

NORTH CAROLINA EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN (NCEOP)
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VOLUNTEER AND DONATIONS MANAGEMENT
2025

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this appendix is to ensure the most efficient and effective use of volunteers, organizations, and donations to support all Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) during incidents of significance in North Carolina that require a state response.

B. SCOPE

This appendix provides guidance on the state's role in supporting the management of affiliated/unaffiliated volunteers and solicited/unsolicited donations. Affiliated volunteers include those that are trained and rostered by their organization, as defined in the NC Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). Unaffiliated volunteers, also known as spontaneous volunteers, include individuals who offer to help or who self-deploy to assist in emergency situations without coordinating their activities. They are considered "unaffiliated" because they are not part of a disaster relief and/or emergency response organization. The guidance in this appendix also ensures the effective and efficient acceptance, management and delivery of solicited and unsolicited donations including goods, materials, services, personnel, financial resources and facilities.

II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS

A. SITUATION

During and following an incident, requirements for goods, materials, services, personnel, financial resources, and facilities may exceed local and state capabilities. Volunteer and donations management may play a major role in meeting these needs. However, the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) will need to provide leadership and direction to organize and streamline efficient use of resources. Special actions may be required to avoid unsolicited volunteers and donations becoming a burden to response and recovery operations.

B. ASSUMPTIONS

1. Local governments and volunteer agencies will maintain volunteer and donations management plans.
2. Individual volunteers and/or groups of volunteers will go to the affected area and help. An organized volunteer disaster response effort will be required.

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3. Individuals and relief organizations from outside the disaster area may begin to collect donations to meet the needs of the survivors.
4. The SERT will not directly receive unsolicited donations but may support local governments and volunteer agencies with their volunteer and donation management plans.
5. Appropriate public messaging on volunteer and donation opportunities will be provided.
6. Unsolicited donations may arrive unsorted or with minimal packaging from local, national, or international organizations. Unneeded or unwarranted donations may arrive such as unsorted or dirty clothing, used mattresses, or perishable food. These donations should not be accepted.
7. The amount of donations and services may increase with the amount of media attention the disaster receives.
8. Resource gaps tied to medical supplies and pharmaceuticals will be addressed through the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Public Health (DPH) first through all available means.
9. All available means will be used to educate the public, emergency management community, elected officials, and the media on the strategy and principles for managing donations.

III. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. LEAD STATE AGENCY

1. NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY (NCDPS)

NORTH CAROLINA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (NCEM)

- a. Coordinate the efforts of SERT partners associated with volunteer and donations management.
- b. Assist in the arrangement for transportation that might be required during the receipt, movement and distribution of donations when local capabilities and resources have been exhausted.
- c. Determine if resources offered can support any needs requested.

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- d. Coordinate resource requests with private sector assets and capabilities when local and state resources have been exhausted.
- e. Coordinate donated facilities with appropriate stakeholders when local capabilities and resources have been exhausted.
- f. Coordinate and manage Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) volunteers.

B. SUPPORTING STATE AGENCIES

1. OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

**NC COMMISSION ON VOLUNTEERISM AND COMMUNITY SERVICE
(VOLUNTEERNC)**

- a. Execute internal procedures to direct unaffiliated volunteers to local, community, faith-based, and nonprofits entities.
- b. Coordinate activities with the SERT Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL), including VolunteerNC's activation of AmeriCorps members when appropriate.
- c. Coordinate with partner agencies to determine available volunteer resources and needs.
- d. Remain cognizant of the activities and needs of North Carolina Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (North Carolina VOAD) member organizations through collaborative efforts with the SERT.
- e. Collaborate with the Joint Information Center (JIC) on incident-specific media messaging for unaffiliated volunteers and monetary donations.
- f. Oversee the NC Disaster Relief Fund should it be activated by the Governor.

2. NC DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION (NCDOA)

STATE PROPERTY OFFICE (SPO)

- a. Provide information of any state-owned facility that might be needed.

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3. NC DEPARTMENT OF ADULT CORRECTION (NCDAC)

- a. Coordinate available offender labor as needed.

4. NC DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES (NCDA&CS)

- a. Coordinate the use of the state fairgrounds in Raleigh and other NCDA&CS owned facilities.
- b. Arrange for the transport of donated food items if needed.
- c. Conduct inspections of potential suspect food donations.
- d. Provide a liaison to coordinate donation activities for animals.

5. NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (NCDHHS)

- a. Inform the SERT of identified needs within DHHS divisions and/or offices that could be satisfied by offers of donations or volunteer services.
- b. Assist the SERT in the management of donated pharmaceuticals.

**DIVISION OF HEALTH SERVICE REGULATION (DHSR)
NC OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (NCOEMS)**

- a. Collaborate with the SERT on any donated medical supplies.

C. SUPPORTING AGENCIES

1. NORTH CAROLINA VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN DISASTERS (NORTH CAROLINA VOAD)

- a. Provide a liaison to the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
- b. In the event additional volunteer and donations management support is requested, North Carolina VOAD support will be solicited.

2. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGO)

- a. Within its agreements, coordinate the provision of relief efforts by all volunteer organizations actively engaged in providing assistance to disaster survivors.

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3. FOOD BANKS OF NORTH CAROLINA

- a. Provide a liaison to the SERT to assist in the state's process for accepting/refusing offers of donated food, if requested.
- b. Prepare procedures to accept unsolicited donations of food and other appropriate products.
- c. Provide organizational donation phone numbers to NC 211 for reference.
- d. Inform the SERT of any identified needs of survivors which could be met using donations.

4. UNITED WAY OF NC

- a. Provide the information and referral service, NC 211, a public information portal for residents to obtain real-time communications and resources related to a disaster.
- b. Provide trained call specialists to staff the NC 211 call center in order to provide information and referrals on available resources within their community in addition to eligibility requirements and intake information.
- c. Collaborate with the SERT and the Office of the Governor by serving as the fiscal agent for the NC Disaster Relief Fund, if activated.

5. COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAMS (CERT)

- a. Within its agreements, provide volunteers, as requested, to support volunteer and donation operations.

6. TRIBAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- a. Prepare plans to accept offers of donations and volunteer services.
- b. Identify local volunteer coordinators to help match spontaneous volunteers with local organizations or agencies that need volunteers after an incident.
- c. Coordinate with local volunteer, community and religious organizations to operate local distribution sites.
- d. Identify alternate distribution points for contingency purposes.

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- e. Assess local needs for donations and volunteers and communicate the needs through NC SPARTA.

7. FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)

- a. Support volunteer and donation activities as formally requested by the state.
- b. Provide a Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) to support the state Voluntary Agency Liaison.

IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. GENERAL

When counties and local jurisdictions exceed their volunteer and donations management capabilities, the SERT may provide support for the management of affiliated/unaffiliated volunteers and unsolicited donations. During a SERT activation, NC 211 operates a hotline used to receive offers of donations/services and direct them as needed. NC 211 call specialists will provide callers with emergency information such as shelter locations, feeding sites, and road closures, along with intake information and eligibility requirements. The SERT will provide NC 211 with priority emergency information and instructions necessary for electronically capturing donor information related to goods, volunteers, and cash.

The SERT will implement a public information campaign at the onset of the incident to encourage donations of money and specific goods and services. The Governor and senior state officials will inform the public of the donations policy and how the public can best contribute. The SERT will continue the public information efforts throughout disaster operations by coordinating with the Governor's Press Office and the Joint Information Center.

AFFILIATED AND UNAFFILIATED VOLUNTEERS

Affiliated volunteers are those that are trained and rostered by their organization to complete specific tasks. Requests from state agencies, local government or private volunteer organizations for volunteers to assist in affected jurisdictions that are received in NCSPARTA will be forwarded appropriately.

Unaffiliated volunteers, also known as spontaneous volunteers, include individuals who offer help or who self-deploy to assist in emergency situations without coordinating their activities. They are considered "unaffiliated"

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because they are not part of a disaster relief and/or emergency response organization. While the state recognizes the value of unaffiliated volunteers, they are discouraged from going directly into any disaster site. Volunteers can visit VolunteerNC's website for information on how to best affiliate.

SOLICITED AND UNSOLICITED DONATIONS

The SERT may support the management and coordination of solicited and unsolicited donations when local counties are overwhelmed. This may include donated goods, materials, services, personnel, financial resources, and facilities. Unsolicited donations are those that arrive but have not been requested by an agency. Solicited goods are those which are advertised as needs. The SERT does not solicit donations unless otherwise directed by the Governor or designee and will support as necessary. The organization accepting or receiving the donation will follow its own logistics policies and procedures.

B. NOTIFICATION

Notification requirement for activation of web-based systems for donated goods and volunteer services includes informing the President of North Carolina VOAD, the Governor's Press Office, the Joint Information Center, and VolunteerNC.

Notification requirements of the NC Disaster Relief Fund include informing the President of United Way of NC (fiscal agent for the fund), the Governor's Press Office and the Joint Information Center.

C. RESPONSE ACTIONS

1. INITIAL

- a. Several response activation decisions are required by the SERT initially, including the activation of the NC Disaster Relief Fund and establishing NC 211.
- b. Gaps are identified and reported to respective functional leads.

2. CONTINUING

- a. Document and share information and resource gaps by participating in North Carolina VOAD conference calls and communicating with North Carolina VOAD leadership and local emergency management coordinators.

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- b. Facilitate the fulfillment of resource requests and share unsolicited volunteer and donation information with appropriate stakeholders.
- c. Continue processing financial donations for the NC Disaster Relief Fund if activated for the disaster. Financial contributions are distributed to vetted nonprofit and faith-based organizations that are engaged in response and recovery efforts via a grant application process.

V. DIRECTION, CONTROL AND COORDINATION

A. LOCAL

Local governments and volunteer agencies will be encouraged to develop and implement volunteer and donations management plans.

B. STATE

The state will use NCSPARTA and other tools to facilitate volunteer and donations management. Emergency information will be dispersed related to donated goods, spontaneous volunteers, and cash donations.

The state will primarily collaborate with North Carolina VOAD member organizations that have established structures to coordinate volunteers and donations. Rather than donations of food, clothing or other items, the state will encourage donations of cash to established North Carolina VOAD member organizations that are providing services to disaster survivors or to the NC Disaster Relief Fund if activated for the incident.

The decision to activate the NC Disaster Relief Fund is made after discussion between NCEM and the Office of the Governor. VolunteerNC makes the decision to include event specific volunteer opportunities and support.

C. FEDERAL

NCEM communicates and coordinates with the FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaisons (VALs) who may be deployed for the disaster. When requested, the FEMA VAL will support the fulfillment of volunteer and donation resource gaps as identified by the SERT.