



Engaging Volunteer Groups Serving Vulnerable Populations

Engage the faith community:

In most communities, faith congregations have the volunteers and established relationships to effectively reach out to vulnerable populations. Many have ministries targeting elders, persons with disabilities, homebound, and the chronically and terminally ill. Some congregations may also have ministries with cultural communities with limited English communication skills. Several religious denominations at the local, state, and national level also play a large role in disaster preparedness and response efforts.

Connect with your local volunteer center:

Volunteer centers connect people with opportunities to serve and make a difference in their communities. The centers work with many community and faith-based organizations and are local experts at engaging volunteers to meet and support local needs. They can help identify volunteers that you will need to target and serve vulnerable populations.

Volunteer centers in Florida work closely with county emergency managers, either as a county lead or support organization in managing volunteers and donations during times of disasters. Many volunteer centers also work with community and faith-based organizations in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts through their local Community/Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD/VOAD) and/or a local Long Term Recovery Organization/Committee (LTRO/C).

Participate in your local Community/Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD/VOAD) and Long-Term Recovery Organization/Committee (LTRO/C):

A COAD or VOAD is a coalition of organizations that share a common mission to support the needs of survivors following a disaster. These coalitions help facilitate communication among partners to ensure resources and services are coordinated efficiently. An LTRO/C has many of the same partner organizations of a COAD or VOAD, but with an emphasis in providing recovery assistance, such as long-term housing or home repair, to disaster survivors. In some counties, some coalitions function as both a COAD/VOAD and an LTRO/C.

Join the Florida Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Network Program:

Florida MRC units are community based and function as a way to locally organize and utilize volunteers, health care practitioners, and others, who want to donate their time and expertise to promote healthy living throughout the year and prepare for and respond to emergencies. Volunteers provide services to vulnerable populations during both "blue sky" activities and emergency incidents and events. Florida MRC volunteers assist with public health activities including school health screenings, vaccination campaigns, public health fairs, and public health presentations.

Supporting Agencies:

Florida Department of Health for Emergency Support Function, ESF-8 (Health & Medical), for Florida MRC Network Program, and DOH CH 110 Volunteers.

Volunteer Florida, Florida Department of Elder Affairs, and American Red Cross for ESF-15 (Volunteers & Donations) Volunteers.

Additional Information: The following resource(s) provides more information on engaging volunteer groups during disasters and other emergencies:

To find a volunteer center in your community, check out the list of Florida's volunteer centers at: <http://www.volunteerflorida.org/volnow>

Please contact local volunteer organizations or the following websites for additional information.

www.floridamrc.com

www.servfl.com

www.volunteerflorida.org

<http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/volunteers.php>

www.redcross.org

For more information on ESF-8 and ESF-15 go to:

<http://www.floridadisaster.org/emtools/esf.htm>