

## Welcome & Intro

- The purpose of this call is to gain situational awareness regarding plans for deployment and current operations from each VOAD member and partner, as well as provide local VOAD and LTRG networks with an opportunity to share what their unmet needs are.
- **Key Areas of Interest:**
  - **What *specific* activities is your agency undertaking to prepare for deployment within a COVID-19 environment, and how will these actions impact your service provision?**
    - Ex: Implementing social distancing measures will reduce how many survivors a mobile feeding unit can feed
  - **What lessons has your agency already learned from a deployment within a COVID-19 environment?**
    - Ex: Polk County tornado
  - **What are the COVID-19 related shortfalls that your agency anticipates will impact your capacity to respond?**
    - Ex: Decrease in volunteer engagement; shortage of PPE
  - **What types of processes/policies/support will local jurisdictions need to have in place in order for your agency to feel comfortable responding?**
    - Ex: Handwashing stations for muck & gut operations

## Texas Division of Emergency Management – Disaster Task Force

- Voluntary Agency Liaison Report: The Disaster Taskforce continues to monitor donations (PPE, equipment, etc.) being accepted through <https://www.texas.gov/covid19> , and continuing to support Polk County in their recovery efforts.
- First LTR group meetup was held earlier this week and focused on current recovery activities, lessons learned, response during the COVID-19 environment, and planning for future disasters.

## Texas Division of Emergency Management – Mass Care

- SOC is operating 7 days a week. Current largest mission – nursing home testing across the state
- TDEM Mass Care continues to revise evacuation and hurricane shelter plans and annexes with Emergency Management Council partners and local jurisdictions. Many jurisdictions are exploring non-congregate sheltering (ex: hotels)

## Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

- Disaster assessment and recovery agents are involved in the distribution of medical supplies
- Over 14,000 masks have been created and disseminated
- Preparations are underway to assist in establishing local food drives around the state

## Texas Department of Agriculture

- Currently collaborating with partners to extend waivers. 3 additional waivers for the school meal programs were extended throughout the summer (non-congregate meals, waived mealtimes, the ability of parents to pick-up meals without students present). Extensions are now through the end of August.
- TDA continues to coordinate and assist with HHSC's project for school age students
- A taskforce continues to connect farmers to distributors, schools, and food banks to bridge coverage gaps

## **FEMA Region VI**

- VAL Report – Crisis Counseling has been approved and the process has begun. Flyers have been released and all partners are encouraged to disseminate the material within their communities. The toll-free COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line phone number is 833.986.1919.
- FEMA coordinated with 11 organizations regarding water donations and the resource is currently depleted
- A national sheltering workgroup for COVID-19 focused activities has been established focusing on creating guidelines regarding congregate and non-congregate sheltering. Official guidance is anticipated to be complete and released in July.

## **General Land Office**

- GLO continues to build homes, infrastructure, and work on mitigation projects for the 2015 and 2017 disasters. 2018 – 2019 disaster funding (including Hurricane Imelda) is now in the pipeline.
- The GLO is working on adapting Annexes and other plans for recovery targeted at the future hurricane season

## **Adventist Community Services**

- Maintains readiness to respond to disasters though there are difficulties regarding volunteer shortages and training volunteers on the new guidelines

## **American Red Cross**

- Continues to adjust based on the ever-shifting shelter-in-place orders around the state
- Shifted to first focus sheltering within hotels (especially those outside 100 and 500-year flood plains), then dormitories, and lastly traditional shelters (though ideally, no larger than 50 per shelter)
- Working with vendors to plan pre-packaged meals to promote safe social distances as well as other measures to discourage congregation
- Lessons learned from most recent response: Team functionality for disaster management and operations with largely inexperienced staff and volunteers on largely inexperienced with virtual platforms
- Purchasing card limits for hotels have been adapted
- Virtual financial assistance model: ARC launched an immediate assistance program to limit in-person contact.
- Shortfalls – volunteer availability, volunteer comfort in responding within a COVID-19 environment, volunteer and public apprehension or anxiety. Mental health support is a large factor.
- The ARC has launched a virtual family assistance center with information and access to mental/emotional support. Specific focus: grief counseling for those who have lost a loved one due to COVID-19. ARC welcomes partners providing similar services to collaborate. For more information, visit <https://www.redcross.org/virtual-family-assistance-center.html>

## **Catholic Charities – Galveston/Houston**

- CC continues to operate at remote locations with limited staffing
- Will begin seeing clients in office in June

## **Crisis Response Ministry**

- During response from the last disaster (within Polk County), a massive need for mental and emotional care was readily apparent. Anxiety was a prevalent condition throughout the community due to the disaster as well as pandemic concerns. Chaplains spoke to 555 people within the community and around congregate areas (EOCs, PODs, walking affected neighborhoods). COVID-19 environment made counseling difficult due to maintaining safe distances and trainings will continue to be adapted.

### **Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, Texas District**

- Partnered with Center of Hope and currently coordinating with contractors to provide repairs in Polk County
- Current challenge: volunteers are hesitant to engage during the current pandemic

### **Lutheran Social Services Disaster Response**

- Federal DCMP will continue for Harvey through the end of June (remotely).
- National guidelines and policies are being revised and implemented on volunteer work, deployments, emotional & spiritual care, and post-disaster conditions during a health crisis

### **Mission Presbytery**

- Working on areas of food crisis, as well as challenges concerning finding suitable quarantine environments for refugees and asylum seekers

### **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance**

- Emotional Support training programs continue to be adapted to an online platform. Partner organizations are encouraged to engage. For more information, visit <https://pda.pcusa.org/page/esc-webinar/>
- [House Bill 3616 – Faith-Based Response During times of Disaster](#): Currently 11 VOAD members have completed the survey sent out in February. Jim will begin calling and interviewing individual VOAD membership as the insight garnered from partner organization's experience and knowledge is incredibly valuable.

### **Southern Baptist of TX Convention – Disaster Relief**

- Preparing for social distancing guidelines and the impact on feeding, volunteer actions, muck/gut, repairs
- Exploring daily volunteer medical check stations (temperature-taking, isolation areas, etc.)
- 1-800 hotline for assessments via telephone after disasters is being established
- Will not be deploying out of state or requesting teams of volunteers from other states during the pandemic
- Onalaska tornado / Polk County disaster response lessons learned: volunteer housing shortages due to space, work (especially mucking and gutting) took much longer than usual, feeding during social distancing was made easier due to Serv Safe practices, and challenges were created by fewer volunteers per team as well as working with an overall decrease in volunteers on location.
- Disaster observations: Public (and many other agencies) not observing social distancing standards
- Anticipated needs for future disaster: facemasks, suits for muck-out operations, acquiring the proper PPE with smaller budgets due to donation constraints.
- Additional item under consideration: Sanitation at housing facilities (including shower units).

### **Texas Crisis Resiliency Team**

- Field observations in two recent disasters (New Orleans and Polk Co tornado) were made and reports are being created. Lessons learned and challenges observed will be shared in June and information will be distributed through Damian to the membership
- Adaptations of spiritual support during disaster and pandemic concerns are being analyzed (ie: Hospital Chaplains adapting to virtual visits)

### **The Salvation Army**

- Feeding operations have greatly increased across the country – 4.4 meals directly related to COVID-19 response
- Southern Territory – formed workgroups (feeding, warehousing, social services, emotional / spiritual care, etc) to create adapted response plans with a special focus on exploring what needs stockpiled in order to respond to disasters during the current pandemic crisis.

- TSA is coming across many organizations (and individuals) that would like to partner and is currently adapting their volunteer vetting process
- Focused on plans for staging fixed sites and bringing more personnel / volunteers per deployment to accommodate community health concerns onsite (hand cleaning stations, crowd control, etc.)
- Largest current concern: housing of survivors and volunteers for non-congregate sheltering
- Local spontaneous volunteers were previously only used in backhouse tasks (ie: warehouse) without public interaction, but plans are underway on how to better utilize these local manpower resources

#### **United Methodist Committee on Relief – Rio Texas Conference**

- Houston and Dallas conferences are presently in transition; other TX conference are actively working on adapting guidelines for response teams
- Planning is underway regarding operating with reduced numbers of volunteers as well as shorter working hours.
- Exploring offering supplies and guides to survivors for mucking out homes individually.
- Preparing to train community volunteers with Just-In-Time training for clean-up operations.
- Currently working on expanding the supplies of tarps and other cleaning/PPE resources within the warehouse. Rio Texas would appreciate VOAD membership collaboration and resource suggestions
- Actively trying to work closer with local churches in community affected areas to meet their community needs

#### **Americares**

- Not currently deploying volunteers and plans are underway to de-mobilize Texas support in June
- Americares has dispersed thousands of masks through other organizations within the state

#### **OneStar Foundation**

- In conjunction with the Office of the Governor, OneStar Foundation announced the launch of the Texas COVID Relief Fund on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Charitable contribution will help provide vital resources to organizations across the state working to support the economic recovery of Texas communities. Funds raised will be distributed through grants focused on the areas of community and economic development, healthcare, and education. For more information, visit <http://onestarfoundation.org/txcovidfund/>
- Texas nonprofits are encouraged to provide feedback on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to their organizations by completing to the statewide [Nonprofit COVID-19 Impact Survey](#). OneStar will use responses from this survey to identify urgent needs and guide future approaches to funding.
- OneStar has executed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to utilize AmeriCorps members for contact tracing.
- Nominations for the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Governor’s Volunteer Awards are being accepted now through Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup>. For more information, visit <http://onestarfoundation.org/governors-volunteer-awards/>

#### **Samaritan’s Purse**

- Lessons learned and challenges from disaster response in Polk County (and 4 other states): longer deployments, slower work completion due to untrained volunteers, distancing practices and a number of other barriers to efficiency. Additional challenges included keeping team sizes smaller as well as supplying PPE for volunteers

#### **Texas Gulf Coast Regional VOAD**

- Continue to work with local LTRGs within Greater Houston

#### **Aerobridge**

- Aerobridge is on standby and currently awaiting missions (270 aircrafts are on standby in Texas)
- Peer organizations are encouraged to request a mission through the website at [www.AEROBRIDGE.org](http://www.AEROBRIDGE.org)
- Example operation from last week – 5 aircrafts flew 3,000 facemasks across states.

- Walter Martin – liaison Officer for VOADs and NGOs - 803-378-0066

**Next Meeting:** May 29, 2020 @ 11:00am.