

**The Community Preparedness Webinar Series Presents...**

**Volunteering in Times of Disaster**

**July 26, 2011**

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Welcome to the individual community preparedness division webinar series. Today's event is volunteer management in times of disaster. Please keep your speakers on. We will be listening to three presenters today. Thank you, my name is Marcus Coleman, I am program specialist for FEMA individual preparedness division. Volunteer management during disasters. This is something that we have done in partnership in individual assistance division. I want to thank been current and Don Bosch at. We have with us Julie.

Thanks Marcus. Julie I am a volunteer liaison at headquarters. I want to thank everyone who helped pull this webinar together. Been asked me to mention Phoebus role in volunteer management. Supporting appropriate messaging by encouraging the public to get affiliated and get trained prior to the disaster. Secondly, we provide support during disaster operations. And finally, we work with our partners both in the states and nonprofit to develop training to manage large numbers of unaffiliated volunteers. We have worked with EMI on the management of spontaneous volunteers in disasters. Thank you for having us here and we appreciate everyone taking time today to share their experiences.

Thank you, Julie. We will hear from Kelly later. I would like to introduce many of you already know her the CEO of volunteer Florida, Wendy Spencer.

Thank you. It is wonderful seeing name a place the emphasis on tier management. Engaging citizens, preparing organizations, ordination of volunteer relief agencies and also spontaneous volunteers on how we manage them.

Just say yes to volunteers. This is a result of the oil spill in Florida. There were tens of thousands of volunteers who wanted to be a part of the solution, help do cleanup, take part. They were frustrated that there were not many opportunities to serve. When we talk to local relief organizations they too were exasperated, they didn't have the normal types of volunteer opportunities to put them to work. They were telling people to call them later. That contributed to a negative environment in the region that was impacted. There was a small survey done in a county in the panhandle of Florida in the heat of the oil spill, 30 days after April 21. They asked what were your concerns? Health concerns, it is this oil going to get in the aquifer? The second one was, I am not getting

enough information and I don't trust the information that I am getting. The third one was they are not letting me help, I want to volunteer. It was a big wake-up call for those of us working with emergency management that we had to be creative. How can we put these volunteers to work? Our phones are ringing off the hook for people who want to volunteer. We were going to bring in volunteers to answer the phone for all the volunteers. There were things they could do but we had to think more creatively. We had to prepare for an economic downturn or a fact. There were opportunities for working in food banks. That was a hard lesson learned. Community-based organizations really need to think ahead and anticipate how a disaster might impact their current clients and what additional services they might need to offer them and how they can engage spontaneous volunteers to prepare for that.

How can we prepare organizations? What is involved in saying yes to volunteers. Planning to use spontaneous volunteers effectively and safely in the community. If you are an American Cancer Society local office, your clients will be impacted by a hurricane or disaster in several ways. They could lose transportation, some medications could be destroyed. What are they need to have lacks what are the resources you have to meet those needs? Some of those needs can be filled by spontaneous volunteers. The agency needs to know in advance which roles are important for new volunteers. How can we screen the volunteers? How can we train in? These need to be thought about in advance.

Be sure you get volunteers with the right skills you need to use a volunteer reception center. It is a place, a location that identified any community where you can identify volunteers, you can assess their skills, back them up with needs, and provide a safety briefing and then deploy those volunteers out to a job. In preparation for that coming need to write job descriptions. Do volunteers need to be able to lift a certain amount of weight? Do they need a drivers license? How can you streamline the training? How can it be presented quickly to new volunteers who are coming on the scene? We all of -- encourage predisaster affiliation, there will always -- always be people who sought -- spontaneous show up decide they want to help at the last minute. We need to be able to use these great resources, it helps the community respond.

The coordination of volunteer relief agencies. We shouldn't take that for granted. We are so blessed in America, across the country where we have great relief organizations who are well trained. They are very experienced, hundreds of them across the country. Just because we have well-trained relief organizations, we can take it for granted that they know exactly where to go. We must provide an avenue, a vehicle to connect relief organizations program with them those affiliated volunteers and connect them to a need locally. We

sometimes compartmentalize disaster work. We sometimes think it is the work of government and then citizens have no role. Sometimes government assumes that the volunteer agencies will do their thing and don't need much guidance. What we have found in Florida is when an emergency agency has strong relationships with local relief organizations and they play a coordinating role, at least for the following good benefits occur. Benefits are conserved, fewer gaps in services because emergency management has coordinated to be sure that all areas needing help receive it. The third one is, the best thing about integrating volunteer agencies into their local emergency management program, it brings peoples to the table to collaborate that ultimately benefit the survivors. The last benefit is it allows agency each to look into new ways to use spontaneous volunteers and to plan to use them safely to meet survivors radical needs. The last slide, how to plan now to manage spontaneous volunteers. There will always be volunteers who emerge and converge on disaster area. Every jurisdiction whether a neighborhood or a town or an entire state having a solid plan for the management of these spontaneous volunteers. Of ERC, volunteer reception center. You might need to provide transportation to these worksites. Inform the public is a keyword. Most disasters are a huge communications event. Information is key citizens are starved for it. They want to know where to go to help and how they can participate in recovery. Kelly will speak to how you will use online volunteer reception centers. There are ways virtually and in person that people can help. Everyone can self organize themselves in raising funds, community fund-raising. There are ways that you can participate in fundraising as well, that's a great volunteer opportunity. Fortunately FEMA agrees that the donated items are important to response. Another great news coming up is that FEMA is now completing a new course called the management of spontaneous volunteers in disasters. The first time is going to be offered is in the Las Vegas at the US annual meeting from November 11 through the 17th. The course will be offered on the 12th and the 13th. I think that will be a great training. If you are a volunteer on the webinar today, thank you for your interest in volunteering contact your local emergency management agency before the next disaster happens and link up with their information about local relief organizations in your community. There should be a role for you in your area, articulate your skills and your ability is and help affiliating now with relief organizations. I appreciate the opportunity from FEMA to share some information.

Thank you Wendy. I appreciate that there may be volunteers on this webinar. They can give us insight into how we can prepare the community before a major disaster. I am going to transfer to our next two presenters, they are currently involved in working in Missouri and that is Mr. Bruce Daley and clam gardener, AmeriCorps St. Louis.

Good afternoon Marcus and Sean and my other colleagues. It is a pleasure to join you on this we wanted to take a couple of minutes to share some of our recent experience after the Joplin tornado and the volunteer management aspects in the aftermath of the tornado.

This has gotten wide play in the national news.

I have done this type of work for a long time in terms of the localized impact, this is probably the most catastrophic impact that I have seen in perhaps 25 years. A local -- I won't go through all the impacts, but about a third of the community was totally destroyed and uninhabitable. Major impact zone was about 6.4 miles long and it happened just in the early evening before six o'clock on May 22. Because of the time of day it created major chaos in the community, all the communities what -- a lot of families were separated from each other. That created huge challenges. There are two impacts that we have been addressing from the beginning. The debris that was generated is on the order of 6,000,000 cubic yards. Joplin was really -- awarded an expedited debris removal program. The monetary estimate about what it will take to do that part of the job is about \$300 million which would mean state and local government have to pick up \$30 million of that under the 10% rule. That is a huge challenge. 47% of the community was uninsured or underinsured. That presents huge challenges in terms of people being able to take care of emergency home repairs. When we talk about moving into long-term in recovery and rebuilding we have to rely on the private sector, voluntary resources to undertake lion share of that work.

We got involved, many of us had gathered in Kansas City. I was in Kansas City and found out about this at about seven o'clock that evening and immediately was able to respond to Joplin and was thereby just be for -- before nine o'clock. We had been working for a month or so on the tornado that had affected St. Louis we had our own dedicated AmeriCorps team. We had two teams from Denver and triple C. We have developed a good working relationship among the various national service assets that were in our state and we were able to immediately mobilize all these resources and deploy them as early as 9:30 in the evening. The first wave arrived in about -- Joplin at about 2:30 in the morning. We had another 30 or people buying him.

We ran into several major challenges. We had to multitask from the get-go. We had to figure out with three or four hours of planning time how to provide search capacity to support the Red Cross. 911 and local phone system was being paralyzed by the incoming calls from people looking for missing people, wanting status reports. We had to stand up immediately a way to diverge those calls to a call center. We also knew that there was going to be a tremendous influx of people wanting to help. We know how many, but we knew that it was going to be a major outpouring of assistance. By midmorning that number of

volunteers rose to 1500. By one o'clock we had about 3000 individuals wanting to be directed to have an opportunity to lend a helping hand.

We were under huge pressure to not let that happen while we were running search dogs trying to cover large debris fields looking for survivors. We were paralyzed by outside communication coming into the area and wanting updates, wanting -- from outside relief organizations, other state agencies that were trying to coordinate with us. We were getting 200 cell phone calls in the first day or two. We had to find a way to stay focused on some of the key performance areas that we were responsible for. We lacked a stable communication by form. That posed a problem for us. Our state deployed through the state fire marshal's office a new incident command bus that had a satellite uplink capability. We had fire dispatchers assigned to us. We were looking at dealing with life safety issues for volunteers. There were numerous gas leaks, broken water mains, energized power lines that were down and other hazardous debris. We had to find a way to effectively identify those hazards and risks and try to provide for volunteers safety.

Initially, and our first go with the DRC. We were able to operate from a state university, Missouri Southern State University. This was not a site that we had predetermined. It happened to be untouched by the tornado and had tremendous resources that were made available to us immediately. By the first day of our response we were able to open a BRC within the student center on campus and we were able to set up satellite call centers that would allow us to war name with the virtual BRC, United Way 211 system in Missouri that allowed us to get incoming volunteer groups or individual volunteers sent to us so that we knew in advance what to plan for. We also set up a missing persons hotline, and we set up a donations Hotline. All three of those modules were operating and interlinked with each other in the same physical location. We used signage to you deal with traffic flow and direct people to large parking areas. In the middle of the night I made an emergency call to our state Department of Transportation about a next morning they were able to deploy a lot of these portable computerized messaging screens that were able to direct responders to staging areas that we had at the University. Initially we were doing a quick sorting of people. We had large need to support search and rescue operations. This was one of the largest self deploying type of disaster events we have had in our history, very similar to what happened after September 11. We had people come from Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas and Missouri. All those people were be diverting to us to be organized into manageable numbers and then for us to attach leadership to those groups and then send them out to where they could be effectively utilized. We were beginning to match volunteers who didn't have those types of skills to partnering agencies, like the Red Cross who needed help with warehousing on donations.

Everyone was checked through drivers license and they were credentialed in a rudimentary way with surveyors tape to identify different types of volunteer responsibilities. We transported people out to their service sites. Or they were being transferred -- transported out into the field at staging areas. We had an intake center for groups that wanted to volunteer and wanted to be plugged in. We were able to intake groups of people.

We had a donations desk in the DRC stuff was showing up at our front doors, water, food, sunscreen, hand tools. We needed to receive those items. I will turn it up --

We have been able to utilize AmeriCorps members to supervise and help coordinate thousands and thousands of volunteers. We have been able to add the medical unit, tool caches. We been able to use the command system and be able to break down everything were doing make sure we have specific points of contact we used busing and transportation for volunteers. That helps us control the thousands of people we have out there. We can keep everyone safe and track hours

In the last two months we have gotten some pretty incredible results. We have tracked almost 150,000 volunteer hours.

It has been a learning process. Been able to break it down and utilize AmeriCorps members directly supporting and working with the local city and state to meet their needs as well. I will leave it to you Bruce.

Can you talk about the team leader role and how we utilize our folks to work that?

Sure. Our team leaders are registering volunteers, are bidding safety briefings. Making sure they are supplied with resources, tools or water.

We are using team leaders in our office settings to make sure we are on the same page and avoid duplication of effort. We break everything down into zones and divisions. We have seen huge numbers of volunteers and huge amount of need.

Is there anything else you want to share?

I think that is it. At the end of the presentation I'm sure we will have a way to figure out how to get back to people on the call. We have a regular situation report that we are distributing to interested parties about the jobless situation and we can make sure that we pass on updated information in the future weeks to come if people are interested in that.

Thank you both very much. We are learning from the challenges that you are facing. We appreciate you all sharing about how you dealt with the long-term management of this disaster thus far. Before we get to our final presenter I wanted to point everyone in the direction of the filesharing button. BBs are files that you can download during the webinar. There is a lot of good information. It is a filesharing box. We will try to get links from each one of our presenters. If you enjoy this webinar, this webinar will be recorded and will be available a few days after the webinar. It will be in the webinar library. We will go to our final presenter, Kelly from hands on network.

This is Kelly, can you hear me?

Yes we can.

I want to thank Wendy and Bruce. I will probably see a lot of what they have already said. I am a strong supporter of AmeriCorps. I want to give a shout out to the Joplin folks, they have done an incredible job of working with everyone. Hands on network we have about 200 affiliates worldwide I manage our disaster services both nationally and globally.

Many of our affiliates are engaged in disaster. Many of them got thrown into it over the last couple of years. We have made a national investment to support the partners we work with. Our expertise is managing the spontaneous volunteers. We do know that they will show up as in every disaster. I will focus on the trends, like social media. The outpouring that occurs now taste on information been available so quickly is a challenge. We are working with many of our national partners to support the local affiliation.

We have worked a lot with volunteer Florida. We helped co-present what will be coming out at the end of the summer, the FEMA training. Challenges and opportunities nationally and internationally. The management of the self deployment. The Chinese visited different disaster areas to figure out how to manage spontaneous volunteers. I got back from Japan last night and they are dealing with the same things. There are cultural nuances that have to be dealt with. Internationally it is a lot more challenging based on their cultural standards. Unified external messaging, social media. Policing social media. Some of the challenges are that some of the information on social media is not accurate. We are trying to direct the ball to the state commission or the local managing agency.

National partner projects and opportunities. We are working with the Corporation in addition to national bow add. Who are individuals and organizations who are trained to monitor -- manage spontaneous

volunteers? We have done some follow-up work and surveys to the local field. We are trying to develop a database of trained volunteers. The FEMA G. level course that will be coming out at the end of the summer. We are trying to figure out how the emergency managers can work with state commissions, AmeriCorps and hands on affiliates to deliver this training. It's an exciting opportunity that this is available. There will be a level of consistency because of this. We will have more questions when that will come out. The last item I wanted to bring up is a summer preparedness campaign. We are trying to promote what ready.gov is doing. This will start at the middle of August and run through September. Get affiliated is remote in citizen organizations.

One of the things we are working on is a state portal or technology which includes a disaster portal. That is something that we are starting to identify and we will build out a technology platform. With technology, there is many ways to direct people. We are looking into other ways that we can help. We are looking at how to direct them through crowd sourcing and crowd following the social media.

From a national perspective that we are working on is trying to develop an impact study that would look at different cases. Right now it is challenging to show tracking the volunteers, the hours, and the impact. This shows the value and the impact of volunteers during disasters. We are trying to develop something to be used for funding opportunities legislation and policy. Anyone has any questions, I am open to that. On the screen, is money e-mail address.

Thank you, Kelly. A lot of good resources that are already available and on the horizon. Many of you may know September is national preparedness month, we hope you share information about this. It could be time to get affiliated with an organization or to engage in some act of service throughout the month of September. [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov), we will have it typed up afterward.

We will have the question-and-answer section. This webinar is being recorded, and will be available in the next few days.

Thanks Marcus. I am moving way out. You can type your question into the lower chat box and then we can get them organized and answered.

While we are waiting, I want to thank everybody again, all the presenters on the call. Feedback is important, please stay on after the question and answer session. If there are any recommendations or information you would like to see, please feel free to let us know. You can contact us at [citizencorps.gov](http://citizencorps.gov). Please send us your feedback.

How are you covering liability and workers coverage spanning the various agencies mentioned?



We have all of our volunteers register which gives us a database of skill sets that we can utilize. We have a course of the disaster they sign a waiver that releases any organization from anything. That waiver makes them -- then part of a task force.

We had a few different coverages. We had a release of liability waiver. We had property insurance and we held specific volunteer insurance. America is not considered volunteers. If you e-mailed me I can give you the information. You need workers comp and a separate liability insurance for volunteers. Each state has different liability laws. I can give you that link.

Even though we have all of our volunteers sign a liability waiver, the bottom line is, when we are supervising them and leaving them in the field we are accepting responsibility for them. Our liability coverage for an agency covers volunteer engagement of that type.

Next question is how do you balance projects available and volunteer turnout? How is this developed and managed?

This is Bruce, using Joplin as a case example. We had a volunteer reception center and also operated a recovery center. Homeowners with individual needs could register and request assistance, they sign a waiver they give us initial information that breaks down their request and then we go out and scout those individual work requests and organize them into project groups so that we can know in advance that type of numbers that would be needed to accomplish that service. And allows us to organize equipment that might be needed of the specialized nature to augment what volunteers and hand crews are able to do.

How do you screen spontaneous volunteers? How do you get them before actually deploying them?

One of the biggest ways we do that is through our team leadership roles and just general safety briefings. We have age limits for what people can do. We are looking for closed toed shoes in the field. We would've been able to benefit with a better interview process, but we didn't have the time. We were providing other opportunities so that if one were given they can volunteer and serve at another capacity.

When you are having people register online the specific questions that you ask helps you vet them. In the immediate response, a lot of it you are doing it right on hand and then monitoring it throughout the project.

One of the questions we have seen is someone had asked how local Citizen Corps groups, search teams, volunteers, police services. How can they get connected in the future?

This is Kelly, if you are not able to find a hands on affiliate in your area, we chatted to me and I will connect you with the closest affiliate or state organization or partner that we work with.

This is Wendy, in virtually every state there is a statewide emergency support unction for volunteer and donations. You can find a list of the state commissions on Corporation for National Service.gov there will be information on their website. In our state, we do that linkage on a statewide level. Locally the emergency manager or information could be found on the website.

This is Bruce, it is critical that this unity be grown as much as possible at the grassroots, local level. Fundamental to this question is who is at the table and who is coordinating and planning together? We had the response community that align with fire, police, and emergency medical services. It is important that those two circles of people be unified before a disaster and then so that the table reach is broad. Everybody is finding their niche and role and is able to develop teamwork before it is needed.

Does anyone have anything else to add to that?

At this point we are going to wrap up.

Someone had talked about the speech being garbled, we will work on that for future webinars. We will have a recorded version with clean audio available. How will people be located about additional webinars. A lot of the resources we have heard from our colleagues . You can go onto CitizenCorps.Gov to reach additional preparedness information.

We have moved on to the poll. This is our closing screen. We will leave it up for a few minutes. Was this webinar information informative and useful? Please, before you go, respond to these polls. Thank you for attending our webinar series.

There are a lot of excellent questions that we didn't get to, we are going to copy and paste them in and disseminate them to our presenters who will answer as necessary.