

OPERATION BLUE ROOF AND BEYOND:

Protocol on the Deployment of AmeriCorps Teams for Disaster Recovery

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By: Deborah Burr

The objective of this protocol for the deployment of AmeriCorps teams for disaster recovery assistance is to establish a guide for future Florida State Parks AmeriCorps teams in the case statewide disaster assistance is needed. Although this protocol is based on experiences of Florida State Parks AmeriCorps deployment of Hurricane Charley of 2004, it is intended to be a reference for any AmeriCorps program or other volunteer organization. The outline of this protocol can also be tailored to be used, not just in the case of a hurricane, but with other types of natural disasters as well.

I. Introduction

AmeriCorps programs are funded by the Corporation on National and Community Service (CNCS), monitored by Volunteer Florida, The Governor’s Commission on Community Service and administered by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks. AmeriCorps is a national service program founded on the idea of national service in 1991 by the National Citizen Service Act. The Florida State Parks AmeriCorps program began in 1997 and continues into its 9th year of service to Florida state parks and local communities of Florida. In cooperation with park staff, local organizations and schools, Florida State Parks AmeriCorps members provide service in the areas of habitat restoration, ADA compliance, prescribed burning, trail maintenance, cultural and historical restoration and environmental education. Members in turn receive a monthly living allowance, health insurance and upon completion of their term of service, members are eligible for an education award from the National Service Trust in the amount of \$4,725 that may be used to repay qualified student loans or to apply to higher education.

A. Program Contract Clause

Florida State Parks AmeriCorps is bound by a contract made between the Volunteer Florida, the Florida Commission on Community Service and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The contract states in paragraph I, section 1: “The Corporation on National Service (under agreement with FEMA) and Volunteer Florida (under agreement with DCA) requires the availability of AmeriCorps members to be assigned to provide assistance in disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation activities. As part of its commitment to community service, DEP agrees to train its members and staff to assist in the disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation activities. Volunteers working with the program will be given the option to participate in this training. Types of events that could impact Florida include hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, other weather related events and man-made events, such as hazardous material accidents. Program members, staff and volunteers, based on the nature of the program, will be trained to assist with any of the following activities:

community preparedness education, shelter operations, mass care, debris removal, community outreach, and other disaster recovery related activities. Program members, staff and volunteers may be requested to provide assistance anywhere in the State of Florida. AmeriCorps staff and AmeriCorps members shall work under the direction and control of the DEP and the Florida Park Service and shall not be considered volunteers to FEMA, DCA or DEM of the purposes of Chapter 110(IV) F.S. Requests for disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation assistance will be made on behalf of the Florida Governor's State Coordinating Officer through the Commission's Director of Emergency Management after consulting with the state CNCS office disaster coordinator. All related activities undertaken by a program will be in cooperation with the local office of emergency management. Approved expenses incurred as a result of provider activities related to disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation would be reimbursed. According to State of Florida and Federal regulations, non-profit entities responding in times of disaster may request reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Up to 75% of eligible expenses may be reimbursed. The State of Florida, on a disaster specific basis, may cover the remaining 25% of eligible expenses for private non-profit entities. The Provider (DEP) responding at the request of the State Coordinating Officer would be eligible for reimbursement of disaster related expenses. The Commission has identified low and no cost training opportunities statewide. The Provider (DEP) may contact the Commission's Director of Emergency Management for specific training questions and opportunities."

B. Member Contract

The participants of the AmeriCorps program are referred to as members. When members are selected for a term of service with the AmeriCorps program, they sign a legally binding contract which includes a participation description. The participation description includes all tasks that members may be required to participate on including disaster relief, recovery, and mitigation or training activities.

C. Training

During the Member's of service, they are required to complete Red Cross training in Disaster Preparedness, Mass Care, Shelter Management and optional ERV (Emergency Response Vehicle) training. This training is required prior to participating on disaster relief tasks. Members are also required to complete CPR and First Aid as provided by the Red Cross, Florida Safety Council or American Heart Association. Program staff is responsible for the coordination and scheduling of this disaster related training and most can be provided by organizations at no cost or little cost. Other types of program training such as chainsaw skills and safety, basic carpentry, and basic fire training are provided or coordinated by the program staff for the AmeriCorps members.

II. The Constituents Involved in the Coordination of Disaster Deployment

Parties or Interest Groups Those who are affected by or involved in the issue (primary and secondary)	Interests in the Issue Desired outcomes - what they want to gain or protect and legal or practical constraints on them	Representation What individual or institution will advocate for this party or interest group?	Power, Roles and Responsibilities Legal authority or right, position, expertise, influence or resource power or ability
DEP – The Division of Recreation and Parks	Money and priority level for the disaster recovery request for assistance	The Division Director and the Coordinator of Volunteer Programs	Agency in which the AmeriCorps program is housed
Volunteer Florida	Volunteers being utilized for the participation on disaster recovery related activities.	Director of Emergency Management	State Commission that coordinator efforts of volunteers during disaster relief and recovery
The Corporation on National and Community Service (CNCS)	AmeriCorps members being utilized for the participation on disaster recovery related activities for long term visibility of the program	Director of Disaster Management and Homeland Security	The Federal agency responsible for AmeriCorps programs nationwide
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	To utilize volunteer organizations in the disaster recovery efforts	Liaison for Volunteer Agencies	Federal agency that oversees federally declared disaster areas
AmeriCorps Program Staff	To ensure that the AmeriCorps members are supported and properly supervised	AmeriCorps State Program Director	Program staff that directly supervises AmeriCorps members
AmeriCorps members	To assist victims of disasters and perform service to the community in need.	AmeriCorps District Coordinators	Participant that carries out the tasks of the mission assignment in accordance with the AmeriCorps member contract. .
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	To ensure the mission is carried out safely and successfully.	Coordinator of the Roofing Mission	Federal agency that coordinates the Roofing Mission for federally declared disasters

III. Drafting the FEMA Mission

There are key pieces of information to consider before the official mission is drafted and executed. Primarily, it must be determined under whose orders AmeriCorps members are to be deployed. Based on varied experiences of the Florida State Parks AmeriCorps program, there has been a time where the deployment orders were given by FEMA, however, for the deployment of AmeriCorps members for Hurricane Charley recovery, the deployment was initiated by The Corporation on National Service (CNCS). The deployment can also be under the request of Volunteer Florida. Once the deploying agency is determined, then the reimbursement and approvals can be negotiated.

Depending on the extent of the disaster and the need, an official FEMA mission may be necessary to make AmeriCorps members available for deployment. Sometimes, in the case of isolated disasters such as tornados, flooding and fires, an official FEMA mission may not be required. The reason is that isolated disasters may only require AmeriCorps assistance for a few days. However, in the case of widespread disasters, such as hurricanes, a FEMA mission is necessary to be able to support the AmeriCorps members on long term disaster relief assignments.

It is the responsibility of the AmeriCorps State Program Director and the Florida Parks Service's Coordinator of Volunteer Programs to coordinate the recovery mission. The mission document includes the tracking information, assistance requested by FEMA, initial Federal coordination, task description, FEMA coordination, budget, approvals and time obligation.

A. Task

The mission should have a specific task or tasks described within the mission document. Examples of a task can include but not limited to: debris removal, tarping of damaged roofs, assisting with operating warehouses and call centers. All tasks should to be targeted to elderly, disabled and other special needs disaster victims. (See Appendix I)

B. Budget

The budget for the proposed mission should be formatted in a line item format. The budget acts as a maximum dollar amount to be reimbursed for the recovery assistance described in the task(s) for the full support of the AmeriCorps members and staff for the duration of the mission assignment. No matter which agency initiated the mission, the AmeriCorps program (under DEP) should be reimbursed 100% of the total expenditures. Depending on who issued the deployment orders, CNCS will reimburse the program 100% and the reimbursement needs to be submitted directly to CNCS. In other instances not initiated under CNCS, FEMA will reimburse 75% of all expenditures and the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) should reimburse the remaining 25% of the total expenditures. (See Appendix II)

C. Mission length

Generally, a disaster recovery mission can take from two day up to 30 days and should be discussed during the planning stages. In some instances a 30-day mission can be extended depending on the need for recovery.

D. Approvals and time allowed for each

All missions must be approved by first the Federal Approving Official, the State Approving Official (at DCA) and the Director of the Division of Recreation and Parks. It may require a few days before all required approvals can be obtained and the mission assignment can be executed.

IV. Coordination for mission support

The coordination of a disaster recovery mission is the responsibility of the State Program Director and is crucial to its success. Based on what we've learned from the Hurricane Charley recovery mission, the coordination of a mission involves many agencies and on the ground logistical details. Because the logistics of the overall disaster assistance, up to 7-days may be needed before the details are worked out and AmeriCorps teams can be deployed.

A. Partnering agency

The partnering agency must be identified prior to deployment of the AmeriCorps members. Partners can be other government agencies (state or federal), and other not for profit organizations. It is important that the partnering agency/organization understands the goal of the disaster recovery mission including any targeted populations that require assistance.

1. Project training

The partnering agency should provide an appropriate training, if necessary, before the task is executed.

2. Project materials & supplies

The partnering agency should provide the materials necessary to complete the mission task with the exception of basic tools and personal protection equipment (PPE) which are included in the budget.

B. AmeriCorps program

In the case of multiple AmeriCorps teams being deployed for disaster recovery, it is the responsibility of the State Program Director to coordinate the mission for the field.

1. Daily Coordination

Daily coordination of the disaster recovery mission includes being the point of contact for the partnering agency or organization. Key items to

coordinate are meeting location, arrival time, buying or bringing lunch (where and is it being provided), water, ice, transportation and communications (phones).

2. Supervision

It is important that there be adequate supervision of the AmeriCorps teams. It is ideal that each team have one Coordinator assigned to supervise each team and one Coordinator be available to rove between work sites, deliver supplies and run errands as needed.

3. Supplies

Daily supplies should include personal protection equipment, hammers, nails, water and other tools as required.

4. Accommodations

An assessment of lodging resources is recommended before the deployment of AmeriCorps members. Depending on the area to which the members will be deployed, a camp setting in a state park may be available. Other options that need to be assessed are hotels, shelters, schools or other facilities with access to bathrooms and showers that is big enough to hold the AmeriCorps members. As a backup plan, tents should be brought in the case of a lack of other options. If the members have to be split up for any reason, the AmeriCorps Coordinators should also be split in order to have the proper supervision and communications at each location.

If available, recommended accommodations during disaster deployment is at a state park in a camp setting. The recommendation is based on practicality. First, meals are easier to provide for members in the group setting. Where per Diem is at \$21/day per person, the AmeriCorps members generally don't have the "up front" money for 30 days to provide their meals, nor do most members use credit cards. In past statewide meetings for AmeriCorps, some districts have always made members responsible for their own meals and provided the reimbursement afterwards. This has resulted in members eating with districts that use the state purchasing card (PCard) to buy groceries and prepare their meals as a group. Also, travel advancement would be logistically more trouble than if groceries were purchased using the PCards. These points need to be evaluated if accommodations are provided in a setting other than a camp setting.

If accommodations are provided in a hotel setting, meals will be difficult if not impossible to prepare. Approval for members to receive per diem must be completed prior to deployment. Other options for food can include distribution centers, the Red Cross, and the Salvation Army. Also, in a hotel setting there is no secure storage for equipment and tools.

Lastly, the supervision and communications in a group camp setting during the last deployment was proven effective which supports a more efficient mission. If at a hotel, supervision would be more challenging for the Coordinators and communications with all of the members would be difficult due to the lack of common space. In a non-group setting, it is recommended that a communication protocol be established.

5. Meals

Meals are purchased at local grocery stores using the state purchasing card. Food items are planned and purchased for at least a few days at a time. It is ideal that one Coordinator and 5 AmeriCorps members from each of the five districts make the trip. A list should be combined in order not to over purchase and create waste. Food is prepared in a microwave oven or on camp stoves as provided by the AmeriCorps program. During some missions, meals can be provided at no cost to the AmeriCorps program or the member from local distribution centers, the Red Cross or the Salvation Army. Meals members purchase on their own can not be reimbursed unless they are on travel status.

6. Water

A sufficient supply of bottled water and Gatorade must be provided to the AmeriCorps members. Free water and Gatorade may be obtained from the local distribution center or the Red Cross. If it not available at no cost, a sufficient amount of these items may be purchased at Wal-Mart or other local grocery store.

7. Reports

The State Program Director is responsible for submitting reports including a Mission Assignment Monthly Progress Report to FEMA to include cost data when Mission Assignments take more than 60 days to complete including billing. The Mission Assignment Monthly Progress Report can be accessed and submitted online at www.fema.gov/pfm/pled_agencies.htm.

V. Preparing AmeriCorps members for deployment

A. Communications

The success of the mission depends on clear and effective communications from the start of the planning stage and throughout the entire mission.

Communications starts with the Volunteer Florida's Coordinator of Emergency Management who directs the AmeriCorps State Program Director. The AmeriCorps Program Director then maintains communications with DEP and Division Management on the expectations and needs of the mission. The State Program Director also is responsible for maintaining communications with the AmeriCorps District Coordinators and then to the AmeriCorps members. It is

important to also include the district management on these same communications.

B. Task Assignment

The task assignment is project or projects that will be completed under the FEMA mission. The tasks are written into the original FEMA mission document and may include Shelter Operations, Mass Care, debris removal and the drying in of homes. Communicating these tasks to the AmeriCorps members is important in order to prepare them for what is to be expected.

C. Supplies

Supplies should be purchased before the AmeriCorps teams deploys due to the potential scarcity of supplies in the disaster area. In the experience of the Hurricane Charley recovery, extra fuel was brought with the teams due to the gasoline shortages in the disaster affected areas.

1. What to bring

AmeriCorps members should bring personal items in addition to their required service gear (issued AmeriCorps shirts, pants and hat), work boots, sneakers, and additional clothing to wear during the evenings. If the accommodations are provided in a location other than a hotel, members should also bring a bath towel, sleeping bag or sheets and a blanket.

2. What to purchase

All personal protection equipment (PPE) and other tools needed to complete the mission will be purchased for the AmeriCorps members. It is recommended that needed supplies be divided up to purchase between the AmeriCorps District Coordinators and that those supplies be bought for all teams. For example, one Coordinator would buy 50 hammers and 50 pairs of work gloves in a variety of sizes. Another would purchase 50 hard hats and 50 pairs of safety glasses and so on. This is to help ensure that all AmeriCorps members will be provided adequate equipment and to making the purchases the least time consuming as possible.

Additionally, all members will be provided food in lieu of per diem that can be purchased using the State of Florida purchasing Visa card. Food preparation in a group setting done using provided camp stoves. Other means of preparing food, such as a microwave can be purchased for group use. Food items can be stored in a provided refrigerator and team coolers.

D. Weekly schedule

A written schedule is essential to the mission in order to provide structure and consistency to the work load and days off. It is also essential to post the schedule

in a common area or hand it out so everyone knows where and when they are expected to be.

1. Team Assignments

It is recommended that teams be designated in order to balance the strengths and weakness of the teams. In past experiences, all district teams were divided equally among five disaster recovery teams. This is beneficial to the members and staff to diversify the experiences for all members.

2. Days off

It is important that days off be given to teams on a rotating basis in order not to stop the efforts of the mission. It is recommended that two days be given off for each work week.

3. Personal commitments and other personal needs

Prior personal commitments must be accommodated if possible. Specifically, personal commitments that involve events which the AmeriCorps member has already paid for and can not be changed (i.e. airline reservations). Other commitments should be accommodated on a case by case basis. If a member has a family situation which he/she must attend to, they should be allowed to with communication on when they will return.

VI. Preparing staff for deployment

The most important preparation for staff is to appoint one person to be in charge for the duration of the mission. Also recommended is a second in charge in the case the person in charge is absent or has other business to attend to. In the case that multiple AmeriCorps programs are deployed to the same relief area, one of the program staff should be designated in charge of the deployment and the coordination in order to disseminate information effectively. If one particular program has the skills necessary to provide the recovery more so than other programs, one of the program staff from that program should be designated in charge and then delegate other pertinent leadership roles to other program staff. It is essential to the mission that pertinent information and expectations are communicated with all program staff.

A. Communications

Communications between the program staff should be clear and delivered in a timely manner. When possible, these communications should be in writing via email or other written document. All written communication should also include Division and District Managers. Additionally, on the ground communications should be done using a cell phone or 2-way radio when available.

B. Supervisory Responsibilities

Staff should understand their role and responsibilities during the disaster recovery mission. It is essential that each staff person take supervisory duties seriously and they are held accountable even though there is one staff person that has been designated in charge. Staff is responsible for on the ground supervision for the AmeriCorps teams while they are serving on their assigned task and also at the camp or hotel where they are staying. It is also recommended that at least one staff meeting be held for each week on deployment. The following outline from the Center for Mental Health and Safety provides good key points to consider when assigning responsibilities for staff.

1. EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE & LEADERSHIP

- Clear chain of command and reporting relationships.
- Disaster orientation provided for all staff.
- Shifts no longer than twelve hours with twelve hours off.
- Briefings provided at beginning of shifts as staff exit and enter the operation.
- Necessary supplies available.
- Communication tools available (e.g., cell phones, radios).
- Full-time disaster-trained supervisors and program director with demonstrated management and supervisory skills.
- Clear and functional organizational structure.
- Program direction and accomplishments reviewed and modified as needed.

2. CLEAR PURPOSE & GOALS

- Clearly defined intervention goals and strategies appropriate to assignment setting.
- Community needs, focus and scope of program defined.
- Periodic assessment of organizational health and service targets and strategies.
- Staff trained and supervised to define limits, make referrals.
- Feedback provided to staff on program accomplishments, numbers of contacts etc.

3. FUNCTIONALLY DEFINED ROLES

- Staff oriented and trained with written role descriptions for each assignment setting.
- When setting is under the jurisdiction of another agency (e.g., Red Cross, FEMA), staff informed of their role, contact people, and expectations.
- Job descriptions and expectations for all positions.
- Participating disaster recovery agencies' roles understood and working relationships with key agency contacts maintained.

C. Team Assignments & Support

Staff should be assigned to supervise at least one of the teams. Staff needs to be responsible for making sure the project is running smoothly and adequate support is provided.

1. TEAM SUPPORT

- Buddy system for support and monitoring stress reactions.
- Positive atmosphere of support and tolerance with "good job" said often.
- Team approach that avoids a program design with isolated workers from separate agencies.
- Regular, effective meetings with productive agendas, personal sharing, and creative program development.
- In-service training appropriate to current recovery issues provided.

D. Overtime

(See Appendix III)

VII. Safety

Safety is the most important item to be emphasized during all AmeriCorps projects and especially during disaster deployment missions. Important topics to discuss with AmeriCorps members are the use of Personal Protection Equipment, proper hydration, sun protection, fatigue and use of project equipment and tools. These safety topics should be addressed with members in regular safety briefings and by proper supervision from staff.

When the wind and waters recede, people in the areas affected by a hurricane will continue to face a number of hazards associated with cleanup activities. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) offers the following guidelines for preventing injury:

E. Wear Protective Gear

AmeriCorps members serving on projects with the USACE or any other Federal agency must comply with OSHA safety requirements. Some of the required safety equipment may include hard hats, harnesses, eye protection, and work gloves. Other items of PPE could also include hard hats, goggles, heavy work gloves, and watertight boots with steel toe and insole (not just steel shank).

Wear earplugs or protective headphones to reduce risk from equipment noise. Equipment such as chain saws, backhoes, and dryers may cause ringing in the ears and subsequent hearing damage.

F. Beware of Electrical Hazards

If you are working on or near power lines, refer to the additional recommendations provided in our fact sheet on Worker Safety in a Power Outage or in Hazards of Flood Cleanup Work from NIOSH. This information can be accessed at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/flood.html>.

G. Prevent Musculoskeletal Injury

Special attention is needed to avoid back injuries associated with manual lifting and handling of debris and building materials. Always follow the “team lift” rule and never try to lift anything alone that is too heavy.

H. Beware of Structural Instability

Never assume that water-damaged structures or ground are stable. Buildings that have been submerged or have withstood rushing flood waters may have suffered structural damage and could be dangerous. If the structure appears to be severely damaged from water, wind or fire do not enter the structure and do not climb on the roof.

I. *Avoid Hazardous Materials*

Flood waters can dislodge tanks, drums, pipes, and equipment, which may contain hazardous materials such as pesticides or propane. If contamination is suspected, do not enter the water. Additionally, if there are household chemicals that have spilled, use thick rubber gloves or other tools to collect the material. It is ideal that AmeriCorps members leave the chemical cleanup to trained environmental cleanup personnel.

J. *Prevent Drowning*

When entering moving water, you are at risk for drowning, regardless of your ability to swim. Because those in vehicles are at greatest risk of drowning, it is important to comply with all hazard warnings on roadways and to avoid driving vehicles or heavy equipment into water of an unknown depth. NIOSH recommends that you avoid working alone and wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket when working in or near flood waters.

K. *Preventing West Nile Virus (WNV)*

After a hurricane, mosquitoes may breed in standing water during the summer and autumn months. The easiest and best way to avoid WNV is to prevent mosquito bites by wearing long sleeves and pants and by applying insect repellent that contains DEET.

L. *Hydration*

Dehydration is one of the most common causes of safety accidents. Proper hydration by drinking plenty of water sometimes isn't enough. Sports beverages such as Gatorade may supplement sugars and salts that the body needs to avoid heat exhaustion.

M. *Sun Protection*

Adequate sun protection must be used while working on projects outside. Sun screen with a high SPF and/or long sleeve shirts are recommended in addition to a hat. Shade breaks are also recommended.

N. *Prevent Fatigue-Related Injuries*

Continued long hours of work, combined with exhaustion, can create a highly stressful situation during cleanup. People working on hurricane and flood cleanup can reduce their risks of injury and illness in several ways:

- Set priorities for cleanup tasks and pace the work. Avoid physical exhaustion.
- Resume a normal sleep schedule as quickly as possible.

- Be alert to emotional exhaustion or strain. Consult family members, friends or professionals for emotional support.

For more information on worker safety, refer to the hurricane recovery page on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's web site at www.osha.gov. (See also Appendix IV and V)

O. Project equipment and tools

An assessment of the required project equipment and tools is suggested and safety factors of each should be discussed. Proper training should be provided emphasizing the safe use of the equipment and tools.

VII. Emotional support in disaster areas

Relief volunteers may witness human tragedy and serious physical injuries, depending on the nature of the disaster and their role. This contributes to the psychological impact of their work. In disasters in which there is a high level of exposure to human suffering, injuries, and fatalities, providing psychological support and interventions for volunteers is especially necessary.

The signs and symptoms of volunteer stress are also important to discuss, as early recognition and intervention are optimal. Educating supervisors and staff about signs of stress enables them to be on the lookout and to take appropriate steps. When programs emphasize stress recognition and reduction, norms are established that validate early intervention rather than reinforcing the more common (even though we know better) "distress is a sign of weakness" perspective.

The days and weeks after a hurricane are going to be rough. In addition to your physical health, you need to take some time to consider your mental health as well. Remember that some sleeplessness, anxiety, anger, hyperactivity, mild depression, or lethargy are normal, and may go away with time. If you feel any of these symptoms acutely, seek counseling.

Your state and local health departments will help you find the local resources, including hospitals or health care providers that you may need. Information and additional resources can also be found at www.mentalhealth.org.

Additionally, regular debriefing and reflection is recommended either among the AmeriCorps teams or, if available with mental health professional that is trained to help relief volunteers cope with the stress of the recovery mission. The Red Cross and the Salvation Army have trained professionals available to assist relief volunteers with the emotional stress of the recovery mission.

A. Common Disaster Worker Stress Reactions (*The Center for Mental Health Services, 1994*)

1. Psychological and Emotional: Feeling heroic, invulnerable and euphoric, denial, anxiety and fear, worry about safety of self and others, anger, irritability, restlessness, sadness, grief, depression, moodiness, distressing dreams, guilt or "survivor guilt", feeling overwhelmed, hopeless, feeling isolated, lost, or abandoned, apathy, and identification with survivors.
2. Cognitive: memory problems, disorientation, confusion, slowness of thinking and comprehension, difficulty calculating, setting priorities, making decisions, poor concentration, limited attention span, loss of objectivity, unable to stop thinking about the disaster and blaming.
3. Behavioral: change in activity, decreased efficiency and effectiveness, difficulty communicating, increased sense of humor, outbursts of anger, frequent arguments inability to rest or "letdown", change in eating habits, change in sleeping patterns change in patterns of intimacy and sexuality, change in job performance, periods of crying, increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs, social withdrawal, silence vigilance about safety or environment, avoidance of activities or places that trigger memories and proneness to accidents.
4. Physical: increased heartbeat and respiration, increased blood pressure, upset stomach, nausea and diarrhea, change in appetite, weight loss or gain, sweating or chills, tremors (hands, lips), muscle twitching, "muffled" hearing, tunnel vision feeling uncoordinated, headaches, soreness in muscles, lower back pain, feeling a "lump in the throat", exaggerated startle reaction, fatigue, menstrual cycle changes, change in sexual desire, decreased resistance to infection, flare-up of allergies and arthritis and hair loss.

As with disaster survivors, assessment hinges on the question of "How much 'normal stress reaction' is too much?" Many reactions listed are commonly experienced by disaster volunteers with limited job effects. However, when a number are experienced simultaneously and intensely, functioning is likely to be impaired. Under these circumstances, the volunteer should take a break from the disaster assignment for a few hours at first, and then longer if necessary. If normal functioning does not return, then the person needs to discontinue the assignment. (See Appendix VI)

B. Coping with Stress

The United States Department of Health and Human Services identifies that individual responses to a threatening or potentially-traumatic event may vary. Responses to trauma can last for weeks to months before people start to feel normal again.

There are many things one can do to cope with traumatic events, including:

- Keep as many elements of your normal routine incorporated into the disaster plans as possible.
- Be aware that you may have fewer resources to attend to your day-to-day conflicts, so it is best to resolve what you can ahead of time.
- Turn to family, friends, and important social or religious contacts to set-up support networks to help deal with the potential stressors.
- Encourage someone to express feelings and thoughts, without making judgments.

Clinical supervisory support is essential when a disaster volunteer's personal coping strategies are wearing thin. Counseling support involves exploring the meaning for the volunteer of the disaster stimuli, prior related experiences and vulnerabilities, and personal coping strategies. Suggestions can be made for stress reduction activities. Usually, stress symptoms will gradually subside when the volunteer is no longer in the disaster relief environment. However, if this does not occur, then professional mental health assistance is indicated.

VIII. Reporting requirements

Daily accomplishments must be called in at the end of each service day to a staff person from The Corporation on National and Community Service OR FEMA liaison as determined by the initiating agency of the deployment. Additionally, the Program Director should collect all data for reporting on AmeriCorps quarterly reports.

A. AmeriCorps project reports

Data must be reported on all disaster related activities in the AmeriCorps Web Based Reporting system (WBRS).

1. Record keeping and data entry

Project Completion forms should be completed for all separate activities. It is suggested that Independent Accomplishments are created in WBRS in order to accurately report disaster recovery accomplishments. Examples of categories that can be created are as follows:

- FEMA Disaster Recovery Mission (roofing project)
- Distribution of supplies to hurricane victims
- Shelter Operations and Mass Care/Red Cross
- Disaster clean up in state parks
- Non-AmeriCorps Volunteers-Disaster Relief/Recovery

2. AmeriCorps member timesheets and hours

It is important that a consistent number of hours are reported for each AmeriCorps member if they are serving under the same deployment. Members receive hours from the start of travel to the project site until they return to the camp/hotel. If there are additionally service requirements,

such as mandatory meetings or cleaning duties of the facilities, member should count those hours in addition to the daily disaster recovery project. On members' day off, members can receive member development hours, with advance approval, if they visit a local museum, historical or educational establishment.

Members and their supervisors need to be reminded that members do not receive service hours for being "on call" in the case of deployment for disaster recovery.

B. *Financial reporting under a FEMA mission*

In the case of the Hurricane Charley deployment in 2004, the mission was drafted under the partnership between FEMA and The Corporation on National and Community Service (CNCS), not the program itself. Therefore, all reimbursement from expenses must be submitted to CNCS, via the DEP budget/grant office, to the designated staff that will process the reimbursement. The request for reimbursement should be submitted to CNCS in a spreadsheet format with a summary page as included in the FEMA reimbursement forms.

In the case that the program itself is in a partnership with FEMA, the FEMA reimbursement forms should be used and submitted through the agency's budget office for direct reimbursement.

1. Forms sample (See Appendix VII)

2. Reimbursement

The proposed budget submitted with the original FEMA mission proposal is the maximum amount that can be reimbursed for expenditures during the time of deployment. The budget is a reimbursable amount which provides guidance on spending during the mission. It is important to know that the agency does not necessarily have that amount in a special account available for spending. Expenditures are charged under the budget spending authority – which is approved by the Florida Legislators each fiscal year, therefore the proposed mission budget should be communicated with the Division's Budget office prior to deployment.

3. Allowable expenditures

As with any grant, allowable expenditures must be related to the task assignment and the support of the AmeriCorps members during the deployment. Acceptable categories can include, but are not limited to: food cost, laundry, lodging costs (hotel or other fee based accommodations), equipment, communication expenses, vehicle rental, and fuel. It can be noted that copies of receipts may be requested and an accurate file of these records must be maintained while on deployment to be submitted as backup documentation for reimbursement.

4. Timeline & deadlines for reimbursement

All required reports should be completed upon completion of the disaster recovery mission if deployed for 30 days. If the mission is extended and exceeds 60 days, monthly reports should be submitted to the appropriate agencies.

IX. Media and Public Relations

Public Relations are important to the disaster recovery mission in regards to future funding of the program. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that a communications protocol be developed to designate who will speak to the media/public on specific subjects at whose direction. Lists should also be developed and maintained that identify primary contacts/experts for key offices and issue areas, secondary contacts/experts for key offices and issue areas and media lists. A media list is a list of print, broadcast, and electronic media that will allow your communications team to identify every possible national, regional, and local outlet and analyze its potential value for reaching your target audiences. Identify information needs and develop appropriate fact sheets and background materials.

A. Press Releases & Media

1. DEP

Submit updates to the Division's Information Director on a regular basis including any human interest stories and photos of volunteers on the project site.

2. Volunteer Florida

In addition to the DEP updates, similar updates should be sent to Communications Director at Volunteer Florida. Make sure that the program name is highlighted.

3. Corporation on National and Community Service

In addition to the DEP and Volunteer Florida updates, the similar updates should be sent to Communications Director at CNCS. Again, ensure that the program name is highlighted.

4. Newspaper

There are times when newspapers ask for interviews with the AmeriCorps members and/or Program Director. AmeriCorps members should be given adequate information to be able to tell the reporter who we are, what we are doing, with who and for how long. It is recommended that, if possible, a staff member also be in attendance while the AmeriCorps member is being interviewed to ensure accuracy and representation. Always ask the name of the newspaper and when it may be printed in order to obtain a copy for the program's media file.

B. Press Briefings

1. Governor Press Briefings at the Emergency Operations Center

Although these briefings may not always occur, it is important that the program be represented at any press briefings asked to attend. All DEP information staff should be notified upon the invitation to attend such briefing.

2. Briefings with CEO of Corporation on National and Community Service

If given the opportunity, it is important to convey the successes of the disaster recovery mission to the CEO and other staff at CNCS. Because schedules are sometimes tight and all the successes that want to be communicated may be cut short, it is helpful to have all information, photos and news articles on a compact disc for CNCS to take back to Washington, D.C. for review when more time allows.

C. Website

1. Project Description

When time allows, the program website should be updated under the “Current News” page to add a description of the disaster recovery mission. Additional links should be included to additional news stories on the internet that the program is featured in.

2. Photo slideshow

A link to a photo page should also be included on the “Current News” page of the program web site. The photos should all include the AmeriCorps logo or other appropriate logos representing the partners involved. An announcement of this web site addition should be sent out to partnering agencies.

X. Evaluation of mission

Evaluations are an important part of any activity or program. An evaluation provides the program with feedback from the constituents on the organization and leadership of the project or in this case, the disaster recovery mission “Operation Blue Roof.”

A. Evaluation results from Hurricane Charley recovery mission – Operation Blue Roof

(See Appendix VIII)

XI. Recommendations from “Operation Blue Roof” and for Future Deployments

1. The Corporation on National and Community Service establish a protocol for future deployments of AmeriCorps programs to assist on disaster recovery missions. If it is the requirement of AmeriCorps programs nationwide to be available for disaster assistance, the establishment of such protocol would be useful for all programs nationwide. A protocol would be useful in order to provide a necessary structure for deployment so programs are able to respond quickly without having to start from scratch in the planning and coordination of the initial mission assignment. Essentially, programs wouldn't be left to have to figure it out as they go and make mistakes which would make the efforts not as effective which distracts from serving the needs of the people and the communities they are serving.
2. The AmeriCorps program has a chain of command in place and protocol to determine who is in charge of the mission. The AmeriCorps program should have an approved disaster plan which defines the structure of future missions and this structure be updated and communicated on an annual basis or as staff assignments change.
3. The expectation of disaster assistance is explained fully to all new AmeriCorps members and that the reality of disaster deployment is difficult and can include deployment for an extended length of time.
4. The host agency of the AmeriCorps program support the efforts of the program staff and provide timely information to be disseminated to program participants.
5. The host agency of the AmeriCorps program is supportive of the mission assignment and visits the recovery sites, if possible, in order to avoid making decisions that are disconnected with the reality of the disaster mission.
6. Provide a forum where the concerns of the AmeriCorps members can be heard and supported by upper management, who are making the decisions.
7. A checklist is drafted of topics to consider while planning and executing the deployment to make sure that all pertinent planning is being addressed.

8. Disasters are unavoidable and the requirements of AmeriCorps assistance on recovery and relief efforts are beyond the program's control.

9. A positive attitude is maintained at all times among AmeriCorps members and staff. We can not control the needs of the disaster victims and AmeriCorps members and staff needs to have patience and compassion during the mission is necessary.