



Unaffiliated Volunteers

in Response and Recovery





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Introduction

As surely as disasters will happen, volunteers will come. Many emergency managers admit to being unnerved by the prospect of coping with convergent volunteers because there are so many unknowns. How many will come and when? Will any of them have the skills we really need? What happens if somebody gets hurt? Where will they stay? Who will feed them and how? How will they know where to go and what to do? Who will manage them?

As Florida's lead agency for Emergency Support Function 15 (ESF-15), Volunteers and Donations, Volunteer Florida will provide straightforward answers to these questions and some compelling reasons to include procedures for utilizing this powerful resource in your Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP).



***Whether you plan or not, they
will come***



The Role of Volunteer Florida

Volunteer Florida works closely with the Florida Division of Emergency Management to plan for and ensure productive volunteer participation in disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. During the response and recovery phases of a disaster, Volunteer Florida coordinates the efforts of Florida's volunteer response organizations. Volunteer Florida staff at the State EOC operate an 800 hotline and issue press releases to regional and national media, providing the public with direct access to official information about the volunteers and donations needed and not needed.

As your county ESF-15 lead organization establishes procedures for managing unaffiliated volunteers, or refines your existing plan, Volunteer Florida's Emergency Management staff will be available to provide technical assistance and insight into the process.



***Volunteer Florida coordinates
volunteer response and
recovery efforts***

What are Unaffiliated Volunteers and What Do We Do with Them?

Convergent, unaffiliated volunteers are those not associated with any recognized disaster response agency, but who possess other training, skills and experience. They can appear on the scene or call to offer assistance. No distinction is made here between the terms “convergent,” “unaffiliated,” and “spontaneous” and they will be used alternately throughout this booklet. Management of this resource is a function of ESF-15, Volunteers and Donations, but is distinctly separate from its coordination of the traditional volunteer response organizations and from its management of donated goods.

Because many unaffiliated volunteers lack formal disaster training offered by the American Red Cross, The Salvation Army and others, there is understandable reluctance among emergency management professionals to consider convergent volunteers as a resource to be counted on in the event of a major disaster. It is logical for the traditional volunteer response organizations, as well, to be wary of well-intended but inexperienced volunteers whose efforts have sometimes hindered rather than helped response and recovery operations.

The key words in this dilemma are “major disaster.” When a community experiences a disaster of such magnitude that the capacity of local response organizations is severely challenged, volunteers will respond. Media coverage of such events brings graphic images of the victims and their damaged property into living rooms in neighboring counties and states. Such coverage evokes viewers’ compassion for the victims and gratitude that their



“Unaffiliated” does not mean unskilled!

own community has been spared. Hundreds or thousands will feel compelled and energized to take action.

Success Stories

Two Florida counties have demonstrated that it is not only possible but extremely cost-effective to harness this resource, organizing and empowering it to effectively serve communities struck by major disasters. When a rare F-4 tornado ripped through Osceola, Orange and Seminole Counties in late February, 1998, tearing apart homes, businesses and lives, calls from people offering assistance immediately began to pour in.

As Osceola County's professional responders and trained, affiliated volunteers rescued survivors and tried to protect property from further damage, several county employees began to set up a volunteer intake and dispatch center to handle the spontaneous volunteers offering to help. Day by day they designed new forms, implemented new procedures and organized the flow of convergent volunteers to help with the cleanup. Increasing numbers of volunteers showed up each day, as the surrounding communities realized the extent of the damage. Unaffiliated volunteers registered during the next few weeks totaled over 3,100. Hundreds more had helped during the first few days, but were never registered.

A review of Osceola's volunteer database, set up after the event, revealed that nearly 1,000 of these volunteers were residents of Osceola County, over 1,700 were from elsewhere in Florida and nearly 400 were from out of state. (They included individuals and families, groups from 38 churches, 10 schools and universities, 45 businesses and 35 other community or civic organizations.)

The county arranged for buses to transport volunteers to the worksites to prevent congestion and to ensure the secu-

rity of the impacted neighborhoods and businesses. A list of the volunteers being transported, showing the date and time of the trip, accompanied each driver and helped organizers to keep track of hundreds of people each day. This documentation also corroborated records of volunteer hours, as Budget Department personnel prepared the county's request for FEMA reimbursement.



Osceola County Emergency Management Director Matt Meyers and Budget Department Director Dick Hudson credit a major part of the county's successful recovery to the volunteers who responded and to the county employees who, under tremendous pressure, devised a workable system for managing them.

In Seminole County the Executive Director of the not-for-profit Seminole Community Volunteer Program, set up a reception center for volunteers under the awning of a volunteer's motor home. Located next to the county's command center, this makeshift volunteer center processed 1,400 volunteers during the next two weeks. Agency staff kept daily records of the volunteers at each site and how many hours each worked. At the beginning of every shift, volunteers signed in and received their assignments, along with color-coded ID bracelets. When they signed out at the end of the day, they turned in the bracelets and reported to the staff the kinds of work they had performed that day. The ID bracelets enabled Sheriff's deputies, using a block captain system, to enforce strict security measures.

Although Osceola and Seminole Counties managed to utilize many of the convergent volunteers, local emergency managers agree that volunteers could have been referred more quickly and the documentation of their hours and activities streamlined, had a plan been written ahead of time for the management of these volunteers.

Whether you plan for them or not, they will come!

The good news is that, no matter who or how many "they" turns out to be, the procedure for managing unaffiliated volunteers is the same. It's straightforward, logical and easy! It can be used in any size community, with the participation of any combination of community resources, for any type of disaster, no matter how extensive the damage.



Though many are first-time disaster volunteers, unaffiliated volunteers bring with them a wide range of skills and professional training, often in short supply after a catastrophic event. "Unaffiliated" doesn't mean unskilled! Effectively used, spontaneous volunteers can supplement your response and recovery operations in many areas. Through a short screening process, a volunteer coordinator might learn that a spontaneous volunteer who listed "accountant" as his occupation also has the skills and tools needed to trim trees or owns a boat that could be used for search and rescue. Along with their skills, they bring strength and energy, optimism for the future of the affected community, and concern for those who are suffering, both survivors and weary responders.

Communities benefit from increasing public awareness of the need for everyone's participation in disaster recovery. Many government organizations and private corporations encourage their employees' community involvement by offering paid or unpaid leave to those who participate in disaster related activities.

Florida's Employee Disaster Leave law allows state employees, with supervisor approval, 15 days of paid leave per year to work in American Red Cross disaster recovery operations. Civic and fraternal organizations have become valuable sources of dedicated disaster relief volunteers. Colleges and universities encourage faculty and student participation in disaster recovery as a means to instill in their students a strong community ethic.

It will never be possible to predict exactly how many unaffiliated volunteers will show up, who they will be or what skills they will bring. But it is possible to be prepared to gain the maximum benefit from their contributions, and for them to leave your community knowing that they have eased the pain of a survivor, helped to protect or rebuild someone's property, and helped your community to recover from the disaster.

Great Reasons for Writing Unaffiliated Volunteers into your CEMP

For the following economic, logistical and psychological reasons, plan now to effectively utilize the unaffiliated volunteers who will respond if your community experiences a disaster.

Economic

After the tornado in Osceola County, the initial estimate for professional cleanup alone was over \$8 million. The actual cost of cleanup was only about \$1.4 million, largely due to the tremendous efforts of unaffiliated volunteers. Volunteer participation also shortened the estimated cleanup time from 90 days to about 55 days. The county's total reimbursement from FEMA is anticipated to be over \$2 million. The documented value of those volunteer hours covered \$240,000 of Osceola's approximately \$300,000 total match.

In Seminole County, the estimate for professional cleanup was \$1,525,000. The work contributed by spontaneous volunteers helped to bring the cleanup cost down to \$660,000. Because the Seminole Community Volunteer Program was able to set up its disaster volunteer center almost immediately, sufficient volunteer hours were documented to cover the entire \$330,000 county match for the \$2,242,199 FEMA reimbursement.

The economic advantages alone are a substantial reason to make this resource an integral part of your comprehensive plan – but not the only reason.

UNAFFILIATED VOLUNTEERS IN RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

County	Initial Cleanup Estimate	Cost/cleanup w/Volunteers	Total County Match	Match \$ Covered by Volunteers	Total Reimbursement
Osceola	*\$8M/90 days	\$ 1.4M/55 days	\$300,000	\$240,000	>\$2,000,000
Seminole	\$1,525,000	\$ 660,000	\$330,000	\$330,000	\$2,242,199

*A decrease in the scope of the work also contributed to this cost reduction.



hamper the organization’s response. The American Red Cross, The Salvation Army and many others have awesome responsibilities in the wake of a major disaster. Their work is hindered rather than helped, when, for lack of planning, a community places on them the additional burden of “doing something with” the spontaneous volunteers.

Every community will find that it has one organization whose non-disaster mission and position in the community make it a logical organization to coordinate the multi-agency utilization of spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers. It will not necessarily be the same agency or the same kind of agency in every county.

Logistical

They will come, so planning ahead for spontaneous volunteers is to everyone’s advantage. All of the traditional response organizations would, of course, prefer to operate strictly with highly trained people who know and follow their organization’s prescribed procedures. When responding to a major event, however, even these seasoned responders sometimes find themselves shorthanded and unable to meet the community’s needs. When a response organization needs additional volunteers, it needs people with the skills necessary to help meet its commitments to the community. Without an effective screening and referral process in place, the convergence of volunteers without those skills can

Public Perception

There is a third compelling reason to include this resource in your CEMP. Well managed convergent volunteers contribute to a positive public perception of your response and recovery effort. Professional responders and trained, affiliated volunteers must maintain a “big picture” perspective and remain focused on their missions. Unaffiliated volunteers, on the other hand, often have more time to meet the individual needs of survivors, to hold a hand or offer comfort and encouragement.

There are dozens of heart-warming stories from Central Florida of spontaneous volunteers helping to ease the pain of tornado survivors with their sacrifices of time, talent and compassion. In most cases the volunteers were empowered to serve by a dedicated professional responder. Such was the case in an Osceola County neighborhood, where volunteers searched through the rubble for anything that might be of value to the victims.

Volunteers boxed the items they recovered by address, to be sorted later. They found rolls of undeveloped film, a Navy uniform soaked with mud, a box of old service medals and the last piece of a survivor’s marriage certificate. The other pieces had been found some distance away and placed together like a jigsaw puzzle. A local dry cleaner cleaned the uniform, children’s stuffed toys and many other precious items for survivors at no charge. One compassionate volunteer, an artist, used trays of water and an array of paintbrushes to clean photos and personal documents, drying them in front of fans. Family Bibles and a 1963 yearbook were dried one page at a time.



In a disaster the size of Hurricane Andrew it would have been impossible for recovery workers to spend time in this way. But when it is possible, such as after the Central Florida tornado, it is the commitment, love and compassion of spontaneous volunteers that makes it so.

Before a Disaster Occurs

Creating a Strong Local Network for Effectively Using Unaffiliated Volunteers

Each Florida county is a unique environment with its own assemblage of emergency management positions and personalities. Each jurisdiction also has its own distinct array of non-governmental resources – traditional response agencies and one-of-a-kind local organizations. From these resources, several may stand out as having the capacity to register and refer spontaneous volunteers in the event of a disaster and to develop a network of companies and not-for-profits to provide for the basic needs of those volunteers. The organization you engage to coordinate your county's use of unaffiliated volunteers will be referred to here as the **Coordinating Agency (CA)**.

In some counties a local volunteer center has served as the coordinating agency. This model has worked because volunteer centers have experience in referring volunteers according to their skills, abilities and limitations. Many have been trained on effective procedures for registering, referring and documenting unaffiliated disaster volunteers.

Many counties have a government volunteer coordinator who recruits and places volunteers in county government departments. These employees are also likely to be adept at determining the skills and interests of spontaneous volunteers. In the absence of a professional community volunteer manager, a volunteer coordinator in a local not-for-profit organization, such as the United Way, American Cancer Society or Habitat for Humanity, may have the required volunteer management and network-building skills.



Each Florida county has a unique combination of community resources

Regardless of what organization you engage to take on this responsibility, familiarity of its people with the missions and staffs of local not-for-profits and experience as a convener and collaborator will be extremely valuable. It is important for your ESF-15 Volunteers and Donations lead agency to establish regular communication with your coordinating agency to ensure mutual understanding of the CA's responsibilities and the procedures by which they will be carried out. Those responsibilities include:

Appoint a Disaster Response Coordinator – The CA will designate a staff member to serve as Disaster Response Coordinator. The coordinator will regularly attend local emergency management planning meetings and will affiliate the CA (if it's not already a member) with the local Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), Interfaith or other local disaster coalition.

Educate local coalitions – The Disaster Response Coordinator will educate the member organizations of your VOAD or Interfaith regarding the CA's role of referring spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers to them during disaster recovery.

Build a community network – The Coordinator should gather information from VOAD members about their anticipated disaster volunteer needs. The Coordinator can then begin to build a network of civic, fraternal and other groups, encouraging their members to affiliate with a local disaster response organization and to become trained to help them in disaster. For example, members of a local garden club who become affiliated with and trained by a homeless shelter will be able to help immediately when needed and will not become unaffiliated volunteers who need to be registered, referred and trained after a disaster occurs. The Coordinator can also pursue mutual assistance plans with counterparts in neighboring counties.

Develop a volunteer referral plan – The Coordinating Agency's Disaster Response Coordinator will develop a disaster volunteer referral plan and gather the supplies needed to open a volunteer reception center. The Coordinator will participate with the ESF-15 lead agency in finding several locations suitable for housing the reception center; will arrange sources and transportation of needed equipment, including emergency communications; and will recruit, train and orient volunteer staff to help operate the reception center.

Arrange to transport volunteers -- For security reasons, emergency management personnel will not allow volunteers to drive their own vehicles into impacted areas. The Coordinator should work with local ESF-15 personnel to develop a plan to transport volunteers from the reception center to the worksites. A school bus or city bus could be designated to provide transportation during the busiest times. Churches or charter companies might also donate the use of their buses.

Develop a public information plan – In cooperation with your ESF-15 lead agency, the CA will develop a public information plan for letting potential spontaneous volunteers know before a disaster occurs how to get involved if there is ever a need and, after a disaster, what help is and is not needed. This plan may include writing press releases in advance, for quick editing and dissemination to local and regional media, and securing a commitment from the local phone company for a complimentary 800 number and additional lines to be installed at the volunteer reception center.

Engage the business community – The CA can engage local businesses in planning to donate goods and services to future response and recovery efforts. A particular focus of the CA could be to secure contingency agreements for shelter for spontaneous volunteers in local or nearby hotels/motels, school dormitories, etc., and donated meals for the reception center staff.

Developing Mutual Support

Your Coordinating Agency will provide invaluable support to the local emergency management community. It is important to remember that your CA may operate with a budget consisting primarily of restricted funds – funds allocated or granted to the organization to be used for specific purposes. The agency will have a mission and specific goals it must achieve in order to continue receiving that funding. Your emergency management department can help to ensure that the CA is able to invest sufficient time to prepare for its new, official role in your CEMP by assisting the agency to secure additional funding for this purpose. A letter of support explaining the vital services your CA provides to the community after a disaster will assist the agency to garner the needed financial support from your county government, community foundation, United Way or other sources.



After the Disaster

Setting Up and Operating a Disaster Volunteer Reception Center

When a major disaster occurs, the large number of spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers who converge to assist with recovery can be overwhelming to an already stressed community. Hundreds or thousands of unaffiliated volunteers cannot be easily handled within the normal office setting and operating procedures of the Coordinating Agency.

A *Volunteer Reception Center (VRC)* provides a place where large numbers of volunteers can be efficiently processed and referred to agencies needing their services. The process described here provides an easy way to document volunteers being registered, requests for volunteers, VRC staff hours worked, and expenses incurred.

Set up to receive volunteers – Upon receiving instructions from the ESF-15 lead agency, the CA will prepare to process spontaneous volunteers in the agency's regular office or will set up a volunteer reception center at a site designated by the lead agency. The VRC Floor Plan included in this section can be adapted to meet your needs and physical setting. Ideally, the reception center would be set up under the supervision of the VRC Director. However, after a disaster, there is no guarantee that the Director will be the first to arrive. Paid staff and a few key volunteers should be trained to set up the VRC, in case it becomes necessary.



***The procedure is straightforward,
logical and easy***

Begin the registration process – The CA will begin processing and referring volunteers as soon as possible after the arrival of the first volunteers and the receipt of the first requests for volunteer assistance from response organizations. The process will include registering and quickly interviewing volunteers to determine their skills, abilities and limitations; referring each to a requesting agency with the name of the supervisor to whom they should report; providing identification tags or bracelets with the date and agency or ESF to which the volunteer was referred; and providing a basic safety briefing.

The Disaster Volunteer Registration and Referral forms and the Request for Volunteers form provided in the Appendix, were created for use with a PC network and a Microsoft Access database, but are adaptable to other systems or to manual use. The VRC procedures explained in the Job Descriptions section were used and modified during three successive disaster exercises conducted by volunteer centers.

The Disaster Volunteer Registration form is more detailed than many forms currently in use for two reasons. First, it can be used for both pre-registering local volunteers willing to help in disaster and for registering spontaneous volunteers post-event. Pre-registering people interested in disaster relief helps to get prospective disaster volunteers affiliated with an appropriate agency before an event occurs, and allows the volunteer center to recruit and train volunteers to help operate a volunteer reception center.

Second, if the VRC will be using a database capable of matching the skills of volunteers to specific requests from the community, greater detail facilitates a better match and provides contact options to help locate the needed volunteers later.

While detailed information on volunteers is very helpful, the magnitude of a disaster might make gathering all of the information requested on the form impossible; and the limited scope of some events, in which only sandbagging or clean-up are needed, might make some information unnecessary.

The Release of Liability Statement on the Disaster Volunteer Registration Form should be reviewed by your county Risk Management Department and any necessary changes made prior to using the form. (This would also be a good time to review the county's plan to purchase insurance to protect volunteers, the county and its residents during the response and recovery phases.)

The CA will not conduct background checks on volunteers or verify their credentials. Background checks, if required, and verification of credentials are the responsibility of the receiving organization.

Document all training, expenses and time donated. All VRC staff should be made aware of the need to maintain accurate documentation of their activities, including training provided to volunteers, expenses incurred through your Coordinating Agency's disaster relief efforts, and time and skills donated by unaffiliated volunteers.

It is important for VRC staff to provide safety briefings and, when appropriate, specific job training to all volunteers and to keep complete and accurate records of all such training. These records will minimize the effects of any possible legal action taken against the county or the coordinating agency, should a volunteer be injured or inadvertently cause damage to property or to others.

To ensure that your Coordinating Agency is not left with non-reimbursable expenses at the end of its disaster service, it is imperative to establish an agreement in advance between your local Department of Emergency Management and the CA. The agreement should detail what expenses will be reimbursed and what documentation is required to ensure prompt payment.

Procedures for documenting the hours and the type of work done by each volunteer should be determined jointly by the ESF-15 lead agency, the CA, and the county budget department, to ensure the maintenance of all information required to support a FEMA reimbursement application.

The Flow of Volunteers and Information through the Volunteer Reception Center

The following station descriptions explain the VRC floor plan that follows. Stations #1-6 labeled in bold font on the Floor Plan and the solid arrows connecting them represent the movement of volunteers through the registration and referral process. For security, safety and risk management reasons, all volunteers should complete the entire process.

Station #1 Registration / Orientation

At Station #1 greeters give volunteers instruction sheets, ask them to fill out registration forms and give them a brief orientation to the registration process. If possible, this station should be located outside or in a room adjacent to the main registration area, to minimize the commotion and stress inside the Volunteer Reception Center.

Station #2 Interviews

As interviewers are available, a Greeter ushers in new volunteers. At the completion of the interview, the volunteer is given a referral form telling him where and to

whom he should report to volunteer. He then proceeds to Station #3.

Station #3 Data Coordination

The volunteer presents his referral form to the Data Coordinator, who records the referral. The Data Coordinator communicates, as needed, with the requesting agency so that, when the need has been met, the request can be closed out. The volunteer takes his referral form to Station #4.

Station #4 Volunteer Identification

Volunteer ID staff attach a wristband to each volunteer, containing the volunteer's name, the agency or site to which the volunteer was referred and the date(s) on which the volunteer expects to work. The volunteer proceeds to Station #5.

Station #5 Safety Training

The Safety Trainer will document the attendance of each volunteer and present a prepared safety briefing appropriate to the specific disaster event. At the conclusion of the briefing, the trainer will refer volunteers to Station #6 for specific job training or to the transportation area for a ride to the job site.

Station #6 Specific Job Training

Job training specific to each worksite or function can be provided before volunteers depart for their work areas. If possible, training should be given by someone with first-hand knowledge of current operations at the site.

Other Support Functions

Other areas shown on the Floor Plan house necessary staff who do not deal in person with spontaneous volunteers:

Phone Bank

The critical function of the phone bank staff is to take calls from individuals and groups wishing to volunteer and from organizations needing volunteers. Each call is recorded and posted on the request board or forwarded to the Data Coordinator.

Data Entry

Data entry staff enter the Requests for Volunteers and the Volunteer Registration Forms into the computer. When the influx of volunteers subsides, staff can begin entering the referrals recorded on the Request for Volunteers forms and close out the completed requests. As needed by the interviewers and the data coordination section, data entry staff can print updated lists of the unfilled requests.

Supply Area

This area should be located in a room that can be secured and should be accessed only by VRC staff.

Public Information

The Public Information Officer is the only staff member to make statements to the media about the center's operation. All information should be approved by the VRC Director and coordinated with the local ESF-15 lead agency prior to dissemination.

Runners

Runners are not shown on the VRC Floor Plan but are integral to the smooth operation of the center. Any station needing assistance raises a small flag to summon a Runner. Runners post new requests for volunteers on the request board, carry information from one station to another, escort guests, and deliver supplies to the stations.

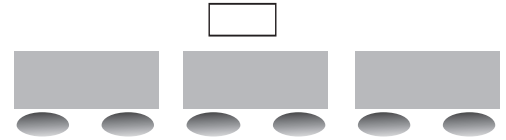
Staff Break Area

Though not shown on the VRC Floor Plan, a break area should be established. Noise, frustration, the general sense of urgency and the intensity at which the VRC staff will be working will cause stress to build. Providing a quiet room with low light and ensuring that staff take short breaks whenever possible will help everyone to operate efficiently and minimize the stress.

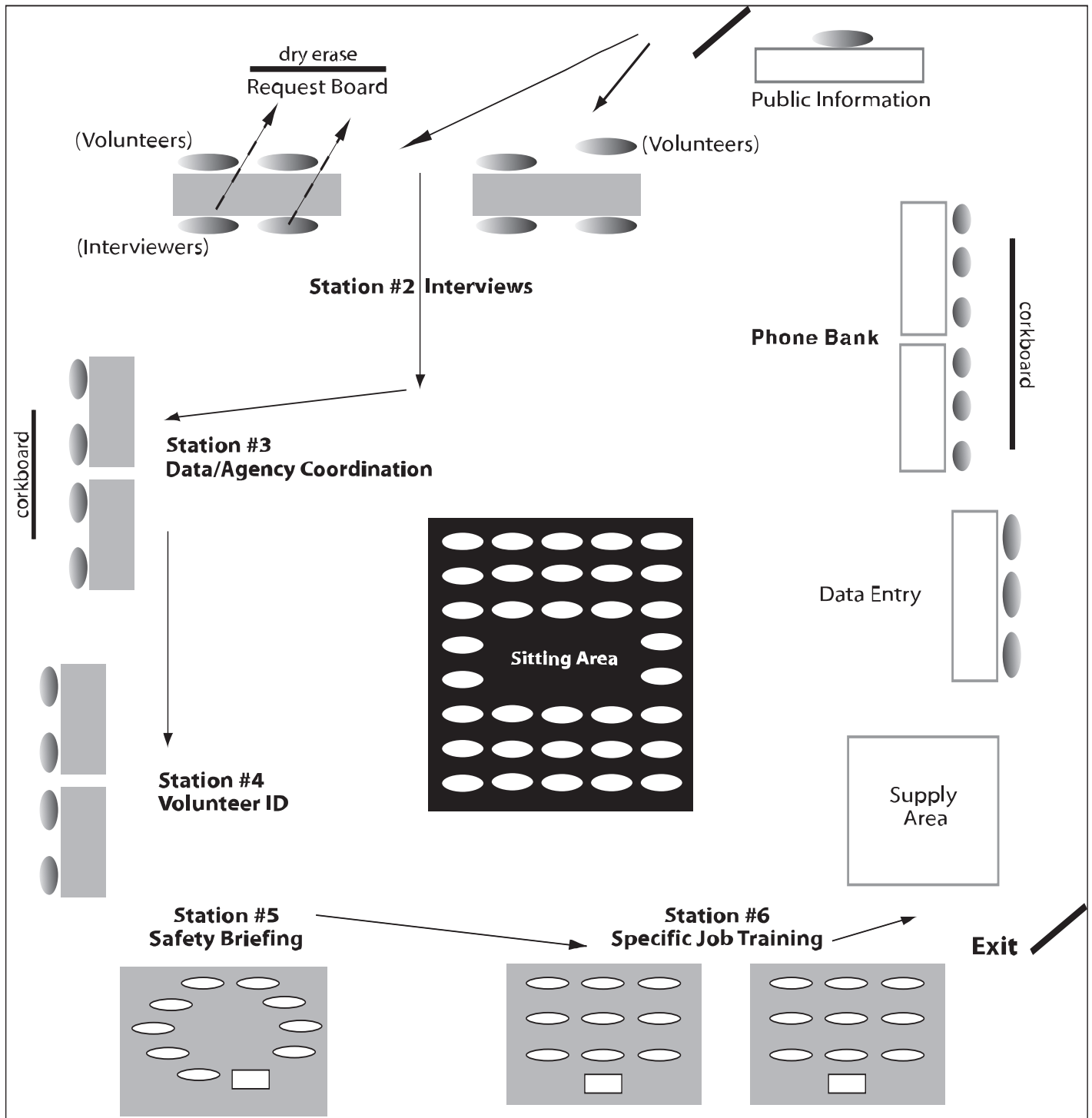
Volunteer Reception Center Floor Plan

-  Volunteer Registration Stations
-  Volunteer Sitting Area
-  Staff Only Areas
-  Volunteer Movement
-  Line of Sight

Station #1 Registration/Orientation



Volunteer Entrance



Assembling Volunteer Information for County Reimbursement

Documentation for Reimbursement and Risk Management

Counties that kept accurate records of the hours and kinds of disaster relief work done by volunteers have been extremely successful in counting those contributions toward their match for FEMA reimbursement. Developing a system for recording and maintaining the needed information is the crucial first step to success. All county personnel who will be supervising volunteers should be trained on the importance of thoroughly documenting the hours and kinds of work done by volunteers.

Worksite supervisors should be instructed to:

1. Maintain a supply of volunteer sign-in sheets at each volunteer worksite. (Use the sample provided in the Forms Appendix or develop one that meets your specific needs.)
2. Conduct a safety briefing as each group of volunteers arrives, regarding the specific hazards at the site. This step is critical to preventing injuries and minimizing the risks to the volunteers, the county, and the property on which the volunteers will be working.
3. Have all volunteers read the statement at the top of the sign-in sheet and sign in, recording their time of arrival and departure each day. (Review the statement with your Risk Management Department and

edit as necessary. Volunteers registered with the Volunteer Reception Center will already have signed a complete release of liability on their Disaster Volunteer Registration Form, but should sign the sign-in sheet each day, as well.)

4. At the end of each shift, turn in all volunteer sign-in sheets to a designated supervisor, who will turn them in to the county Budget Department.

Strict adherence to these procedures will minimize the effects of any possible legal action taken against the Coordinating Agency or the county, should a volunteer be injured or inadvertently cause damage to property or to others.

Placing a Value on Work Done by Volunteers

All work that is eligible for FEMA reimbursement if done by county employees or contractors is also eligible when done by volunteers. Matching credit for volunteer contributions toward both direct and indirect costs will only be given by FEMA, however, if the county and its contractors have established a rate for each type of work completed.

The rate applied to each type of volunteer work should be the rate at which a county employee would be paid, including fringe benefits, for the same or similar work, or the customary rate for that work in the local labor market.

Refer to Code of Federal Regulation 44, Section 13.24 and Section 206 Subpart H for additional information.



Appendix

Equipment Lists and Forms for Registering, Referring and Documenting the Work of Unaffiliated Volunteers

The forms provided can be photocopied or customized with permission from Volunteer Florida to meet local needs. Some are arranged with multiple copies per page. The Disaster Volunteer Registration and Request for Volunteers Forms were designed for use with a Microsoft Access database.

Volunteer Reception Center Supplies and Equipment

The following list of items should be included in the Coordinating Agency's "Go Box." The quantities listed here are the minimum required to set up and operate the VRC for the first day. Depending on the magnitude of the event, the VRC Director should arrange for the purchase of additional supplies. The equipment listed as optional has been found to be extremely useful.

Disaster Coordinator's "Go Box" Contents

Office Supplies:

Dry erase markers (set of 4)
 Dry eraser
 Pens (box of 12)
 1 Highlighter
 Pencils (box of 12 sharpened)
 2 Lined pads of paper
 Copy paper, 1 ream
 2 Sheets from a flip chart pad
 3 x 5 Cards (pack of 100) and file box
 12 File folders and labels
 3 Hanging file folders and labels
 Push pins (pack of 100)
 1 Clipboard
 Stapler, staples
 Masking and clear tape
 Staff name tags
 Post-its:
 3 packs of 3"x3"
 1 Post-it fax pad
 12 #10 envelopes
 1 Medium size binder clip
 Scissors
 Pencil sharpener
 Paper clips (box of 100)
 200 Hospital ID bracelets
 ID bracelet tool and markers (if required)

Forms:

Volunteer Instructions – 25 sheets (4/sheets)
 Disaster Volunteer Registration – 100
 Request for Volunteers – 50
 Disaster Volunteer Referral – 50 (2 per page)
 Employee & Volunteer sign-in/out – 10 each
 Expenses Incurred – 10

Lists and Maps

VRC floor plan
 City and county maps
 Emergency phone list
 VRC job descriptions

Equipment

Battery-operated radio and batteries
 Battery-operated clock (optional)
 Coffee urn, cups, coffee, creamer & sugar
 Large ice chest
 Disposable camera
 Phone system (rollover with 8-10 lines, opt)
 5 Free-standing sign posts (opt)
 Printed signs

Signs for Volunteer Reception Center

(Need one each, unless otherwise specified)

Signs

Volunteer Reception Center (2+ as needed)
 Station #1 Registration
 Enter
 Station #2 Interviews
 Station #3 Data Coordination
 Station #4 Volunteer I.D.
 Station #5 Safety Briefing
 Station #6 Job Training
 Exit
 Transportation to Worksite (with arrows)
 Staff Only (2+ as needed)
 Current Needs
 Phone Bank
 Offers of Volunteer Help
 Individuals
 Groups
 Other Resources
 Public Information Officer

Where to Post

On street visible from either direction
 Registration / orientation area
 Volunteer Entrance to VRC
 Interview Area visible from Volunteer Entry
 Data Coordination visible from Station #2
 Volunteer ID area visible from Station #3
 Safety Training visible from Station #4
 Job Training visible from Station #5
 Exit, visible from Stations #5 and #6
 Near Exit and outside, as needed
 Staff rest area, supply area, etc
 Dry erase board in Interview area
 Phone Bank area
 Top left of bulletin board in Phone Bank
 Beneath "Offers of Volunteer Help" sign
 Beneath "Offers of Volunteer Help" sign
 Top right of bulletin board in Phone Bank
 Public Information Officer's table

Note: *All signs should be large enough to be seen from across a large room.*

Job Descriptions

VRC Director

Your job is to oversee the operation of the Volunteer Reception Center. You will:

- Clearly designate one entrance and one exit
- Set up the room for efficient flow of volunteers and information
- Brief and assign tasks to staff and volunteers of the center
- Monitor the operation and make changes when necessary
-
-

You should meet and thank all volunteers who help in the VRC and instruct them to sign in and out on the Volunteer Sign-in / Sign-out Record daily.

Items needed:

- ID badge
- Tables and chairs (See sample room layout for details)
- "Go Box" containing office supplies and forms to stock your VRC for the first 2-3 days
- Items on the Supplies and Equipment list

Greeters

Ideally, you will be working with a partner, orienting volunteers inside and outside the volunteer entrance. Your job is to greet people with a friendly and firm demeanor, determine the purpose of their visit and direct them accordingly.

- If they are there to volunteer, thank them, give them a "Volunteer Instructions" sheet and ask them to fill out a registration form. When the form is completed, direct them to the next available interviewer at Station #2.

- If they are media personnel, direct them to the Public Information Officer.
- If they are disaster survivors, refer them to the appropriate organization.
- If they have food, clothing, etc., to donate, refer them to the appropriate agency.

If there is a long wait, some volunteers may not understand the reason and may become impatient. Please thank everyone for volunteering, briefly explain the process and ask everyone to be patient or to come back later.

Items needed:

- ID badge
- Sign (Station #1 Registration)
- Table and chairs for volunteers to use while filling out forms
- Supply of Volunteer Instructions handouts
- Supply of Disaster Volunteer Registration Forms
- Flag

Phone Bank Staff

You will be handling two types of calls, those from agencies requesting volunteers and those from people wanting to volunteer. The information you record about each call must be complete and in sufficient detail to facilitate matching volunteers to the needs.

When you receive a call from an agency, fill out a Request for Volunteers form while you are speaking with the agency caller. If there is a computer available for entering the needs into a database, Data Entry staff should enter the need as soon as possible.

Next, call a runner by raising the flag at your station. Ask the runner to post the volunteer request on the dry erase board in view of the Interviewers (Station #2) and then to give the Request for Volunteers form to the Data Coordinator (Station #3).

When people call to volunteer, thank them and give them the following registration options:

- If they choose to register on line, they will be e-mailed or called to discuss possible assignments and given further instructions. If the caller represents a group that wishes to volunteer together, assure them that you do need their help and ask them to be patient while you determine where they can be of most help. It might take one day or several to match them with a need, especially if they are coming from out of town. Post the caller's inquiry on the board behind the Phone Bank.

When a match (a mission) is found for that volunteer, e-mail or call them back and schedule a time for them to come to the VRC to sign their on-line registration form, pick up their referral form and ID bracelet(s), and attend a safety briefing. Make sure that the volunteer's on-line registration form is waiting with the Interviewers (Station #2) on their arrival date.

- If they choose to register in person at the VRC, they will be given instructions when they arrive.

Items needed:

- An ID Badge for each staff member
- Sign (Phone Bank)
- Two tables and four chairs
- Phones
- Supply of Request for Volunteers forms
- Pens, push pins or masking tape
- Flag

Runners

Your job is to carry information from one station to another within the VRC. When a station needs you to pick up forms, restock their supplies or escort a volunteer from one place to another, they will signal you by raising the flag at their station. Please watch carefully for this signal and respond promptly, in order to keep the information and volunteers moving smoothly through the registration and referral process. When you are asked to post a Volunteer Request on the board, write neatly and large enough so that the interviewers can see the requests clearly. After posting the request on the board, give the Request form to Data Coordination (Station #3).

Items needed:

- An ID Badge
- Dry erase marker & eraser

Data Entry

Your job is to enter the information from the Volunteer Registration and Request for Volunteers forms into the database so that the county has an accurate record of who participated in the recovery effort, what kinds of work they performed and when. The computer will assign a number to each Registration and Request, which must also be hand-written on the paper forms.

After the initial influx of volunteers has subsided, you may have time to begin entering the referrals recorded on the Request forms and close out the completed Requests. As needed by VRC staff, print updated lists of the unfilled Requests and ask a Runner to distribute copies to Phone Bank staff, Data Coordination, Interviewers and, if requested, the VRC Director. Even if you are familiar with the software being used by the VRC, please ask for a brief orientation before beginning your first shift. Accuracy is more important than speed.

The information you enter will be used to determine the amount of money the county will receive from the Federal Government as a result of the disaster.

If you have difficulty using the computer, please ask for help immediately. Do not attempt to fix the problem yourself.

Items needed:

- An ID Badge
- One table and two chairs
- Printer
- Pens
- Flag
- One or more computers (multiple computers should be networked to provide all users access to information on the status of volunteer requests and the availability of volunteers.)

Interviewers

Your job is to do a quick interview of the prospective volunteer and refer him to a job at an agency appropriate to his abilities and interests. Volunteer requests will be posted on a board in front of you (behind the volunteers being interviewed) and erased as they are filled. If the center has a computer system, you might also receive a printed list of the current needs.

Ask for the volunteer's registration form. With the volunteer, verify its completeness and accuracy, and use it as a guide from which to inquire more about the volunteer's skills. At the conclusion of the interview, keep his registration form. When the volunteer accepts an assignment, fill out a Referral form, give it to the volunteer and instruct him to report to Data Coordination (Station #3).

Before signaling the Greeter that you are ready for another interview, take a minute to jot down in the "Notes" section anything about the volunteer you feel is important, that the volunteer did not include on his registration form

(a special skill, an obvious physical limitation, etc.) If your center decides to use the blind field labeled "Office Use Only," check the appropriate box. Place his registration form in the bin or file.

Appropriate use of the "Office Use Only" field should be determined by the VRC Director, possibly with input from the local ESF-15 lead agency. It is intended to provide a customizable "blind" field in which special information can be noted about volunteers. If, for future referral of that volunteer, it would be helpful to know his general level of ability to work independently, boxes 1-5 could be coded: 1. Learns quickly, able to supervise the activities of others; 2. Would work well independently...5. Needs close supervision. A drawback to this kind of field is that interviewers may not be able to judge the appropriate entry from only a short interview. The advantage is that a volunteer with an obvious special ability or limitation can be utilized to his full potential or placed in a relatively low-risk, closely supervised environment.

Key points to remember are:

- Disaster registration differs from a "normal" volunteer intake – there is less time to try to fit each volunteer into an ideal assignment.
- Refer the volunteer on the spot if possible – it may be impossible to contact him later. If the volunteer has special training or unusual skills that you think might be needed soon, ask him to wait in the sitting area and to check the volunteer request board for new requests for their specialized skills.
- It is likely that some volunteers will exhibit the stress of the disaster – an extra measure of patience and understanding is needed.
- Be sure to watch for volunteers who would be effective working in the Volunteer Reception Center.
- You may be called upon to train volunteers to assist with the interviewing.

Items needed:

- An ID Badge for each interviewer
- Sign (Station #2 Interviews)
- Two tables and eight chairs that will allow four interviewers to sit across from the four new volunteers they are interviewing
- Supply of Referral forms
- Bin or file in which to keep the Volunteer Registration Forms
- Pens
- Flag

Data Coordinator

Your job is to match the Referral forms to the Requests and to close out the Requests when they have been filled or are no longer needed. You may have to call an agency contact to clarify the agency's Request. When you speak with an agency contact, record the information on the Request form in the section called "Follow-up Contacts with Requesting Agency."

If a volunteer who has been interviewed but not referred approaches your station, thank them for coming and ask them to please wait in the sitting area in the center of the room.

When a volunteer brings you his Referral, enter his name and the date of the referral on the Request form to which he was referred. Place your initials on his Referral form. If you have time, call the agency contact to let him know who or how many volunteers have been referred. Confirm with the agency contact whether you should continue referring volunteers or close out the request. When the request has been filled, raise your flag to call a runner and ask him to remove that request from the board.

If your station has a computer, enter the date and reason the request was closed (completed, no longer needed, etc.) at the bottom of the Request form. Place open

Requests in one bin and closed Requests in the other, in either numerical order or alphabetically by agency.

Items needed:

- An ID Badge for each staff member
- Sign (Station #3 Data Coordination)
- Two tables and four chairs
- Two bins – one for open Requests and one for closed out Requests
- Phone
- Pens
- Computer, if available, networked to the computers at the Phone Bank station
- Flag

Volunteer ID Staff

Ask if the volunteers have been referred to a volunteer position yet. If they have not been referred, thank them for coming and ask them to please wait in the sitting area in the center of the room.

If they have been referred, clearly write the name of the volunteer, the dates to be worked and the name of the agency or ESF to which the volunteer was referred, as shown on their Referral slip, on the white portion of an ID wristband. Place the ID wristband securely on the volunteer's wrist.

Explain to the volunteers that the ID will be "good" only for the date(s) written on the band. Authorities will not permit them to enter any of the disaster recovery areas on any other day, without a current ID wristband. If volunteers plan to work more than one day, you may write the beginning and ending dates of their service. Thank them for coming and direct them to Station #5 Safety Training.

Items needed:

- An ID Badge
- Two tables and four chairs
- Sign (Station #4 Volunteer I.D. Tags)
- Supply of volunteer ID wristbands
- Markers
- Scissors
- Flag

Safety Trainers

Your job is to brief all new volunteers on what to expect at their job sites, how to be safe while volunteering and how to take good care of themselves after their experience. When a small group has gathered, thank the volunteers for offering to help. Pass around a clipboard with an attendance sheet and check to be sure that all participants have signed it.

Read the entire Safety Training sheet slowly, emphasizing the importance of following supervisors' instructions at the work site. Encourage everyone to attend a debriefing, if available, at the end of their shift. Ask if there are any questions. If a question arises to which you do not know the answer, raise your flag and ask a runner to summon the VRC Director or other VRC staff to answer the question.

Some volunteers will be required to take additional training for their particular work. Direct those volunteers to where that training is provided. When your briefing is concluded, explain where the volunteers should meet the transportation to their worksites, if transportation is provided.

File the attendance sheet for each class in a folder and turn them in to the VRC Director daily.

If the content of your safety briefing changes (new material is added or safety instructions change), staple a copy of the new safety training script to the attendance sheet of the first class in which the new script was used. Maintenance of these records is important to help protect the Coordinating Agency and local disaster officials from liability, should a volunteer be injured on the job.

Items needed:

- An ID Badge
- Sign (Station #5 Safety Training)
- Clipboard with attendance sheets
- Pen
- A supply of Safety Training handouts
- Stapler
- 10 or more chairs, preferably in a semi-circle so participants can all see one another
- List of additional training required by specific worksites, training locations and instructors
- Flag

Safety Training for Volunteers

(Presenter: Edit this training for the specific incident)

1. If you will be working outside, dress for the weather. Boots may be helpful, as debris on the ground can be sharp and dangerous.
2. Bring work gloves, sunscreen, hat and any appropriate tools you have. You will be responsible for your tools.
3. Water may be available at your work site, but you are encouraged to bring a personal water container. It is important to drink lots of water while you work.
4. If death/injuries have occurred in the area where you are working, there will be bacteria. When you take a break, wash thoroughly.
5. When you arrive at your worksite, you will be warned if there is a possibility of encountering victims.
Follow the instructions given to you at your job site.
6. The work you will be doing may cause you stress, anxiety, fear or other strong emotions. You are providing a valuable service by volunteering today. Please understand that, by helping, we will not be able to undo the effects of this event. We are each just one person. All we can do is help in our own small ways to assist victims into the recovery process. If you care for one lost animal, find one child's lost favorite toy, or hold the hand of one wheelchair bound senior in a shelter, you will have eased a little of the pain.

Do not feel guilty because you are not able to fix everything. Just work your shift, then go home to rest and eat well. Both will help to relieve the stress. **Be sure to attend any debriefing that may be conducted at the end of your shift.**

7. Older children can help with the disaster recovery work in some areas, but parents must sign a release of liability form for each child under the age of 18. It is recommended that children remain in school, if it is open. Older children can participate with parents on weekends.
8. You will be covered by insurance provided by the county in which you will be working. If you should sustain an injury, you must pay for any treatment required and then submit a claim form and be reimbursed by the insurance company.
9. **Follow carefully any instructions given to you at your job site.**
10. **Please attend any debriefing activity provided at your worksite after your shift.**

Request for Volunteers

(Complete one form for each job description.)

Request # _____ **Today's Date:** _____ **Start Date:** _____ **End Date:** _____

Title of Volunteer Position: _____

Agency Name: _____ Agency Contact: _____

Agency Address: _____ Phone: _____ Ext: _____

Duties: _____

Volunteers must be physically able to: _____

Number Needed: _____ Days/Hrs Needed: _____

For this position, volunteers must be at least _____ years of age.

Skills Needed (if computerized, select from skills listed on Disaster Volunteer Registration Form)

Job Skill#	Description	Job Skill#	Description

Follow-up Contacts with Requesting Agency / Clarification of Need

Date	Comments

Volunteers referred

Name	Date	Name	Date

Request closed on ___ / ___ / ___

Completed ___ No placements possible ___ No longer needed ___

Volunteer Instructions

- 1. Reception Area:** Please fill out a registration form and proceed as directed to an Interviewer at Station #2.
- 2. Interview Area:** Interviewer will take your form, talk with you about your skills and refer you to an agency needing your help. Next take your Referral form to the Data Coordinator (Station #3).
- 3. Data Coordination Area:** Coordinator will record and initial your Referral form and, if possible, notify the agency to expect you. Take your Referral form to the ID area (Station #4).
- 4. Identification Area:** You will receive an ID bracelet that will allow you to enter restricted areas during the day(s) written on ID. Proceed to Safety Briefing area (Station #5).
- 5. Safety Briefing Area:** You will be given special instructions about safety, security & transportation. You may be directed to Station #6 for additional job training.
- 6. Specific Job Training:** Some jobs will require extra orientation or training that will be provided by the agency to which you are referred.

Thank you for Volunteering!

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Thank you for Volunteering!

Disaster Volunteer Registration Form

(Please print clearly. submit at Volunteer Reception Center or fax to _____.)

Mr. ___ Mrs. ___ Ms. ___ Name _____ Birth Date _____ Day Phone _____
 Email Address _____ Eve Phone _____
 Home Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Emergency Contact _____ Relationship _____ Emergency Phone _____
 Occupation _____ Employer _____
 Business Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Are you a year-round Florida resident? ___ Yes ___ No Months you are available _____
 If you have any health limitations, please explain _____
 I am willing to volunteer in: ___ this county ___ a neighboring county ___ anywhere in Fla ___ anywhere in the U.S.

Are you currently affiliated with a disaster relief agency? ___ Yes ___ No
 If yes, name of agency: _____
 Special skills and/or vocational/disaster training: _____

SKILLS: Please check all that apply.

<p>MEDICAL</p> <p>___ 110 Doctor Specialty: _____ ___ 120 Nurse Specialty: _____ ___ 130 Emerg. medical cert. ___ 140 Mental health counseling ___ 150 Veterinarian ___ 160 Veterinary technician</p> <p>COMMUNICATIONS</p> <p>___ 210 CB or ham operator ___ 220 Hotline Operator ___ 230 Own a cell phone # _____ ___ 240 Own a skyphone # _____ ___ 250 Public relations ___ 260 Web page design ___ 270 Public Speaker</p> <p>Language other than English: ___ 261 French ___ 262 German ___ 263 Italian ___ 264 Spanish ___ 265 Ukrainian ___ 266 _____ ___ 267 _____ ___ 268 _____ ___ 269 _____</p>	<p>OFFICE SUPPORT</p> <p>___ 310 Clerical - filing, copying ___ 320 Data entry Software: _____ ___ 330 Phone receptionist</p> <p>SERVICE</p> <p>___ 410 Food ___ 415 Elderly/disabled asst. ___ 420 Child care ___ 425 Spiritual counseling ___ 430 Social work ___ 435 Search and rescue ___ 440 Auto repair/towing ___ 445 Traffic control ___ 450 Crime watch ___ 455 Animal rescue ___ 460 Animal care ___ 465 Runner</p> <p>STRUCTURAL</p> <p>___ 510 Damage assessment ___ 520 Metal construction ___ 530 Wood construction ___ 540 Block construction Cert.# _____ ___ 550 Plumbing Cert.# _____ ___ 560 Electrical Cert.# _____ ___ 570 Roofing Cert.# _____</p>	<p>TRANSPORTATION</p> <p>___ 610 Car ___ 615 Station wagon/mini van ___ 620 Maxi-van, capacity _____ ___ 625 ATV ___ 630 Own off-road veh/4wd ___ 635 Own truck, description: _____ ___ 640 Own boat, capacity _____ Type: _____ ___ 650 Commercial driver Class & license #: _____ ___ 660 Camper/RV, capacity & type: _____</p> <p>LABOR</p> <p>___ 710 Loading/shipping ___ 720 Sorting/packing ___ 730 Clean-up ___ 740 Operate equipment Types: _____ ___ 750 Experience supervising others</p> <p>EQUIPMENT</p> <p>___ 810 Backhoe ___ 820 Chainsaw ___ 830 Generator ___ 840 Other: _____</p>
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Office Use Only

1 2 3 4 5

Disaster Volunteer Registration Form (side 2)

Release of Liability

I, for myself and my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, hereby release, indemnify, and hold harmless the Coordinating Agency, local governments, State of Florida, the organizers, sponsors and supervisors of all disaster preparedness, response and recovery activities **(check with local Risk Management and Emergency Management Departments regarding who should be included)** from all liability for any and all risk of damage or bodily injury or death that may occur to me (including any injury caused by negligence), in connection with any volunteer disaster effort in which I participate. I likewise hold harmless from liability any person transporting me to or from any disaster relief activity. In addition, disaster relief officials have permission to utilize any photographs or videos taken of me for publicity or training purposes. I will abide by all safety instructions and information provided to me during disaster relief efforts.

Further, I expressly agree that this release, waiver, and indemnity agreement is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by the State of Florida, and that if any portion thereof is held invalid, it is agreed that the balance shall, notwithstanding, continue in full legal force and effect.

I have no known physical or mental condition that would impair my capability to participate fully, as intended or expected of me.

I have carefully read the foregoing release and indemnification and understand the contents thereof and sign this release as my own free act.

Signature _____ Date _____

Guardian, if under 18 _____ Date _____

Volunteer's credentials were recorded as presented. Verification of credentials is the responsibility of the receiving agency or ESF.

This volunteer was referred to the following ESFs or agencies:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Need#</u>	<u>ESF or Agency</u>	<u>Contact Name</u>	<u>Contact's Phone#</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Return this completed form to: **(Coordinating Agency name and address)**

Notes:

Disaster Volunteer Referral

Name of Volunteer _____ Date _____

Referred to (agency/ESF) _____ Need# _____

Agency contact name _____ Phone _____

Address of Agency/Site _____

Directions to Site _____

Title/description of volunteer assignment _____

Days & hours needed by agency _____

Note: Verification of volunteer's credentials is the responsibility of the agency receiving the volunteer.

VRC Staff Initials:

Interview

Data Coord.

Safety Brief

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Disaster Volunteer Referral

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Referred to (agency/ESF) _____ Need# _____

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Address of Agency/Site _____

Directions to Site _____

Title/description of volunteer assignment _____

Days & hours needed by agency _____

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VRC Staff Initials:

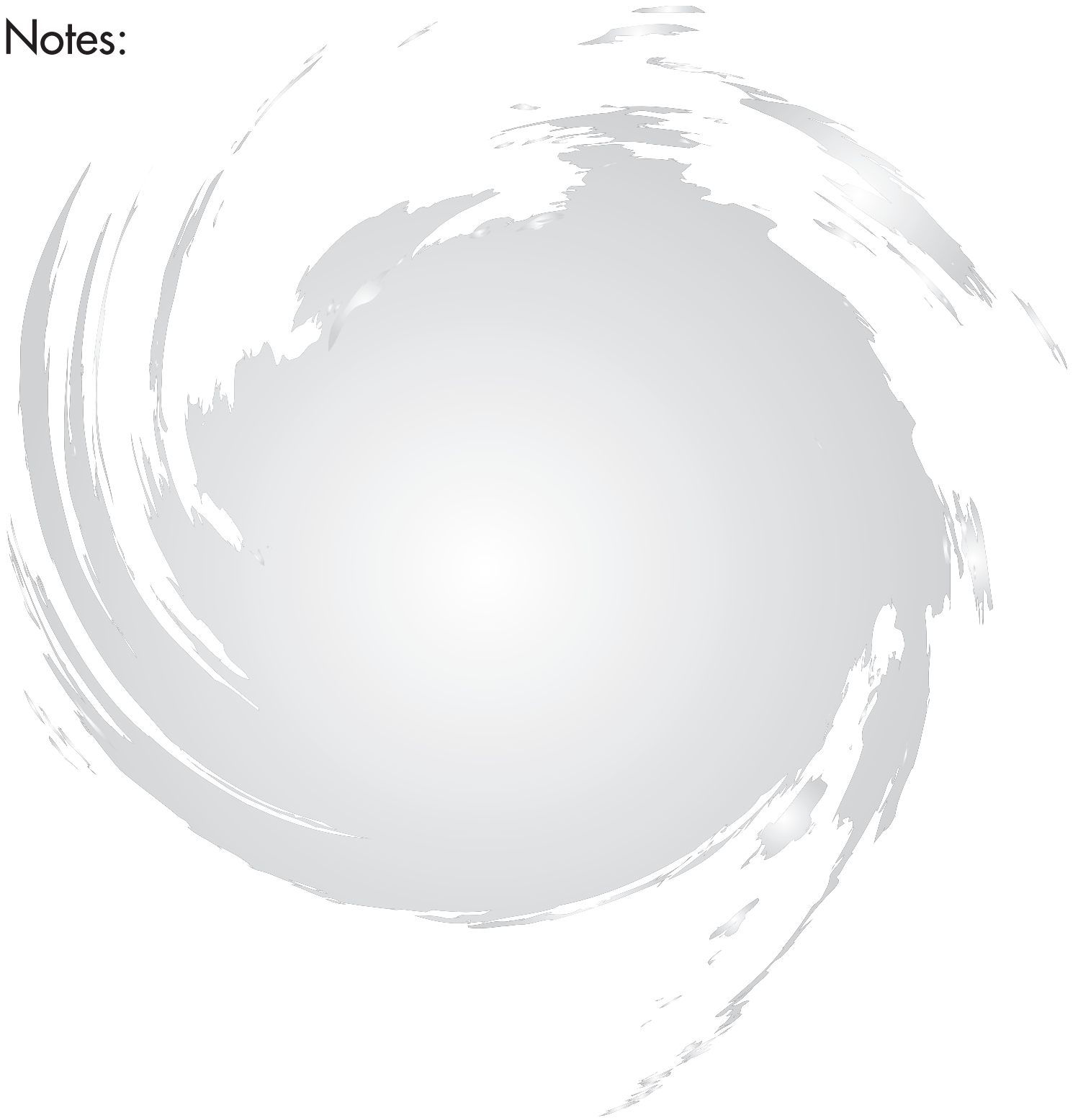
Interview

Data Coord.

Safety Brief

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Notes:





401 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301
Telephone: 850-921-5172 (voice/tty)
www.volunteerflorida.org