Volunteer and Donations Management

I. Introduction

A. Purpose

The Volunteer and Donation Management Annex documents the design and operations of a flexible state-level volunteer and donation management system which is designed to augment an impacted local unit of government. This system is designed to receive, process, and distribute a wide variety of donated goods and services that are offered or sought to assist emergency and disaster victims.

This Annex provides procedures for the coordination, acceptance, control, receipt, storage, distribution and disposal of donations-in-kind, volunteers, donated services and funding. For these purposes, a volunteer is defined as an individual who, beyond the confines of paid employment and normal responsibilities, contributes time and service to assist in the accomplishment of a mission.

B. Scope

IEMA will work closely with Illinois voluntary organizations who have agreed to help coordinate volunteers and donations through Illinois Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (Illinois VOAD). This Annex will not interfere with any individual private voluntary organization's policy concerning donations; it does not direct any individual or private community organization’s policies concerning gifts or donations. The intent is to provide a means to coordinate all donations and respond to the needs of disaster victims and impacted governments in the most efficient and timely manner possible. Individual organizations will
operate under their own administrative protocols.

II. Assumptions

A. Lack of an organized system for the management of donations and volunteers will result in chaos and detract from an otherwise effective disaster response.

B. Without adequate controls in place, large amounts of unsolicited, unusable donations will be sent to an impacted area.

B. The state of Illinois will, during large scale disasters, activate the Volunteer and Donations Coordination Team (VDCT).

C. The timely release of appropriate information to the public regarding the recruitment and necessity of volunteers during an event discourages spontaneous volunteers.

D. The timely release of information to the public regarding the needs of the voluntary agencies involved in disaster relief, acceptable donations and a readily available point of contact are essential in donations management.

E. In a wide scale disaster, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) may establish a regional disaster donations program.

F. Impacted location may receive donations of money which is most desirable and practical to directly relieve suffering.

III. Concept of Operations

A. General

1. When warranted, the IEMA director or designee, will assign the VDCT to work with impacted local units of government to determine the initial "needs list" for donated goods (defined as materials, goods and supplies which are given, not purchased) and services (defined as those people who volunteer their time to be of benefit to an incident) and to identify operating facilities for volunteer and donations management. If necessary, VDCT members will be designated as the volunteer and donations liaison to facilitate transactions concerning offers of cash, goods, and services during disaster operations.

2. IEMA may utilize technological systems such as WebEOC and other systems to communicate availability of donations.

3. Voluntary organizations working through Illinois VOAD will provide IEMA with an organizational point of contact and their contact
information. Voluntary organizations active in disaster relief will operate facilities for coordinating designated donations and donations that are specifically solicited by their agencies. Voluntary organizations will work cooperatively with impacted local units of government.

4. Individuals and businesses soliciting contracts for goods and services will be referred to CMS.

5. No attempts will be made by anyone involved in the coordination and implementation of this Annex to solicit donations for any specific organization.

6. Only those government organizations or charitable organizations recognized by the Attorney General’s Office of Charitable Solicitation or otherwise exempt from the Solicitation for Charity Act and recognized by Illinois VOAD as actively providing disaster relief will be promoted by the State as a sanctioned organization.

B. Operational Structure

1. The impacted local unit of government has primary coordination responsibility and authority over the management of volunteers and donations. The State of Illinois will assist local units of government if requested or necessary.

2. The VDCT will coordinate response needs with offers of goods and services along with an impacted local unit of government if requested. VDCT team members will include at a minimum, IEMA, American Red Cross (ARC), and Illinois VOAD.

C. Specifics

1. Designated Donations

   a. A designated donation is an offer made to an organization and accepted, or a donation requested by an organization.

   b. Inquiries concerning donations for a specified organization will be referred to that organization.

   c. The organization accepting/receiving the donation will follow its own logistical policies and procedures.

   d. Once a donation has been accepted, it is deemed to be a designated donation and belongs to that agency.
e. Once a donation is under the control of an agency, distribution of the donation will be accomplished by that organization's procedures.

2. Unsolicited/undesignated goods
   a. Donors will be discouraged from sending unsolicited donations directly to the disaster site.
   b. Unsolicited and undesignated goods are those that arrive in the area but have not been requested by an agency. Every effort will be made to have every shipment designated to a response agency. As a last resort, shipments that are unsolicited and undesignated will be directed to the reception center as established by an impacted local unit of government.
   c. Unsolicited and undesignated goods will first be directed to an agency that has agreed to accept such goods and services. IEMA may utilize technological systems such as WebEOC and other systems to communicate availability of donations.
   d. Should unsolicited and undesignated goods arrive on site against the advice of what has been requested, a VOAD agency skilled in managing unsolicited donations will be requested through Illinois VOAD (if it does not exist at the impacted local unit of government) to manage the sorting and distribution of these donations.
   e. Items that circumvent this policy may be destroyed or donated to suitable charities.

3. Volunteer Services
   a. State communications will encourage volunteers to affiliate with a recognized private disaster response organization or other organized group of their choice. Unaffiliated volunteers will be restricted from entry into any disaster site.
   b. All public volunteers will be referred to an impacted local unit of government once volunteer opportunities and a point of contact have been verified by IEMA.

4. Corporate Donations
   a. Corporate offers of bulk items will be coordinated by IEMA and directed to an impacted local unit of government or an Illinois
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VOAD partner agency if they can be used in the disaster response and recovery efforts. The offer will be entered into the donations tracking spreadsheet and communicated to the impacted local unit of government.

b. If applicable, information concerning the proper use of items being donated and expiration dates will also be entered into the tracking spreadsheet.

c. If donations are accepted, donors will be advised on how and where to ship donations.

5. Request for services other than volunteers/other than toll-free numbers

a. Requests for unmet needs from local units of government and Illinois VOAD partner agencies in impacted jurisdictions will be forwarded to the VDCT for attempted fulfillment. This does not preclude direct coordination with voluntary organizations involved in the disaster operations by local units of government.

b. Requests will be entered into a tracking spreadsheet.

c. Updated information regarding the status of the unmet needs should be forwarded to the VDCT by the impacted local unit of government.

6. Transportation

a. Transportation of goods from the donor to the receiving organization will be determined by agreement of those two parties.

b. Transportation of disaster supplies from a reception center to distribution points in the affected area(s) will be accomplished by various means. The receiving organization may pick up, use volunteer hauling services, or transport may be provided through provisions outlined in the Illinois Emergency Operations Plan, ESF 1, Transportation Annex.

c. IEMA will coordinate with ISP, IDOC, other state agencies and local units of governments to identify and manage checkpoints and staging areas for incoming donations if requested by the impacted local unit of government. IDOT-H will assist at the staging areas. Fairgrounds and correctional institutions may be considered for this use.

d. IEMA will coordinate with ISP and IDOT-H in directing vehicles
and trucks bringing donations into the state.

e. IDOT-H, with assistance from ISP, will coordinate over-height and over-weight vehicle transports throughout the state. IDOT-H will also issue temporary permits for such transports.

7. Public Information

a. The IEMA Public Information Officer (PIO), in conjunction with the ARC and VDCT, will develop a program to educate the public and media concerning the states’ volunteers and donations management plan. CMS will assist with the development of guidance for the use of state employees seeking release from job duties in order to volunteer.

b. The public information program will be designed to encourage cash donations and to limit or stop the arrival of unwanted goods and services.

c. The public information program should target a variety of organizations, such as civic/church groups, unions, parent-teacher associations/organizations, and other interested groups.

d. News releases, prepared in advance, will be issued immediately following a major disaster. These news releases will encourage cash donations to voluntary organizations and will briefly explain some of the problems associated with unsolicited goods and services. News releases can also provide information on the need for volunteers. Issuance of news releases will be based on the needs assessment.

e. Timely release of information to the public regarding the recruitment and necessity of volunteers during an event is a priority. Information can be released via many outlets, including through the State incident Response Center (SIRC) established hotlines and websites, including Ready Illinois. Timely release of information may discourage spontaneous volunteers who arrive at a disaster event without a specific affiliation to a traditional voluntary disaster agency.

8. Training

a. All persons involved in the VDCT must be trained, familiar with its procedures, and unbiased in referrals.

b. Copies of this Annex, and copies of any press releases issued
throughout the disaster period will be made available for reference to VDCT workers. It is imperative that individuals involved stay abreast of all information being provided to the media.

9. Disposition of Excess Donated Materials

a. Disposal

(1) Many items donated will be unsuitable and unneeded. These items must be disposed of properly, taking into consideration donor sensitivity and environmental concerns.

(2) Unusable items will be recycled when possible.

(3) Usable goods will be redistributed to not-for-profit organizations that may not have been involved in disaster operations.

(4) Goods may also be donated to other disaster areas overseas through the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance or other agencies.

(5) Dumping of food stuffs (defined as food commodities in all forms) and other commodities may have an adverse affect on the economic recovery and public health of the affected areas and should be avoided.

(6) Local laws will apply when disposing of any hazardous materials. Contracting for disposal of these items should be considered.

IV. Responsibilities

A. Primary Agency – Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA):

1. Serves as the lead agency and provides a State Volunteer and Donations Coordinator (SVDC) who will lead the VDCT. The SVDC serves as the point of contact with the Governor's Office of Citizens Assistance (GOCA), local government(s), supporting state agencies, appropriate voluntary agencies, and private sector organizations at the state level.

2. Establishes and manages the VDCT. The VDCT will manage and maintain control over volunteers and donations management as described in this Annex.

3. Instructs, informs and coordinates all private sector and voluntary
organizations involved in volunteers and donations management.

4. Arranges for transportation as required during the reception, movement and distribution of unsolicited donations and others as required in accordance with the Illinois Emergency Operations Plan, ESF 1, Transportation Annex.

5. Establishes a volunteers and donations tracking spreadsheet.

6. Works with the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) system and other external organizations should resources outside the state be necessary to manage volunteers and donations.

7. Public Information Officer (PIO)
   a. Drafts and coordinates all news releases involving volunteers and in-kind donations on behalf of the VDCT.
   b. Prepares pre-event news releases for release upon activation of the IEOP.
   c. Develops a public education program for donors and volunteers.

B. Support Agencies

1. Governor’s Office of Citizens’ Assistance (GOCA)
   a. Provides support staff for the VDCT if necessary.
   b. Assists with recording volunteer and donation offers in the volunteers and donations management tracking spreadsheet.
   c. Provides additional staff through the use of voluntary organizations.

2. Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDA)
   a. Coordinates donations for livestock and other agricultural needs.

3. Central Management Services (CMS)
   a. Upon request, establishes a toll free telephone number and internet availability for all citizens and agencies desiring to donate money, services, or other in-kind donations. CMS also provides required telecommunications lines, space and office equipment as possible to accommodate the VDCT.
b. May provide available warehousing equipment resources as circumstances dictate.

c. Identifies equipment available at State Surplus Property as needed for use during disaster operations.

d. Upon request, assists in recruiting and assigning state agency employees to staff VDCT operations. This may include those employees with specialized skills such as bilingual specialists, data entry operators, and other specialized skills. CMS can assist with some special skills that relate to job descriptions, but language skills requests usually route through Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS).

4. Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC)

a. May utilize correctional institutions as staging areas for unsolicited donations.

b. May utilize offender labor to sort and process unsolicited goods at designated staging areas.

5. Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service -- Serve Illinois (ICVCS)

a. Assists the VDCT by coordinating, recruiting, training and overseeing volunteer management programs.

6. Illinois Department of Military Affairs (IDMA)

a. Provides transportation for donated goods as the situation may dictate and as resources allow.

b. Provides warehousing equipment and operators, as resources allow, in support of the VDCT.

7. Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH):

a. Provides applicable health guidelines and medical rules and regulations for the acceptance, handling and issuance of in-kind donations.

b. Provides applicable health and medical inspection and oversight in the public interest as required to public and private facilities accepting and dispensing in-kind donations.
c. Inspects food donations as required by law.

8. Illinois Department of Transportation–Highways (IDOT-H)
   a. Provides transportation of disaster supplies from the reception center to distribution points in the affected area(s).
   b. Assists at staging areas in coordination with recovery efforts.
   c. Coordinates, with assistance from ISP, over-height and over-weight vehicle transports and issues permits for such transports.

9. Illinois State Police (ISP)
   a. Provides convoy escort support as the situation may dictate and as resources allow.

C. Voluntary Agencies

1. American Red Cross (ARC)
   a. Provides liaison to the VDCT.
   b. May provide traditional services according to the nature of the incident including but not limited to Mass Care, Shelter Operation, Mental Health Counseling, Disaster Welfare Industry, and Health Services.
   c. May provide training to and volunteers for the VDCT.
   d. May operate response centers for spontaneous unaffiliated volunteer registration at impacted local units of government if requested.

2. Illinois Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)
   a. Provides volunteers to assist in operation of the VDCT and reception centers at impacted local units of government if requested.
   b. Provides organizational donation phone numbers, if active in disaster relief operations, to the VDCT for reference.
   c. Provides any particular donation requests to fulfill unmet needs.
V. Resource Support

A. Personnel

VDCT staff may be assigned state employees or other volunteers or, if necessary, temporary contracts may be let.

B. Communications

CMS will establish and maintain the telephone lines and provide computer support for the VDCT.

C. General/Support/Equipment

IEMA and CMS will determine the needs and sources for office space, furniture, computers and other equipment, and arrange for the procurement of such.

D. Administration

1. Administrative support will be provided by IEMA, other state agencies and voluntary organization personnel. Temporary personnel may be employed on an as needed basis.

2. All agencies involved are to maintain logs and journals on their agencies’ respective activities as they relate to the VDCT.

3. Audits

   a. IEMA will be responsible for the audit of all undesignated donations of goods.

   b. The organization accepting donations of goods and/or cash will follow its own internal policy and procedures for audits.

VI. Exemption from Liability

Section 21 of the IEMA Act provides for no private liability for government workers, volunteers, and companies that provide services during a disaster.

A. “a) Any person owning or controlling real estate or other premises who voluntarily and without compensation grants a license or privilege, or otherwise permits the designation or use of the whole or any part or parts of such real estate or premises for the purpose of sheltering persons during an actual or impending disaster, or an exercise together with his or her successors in interest, if any, shall not be civilly liable for negligently causing the death of, or injury to, any person on or about such real estate or premises under such license, privilege or other permission, or for
b) Any private person, firm or corporation in the performance of a contract with, and under the direction of, the State, or any political subdivision of the State under the provisions of this Act shall not be civilly liable for causing the death of, or injury to, any person or damage to any property except in the event of willful misconduct.

c) Any private person, firm or corporation, and any employee or agent of such person, firm or corporation, who renders assistance or advice at the request of the State, any political subdivision of the State under this Act during an actual or impending disaster, shall not be civilly liable for causing the death of, or injury to, any person or damage to any property except in the event of willful misconduct.”

B. “The immunities provided in this subsection (c) shall not apply to any private person, firm or corporation, or to any employee or agent of such person, firm or corporation whose act or omission caused in whole or in part such actual or impending disaster and who would otherwise be liable therefore.”

VII. Authorities

A. IEMA Act (20 ILCS 3305/)

VIII. References

A. FEMA Disaster Assistance Policy (DAP) 9525.2 – Donated Resources