteer Center and the County Volunteer Office communicate throughout the year through quarterly meetings of the Disaster Volunteer Coordinating Committee (DVCC); both organizations participate along with representatives from some cities. DVCC meetings focus on information-sharing, training, joint planning, problem-solving and other activities designed to ensure high levels of coordination and effectiveness at the time of a disaster.

## **Operational Issues and Topics**

### **Volunteer Management in SEMS—Examples**

Each of the SEMS sections addresses or supports in some way an aspect of volunteer management, as illustrated by the examples below:

*Operations Section:* Various branches activate and manage affiliated volunteers and service program members.

*Logistics Section:* The [Personnel Unit] is responsible for the activation, management and demobilization of the Emergency Volunteer Center, through which spontaneous volunteers are mobilized. The Communications Branch may activate and manage affiliated volunteers.

*Plans/Intelligence:* Responsible for forecasting future and changing needs for volunteers.

*Finance/Administration:* Responsible for tracking time and expenses associated with mobilization and deployment of volunteers.

### **Emergency Volunteer Center (EVC) Implementation Models**

The chief method for coordinating the resources of spontaneous volunteers and unaffiliated service programs is the Emergency Volunteer Center (EVC). The EVC acts as a clearinghouse for information about disaster-related positions available in government agencies and in NGOs. Potential volunteers who contact the EVC are asked about their skills, experience and availability and then referred to an appropriate volunteer position. When staffed by authorized personnel, government-run EVCs may also register appropriate volunteers as Disaster Service Workers.

There are three Emergency Volunteer Center (EVC) implementation models—walk-in, phone bank and online. Each of the models described below can be provided directly by local government or the Operational Area, or tasked to a volunteer center or other appropriate organization.

*Walk-in.* Because this is the most complex strategy, the checklists provided with the volunteer template are for setting up and operating a walk-in EVC. The walk-in center is a place where potential volunteers first complete an intake form, then are interviewed briefly in person and referred to an appropriate position within the jurisdiction or to an outside agency. This strategy is the best option when phone service has been disrupted.

*Phone Bank.* A phone bank EVC serves the same purpose and function as a walk-in EVC. It is more efficient in its use of resources than a walk-in center. For example, the phone bank does not have the same space or parking space requirements that a walk-in EVC has. It also does not need as many people to staff it. The walk-in EVC model and checklists can be easily adapted for phone bank operations.

*Online.* The best use of online service is for informing people generally about volunteer opportunities and for having people fill out and submit volunteer intake forms. Volunteers who apply in this way can be referred by a return phone call or an email message.

Systems where the volunteer is given a list of opportunities and allowed to self-deploy during a response are not recommended. It would be difficult to control the numbers of people responding to a particular opportunity, and challenging to integrate tracking of volunteers referred online with the walk-in or phone bank method.

### **Placing Volunteers in Local Government Positions**

Those volunteers who are referred by any type of EVC (walk-in, phone bank or online) to a position with local government must also visit a Volunteer Registration Station to complete the placement process. This includes interviewing, screening, orienting and assigning the volunteer to a supervisor. It also includes, when appropriate, registration and swearing in of volunteers as Disaster Service Workers (DSWs).

Staffing for the Volunteer Registration Station must be by government employees. Swearing in volunteers as DSWs can be done legally only by a city or county clerk, or any other persons so authorized by the county clerk. When a phone bank or online process is used for referring volunteers, the Volunteer Registration Station will necessarily be located elsewhere. When a walk-in EVC is utilized and provided by an outside organization, the station may be co-located with the EVC or located elsewhere. When the walk-in EVC is provided by the government, the station should be integral to the EVC structure.

### **Selecting and Establishing the EVC Site**

An EVC should be established at a location that is not directly at or close to the site of an incident or the jurisdiction's EOC. The ideal EVC location is some distance away from

the scene of an incident and the EOC, or Command Center, but close enough for a messenger to deliver communications, supplies, etc.

The designated location should have adequate facilities for intake, referral and registration of volunteers. When designating a facility, take the following into consideration:

- Availability of a large room for centralized EVC operations
- Adequate space for waiting area, intake process, separate areas/rooms for possible volunteer orientation and training
- Space that allows for relatively easy traffic flow
- Adequate parking
- Accessibility
- Ability for public to find/identify the EVC
- Location that can be secured
- Adequate/accessible restrooms
- Capacity for phone/network lines

### **Relationship of the EVC to the EOC**

*Local Government EVC.* Each local EOC will be the point of contact for establishing a local EVC. The EOC will make the decision to activate the EVC, help determine its location and obtain resources needed for EVC operations. EVC staff must work with the EOC to obtain the needed facilities, supplies, personnel and support necessary for operating the EVC. The local EOC will also be the communications link to the Operational Area.

The EOC will also be a necessary source of information about what kinds of volunteers, how many, etc., are needed for disaster-related activities by government agencies. While the EOC may not be the only source, it is a logical place to begin, since requests from the field will be coming into the EOC. Requests sent to the EOC should be quickly routed to the Personnel/Volunteers Unit so that they can then be transmitted to the EVC.

*Operational Area (Countywide) EVC.* Once the Operational Area decides to establish a countywide EVC, the Operational Area should inform the local governments in its jurisdiction. For local governments that have already activated, this will be an opportunity to fold local operations into a countywide operation. If direct EVC-to-EVC communication channels are not available, coordination may take place through the respective governing body representatives. The Op Area EOC will provide facilities, supplies, personnel and support for operating the EVC. This is a key opportunity for partnering with a local volunteer center or other agency that can assist the Operational Area in achieving its volunteer coordination objectives.

As with a local government EVC, the EOC is the primary source of information for the EVC on where, when and how many volunteers of what types are needed by government agencies for disaster-related activities. Requests coming into the EOC should be routed to the Personnel/Volunteers Unit so they can then be sent to the EVC.

### **Information Management Technology**

While any database program can be used to track information about volunteers and volunteer opportunities, some are easier to use than others. While not the only consideration, ease of use should be high on the list of criteria for selecting a program, since inexperienced people may be entering data.

Another consideration is capacity—how many records will a file hold? For some disasters, 10,000 records might be needed.

As systems are becoming more sophisticated and government develops more technical capacity, a completely interactive system for recording and storing volunteer data is possible.

### **Volunteer Management in the Field**

Discussion of the management of volunteers working in disaster-related activities under the auspices of local government is beyond the scope of the spontaneous volunteer management plan and of this guidance. Yet skill in recruiting, screening, registering, training, supervising and recognizing volunteers are the hallmarks of a well-run operation and tantamount to providing a satisfying experience for a volunteer. Providing appropriate training and supervision are also legal requirements for those managing Disaster Service Worker volunteers.

Local government departments whose employees are likely to manage volunteers in disaster-related activities should be well prepared with written plans, procedures and forms. Employees with volunteer management responsibilities should be trained in advance on the basics of good volunteer management. A number of resources are available for those wishing to learn more:

- A local volunteer center, United Way or community foundation may provide volunteer management training and other related resources
- The CSTI/FEMA course, *Developing Volunteer Resources*, provides an overview of volunteer management principles and practices, along with applications to disaster operations
- Books and other publications on volunteer management are plentiful; check with your community's volunteer center, a local bookseller or an online bookselling service

### **Suggestions for Developing Volunteer Management Capacity in the Four Phases of Emergency Management**

#### **Preparedness**

- Adapt template and get approval from designated authority
- Orient, train and exercise employees who are most likely to staff the Emergency Volunteer Center (EVC)
- Provide volunteer management training (Volunteer Management 101) to field supervisors
- Train staff at all levels in every department on what this template is about

- Inform the media and agencies in the community about the role of the EVC in a disaster
- Assemble and distribute Go Kits
- Identify possible locations for the EVC
- Develop and distribute messages for the public on how to be an effective disaster volunteer
- Develop relationship with local volunteer center or other agency
  
- **Response**
- Ensure volunteer management is represented in the jurisdiction's EOC
- Follow established procedures and use standardized forms for volunteer intake and referral at the EVC
- Enlist volunteer management employees from the jurisdiction to help in executing the EVC
- From the onset of the disaster, proactively identify needs for volunteers within government and outside agencies
- Encourage continuous media coverage on volunteer skills needed
  
- **Recovery**
- Conduct outreach to disaster agencies to determine ongoing needs for volunteers
- Re-contact volunteers and recruit new volunteers to assist with recovery activities
- Send media releases to inform public of continuing needs
  
- **Mitigation**
- Review post-disaster After Action Reports for lessons learned
- Modify concept of operations, checklists and/or tools in volunteer management template based on lessons learned