

Volunteer Coordination Workgroup Meeting Notes

February 26, 2025

1:30 pm - 3:20 pm

Links:

- [Slide Deck](#)
- [Volunteer Job Descriptions](#)

Attendees:

- Andi Cook
- Vlad Ibarra
- Katherine Tong
- Kiva Maxwell
- Jackie Miller
- Paul Green
- Jesus Rodriguez
- Samir Idrees
- Larry Satterwhite
- Tonya Clarke
- Tori Trevino
- Amber Barrow
- Larry Satterwhite
- Rachell Cook
- Roman Aguilar *
- Brooke Campbell *
- Robert Nnake *
- Thomas Holstien *
- Trevor Barnett *
- Gary Flaharty *

Process Overview:

- Presentation also given to Houston Responds
- Potential Unaffiliated Volunteers OR "Spontaneous Volunteers"
 - Spontaneous Volunteers: volunteers that are not committed to volunteer prior to a disaster, but do so when an emergency happens.
 - Potential Unaffiliated Volunteers: volunteers that would be likely to commit to volunteering in an emergency situation
- Directing volunteers to where they are needed the most

- VOADs and NGOs will identify these needs and send their volunteers to these areas

4 Goals:

1. Establish Targeted Pools
 - a. **Leader: Robert Nnake**
 - b. Examples of targeted pools:
 - i. Hospitals, corporations, unions
 - ii. These are organized groups that have incentives to volunteer and have a large group of potential volunteers
 - iii. **Other orgs to include:** CCRC Corporate Community Relations Council, civic clubs, churches, AARP, unions, major employers, GHP, Tommy Holstein
2. Refine the Process for Recruiting, Placing, and Assigning Unaffiliated Volunteers with VOADs, NGOs, and Jurisdictions- **Volunteer Houston Experience**
 - a. **Leader: Andi Cook**
 - b. Recruiting
 - i. Volunteering should be an appealing experience
 - c. Placing
 - i. Volunteers need to be assigned to volunteer jobs that they have the skills to do
 - d. Assigning
 - e. **Other orgs to include:** CERT, AARP, CM Carter, Astros Foundation, and Roman Aguilar
3. GSD & Deliver Great Volunteer Experiences
 - a. **Leader: Brooke Campbell**
 - b. Volunteers expect a fulfilling and meaningful volunteer experience
 - c. **Other orgs to include:** Catholic Charities- Mark Osbourne, Santo Marino- Baker Ripley, Katherine Tong- Food Bank, UH Student Volunteers, Trevor Barnett
4. Volunteer Capacity and Locations
 - a. **Leader: Gary Flaharty**
 - b. VOADs and NGOs need to be in a position to recruit volunteers and provide experiences
 - c. To place volunteers to experiences, an organization needs to oversee the volunteer opportunities
 - d. **Other orgs to include:** Houston Responds, CCDR, Tanya Clark, Vlad Ibarra Roman Aguilar, Tool Bank

Committees:

- Goal 1: Recruitment
 - Baker Ripley Staff Member
- Goal 2: Refine the Process for Recruiting, Placing, and Assigning
- Goal 3: Volunteer Experience
 - Trevor Barnett
- Goal 4: Capacity Building
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- Jackie Miller at-large

Other Issues:

- Scalability from “Hyper-Local Disasters” to Declared Disasters
 - Some disasters are not county-wide emergency events, but the volunteer base should be able to adapt to this
- Support Short-, Intermediate-, and Long-Term Recovery
- Responsive & Flexible
 - Provide quick response to disasters
 - Provide various resources in an efficient manner and respond to specific needs
- Practiced, Drilled
 - The system should be tested before the next major disaster to ensure it works
- Address Multiple Jurisdictions
 - Counties, cities, and other municipalities are included in our area
- Year-Round Engagement to Maintain Readiness and Management of Blue-Sky Work
 - Volunteer groups and

Divide and Conquer!

Feedback on Design:

- Positive feedback. People are on board!
- Brooke: Do you envision work on all these happening at the same time? Should one goal be accomplished before the others?
 - Gary: We need to make progress on all 4 to make progress in the total system. Need to make somewhat even progress on the 4 goals.
 - Robert: Can and should happen concurrently. To accomplish this before hurricane season 2025, they need to happen concurrently
- Brooke Campbell: Recruiting volunteers and getting them to commit requires their strong buy-in and they need comprehensive plans to fully commit.
- Jackie Miller: Development of talking points for all group members to be communicating consistent information and set consistent expectations.

- Brooke Campbell: Take these goals and convert them to one-page talking points
- Robert Nnake: These expectations will be laid out clearly based on feedback from these group meetings

Discussion

Goal 1: Establish Targeted Pools of Potential Unaffiliated Spontaneous Volunteers (USVs)

- Reaching out to community groups, employers, unions, churches and faith communities
- Establish protocols for soliciting USVs for short-term and long-term recovery
- Discussion: Groups to be leveraged:
 - United Way
 - Greater Houston Partnership
 - Houston Responds
 - Universities
 - Fraternities and Sororities
 - Education Groups
 - Interfaith Relations at Interfaith Ministries
 - Superneighborhoods and Civic Clubs
 - Outreach to these groups would do well from a “help your neighbor” standpoint
 - This would also help accomplish Goal 4 of building capacity
 - CERT
 - Jackie Miller: Medical Reserve Corps and CERT get activated through jurisdictions
 - Medical Reserve Corps

Goal 2: Refine the Process for Recruiting, Placing and Assigning Unaffiliated Volunteers with VOADs, NGOs, and Jurisdictions

- Disaster website
- Filtering and assignment
 - Visiting the disaster webpage should be an enjoyable experience
 - Remote/onsite
 - Distance from home
 - Time of Service
 - Universal Job Descriptions
 - These have been shared with VOADs to ensure the positions have been described accurately and that the appropriate necessary skills are listed
- Generic job descriptions for self-placement

- Handoff to VOAD, NGO, and jurisdiction

Goal 3: GDF and Deliver Great Volunteer Experiences

- Handoff from VH
- Onboarding to VOADs, NGOs, and jurisdictions
 - These coordinating entities need to be timely with communications to ensure volunteers remain committed
 - Safety briefing: tools are provided, skills are taught as necessary
- Solicit Feedback
- Dashboard
 - To track who showed up
- Adjust and repeat
- Discussion: Updates from Samir about Volunteer Houston
 - Banner to show the name of the disaster
 - Section based on job descriptions
 - Before seeing the job descriptions, potential volunteers will filter based on their skills and preferences for their volunteer experience
 - Sign up for an agency to volunteer with
 - Select a time
 - Brooke: is there a follow up with a volunteer?
 - Samir: there are plans to make an after-disaster survey to solicit feedback
 - Will need volunteers to create the survey to get the right kinds of feedback
 - Brooke: Is this disaster volunteer sign up separate from the regular website?
 - Samir: yes, this is a separate module
 - Agencies:
 - Will need to be trained on how to use the website in blue sky days
 - Retraining may be necessary
 - Management of Change:
 - Will need to have people who maintain this website and ensure that the relevant parties are able to use it
- Brooke: Get a focus group of volunteer coordinators of what resources and directives are needed to ensure positive volunteer experiences
 - Leverage VOADs & LTRCs for this purpose

Goal 4: Build Capacity to Accept Unaffiliated Spontaneous Volunteers in the Right Locations

- Solicit and train site leaders and establish processes at VOADs and NGOs and jurisdictions
- Build resilient community resources

- Helping neighbors help neighbors
 - Developing “site leaders” throughout the community who know how to respond to an emergency and manage volunteers
- Direct VOADs and NGOs to the right locations
- Capacity Building
 - Establish Standards and Practices, Recruit and Train Leaders
 - Training Civic Organizations, Unions, and the Faith Community, among others, to respond to
 - Their community, first responders, and the vulnerable
 - First responders take care of everyone else, these groups can take care of them and their homes
 - Neighbors
 - Redirecting neighborhoods with less pressing needs to areas that need additional assistance
 - The larger community
- Addressing High SVI Communities
 - We can use data to help target our response to areas that may need it most and may have the least capacity to respond
 - We can direct VOADs and NGOs to respond to these areas
- Discussion:
 - Vlad Ibarra from Houston Ready can help with this piece
 - Volunteer Houston could be an early recruiting tool to make “pods” of people who would have leaders that would act as lieutenants to the captains (emergency-related employees) of the pods. They would all be trained extensively into how to manage USVs
 - CERT volunteers are one potential group to train for this
- Who would be the site supervisor to the post through Volunteer Houston?
 - Every needs post would have a pre-determined point of contact from the group that posts it
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Next Meeting

- March 26th 1:30-3:30 Location TBD
- Meeting Times to be set for the 4th Wednesdays

Other Notes:

May 17th: Extreme Weather Ready Workshop at George R. Brown for the region. This could be an opportunity to present the new platform to the public.

CERT: How can CERT groups work under some direction?

- Jackie Miller: Each jurisdiction trains its own CERT groups. Groups can also work with MRCs.
- CERT coordinator for jurisdiction, Jennifer Sueter for Harris County, will reach out to CERT groups. CERT coordinators from other OEM offices can also be contacted to activate their CERT groups.