Emergency Support Function (ESF) 15
Volunteers and Donations

Lead Coordinating Agencies: United Way of Escambia County
Be Ready Alliance Coordinating for Emergencies

Support Agencies: The Salvation Army
American Red Cross of Northwest Florida

I. Purpose

The purpose of Emergency Support Function-15 (ESF-15) is to coordinate the efficient and effective utilization of affiliated and unaffiliated volunteers and donated resources to meet the needs of the impacted area(s) of Escambia County following a disaster or other incident of significance. Responsibility for specific functions within ESF-15 will be delineated between United Way of Escambia County (UWEC) and Be Ready Alliance Coordinating for Emergencies (BRACE), which serves as the Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) for Escambia County, based on the policies that follow.

The following policies apply:

- All unaffiliated and affiliated volunteer activity referred through the EOC will be coordinated by ESF-15. Unaffiliated volunteers will be referred to UWEC for follow up, placement, and coordination. Recognized affiliated volunteer groups will be referred to BRACE for follow up, placement, and coordination.

- All unsolicited offers of donations will be routed to and/or coordinated by ESF-15. Monetary donations will be referred to UWEC and donations of non-monetary goods will be referred to BRACE.

- All requests for goods or services that can be provided through volunteers or donations will be coordinated by ESF-15. UWEC and BRACE will coordinate requests for volunteers, with the intent being to place unaffiliated volunteers with volunteer organizations that are capable of training and using volunteers in their capacity of providing immediate emergency relief.

- Affiliated volunteers or groups of volunteers will be coordinated by BRACE with the intent of assigning them to organizations that can best utilize their skills both in immediate disaster relief but also to assist BRACE in their role during the long term recovery phase of matching volunteer groups with organizations providing case management to individuals adversely impacted by disaster.

The following assumptions will guide the implementation of ESF-15 in Escambia County:

- A significant natural or man-made catastrophic event will produce an overwhelming public response both locally and from outside of Escambia County.

- Type and location of damage sustained during the event will influence the amount and type of assistance required.

- Effective coordination of disaster response requests will be difficult during the immediate post-event time period due to damage or destruction of communication networks.

- Damage or destruction of transportation networks will slow response and delay arrival of volunteer and donations resources.
• It is impossible to have advance knowledge of the arrival of all donations.
• Numerous unaffiliated volunteers will arrive without prior coordination.
• An accurate inventory management system is essential to the effective and timely distribution of donated resources.

II. Concept of Operations

A. GENERAL

1. Procedures protocols and plans for disaster response activities are developed to govern staff operations at the Escambia Emergency Operations Center and in the field. These are in the form of the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), and corresponding Appendices and Standard Operating Guidelines, which describe ESF-15 responsibilities. Periodic training and exercises are also conducted to enhance effectiveness.

2. In a large event requiring local or State mutual aid assistance, ESF-15 will work with its support agency counterparts to seek and procure, plan, coordinate and direct the use of any required assets.

3. Throughout the response and recovery periods, ESF-15 will evaluate and analyze information regarding the availability of volunteers and donated goods and services.

4. ESF 15 representatives will fill liaison roles at the EOC to assist in coordination of all activities under ESF 15. UWEC will be responsible for the primary liaison role at the EOC and will maintain communication with BRACE to ensure coordination of efforts and effective delineation of responsibility within the various functions of ESF 15. BRACE will be responsible for the secondary liaison role at the EOC and will maintain communication with United Way to ensure coordination of efforts in an unduplicated manner. Staffing of the liaison positions will be based on activation level assessed by County staff. In the event of full activation, UWEC will staff liaison position on 24 hour basis until at least 72 hours after emergency is initiated (ie; landfall in the event of hurricane). After 72 hours, UWEC will consult with County planning department to determine whether a 12-hour staffing pattern is acceptable, with the intent being to staff the liaison role on a daylight basis, while still being responsible to maintain and update staffing plans and Agency situation reports for ESF 15 on a daily basis.

5. After consultation with State ESF 15 and local emergency management staff, ESF 15 may establish a Donations and Volunteers Hotline, if it is decided that a local hotline is preferable to the State Hotline and Donations Portal that in most cases will be active in event of disaster.

6. After consultation with State ESF 15 and local emergency management staff, warehouse space may utilized by ESF-15 to receive, sort, inventory and redistribute donated goods to agencies and churches.

7. After consultation with State ESF 15 and local emergency management staff, ESF 15 may establish volunteer reception centers (VRC) to manage unaffiliated volunteers. BRACE will assess the need to establish a volunteer team assignment centers (VTAC) for affiliated volunteers in consultation with United Way, ESF 15 at the Florida EOC, Florida Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (FLVOAD) and the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
(NVOAD). VRCs and VTACs will be co-located whenever possible to facilitate coordination and aid in the assignment of unaffiliated volunteers to affiliated volunteer teams.

8. Prioritization of needs will be established following survey of health and human services agencies.

**Incident Command System Structure: ESF 15 – Volunteers and Donations**

**B. ORGANIZATION**

**1. COUNTY**

   a. During an activation of the County Emergency Operations Center, UWEC and BRACE staff will coordinate efforts to provide support that will allow for an appropriate, coordinated and timely response. UWEC will take primary responsibility for staffing an EOC liaison position at the EOC and will coordinate with the State ESF 15 and County planning department during the preparation phase. BRACE will staff the secondary EOC liaison position at the EOC and will coordinate with United Way, FLVOAD and NVOAD.

   b. During an emergency or disaster event, the ESF 15 leads, UWEC and BRACE, will coordinate the available resources with the Human Services Branch Chief. UWEC will be responsible for managing unaffiliated volunteers and monetary donations. BRACE will be responsible for managing affiliated volunteer groups and donations of non-monetary goods.
c. During the response phase, ESF-15 leads, UWEC and BRACE, will evaluate and analyze information regarding volunteer and donation resource requests, with UWEC focusing on requests that can best be met by unaffiliated volunteers and monetary donations, and BRACE focusing on requests that can best be met by affiliated volunteers or donated goods. Requests for assistance by individuals who are identified as homebound (i.e., incapable of leaving their home due to disability) will be referred to BRACE for follow up. Also, ESF-15 leads will coordinate with County planning department, Human Services Branch Chief, and State ESF 15 to develop and update assessments of the requirements for volunteers and donations in the impacted area and undertake contingency planning to meet anticipated demands and requirements.

d. The ESF 15 Annex to the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, accompanying Appendices and Standard Operating Guidelines that govern response actions related to emergencies in Escambia County will be maintained by ESF 15 leads, UWEC and BRACE. However support agencies may develop and maintain their own similar documents for internal use, which must be compatible with and in support of the overall CEMP. All such documents will be in compliance with the National Response Framework, the National Incident Management System, the Incident Command System and the County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

e. In the recovery phase, BRACE will coordinate social and support services, with the cooperation and collaboration of its partners through its Recovery – Individual Assistance Committee (formerly Long Term Recovery Committee) by utilizing local, donated, and purchased resource from its partners and the community to meet individual unmet needs and coordinate social service casework where appropriate. BRACE will facilitate access to the Coordinated Assistance Network (CAN) to minimize duplication of effort and assistance while streamlining assistance to survivors.

f. Staffing of ESF 15 positions will be accomplished through using resources of UWEC and BRACE along with personnel from ESF 15 support agencies and trained and screened volunteers.

g. Individual organizations supporting ESF 15 will maintain contact with the ESF 15 EOC liaison to advise of status and response capabilities.

C. ALERTS/NOTIFICATIONS

1. Upon activation of the CEMP, the Public Safety Bureau will notify the point of contact(s) for ESF-15 through multiple methods.

2. The Co-lead ESF 15 Coordinating Agency representatives or designees will coordinate all activities of ESF-15.

3. Upon instructions to activate ESF-15, The Co-lead Coordinating Agencies will implement procedures to notify and mobilize all personnel, facilities, and physical resources likely to be needed, based on the emergency circumstance.

D. ACTIONS

Actions carried out by ESF-15 are grouped into phases. Each phase requires specific skills and knowledge to accomplish and requires significant cooperation and collaboration between all supporting agencies and the intended recipients of service.
ESF-15 encompasses a full range of activities from training to the provision of field services. It also functions as a coordinator and, at times, assumes direct operational control of provided services.

1. PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS

   a. Actions and activities that develop Volunteers and Donations response capabilities may include planning, training, orientation sessions, and exercises for ESF-15 personnel (i.e., County, State, Regional, and Federal) and other emergency support functions that will respond with ESF-15. This involves the active participation on inter-agency preparedness organizations, which collaborate in such activities on a regular basis.

   b. Local and State Volunteers and Donations will jointly address planning issues on an on-going basis to identify response zones, potential staging areas and specific requirements.

   c. Conduct planning with ESF-15 support agencies, Regional Domestic Security Task forces, and other emergency support functions to refine Volunteers and Donations operations.

   d. Coordinate and / or participate in training and exercise for EOC and Volunteers and Donation Team members.

   e. Prepare and maintain Standard Operating Guidelines, resource inventories, personnel rosters and resource mobilization information necessary for implementation of the responsibilities of the Co-lead agencies. Ensure Co-lead agency personnel are trained in their responsibilities and duties.

   f. Establish and maintain a system to support on-scene direction and control and coordination with county EOC, regional task force and state EOC.

   g. Pre-position response resources when it is apparent that volunteer and donations resources will be necessary. Relocate ESF 15 resources when it is apparent that they are endangered by the likely impacts of the emergency situation.

   h. Participate in all hazards exercises involving ESF-15.

   i. Coordinate with JIC/ESF 14 to disseminate timely and specific messages to the public regarding guidelines for donors and potential volunteers.

   j. Each ESF lead and support agency is responsible for becoming familiar with the EOC COOP to coordinate their efforts at an alternate EOC location that will only allow one representative from the ESF to represent all agencies for that ESF. There will not be enough space in the alternate facilities for more than one representative per ESF. Other ESF agencies will need to find other locations from which to coordinate with the one ESF representative that is in the alternate EOC location.

   Each ESF must identify and schedule the ESF representative for all of the ESF agencies. It is highly recommended that all agencies of the ESF support the ESF schedule with their normal ESF representatives.

   Each ESF representative should be familiar from where the other ESF agencies will be operating under these circumstances.

   Plans, procedures, checklists, contact information, and protocols should be developed and coordinated to maintain communications and seamless
community response services during any EOC COOP implementation. This may include lack of computers, lack of network or EOC database management tools, or even feeding and sleeping arrangements. Each organization must plan to supplement their resources appropriately, this may include the development of a “go-kits” of basic supplies and equipment as appropriate.

k. In any EOC operation, whether at the primary location or alternate location, all EOC agencies and representatives must be prepared for the potential for personal service failure. In the event the feeding contractor in the EOC is unable to meet the need either at the primary or alternate facilities, or for sleeping arrangement, or any other personal need, every EOC representative must plan to be self-sufficient and maintain their job responsibilities.

2. RESPONSE ACTIONS

a. Coordinate operations at the ESF-15 office in the County Emergency Operations Center and/or at other locations as required.

b. Monitor and coordinate ESF 15 resources and response activities.

c. Participate in EOC briefings, Incident Action Plans, Situation Reports and meetings.

d. Coordinate with other ESFs and serve as an informational group on the availability and coordination of resources from volunteers and donations.

e. Catalog and update local unmet needs and communicating those needs to volunteer and donations primary support staff.

f. Coordinate with ESF 15 agencies to identify staging areas for donations.

g. Coordinate with EFS 15 agencies in identifying Volunteer Reception Centers, which will be patterned after the Volunteer Florida publication Unaffiliated Volunteers in Response and Recovery.

h. Coordinate with ESF 15 agencies in identifying Volunteer Team Assignment Centers that will be co-located with Volunteer Reception Centers when possible.

3. RECOVERY ACTIONS

a. Recovery operations of ESF-15 will be a continuation of activity begun during the Response Phase and may continue beyond EOC activation period.

b. Case management for individual needs and the efforts to meet those unmet needs will be coordinated by BRACE.

c. Recovery will naturally transition to demobilization based on indicators including, but not limited to: immediate needs being met, donor fatigue becomes apparent. Demobilization activities delineated in Donations Management SOG’s.

4. MITIGATION ACTIONS

a. ESF-15 will work with Escambia County Department of Public Safety to assist in the promotion of the benefits of individual, neighborhood and community preparedness.
b. BRACE will maintain membership in the Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) and will advocate membership by its Partner organizations.

E. DIRECTION AND CONTROL

1. The ESF-15 system operates in two arenas; 1) The county Emergency Operations Center; 2) field locations.

2. During emergency activations, all decisions will be coordinated through ESF in an effort to meet the community needs in coordination with and as directed by the incident commander.

3. A staffing directory and the ESF-15 Emergency Operations Plan, its accompanying Appendices, Annexes and Standard Operating guidelines are maintained by the United Way of Escambia County with status of the call lists updated at least monthly and all other documents at least annually.

F. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. CO-LEAD PRIMARY AGENCY – UNITED WAY OF ESCAMBIA

   Activate the ESF-15 liaison for duty at the EOC.
   • Notify all support agencies for assessment, activation and mobilization purposes.
   • Coordinate with State ESF 15 to determine available resources and needs.
   • Organize and provide lead staff and resources to support the specific functions of managing unaffiliated volunteers and monetary donations. This may include the establishment of a Volunteer Reception Center in the field, after consultation with County Human Services Branch Chief, County planning department, and State ESF 15.

2. CO-LEAD AGENCY – BRACE

   Activate the ESF-15 liaison for duty at the EOC.
   • Notify all BRACE affiliated support agencies and organizations for assessment, activation and mobilization purposes.
   • Organize and provide lead staff and resources to support the specific functions of managing affiliated volunteer groups and donations of goods. This may include the establishment of a Donations Management Warehouse in the field, and/or a Volunteer Team Assignment Center after consultation with County Human Services Branch Chief, County planning department, and State ESF 15.

3. SUPPORT AGENCIES

   (NOTE: Each Support Agency should review its own roles and responsibilities and revise in conjunction with UWEC and/or BRACE.

   a. Provide personnel and resources to staff operations supportive of ESF-15 purpose.
   b. Notify and mobilize personnel as directed by ESF-15 representative.
   c. Maintain regular communication with ESF-15 representative at the EOC.
d. Maintain records of personnel, funds and time expended in support of directed operations.

e. Coordinate and cooperate with the Co-lead Agency the receipt and disbursement of all donated goods and services to agencies and individuals in need.

f. Coordinate and contribute resources to efficiently and effectively meet the mission goals and community unmet needs.

G. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

1. During a response, each agency/department is responsible for recording and tracking its own expenditures and seeking reimbursement from the appropriate resource after the event.

2. Expenses will be tracked, summarized, and coordinated through ESF 15 and information provided to the Finance and Planning Section for the general tracking and reporting of disaster expenses only.

H. REFERENCES AND AUTHORITIES

- BRACE Standard Operating Guidelines