

TEXAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN

Based on recommendations from
THE UNITED METHODIST COMMITTEE ON RELIEF

Love in Action



February 25, 2009

This is a living document subject to change.

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PREFACE

Disaster Response and Recovery is a vital part of our church Mission. Within the new structure of the Texas Annual Conference, the Texas Annual Conference Committee on Relief (TACCOR) falls under the Assistant to the Bishop. We are called to love one another. One of the ways we can show the love, hands, feet, and face of Jesus is through the efforts we make in the community and around the world. This directly reflects our Core Beliefs of “Radical Hospitality”, “Risk-taking Mission”, “Extravagant Generosity” and “Connectional Ministry”.

The Texas Annual Conference is committed to providing assistance following disasters. In response to this commitment, this plan was prepared. It outlines the organization and protocols for disaster response.

Our United Methodist disaster-response effort is a vital part of our church Mission and ministry. The ministry is multifaceted and includes theological, material, mental health, advocacy, and social-service components. They are designed to provide for the spiritual, emotional and physical recovery of disaster survivors and for the well-being of their caregivers.

Disaster response requires a commitment from individuals at all levels in our conference structure. We must all know our role and understand how we can fulfill our duties so that we can assist people in crisis following a disaster as the body of Christ.

The most important thing to remember when doing disaster response and recovery is to show the Face of Jesus to everyone involved. Remember, to quote a song “You may be the only Bible some people read.”

1 Peter 4:8-11 New Living Bible

“Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins. Cheerfully share your home with those who need a meal or a place to stay. God has given gifts to each of you from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Manage them well so that God’s generosity can flow through you.”

Matthew 5:16

“In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

John Wesley’s Rule

- Do all the good you can,
- By all the means you can,
- In all the ways you can,
- In all the places you can,
- At all the times you can,
- To all the people you can,
- As long as ever you can.

The mission of the Texas Annual Conference Committee on Relief (TACCOR) in partnership with UMCOR is to support UMCOR's efforts to reduce human suffering by coordinating the ministries of the Texas Annual Conference in the area of Disaster Relief. TACCOR will also promote the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering and work to raise the awareness of the congregations of the Texas Annual Conference regarding the work they are involved in through the UMCOR of the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church.

WHY A CONFERENCE PLAN?

We prepare for disaster because we are not immune to natural or human-caused disaster. We recognize that the potential for disaster exists within the borders of our conference. Although many immediate concerns call for our time and energy, we are willing to plan for future disasters. We want to avoid having to scramble for answers after a disaster has happened.

The risk of not planning often leads well-intentioned Christians to delay, complicate, and confuse recovery efforts. Some volunteers will operate impulsively rather than with an understanding of how disaster response works. "Flying by the seat of their pants," with no pre-planning, training or coordination, they duplicate aid to some survivors while overlooking genuine need in others. Worse yet, sometimes their "good doing" will inflict additional harm. Improper response is a terrible thing to force upon those whose lives are already damaged!

Additional harm most often happens as helpers rush to do home repairs. They frequently carry the work too far, too soon. Untrained volunteers don't understand the law, insurance assessment procedures or how certain hasty repairs can jeopardize a survivor's health (such as when flood damage is covered over before interior segments of walls and floors dry completely). Without training, well-intentioned volunteers can imperil a survivor's health and eligibility for financial assistance from insurance and the government.

We have moral and legal reasons to be prepared. If we take seriously our ministry to relieve suffering, then we Christians must do all we can to prevent further suffering of already hurting people. We want to be prepared when disaster strikes.

Faced with a dynamic and risky environment, we must continually strive to become better than we are. That is done by building competent local strength; by training and managing our volunteers better; by preparing our families, churches and communities to be better prepared for disaster; and by being true to our collective mission.

Response and Recovery happens on five levels at once:

UMCOR: funds, supplies, training, and technical assistance, equipment, kits

Conference: funds, support, training, personnel. Receives all offers of assistance and client needs then matches resources to needs to help survivors achieve recovery

District: volunteers, guidance, housing for teams, office space, damage assessment

Local Churches: local knowledge of resources, housing, hospitality, volunteers, office space

Community Support: Unmet needs committee, other faith based groups, local non profits

FOUR PHASES OF A DISASTER

Preparedness Phase -BEFORE any disaster happens, it is important that we PREPARE. While our coastal districts are the ones most prone to hurricanes or chemical disasters, the entire conference is subject to tornadoes, floods, wild fires and other types of disasters. In addition, if a single district is damaged excessively, such as Beaumont with Hurricane Rita, it is imperative that other districts be prepared to mobilize for a broad response. This means that ALL districts need to recruit and train teams for Disaster Response

This cost of not being prepared, in terms of lives lost and economic devastation, is simply too great! We STRONGLY encourage all churches of the Texas Annual Conference to educate their congregations. Every district shall provide at least one annual session of Disaster Preparedness. Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston (713-533-4900) is strongly recommended and can conduct this training anywhere in our Conference. Cost per church: \$100. Currently, Jennifer Posten is our contact person.

UM Churches in the southern half of the Conference, especially those within common evacuation areas, are encouraged to partner with a sister church in the north located on state evacuation routes which may be obtained from your local Emergency Management office

Emergency Phase: Usually lasts 1 to 3 days. This phase is where search and rescue takes place and is left to emergency personnel (Community Emergency Response Teams-CERT, volunteer fire departments, local police and sheriffs departments) who are in control. The church should monitor the situation (Texas Annual Conference churches, disaster-response representatives and the United Methodist Committee on Relief) but has no specific role in the work that happens in this stage. As a church our early response should be to account for members of our church family, our neighbors, our loved ones, the elderly and disabled people who may need help.

Relief Phase: Usually lasts 10 times longer than the Emergency Phase (example: If the Emergency Phase lasts one day; the Relief Phase lasts about 10 days). In the Relief Phase, assessment is being done, and interfaith alliances are being formed. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, American Red Cross, and other volunteer organizations aiding in disaster response (VOAD) are working to provide help for the survivors. The United Methodist response begins with an initial survey and needs assessment by the Bishop, UMCOR national rep, and a representative from the Texas Annual Conference Disaster Response Committee. Early Responder teams will be activated to ensure the safe removal of debris and temporary repairs designed to stabilize an area from further damage. ER Teams must be trained, carry credentials and have Safe Sanctuary Certification or they will not be allowed into the disaster area. The Texas Annual Conference, as well as the district and local churches, will begin organizing for the Long-Term Recovery.

Recovery Phase: Usually lasts 10 times longer than the Relief Phase (example: If the Relief Phase lasts 10 days, the Recovery Stage lasts about 100 days). The emphasis here is on long-term community-based organizations. This phase is when normal PIM/VIM Teams come to the site for repair and rebuild work. The Texas Annual Conference Disaster Response “staff” is in place to provide rebuilding, advocacy, resource development, housing plans and long term planning. (See p.39 for General Timeline details.)

LEVELS OF A DISASTER

Low Level: Involves a limited number of households. Assistance provided by local churches and districts, with notification to District Superintendent.

Medium Level: Involves an entire community or several scattered communities. Assistance provided by organizing district response through the District Disaster Coordinator and District Superintendent.

High Level: Involves a wide area and requires a massive response by state and national agencies. TACCOR is responsible for organizing a conference-wide response to the crisis and assists districts and local churches.

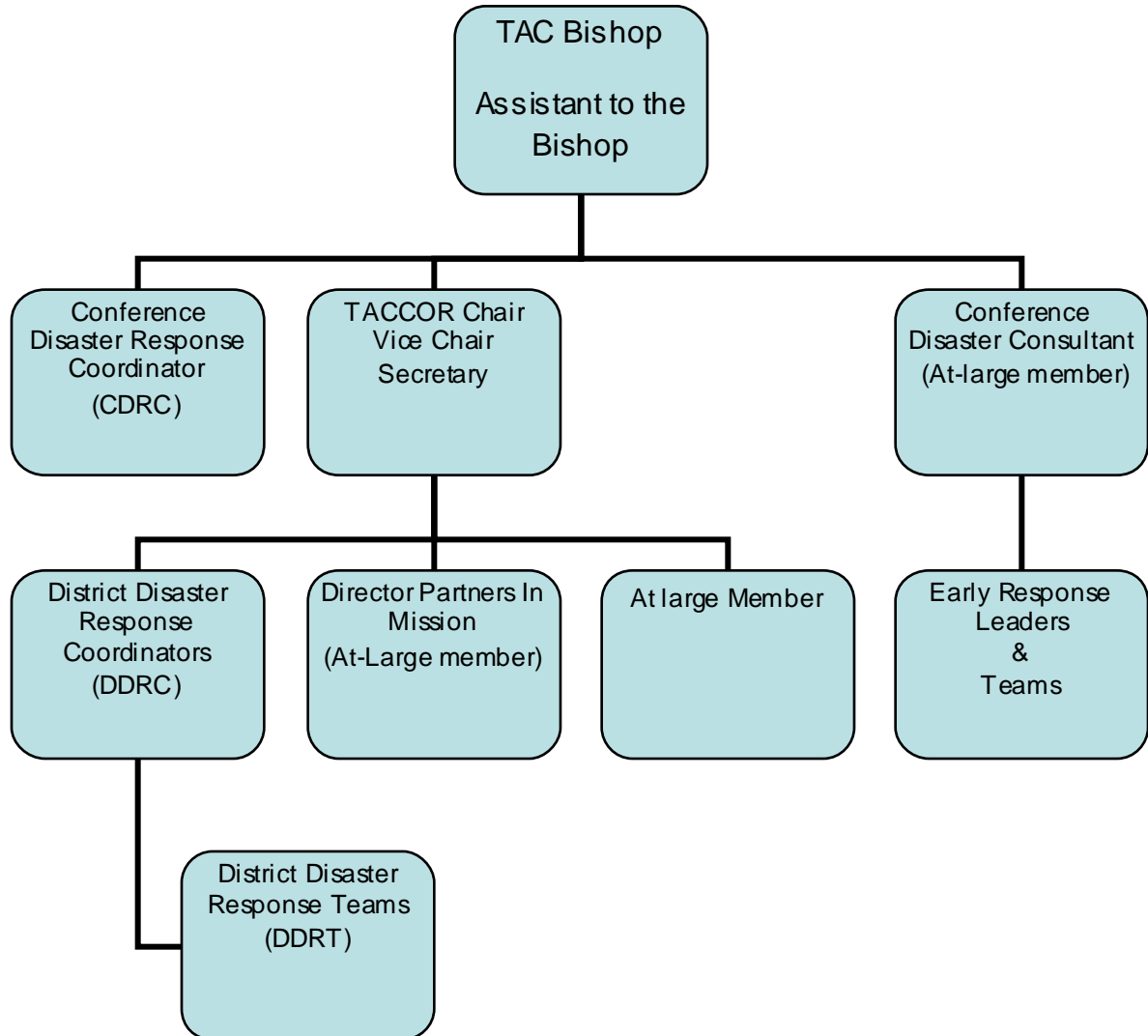
TACCOR (Texas Annual Conference Committee on Relief)

This Texas Annual Conference committee establishes policy and procedures within the structure of the Texas Annual Conference, under the direction of the Assistant to the Bishop, for disaster response.

The committee is made up of the following members:

- Assistant to the Bishop
- Chair of TACCOR, Vice Chair, Secretary
- Conference Disaster Response Coordinator
- Two representatives from each District (Suggested: one lay and one clergy)
- PIM Director, Conference Disaster Consultant, and Sending Ministries Chair
- Communications Coordinator

TACCOR Committee Flow Chart



The functions of the Committee are:

- Set broad policies and procedures related to disaster response.
- Provide guidelines to develop District Disaster Plans.
- Provide training through UMCOR to the Cabinet and district volunteers.
- Develop the Conference Disaster Plan and implement the portion assigned to the committee

ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHO ARE DISASTER VICTIMS ARE EXCUSED FROM ANY AND ALL CONFERENCE/DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES UNTIL ALL ISSUES OF PERSONAL RECOVERY/FAMILY SAFETY HAVE BEEN SATISFACTORILY ADDRESSED!

Chair Person – TACCOR Committee

Some of these responsibilities will transition to the Disaster Response Coordinator and/or the Disaster Executive Director as soon as that person is identified with each and any imminent event. If the TACCOR Chair is part of the disaster and/or evacuation, these responsibilities will transition first to the Vice Chair of TACCOR and then to the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator (CDRC).

Prior To A Disaster:

1. Oversee the work of TACCOR.
2. Preside at all TACCOR meetings.
3. Participate in Conference Initiatives related to disaster.
4. Ensure representation of TACCOR on the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD).
5. Facilitate recruitment and training of TACCOR members, District Disaster Response Teams (DDRT) and potential additional volunteers in coordination with Recovery Team.

If A Disaster Is Imminent (3-Day alert, if possible):

1. Call TACCOR members and put the committee on standby. Determine how many TACCOR members will be able to respond.
2. Contact VOAD to get the time and place for the briefing on the disaster.
3. Alert the Bishop, Assistant to the Bishop and District Superintendent(s) regarding the estimated extent of the disaster.
4. Contact DDRC and inform them of the briefing with VOAD. Make sure that the DDRC attend the briefing if it is in a local district.
5. Make sure Early Response Teams are on standby and establish team leadership.

Relief to Recovery Stage:

1. Oversee the work of TACCOR.
2. Consult with the Assistant to the Bishop regarding the possible need for an Executive Director.
3. Be responsible, along with the Executive Director (assigned by the Bishop or Assistant to the Bishop if this person is not the same as the CDRC) and the CDRC, for holding briefing sessions with the members of TACCOR and DDRT.

Conference Disaster Response Coordinator – CDRC (duties temporarily assumed by Disaster Response Consultant). To avoid potential conflict of responsibilities, UMCOR suggests that the CDRC be a layperson or retired clergy member. The coordinator should serve at least four years and should be recruited with the understanding that he/she will enroll in training classes at least two times (one basic course, one advanced course) during the four years at UMCOR's Training Academy or Jurisdictional Academies. All expenses will be underwritten by UMCOR and/or The Texas Annual Conference.

Duties of the coordinator include:

- Working with District Superintendents to identify appropriate individuals to serve as DDRC.
- Planning for training of Early Response Team (ERT) members and Disaster Response Team Leaders in conjunction with the Conference PIM Director
- Issuing a call, through the PIM Director, for ER Teams as needed.
- Work with the Bishop's representative to determine the need to invite ERT from outside the conference and communicate this to the PIM Director. The invitation will then be communicated to the South Central Jurisdiction UMMIM Coordinator by the Director of PIM.
- Deciding all management and deployment questions for volunteers, including ERT, in conjunction with the PIM Director in the early phases of Relief and Recovery.
- Assist Executive Director in preparing for Long term Recovery as needed.
- Assume Executive Director Duties in absence of the Executive Director. (see duties for Executive Director on page 15)

Prior to a Disaster:

Keep a copy of all disaster forms and plans.

- Keep an accurate record of TACCOR and DDRT membership, updating by July 30th of each year. Share records with TACCOR Committee.
- Assist Conference Communications Coordinator in recruiting potential churches for possible office space in several locations in each district.
- Develop and maintain a data base of potential sites to be contacted if the need arises.
- Periodically make a hard, current copy of database of potential volunteers for response to a disaster. This ensures we have multiple copies in different physical locations.
- Work with TACCOR/DDRT Information Coordinator to recruit churches from each district willing to operate and staff a Disaster Information Center. The center will be responsible for collecting and disseminating details about donations, manpower, and other pertinent information relevant to response and recovery.
- Attend (or assign someone to attend) VOAD and FEMA meetings, and see that the work of the United Methodist Church is in cooperation with other agencies active in disaster.
- Attend any pertinent UMCOR training, such as Early Responder, Case Management and any future training. Assess need for training within the Conference.
- Assume leadership of TACCOR in the event the Chair and Vice Chair are unavailable.
- Work with TACCOR members to identify volunteer drivers and available trucks for distributing supplies immediately after disaster.

- Assist ER Training on a monthly basis. Ensure sessions are geographically distributed.
- Track Certified Early Responders and verify accurate contact information at the start of each Hurricane Season.

Relief to Recovery Stage:

- For all initial assessment of larger disasters, the CDRC, or designee, should be asked to accompany the District Superintendent of the affected area, and the Bishop.
- Work in cooperation with the Executive Director but ready to assume command of the disaster response operations in the absence of the Executive Director.
- Assume leadership of TACCOR in the event the Chair or Vice Chair is unavailable.
- Responsible, along with the TACCOR Chair Person and the Executive Director, for holding briefing sessions with the members of the TACCOR and DDRT.
- These functional responsibilities are handed to recovery people when the Long-Term Recovery Office is functioning.

Director, Partners In Mission -

Prior to a Disaster:

- Serve as a member of the TACCOR committee
- Work with TACCOR to develop a Conference plan.
- Keep the plan available.
- Be sure the Bishop and Cabinet have copies of the plan.
- Make certain that appropriate ERT Training is conducted.

When Disaster is Imminent:

- As soon as possible, visit the affected area with the CDRC.
- Make certain that the Communications Director is involved and remains so.
- Request additional office staff members as needed.
- Arrange office space for the disaster-response effort, if possible. The telephone team and others will need an area. Response personnel will need access to the building beyond usual business hours. Disaster response doesn't fit into an eight-hour day.
- Be aware of the length of time recovery takes. Continue to remind the conference that recovery is still going on.
- Encourage the conference to give financial and personal help.
- Keep in touch with the CDRC and the TACCOR committee.

Recovery:

- Participate in the closeout process.

District Disaster Response Coordinators – DDRC- (2 per district) – appointed by DS

Prior to a Disaster:

- Act as liaison between District and TACCOR
- Responsible for forming District Early Response teams and development of District DR plan
- DDRC's should serve at least four years and should be recruited with the understanding that he/she will attend trainings provided by Conference. (ERT and PIM Team Leadership)
- Attend TACCOR meetings.
- Organize the District Disaster Response Team (DDRT)
- Ensure that Disaster Preparedness Training is held annually

When Disaster is Imminent:

- Serve as the conference “mouth, eyes, and ears,” helping to interpret the work of the group to local laity and pastors.
- Conduct an initial on-site assessment as soon as possible after disaster strikes and report the need for assistance to the CDRC. That reporting should be done in coordination with the local pastor and/or District Superintendent, when possible.
- Work with the Early Response coordinator (DR Consultant) to help in the deployment of ERT as needed.
- Plan and promote training for ERT and DDRT in the district

It is recommended that two persons serve as co-coordinators in each district (preferably one layperson and one clergy member). They will share responsibility for creating, maintaining and leading the District in disaster response. Members shall be appointed by the District Superintendent for a period of 4 years. To maintain continuity, consideration should be given to staggering appointment dates.

The DDRC will contact local churches when a disaster occurs within the district. The DDRC may be contacted by local church members when a disaster affects their community. District coordinators will work with the conference and other faith groups to help address any unmet needs after insurance and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have given their help.

District coordinators should be recruited with the understanding that they will participate in Basic Disaster Training as planned by the conference and taught by a qualified leader from UMCOR. When the opportunity arises, they are encouraged to enroll in the UMCOR Training Academy at the UMCOR Sager-Brown Depot or the jurisdictional academies, when offered. All expenses will be underwritten by UMCOR and/or The Texas Annual Conference.

District Disaster Response Team (DDRT)

The following positions will need to be filled, trained and ready to be activated as needed in the event of a disaster. They will facilitate the early response and will hand over information, techniques and strategies to the Recovery Staff once the Recovery Office is established.

The DDRT is made up of the following:

- **The District Superintendent**
- **District Disaster Response Coordinator(s)**
- **Communications Coordinator**
- **Spiritual Care Coordinator**
- **Volunteer Coordinator**
- **Equipment Coordinator**

District Disaster Response Coordinator (DDRC)

- Act as liaison between District and TACCOR, appointed by the DS.
- Responsible for forming District Early Response Teams and develop district guidelines for implementation within the Conference Plan. (A copy of your district guidelines is to be on file in the office of the Assistant to the Bishop.)
- Attend trainings provided by Conference.
- Attend TACCOR meetings.
- Organize the District Disaster Response Team (DDRT)
- Verify that Disaster Preparedness Training is held annually
- Serve as the conference “mouth, eyes, and ears,” helping to interpret the work of the group to local laity and pastors.
- Conduct an initial on-site assessment as soon as possible after disaster strikes and report the need for assistance to the CDRC. That reporting should be done in coordination with the local pastor and/or District Superintendent, when possible.
- Work with the Early Response coordinator (DR Consultant) to help in the deployment of ERT as needed.
- Plan and promote training for ERTs and Disaster Response Team leaders in the district
- The DDRC will contact local churches when a disaster occurs within the district. The DDRC may be contacted by local church members when a disaster affects their community.
- District coordinators will work with the conference and other faith groups to help address any unmet needs after insurance and the Federal Emergency Management Agency have given their help.

Communications Coordinator:

Prior to a Disaster:

- Communicate to congregations the need for funds during the disaster and encourage contributions to appeals by the Bishop for response and recovery.
- Locate churches in Districts willing to operate a call center before a disaster
- Arrange at each location to be on stand-by for phones set up and/or transfer.
- Recruit potential churches for office space in several locations in each district.

- Educate Church Leadership at potential sites for office space about what is needed for a Recovery office.
 1. Up to three rooms with doors that will lock. Due to the nature of the confidential information filed.
 2. Tables and chairs in each room
 3. Agreement to add up to three separate phone lines at conference expense.
 4. Access to a copier or buy one for the Recovery Office
 5. Access to bathrooms
 6. Work with the Conference Web Master to update the website

Following a Disaster:

- Assist to set up the Recovery office and assess needs.
- Relay information about needed supplies for the office or in the field
- Write articles for newspapers, website etc.
- Contact newspapers and television stations for news coverage of the work of UMC in disaster.
- Arrange for video footage and photo to be taken during the entire response and recovery process.
- Work closely with the Conference Communications Director.
- Receive approval from Conference Communications Director before releasing any print material
- With DDRCC, decide at which pre-approved site The Information Center should be located. Get volunteers scheduled and The Information Center open.
- Receive information from Conference Communications Director such as but not limited to:
 - Donation Sites
 - FEMA registration center
 - Feeding sites and Shelters
 - United Methodist Response Centers
 - District Contacts
 - Road Closures
 - Needs in disaster area
- Discourage callers from having clothing drives. If they would like to donate goods refer them to Donation sites set up by other VOAD organizations.
- Encourage financial contributions to the conference. If there is a Bishop's appeal a number will be assigned to specify contributions.
- Only useful information should be passed to the local disaster area.
- Regularly send information received to appropriate response sites in the disaster area.

During Recovery If Necessary

- Make available all forms to the Recovery Office
- Transfer all information to appropriate Recovery Office staff so they can continue to process information as needed.

During Recovery if Necessary:

- Pass all pertinent information to the Recovery Director of the Long Term Recovery Office.

Spiritual Care Coordinator (Consider Stephen Ministers as candidates for this position)

Prior to a Disaster:

- Recruit, supervise and assist in training persons interested in providing spiritual care to disaster victims, TACCOR & DDRT members, incoming volunteers, and others in need of spiritual care in a disaster situation.
- TRYNOVA.org (800-879-6682 or 703-535-6682) offers 40-hour training class for volunteers. Both trynova.org and voad.org offer hand-outs for dealing with people in crisis.
- Develop partnerships between pastors for spiritual support during disasters.

During the Disaster:

- Coordinate with VOAD organizations in assigning Christian Care Givers in the disaster area.
- Organize and supervise a team of volunteers that will be able to Brief every PIM/VIM team upon their arrival in the disaster area and debrief each PIM/VIM team before they return.
- Coordinate with TACCOR and DDRT Volunteer Coordinators if any Christian Care Givers need accommodations

During Recovery If Necessary:

- Provide Recovery staff a list of volunteers willing to continue with recovery effort to provide same function as before on a long term basis.

Volunteer Coordinator –

Receives phone calls, keeps schedule of teams by dates and provides some training for new volunteer teams. Maintain data base of potential volunteers needed for various jobs in disaster response.

- In cooperation with the DDRC and the Volunteer Coordinator, recruit and train volunteers to operate the information center.
- Keep the trained volunteers on stand-by when you have been notified that the Call Center may need to open.
- Review data bases of volunteers
- Make sure all volunteers are Safe Sanctuary Certified.
- Find out the kinds of skills will be needed for the disaster area. Recruit and refer potential volunteers

Following A Disaster:

- Find housing for volunteers.
- Coordinate, register, house and assign all volunteers to the office, donation centers and job sites.
- Schedule someone to meet volunteers as they enter the disaster site, escort them to their accommodations and job assignments.
- Obtain and provide local information: hospitals, restaurants, shopping areas, and provide maps when possible.
- Volunteers may be assigned to work on residences or other projects if they are in need and the volunteer team agrees to work on said project. This could be, but is not limited to:
 - Community or Civic projects such as cleaning debris at a nursing home that is preventing residents from getting outside.
 - Cleaning a common area in a community.

- Warehouse work for other VOAD organizations

During Recovery If Necessary:

- Relay information concerning volunteers to the full time staff Volunteer Coordinator continuing the recovery effort. Please include any difficulties you are aware of with staff issues or special needs.
- Staff Volunteer Coordinator will continue with the same duties but for the whole recovery.

Equipment Coordinator –

Prior To A Disaster:

- Be responsible for the purchasing and maintaining equipment for the district ERT Trailer.
- Work with ER Teams in the district where the trailers are on hand to ensure that the trailers are maintained and equipment accounted.
- Assure tools, supplies and equipment are available for each work team.
- Maintain data base of location of trailers and any other disaster related equipment or supplies within the District. This database should also include inventory of tools on each trailer.
- Verify yearly that the trailers are still in place and that ER and/or PIM Teams still have the option of asking to use them.

Following A Disaster:

- Assure that adequate fuel for generators is in the district ERT Trailer.
- Make arrangements with local churches to have the trailers brought to the disaster site and conduct an “arrival” inventory.
- When the trailers are no longer needed, make sure a “departure” inventory is done on each trailer before being returned.

During Recovery if Necessary:

- Transfer information about all equipment to the Recovery Staff
- Return all equipment used during response but not needed for recovery.
Coordinate the return of equipment and supplies with the DDRRC or Executive Director at the close of response or recovery phase.

When a Disaster is Imminent

Executive Director - Relief to Recovery Stage – This could be the same person as the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator (CDRC) but also may need to be a different individual appointed at the time of the disaster. This may be necessary if the CDRC is a victim of the disaster or other needs that may inhibit the CDRC from performing these tasks.

- Appointed by the Bishop for each disaster
- Accountable to the Assistant to the Bishop.
- Liaison for the Bishop and Assistant to the Bishop to the District Disaster Response Coordinators, District Superintendents, VOAD member agencies and government agencies.

Relief Stage:

- The Executive Director for the disaster will continue to update the District Superintendents with the latest information concerning the disaster and ask how they can continue to provide assistance to the Districts.
- Stay in contact with the Assistant to the Bishop, and the Bishop to inform them the estimated extent of the disaster.
- Meet with VOAD, TACCOR, and the local DDRT(s) for a briefing on the disaster.
- Pass along phone number and location of TACCOR office to VOAD and FEMA.
- Obtain permission from First-Response authorities for access to the disaster area.
- Have the local District Superintendent affected by the disaster call the Bishop and CDRC to schedule a tour of the disaster area with other cabinet members including the Assistant to the Bishop and Conference Director of Communications.
- Work with DDRT Spiritual Care Coordinator.
- Meet with CDRC, Local District Superintendent(s) and Local DDRT(s) to assess the damage to church property, congregations and communities. With the Assistant to the Bishop, take any appeal the District Superintendent(s) has to the Bishop. This preliminary needs assessment should include any information from the TACCOR and DDRT, VOAD and FEMA.
- In cooperation with The Assistant to the Bishop call the District Superintendents in the disaster areas to get a feel for the level of damage. Ask each DS if they need relief operations in their district. The ERT's cannot enter a district without a request from the District Superintendent. Once the Bishop has made a decision concerning how the Conference will respond to the disaster, relay all the information to the pertinent individuals.
- Once the Bishop requests UMCOR assistance, coordinate with The Assistant to the Bishop and UMCOR.
- Coordinate with the DDRT Volunteer Coordinator the housing of any UMCOR consultants who will be arriving at the disaster site.
- Be responsible, along with the CDRC, for holding briefing sessions with the members of TACCOR and DDRT
- If there is no Inter-Faith Committee in existence within the disaster area, work with the DDRT and local ministers to establish one.
- Responsible for handling an evaluation at the close of the Response Phase

During Recovery:

- If the Response and Recovery Phases will be long term, review with the District Superintendent, TACCOR, Assistant to the Bishop and Bishop the possibility of hiring a Recovery Staff.
- Work with UMCOR to create a budget, timeline and recovery office
- Pass information to the Director of the Recovery office to include but not limited to:
 1. Case Information
 2. Equipment and supplies
 3. Concerns
 4. Meeting locations and times
 5. Community Connections and resources
 6. Local Church, District, and Conference connections and resources
- Assist in creating the Disaster Recovery Executive Committee consisting of:

1. Bishop or designee
2. Assistant to the Bishop
3. District Superintendent(s) in affected area
4. Conference Treasurer
5. Director of Communications
6. Conference Disaster Response Coordinator (CDRC)
7. Director of the Recovery

Once the Recovery Executive Committee is formed all responsibility is turned over to them and the Recovery Office Staff.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CONFERENCE LEADERS

THE ROLE OF THE BISHOP

Leadership by the resident Bishop is extremely important. For many, a bishop's appearance at the disaster site symbolizes the "awesome presence" of Christ and the commitment of his church to relief of suffering. (*Don't dismiss or minimize the value of "symbols" to people in need.*) The Bishop's role as the symbol of a caring church cannot be filled by anyone else!

Communities receiving a visit are grateful that their pain was important enough for the Bishop to set aside routine business. Communities not receiving a visit won't forget the slight. Unfortunately, district superintendents and other well-intentioned staff members often try to "protect" a Bishop's time by wrongly advising that it isn't necessary for him or her to go to the disaster area. This protection does much damage to the conference in the long run. **A disaster is a tragedy, and the conference cannot conduct "business as usual."** (*Don't delay too long. A visit long after the crisis gives the impression that the Bishop couldn't be bothered enough to drop everything and come when people needed it.*)

In Early Preparation, the Bishop:

- Appoints a CDRC who will serve at least four years. (Don't restrict the search to active clergy members. They may not have time to devote to this effort.)
- Appoints a conference staff person to represent the Bishop on TACCOR.
- Empowers the Bishop's representative—in the Bishop's absence—to implement the response plan when disaster strikes. That responsibility includes contacting the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) for assistance. (Only a Bishop or designee can make this request.)
- Is aware of the assistance UMCOR can and cannot provide.
- Establishes contingency plans for a conference wide financial appeal.

When Disaster is Imminent or Strikes, the Bishop will:

- Let conference disaster-response leaders know where he/she is.
- See that the conference properties are protected from further damage.
- Request assistance from UMCOR (Emergency Response Office 202-548-4002).
- Visit the disaster site to meet and pray with survivors and to make our "connected" church visible. This visit should be with the local District Superintendent and the Communications designee.

- Immediately appoint a supply pastor for any clergy members who are other than minor survivors of the disaster. Pastors who are themselves survivors must be allowed time to focus on their recovery. Supply pastors would serve a minimum of one month. The reason for the appointment must be explained to the local church membership. Disaster-response funds may be used for this purpose.
- Appoint temporary assisting pastors to any disaster-affected congregations when it is clear that the pastor-in-charge may be overwhelmed by duties of both church and community as recovery takes place. (Look among the ranks of the retired pastorate.) The assistant should be available for up to a year and on site for one or two months. After the first one or two months, the assistant rotates in and out under the direction of the pastor in charge.
- Appoint—in large disasters when the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator is a pastor—a supply pastor for at least one month to relieve the coordinator of local church duties. Explain the reason to the congregation.
- See that the person on conference staff with the disaster-response portfolio is relieved of other duties for one month if the disaster is large (Medium and High Level). Provide additional temporary support staff.
- Appoint a temporary Assisting District Superintendent to those regions that are hardest hit, especially if there is significant church property damage. If the Bishop is a survivor, he/she should also have an assistant who can share the load.
- Appoint an Executive Director for this specific disaster if the CDRC is not able to perform those functions.
- Consider a conference wide financial appeal through the Conference Council on Finance and Administration. Make this appeal as soon as possible. If you wait, donors will assume that the church is not involved and will give to other agencies.
- Remember that it cannot be business as usual if the disaster is large.

In the Aftermath, the Bishop will:

- Have all involved leaders meet for reports and evaluation.
- Publicly acknowledge workers and work done.
- Plans for a service of praise and memorial a year from the date of the disaster

The Assistant to the Bishop

At the beginning of the Calendar Year:

- Meet with the Bishop to request a letter be sent to the District Superintendent of each pastor serving on TACCOR. This letter is to request the DS contact the Staff Parish Chairperson of the pastor's church informing them that the Bishop requires their pastor's service for disaster response for maximum of (four) weeks.
- After the pastor's service to the conference he/she should receive up to two additional weeks leave for rest and recovery. This is necessary for the pastor to transition back into congregational ministry after the intensity of disaster work. The pastor will need time to rest and be with his/her family.
- If the disaster affects the entire district, it is suggested that the above recommendations be applied to the District Superintendent as well.
- Encourage the District Superintendent's assistance in recruiting pastors in each area that would be willing to take on additional responsibilities for any DDRT/TACCOR pastors when they are actively performing duties during disaster response.

Prior To A Disaster

- Contact all local pastors, TACCOR and DDRT members for current contact information by phone, or through clergy net or The Conference Web Site.
- Share updated contact information with the CDRC.
- Retain a copy of Conference and District disaster plans.

If A Disaster Is Imminent:

- Recruit volunteers to fill positions in the conference and district teams.
- Keep a copy of the database of conference and district disaster response team and coordinators. This database should be used to identify volunteers to be contacted and fill positions such as caseworkers, information center volunteers, and any other volunteers needed for a particular disaster. The master copy may be associated with a previous disaster if active recovery work is still being done. If so, plan to take a periodic copy to be used for new disasters.
- In case of evacuation key TACCOR and DDR team members are encouraged to evacuate to the prearranged designated sites, depending on the nature of the disaster, to assemble and begin response efforts.

Relief Stage:

- If the Assistant to the Bishop is able to respond to the disaster, he or she will work with the newly appointed Executive Director, the CDRC, District Superintendent(s) and the pastor(s) in effected areas.
- Work with the District Superintendent, the TACCOR and DDRT to assess the damage and make a decision about what support is needed from UMCOR and the Conference.
- Meet with the Bishop and the Executive Director and/or CDRC or other TACCOR representative to decide what response the Conference should make to the disaster.

During Recovery If Necessary:

- The Assistant to the Bishop will serve on the Long Term Recovery Executive Committee.
- The Assistant to the Bishop or Bishop's Designee will serve as chair of Long Term Recovery Executive Committee.

District Superintendents

All Texas Annual Conference District Superintendents have "some" level of responsibility in a disaster within the boundaries of our conference. Communicate with TACCOR and DDRT members, other District Superintendents, Bishop and Conference staff to assure preparation for disaster. Be active in the initial response and through recovery phase of disaster as liaison

In Early Preparation, each District Superintendent will:

- Be familiar with the Texas Annual Conference Disaster Response Plan.
- Keep a copy of the plan available.
- Appoint or have the Nominating Committee select a DDRC to serve on TACCOR. Look to laity. Clergy members rarely have the time to devote to this effort. Our itinerant system does not allow for long-term involvement. A four-year commitment is necessary.

- Assist the DDRC in creating the DDRT committee.
- Identify church properties that agree to serve as Operations Centers for Relief and/or Recovery, temporary shelters. (American Red Cross has application/training program), places to house volunteers and places to collect, warehouse, and distribute donated goods.
- Identify churches whose members agree to serve as Early Response Teams, Partner in Mission teams during Recovery and Individual Volunteers trained in Disaster Response.

When Disaster Is Imminent or Strikes, each District Superintendent will:

- Let the Bishop and his/her DDRC know where he/she is.
- Assess any damage to his/her household. If a District Superintendent is a survivor, he/she should not rely on personal judgment. Listen to others. If he/she cannot perform his/her duties, request help.
- Contact pastors in the affected communities.
- Check on damage to church-owned property as well as the extent of damage in the affected community. (Conference and UMCOR personnel will need this information, particularly if a Church wide Appeal is sought.)
- Accompany the Conference Disaster Response assessment team.
- Tour the affected area with the Bishop. See that the Communications Director, or his/her designee, is along. Connect with the District Lay Leader.
- Get caregivers into the community immediately if there has been loss of life or destruction of church property. (Crisis intervention is crucial.) Remember these caregivers are there to assist the local pastor and augment what the local congregation can do.
- If a pastor is a survivor, appoint a supply pastor immediately. The appointment should be for at least one month. The purpose of the appointment needs to be explained to the membership. If the pastor must relocate from a damaged home, take the initiative to recruit volunteers to help cleanup, pack, and take items to storage.
- Find an assistant as well as a trusted counselor if the superintendent is likely to be over whelmed by the scope of a disaster. Be aware of the length of time recovery takes. Since superintendents need to be very involved and highly visible, they cannot conduct business as usual for some time. Remember, damage to church property will consume much of the superintendent's time.
- Encourage unaffected churches near the disaster to share their resources.
- Watch for "burnout" in the leadership. Set up a "buddy" system.
- Use the authority of the superintendent's office to ask people to do certain tasks.
- Encourage pastors and laity to give themselves plenty of time to make decisions following a disaster.
- Work with disaster-affected clergy members to develop their own recovery plan.

In the Aftermath the District Superintendent will:

- Pastors who go from a chaotic and challenging disaster recovery to too calm an appointment are often not challenged. They tend to create "mini disasters" in their new congregations. Certainly they will need some recovery time, less conflict and fewer demands on their time—but not too much quiet. They still need rewarding challenges.
- Participate in the closeout evaluation from disaster in the district.

- District decision makers should include the District Superintendent, District Disaster Response Coordinators, Conference Disaster Response Coordinator and pastors in the district.

United Methodist Pastors-

In Early Preparation, Pastors will:

- Talk with the congregation about being prepared (including all medical needs and prescriptions, critical personal documents and contact information).
- Select a church Disaster Response coordinator.
- Have the church establish Disaster Response Plan.
- Encourage Early Response and Disaster Preparedness Training.
- Collect relief supplies.
- Be trained in disaster response.
- Prepare a list of all members and know how to contact them if evacuated.
- Identify special needs of parishioners for transportation and assistance.

When Disaster Is Imminent or Strikes, Pastors will:

- Check on the well-being of church members. In the early days of a large disaster, pastors may not have time to do that personally. If the phones are working, a congregational phone tree is helpful for discovering immediate needs. Knowledge about how folks are doing will help pastors set priorities. Volunteers, preferably trained (like Stephen Ministers), from yours or nearby congregations are great for personal follow-up on the phone calls. When phones are not working, Stephen Ministers can make an initial personal contact on the pastor's behalf. They can report urgent needs. Use their help! Even those unaffected by the disaster will appreciate the concern.
- Contact Trustees to ensure that proper shut-down procedures are taken at the church facility and at home. Shut off gas, water and electricity.
- Let the District Superintendent and Conference Disaster Response leaders know where and how the church staff is.
- Be willing to participate in the initial damage assessment. The Bishop and District Superintendent may also want to visit the area. If you do not hear from your conference leaders, invite them. Their presence in the early days will comfort people and will fill everyone with hope that their church cares about them in their time of need.
- Visit the disaster area after conditions are safe to meet and pray with survivors and to make our church visible so survivors feel the presence of God.
- Resume worship as soon as possible.
- If necessary, locate a suitable alternative for worship, such as a school or another church. Do not forget the importance of church school. Children need stability resumed as soon as possible and will need to process the disaster. (UMCOR can provide training for adult workers with children in how they can help children recover.)
- Perhaps an alternative use for your church building might be for distribution of food or other items. **(DON'T GET INTO CLOTHING COLLECTION!)** Any use of the facility must be a joint decision with the pastor and church trustees. Everyone has to buy into the disruption in your church for the month or so that distribution goes on.

- Another possibility would be for the church to offer to house United Methodist or other volunteers from recognized relief agencies. Teams must be totally self-sufficient, with food, water and bedding, especially in the early days of relief. This decision, too, should be a joint one involving the pastor, trustees, and the TACCOR.
- A church might want to offer a portion of its space to the conference relief and recovery operation as a coordination point for the disaster-response effort. However, that could last from three months to a year. Although not necessarily disruptive to the church programs, it should be carefully thought through. Participating does much to enhance a church's reputation in the community. *(If casework takes place in your church, you must meet certain requirements to honor client confidentiality. For information see UMCOR's casework manual.)*
- Encourage volunteer mission teams from the congregation to assist disaster survivors within and outside the immediate area. Consult with CDRC for advice and coordination. ERTs that do immediate debris cleanup and temporary repairs must be trained and certified by the conference.
- Provide input and participate (possibly as a board member) in a long-term recovery organization. As the disaster response unfolds, such a faith-based, community long-term social service recovery organization is likely to be established—whether it is entirely run by United Methodists or is an interfaith (often a better solution for pooling resources). This commitment is always long-term. Before agreeing to serve, make certain that your family and congregation fully support your participation. Remember, you probably had a “full plate” of responsibilities before the disaster. Now that the Relief Phase has past, it may now be time for you to consider passing the torch on to laypeople who would better represent the congregation in the recovery phase. Empowering the laity in this way is a wonderful opportunity for their sense of ministry to grow.

In the Aftermath, Pastors will:

- Participate in an opportunity for closeout evaluation.

Conference Communications-

This office will be vital in getting the news out not only to our Conference but to the General Church.

- The Director of Communications should appoint a staff person who is the direct contact person for Disaster information.
- Set up the BLAST for instant messages to the Conference
- Be available to visit the disaster area for photos, stories and needs.

The Conference Treasurer-

The Treasurer of the Texas Annual Conference administers the Conference Disaster-Response Funds and the UMCOR Disaster-Response Grant process. He/She receives all donations from individuals and grants. He/She will handle requests for funding in regarding the disaster.

In Early Preparation:

- Works with TACCOR to develop the financial process of the plan.
- Serves on the Executive Committee of the Long Term Recovery

When Disaster is Imminent or Strikes:

- Obtain extra office help or temporarily transfer normal duties to other staff members.
- As soon as possible, visit the affected area with the Bishop and Conference Disaster Response Coordinator, as appropriate.
- Help in release of money to establish the "Call In" Center and begin the initial set up of the Recovery Office.
- Be aware of the length of time recovery takes. Continue to remind the conference that recovery is still going on.
- Encourage the conference to give financial and personal help.
- Keep in touch with the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator and TACCOR.

In the Aftermath:

Participate in an opportunity for closeout evaluation.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES RELATED TO FUNDS

Financial Limitations

1. UMCOR money is to provide immediate relief of acute human need.
2. UMCOR money cannot be used to repair or rebuild disaster-damaged church property.
3. General Appeal money can only be used for its designated purpose.
4. No money will be given to victims. All disbursement of funds will be made to approved vendors.
5. Annual Conference money will be used for needs designated by the **CDRC and TACCOR Executive Committee initially, and then with the Recovery Executive Committee.**
6. Conference money must be used first before General Appeal and UMCOR money can be used.
7. All UMCOR money not used must be returned to UMCOR at time of close out.

Resources Available From UMCOR

1. \$10,000 will be sent to the Conference Treasurer as soon as the Bishop makes the request for UMCOR assistance. This is start up money for disaster relief.
2. UMCOR money can be requested up to \$100,000.00. Detailed budgets need to accompany the request. Requests for more than \$100,000.00 need the approval of the entire UMCOR Board of Directors which only meet periodically.
3. UMCOR personnel will assist the Conference and the CDRC following a disaster.
4. Equipment such as generators, pressure washers, ice coolers for bulk ice, etc. can be requested. UMCOR takes care of transporting the equipment to the scene at no cost to the Conference.
5. Flood Buckets and Health Kits are available through Sager Brown at no cost to the Conference.

The Texas Annual Conference Churches will be encouraged to participate in the special Sunday offering set aside for One Great Hour of Sharing Funds will go to the United

Methodist Committee on Relief. The churches will also be encouraged to donate moneys for disaster-response needs before and after a disaster. Unless specified, the moneys collected will be placed in a Conference Disaster-Response Fund and administered by the Conference Treasurer. Large disasters may generate significant amounts of donated money from within and outside the conference, most of it arriving during the first one or two months following the event. In such cases, the Conference Treasurer will assign an accounting number for these designated funds.

The Conference Treasurer will keep a record of expenditure based on purpose of expense (i.e. materials/furnishings, utilities, contractor services, etc.), and not according to districts or disasters. District Disaster Coordinators requesting funds are expected to keep a record of moneys spent on a disaster response under their leadership and make the necessary report.

Request for money from the Disaster-Response Fund will follow rules governing check requisition as set forth by the conference.

Because of the nature of disasters, funds must be distributed during the relief phase in a timely manner. Paper trails and good accounting are essential for all transactions, but quickly launching disaster operations requires considerable flexibility in disbursing money. In most instances, once-a week disbursements work well. **The Conference Treasurer is not responsible for spending decisions for a disaster.**

Church funds are needed most during the Recovery Phase, long after contributions have dwindled or stopped completely. For this reason, it is necessary to let government and other agencies spend their money during the Relief Phase while church funds are conserved. Special circumstances may make it necessary to provide small amounts of emergency assistance to a few survivors during the Relief Phase. Any assistance should be based on documented need, and pre-set equal amounts should not be provided to survivors. Wait until case management is in place to set priorities for genuine needs before dispensing most funds.

As soon as possible following a disaster, CDRC will use the network of the conference and district leadership to notify congregations of the need for money. The Bishop will make the decision to request moneys for the disaster response. A conference mailing to congregations, e-mail to pastor and the conference Web site may be used to inform churches of the disaster and ask that an offering be taken during two Sundays following the disaster. Congregations will be asked to help while the news is fresh. Do not wait for the regularly scheduled issue of the Cross Connection. People are more inclined to pay attention to a postcard, e-mail and phone call. Any delay may cause members to assume the church is not involved in the response, and they will donate to other agencies.

It is important that we vigorously generate local funds for local disasters. UMCOR expects a conference to spend conference-generated funds first—before denominational money is used. *(See section on UMCOR funding guidelines.)*

UMCOR FUNDING GUIDELINES

Part I—Relief Phase—Request for funds must come from the Bishop's office through the CDRC.

- To meet immediate emergency needs—food, clothing, and shelter.
- To begin set up of response organization.
- To assist local churches with added burdens caused by the response needs.
- Relief Phase request may not to exceed \$10,000 per disaster incident.

Part II—Recovery Phase—Request for UMCOR grants must be accompanied by preliminary budget and come from the Bishop's office. Assistance and format for this procedure can come from the CDRC.

- To provide direct assistance to clients.
- To pay salary of conference-hired staff for recovery organization.
- To help set up the disaster-recovery organization.
- To cover administrative costs; which will be less than 20 percent of total request
- Funds may not be used to repair church owned property

SHELTERS

The Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church strongly recommends that all local UM Churches explore and pursue official approval as a Red Cross Shelter. Churches which choose not to be Red Cross approved, or who do not meet Red Cross Specifications, are cautioned to study carefully the costs and liabilities involved before allowing facilities to open as a shelter. The final decision on this matter lies with the Board of Trustees of each local United Methodist Church.

CONCLUSION

This plan covers the basics of disaster response. But this document isn't all-inclusive. For further information on processes and strategies for responding to disasters, please contact the United Methodist Committee on Relief manuals on the topic of interest.

APPENDIX

LONG TERM RECOVERY MAJOR DISASTER Disaster Recovery Executive Committee

The Disaster Recovery Executive Committee is formed after the Long Term Recovery office is set up and staff are hired.

This group is made up of the following:

- Assistant to the Bishop
- District Superintendent(s) in affected area
- Conference Treasurer
- Conference Disaster Response Coordinator
- Director of the Recovery
- Conference PIM Director
- District Disaster Response Coordinator (DDRC)

The Executive Committee will be empowered to make decisions, especially on release of funds up to an amount agreed upon by the committee and the budget submitted to UMCOR. It is not responsible for micromanaging operations aspects of the disaster-response effort, although the committee will lend their advice and council on issues dealing with Recovery Office. Regular assessments will be conducted of the Recovery Office as resources must be measured carefully.

Disaster Office – Long Term Recovery

Director of the Recovery
Volunteer Coordinator
Family Assistance Director
Family Advocates
Construction Coordinator
Warehouse Coordinator

Director of the (Long-Term) Recovery-

Takes over from the Executive Director of the Disaster and/or CDRC and continues most of the job description for the Executive Director plus the following. The Director is the visionary leader for the Team, responsible for seeing the big picture and working with all programs and outside agencies as needed. He/she is responsible for interpreting and representing the program to other agencies and organizations as well as to the conference.

Specific Responsibilities:

- Reports directly to Disaster Recovery Executive Committee of the Texas Annual Conference
- Manages all phases of the Recovery Efforts throughout whole disaster area
- Oversees Operation of the Disaster Recovery Centers, staff and funds
- Hires, evaluates, and terminates staff with the assistance of the Disaster Recovery Executive Committee
- Financial accountability to the Texas Conference and to other funding sources

- Liaison to Texas Annual Conference of the UMC, TACCOR, UMCOR, United Methodist Partners In Mission, Interfaith, Texas VOAD, and other agencies as related to disaster programs
- Assist in the development and implementation of programs
- Schedule and conduct regular staff meetings
- Keep updated on current programs and agencies that relate to disaster response
- Accountable to the Bishop of the Texas Annual Conference of the UMC
- Assists Executive Director in providing supervision and training to the staff of the Long term Recovery Office.
- Arranges and oversees training of Family Advocates.
- Receives, Evaluates and Processes all Family Advocacy Referrals.
- Maintains Confidential Files to include consistent written and oral communication with Homeowners, Family Advocates, and Other agencies, regarding the progress of all On Site Work.
- Communicates with Family Advocates, Team Leaders and PIM Team Coordinator weekly to plan and organize the use of work teams.
- Helps solicit assistance from Local Agencies & Churches
- Coordinates Communications through Local, District and Conference Media
- Prepare and distribute staff directory to TACCOR and DDRT Coordinators
- Contacts Local Agencies when referral is needed for unmet needs.
- Represents UMC Recovery efforts on all the Long Term Recovery Committees in the disaster areas

Volunteer Coordinator (Work Team Director)

- Processes all volunteer Contacts & Information
- Provides training to all Team Leaders at the site if necessary for Safe Sanctuary.
- Receive and store donated items, mailing thank you note or donation letters
- Check voice notes and recording device for messages
- Maintain a reference manual of information and best practices.
- Keep statistical information on all teams. Maintain a current data base.
- Coordinates with Team Leaders and Construction Supervisor to arrange weekly Work Team Assignments
- Communicates to Hospitality Coordinator needs for accommodations and any other hospitality to teams.
- Gives team contact information to Conference Hospitality Coordinator so all teams can receive appropriate acknowledgement.
- Hand out T-shirts as requested.

Family Assistance Director – Recruit, supervise and assist in training individuals interested in providing casework for initial response in disaster situation. The Family Assistance Director is the key to success in the home related ministries. Finding and qualifying the right people for assistance, and programs, is critical in disaster ministries accountability. This person must be a good communicator, must be resourceful and creative, as well as persistent and patient. The ability to be successful in housing ministry revolves around this position.

Responsibilities:

- Provide leadership in all areas related to casework and Family Advocates.
- Assemble and maintain a list of potential volunteer family advocates.
- Assist in providing training for Case Management.

- Establish and maintain a data base with complete records on all families/clients in disaster ministries system and file them at the office
- Begin assigning families to Family Advocates. Limit them to a small number, less than 10 at a time, depending on the amount of assistance the family needs to recover.
- Be an advocate for families in the disaster ministries system
- Act as a liaison to other agencies and organization that provide resources to families
- Supervise the work of all the volunteer Family Advocates
- Assist in the planning and implementation of classes for families including but not limited to budgeting, home maintenance, home ownership
- Attend regular staff meetings called by the Executive Director-Disaster Ministries
- Work closely with the Construction Coordinator as client homes qualify for volunteer teams
- Keep updated and educated on issues as related to casework, especially as it applies in disaster recovery
- Attend VOAD or appropriate meetings to keep updated on all issues
- Meet with Long term Recovery subcommittee of VOAD

Following A Disaster:

Meet with VOAD, District Superintendent, Pastors, American Red Cross and FEMA and others to receive referrals and coordinate efforts.

Family Advocates –

Religious community disaster caseworkers are called “family advocates”. Their work is similar to caseworkers in secular agencies, but often includes an added “helping” dimension.

Responsibilities:

- Attend UMCOR Case worker training
- Work under direct supervision of the Family Assistance Director- Disaster Ministries
- Develop a sound knowledge of various relief programs
- Receive assignments from the Family Assistance Director for each client contact
- Conduct interviews with clients in vulnerable population groups
- Assess individual needs
- Provide reassurance and emotional support to clients
- Search neighborhoods to find isolated or “hidden” survivors who need assistance
- Assigned up to 10 client families at one time
- Follow up on lists of affected persons received from other providers and agencies to assure needy persons receive services
- Determine the best resources for meeting needs
- Provide assistance in Disaster Recovery Centers
- Obtain and help provide inter-agency and public information
- Assist individuals in completing forms, negotiations and appeals
- Identify individuals with needs exceeding the scope of existing programs and seek ways to address those needs
- Complete paperwork

Family Advocates do not merely respond to survivor needs on demand, but take the lead in helping survivors explore their full range of possible needs. With training and resources to bridge gaps between various service providers, they help meet survivor needs in a comprehensive manner.

Construction Coordinator

The Construction Coordinator provides guidance and supervision for the volunteers to insure quality workmanship and a positive experience. Manage all aspects of the construction process in a manner consistent with disaster ministries goals and principals. This may also include working with sub contractors, local communities and accepting supply donations to insure maximum participation in the projects.

- Communicate with Volunteer Coordinator to establish needs and team schedules
- Access volunteer skills to better utilize teams
- Work closely with the Family Assistance Director to assist qualified families
- Daily communication with the Materials and Warehouse Coordinator
- Order all materials and equipment for each site prior to team arrival
- See that property, equipment, and supplies are protected and properly maintained
- See that all necessary permits and inspections are done on schedule and all work is with in code
- Prepare weekly status reports on jobs in progress for staff meeting
- Assess disaster related damages; prepare estimates for time and materials to do necessary repairs
- Provide written estimate to Director of Recovery if funds need to be allocated from Texas Annual Conference of the UMC
- When job is approved, provide written statement/agreement of work to be done signed by homeowner
- Provide leadership, training when necessary, and supervision of repairs in conjunction with the Volunteer Coordinator
- Maintains contact and site evaluation of all projects assuring work plan will meet codes and compliances before work begins.
- Clarifies Building Code Issues, sanitary issues, and mitigation issues to assure projects meet with local codes

Warehouse Coordinator

The Warehouse Coordinator basically runs the warehouse facility. He/she is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the physical building and grounds as well as the materials used in disaster programs. The success of this person directly impacts the quality and success of all disaster programs.

- Keep updated on potential resources and projects for disaster ministries
- Attend staff meetings as called by Director of the Recovery
- Assist in the planning and implementing of instructional classes for materials and tool safety for volunteers working at the warehouse
- Identify and cultivate relationships with suppliers of resources necessary to disaster programs
- Report successful relationships/agreements to Construction Coordinator
- Computerize the inventory in warehouse – in and out going materials

- Accurate monthly inventory count will be sent to the Construction Coordinator and the Executive Director

MANAGEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

General Information Regarding Volunteers

The role of volunteers is to assist people in the devastated area to rebuild their lives, often through rebuilding damaged structures. This work should be done so as to reduce the trauma and chaos of the situation as much as possible. The primary concern should be the survivor!

The CDRC, or designee, in conjunction with the Conference PIM Director, makes all management and deployment decisions for volunteers (including Early Response Teams).

Volunteers should:

- Be Safe Sanctuary Certified and Back ground checked
- Be willing to listen and assist survivor in obtaining a range of disaster-related services.
- Be ready and willing to go when their skills are needed and their team can be accommodated.
- Be caring, understanding, sensitive, and nonjudgmental.
- Be willing to do the tasks assigned.
- Know and understand the disaster stages and timelines.
- Not go unprepared, unannounced or uninvited!
- Contact the PIM Director, Early Response Coordinator or the designated contact in devastated areas to see when and how they can offer assistance.
- Check in with local coordinator/authorities for task assignments.
- Communicate so adequate time is available to prepare work assignments for skills of volunteers and the time they have to serve.
- Leave for the affected area with all sleeping and other personal needs for housing, gasoline and food.
- Only work on assigned projects by the appropriate coordinator (Unauthorized repairs can prevent owners from receiving insurance payments or federal assistance).
- Relief Phase Volunteers should be ERT-certified.
- Be Flexible.

Volunteer teams should:

- Be led by a trained PIM/ ERT team leader.
- Appoint a leader or liaison to coordinate with local response group.
- Plan on providing needed materials (or funds to purchase before arrival) for rebuilding or cleanup.
- Have a crew leader to supervise the work
- (ERT's) provide own transportation, food, lodging and first aid.
- Set aside time for sharing group experiences, rest, and worship.

Remember: Volunteers are guests and servants!

Early Response Teams (ERTs) United Methodist Partners in Mission (UMMIM) Disaster Response Teams

The Early Response Team

An Early Response Team is a specialized, trained and certified collection of volunteers that comes self-contained into an area, if and when requested.

The **primary task** of the Early Response Team is, first and foremost, to provide a Christian presence reassuring survivors that the church cares about them.

The **secondary duties** are:

- Take steps to prevent further damage to a family's personal property (stabilize). Such steps may include tarping, debris removal, chainsaw work, and cleaning out flooded homes.
- To be part of a caring ministry of listeners who will help the survivors begin to heal.

Early Response Teams **DO NOT**:

- Make permanent repairs or begin rebuilding. To do so before insurance and government assessments are done and permission to proceed is given may reduce or eliminate any assistance from those sources. Such action can become a liability issue for team members, churches, and the conference if teams are thought to hinder or duplicate a person's access to benefits.
- Arrive in a disaster area without an invitation from the CDRC.
- Out-of-conference teams DO NOT come in until invited by the South Central Jurisdiction UMMIM Office.
- Come in unless they are trained, certified and recognized by the conference and the UMMIM Jurisdiction Office.
- Make promises to the survivors.

PIM/VIM and Disaster Recovery Teams

Rebuilding and permanent repairs will be done by UMMIM/PIM Disaster Recovery Teams and others who will work during the Recovery Phase.

These teams go in under the direction of the CDRC, or designee, through the Conference Partners In Mission (PIM) Director. Once the Recovery office is set up, the volunteer teams will work through the recovery office.

THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN YOU VOLUNTEER TO DO DISASTER WORK

1. You are coming into a place that is chaotic and lacking in basic comforts.
2. Come prepared to provide your own food and lodging: be self-sustaining or make arrangements ahead of time.

3. Remember disaster ministry is more than bricks and mortar, crisis listening is important to disaster victims. Be patient with fellow workers who have good listening skills and spend time letting disaster victims vent. The service they provide is just as important to the victim and their recovery as cleaning and debris removal.
4. Be prepared for disturbing sights of destruction and decay.
5. Be prepared to be overwhelmed by your experience
 - a. Be willing to admit you need to talk to someone about your experience.
 - b. Take care of yourself!
6. As United Methodists we are a part of a disaster response system that includes government agencies (FEMA, HUD, IRS, etc.), faith based organizations, and community organizations. Be prepared to work within the system. Wishing things were done a different way won't change reality.
7. Be a team player, you may not have the whole picture. Bring any information concerning victim's situation, resources, and needs to the team.
8. **Response is a sprint; Recovery is a marathon;** pace yourself. Recognize whether you are a sprinter or a marathoner. Most people can't do both. It is ok to come in where your skills fit.
9. Remember we can't help everyone! We can't fix everything! Do your best and let God do the rest!
10. **Know when to say "NO". Sometimes we can't help.**
11. Know how to say "NO". Say no respectfully. Be careful to leave the survivors dignity intact. Be honest.
12. Be Flexible. Be prepared for change. Anticipate surprises, and don't expect things to work as planned.
13. **Get to know where and how to refer victims to community and recovery resources. Make appropriate referrals.**
14. Keep your values to yourself. It is OK to keep your values. It is important to know what they are but check them at the door.
15. Be aware of cultural diversity. Respect differences in people and understand you may have to adjust your thinking to be helpful.
16. Priorities, Priorities, Priorities: They change constantly and sometimes have to be reshuffled more than once (even in a day). Change sometimes happens abruptly.
17. Overcome Client Resistance: Sometimes survivors have trouble trusting other agencies, government officials or strangers. Help them trust enough to get the assistance they need.
18. Crisis Issues: Some survivors may exhibit symptoms of trauma and need more help getting past the event. Encourage them to seek counseling, offer referrals.
19. Verify Needs: Remember the **RESPONSE PHASE IS STABILIZING AN AREA TO PREVENT FURTHER DAMAGE OR HARM.** During **RECOVERY** the process will require verification of income, resources, services already received, or need. Work will slow down and be decided on a case by case basis.
20. Have Compassion and Patience. The recovery process is slow and frustrating.
21. Make the survivor your focus: Remember the agency you represent is not the number one priority, assisting the client in getting needs met is why you are there.
22. Confidentiality: Remember the information you are dealing with is important to the family and legally protected.
23. Listen: Listening is the best asset you can contribute. You can be more help listening than giving advice
24. Practice good boundaries: You will not like every client with whom you come in contact. Maintain a professional relationship as long as you are providing assistance to the client.
 - * Don't encourage inappropriate dependencies on our services
 - * Don't inappropriately insert yourself into victim's lives

- * Don't play favorites with clients
- * Do not lose sight of Personal Safety Issues
- * Do NOT go anywhere alone!

25. In the response and recovery process it is crucial to apply for everything including SBA loan even if you know you will not be approved. **In the FEMA process, you have to be denied to move on to the next step or appeal.**

26. **Last but not least TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!**

- * Find someone to talk to
- * Take time to pamper yourself
- * Ask for support
- * Don't take your work home with you
- * Watch out for compassion fatigue
- * Do things that reenergize you

OTHER CONCERNS AND PROCEDURES

Donated Goods

- Do not solicit donations for clothing! Refer all such donations to the Seventh-day Adventists and/or the Salvation Army.
- Never send supplies unannounced or unexpected.
- In-kind (noncash) donations will be received based on specific needs or otherwise redirected to other agencies.
- Location for collection/distribution of donated goods will be determined by local coordinator based on available space and specific needs.
- Materials or financial assistance should be distributed through the direction of the local response unit.
- Cash donations are recommended and should be sent to Conference Treasurer designated for the Texas Annual Conference Disaster-Response Fund.

Repair of Damaged Church Property

Unless specifically given for that purpose, money from the United Methodist Committee on Relief cannot be used for repairing churches. Under certain conditions, the district will seek to help churches raise money to repair churches damaged in a disaster. The conference takes seriously the mandate that church-owned properties have adequate insurance, including flood coverage (*which requires a separate policy*). The task of rebuilding or repairs will rest with each church and its trustees, not TACCOR.

Relief of Human Suffering

The primary task of TACCOR is to relieve human suffering. Both the survivor and the caregiver are candidates for care. **Conference and UMCOR money is to be used for the relief of human need. Assistance must be given regardless of a person's race, color, economic status, or religious affiliation.** The use of funds will take into account special consideration to those in a disaster-affected community who are marginalized and live in minority communities within a majority culture.

GUIDELINES FOR DISASTER RESPONSE AT A GLANCE

Preparation Response Recovery UM Pastor

- Talk with congregation about being prepared
- Select church coordinator
- Have church establish response plan
- Encourage ER Training
- Collect relief supplies
- Be trained in disaster response
- Offer ERT's, if there are trained teams in your congregation
- Survey congregation/community for needs
- Contact CDRC/DS if you have needs beyond the capability of the church
- Set up as relief/distribution center if needed (not shelter)
- Provide housing/meals for volunteers working in your community
- Provide directional assistance for teams
- Keep DS informed as to progress of recovery
- Resume pastoral duties as soon as possible.

District Disaster Response Coordinator (DDRC)

- Attend TACCOR meetings
- Get to know DS, and establish a means of communication for emergencies
- Encourage district churches to be trained in Disaster Preparedness.
- Assure ERTs and Disaster Response Teams are trained.
- Encourage collection of emergency supplies
- Check with Pastors in your area if affected by the disaster
- Offer assistance to Partner-District if needed
- Check with DS on damage reports and visit affected area with the DS and CDRC as soon as possible following the disaster
- If not affected, help with coordination of response efforts
- Meet with CDRC to determine response program
- Inform conference of needs and areas for response supply delivery
- Encourage volunteers from your District
- Encourage churches in district to volunteer and/or provide for volunteers
- Visit affected area as often as possible to offer hope and support and assist in long term recovery efforts as needed by the community
- Communicate with conference any needs and concerns for affected area.

District Superintendent

- Be trained by UMCOR on response procedures
- Establish a communication system with your DDRC
- Make disaster response training a yearly part of a district pastors meeting
- Gather information from pastors/CDRC about damage in your District
- Meet with Bishop to determine response
- Visit affected area as soon as possible after event
- Communicate with local pastors, relay information.
- Encourage churches in district to volunteer for recovery efforts
- Visit affected area as often as possible to offer hope and encouragement
- Have a district pastors meeting ASAP to discuss recovery effort.

UMCOR

- Collect and store emergency materials
- Assist TACCOR in training for local church preparation
- Maintain relations with other National response agencies, UMVIM/UMPIM, VOAD, and Interfaith, etc
- Works with PIM to provide ERTs to affected areas at the request of the area.
- Send available emergency response supplies as requested by CDRC/DS/local pastors through appropriate channels
- Provide materials support
- Provide emergency funds at request of Bishop
- Provide consultants and technical assistance when requested
- When requested, assist with the set up long-term recovery centers
- Communicate needs to those who need to know.
- Provide continued technical support as needed
- Provide funds for long term

GENERAL TIMELINE

Preparation (Year Round)

- a) Familiarize plan and be ready to respond
- b) Fill the vacant positions on Conference and District Teams
- c) Establish potential office space and team housing
- d) Maintain a disaster data base to include contact information
 - i) Positions
 - (1) Conference Team roster
 - (2) District Teams roster
 - ii) Potential Office locations
 - iii) Potential Housing locations
 - iv) Potential Work Teams
- e) Ongoing training
 - i) For conference and district response teams (ERT and Family Advocacy)
 - ii) Training for individual positions and duties
- f) Disaster Trailers
 - i) Maintain inventory and equipment
 - ii) Confirm location
 - iii) Arrange for acquisition of necessary equipment

Disaster pending / standby (3 Days Maximum)

- a) Review plan and be ready to respond
- b) Make sure all disaster response positions are filled
- c) Establish contact with appropriate team members and place them on standby
- d) Confirm buildings, trailers and other resources are available and ready
- e) In case of evacuation TACCOR members are encouraged to consider using a common place. An effort is underway to identify a location which would be willing to host 8-10 committee members and spouses for several days.

Immediately following disaster

- a) Any duties in phase one that have not been completed
- b) Ascertain degree of damage and determine level of response needed
- c) Follow TACCOR and DDRT Disaster Plan
- d) Begin communication links with other VOAD member agencies, local emergency management centers, and Federal and State Agencies
- e) Activate Information Center

Relief

- a) Assist in making buildings safe, sanitary and secure
- b) Assist other disaster agencies in their relief efforts
- c) Set up office space and housing units for teams
- d) Arrange for delivery and set up of Disaster Trailers
- e) Arrange to receive UMCOR Supplies
- f) Contract use of and terms for personal property (cell phones, vehicles, computers, etc.)
- g) Assess recovery level needed

1) Recovery

- a) Recovery Committee will meet and determine recovery needs
- b) Determine staff needs for recovery
- c) Establish purchasing agreements for supplies
- d) Set up and contract office space for long term use
- e) Provide training for caseworkers
- f) Participate in long term recovery committee meetings
- g) Communicate needs for volunteer teams
- h) Communicate progress to Conference Communications Office and Recovery Committee
- i) When recovery is discontinued return all equipment, supplies, and documentation to appropriate place, location, or individual

SOME USEFUL INFORMATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

Useful Information:

The Response and Recovery Staff work through the Texas Annual Conference to supply the following services:

1. Christian Care and Counseling for the victims of a disaster
2. Financial relief for persons who do not have adequate insurance
3. Early Response Teams will assist families and churches to clean up and make their buildings stabilized to prevent further damage and avoid any additional harm during the **Relief** Phase.
4. Partners In Mission and Volunteer In Mission teams assist in **REBUILDING** during the **Recovery** Phase.

The Texas Annual United Methodist Church is a member of VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster) which is a volunteer agency comprising of the ARC (American Red Cross), Salvation Army, other denominations, and private

organizations. Through this combined effort the victims of a disaster can expect to receive the best possible care and assistance.

Lessons Learned:

1. Planning and preparation are essential to make a disaster response run smoothly.
2. Plan disaster response efforts with possible recovery efforts in mind.
3. In addition to church members, identify community members who would be interested in providing volunteer time in response and recovery efforts.
4. Advocate ongoing training and education to all response and recovery paid or volunteer staff.
5. Provide community education about how to access response and recovery services and changes that occur during the process.
6. Identify and arrange community resources willing to respond during the response and recovery process, such as showers and lodging for teams.
7. Kinds of repairs and property to be repaired should be made on a case by case decision. The decisions to provide assistance should not be based on race, religion, political beliefs, community standing or other factors not related to need.
8. Provide support and clear guidelines to local church(s) and local organizations who have taken responsibility for the response to the disaster. Communicate from the beginning of recovery how things are different in this phase. Promote a clear understanding of their new role in recovery.

INCIDENT COORDINATION SYSTEM OVERVIEW

- Relief Phase -

Disaster operations are organized differently in the Relief and Recovery Phases.

The Relief Phase, when the crisis seems to have a life of its own, is very fluid and almost chaotic. Consequently, a more deliberate and structured management tool is required. The Incident Coordination System is one used by response agencies in their rescue and relief activities.

Originally developed by the fire service, ICS is a widely used management tool. It organizes personnel, facilities, resources, and communications in a crisis. The system establishes prompt coordination of various management functions and can be used with any disaster regardless of size, complexity, or resources required. ICS is a procedure for delegating specific assignments that break the disaster response into manageable segments. Since ICS is flexible, it permits the insertion of additional resources as the incident grows in complexity, and it allows for the orderly transfer of personnel into and out of the disaster site.

Benefits of the Incident Coordination System

Flexibility: The ICS design can be adapted and used in a variety of disaster settings.

Modular Format: Management is divided into five functions:

- Team Leadership
- Logistics
- Operations Administration/Finance
- Planning

Each function does not necessarily require independent staffing. Initially, or in a small event, one or two individuals may perform several roles. As need requires, duties can be transferred to others. As complexity increases, the functional areas can be further divided into leadership and support functions. When things calm down, ICS scales back to where one or two people again perform all the duties.

Again, ICS depends on functions, not people. Over time, several people may be rotated into the disaster to perform a particular role as others are rotated out for rest or return to their normal duties. In Level I and II disasters, one, two or three people may perform all the functions. Although in some settings, one or two people will fill all roles, good planning requires staffing for the worst case you can imagine. Identify people in your conference who have skills, gifts, and graces that might fit one or more of the functional areas. If possible, have at least two, if not three people, for each slot. When disaster hits, several may be on vacation or may be survivors themselves.

Incident Coordinator in Relief Phase

The Conference Disaster Response Coordinator will be the Incident Coordinator in the Relief Phase. All tasks performed are under overall directions of a leader called the Incident Coordinator. This individual may change during relief response. ***At any given time, one person must be in charge.***

Primary responsibilities of the IC:

- **Strategy.**
- **Public Information.**
- **Tactics.**
- **Resource Allocation and Coordination.**
- **Conference and Interagency Relations.**

The remaining four functional areas—operations, logistics, planning/training, and administration/finance—report to the IC.

ICS TEAM

Since ICS is based on function, not on personnel, one individual may provide all services and leadership in a small disaster. BUT, as that one person faces larger and more burdensome responsibilities, he/she must give functional areas to others. *There is no room in the ICS structure for “Lone Rangers.”*

In a Medium or High Level event, where responsibilities loom large from the start, all members of the team should be mobilized immediately.

Glossary and Disaster Acronym Guide

This glossary is not intended to list every word in the document. Words/terms which were unfamiliar to the reviewers of this document were identified and included in the glossary. Additional words/terms were included as they are identified as unfamiliar.

ARC- American Red Cross

CBO- Community-Based Organization

CDC – Center for Disease Control

CDRC- The Conference Disaster Response Coordinator is appointed by the Bishop and serves on the TACCOR committee.

CERT – Community Emergency Response Team. These are the true First Responders, along with uniformed professionals (fire & police departments primarily.) Training is generally available through local government organizations, such as City of Houston or Harris County.

CISM Training – Critical Incident Stress Management; such training is recommended for anyone who is likely to be involved in “Critical Incidents”

DEM - Division of Emergency Management

DDRC- District Disaster Response Coordinator: Appointed by the D.S. and is responsible for the organizing, training and implementation of the DDRT.

DDRT – District Disaster Response Team is appointed by the D.S. and responsible for disaster planning and response within the district.

DFO- Disaster Field Officer

DHHS- US Department of Health and Human Resources

DHS- US Department of Homeland Security

DISC- Disaster Information Support Center

DOD – Departments of Defense

DRC – Disaster Recovery Center

EAS- Emergency Alert System

EOC – Emergency Operations Center

EPA – Environmental Protection Agency

ERT – Emergency Response Team

ESC – Emergency support Center

Family Advocacy – the new “preferred” term for “Case Management”. UMCOR is encouraging usage of this terminology, but it does not appear to have broad acceptance in the traditional social services community. Be aware of this term but be sensitive to the terminology being used by the various organizations involved in any specific disaster

FCO – Federal Coordinating Officer

FEMA – Federal Emergency Management Agency. Currently part of Homeland Security. Is the national government organization responsible for responding to declared disasters.

HA – Housing Assistance

ICS – Incident Command System

IHP – Individual and Household Programs

JFO – Joint Field Office

LDR- Lutheran Disaster Response

LHA – Local Health Authority

LHD – Local Health Department

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

NIMS – National Incident Management System

NOAA – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

OES – Office of Emergency Services

PIO – Public Information Officer

SBA – Small Business Administration

SERT – State Emergency Response Team

SOC – State Operations Center

TACCOR – Texas Annual Conference Committee on Relief is the committee responsible for organizing, training and publicizing disaster teams, district committees, early response teams and other issues surrounding disasters. People are appointed to this committee

UMCOR – United Methodist Committee on Relief is the not-for-profit global humanitarian aid organization of the United Methodist Church.

USAR – Urban Search and Rescue

VOAD – Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. Sometimes prefaced with a state code such as LAVOAD or TXVOAD to indicate a state organization. Can also exist at the local (Houston VOAD) or regional level.