

Integrating Volunteer Responders into the Local Emergency Response Plan

A Panel Discussion

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Panel Members

- ▶ Gina Hardin
 - Des Moines County Emergency Management
- ▶ Keith Morgan
 - Story County Emergency Management
- ▶ Steve O'Neil
 - Cerro Gordo County Emergency Management
- ▶ Clair Franzen
 - Buchanan County Emergency Management

Background and Management

»» Clair Franzen
Buchanan County Emergency
Management

Definitions

- ▶ According to Google, Volunteer (noun)
- ▶ “A person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task.”

Definitions

- ▶ **Formal Volunteer**
 - Works with the organization on a regular basis
- ▶ **Spontaneous Volunteer**
 - Ad Hoc / spontaneous as needed, per project basis such as sand bagger or others that show up at time of emergency or special event
- ▶ **Affiliated Volunteer**
 - Affiliated with an agency and who has been trained for a specific role or function in disaster relief or response during the preparedness phase.

Benefits of Volunteering

- ▶ Make a positive difference in your community
- ▶ Learn new skills
- ▶ Improve your health
- ▶ Create more fun in your life
- ▶ Meet people with similar interests
- ▶ Share your skills and life experiences
- ▶ Meet people you wouldn't have otherwise
- ▶ In one survey 28% of unemployed volunteers (and 16% of employed volunteers) said that their volunteering had helped them obtain a job in the past
- ▶ (www.givingandvolunteering.ca/pdf/factsheets/Benefits_of_Volunteering.pdf)

Formal Volunteer Program

- ▶ Materials You Should Have
 - Volunteer Policy
 - Volunteer Background Check Policy
 - Volunteer Handbook
 - Position Description
 - Liability Waiver
 - Activity Log Sheet

Formal Volunteer Program

- ▶ Volunteer Policy
 - Provides overall guidance and direction to staff and volunteers engaged in volunteer activities.
 - Should be a dedicated section a single policy
- ▶ Background Check Policy
 - Describes the terms and conditions under which background checks are conducted.
- ▶ Volunteer Handbook
 - Details essential information about the policies and expectations of your agency

Formal Volunteer Program

- ▶ **Position Description**
 - Intended to identify the major responsibilities and requirements of a position.
- ▶ **Liability Waiver**
 - Have signed Liability Waiver on file.
 - Work with your insurance carrier and attorney
- ▶ **Activity Log Sheet**
 - Track your time and tasks performed.

Spontaneous Volunteer Program

- ▶ Materials You Should Have
 - Volunteer Policy
 - Volunteer Reception Center Plan and Go Kit
 - Task Descriptions
 - Liability Waiver
 - Activity Log Sheet

Spontaneous Volunteer Program

- ▶ Volunteer Policy
 - Provides overall guidance and direction to staff and volunteers engaged in volunteer activities.
 - Should be a dedicated section a single policy
- ▶ Volunteer Reception Center Plan and Go Kit
 - Organizational structure and process to access and manage spontaneous volunteers
 - Resources needed to establish a Reception Center

Spontaneous Volunteer Program

▶ Tasks Description

- Intended to identify the tasks, training and protective equipment required.
- Used to determine what tasks the volunteer may be assigned to

▶ Liability Waiver

- Have signed Liability Waiver on file.
- Work with your insurance carrier and attorney

▶ Activity Log Sheet

- Completed by Reception Center Staff to track time and tasks performed.

Affiliated Volunteer

- ▶ Managed as you would any other mutual aid organization
 - Local agency have a Mutual Aid agreement in place
 - State wide Iowa Mutual Aid Compact (IMAC)
 - National Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)

Volunteer Guidelines

- ▶ When working with the public, as a representative of Emergency Management, we ask that you maintain a positive attitude.
- ▶ Refer all questions you are unsure of to the office staff.
- ▶ If you sign up for an assignment and are unable to fulfill your commitment, please notify the office.

Volunteer Guidelines

- ▶ If you encounter an emergency, of any type, please call 911 and then notify the staff.
- ▶ Never place yourself in a dangerous situation. If a questionable situation occurs, notify the staff or the appropriate authorities.
- ▶ **MOST IMPORTANTLY! HAVE FUN!**

Community Resilience and Volunteers

» Steve O'Neil

Cerro Gordo County Emergency
Management

Community Resilience

- ▶ Community resilience is a measure of the sustained ability of a community to utilize available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations.

Community Resilience

- ▶ Why is community resilience important?
 - Communities are becoming more complex, and so are the challenges they face. Human-caused or natural disasters are becoming more frequent and more costly.
 - Addressing these threats requires us to take an approach that combines what we know about preparing for disasters with what we know about what actions strengthen our communities everyday.

Community Resilience

- ▶ How are community resilience and disaster preparedness related?
 - By building community resilience we benefit emergency management and our community members. Community resilience expands on our traditional preparedness approach by encouraging actions that build preparedness while at the same time promoting strong community systems.

Volunteers Can and Should be the Backbone of Community Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience

- ▶ In disaster response, the role and contributions of volunteerism is well recognized. When a disaster happens, volunteers are normally the first to act. The impact of volunteers in disaster response can be tremendous, as the extent of damage – in terms of economic and human loss – is greatly influenced by the initial response to a disaster.

Volunteers Can and Should be the Backbone of Community Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience

- ▶ If we are to have an effective Emergency Management program in our communities, then we need to have the participation of the communities in the program. Building a solid volunteer program supports a strong EM program and builds community resilience and disaster risk reduction.

Successes and Pitfalls

- ▶ You need a Foundation
 - Citizens Corps – CERT, MRC
 - Amateur Radio Groups
 - RSVP

Successes and Pitfalls

- ▶ Building on the Foundation
 - Keep them engaged
 - Rules and Expectations
 - Defined mobilization process
 - Increase capacities to prepare for and respond
 - Integrate into community planning process
 - Make use of all public education opportunities
 - Encourage interaction of volunteers with responders and elected officials.

Successes and Pitfalls

- ▶ Your biggest pitfall will be success. Now I have this functional program, how do I keep it going?
 - Expect a lot, get a lot.
 - Don't be afraid to think outside the box.
 - Be ready to fail once in a while, and embrace it.
 - Give them the tools to grow, and then trust them.
 - Never underestimate...
 - Define your mission and know your limitations

Activation of Volunteers

»» Keith Morgan
Story County Emergency
Management

Incident Commander (IC) Identifies Unmet Need

Incident Commander (IC) Identifies Unmet Need

- ▶ Does the IC have volunteer resources within their community that they can use?
- ▶ Will these resources be double or triple tapped?
- ▶ Has the IC thought through the who, what, where, when, and how of utilizing volunteers?

Incident Commander (IC) Identifies Unmet
Need



Request Assistance From Emergency
Management (EM)



Request Assistance From Emergency Management (EM)

- ▶ The EM may now become the ‘broker’ for volunteer resources matching them to ICs
- ▶ The EM may need to ‘apportion’ volunteers if request exceed resources
- ▶ The EM should have policies for less than an emergency

Incident Commander (IC) Identifies Unmet
Need



Request Assistance From Emergency
Management (EM)



EM request assistance from Volunteer Org on
behalf of IC



EM request assistance from Volunteer Org on behalf of IC

- ▶ Remember, these are volunteer organizations and you are asking them to help
- ▶ Volunteer leadership needs information to judge appropriateness of task, risk, capability to support
- ▶ Provide clarity as chain of command; are you in direct control or just a match maker

Incident Commander (IC) Identifies Unmet
Need



Request Assistance From Emergency
Management (EM)



EM request assistance from Volunteer Org on
behalf of IC



Volunteer Org deploys to IC for specified task



Volunteer Org **deploys** to **IC** for **specified task**

- ▶ Work to make sure the IC and lead for volunteers understands the tasking
- ▶ Work to ensure they stay safe
- ▶ Try to prevent 'mission creep'

Incident Commander (IC) Identifies Unmet
Need



Request Assistance From Emergency
Management (EM)



EM request assistance from Volunteer Org on
behalf of IC



Volunteer Org deploys to IC for specified task



Volunteer Org completes task or reassigned



Volunteer Org **completes task** or **reassigned**

- ▶ Once a specified task is completed, then the volunteer organization should be available for retasking
- ▶ If the IC has further task, they should be sent to the EOC to be prioritized with other request.
- ▶ Try to prevent volunteer burn out.

Care and Feeding of Volunteers

»» Gina Hardin

Des Moines County Emergency
Management



Recruitment

- ▶ Your current volunteers are your best recruitment tool
 - Brochures/flyers
- ▶ The public needs to know who your organization is and what you do
 - Use social media
 - Traditional media
 - After an disaster



Recruitment

- ▶ Tell the story on how volunteers supports your mission
 - Use events
 - Traditional media, social media
 - Website
- ▶ Use non-traditional sources
 - Senior centers
 - Presentations
 - Educational booths
 - Business/industry safety teams
 - Volunteer Fairs
 - Displays



Veting

VET

1. To make a careful and critical examination of (something).

- ▶ **Background checks for Formal Volunteers**
 - Use a application process
 - Interview by team members
 - Have volunteer sign release for the check
 - Law enforcement may be able to provide some assistance
 - National firms that do background checks
 - Check at a minimum (free and on-line):
 - Sex offender database
 - Iowa Courts On-Line

Veting

- ▶ Background checks for Spontaneous Volunteers
 - No time during a event
 - Need to utilize in tasks that minimize risk
- ▶ Background checks for Affiliated Volunteers
 - Processes in place



Liability



- ▶ Have a plan
 - Defined roles, responsibilities, reporting, and documentation
 - Who is in charge?
- ▶ Discuss your plan with your County Attorney and Insurance Carrier
- ▶ Release form signed by all volunteers

Liability

- ▶ Utilize your formal and affiliated volunteers
 - Safety Officer
 - Division/Group Supervisor
 - Task Force Leader
 - Organize spontaneous volunteers
- Refer to resources listed on handout



Training

- ▶ What is goal of the program?
- ▶ Training plan/schedule
- ▶ Training needs of program (skills)
- ▶ Basic – Advanced – Retraining
- ▶ Exercises
- ▶ Make the training fun



Training

- ▶ Resources for training
 - Courses from FEMA (on-line and at EMI)
 - Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
 - Affiliate organizations
 - National Weather Service (NWS)
 - Conferences
 - Other local resources
- ▶ Mentoring
- ▶ Keep volunteers engaged



Retaining

- ▶ Keep volunteers engaged
 - Use them or lose them
 - Have tasks planned and the resources needed to complete the tasks
- ▶ Volunteers stay where they are:
 - Upskilled
 - Mentored
 - Challenged
 - Rewarded
 - Involved
 - Appreciated
 - Valued
 - On a mission
 - Empowered
 - Trusted



Retaining

- ▶ Provide opportunities
 - Training / exercises / meetings
 - Outreach for your organization
 - Assist at community events



Retaining

- ▶ Provide feedback
 - Annual review
 - Recognition events
 - Local awards (agency, community)
 - Governor's Volunteer Award
 - Just say "Thank You"



Put it all together... Integrating Volunteers

- ▶ Incorporate them into your plan
- ▶ Understand different types of volunteers
- ▶ Develop a foundation
- ▶ Have a plan to involve
- ▶ Recruit, train, involve and retain them



Discussion and Questions?

»» Audience Participation Time

Thank You

- »» Additional Information Available on the Volunteer Resources Handout