

Primary National Volunteer Response Organizations

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Editor's Note: This Chapter is the continuation of an adaptation of a state plan for disaster preparation and response. In total, the original chapter comprises Chapters, 1, 14, 16-18.

While local, state, and federal agencies have the responsibility and the burden of preparing for and responding to disasters, there are a variety of other private and public organizations with disaster response missions. The American Red Cross is probably the most noted with its disaster relief history of more than a century.

The American Red Cross

The American Red Cross is a humanitarian organization of volunteers that provides relief to survivors of disaster. The Red Cross helps people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies and provides such services consistent within its Congressional Charter and under the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

In 1905, the Red Cross was chartered by Congress to “carry on a system of national and international relief in time of peace and apply the same in mitigating the sufferings caused by pestilence, famine, fire, floods, and other great national calamities, and to devise and carry on measures for preventing the same.”

This Charter is not only a grant of power, but also an imposition of duties and obligations to the nation, to disaster survivors, and to those donors who support its work.

Red Cross disaster relief focuses on meeting an individual's immediate disaster-caused needs. When a disaster threatens or strikes, the Red Cross provides shelter, food, and health and mental health services to address basic human needs. In addition to these services, the core of Red Cross disaster relief is the assistance given to individuals and families affected by disaster to enable them to resume their normal daily activities independently. The Red Cross also feeds

emergency workers, handles inquiries from concerned family members outside the disaster area, provides blood and blood products to disaster victims, and helps those affected by disaster access other available resources.

What is most important to remember about the role of the Red Cross in disaster relief is that the Red Cross supplements the resources and services of the local, state, and federal government and does not override or substitute for the local, state, and federal governments' responsibilities in times of disaster.

American Red Cross at the Local Level

Most counties across the country have active Red Cross Chapters, which meet the day-to-day needs of individuals affected by community emergencies such as single-family house fires and small floods. These needs typically include short-term shelter, food, and clothing and the provision of mental health and physical health services.

American Red Cross at the State and National Level

When a disaster exceeds the human and material resources of a given Red Cross Chapter, the affected chapter can look to neighboring chapters or other chapters within the state for assistance. In those situations where the incident exceeds that which the state can accommodate, the Red Cross may deploy resources from within its service area (e.g., the Northeast Region) or from across the country.

American Red Cross and Disaster Mental Health

In 1992, the American Red Cross developed a disaster mental health component to its disaster relief branch. Licensed mental health practitioners, acting as volunteers, are trained to recognize a disaster's emotional impact on survivors and disaster workers and provide appropriate interventions to mitigate or resolve such symptoms. On a local level, disaster mental health volunteers may respond and support individuals involved in house fires or other community emergencies. On large-scale disasters, mental health professionals may be deployed to hurricanes, floods, tornados, forest fires, incidents involving weapons of mass destruction or other disasters.

In most cases, the local governmental authority in the disaster area coordinates the disaster response and relief efforts. There are instances, however, in which the American Red Cross authority in disaster response supersedes that of the local governmental unit. This occurs in the coordination of mental health services following aviation and other transportation disasters.

The Aviation Disaster Family Assistance Act of 1996 (ADFAA)

In 1996, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) was assigned the role of integrating the resources of the federal government with those of local and state authorities and the airlines to meet the needs of aviation disaster victims and their families. As a result, the *Federal Family Assistance Plan for Aviation Disasters* was developed and implemented. This plan describes the airline and federal responsibilities in response to an aviation crash involving a significant number of passenger fatalities and/or injuries.

In addition, the ADFAA mandates that the NTSB identify a human service organization to coordinate family assistance and mental health services to surviving victims and the families of the deceased and to coordinate a non-denominational memorial service. The NTSB, in turn, has named the American Red Cross to oversee the coordination of these services. In the event an aviation disaster meets the above criteria and the ADFAA is enacted, the national headquarters of the American Red Cross will deploy a Critical Response Team to engage the *Federal Family Assistance Plan for Aviation Disasters.*' This team will work with local, state, and federal resources to meet the mental health and spiritual care needs of those involved.

American Red Cross and Disaster Spiritual Care

The American Red Cross recognizes the importance of spiritual care support during times of disaster, especially in those events resulting in mass casualties and fatalities. While the American Red Cross does not specifically provide spiritual care support directly through its volunteer resources, Red Cross chapters across the country are encouraged to collaborate with faith-based organizations in their communities to ensure that spiritual care services are offered and provided to those requesting and requiring such support.

In the event of an aviation disaster, where the Federal Family Assistance Plan for Aviation Disasters is engaged, the American Red Cross will deploy specially training disaster spiritual care professionals. While it is not the role of these individuals to provide direct spiritual care assistance, these individuals will assist the community in organizing the provision of spiritual support to disaster victims, their family members and the general community through the use of community faith-based organizations.

The Salvation Army

Role in Emergency Disaster Services

Federal law has reaffirmed The Salvation Army's authority to provide disaster assistance with the passage of the Robert T. Stafford Emergency and Disaster Assistance Act, which also created the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This Act specifically names The Salvation Army as a relief and disaster assistance organization.

Several factors guide The Salvation Army's role in responding to disasters. These guiding factors include:

The Salvation Army has an established right to provide disaster relief services. That right is recognized by public law and through signed Memorandums of Understanding and Agreements (MOUs) with government agencies and other voluntary organizations.

- The Salvation Army's disaster relief services are supported solely by donations.
- The Salvation Army is not a first responder; rather, it supports first responders.
- The Salvation Army is a mass-care support agency.

Goals in Emergency Disaster Services

When The Salvation Army initiates a disaster relief operation, the first aim is to meet the basic needs of those who have been affected, both survivors and first responders (such as firefighters). Even at this level, The Salvation Army's workers are ministering in that they serve as a means of expressing God's love. The Salvation Army's goals are to offer:

- Material comfort
- Physical comfort
- Emotional comfort
- Spiritual comfort

The Salvation Army provides help as an outgrowth of faith and as an act of obedience to God, but no service is withheld because of a recipient's beliefs. If disaster relief recipients ask for prayer or spiritual counseling, The Salvation Army can provide these. The Salvation Army's service might be described as a "ministry of presence," just as the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and mourn with those who mourn." (Romans 12:15)

EMERGENCY DISASTER SERVICE ACTIVITIES

The Salvation Army provides numerous disaster relief services. Each disaster creates its own unique circumstances. The Salvation Army's disaster response is community based, varying from place to place based upon the community's situation and the magnitude of the disaster.

In a disaster, The Salvation Army has the ability to provide both immediate emergency assistance and long-term recovery help. Emergency response services are activated on short notice according to an agreed-upon notification procedure, while long-term recovery is strategically planned in response to the situation, through working and partnering and many other community entities.

Even with the ability to be flexible and to respond based upon the community's situation, there are several basic services that The Salvation Army offers in most major disasters. These services, described below, form the core of The Salvation Army's disaster services program.

Food Service

The most visible of The Salvation Army's disaster services is the delivery of meals and drinks to disaster victims and emergency workers. Food may be prepared and served at congregate feeding sites (such as a Salvation Army corps

building, camp or shelter) or from one of the Army's mobile feeding units/canteens, which are essentially kitchens on wheels. Nourishment is provided at other types of events, such as:

- Search and rescue operations
- Law enforcement activities
- School violence incidents
- Disaster drills
- Training exercises
- Special Events

Hydration Service

Hydration service provides beverages which replenish electrolytes (minerals such as potassium), enhance energy and which meet general hydration requirements for those served. Hydration service is offered to affected people and service providers. Hydration service is often used to augment disaster food service. In some situations, however, hydration may be all that is required. Some situations where hydration service is provided alone include:

- Where food is not the most immediate basic need, such as at public events where people may become victims of heat exposure.
- When consumption of food is not safe, such as when air borne contaminants are present.
- Where and when a local Department of Health restricts the serving of food.
- When security management does not allow food service.

Emergency Shelter

When necessary, The Salvation Army provides shelter in a facility identified by the local emergency management personnel. These facilities include:

- Municipal shelters, such as schools
- Salvation Army buildings
- Other facilities that are predetermined by authorities

Cleanup and Restoration

The Salvation Army supports people as they restore and rebuild after a disaster. Cleanup and restoration services include:

- Distribution of cleanup supplies such as mops, brooms, buckets, shovels, detergents, and tarps.
- Coordination of volunteer rebuilding teams.
- Set up of warehouses to distribute reconstruction supplies such as lumber and sheetrock.

Donations Management

The Salvation Army is one of the nation's leaders in collecting, sorting, and distributing donated goods. During a disaster, The Salvation Army may:

- Open disaster warehouses to receive and sort donations.
- Establish distribution centers to dispense goods directly to disaster victims.
- Use donations to support other disaster programs, such as mass feeding and cleanup.

Spiritual and Emotional Care

The Salvation Army provides spiritual comfort and emotional support to disaster victims and emergency workers coping with the stress of a disaster. Salvation Army counselors, who are often ordained as clergy (officers), may simply offer a "ministry of presence," but often people who know about The Salvation Army as representatives of God may ask for prayer or help from the Bible. At Ground Zero following 9/11, one of the most critical ministries of The Salvation Army was counseling firefighters, police, and morgue workers who were struggling with the enormity of the tragedy. Other examples of spiritual and emotional care activities include:

- Comforting the injured and bereaved
- Conducting funeral and memorial services
- Providing chaplaincy service to disaster workers and emergency management personnel

Disaster Social Services

The Salvation Army provides direct financial assistance to disaster victims through a system of trained caseworkers. This assistance is available for:

- Essential living supplies, such as food, clothing, medicine, bedding, or baby products
- Emergency housing needs
- Disaster-related medical or funeral expenses

Emergency Communications (SATERN)

Through The Salvation Army Team Emergency Radio Network (www.SATERN.org) and other amateur radio groups, The Salvation Army helps provide emergency communications when more traditional networks, such as telephones, are not operating. These teams:

- Relay critical information about the disaster.
- Transmit welfare inquiries from friends and family

members who are otherwise unable to reach loved ones in the disaster area.

Administration

This service provides the support to keep the other services functioning and includes:

- Clerical and office support
- Purchasing and accounting
- Statistics and reports
- Documentation for authorities
- Personnel, staff and trained volunteers
- Management of spontaneous volunteers

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) ²

Many states and U.S. territories have a Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) program whose main mission is to coordinate the planning efforts of that state or territory's voluntary organizations committed to disaster response. The National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) is the national coordinating body of these state and territory affiliates. During times of disaster, NVOAD, or its affiliate, will encourage the participating voluntary organizations to engage their disaster response services and will assist in coordinating these services with other local, state, and federal disaster response agencies. Participating organizations in NVOAD include the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Catholic Charities USA, Mennonite Disaster Services, and a host of other human service and faith-based organizations.

National Faith-Based Disaster Service Organizations

Although faith-based organizations are the primary long-term disaster assistance providers, their contributions to disaster work are as varied as their spiritual practices. Below is a partial list of organizations that have program and contact information available to the public.

- ***Adventist Community Services (ACS) –**
Disaster Response; National Office: Silver Spring, MD
– Services: emergency goods/supplies and warehouse operations
– Contact: acsnydirector@hotmail.com,
www.nadadventist.org/acs/disaster-response.htm,
877.227.2702, 301.680.6438.
- **American Baptist Men (ABM) –**
Disaster Relief; Headquarters: Springfield, IL
– Services: housing assessment, debris removal, and housing cleanup
– Contact: www.abmen.org, 800.222.3872 x2452.
- **American Jewish World Service (AJWS) –**
Headquarters: New York, NY
– Services: fosters civil societies sustainable development and human rights for all internationally
– Contact: www.ajws.org, 212.792.2900 or 800.889.7146.
- **American Red Cross (ARC)-Spiritual Response Team (SRT) –**
Headquarters: Washington, D.C.
– Services: volunteer chaplaincy for aviation incidents
– Contact: www.redcross.org, 202.303.4498.
- ***Catholic Charities USA –**
Headquarters: Alexandria, VA
– Services: multi-service agency; distribution of funds to support long-term case management
– Contact: www.catholiccharitiesusa.org, 703.549.1390.
- **Christian Contractors Association (CCA) –**
International Headquarters: Brooksville, FL
– Services: home construction/rebuilding
– Contact: www.ccaministry.org, 800.278.7703,
800.270.4227 or 352.799.7856
- ***Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) –**
DRS; US Head Office: Grand Rapids, MI
– Services: needs assessment, home reconstruction, work camps and training for recovery organizations
– Contact: www.crwrc.org/relief, 800.848.5818,
800.552.7972 or 616.241.1691
- **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints –**
LDS Philanthropies; Headquarters: Salt Lake City, UT
– Services: warehousing & distribution of emergency goods
– Contact: www.lds.org/ldsfoundation, 800.525.8074,
801.240.5567 or 801.240.3544.
- **Church of the Brethren –**
Emergency Response/Service Ministries; Headquarters: New Windsor, MD
– Services: childcare for impacted families and volunteer home reconstruction
– Contact: www.brethren.org/genbd/ersm,
800.451.4407 x4.
- ***Church World Service (CWS) –**
Emergency Response Program (ERP); Headquarters: New York, NY
– Services: support & training to long-term recovery organizations and staff, warehousing & distribution of donated goods, and maintenance of extensive online training and preparedness resources
– Contact: www.cwserp.org, 800.297.1516 x222 or 212.870.3151.
- ***Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) –**
Headquarters: New York, NY
– Services: redevelopment and recovery program funding
– Contact: www.er-d.org, 800.334.7626 x5129.
- **Friends Disaster Service (FDS) –**
Headquarters: Peninsula, PA
– Services: volunteer labor coordination and victim advocacy
– Contact: www.friendsdisasterservice.org, 717.859.2210.
- **International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) –**
Headquarters: Baltimore, MD
– Services: funding to long-term recovery organizations, and emotional and spiritual care
– Contact: www.iocc.org, 410.243.9820 or 877.803.4622.
- ***Islamic Circle of North America-Relief (ICNA Relief) –**
Headquarters: Jamaica, NY
– Services: long-term recovery case management & humanitarian aid
– Contact: www.reliefonline.org, 718.658.7028.
- ***Lutheran Disaster Response –**
Headquarters: Chicago, IL
– Services: long-term recovery case management and work camp coordination
– Contact: www.ldr.org, 773.380.2748.

- ***Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) –**
Bi-National Office: Akron, PA
– Services: housing cleanup, home repair, and reconstruction
– Contact: www.mds.mennonite.net, 717.859.2210 or 800.241.8111.
- **Mercy Corps –**
USA Headquarters: Portland, OR
– Services: emergency relief
– Contact: www.mercycorps.org, 800.292.3355.
- **National Disaster Interfaith Network (NDIN) –**
Headquarters: New York, NY
– Services: a network of local, regional, and state interfaith disaster organizations
– Contact: www.n-din.org, 212.669.6100
- **Nazarene Disaster Response (NDR) –**
Headquarters: Kansas City, MO
– Services: volunteer labor coordination and long-term recovery support
– Contact: www.ncm.org/min_ndr.aspx, 888.256.5886
- **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) –**
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); Headquarters: Louisville, KY
– Services: work camp coordination, recovery program funding and capacity building
– Contact: www.pcusa.org/pda, 888.728.7228 x5839 or 800.872.3283
- ***The Salvation Army –**
Headquarters: Alexandria, VA
– Services: emergency relief and feeding, long-term case management, and distribution of goods
– Contact: www.salvationarmyusa.org.
- ***Sikh Coalition –**
National Headquarters: New York, NY
– Services: civil rights/liberties advocacy and backlash mitigation education
– Contact: www.sikhcoalition.org.
- ***Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVDP) –**
Headquarters: St. Louis, MO
– Services: long-term recovery case management and distribution of clothing & donated goods
– Contact: www.svdpusa.org, 314.576.3993.
- **Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) –**
NAMB Disaster Relief Program; Headquarters: Alpharetta, GA
– Services: feeding programs and coordination of home repair/rebuilding
– Contact: www.namb.net/dr, 800.634.2462 or 770.410.6000.
- ***Taiwan Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation –**
Northeast Regional Office: Flushing, NY
– Services: distribution of food and donated goods, support for medical services, and counseling
– Contact: www.tzuchi.org, 718.460.4590.
- ***United Jewish Communities (UJC) –**
National Office: New York, NY
– Services: funding for Jewish long-term recovery and redevelopment organizations
– Contact: www.ujc.org, 877.277.2477 or 212.284.6500.
- **United Church of Christ (UCC) –**
Disaster Response; Headquarters: Cleveland, OH
– Services: funding and capacity building for environmental and technological disasters and long-term recovery organizations
– Contact: www.ucc.org/disaster, 216.736.3211 or 866.822.8224 x3211.
- ***United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) –**
Headquarters: New York, NY/Washington, D.C.
– Services: long-term recovery case management, warehousing and distribution of donated goods, home rebuilding and repair
– Contact: www.umcor.org, umcor@gbgm-umc.org, 800.554.8583.
- ***United Sikhs –**
Headquarters: New York, NY
– Services: humanitarian relief and coordination of recovery volunteers
– Contact: www.unitedsikhs.org, 888.243.1690 or 646.338.5996.
- ***World Vision –**
Headquarters: Federal Way, WA
– Services: warehousing and distribution of donated goods
– Contact: www.worldvision.org, 888.551.6548

** Has a local office or headquarters in New York City*

¹ For more information on the Federal Family Assistance Plan for Aviation Disasters, refer to the Web site www.nts.gov/publictn/2000/spc0001.pdf.

² For information on the National Voluntary Organizations Active In Disaster, refer to the Web site www.nvoad.org.