

Cuyahoga County Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD)

Standard Operating Guidelines December, 2015

1. Purpose

The purpose of the *COAD Standard Operating Guidelines* is to provide the principles and practices that will direct the decisions and activities of COAD Members during all phases of emergency and disaster management.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Agency:** A governmental entity.
- 2.2 **Continuity of Operations:** The ability of an agency or organization to perform its essential functions when its normal environment is disrupted.
- 2.3 **Disaster:** A danger to life, property, the economy, and/or the environment that overwhelms resources.
- 2.4 **Emergency:** A danger to life, property, the economy, and/or the environment that can be managed with available resources.
- 2.5 **Emergency Management:** The managerial function charged with creating the framework within which communities reduce vulnerability to threats and hazards and cope with disasters.
- 2.6 **Event:** A planned occurrence.
- 2.7 **Hazard:** A danger created by acts of nature or unintentional human acts.
- 2.8 **Incident:** An unplanned occurrence.
- 2.9 **Mitigation:** Preventing emergencies and disasters or minimizing their effects.
- 2.10 **Organization:** A non-governmental entity.
- 2.11 **Phases of Emergency Management:** For COAD purposes the phases of emergency management will be preparedness and mitigation, response, and recovery.
- 2.12 **Preparedness:** Planning for the management of emergencies and disasters.
- 2.13 **Readiness:** The state of being fully prepared.

- 2.14 **Recovery:** Actions taken to return individuals and communities to a normal state.
- 2.15 **Redundancy:** Providing for either duplication of identical services or the ability to communicate through diverse, alternative methods when standard capabilities suffer damage.
- 2.16 **Response:** Actions taken to manage emergencies and disasters.
- 2.17 **Situational Awareness:** The ability to identify, process, and comprehend the critical elements of information about what is happening around you.
- 2.18 **Threat:** A danger created by intentional human acts.

3. Whole Community Approach

COAD will subscribe to the Whole Community Approach, which is explained by FEMA as follows:

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recognizes that it takes all aspects of a community (volunteer, faith and community-based organizations, the private sector, and the public, including survivors themselves) – not just the government – to effectively prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against any disaster. It is critical that we work together to enable communities to develop collective, mutually supporting local capabilities to withstand the potential initial impacts of these events, respond quickly, and recover in a way that sustains or improves the community’s overall well-being. How communities achieve this collective capacity calls for innovative approaches from across the full spectrum of community actors to expand and enhance existing practices, institutions, and organizations that help make local communities successful every day, under normal conditions, and leverage this social infrastructure to help meet community needs when an incident occurs.

4. COAD Values

- 4.1 **Cooperation:** Working together to increase the capabilities of Members to support each other’s goals.
- 4.2 **Communication:** Sharing information and disseminating a common message.
- 4.3 **Coordination:** Integrating resources into an efficient and effective system.
- 4.4 **Collaboration:** Working together to create new systems and to achieve more than single organizations can achieve alone.

5. Emergency Management Principles

- 5.1 **Comprehensive:** Consider and take into account all hazards, all phases, all stakeholders and all impacts relevant to disasters.
- 5.2 **Progressive:** Anticipate future disasters and take preventive and preparatory measures to build disaster-resistant and disaster-resilient communities.
- 5.3 **Risk-driven:** Use sound risk management principles (hazard identification, risk analysis, and impact analysis) in assigning priorities and resources.
- 5.4 **Integrated:** Ensure unity of effort among all levels of government and all elements of a community.
- 5.5 **Collaborative:** Create and sustain broad and sincere relationships among individuals and organizations to encourage trust, advocate a team atmosphere, build consensus, and facilitate communication.
- 5.6 **Coordinated:** Synchronize the activities of all relevant stakeholders to achieve a common purpose.
- 5.7 **Flexible:** Use creative and innovative approaches in solving disaster challenges.
- 5.8 **Professional:** Value a science and knowledge-based approach based on education, training, experience, ethical practice, public stewardship, and continuous improvement.

6. Before a Disaster – Preparedness and Mitigation Activities

COAD will meet monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, or as needed to participate in preparedness and mitigation activities to include:

6.1 Planning

- 6.1.1 COAD will develop a communication system to maintain contact with and share information with Members and the public. The system should include all modes of communication, including landlines, cellular phones, electronic mail, text messaging, social media, websites, radios, hotlines, and any other modes of communication that are identified.
- 6.1.2 COAD will develop a Strategic Plan to include goals, objectives, tasks, and timelines. The Strategic Plan will guide the activities of COAD and will be reviewed and revised at least annually.
- 6.1.3 COAD will identify community needs, resources, and resource gaps. COAD will work to close the resource gaps.
- 6.1.4 COAD will synchronize its plans with other county entities, including the Cuyahoga County Office of Emergency Management (CCOEM) and local municipalities.

- 6.1.5 COAD will encourage Members to develop emergency operations plans within their agencies and organizations, including continuity of operations plans.
- 6.1.6 COAD will develop coordination mechanisms for the response and recovery phases, including policies, procedures, and standard operating guidelines for Long-Term Recovery Groups.

6.2 Relationship-building and Information-sharing

- 6.2.1 COAD will engage the whole community and encourage organizational membership in COAD.
- 6.2.2 The Membership Officer will maintain a membership roster to include names of organizations, names of representatives, contact information, mission, and resources. Members will update the roster as soon as information changes. The Membership Officer will review the accuracy and completeness of the roster regularly.
- 6.2.3 Members will attend COAD meetings and other events to become acquainted with representatives of other agencies and organizations, which will facilitate communication and understanding during emergencies and disasters.
- 6.2.4 Members will use meetings and the communication system to report and receive information and to maintain situational awareness.

6.3 Training and Exercising

- 6.3.1 Members should complete the following courses as baseline training in emergency management. Completion of this training will contribute to the ability of Members to operate efficiently and effectively within the federal, state, and local emergency management systems. These courses are available online, free of charge, from FEMA Independent Study at the links provided.
 - 6.3.1.1 IS-230 Fundamentals of Emergency Management
<http://www.training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-230.d>
 - 6.3.1.2 IS-700 National Incident Management System An Introduction
<http://www.training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-700.a>
 - 6.3.1.3 IS-100 Introduction to Incident Management System
<http://www.training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-100.b>
 - 6.3.1.4 IS-200 ICS for Single Incidents and Initial Actions
<http://www.training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-200.b>
 - 6.3.1.5 IS-800 National Response Framework An Introduction
<http://www.training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-800.b>
 - 6.3.1.6 IS-2900 National Disaster Recovery Framework
<http://www.training.fema.gov/is/courseoverview.aspx?code=IS-2900>

- 6.3.2 Additional online and classroom courses are available from the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium, the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, and the Cuyahoga County Office of Emergency Management (CCOEM). Members will be notified when courses are identified and become available.
- 6.3.3 COAD will create its own programs when a training need is identified for which there is no established course.
- 6.3.4 The emergency management community uses exercises to familiarize personnel with roles and responsibilities, foster interaction and communication across organizations, and identify gaps and areas for improvement. Using the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) as a guide, COAD will participate in exercises to test its own plans and will seek opportunities to integrate into county or regional exercises.

6.4 Preparedness Training

- 6.4.1 Members will promote personal and family preparedness among their paid and volunteer staff and will have a continuity of operations plan.
- 6.4.2 COAD will use its communication system and appearances at events to make the public aware of its mission and activities.
- 6.4.3 COAD will create opportunities to educate the public on actions that individuals can take to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disasters, thereby reducing the burden on governmental and non-governmental resources.
- 6.4.4 COAD will educate the public on the governmental and non-governmental assistance that is available to individuals who cannot respond or recover from emergencies and disasters on their own.
- 6.4.5 COAD will publicize the 211 Helpline of United Way of Greater Cleveland number during preparedness and mitigation phases as a means of accessing assistance.

7. During a Disaster – Response

- 7.1 Members are expected to participate in COAD efforts only for community emergencies and disasters. Routine cases of individuals who need help are outside the scope of COAD and will be assisted through normal social services channels.
- 7.2 When CCOEM receives notice of an impending or active emergency or disaster that might result in calls from the public for assistance, CCOEM will alert Members through the COAD communication plan.

- 7.3 When Members are placed on alert, they should ensure that resources are in place to activate their emergency operations plan and should notify United Way of the resources they have available.
- 7.4 Individuals who need disaster assistance will be directed to call the 211 Helpline of United Way of Greater Cleveland. The Helpline number will be provided to the public during the preparedness phase and each time an incident occurs. [This procedure might change if COAD determines that municipalities want their residents to contact their municipality first.]
- 7.5 United Way will direct individuals in need to COAD Members or to non-COAD resources as appropriate. Individuals might also contact Members directly.
- 7.6 Member agencies or organizations will respond according to their standard operating procedures and maintain all casework records.
- 7.7 COAD will designate a Casework Coordinator. Members that have accepted referrals or have received cases directly from the public will keep the Casework Coordinator informed about opening and progress of cases through written daily reports.
- 7.8 Members will participate in periodic conference calls or meetings with the Casework Coordinator to ensure that needs are being met, that resources are equitably distributed, and that efforts are not being duplicated.
- 7.9 COAD will support Members but will not engage in casework, will not be associated with individual cases, and will not maintain casework records.

8. After a Disaster – Recovery

- 8.1 If COAD Members continue to receive new requests for assistance after the initial response phase (several days), COAD will convene a Long-Term Recovery Group (LTRG) of non-profit and for-profit organizations in the form of an Unmet Needs Committee or a Long-Term Recovery Committee. In extraordinary circumstances, a Long-Term Recovery Organization or a Community Coalition for Recovery can be considered.
- 8.2 The LTRG will become a separate entity from COAD and will follow the policies and procedures established by COAD Members during the preparedness phase.
- 8.3 Members will continue to make daily written reports to a Casework Coordinator and to attend periodic meetings and/or conference calls to facilitate coordination.
- 8.4 When all or most cases have been closed, COAD/LTRG will hold an After-Action Conference to review the strengths and weaknesses of the COAD/LTRG mechanisms and develop an Improvement Plan to address weaknesses.
- 8.5 Upon completion of the Improvement Plan, the LTRG will be officially disbanded, and COAD will assume responsibility for the implementation of the Improvement Plan.