

New York State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

Emergency Support Function #7

Volunteer and Donations Management Appendix



**Disaster Preparedness
Commission**

**Prepared by the New York State
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Section I: General Considerations and Planning Guidelines

A. Introduction

It is accepted that during times of large-scale emergency events, public and private sector entities both from the affected area(s) and from outside of the affected area(s) are led by compassion to help those affected. Donations of goods, services, time, and financial donations should be anticipated and prepared for. While the type and quantity of supplies needed will vary by event, a process should be in place to prepare for the acceptance and distribution of human and material resources at the local, state, and federal response levels. Many non-governmental agencies utilize volunteers and donations on a day-to-day basis, and it is recognized that the State level guidance will not replace such individual agency efforts.

B. Purpose

The Volunteer and Donations Management Appendix is intended to coordinate the processes used by New York State Office of Emergency Management (State OEM) to ensure the most efficient and effective use of donated resources, including donations of goods, services, and/or financial donations. This is a cooperative effort among various state, county, and local governments, and non-governmental agencies to ensure that donated items are utilized and distributed in an efficient and effective manner. This Appendix will provide guidance and a process for the solicitation, receipt, and management of donated goods and services at the State level and will include the close coordination of State agencies to ensure the most effective use of items received.

C. Scope

The Volunteer and Donations Management Appendix will serve as a functional appendix to the Emergency Support Function (ESF) #7 Logistics Annex of the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) – Volume 2. As such, this Appendix:

- Will apply to all incidents that require volunteer and donations management in response to a disaster or emergency at a State level.
- This Appendix outlines the operating structure, duties, and responsibilities, and the pre-planning and facilities that are established for a volunteer and donations management organization. The concept of operations defines how federal, state, and local governments prepare in advance to establish an effective management system.
- The Volunteer and Donations Management Appendix describes the basic process for managing donated goods and services during a disaster. It identifies the basic assumptions of the management strategy, the concept of operations, planning considerations, and the roles and responsibilities of the major government agencies and volunteer and donations management organizations.
- New York State's volunteer and donations management goals are to provide victims of disasters with as much support as possible by effectively channeling offers and goods from the public.
- This document is intended to address State-level response activities related to volunteer and donations management and does not address individual non-governmental entities who routinely utilize volunteers and donations for response activities at an agency level.

D. Situation

Disaster response and short-term recovery activities begin and end at the local government level. The local government is responsible for coordinating and managing all response and short-term recovery activities and services. County and local government emergency management plans developed in

accordance with Executive Law Article 2-B outline the local government's response within its borders to ensure that all local resources are fully committed before requesting assistance from the State. At such time as a local government has exhausted local resources required to protect the population from further injury or devastation resulting from a disaster situation, the State CEMP may be activated. If the State is unable to coordinate volunteer and donations management activities, requests for assistance may be made through an Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) request or request through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

However well intended, volunteers and donations of goods that are not coordinated with the response activities can quickly become overwhelming. Donations of items can become an unnecessary obstacle when there are no plans for the receipt, storage, and/or distribution within the affected areas. Unnecessary or impractical items can also lead to concerns about appropriate disposal and waste. It has been documented that unsolicited donations and volunteers can have negative impacts if the items are unnecessary, inappropriate, and when the donations and volunteer efforts are not coordinated with the response activities, as indicated in the examples below.

- Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, collection sites along the Gulf Coast area were inundated with unnecessary items that there were no distribution plans for. Truckloads of items were simply left on the side of the road, causing concerns about the removal of items that had been left in a hot, humid climate. Although well intentioned, these goods were damaged by the weather and ultimately disposed of as they were no longer useable.
- In December 2014, a mass shooting at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut left 28 dead and 2 injured, resulting in an inundation of approximately 67,000 donated teddy bears. Ultimately, a public request was made through the media that no additional donations be sent due to the lack of warehouse space.
- In 2015, wildfires in Lake County, California destroyed over 76,000 acres of land and displaced many from their homes. One local evacuation center received such an overabundance of unnecessary items that 18 semi-trailers were required to remove the unused donations.

As evidenced in the cases above, the receipt of unnecessary or inappropriate items, or the delivery of items that are not coordinated with the response efforts, can cause an unintentional burden on the affected area(s) and the responding agencies to sort and distribute the items, delegate the items to a community level agency, or dispose of items that are not able to be distributed.

E. Assumptions

State OEM has developed a strategy for collecting, managing, and distributing donated goods and volunteer services during a disaster, based on the assumptions below:

- The successful management of disaster commodities requires a united, cooperative, and coordinated effort by local, State, tribal, and Federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations, business and industry, public, and private institutions, and the public.
- There is a verified need for volunteers and successful recovery efforts in a community impacted by a disaster require a volunteer workforce to supplement traditional responder roles.

- Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) groups must be collaborative and depend on one another for resources and referrals, therefore a strategic and coordinated distribution of volunteers is necessary.
- All volunteers must be screened as part of an on-going process. Screening is done by individual agencies/organizations to various degrees per individual agency/organization standards. The State assumes no responsibility or liability for volunteer screening activities.
- Large-scale/catastrophic disasters will likely overwhelm existing local and State resources, requiring the procurement of necessary items through additional avenues. The supplemental items may be procured through State and Federal government channels, and/or the private sector, filled through voluntary disaster donations, or both.
- New York State does not currently have any one entity that has the capability to oversee the volunteer and donations management activities. In a large-scale event, it is anticipated that these activities will be supported by a request from the State as an EMAC request or by a request to FEMA.
- The volunteer and donations management strategy must be flexible. State and local governments are ultimately responsible for the success of the volunteer and donations management system, including coordinating with the volunteer community, and may implement those parts of the Volunteer and Donations Management Appendix that meet the needs of the response and recovery operations.
- Full use of existing local resources to include private sector involvement and donations, should occur before State assistance is requested.
- Offers of assistance from citizens and the private sector will be made to all levels of government as well as to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).
- In anticipation of a catastrophic incident, FEMA may elect to pre-stage disaster commodities at designated locations to ensure the rapid distribution of needed life-sustaining commodities to disaster survivors in the immediate aftermath of the incident.
- In the immediate aftermath of a catastrophic incident where there is a clear need for disaster commodities, FEMA may elect to deliver life-sustaining disaster commodities to designated locations for rapid distribution to disaster survivors.
- Federal government, international, and volunteer activities must always support the efforts of state and local governments, and existing volunteer and donations management networks or systems are a critical link to an effective program and should be used to the extent practicable.
- NGOs involved in the relief effort will coordinate their relief actions through the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) or the local EOC. Such coordination is necessary to ensure maximum efficiency of the logistics management operation, and to ensure that the needs of the affected population are being adequately met.

- Unusable or inappropriate donations should be anticipated. Usable surplus commodities will be properly disposed of upon completion of response and recovery operations, or once the items are known to be unnecessary.
- Individuals and organizations will feel compelled to go to the disaster area to offer material goods and/or services. These activities may occur with or without coordination with an entity actively involved in the event.
- Close coordination with ESF #15 External Affairs will be necessary to publicize appropriate needs that will supplement operational response efforts and discourage unsolicited items.
- Offers of donations and volunteer services are typically managed at the local level.
- The State will only request and receive specific donations through an online portal, as identified by operational needs. Such items include Conex boxes, debris removal services, fuel cells, generators, light towers, special utility vehicles, sandbags, sheltering facilities, transportation services, traffic control equipment, trash pumps, and water.
- Unsolicited volunteers will be coordinated by local entities as needed.

F. Concept of Operations

During most events, the volunteer and donations strategy will be addressed within ESF #6 Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services. As the operational needs increase, ESF #7 Logistics and the EOC Manager may identify a need for a Volunteer and Donations Management element. Once this occurs, the Volunteer and Donations Management Team will be activated.

The State's management of donations encompasses two distinct sourcing pathways - predesignated items and items being offered up that are not already predesignated or sourced. Donations that are predesignated are sourced immediately to the appropriate entity upon receipt. For non-predesignated items, the State may use the assistance of federally designated vendors for intake and stage the items until a time when the resource is needed.

Initially, the State will make a request of State agencies and private entities to determine if the activities can be either managed by an agency or private entity, or if the responsibilities may be managed by a contracted source. It is anticipated that in large events, the State will make an EMAC request for assistance, and/or the State will request Federal assistance to ensure that volunteer and donations management activities are appropriately staffed and managed.

G. Volunteer and Donations Team Responsibilities

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

- Coordinate with involved agencies and volunteer organizations to determine those goods and donations most needed for disaster relief.
- Work with ESF# 15 to communicate clearly to the public that unsolicited goods or previously unaffiliated volunteers can overwhelm an already stressed infrastructure and create “the second disaster.”
- Publicize, in concert with involved agencies and volunteer organizations, the items and assistance needed and provide a hotline for those who wish to donate or volunteer, as appropriate.
- Facilitate a prompt response to donors and the prompt allocation of donated equipment, goods, services, and financial donations to the victims of the disaster.
- Where necessary and appropriate, train the affected government and/or a VOAD in anticipation of handing over volunteer and donations management responsibilities.

While a Volunteer and Donations Management Appendix is clearly needed for very large or catastrophic events, disasters of a lesser scope can also trigger an outpouring of donations that must be managed. This plan is designed primarily for large-scale disasters but is flexible and can be scaled back for moderate or smaller events that result in fewer donations.

H. Legal Authorities

This authority to develop this Appendix and implement specific response actions can be found in a variety of New York State laws, regulations, and federal authorities, including:

State

- NYS Executive Law, Article 2-B

Federal

- Public Law 93-288, as amended, the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act
- National Response Framework (NRF), ESF #5 (Emergency Management), ESF #6 (Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services Annex), ESF #7 (Logistics Management and Resource Support Annex), Private-Sector Coordination Annex, and Catastrophic Incident Annex
- FEMA Handbook: Public Assistance Applicant Handbook (323)
- 44 CFR: Emergency Management and Assistance (Parts 13 and 206)

I. Plan Evaluation, Maintenance, and Update

The NYS OEM Planning Section has the responsibility for the development, review, and maintenance of all multi-agency response plans under the State CEMP. As required under New York State Executive Law Article 2-B, each plan shall undergo an annual review, update, and be posted online (if applicable) no later than March 31st of each year.

During the annual review by the Planning Section for its material, this plan is examined for both content and format. For updates that do not impact operational mechanisms or processes, the appropriate edits are initiated within the Planning Section and do not warrant external involvement. Plan updates will also

be conducted based upon experiences and lessons learned from exercises or real-world events, or through administrative changes in government. Planning Section updates and/or edits affecting operational capabilities, responsibilities, or otherwise impacting operations will engage stakeholders in a variety of ways, such as verbally, by document review, meetings, webinars, or any combination thereof. Final drafts will be socialized to all appropriate agencies/personnel upon completion.

Section II: Preparedness

A. Planning

The State's Volunteer and Donations Management Appendix is active in each phase of emergency management - Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery - as described below.

- Through ESF #6 Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing, and Human Services, agencies and volunteer organizations will collaborate to develop and maintain a list of available support services, including an inventory of warehouse facilities and their attributes.
- The NYS VOAD, in conjunction with the American Red Cross (ARC) will maintain a listing of active organizations, as well as the organizations capabilities in terms of both human and material resources.
- Adventists Community Services (ACS) maintains a regional network of community-based volunteers that are trained and prepared to provide volunteer and donations management assistance during a disaster or emergency.
- The Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) will work with other State agencies to initiate a central 800 number telephone service for handling inquiries and donations at a statewide level, as required.
- DHSES will work with other agencies to establish procedures for accepting financial donations at a State level, as required. DHSES will determine on a case-by-case basis whether financial donations will be accepted or if callers will be encouraged to contact the relief organization or charity of their choice.
- When there is a Federal Declaration, DHSES will work with a federally authorized vendor to utilize the National Donations Management Network (NDMN) program to accept, direct, and track donated monies, goods, and volunteer services, although other entities may manage the various components. Information about these donations and offers will be provided to local, state, and federal government agencies and volunteers, as appropriate. If necessary, DHSES may work with the Office of Information Technology Services (ITS) for further database development and maintenance to aid in volunteer and donations management.
- DHSES and ACS will establish a policy for distributing those goods remaining after the relief effort ends and disposing of those that have no utility to the community or the State.

B. Training and Exercise

ACS maintains a regional network of community-based volunteers that are trained and prepared to provide donations management assistance during a disaster or emergency. ACS shall provide leadership and training for community-based volunteers to coordinate the flow of incoming undesignated goods.

The NYS VOAD hosts an annual conference for members, which encompasses information sharing, training, and networking opportunities to facilitate better communication and coordination among the VOAD members.

DHSES will attempt to test and exercise the Volunteer and Donations Management Appendix during statewide exercises when the opportunity to address an event of the magnitude that would warrant the activation of the Appendix arises.

C. Logistical Support

Logistical support needs will vary based upon the type and quantity of donations received, as well as the determination of whether volunteer services will be readily utilized. Warehouse space and support (i.e. forklift capabilities, pallet jacks, etc.) would be determined as identified by operational needs.

DHSES maintains multiple stockpile locations throughout the state. These stockpiles can be a resource for logistical support materials including but not limited to warehousing equipment and potential staging areas.

Section III: Response

A. Alert, Notification, and Activation

Upon receipt of notification of any emergency in the state, a determination will be made to activate the State Emergency Operations Center (State EOC). If warranted, the appropriate ESFs will be identified and requested to send a representative to State EOC.

The State EOC will assess the potential needs and demands of the incident, and then determine the level of activation necessary to effectively manage the response to the incident. The capabilities that are needed to support that activation are also identified, and agencies are notified to staff the State EOC using the ESF construct.

Flexibility will be key in activating the State EOC and associated ESFs. Not all incidents are the same, and not all activations will require the full list of agencies to support the demands of the incident. Therefore, the representation of agencies that will be necessary to support the ESF construct may vary from incident to incident. The State CEMP identifies four activation levels of the State EOC. These are:

- **Level 4 Enhanced Monitoring:** A small, isolated, or potential event that has some indicators that warrant extra attention, enhanced monitoring, or external communication.
- **Level 3 Partial Activation:** An incident or event requiring a partial activation of the State EOC with agency/ESF lead activation.
- **Level 2 Full Activation:** An incident requiring full activation of the State EOC with ESF activation.
- **Level 1 Full State/Federal Response:** An incident requiring full activation of the State EOC with ESF activation, and Federal ESF integration and coordination.

B. Response Organization/Direction and Control

The overarching structure of State command and control will be organized as stated in the Volume 2 of the State CEMP, *Response and Short-Term Recovery*. The State will also be represented at the Joint Field Office (JFO), when established, to assist in the local/State/Federal coordination of Federal assets.

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

C. Roles and Responsibilities

- State OEM and DHSES will implement the Volunteer and Donations Management Appendix, advise affected local and county governments, assist State agencies and the Federal government through established channels, and notify the volunteer community through the VOAD network.
- State agencies and local governments will play an active role in supporting the community through Volunteer and Donations Management. The role of State agencies and local government will be to leverage any existing warehouse space, personnel, or contracts to support the Volunteer and Donations Management operational needs.

- ACS shall provide leadership and training for community-based volunteers to coordinate the flow of incoming undesignated goods, provide management of a multi-agency warehouse, and supervise local volunteers and other staff in receiving, sorting, packing, and inventorying donated goods and services.
 - DHSES will place the Volunteer and Donations Team on stand-by depending on the location, scale, and type of event. The Volunteer and Donations Team Leader may begin to:
 - Establish the short and long-term staffing and support needs for a Volunteer and Donations operation and identify the roles and responsibilities of staff and other assisting agencies that may participate.
 - Coordinate with assisting agencies to identify warehouse space and staging areas available for donated goods and secure agreements, if necessary.
 - Search the database and inventories to identify on-hand goods or previous offers that may be useful in this event.
 - Coordinate with ESF #15 External Affairs to encourage the media to request that goods and services be held locally until further notice.
 - State OEM may activate an online donations management portal within the State OEM website when the need is determined in coordination with State OEM Executive Staff.
 - DHSES will initiate an 800 line and phone bank for donated goods and services, as needed.
 - The Volunteer and Donations Team will maintain continuous coordination and communication with all involved and assisting agencies and organizations to ensure a smooth flow of goods and services to stricken areas. Depending on the size and severity of the incident, daily or regular coordination meetings and/or conference calls may be necessary. During a federally declared disaster, the FEMA VOAD Coordinator and FEMA Donations Coordinator should become part of the Volunteer and Donations Coordination Team.
 - To the extent practicable, the Volunteer and Donations Team Coordinator will monitor news accounts and confer with the FEMA VOAD and Donations Coordinators and emergency managers in other states to anticipate the number and type of goods that may arrive and divert them to other parts of the state or country, where appropriate. This may require close coordination with ESF #15 External Affairs and issuing of press releases to educate the public about the challenges associated with unsolicited donations.
 - The Volunteer and Donations Team will prepare daily status reports that document the issues discussed in the conference calls and tracking the number of truckloads or pallets in and out of the warehouses.
 - The Volunteer and Donations Team will maintain records of all purchases, rentals, loans, and agreements to facilitate possible future reimbursement from FEMA.
- 1. National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD), New York State Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster (VOAD), and Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COADs)**

NVOAD is the national consortium of recognized VOADs. Its mission is to provide a forum promoting cooperation, communication, coordination, and collaboration while fostering more effective delivery of services to communities affected by disaster. The NYS VOAD is chartered by NVOAD and collaborate in accordance with national precedents. The VOAD consists of organizations active in disaster response throughout the state. Many members are human services providers who seek to prepare for events that may impact their clients and stakeholders.

The VOAD's role is to bring organizations together and enable them to understand each other and work together during times of disaster preparedness, response, relief, and recovery.

Local COAD groups with national affiliations are especially helpful and can form the core of an effective Volunteer and Donations Management Team. There are more than 20 recognized agencies, with decades of experience, using volunteers in emergency response and recovery. Each agency has established procedures for managing, recruiting, training, and utilizing volunteers and common among them are systems which may include written enrollment, liability arrangements, formal training programs, command and supervision, and reserves planning and organization.

The State's policy is to encourage the use of voluntary agencies that have a method to screen and track volunteers, including previously unaffiliated volunteers, to document liability. The State may request a letter from each voluntary agency/organization, documenting liability coverage for all volunteers. The Volunteer and Donations Team should be familiar with the State's Good Samaritan Law and applicable volunteer liability laws.

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

- Accepting only donations needed, or for which they have an identified use.
- Securing warehouses and distribution centers for agency/VOAD usage.
- Off-loading, sorting, repackaging, storing, and distributing any donations accepted by the VOAD.
- Informing the State of any needs and unexpected shortfalls they experience.
- Redistribution or disposal of any items donated to the agency which are deemed unusable during and after the response and recovery efforts.

2. Networking with Local Government Agencies

It is the State's policy to support and assist local government, when requested and as appropriate. The local government's role, based on available resources, is to:

- Assist the VOADs in reporting the needs to the Volunteer and Donations Team.
- Assist with security at local distribution centers.
- Communicate with community-level initiatives.
- Inform Volunteer and Donations Team of volunteer or donations challenges in the field.

3. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

The federal government's role is to assist the State with additional Federal resources, to facilitate coordination among the State and the VOADs, and to discourage unsolicited donations that are not coordinated with the response efforts. Specifically, FEMA's role is to support the State, as requested and required, by:

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

4. Volunteer Resource Types

It is vital to recognize that various types of volunteer efforts, based upon previous affiliation status, licensing requirements, and screening, should be approached and managed in different ways. Most resources will be addressed under one of the following groupings:

- **Professional:** This group includes emergency personnel and professionally licensed/certified individuals. If arriving from outside of the affected area, they may be attached to emergency operations in their home regions. Confirmation of required license or certifications are the responsibility of the agency utilizing the individuals. Often regulatory agencies within the affected area may waive or relax local certification requirements when there is a need for professional skill sets.
- **Traditional Affiliated:** These volunteers are attached to a recognized voluntary agency. They are pretrained for disaster response by the agency with which they are affiliated and form the core cadre for paraprofessional and nonprofessional volunteers. They are typically prescreened and will not require additional State resources in order for their skills to be utilized by an individual agency. Typically, these individuals are already coordinated by the affiliated agency and assimilated into the individual agency's response and recovery efforts.
- **Spontaneous Personnel Arriving from Within the Affected Area:** Living in the affected area, these volunteers feel motivated by a degree of community ownership. They have no association or previous affiliation with recognized voluntary agencies and may have no formal training in disaster-related operations or relevant skill sets. These individuals will require additional screening and training efforts.
- **Spontaneous Personnel Arriving from Outside the Affected Area:** These volunteers are not from the impacted area and have no prior affiliation with recognized voluntary agencies. They may or may not have relevant skills and may arrive as individuals or in groups. Often these are grassroots efforts which will require screening, training, and coordination within established outlets to ensure efforts are coordinated and consistent with the goals of the response and recovery operations.

5. Staffing for Small-Scale Events

These events are small, limited, or localized in nature. It is anticipated that volunteer and donations activities will be coordinated through ESF #6 Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing and Human Services and will not require additional State support.

6. Staffing for Large-Scale Events

These events occur when a State and/or Federal disaster declaration is likely. Volunteer and donations activity could be significant but may not require the activation of all components of this Appendix, and some functions may be combined.

- ESF #7 Logistics leadership, in coordination with the EOC Manager, will determine appropriate staffing levels based on the Volunteer and Donations Team Leader's reports regarding donations activity and staff, space, and other identified requirements. The Volunteer and Donations Team Leader will manage the donations function in proximity to ESF #6 Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing and Human Services, with the following additional staff added for support, as necessary:
 - Phone Operator/Data Entry: answer calls and inputs data regarding offers or canvasses volunteers and agencies regarding the need for donations, assists in compiling status reports for State OEM and other agencies.
 - Coordinator/Logistician: If activity levels warrant, supervises phone and data functions and oversees coordination between donors and receiving agencies or organizations and coordinates with local, county, state, and federal government agencies, and other emergency management, private, voluntary, and support organizations.

7. Staffing for Catastrophic Events

Catastrophic events are anticipated to generate significant media attention or public interest. Volunteers and donations can be overwhelming and may not correspond to the needs of the victims or the community. This plan is generally written to manage the donations triggered by events of this magnitude.

Catastrophic events will require full implementation of the Volunteer and Donations Management Appendix and full activation of the Volunteer and Donations Team, warehouses facilities, a dedicated 1-800 phone line, and a volunteers and donations database system. The Volunteer and Donations Team is responsible for integrating volunteer and donations management into the larger local, state, and federal disaster relief effort.

During a catastrophic event, the Volunteer and Donations Team operates from the State EOC. State EOC staff will manage all requests for assistance, provide resources, track damage and fatality reports, and issue public statements.

ESF #7 Logistics will determine appropriate staffing levels based on the Volunteer and Donations Team Leader's reports regarding donations activity and staff, space, and other requirements. Staffing for Catastrophic Events may include:

- **Volunteer and Donations Team Leader:** a designated staff person who oversees all volunteer and donations efforts. This person may have other duties when there is no event to respond to, but should have knowledge of local, state, and federal emergency management systems, as well as the services and capabilities of a variety of volunteer and social service

agencies. During the activation of the State EOC, the Leader will serve as the Volunteer and Donations Team's liaison. The Volunteer and Donations Team Leader will:

- Represent the Team in all State EOC coordination issues and speak on behalf of volunteer and donations policies in all State OEM decisions.
 - Communicate all policy decisions to the Team and communicate the Team's needs to the State EOC staff.
 - Coordinate with ESF #6, the FEMA Donations Coordinator, the Statewide Volunteer Coordinator, and VOADs.
 - Provide ESF #15 External Affairs with information appropriate for news releases.
- **Phone Bank Group:** The Phone Bank Group will consist of phones and operators whose numbers will depend on the magnitude of the disaster and the available facilities. There should be a separate 800 line dedicated to incoming donations calls to facilitate their tasks.
 - **Coordination Group:** serves as point of contact for requests from ESF #7 and VOAD groups, maintains record of donations and needs referrals, and makes connections or referrals to fulfill those requests. The Group will match a donation of goods and/or services with an existing need or anticipated need or refer a donation to another area or state where it can be used. The State should determine on an event-by-event basis the policy for donations of goods for which there is no identified need.
 - The Coordination Group will liaison with State OEM Operations, any State warehouse, or staging facilities, involved VOADs, and representatives of State and Federal agencies, including FEMA. The Coordination Group may include the positions below:
 - **Supervisor:** oversees the Warehouse, IT, and Volunteer Coordinators.
 - **Warehouse Coordinator:** responsible for ensuring the smooth operation of the warehouse or staging facilities.
 - **Information Technology (IT) Coordinator:** oversees IT issues and liaisons with the ITS.
 - **Volunteer Coordinator:** manages donated volunteer labor.
 - The Coordination Group may also include representatives of the VOADs who give advice, perform tasks, or both. The Group should conduct regular meetings or a daily conference call to discuss donations and volunteer issues, strategies, and new ideas and to anticipate potential problems.
 - **Financial Donations Group:** serves as point of referral for callers offering financial donations and should consist of representatives of the State agencies accepting financial donations contributions. This may be contained within the Phone Bank Group. Callers who identify a specific volunteer organization for financial donations will be referred directly to that group. Callers with no preference will be provided a list of volunteer organizations accepting financial donations.
 - **Support Group:** provides or coordinates all logistic, technical, administrative, and security assistance for the Donations Team for the warehouse and staging areas. The size and specific functions of this group will depend on the needs of the team and the size and scope of the disaster.

8. Volunteer and Donations Team Facilities for Catastrophic Events

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

- **Volunteer and Donations Coordination Center:** will be located at the State EOC, with the possibility of a Disaster Field Office (DFO) presence for large-scale or prolonged events. It serves as the central location for the Donations Team and supports the functions of the staff, participating volunteer groups, and the State and FEMA volunteer and donations coordinators. The Volunteer and Donations Center functions as the central point of direction and control.
- **Phone Bank Center:** will be located at an existing 800 phone facility for most events and will take advantage of that facility's equipment, its staff, and their training to expedite implementation.
- **Warehouse:** will be located outside of the immediate disaster area to keep the anticipated traffic congestion in the disaster area to a minimum, and should be located close to highways, air, rail, and water transport routes when possible.
 - Depending on the scale of the event and the anticipated and duration of the warehouse function, the Volunteer and Donations Team may want to consider the access to local labor sources and the availability of parking, shuttle buses, and feeding for warehouse staff. The site should have a first aid station and a Safety Officer responsible for monitoring all activities, including those involving heavy equipment. Adequate sanitation facilities for volunteers and staff are required.
 - Waste disposal operations and procedures should be defined since there may be considerable amounts of cardboard, paper, metal, and spoiled or unsafe containers of goods that require proper disposal.
 - The warehouse's organizational structure will reflect the Incident Command System (ICS) whereby operations, logistics, planning, and finances are separate functions so that all personnel may enter the system at any time and be familiar with the organizational structure.
- **Local Distribution Center:** may be a church, community-based organization, or volunteer agency facility, or a local, state, or federal government site from which goods are dispersed directly to disaster victims or service agencies.

9. Other Factors for Consideration

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

- **Risk Management:** The Volunteer and Donations Team will comply with State and local laws and understand how flexibility in these laws can be used to support the operations. Subjects such as insurance, medical coverage, bonding of workers, worker safety, workmen's compensation, and other liability issues should be addressed. Similarly, local or State laws applicable to disposal of waste, sanitation facilities on site, feeding facilities on site, storage of food and hazardous materials on site, and child labor practices should be made available to all risk management staff and followed appropriately.

- **Security:** Prepare for security of all personnel and each donations management facility. Each facility is likely to be a 24-hour operation and will require appropriate security. Special security for certain incoming goods such as medicines and syringes, hazardous materials, and firearms may be necessary.
- **Awareness of the Affected Community:** To appropriately gather intelligence and inform the affected community through the use of appropriate communication mechanisms (e.g., faith-based centers, established community programs, and leaders). All volunteers should be oriented to the area, particularly addressing guidance to respect local customs, sensitivities, and religious traditions. All materials used for volunteer intake should be translated into multiple languages based upon the local population.
- **Local Economy Impacts:** One goal of disaster relief and recovery is the restoration of the local economy. Care must be taken to ensure relief contributions do not impede local economic recovery. Where possible and practical, purchases should be made from local vendors, thereby boosting local economy recovery efforts. Large quantities of donated goods purchased outside of the affected area can potentially have a negative impact on local businesses as they attempt to reopen and recover.
- **Environmental Impacts:** Disposal of donated goods and environmental concerns must be considered in establishing a Donations Center. Disposal of some items may require a contract with a hazardous material company. In isolated situations, a request for waiver of a specific law may be necessary. Center managers must be familiar with local and state requirements and remain aware of environmental cleanup work that remains after the response phase has ended.
- **Accountability:** Accountability is key. While a record of goods dispatched on a daily basis to the disaster area should be maintained, it is understood that perfect accountability of goods may not be possible in situations where there is high volume flow in and out. The top priority is always to immediately deliver critically needed items to the disaster area.

10. Financial Donations

There are many advantages to making financial donations to aid relief efforts. Financial donations allow agencies meet the precise needs of the disaster victims in the community and supports the reestablishment of local economy by purchasing items in or near the affected area(s) when possible. Sending financial donations rather than truckloads of goods avoids the labor-intensive logistical tasks such as offloading goods, sorting, storing, repacking, and reshipping the goods, and avoids the financial costs associated with shipping.

Consistent with one of the most important underlying principles in donations management, the government role is to support, strengthen, and build upon the existing network or capacity of the VOADs response and recovery. Donors contacting a government sponsored phone bank should be given a list of the well-established voluntary organizations that are confirmed to be fully involved in the disaster operation, to ensure that donors may support the agency or activities of their choice.

The State may accept financial donations in a fund strictly for disaster response and recovery, when directed to do so by the Governor. It should be clearly stated that not all disaster events will require a disaster and recovery fund. If activated, it is imperative that there is a documented plan for accounting, distribution, and accountability to occur. It should be considered that the development of a State fund for disaster relief may compete directly with the efforts of the traditional voluntary

agencies which depend largely on donations of all kinds from the public and will typically only be activated in large-scale or catastrophic events.

11. Warehouse Considerations

The facility should include a staging area for trucks ready to unload, and for staff to inspect the cargo to determine the requirements and strategy for unloading. It will be critical to maintain an inventory listing of available goods at each center so that the Volunteer and Donations Coordination Team can match the goods with requests from the affected community.

Locked and secured areas will be needed for controlled items like medicines, syringes, and firearms, and hazardous substances like paint and chemicals. In some circumstances, refrigeration may be a requirement. The coordination of an appropriate warehouse location will be dependent upon the type of goods received and the anticipated storage needs, taking into consideration any special storage requirements that may exist.

Section IV: Recovery/Demobilization

A. Overview

Dependent on the type of destruction and damage caused to the communities and individuals, the response may be short-lived or could extend for a prolonged period of time, perhaps even years. Regardless of the extent of damage, the State of New York will strive to assist local governments, businesses, and citizens in recovering from the impacts of any emergency.

A variety of forces may influence the direction of the recovery process. Considerations that must be analyzed for an effective response and prompt recovery include the safety of responders, repair and reopening of critical transportation routes, remoteness of areas, and the needs and requirements for the restoration of utility systems. As the response begins to transition from the response phase to the recovery phase, the focus begins to shift to rebuilding a community and demobilizing State response activities and resources. The recovery process typically includes both short-term and long-term actions that can be taken restore a community to a state of self-sustainment.

During the recovery process, the Volunteer and Donations Management activities will continue and the need for such activities may increase. As individuals begin to return to the affected area(s), the cleanup and rebuilding of homes and community can continue indefinitely as the community as a whole begins to define a new sense of normal. It is during this time that volunteer activities may commonly be coordinated to provide direct assistance to those affected, particularly in terms of manual and skilled labor including activities such as cleaning up debris or repairing existing structures.

B. Demobilization of the State Response

Demobilization is the downsizing of the State's role in the donated goods and services operation, which should be shorter than the involvement of the voluntary agencies. Demobilization involves the State reducing and ultimately transitioning activities and support in terms of facilities, coordination, and other activities that can be transitioned to the affected local government or a voluntary agency group. State demobilization should begin once the affected volunteer groups are able to handle the flow of goods and services, and the affected local government has the capacity to oversee all aspects of the donations management program. Ultimately, the State decides when to demobilize or reduce its support and will do so with input from other involved entities to determine the most appropriate time and plan for the transition of responsibilities.

During the demobilization of State support, outgoing personnel should receive a safety briefing, particularly addressing any items that they may have been exposed to and the long-term effects, if applicable. During the briefing, information regarding challenges and lessons learned should be gathered for future updates to planning efforts as appropriate, and a report should be made to ESF #7 to ensure that all information is gathered and shared appropriately.

Multiple steps are taken during the demobilization of State-level assets. If EMAC has been activated, the personnel and equipment associated should be released from the response activities. Volunteers should be debriefed and released from their responsibilities. Facilities used during the response phase should be returned to pre-event conditions and turned back over to the owner.

Upon demobilization, it should be anticipated that there may be donated or perishable items that should be disposed of appropriately. Items may be turned over to local government for ongoing recovery activities. Every effort should be made to provide any surplus of donated perishable items to local food pantries or other non-profits that can quickly utilize such commodities.