

# Spontaneous Volunteer Annex

## \_\_\_\_\_ County Spontaneous Volunteers Annex

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this annex is to provide for adequate management and utilization of spontaneous volunteers in the event of an emergency or disaster within \_\_\_\_\_ County, New Jersey.

### **Assumptions**

- Tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, and winter storms have affected the county in the past and will continue to affect the county in the future.
- Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD), Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), Medical Reserve Corp (MRC), Non-Governmental Organizations, and Disaster Relief groups are composed of trained volunteers to perform specific functions in the hours, days, and weeks following a disaster. These organizations have trained and screened these personnel for adequacy in a disaster setting and are responsible for the overall supervision of their personnel.
- In times of disaster or emergency, members of the general public volunteer their time and abilities for a variety of reasons.
- All operations shall be run utilizing the Incident Command System under the direction of the emergency operations center

### **Concept of Operations**

The Office of Emergency Management Coordinator has responsibility for the implementation of this annex. Reasons for implementing this annex may include but are not limited to the following:

- When the nature of an incident and/or media coverage makes convergence of spontaneous volunteers likely.
- When shortages of workers require augmentation of staffing support from outside resources.
- When volunteers with particular skills and/or special knowledge of the affected jurisdiction could enhance relief and/or recovery efforts.

When it has been determined that the activation of this annex is warranted, the OEM Coordinator shall notify those agencies and organizations tasked with specific response roles, as needed. There are two primary methods of handling requests for and to volunteer; phone banks and volunteer reception centers (VRC). During an incident, these facilities can be located separately or together depending upon the needs of the incident and staffing requirements.

## **Public Information**

The OEM Coordinator shall coordinate the issuance of any media releases to the appropriate media sources based upon the type, complexity, needs, and timeliness of the response with the County's Public Information Officer (PIO).

The PIO will:

- Issue media releases in coordination with the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) detailing the hours and location(s) of the VRC(s).
- Issue media releases to the public soliciting areas for volunteers to work in support of the relief or recovery effort.
- Coordinate the escorting of media to observe operations at the VRC, in the field, or both.

## **Phone Bank**

Phone banks may be used to gather and disseminate information from potential volunteers.

Phone banks are ideal for the following situations:

- Where a suitable location for a volunteer reception center is unavailable
- When there has been a need for volunteers identified, however utilization of the actual volunteer workforce may be delayed due to external circumstances
- When current staffing levels prohibit the activation of a volunteer reception center.

Phone bank staffing levels will depend greatly upon the number of phones being operated. It is generally accepted that there will be one person to review all applications and match them with a potential volunteer opportunity for every 3 phone lines being operated. If the phone bank will be located in a location where it is not possible to utilize a runner for communication purposes, it will then be necessary for the phone bank to have an additional phone line that has not been published. It may be necessary for the phone bank to have access to the following items:

- Copy Machine
- Blank Applications
- Pens
- Paper

Phone bank staff must be sure to keep control of the conversation and keep the caller on point with the information in the order it appears on the application.

## **Volunteer Reception Center**

The chief method of coordinating spontaneous volunteers shall be the Volunteer Reception Center (VRC). For logistical reasons, the VRC shall be a facility located in the general vicinity of the primary area of work. All personnel who wish to volunteer shall be processed through the VRC with the exception of registered volunteers of the American Red Cross and

The Salvation Army. Because incidents vary in size and complexity, there may be a need for multiple VRCs.

### **The Facility**

The facility shall be adequate enough to process a large number of people in an efficient manner (i.e. large garage, tent, school gymnasium, etc.), and provide for adequate parking for those who wish to volunteer. The facility shall be well marked so that all personnel, volunteers and staff alike, can easily locate it. The facility should have chairs available for seating, tables available for staff to conduct their business, and tables or clipboards for volunteers to fill out paperwork. The facility should also have electricity, running water, and bathrooms. In a tent situation, portable toilets and hand sanitizer should suffice. The VRC should have at a minimum:

- 8 Tables
- 30 Chairs
- Signs to designate stations, restrooms, and exit
- 1 Copy Machine
- 300 Applications
- 300 Referral Forms
- Communications with the EOC
- 1 Computer
- 1 Printer
- Pens
- 6 Clipboards

### **Staffing**

All VRC staff should be clearly identified by a vest, ID badge, or both so as to clearly delineate from whom potential volunteers shall take direction. The volunteer screening coordinator shall attempt to staff positions with personnel whom are knowledgeable in that particular field, if possible (i.e. Applications reviewed by human resources personnel, etc.). VRC staff should have a clear understanding on whom to report potential personnel issues or any other issues. It should also be clear that any unusual event must be reported and documented. Security at the site will vary depending upon the type and proximity of the event, however, there should be a staff member posted at each entrance and exit to ensure people are going the correct way. Those staff posted at the exit shall, in conjunction with the transportation coordinator, advise the volunteers where they must go to report for their job assignment or where to wait for transportation to their job assignment. Safety and training officers will not be needed in the initial opening of the VRC, so they may be able to staff other positions, until needed. Volunteers that show up early and are suitable for

clerical work may be assigned staffing positions in the VRC as needed. It is important that all staffing positions must be given breaks at regular intervals, however shutting the VRC down should only be considered as a last resort. It is suggested that staff breaks be done on a rotating basis.

### **Operations**

The stations shall be set up so that volunteers begin with station 1, registration, located near the entrance, and end with station 6, specific job training, located near the exit. The stations shall be set up as follows:

#### **Station 1 – Registration/Background Screening**

The registration station shall be the location that all volunteers are greeted by a volunteer receptionist, receive a volunteer application, and have any general questions answered. At this station, the volunteer's state or federally issued photo identification will be photocopied and placed in the file along with their application. Law enforcement personnel will be at this station to conduct background screening on all applicants. They will then be instructed to proceed to the waiting area to fill out their application. Prior to leaving this station, all volunteers must be informed that they must check out through the VRC prior to leaving the incident site. Volunteer reception supervisors will be located in the waiting area to assist them in filling out the application if necessary. Upon completion of the application, they will then proceed to station 2.

#### **Station 2- Interviews**

The interview station shall be the location in which a general interview is conducted to verify information on the application, view any credentials that the individual may have, and determine a suitable job assignment. All volunteers are to be considered regardless of age, race, sex, orientation, or handicap, however only volunteers meeting the particular requirements of a job assignment shall be assigned to that job, until all positions have been filled. Interviewing staff should keep in mind that this must be a quick process. The number of interviewing staff will depend upon incident complexity and size. Upon completion of the interview, the interviewing staff shall annotate upon the volunteer referral form the areas in which the volunteer is suitable for assignment. Upon completion of this station, the volunteer will proceed to the data entry/agency coordination station with their volunteer application and volunteer referral form.

#### **Station 3 – Data Entry/Agency Coordination**

At this station, staff will enter information from the volunteer application and volunteer referral form in order to track volunteer job assignments, what kind of work was done,

overall effectiveness, and time worked. They will also match the volunteer to an available job assignment based on their skills and abilities. Upon completion of this station, volunteers shall proceed to station 4.

#### **Station 4 – Volunteer Identification**

At this station, volunteers will be issued their volunteer identification. All volunteers shall be issued volunteer identification. Explain to them that this will be their access pass into the affected area. If they do not have this on their person, it can lead to them be escorted out of the area. Depending upon their particular job assignment, they may need additional training. For those who do not need additional training, the volunteer referral cards will be collected and it shall be verified that they have completed all of the stations. From here, all personnel will proceed to the safety brief, and specific job training as needed.

#### **Station 5 – Safety Brief**

At this station, members will receive a general safety brief as to the hazards unique to this particular incident. The safety brief should be done on a set schedule so that volunteers will have the opportunity to utilize the restroom or take a short break. Upon completion of the safety brief, the safety officer will annotate that the volunteer has completed this station.

#### **Station 6 – Job Training**

At this station, subject matter experts will deliver brief job training to volunteers who require such training. Job training may include, but not limited to:

- Flood Fighting Operations
- Shelter Operations
- Bulk Distribution

Those volunteers who do not need any job training, will skip this station and exit.

#### **Demobilization**

Upon the completion of all work assignments or the end of the operational period, the VRC shall be demobilized. All volunteers who are leaving the incident shall demobilize through the VRC. They shall enter through the exit door and follow the signage to the data collection area. At the data collection area, they shall turn in their volunteer ID and the time in which they leave shall be logged.

#### **Transportation**

Due to logistical issues and liability, it is suggested that volunteers not drive to job assignments in the field. The incident scene will already have emergency response and utility vehicles, so additional traffic may hinder response and recovery efforts. It is recommended that transportation is set up between the VRC and the incident scene, utilizing vans or busses. Unless the volunteers and staff members will be fed by mobile feeding sources, the transportation coordinator must also coordinate the transportation needed for meal breaks. The transportation coordinator shall have contact with all job sites to ensure that the site is ready prior to sending any volunteers and also when that site has reached the maximum number of volunteers.

## **Field Operations**

### **Initial Operations (Prior to volunteer arrival)**

Upon arrival at a particular job site, it shall be the responsibility of the field supervisor to complete a safety assessment. If the site is deemed to be too dangerous for volunteer operations, the supervisor shall contact the Volunteer Manager immediately. The decision on whether or not a particular site's dangers can be mitigated or eliminated will rest with the Spontaneous Volunteer Manager. All hazards shall be clearly marked to ensure that personnel are aware. The supervisor shall contact the Volunteer Manager for any requests for equipment or safety items. Once the supervisor has deemed that the site is ready to accept volunteers, he/she shall contact the transportation coordinator and inform them, and verify how many volunteers will be needed at the site.

### **Operations**

There will be one supervisor appointed to receive the incoming volunteers. This supervisor shall conduct a safety brief and ensure that all hazards on site are pointed out to each volunteer. Supervisors shall ensure that all volunteers are working safely, taking adequate breaks, and eating regularly. The preferred method of meal breaks will be in the field if possible. The alternative is transporting all volunteers offsite to a meal facility and then bringing them back to the site. Any injuries or potential personnel problems shall be brought to the attention of the spontaneous volunteer manager immediately. Any situation in which the supervisor is unsure of how to deal with shall be brought to the attention of spontaneous volunteer manager.

### **Demobilization**

Upon completion of the assignment or at the end of the operational period, the field supervisor(s) shall ensure that all equipment and personnel are accounted for. When accountability is complete, they shall notify the transportation coordinator of their location

and how many personnel are to be picked up. The field supervisor shall be the last person to leave the site to ensure that no one has been left behind.

## **Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities**

### **Volunteer Coordinator**

- Serves as liaison between the Volunteer Manager and Emergency Operations Center or Incident Command Post.
- Coordinate resource requests from Volunteer Manager with participating agencies.
- Coordinates requests for volunteers from participating agencies through the Spontaneous Volunteer Manager and Volunteer Reception Coordinator.
- Ensure volunteer requests are fulfilled.
- Other duties as assigned.

### **Volunteer Manager**

- Oversee implementation of this annex.
- Supervise Volunteer Screening Coordinator and Field Supervisor.
- Determine resource needs and request them through the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Process and oversee the fulfillment of volunteer requests.
- Establish and clearly communicate job assignment rules.
- Consult with and act as a technical resource to volunteer supervisors regarding potential personnel problems.
- Other duties as assigned.
- 

### **Volunteer Screening Coordinator**

- Establish spontaneous volunteer reception center at designated facility
- Ensure individuals processed through the spontaneous volunteer center undergo a consistent, non-discriminatory screening procedure including an application, interview, and proper identification.
- Initiate and maintain a master filing system.
- Engage and supervise additional volunteer screeners as needed.
- Work with the Volunteer Manager to fulfill volunteer requests.
- Arrange for proper follow-up and thanking of volunteers assigned through the volunteer reception center.

- Ensure proper disposition of volunteer records and files upon the conclusion of the operation.
- Other duties as assigned.

### **Volunteer Receptionist**

- Greet incoming volunteers.
- Gather and photocopy state or federally issued photo identification cards.
- Issue applications to prospective volunteers.
- Answer questions from the prospective volunteers to the best of their ability.
- Other duties as assigned.

### **Volunteer Screener**

- Review and process applications from all prospective applicants.
- Conduct a brief interview with prospective applicant to verify information on their application.
- Determine applicant's suitability for assignment.
- Assign applicant to proper category(s) based upon skills and interview.
- Other duties as assigned.

### **Volunteer Trainer**

- Train volunteers in their respective job assignments.
- Brief all personnel about the possible and potential hazards they may encounter on assignment.
- Ensure all volunteers meet the base requirements of the job assignment.
- Other duties as assigned.

### **Reception Center Volunteer Supervisor**

- Assist volunteers in filling out the application and/or navigating through the Volunteer Reception Center.
- Ensure volunteers are staying within their assigned areas.
- Other duties as assigned.

### **Field Supervisor**



Maintain accountability of all volunteers assigned to him/her.

- Coordinate with the Transportation Coordinator for transportation of volunteers between the VRC and assigned area and number of personnel transported to the job site.
- Ensure that all volunteers are operating in a safe manner and adhering to the rules and regulations of the incident.
- Refer any potential personnel issues to the Volunteer Manager.
- Contact the Volunteer Manager for all injuries incurred by any personnel on the job site.
- Other duties as assigned.

### **Transportation Coordinator**

- Coordinate all transportation of volunteers to and from work assignments.
- Notify field supervisors how many volunteers are being transported to their site and their estimated time of arrival.
- Notify the Volunteer Manager of any potential personnel, special needs, or medical issues.
- Other duties as assigned.

### **Law Enforcement**

- Provide the necessary security at the VRC site and any other sites in which the spontaneous volunteer manager deems necessary.
- Conducts background checks on prospective volunteers.

### **Data Entry**

- Enters information from various forms into spreadsheet or database.
- Tracks location of all volunteers assigned and identifies surpluses and shortfalls.
- Tracks all resources ordered, assigned, and returned.
- Other duties as assigned

### **Direction and Control**

The EOC (Emergency Operations Center) shall be the central point of control for all operations regarding this annex. The EOC shall have the Volunteer Manager to coordinate activities with other agencies, departments, and jurisdictions.

**Lines of Succession**

The lines of succession for this annex are as follows:

1. County OEM Coordinator
2. County OEM Deputy Coordinator
3. Volunteer Coordinator

**Administration and Logistics**

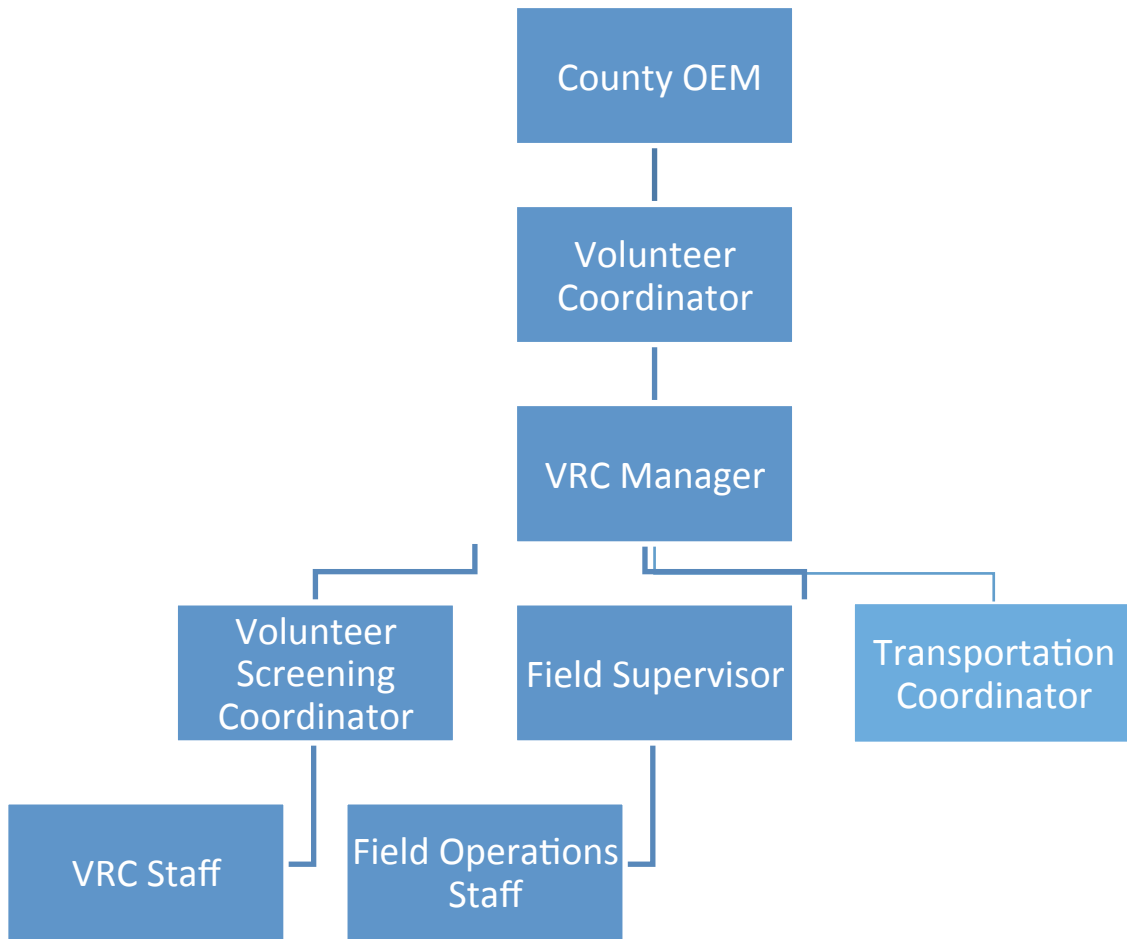
The spontaneous volunteer manager will be prepared to activate the volunteer reception center, phone banks, or any segment there up based upon the direction from the EOC.

The spontaneous volunteer coordinator shall report to the EOC to coordinate with those agencies or jurisdictions that need volunteer support.

The volunteer reception center coordinator shall provide regular updates to the EOC as to the number of volunteers processed and assigned.

**Annex Development and Maintenance**

This annex shall be reviewed and updated by the County Office of Emergency Management at least every two years, or upon the conclusion of the activation of this annex.



Station #1 Registration/Screening



Data Entry



Phone Bank



Station #2  
Interview



Waiting Area

Station #3  
Data Entry/  
Agency  
Coordination



Support  
Services



Station #4  
Identification



Station 5/6  
Training/Safety Briefing



1. \_\_\_\_\_ The County Emergency Management Coordinator shall appoint a Volunteer Coordinator.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The spontaneous Volunteer Reception Center Manager shall train members of the Volunteer Management Support Team in their respective functions.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ A stockpile of needed forms and equipment shall be located at the Emergency Operations Center.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The County Office of Emergency Management shall find suitable locations around the county for possible Volunteer Reception Centers (VRC) in the event of a disaster.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ There will be signs made up designating the 6 stations in the VRC, including entrance, exit and waiting area.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ A piece of apparel for staff shall be determined to set them apart from general volunteers.

#### Incident Check List:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The County Emergency Management Office of Emergency Management shall be responsible for activating this annex, and contacting the Volunteer Coordinator.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The spontaneous Volunteer Reception Center Manager shall be responsible for activating the remainder of the Volunteer Management Support Team staff.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The Volunteer Reception Center Manager shall select a site for the Volunteer Reception Center and ensure that it is suitable for this use.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The VRC Coordinator shall identify any needs or equipment shortages and coordinate them with the spontaneous VRC Manager as soon as possible.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ The VRC should remain in constant contact with the EOC for staffing requests and when requests have been filled.

#### Post Incident Check List:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ All VRC staff shall account for all personnel and equipment prior to demobilization.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Conduct equipment inventory and operability assessment post demobilization.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ After Action Reports shall be due from each supervisor and department head within 10 days of the annex being deactivated.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ This annex shall be updated, if deemed necessary, within 30 days of the deactivation of this annex.