



## U.S. Department of Justice

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### **NDIC Employees Volunteer to Assist in Hurricane Katrina Relief Effort**

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Johnstown, PA – Twenty-three employees of the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) based in Johnstown have volunteered to assist in the Federal Government's Hurricane Katrina disaster relief efforts. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has selected fifteen volunteers to date to participate in the program.

The employees volunteered to assist FEMA in the relief efforts after receiving notification that the Government is accepting volunteers from various Federal agencies to assist with the response to the storm. Volunteers will deploy for a minimum of 30 days to work with FEMA in the affected regions. The volunteers are mobilizing at a site in Orlando, Florida prior to reporting to disaster Joint Field Offices in the locales affected by the hurricane. FEMA will select the assignment sites where the volunteers will work.

The NDIC volunteers will assist in relief efforts in various ways. The volunteers will collect and disseminate information and make referrals for appropriate assistance, identify potential issues within the community, convey information about disaster operations to government officials and perform outreach with community leaders on available federal assistance. Volunteers with special skills, for example, a nurse or EMT could provide medical assistance, someone with a commercial driver's license could drive a truck, and other volunteers may distribute supplies such as water, pillows and blankets.

One NDIC volunteer with 10 years law enforcement experience who is also a volunteer fire fighter and certified EMT indicated that she is very excited to be able to help the people affected by the hurricane. She said it was her calling to serve the public as a federal employee and to help those in need receive the resources they deserve. The volunteer said that she is very proud to be part of the team chosen from NDIC and wishes to thank NDIC for allowing employees the opportunity to participate in the volunteer effort to aid the victims.

Another employee, who grew up in Louisiana, volunteered because he felt it was the right thing to do. He pointed out that many people are helping out in various ways. He indicated that neighbors are helping neighbors out by taking people into their homes if they can. Anyone who

can help should do so, he said. The employee's family members evacuated from Louisiana and Mississippi prior to the hurricane and are part of the group of people who are still coping with changes to their lives in the aftermath of the storm.

A third NDIC volunteer stated that given our history in Johnstown, we have a special sympathy for flood victims. He said he looks forward to assisting any way he can.

NDIC Director, Mr. Michael F. Walther, personally thanked the employees for volunteering to participate in the relief efforts. "I want to extend my personal thanks to the employees who have volunteered and have been selected by FEMA to participate in the hurricane relief efforts. As a native of New Orleans, with friends and family who still live and work in the area, I am especially grateful for their courage and willingness to make this sacrifice," Mr. Walther said.

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