



TEXAS GULF COAST REGIONAL  
VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS  
ACTIVE IN DISASTER

**FUNCTIONS**

**IN**

**DISASTER**

VERSION  
OCTOBER 6, 2022



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## PREFACE

The Texas Gulf Coast Regional Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (TGCRVOAD) recognizes that all sectors of society must work together to foster self-reliant communities. We believe that it is important to facilitate partnerships between local, regional, state, and federal governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as for-profit corporations, foundations, and educational institutions. Our members, the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOADs), represent a powerful force of goodwill with leaders who lay the groundwork to make communities more resilient in times of need. VOADs deliver hope for a more resilient and positive future.

TGCRVOAD consists of nonprofit organizations, community-based groups, government agencies, and for-profit organizations that are active in disaster response in Austin, **Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Walker, Waller, and Wharton counties**. The TGCRVOAD's target audience is disaster response and recovery organizations. It strives to help coordinate money, materials, and human resources effectively.

## FUNCTIONS IN DISASTER

The TGCRVOAD coordinates effective preparedness and rapid response to disasters or human-caused incidents. The key to effective recovery is a rapid and well-planned response. This document, Functions in Disasters, is intended to assist with coordination, collaboration, and communication efforts and to provide guidance regarding the operations of the TGCRVOAD. Functions in Disaster is meant to be scalable depending

on disaster classification, magnitude, and areas of impacts. The TGCRVOAD is prepared to activate based on requests for assistance to assess or address reported or anticipated unmet, per disaster classification. Functions in Disasters describes specific actions taken before, during, and after a disaster.

TGCRVOAD shall respond to disasters that affect the H-GAC 13-county region in the following ways (in no specific order):

- The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, or their designee, supports the County Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) as activated and requested. The TGCRVOAD representative acts as the liaison between the EOC and the VOADs.
- Notify the VOADs of threats or disasters using TGCRVOAD's AlertMedia platform.
- VOADs assists in the disaster response based on each member's or partner's provision of service and capacity and submits Situation Reports (SitReps) to capture impact/needs.
- The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, or their designee provides updated information on situation and response activities to the EOC at regular intervals as necessitated by changes in service, location, needs, etc.

TGCRVOAD is committed to responding to both declared and non-declared disasters. The protocols and response will vary based on impact, capacity, and resources.

## ACTIVATION TRIGGERS AND CONSIDERATIONS

	DISASTER CATEGORIES	
	Declared Disasters <sup>1</sup>	Undeclared Disasters <sup>2</sup>
<b>ACTIVATION TRIGGERS</b>		
<i>Request from State, Federal, local government, or elected officials</i>	√	√
<i>Request from local leadership from within any of the H-GAC 13-County region</i>	√	√
<i>Request from a member organization or community group asks for support.</i>		√
<b>CONSIDERATION FOR ACTIVATION</b>		
<i>Activation of the County or City Office of Emergency Management / Emergency Operations Center (EOC)</i>	√	
<i>The magnitude and scope of the disaster</i>	√	√
<i>The size of the geographic area impacted</i>	√	√
<i>The number of persons, businesses, and public services affected</i>	√	√
<i>Verified long-term recovery needs</i>	√	√

**Note<sup>1</sup>: Disasters that are federally declared.** In instances where a Major Federal Disaster Declaration is issued, additional resources become available for disaster survivors, businesses, and public entities. Once a disaster has been declared, individuals are able to apply for FEMA assistance.

**Note<sup>2</sup>: Disasters that are not federally declared.** Without a Major Federal Disaster Declaration, there is no outside assistance for individuals. The Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management will work with local partners and non-profit organizations to address recovery needs for the community.

## CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

Initial disaster response efforts begin with local jurisdictions working with local emergency management agencies. Local jurisdictions can effectively employ sufficient resources for most emergencies/disasters without any outside assistance. After local disaster response resources are exhausted or jurisdictions recognize that they do not have the resources needed, they will request assistance.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), such as voluntary organizations, faith-based, and grassroots organizations, provide specialized services and expertise during disasters. These organizations can help in areas where the government cannot provide the needed assistance. By using defined tasks and standardized processes, the TGCRVOAD will promote pre-disaster planning, facilitate training, and

provide functional field procedures that are essential in achieving the mission and purpose of the TGCRVOAD.

TGCRVOAD organizations are committed to coordinating to provide an equitable service delivery to minimize the duplication of efforts and benefits. For these efforts to be successful, local government, state, nonprofit, faith-based, and volunteer organizations must collaborate, coordinate, and integrate their response capabilities.

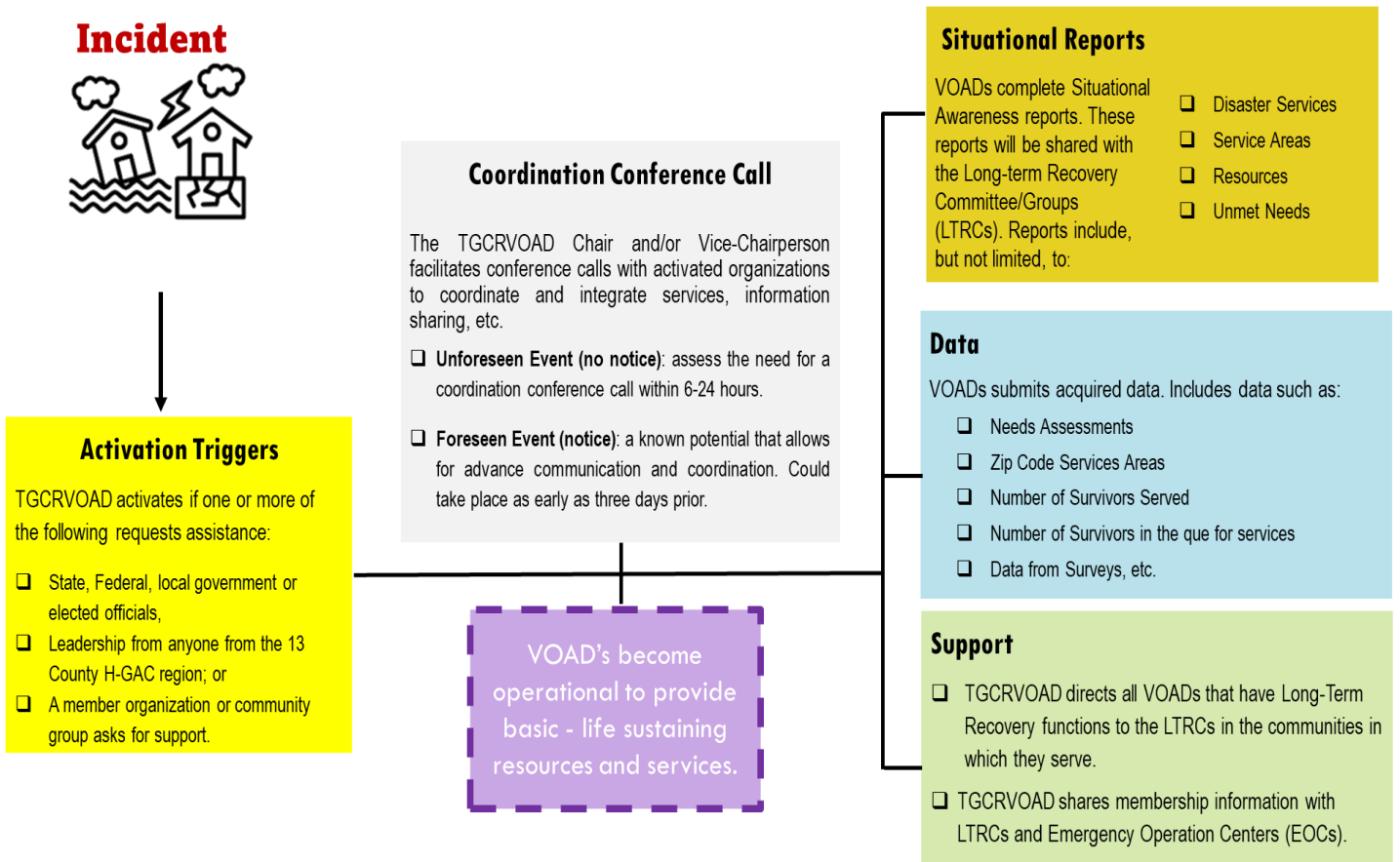
Coordinating VOAD activities before, during, and after a natural disaster or human-caused incident (disaster) allows for a more efficient response to disasters and reduces unnecessary, duplicative efforts. Coordination and communication lead to a more rapid community recovery following an incident.

## TGCRVOAD'S COORDINATION WORKFLOW

Any local government official seeking the assistance of the TGCRVOAD needs to contact the Chairperson and/or Co-Chairperson via phone or at [Tgcrvoad.chair@gmail.com](mailto:Tgcrvoad.chair@gmail.com) to determine if the TGCRVOAD can help during said disaster. Information such as the below may be needed to determine if the TGCRVOAD can help is as follows:

- a. Location of the Disaster?
  - b. When did the Disaster occur?
  - c. How has the Disaster effected your area?
  - d. What is needed to aid in the Disaster Response/relief?
1. Once the Chair and Vice-Chairpersons have determined that the Disaster is in fact a qualifying event for TGCRVOAD per the Functions in Disaster document, the Executive Committee will be notified of a called meeting that needs to be held within 2 hours of the incoming phone call. During said meeting, the initial needs of the disaster will be determined, and the **Activation Level Notification** system will be implemented. A general membership meeting will be scheduled to determine capacity and assistance.
  2. Once the Executive Committee has met to determine the course of action needed, a mass text and/or email will be sent, using the AlertMedia system, to all organizational contacts and/or individuals who have registered for this communication. The mass text or email will include all her pertinent information.

# Exhibit



## VOAD ACTIVITIES BY DISASTER PHASE

VOAD's Role in the Phases of Disaster VOAD strengthens area-wide disaster coordination by sharing programs, policies, information, joint planning, and training. Therefore, VOADs can be involved in all four phases of emergency management.

PREPAREDNESS ONGOING	SHORT-TERM DAYS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Convene bi-monthly meetings</li> <li>o Pre/Post - Disaster Recovery Planning</li> <li>o Partnership building and networking – help VOADs to get and stay connected</li> <li>o Provide advocacy</li> <li>o Communicate Resources, Events, Activities</li> <li>o Community capacity and resilience building               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Community Engagement - 13 counties</li> <li>o Organizational Engagement</li> </ul> </li> <li>o Share in preparedness exercises with HCOEM               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Conduct perinate trainings                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Physiological First Aid</li> <li>o Crisis Cleanup</li> <li>o Disaster Casework</li> <li>o Emergency Preparedness Training</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>o Determine / Engage key partners</li> <li>o Share in determining roles and responsibilities/protocols with HCOEM</li> <li>o Engage Behavioral Health</li> <li>o Develop canned communication templates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Convene bi-monthly meetings</li> <li>o Support Mass Care/Sheltering</li> <li>o VOADs to coordinate initial response activities               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Disaster Casework - Outreach / Canvassing, /Well-being checks</li> <li>o Initial Triage - identify community impact and needs</li> <li>o Address basic human needs</li> <li>o Identify community resources</li> <li>o Activate Crisis Clean-up</li> <li>o Assess and understand risks and vulnerabilities</li> </ul> </li> <li>o Data collection of impact, needs, home damage, business damage</li> <li>o Determine gaps in services from survey and other data sets</li> <li>o Initiate Donations Management</li> <li>o Muck and gut, Clean-up, Mold Remediation</li> <li>o Address behavioral and spiritual health assistance</li> <li>o Coordinate and Implement Volunteer Reception Center</li> <li>o Spontaneous Volunteer Management/Coordination</li> <li>o Coordinate/engage with other county leaders</li> <li>o Disaster Services for Animals</li> <li>o PSAs</li> </ul>
INTERMEDIATE WEEKS-MONTHS	LONG-TERM MONTHS-YEARS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Convene bi-monthly meetings</li> <li>o Begin Transition to LTRC – transition collected data, reports, etc.</li> <li>o VOADs support LTRCs</li> <li>o Convene smaller meetings with other counties</li> <li>o Spontaneous Volunteer Management/Coordination</li> <li>o PSA's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Convene bi-monthly meetings</li> <li>o VOADs support LTRCs</li> <li>o Convene regular meetings</li> <li>o Convene smaller meetings with other counties</li> <li>o PSAs</li> </ul>



## TYPES OF DISASTERS FOR TGCRVOAD RESPONSE

The TGCRVOAD is steady-fast to respond to a diverse type of disasters as noted.

Natural Disasters	Man-Made Disasters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Droughts/ Extreme Heat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active Shooters</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fires</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hazardous Materials &amp; Chemical Emergencies</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Floods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Health Emergencies</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hurricanes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Radiological Emergencies</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tornados</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structure Fires</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tropical Storms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terrorism</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Winter Storms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utility Outages</li> </ul>

### DISASTER VARIATIONS FOR RESPONSE

TGCRVOAD may activate for both **foreseen** and **unforeseen** disasters. The difference relates to the degree of notice the TGCRVOAD may have to plan a disaster response before the disaster occurs.

**Foreseen:** If circumstances allow for notice before the threat, the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, or their designee will schedule one or more Coordination Conference Call(s) for VOADs and brief attendees on the threat, the anticipated unmet needs, and the need to plan and coordinate a response.

**Unforeseen:** As circumstances dictate, the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, or their designee will coordinate with OEM to assess the need for a Coordination Conference Call with VOADS as soon as possible after the event (generally, within 6-24 hours). The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, or their designee will schedule a Coordination Conference Call for VOADs and brief attendees on the event/threat, unmet needs, and coordinating responses.

### SHORT-TERM RESPONSE / RECOVERY

**TGCRVOAD will:**

- offer technical support to, and collaborate with, local emergency management, VOADs, and other key

stakeholders to form/activate a Long-Term Recovery Group (LTRG).

- call stakeholders, which includes government partners, non-profits, and
- for-profits businesses, to the table and to become participating members and supporters of the LTRG.
- regularly engage TGCRVOAD members in discussions about unmet-needs trends and needed resources.

### ALERT NOTIFICATION LEVEL SYSTEM

- TGCRVOAD leadership will share activation statuses using an Alert Notification Level System. The alert notification levels are shorthand for activation and operation readiness. Depending on the timing of the disaster or whether the disaster is foreseen or unforeseen, the request for assistance and the required response, VOADs could move linearly from alert level 0 to 1 to 2 to 3 **OR** jump directly into level 3.
- Note that VOADs could be in multiple alert levels at once. For example, we could be transferring responsibilities for disaster response to the LTRG (level 4), responding to a disaster (level 3), and monitoring or standing by for another response (Level 1 or Level 2).

The chart below outlines the general activities that the TGCRVOAD and VOADs take during responses to foreseen and unforeseen disasters. **Additional information under the communications section.**

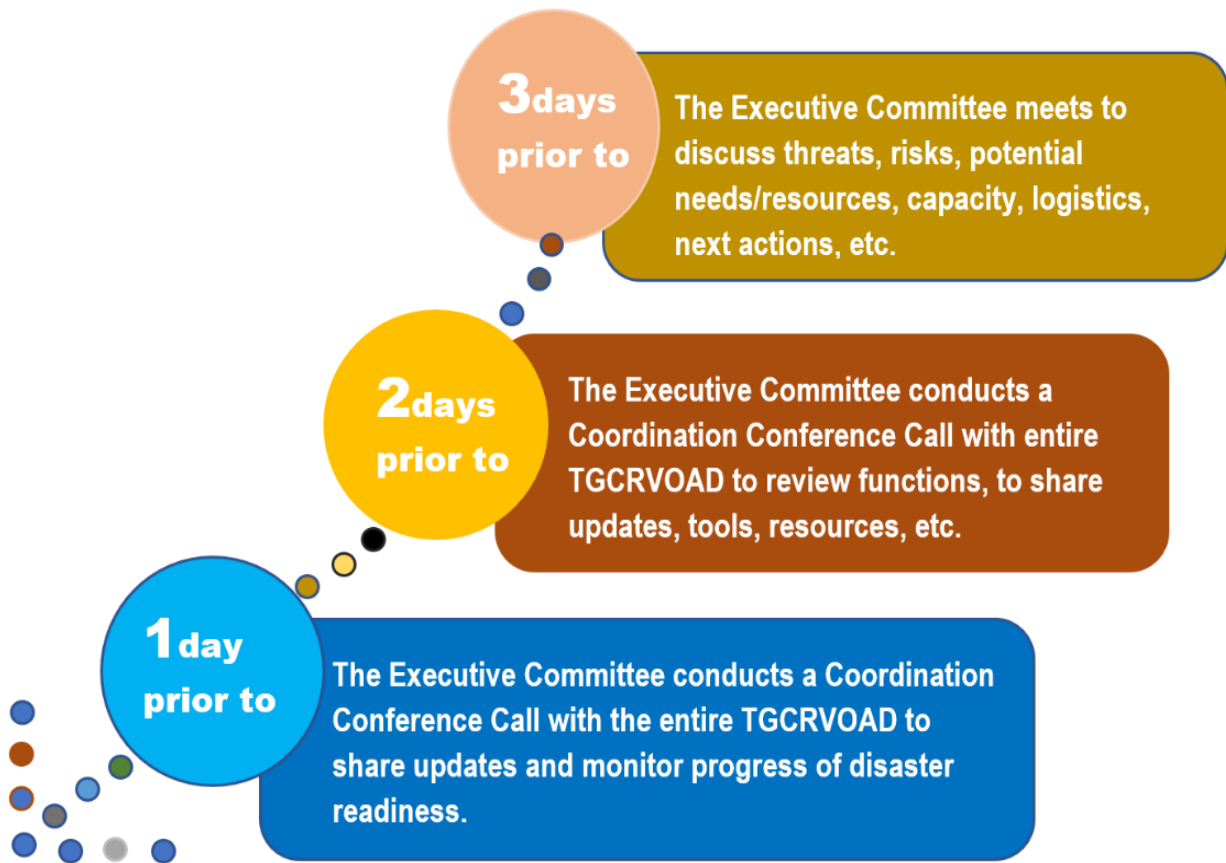
	TGCRVOAD	VOADs (TGCR Members and Partners)
Level 0 Normal Operations		
Level 1 Situational Awareness	Monitor the threat and identify the need to escalate activation level	Monitor the threat
Level 2 Standby	Monitor VOAD activity and assist with coordination activities	VOADs stage resources and prepare to respond quickly as Requests for Assistance are made
Level 3 Activation	Conduct Coordination Conference Calls – SitReps and Coordination; Coordination with VOADs, LTRCs, OEMs	Provide periodic SitReps and participate in Coordination Conference Calls
Level 4 Transition to LTRC	Coordinate activities of VOADs and LTRCs; Support LTRCs	Ensure clean handoff to LTRCs Support LTRCs

## COORDINATION CONFERENCE CALLS

The TGCRVOAD Coordination Conference Calls serve to:

- Coordinate, collaborate and communicate situational awareness between members, government and unaffiliated non-profits or for-profits.
- Encourage or request that members pre-position personnel/volunteers or recovery centers with resources when requested.
- Reinforce the coordination role of TGCRVOAD to minimize self-deployment and duplication of efforts and resources.
- Determine the need for TGCRVOAD activation.

Coordination Conference Calls are scheduled before a foreseen event and immediately after any foreseen or unforeseen event. The frequency can be reduced depending on the need for coordination. Minimally, for foreseen disasters, the below guideline will be used.



**TYPICAL AGENDA - TGC RVOAD COORDINATION CALL(S)**

Within 48 to 72 hours of a large-scale disaster's occurrence, a meeting will be held to coordinate relief/response efforts. The TGC RVOAD Secretary or the Chairperson will send a notification with meeting or conference call details.

- **Situation Brief**
  - Share the TGC RVOAD activation level
  - Communicate the need for coordinated VOAD activity to minimize self-deployment and duplication of efforts and resources.
  - A comprehensive review of the situation, including
    - affected communities,
    - the impact on the affected communities,
    - the status of current response activities, including
      - which organizations are responding,
      - where responses are being made,
      - what resources are being provided, and
      - what resources are needed.
- **Share updates to the situation, including**
  - identifying newly identified affected communities,
  - updating the status of previously and newly identified communities, unmet needs, and needs that have been satisfied

- detailing any changes in response activities, including changes in
  - activity levels, new organizations responding, or organizations demobilizing,
  - resources being or to be provided, and
  - resources needed.
- **Identify existence (if applicable) and contacts for local Long-Term Recovery Committee**
- **Identify what other organizations, if any, that may need to be called upon**
- **Identify the next meeting/call time, date, and location**

*\*Note: Hours could vary depending on the scope and size of the disaster. VOADs go into impacted communities/neighborhoods only when it's safe to do so.*

## ACTIVATION AND RESPONSE

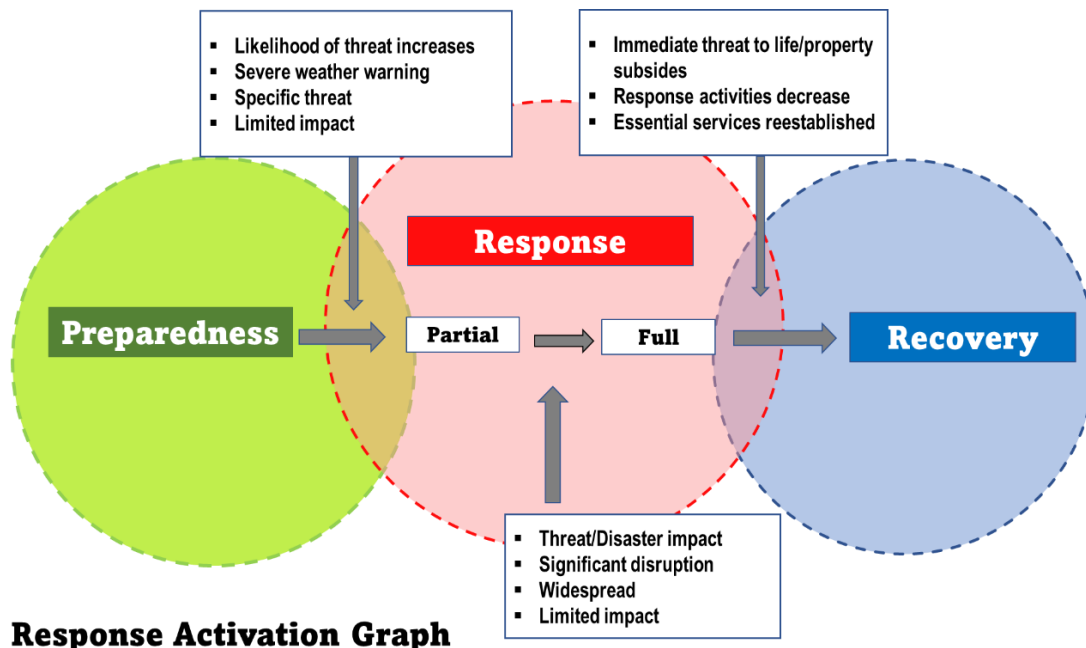
- Mobilize as quickly as possible.
- Reduce duplication of efforts.
- Meet the needs of local communities across jurisdictions within the 13 County regions, as applicable.
- Disseminate information quickly and with credibility.
- Utilize all available communications vehicles to maximize reach.
- Coordinate and collaborate with other credible sources.
- Tailor response to local communities

## RESPONSE ACTIVATION OCCURANCES

Response will occur in two ways:

- ❖ Response – Partial     ➡     (disasters of a limited impact and/or damage)
- ❖ Response – Full        ➡     (disasters with widespread geographical impact and/or damage)

The below graph depicts situations that could stipulate grounds for a partial or full activation. The information serves as a guideline only and is not intended to be an absolute for every response.



## RESPONSE, RELIEF & SHORT-TERM RECOVERY COORDINATION

- Response activities will begin when the impact from a disaster is imminent within any of the H-GAC 13-county region.
- The response / relief phase will include measures to save lives, limit property damage, and protect the environment.
- The response is evaluated by VOADs, and the commitment of VOAD resources is adjusted as required, given the changing requirements of the disaster response needed.
- Response operations will continue until the threat of imminent danger subsides, immediate unmet needs are filled, or resources are depleted, and/or the proper recovery structures are in place.
- Prioritize will be on basic life-sustaining needs, including:
  - health
  - water
  - sanitation and hygiene
  - food and nutrition
  - safety, security, and protection
  - shelter and cleanup (muck and gutting)



## TYPES OF IMPACT

1. **Direct Impact** – Caused by the disaster’s actual, physical forces.
2. **Indirect Impact** – Conditions that develop because of the disaster or events that occur from anticipating the disaster. Indirect harm is used to mean economic “ripple effects” from the disaster other than the direct damage and loss caused by the winds, rains, or flooding.

## COORDINATION OBJECTIVES

- avoid duplication of services
- assure equitable access to assistance
- assist with identifying the most pressing unmet needs
- coordinate the handoff to the local Long-Term Recovery Committee or Group

*Upon contact by HCHS, OEM, VOAD organization, or through contact with OEM, Executive Committee will assist with the coordination of the following activities:*

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## SHELTERING

- Support mass care/sheltering
- Disaster services for animals

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## TRIAGE

Triage after a disaster serves to understand the urgency of deciding the order of treatment or service. Triage efforts assess and address the most pressing emergency issues as deemed necessary. Triage could include outreach, community events, well-being checks, etc. Some level of chaos often marks the triage period; depending on the disaster's nature and the damage's extent, it can last a month or more

- Initiate initial triage – identify community impact and needs
- Assess and understand risks and vulnerabilities
- Identify community resources

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## DISASTER CASEWORK

- Initiate casework response activities, including assessment, fulfillment of basic needs, outreach, canvassing, information and referral services, documentation, and well-being checks
- Address behavioral and spiritual needs as they arise
- Address basic human needs

If it is safe to do so, the goal is to implement disaster casework response within 72 hours after the event. If it is not feasible within the 72 hours, implement as soon as possible. If a client's cases cannot be resolved through with disaster casework during response/recovery phase and have needs beyond immediate needs, should be referred to disaster case management (long-term recovery).

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## DONATIONS MANAGEMENT

- Initiate donation management, including collecting, sorting, and distributing goods.

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## VOLUNTEER MANAGMENT

- Coordinate and implement Volunteer Reception Center(s)
- Support volunteers and volunteer management, especially spontaneous volunteers

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## DATA COLLECTION

One of the most critical needs after a disaster is timely and accurate information. The TGCRVOAD will use an organization reporting method that will enable local VOADs to quickly gather and share this critical information with designated decision-makers in the operational area. The goal is to allow increased disaster response and recovery coordination between VOAD member organizations, government partners, local emergency managers, and FEMA, among others.

Each time VOAD activates in response to a disaster, the Chairperson of the TGCRVOAD, or designated representative, should promptly provide access to the disaster status reporting system to every member organization engaged in the response and recovery effort.

**Minimally, VOADs will collect information about:**

- **Losses/Impact.** What and where are the high-impact areas? How were communities and businesses impacted? What is the impact on homes?
- **Services being provided.** What services are being provided? What organizations are providing them? Where are they being delivered? And, how many clients are being served?
- **Resource shortfalls.** What resources do service organizations require to meet the community's needs?

**CRISIS CLEANUP**

Crisis Cleanup is the designated platform of the TGCRVOAD for survivors to report home damage claims. The Crisis Cleanup platform offers the best opportunity to provide effective service delivery to survivors. The TGCRVOAD encourages organizations to use Crisis Cleanup to claim, report, and close cases of survivors as the designated platform. Each county LTRC is responsible for obtaining the raw data from Crisis Cleanup for its prospective area. Each LTRC will appoint a designee to coordinate the gathering of the data.

<b>WHO</b>	Any organization - local, regional, and national - responding to a disaster with property damage in the Gulf Coast Region of Texas. Responding organizations do not have to be a member of TGCRVOAD.
<b>WHAT</b>	The Crisis Cleanup platform is a technology that relies heavily on the humans that use it. The technology alone will not facilitate the mucking and gutting of homes.
<b>WHERE</b>	Start here: <a href="http://www.txgulfcoastvoad.org">www.txgulfcoastvoad.org</a>
<b>WHEN</b>	TGCRVOAD will contact the Crisis Cleanup team to activate a hotline number within 24 hours of a disaster; clearing the area for survivors to call and log their cases.
<b>WHY</b>	The Crisis Cleanup platform facilitates response coordination and reduces duplication of efforts. Committing to using Crisis Cleanup with the discipline required to keep the information current helps expedite recovery for survivors.

**ANNUALLY (BLUE SKY DAYS)**

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?	WHEN	TASK
Volunteer Houston	May - Aug	Recruit and train remote volunteers as Crisis Cleanup phone bankers
VOAD Executive Committee	May / June	Update VOAD website & HC LTRC "one" flier, if needed
VOAD Volunteer Management Workgroup	May / June	Contact regional & national disaster response organizations to (re)confirm their commitment to this process & update their contact info
VOAD Volunteer Management Workgroup	June / July / August	Facilitate in-person & virtual training for organizations who intend to claim cases
VOAD Executive Committee	July / August	Review process and commitments during regularly scheduled meetings with all members
Responding Organizations Leadership	June / July / August	Send at least one (1) staff member to the training hosted by the Volunteer Management Workgroup

## IMMEDIATE DISASTER RESPONSE PHASE (GRAY SKY DAYS)

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?	WHEN	TASK
VOAD Executive Committee	1 <sup>st</sup> Within 24 hours of disaster striking	Contact Crisis Cleanup team to “turn on” the Houston-based hotline number for survivors
VOAD Volunteer Management Workgroup	Within 24 hours of disaster striking	Contact (email & phone) VOAD member orgs & regional / national disaster response orgs to notify them that the Crisis Cleanup platform will be used
Volunteer Houston	Within 24 hours of disaster striking	Contact phone bank volunteers and begin scheduling them for shifts
VOAD Executive Committee	Within 24 hours of disaster striking	Upload flier / social media graphic to VOAD website for organizations to download & distribute
All VOAD Organizations	Within 24 hours of disaster striking	Go to VOAD website to download flier & social media graphic with CC hotline number & begin distributing far and wide
Responding Organizations	Within 24 hours of disaster striking	Register and attend Crisis Cleanup kickoff call hosted by Volunteer Management Workgroup, info will be posted on VOAD website
Responding Organizations	Ongoing	Claim ONLY cases you can close within 7 days & Close ONLY parts of cases that you completed & log your clients’ cases
VOAD Volunteer Management Workgroup	Ongoing	Monitor organizations actively using Crisis Cleanup daily and ensure they’re claiming/closing cases correctly & host weekly 1-on-1’s with organizations using Crisis Cleanup
VOAD Executive Committee	Ongoing	Forward a note to orgs active in Crisis Cleanup a note from TGCRVOAD with encouragement to keep Crisis Cleanup updated + announcements
Volunteer Houston	After hotline closes	Work with phone bank volunteers to call through one last call down
VOAD Executive Committee	After final call down	Download & deliver all cases to LTRG’s for follow up

## RESPONSE TO NON-DECLARED DISASTERS

A disaster that impacts the Texas Gulf Coast Region, but not considered to be significant enough for assistance from State, Federal, and/or local government programs, may be addressed by the local community. There may be local organizations, neighbor-to-neighbor assistance, and/or personal resources that are sufficient for recovery. There also may be the need to access state or national resources from voluntary agencies that will assist regardless of the absence of a federal declaration. In any case, a modified Sequence of Delivery may be initiated by local organizations to maximize limited resources within the community.



In the event of low-impact or non-significant disasters, the TGCRVOAD will only support by the sharing of various communications to member/partner agencies and/or to the public, unless directed otherwise by local government. TGCRVOAD calls forth an activation if one or more of the following requests assistance to assess or address reported or anticipated unmet needs.

Basic unmet needs that could be addressed by resources obtained by local agencies from jurisdictional, state, or national agencies; or refer the unmet needs' requests to other agencies that can assist.

**1. Voluntary Agencies**

Various voluntary agencies that have response capabilities in their disaster planning. These agencies will work closely with local and state emergency management to provide shelter, food, clothing, and replacement of medical supplies (dentures, prescriptions, eyeglasses, etc.) right after the disaster.

**2. Personal Insurance**

Encourage and educate owners and renters on making use of personal insurance proceeds as well as on the steps for contacting insurance agents, avoiding fraud, etc., at the earliest possible time after the disaster.

## DISASTER RESOURCES

Individuals who need disaster assistance will be directed to call the 2-1-1 Helpline of United Way of Greater Houston or the local disaster hotline, if available. The Disaster Hotline number, if available, will be provided to the public during the preparedness phase and each time a disaster occurs. Referrals can be located on the 2-1-1 Texas website – <https://www.211texas.org/>

## COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

This Disaster Response Communication Plan **will be implemented** when there is a change in the TGCRVOAD Alert Level to 1, 2, 3, or 4. The information to be communicated in the response and recovery process depends upon the characteristics of the event, such as type, location, severity, and effects on the community.

ALERT COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOLS

LEVEL	STATUS	DEFINITION	ACTIVITIES
LEVEL 0	<i>Normal</i>	No known threat to the H-GAC 13 County Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routine operations. No incident or state of emergency. Constant state of readiness.</li> </ul>
LEVEL 1	<i>Situational Awareness</i>	Leadership is aware of a potential threat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The TGCRVOAD Chair and Vice-Chairpersons are aware and monitoring the situation.</li> <li>Monitor weather warnings, watches, evacuation orders, etc.</li> <li>No requests to assist/activate.</li> <li>The Chair and/or Vice-Chairpersons is in communications with the Executive Committee; provides ongoing updates.</li> </ul>
LEVEL 2	<i>Standby</i>	Standby alert signifies to need to be prepared to respond, if requested to do so	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If warranted, the Chair or Vice-Chairperson sends a Level 2 alert via AlertMedia; asking VOADs to be prepared and on standby.</li> <li>When VOADs are placed on standby alert, they should ensure that resources are in place to activate emergency operation's plans</li> <li>VOADs should notify/confirm resources that are available. Detail any other pertinent information.</li> </ul>
LEVEL 3	<i>Activation</i>	Incident has occurred. TGRCVOAD is called upon for support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Chair and/or Vice-Chairperson receives request for assistance.</li> <li>The Chair or Vice-Chairperson sends a Level 3 Alert via AlertMedia.</li> <li>The Chair or Vice-Chairperson shares information about coordination calls or meetings.</li> <li>The Chair or Vice-Chairperson staffs EOC to coordinate services; provides information or updates on VOAD activities/services, and identified unmet needs, challenges, etc.</li> </ul>
LEVEL 4	<i>Switch to long-term recovery</i>	TGCRVOAD's leaderships transitions operations to the local LTRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As basic needs are met and life sustaining measures are completed, the TGCRVOAD transitions activities to LTRCs for Long-term Recovery.</li> <li>TGCRVOAD supplies the LTRC with any data/information collected.</li> <li>TGCRVOAD supports the efforts of the LTRCs in Long-term Recovery.</li> </ul>

## COMMUNICATIONS CHAIRPERSON'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Communications Chairperson / PIO shall fulfill these roles and responsibilities:

### **During All Alert Levels**

- Serve along with the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson as the organization's spokesperson/PIO.
- Maintain the organization's website, manage the TXCDR AlertMedia accounts, and provide oversight of TGCRVOAD's social media accounts.

### **During Alert Levels 1, 2, 3 and 4**

- Initiate emergency contact procedures.
- Maintain communication with other individuals and organizations responding to the disaster.
- Direct work related to releasing information to the media, public, VOADs.
- Be in contact with city or county OEMs for situational awareness and communication among VOADs.
- Coordinate communications with federal, state, and local government, including city, county, LTRCs, and VOADs to ensure that messages are consistent and within the scope.
- Draft all Situation Reports with the assistance of the Secretary. Disseminate or brief out all Situations Reports as required.
- Obtain required clearance of materials for release as needed.
- Function as a member of the Joint Information Center (JIC) or field site team for media relations.
- Manage the email inquiries received through the website.

## PRIMARY COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORM - ALERTMEDIA

The Executive Committee of the TGCRVOAD has established AlertMedia as the primary communications platform during a disaster. The TGCRVOAD is partnering with Texas Congregational Disaster Readiness (TXCDR) access the benefits of the platform. Alert Media can be used for two-way communication and works on multiple platforms (internet browser, iPhone App, or Android App). Do not be alarmed if you see TXCDR when receiving AlterMedia communications. To the right is a is a sample of what you might see. →

Only the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> (as noted on the membership application form) organizational representatives will be able to gain access to the platform. The invitation to access the AlertMedia platform is non-transferable. If changes are necessary, please email the TGCRVOAD membership chair to have your organizational information updated.

In addition to using AlertMedia, key messaging and information will be shared via the TGCRVOAD website at <http://www.txgulfcoastvoad.org/>.

Texas Congregational Disaster Readiness Important Message: TXCDR offers AlertMedia workshops for TGCRVOAD members and Partners. Please see your email for details and the link to the workshops. The next scheduled workshops are on 9/22 Noon - 1 PM; 9/28 10

**VOADs are encouraged to obtain Alert Media accounts for the primary contact and the secondary contact.**

## Key Group Names

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • ALERT: TGVRVOAD                      | to contact all TGCR VOADs with AlertMedia accounts                             |
| • ALERT: TGCRVOAD Chair and Vice Chair | to contact TGCRVOAD Chair and Vice-Chair                                       |
| • ALERT: TGCRVOAD Executive Committee  | to contact all the members of the Executive Committee with AlertMedia accounts |
| • ALERT: TGCRVOAD Media Spokespersons  | to contact the three authorized TGCRVOAD Spokespersons                         |

## SECONDARY COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS

In addition to using AlertMedia, critical messaging and information will be shared via the TGCRVOAD website at <http://www.txgulfcoastvoad.org/>, and on email distribution lists of members.

## EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

During emergencies, the ability to communicate with a variety of entities is critical for the continued functioning of the regional VOAD infrastructure, some of which may include the following:

- Local city/county departments (e.g., fire, EMS, law enforcement, OEM, public health)
- Various operation centers (e.g., EOC, CMOC, DDC)
- Regional entities (e.g., TGCRVOAD, SETRAC, DSHS 6/5s)
- Texas agencies or organizations (e.g., TDEM, DSHS, Texas VOAD)
- Federal or national organizations (e.g., FEMA, National VOAD)

## REGIONAL EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM (RENS)

During normal operations and emergencies, the Harris County Office of Emergency Management is responsible for sending out information to its partners. The information is coordinated from the Harris County OEM office as RENS (Regional Emergency Notification System) message. RENS messages provide valuable updates to and from partners and include "**For Official Use Only**" (FOUO), information that can be critical during response operations.

To receive these messages, **everyone must register** using the secure link at the end of this section. This will ensure you are receiving partner messages to the email and SMS device of your choosing and have the ability to change your preferences.

A **video that walks through the registration process** has been created: <https://youtu.be/7FBaVckpvKE>

These messages and groups are **For Official Use Only (FOUO)**, so ensure that the appropriate people from your agency are registered. The messages are sent from the Regional Joint Information Center at the Harris County Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management.

Many partners fill multiple roles within their agency. To ensure you are receiving all the alerts that you should, please review the descriptions for the RENS groups and **select those that apply to you. The RENS group descriptions can be found within the "Help & Answer" text tab on the RENS Group Selection Page during registration.**

### **Additional Tips**

- Harris County Office of Emergency Management recommend you do this from a computer, not a mobile device, to see the options better.
- Do not try to LOGIN. You need to SIGN-UP (go to the top left of the screen).
- If your username is already taken, that does not mean you are registered for RENS. You may need to create a new/unique username for RENS.
- Your "My Subscriptions" page will be blank. Just hit next and move on.
- Add text codes **893-61 and 878-44** to your contacts for RENS text notifications.
- Should your role or roles within your agency change, it is essential to update your registration information.
- The Regional, Joint Information Center team will verify all entries.

Register for **RENS** messages at: <https://member.everbridge.net/index/453003085618568#/signup>

## REGIONAL JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

The Regional Joint Information Center (JIC) for Harris County is a co-located group of representatives from local, state, federal and private organizations designated to manage public information needs during an incident or event. The JIC is designed to fit naturally into the Incident Command Structure and can be customized to reflect the size of the incident or event. The Communications Chair/PIO, Chair or Vice Chairperson must attend these meetings/call to share information and/or correct information.

## DECONFLICTING INFORMATION

TGCRVOAD will be asking for information from VOAD members to share with government stakeholders, partners, and LTRCs. Requests from LTRCs may be situation-based (e.g., a call- down for crisis clean-up to know who was doing what and which areas are completed).

## KEY MESSAGING

Standard messaging is to be coordinated with local, state, federal governments, LTRCs, VOADs, etc. Key messaging templates are available. Messaging must be verified for accuracy, timeliness, and relevance.

## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>What is Communicated</b>	<b>Special Considerations</b>	<b>Channels</b>
<i>The Community</i>	Preparation and dissemination of information for the affected communities about the activities of the VOADs and how to access their services.	Disseminated in collaboration with VOADs; community diversity; primary role of the VOADs as the survivor-facing organization	2-1-1 support, canvassing, fliers, PSAs, social media, community forums, community events, community outreach
<i>VOADs</i>	Preparation and dissemination of Situation Reports, communication of resource needs and opportunities for collaboration, coordination of messaging	Response priorities; resource needs; unmet needs; need for consistent messaging	AlertMedia, email, Coordination Conference Calls, website, newsletters, briefs
<i>Government</i>	Preparation and dissemination of Situation Reports, communication of resource needs and opportunities for collaboration, coordination of messaging	Close communication on messaging with the JIC	Briefs, situation reports, resource needs
<i>Media</i>	Sharing information about the disaster, recovery efforts, access to recovery resources, and unmet needs	Collaboration with all stakeholders to establish standard messaging and talking points	News releases, interviews, background, pitching stories

## TARGETED AUDIENCES

Messaging crafted for the community either directly by TGCRVOAD or through its VOADs must take the diversity of our region into account. TGCRVOAD's targeted audiences include:

- Non-English-Speaking Residents
- Low Income
- Low Literacy
- Rural Populations
- Homeless
- Individuals with transportation challenges
- Disabled (Physical & Mental)
  - Hearing impaired
  - Visually impaired
- Functionally illiterate individuals

## DEMOBILIZATION AND TRANSITION TO RECOVERY

The TGCRVOAD Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson will coordinate a call or meeting to debrief and discuss demobilization protocols. Following a disaster where the TGCRVOAD has been activated, each individual and/or Organization is responsible for submitting an after-action report to the TGCRVOAD Executive Committee within 15 business days of TGCRVOAD being deactivated from said disaster. The report can be submitted through a link on the TGCRVOAD webpage.

*Demobilization outcomes may be:*

- A return to normal operations; or new normal operations, or
- Transfer to a long-term recovery.

There are two phases of recovery:

- Short term recovery – Many emergency and relief programs complete their work. Restoration of infrastructure and vital life support systems happen in this phase. The community identifies local resources to form a long-term recovery committee (LTRC), and initiation of plans for permanent housing begins.
  - Long term recovery – Transition occurs between the presence of national organizations and the local community. Implementation begins for disaster case management and recovery initiatives administered by the local community. Construction activities to include repairing, rebuilding and/or relocation of homes proceeds during this phase. Resumption of the routines of daily life characterizes this phase.
1. Response/Relief activities will continue as long as they are needed. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson will continue to monitor needs to determine when actions can be turned to recovery.
  2. As soon as possible, after the response/relief phase has passed, all organizations actively involved in the response/relief phase will conduct assessments. Assessments will be used to define the need for resources and strategies needed for future operations. If a JIC has been activated, its operations will be evaluated, and if necessary, its operational procedures will be reviewed and changed for future operations.

All VOADs have a role in transitioning a community from response toward recovery. Some activities that VOADs may perform to support this transition include:

- Coordinating disaster documentation (gathering and archiving all documents regarding the incident),
- Archiving of data and contact information (ensuring that data and information are available for use through the recovery process),
- Helping the community to manage expectations for recovery through Public Information, and
- Conducting after-action reviews.

## RECOVERY

### Long-Term Recovery

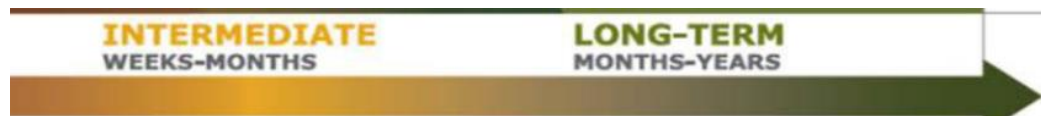
#### **TGCRVOAD offers support during long-term recovery by:**

- sharing SitReps, data, etc., with the LTRG, attending meetings, engaging members in addressing unmet needs and offering training or managing recovery functions.
- continuing to work with, TDEM, NVOAD, TXVOAD, and FEMA Region VI to support state partners' on-going recovery efforts and emerging unmet needs.

## LONG-TERM RECOVERY COMMITTEE / GROUP

The TGRVOAD will work closely with LTRCs to transition operations and information. Long-term disaster recovery involves ongoing recovery projects moving towards self-sufficiency, sustainability, and resilience. These operations can span months to years.

## LONG-TERM RECOVERY ACTIVITIES BY DISASTER PHASE (LTRC)



- *Convene LTRC/Group Meetings*
- *Disaster Case Management*
- *Activate Homeless Prevention Team – Expedited DCM*
- *Address Interim Housing solutions*
- *Assist with FEMA Registration/Communications*
- *Organize Volunteers*
- *Outreach / Canvass / Well- being checks*
- *Conduct Community Needs Assessments*
- *Activate Unified DCM Intake*
- *Continue to engage Behavioral Health*
- *Shift to minor home repairs/ rebuild*
- *Engage HUD Housing Counseling as applicable*
- *Stand-up Unmet Needs Committee / Economic Recovery*
- *Engage Legal Aid assistance*

❖ Continued LTRC/Group Meetings
❖ Look for funding opportunities
❖ Post-disaster Recovery Planning
❖ Disaster Case Management
❖ Develop permanent housing solutions
❖ Major Home Repairs
❖ HUD Housing Counseling
❖ Economic support to replace damaged / destroyed items
❖ Continue to engage Legal Aid assistance
❖ Continue to engage Behavioral Health and Natural and Cultural
❖ Spiritual Health assistance
❖ Continued Canvassing
❖ Continued PSAs



# VOAD and LTRC Recovery Activities By Phase

