



How National Service Formally Partners with Emergency Management Agencies (EMAs)

To maximize national service engagement in times of disaster, a formal partnership with the State Service Commission and the State EMA is important. A formal partnership may comprise a variety of agreements, including but not limited to: integrating the State Service Commission in the State's Emergency Plan or alternatively, establishing an MOU, MOA, or Points of Consensus with the State Service Commission and State EMA or designated lead organization for volunteer and donations management. With an agreement in place, the State Service Commission can activate national service resources quickly, making the response more efficient and effective.

As you develop these agreements:

- Specify but do not limit the tasks that AmeriCorps can do (i.e. Volunteer Reception Center (VRC) operations, sandbagging, donations management, etc)
- If possible, list the State Service Commission as the primary partner as opposed to a specific AmeriCorps or Senior Corps program for more flexibility
- Revisit the agreement regularly to ensure that all parties are aware of the terms and capabilities, and information stays current.
- Identify which Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) are engaged with volunteer and donations coordination.

Below are some states that currently incorporate their State Service Commission into their state's emergency response plan with key pieces highlighted as well as a link to the formal plan.

FLORIDA

Volunteer Florida is listed in the Florida Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan as the Primary Agency for ESF 15 – Volunteers and Donations. The plan:

- Creates a Volunteer and Donations Coordination Team to include Volunteer Florida staff;
- Includes Operational Objectives for all phases of disaster (Preparedness, Response, Recovery, Mitigation);
- Includes Spontaneous Volunteer Management Strategy; and
- Includes Standard Operating Guidelines for the Volunteer and Donations Hotline

[Click here for full language](#)

ALABAMA

Serve Alabama is listed in the State of Alabama Emergency Operations Plan as the Primary Agency for Volunteers and Donations Management under ESF #6. The plan:

- Designates and outlines the role of a State Volunteer and Donations Coordinator (SVDC); and
- Outlines collaboration of SVDC with Serve Alabama

[Click here for full language, Support Annex I – Volunteer and Donations Management, starts on Page 283](#)

Guidance on developing a formal partnership agreement

As you build relationships with emergency management stakeholders, it is essential to develop formal partnership agreements, such as Memoranda of Agreement (MOA), Memoranda of Understanding (MOU), or Points of Consensus.

When developing a formal partnership agreement, be sure to:

- Identify a point of contact for each organization
- Include a start and end date
- Include background information on both organizations and your respective roles in disaster response
- Define the requirements for activating the partnership. For example, consider requiring a formal request from the partner to the State Service Commission requesting support
- Define any requirements for either organization in order to end the partnership
- Define and outline responsibilities of each and of both parties
- Outline any needed timelines, from activation to close out of the activity
- Define communication and reporting requirements
- Include any supporting documents
- Consider legal counsel review

BENEFITS OF FORMAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

- Defined roles and responsibilities
- Identified areas of collaboration
- Identified points of contacts
- Defined and documented roles and responsibilities

Examples

The links below show state emergency plans with a formal role for the State Service Commissions

[Serve Washington](#)
[Serve Montana](#)
[Serve Alabama](#)

[Volunteer Iowa](#)
[Volunteer Florida](#)