



## **Virtual Volunteer Reception Center 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 the state of New Jersey.

### **Assumptions**

- Tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, and winter storms have affected the state in the past and will continue to affect the state in the future.
- Voluntary and Community Organizations Active in Disaster (V/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.

### **Concept of Operations**

The New Jersey Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NJVOAD) Board of Trustees has responsibility for the implementation of this annex. Reasons for implementing this annex may include but are not limited to the following:

- At the request of the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management (NJOEM), as a result of a statewide emergency declaration by the Governor and/or a declaration by the President of the United States.
- 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 NJVOAD Board shall notify those agencies and organizations tasked with specific response roles, as needed.

All requests to volunteer through the Virtual Volunteer Reception Center (VVRC) will be captured using the online volunteer management software Volgistics. During an incident, navigation to Volgistics will be available to the public through the Volunteer page on HELPNJNOW.ORG. Member organizations of NJVOAD, including county and regional VOADs/COADs, will be given access to Volgistics to search for volunteers and to post specific volunteer opportunities.

### **Public Information**

The NJVOAD Board shall coordinate the issuance of any media releases to the appropriate media sources based upon the type, complexity, needs, and timeliness of the response.

They will:

- Issue media releases explaining what HELPNJNOW.ORG is and what can be found on the site.
- Issue media releases detailing what the VVRC is and how to access it.

### **Virtual Volunteer Reception Center**

Coordination of spontaneous volunteers through the VVRC will be done utilizing the online volunteer management software Volgistics. The chief method of accessing Volgistics by the public will be by navigating through the Volunteer page on HELPNJNOW.ORG. Subsequently, organizations with access to the VVRC will also be able to post links to register volunteers on Volgistics through their websites, social media pages, as well as send links out through their email accounts.

Member organizations of NJVOAD, including county and regional VOADs/COADs, will be given access to the Volgistics account to search for volunteers and/or to post specific volunteer opportunities as they arise. Instructions on how to access and navigate through the back-end

of the Volgistics account, along with current login information, will be emailed by NJVOAD to member organizations. Because incidents vary in size and complexity, there may be a need for increased and varied login credentials. This will be communicated to member organizations, as needed throughout the incident, by the NJVOAD Board.

## **Technical Support**

All troubleshooting incidents involving the utilization of the VVRC shall be reported to a VVRC Coordinator who will be appointed by the NJVOAD Board to oversee and coordinate the VVRC. This representative's contact information will be sent to member organizations along with the information on accessing the Volgistics account.

## **Operations**

Operations of the VVRC are simple and self-explanatory. In general, the process will follow:

- **Step 1 – Registration**

Any individual person willing and able to volunteer in New Jersey for the assumed incident, will register using Volgistics. (Group registrations are not available on Volgistics, but can be coordinated directly through willing member organizations.) Registration information may include but is not limited to: name, contact information, age range, skill set, level of experience, and availability.

Volunteers are also able to search for volunteer opportunities posted by member organizations. Requests to participate in these opportunities will be made through the Volgistics system unless otherwise noted on the posting.

- **Step 2 – Contacting Volunteers**

Once a volunteer has registered in Volgistics, member organizations can access the Volgistics account and search for volunteers. Searches can be made for general volunteers or volunteers with specific skills, availability, or traits. Organizations have the ability to export volunteer information for later reference so as not to have to login to access the information every time it's needed.

Member organizations are also able to view and respond to volunteers who sign up to participate in specific volunteer opportunities the organization has posted.

- **Step 3 – Training**

Member organizations who use volunteers found through Volgistics are responsible for the training and liability of said volunteers.

- **Step 4 – Volunteer Statistics**

Tools to aid in the tracking and capturing of volunteer numbers and hours is available through Volgistics. Keeping these records current and accurate is the responsibility of each member organization who utilizes the Volgistics account.

## **Demobilization**

Upon the completion of all work assignments or the end of the operational period, the VVRC shall be demobilized. Access to Volgistics through HELPNJNOW.ORG will be discontinued. Member organizations will be notified of the anticipated discontinuation of the Volgistics account. This will ensure that they are able to collect and export any needed volunteer information, as well as, discontinue posting links to Volgistics through their websites, social media pages, and email accounts.

If access to the Volgistics account is needed for any reason past the demobilization period, member organizations will have to request access by contacting the VVRC Coordinator or the NJVOAD Board.

Feedback from member organizations that participated in the VVRC will be collected through a survey and/or a hot-wash after the VVRC has been demobilized. Information gathered in this feedback will be used to make any updates and changes necessary in order to improve the effectiveness of the VVRC in the future.

## **Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities**

- **VVRC Coordinator(s):**

- Serves as point of contact for VVRC.
- Informs member organizations of pertinent information, including but not limited to: access and login information, updates/changes to the Volgistics account, mobilization and demobilization of VVRC.
- Ensures back-end of Volgistics site is maintained and organized.
- Troubleshoots technical issues with site, either personally or by contacting Volgistics Support.
- Carries out other duties as assigned.

The VVRC Coordinator(s) will act as the sole “staffing” for the VVRC. Liaisons between the VVRC Coordinator(s) and any of the Emergency Operations Centers will be served by the assigned VOAD or COAD representatives (typically the Chair or Vice-Chair).

### **Direction and Control**

The NJVOAD Board shall be the central point of control for all operations regarding this annex. NJVOAD shall have the NJVOAD Chair or his/her designee to coordinate activities with other agencies, departments, and jurisdictions.

### **Lines of Succession**

The lines of succession for this annex are as follows:

1. NJVOAD Board of Trustees
2. VVRC Coordinator

### **Administration and Logistics**

The VVRC Coordinator will be prepared to activate the VVRC based upon the direction from the NJVOAD Board.

The VVRC Coordinator shall report to the NJVOAD Board to coordinate with those outside agencies or jurisdictions that need volunteer support.

The VVRC Coordinator shall provide regular updates to the NJVOAD Board as to the number of volunteers processed and participating member organizations.

### **Annex Development and Maintenance**

This annex shall be reviewed and updated by the NJVOAD Board at least every two years, or upon the conclusion of the activation of this annex.

### **Pre- Incident Check List:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The NJVOAD Board shall appoint a Virtual Volunteer Reception Center Coordinator.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The Virtual Volunteer Reception Center Coordinator will navigate through the HELPNJNOW.ORG website to make sure all links are accessible and functioning properly.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The Virtual Volunteer Reception Center Coordinator will access the Volgistics account to make sure the account is set up and organized and all login codes are valid.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The Virtual Volunteer Reception Center Coordinator shall send the current access and training information to NJVOAD member organizations who will be utilizing Volgistics.

**Incident Check List:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The NJVOAD Board shall be responsible for activating this annex and contacting the Virtual Volunteer Reception Center Coordinator.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The Virtual Volunteer Reception Center Coordinator shall be responsible for sending out the current access and training information to NJVOAD member organizations who will be utilizing Volgistics, if it had not already been distributed before the incident.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The Virtual Volunteer Reception Center Coordinator should remain in constant contact with the NJVOAD Board on updates, issues and requests.

### **Post Incident Check List:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The Virtual Volunteer Reception Center Coordinator shall notify participating member organizations of the approaching demobilization, so as to copy and export all information from Volgistics that might be needed for the ongoing recovery process.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The Virtual Volunteer Reception Center Coordinator shall collect pertinent information from HELPNJNOW.ORG and the Volgistics account to document the type and volume of usage.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ After Action Reports shall be due within 10 days of the annex being deactivated.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ The Virtual Volunteer Reception Center Coordinator shall collect feedback from participating member organizations, in order to best assess any procedures or logistics that need to be changed before the next incident.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ This annex shall be updated, if deemed necessary, within 45 days of the deactivation of this annex.