

## **AmeriCorps Contract - Disaster Related Frequently Asked Questions**

Paragraph K. Disaster Preparedness, Response, Recovery or Mitigation requires program availability, a defined disaster-oriented role, and a relationship with partner organization.

**Q: Why is this required?**

**A:** Practically speaking, in Florida, we are all vulnerable to disasters; therefore we all need to be prepared. This requirement creates opportunities to be active or supportive in community disaster preparedness, response, recovery and/or mitigation efforts. AmeriCorps is an opportunity to help others and meet critical needs in the community. Officially, Florida AmeriCorps programs are federally funded through CNCS who have an agreement with FEMA to provide national service resources for Emergency Assistance.

**Q: What are some examples of a” disaster-oriented role”?**

**A:** Conduct community preparedness education to parents at PTA meetings, community meetings or similar events

Support shelter operations such as helping to set up or clean cots, chairs and tables, assist with shelter surveys and inventories, or staff shelter child care areas

Support mass feeding operations such as unloading food supplies from delivery trucks, providing relief staffing support, cleaning kitchen and feeding areas, or sorting food and packing food boxes for distribution

Conduct community outreach on creating personal or family disaster plans, assembling disaster buckets or clean-up kits to be provided to vulnerable residents

Organize service projects during recovery; build or rebuild wheelchair ramps, remove debris, gutting damaged homes, or help with home rebuilding

**Q: Where do I start when determining our disaster-oriented role?**

**A:** Start with your mission. What is a natural fit for your daily program? If your program is education-based then perhaps something related to sheltering since many schools are shelters. If your program works with low-income or vulnerable populations then look at the needs your clients have before, during or after a disaster.

**Q: What is a partner organization?**

**A:** Partner organizations may include city, county or state emergency management agencies, voluntary agencies active in disasters (Salvation Army, American Red Cross, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Southern Baptist Convention, Catholic Charities, etc.) or other local, regional or state-wide faith- or community-based organizations.

**Q: Where do I start with finding a partner organization?**

**A:** Look in your existing network for another organization in your community which is already connected to your mission and who could use support before, during or after a

disaster. Talk with government emergency managers and planners and ask what needs they have that might fit what you can provide.

**Q: What kind of training do we need?**

**A:** Providers should talk with their partnering organization to assess training needs that fit the disaster-oriented role. The amount and complexity of the training will depend on the specific role.

**Q: Who needs to be trained?**

**A;** Provider's members, staff, and volunteers who will be performing disaster-oriented service should be trained

**Q: How does the Provider validate compliance?**

**A:** This disaster-oriented role will be documented in one of several ways. The simplest is to get a letter of acknowledgement from the partnering organization. The letter should provide sufficient detail to describe the disaster-oriented role and responsibilities of the Provider. For more complex partnerships a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Provider and the partnering organization may be appropriate. The MOU documents a more formal relationship and clearly defines the relationship, roles and responsibilities. The MOU may also detail financial elements of the partnership and is signed by both parties.

**Q: Is any other disaster training required?**

**A:** Yes, all program members are also required to receive basic introductory training in emergency management. This training is designed to provide an overview of the emergency management cycle including:

- Mitigation - Minimizing the effects of disasters
- Preparedness - Planning how to respond
- Response - Protecting the public and meeting survivors' immediate needs
- Recovery - Returning the community to normal.
- How emergency management works in my community
- Personal and family disaster planning
- Organizational disaster planning

**Q: Will Providers responding to disasters be reimbursed for disaster-related expenses.**

**A:** Providers responding at the request of the State Coordinating Officer may be eligible for reimbursement of Emergency Assistance related expenses. The details relating to eligible costs and process are agreed upon prior to deployment.