

Quick Reference Guide for Voluntary Organizations & VALS

Voluntary Organization Assistance

What do voluntary organizations do?

Voluntary Agencies (including faith based and community based organizations) begin providing immediate emergency assistance at the onset of a disaster and often provide help when all other government avenues have been exhausted.

What is National VOAD?

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (National VOAD): is the coordinating and convening mechanism for voluntary agencies that are national in scope and have disaster response and recovery programs. National VOAD provides the forum for agencies to work together cooperatively in their preparedness, response and recovery efforts. Presently, there are 49 active members. Additional information on National VOAD and the state VOADs can be found on the National VOAD web site (<http://www.nvoad.org>).

What do State VOAD's do?

State VOADs: Replicate the coordination efforts among the state representatives of national voluntary agencies; and expand their membership to include other voluntary agencies and the private sector that are active in State and/or local jurisdictions, but are not national in scope.

Who provides immediate emergency assistance?

Immediate Emergency Assistance: Voluntary Agencies provide assistance, as needed, even if the emergency does not receive a Presidential Declaration. Assistance may include:

1. Emergency shelter at congregate care facilities when a disaster is anticipated (hurricane or severely hot/cold weather); or immediately post-disaster (earthquake, tornado, flood).
2. Feeding: meals are provided either at congregate care facilities or by mobile feeding units in the field.
3. Other Services: medicine, clothing, comfort kits, pet support, transient accommodations, health care, cleaning supplies, emotional and spiritual care, crisis counseling, etc.

What are Long-Term Recovery Committees?

Long-Term Recovery Committee (LTRC): LTRCs organize post-disaster and consist of voluntary agencies, community based organizations, local government and the private sector that have resources available for recovery assistance. The participating organizations agree to work together cooperatively according to their respective missions and guidelines. Included as a part of the committee is a disaster case

management component that verifies the disaster caused unmet needs. The FEMA VAL works closely with the LTRCs providing technical assistance and guidance as they establish themselves, establishing a referral mechanism for applicants that have exhausted government resources or are ineligible for FEMA disaster assistance and providing FEMA assistance information within the parameters of the Privacy Act to help avoid duplication of benefits (DOB). Assistance is provided on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the guidelines established by the particular LTRC. Types of assistance might include, housing repair, building of houses, personal property needs, medical assistance, child care, transportation, etc.

What are disaster caused unmet needs?

Definition of disaster caused unmet need: The FEMA Inspected Damage dollar amount minus an applicant's resources (Homeowner, Content, Flood Insurance, FEMA Individual and Household program assistance) equals the disaster unmet need when the dollar amount is greater than zero.

What does the FEMA Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) do?

The **FEMA VAL** keeps the voluntary agencies active with the disaster informed about the disaster situation and also reports on the services they are providing or plan to provide. Additionally, the VAL will schedule conference calls and host a coordination meeting with the primary response voluntary agencies, other Community-based (CBO) and Faith-based (FBO) organizations and the private sector organizations that may be independent from State or local VOAD.

VAL Responsibilities:

- Serves as the link or Liaison between FEMA Regional Response Coordination Center (RRCC) and/or the Joint Field Office (JFO) and the voluntary agencies and community based and faith based organizations and the private sector groups involved in disaster response and recovery. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Sharing key mass care and damage assessment information
 - Keeping agencies informed of the status of declarations, location of JFO and/or DRC locations and recovery program information
 - Participating in community and voluntary agency meetings
 - Presenting the Individual Assistance (IA) Disaster Assistance process to assist voluntary agencies in understanding the FEMA IA program and help the agencies avoid duplicating benefits
 - Identifying trends in recovery needs and resolving issues.
- Manage the Voluntary Agency Group at the Joint Field Office. Activities may include:
 - Internally arranging space for voluntary agency representatives to operate within and meet at the JFO, as appropriate
 - Coordination of voluntary agency communication to other JFO functions, such as the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) staff, External Affairs, Community Relations (CR), Congressional Liaison staff and other pertinent program offices
 - Sharing voluntary agency information with the Individual Assistance Programs and providing a contact list of agencies assisting with the disaster recovery efforts to IA and other stakeholders for referral purposes
 - Reporting voluntary agency activities to ESF-5 Planning Section, FCO briefings, and other program areas
 - Reporting FEMA activities to the voluntary agencies
 - Developing Long Term Recovery Committees
- Establishing functional referral systems
 - Identifying voluntary agency hotline referral point(s) for emergency needs and a formal system of referrals to Long Term Recovery Committees