NJVOAD – a coalition of organizations that contribute to developing and sustaining community resiliency throughout the disaster cycle – facilitates and fosters cooperation, communication, coordination and collaboration among members and partners to improve preparedness, resilience, response and recovery resulting in more effective outcomes.

NJVOAD accomplished quite a bit in 2018, thanks to the engagement and support of our members, partners, funders and supporters.

COOPERATION: Advancing the VOAD Movement and Helping Communities Recover

NJVOAD and our members supported response and recovery efforts locally and throughout the nation following another disaster-filled year. The Burlington County COAD sprang into action with the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, Tri-State Canine Response, and the United Methodists to support a Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) in Willingboro following severe flooding in June. The Ocean County COAD joined with the Red Cross, Team Rubicon and the United Methodists to support response and recovery efforts in Brick following severe flooding in August. The Passaic County VOAD was called into action and enlisted the support of Catholic Charities and Southern Baptist Conference Disaster Relief to support flood recovery efforts in Little Falls. NJVOAD supported localized flooding by activating the Donations and Volunteer Coordination portals on HELPNJNOW.ORG, speaking at recovery information sessions for flood victims and distributing recovery information and resources to affected households. NJVOAD also coordinated with NJ 2-1-1 to establish a process for providing resource and referral information to support those seeking assistance from localized disasters in throughout New Jersey.

In addition to supporting local recovery efforts, NJVOAD members deployed to support several national incidents, including: mass shooting (Thousand Oaks, CA), Hurricane Florence (Carolinas), Hurricane Michael (Florida), wildfires (California) and many other smaller-scale disasters. NJVOAD also informed the public of the best way to offer support in times of disaster through the creation of the Hurricane Relief page for HELPNJNOW.ORG, which was promoted on the NJ Governor’s website and in social media: http://helpnjnow.org/special-donations/
NJVOAD delivered and/or assisted in coordinating a total of 25 training sessions for NJVOAD members and partners, including four new training modules designed to support county and regional Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COADs): *A Different Kind of Disaster, Asset-Based Community Development, Comprehensive Active Shooter Management: From Pathway to Violence to Road to Recovery, and Disaster Recovery and Continuity Planning.* In addition, NJVOAD staff delivered an additional six presentations highlighting the role of VOA and/or HELPNJNOW.ORG to a variety of key stakeholders, including Emergency Management Coordinators, AmeriCorps Program Managers, State Emergency Management Program Stakeholders, and PSEG Employees and Families. NJVOAD was honored to present at the Creative NJ Annual Statewide Summit on the topic of: *Far-Reaching Effects of Collaboration - NJVOAD’s Streamlined Disaster Response Design Deployed in NJ, FL & TX.* In coordination with the NJ Department of Human Services and PSEG, NJVOAD co-facilitated a New Jersey Emergency Preparedness Association (NJEPA) Conference breakout session on the topic of *Building Relationships that Weather the Storms.* NJVOAD also coordinated a panel discussion on *Building Disaster Resilient Communities* presented at the New Jersey Governor’s Volunteerism Conference.

NJVOAD’s annual conference - *Engaging the Whole Community in Preparedness, Response and Recovery* - featured New Jersey Office of Homeland Security (NJOHSP) Director Jared Maples. This well-received conference offered a variety of learning paths to a broad audience. This fourth annual conference was very well received with 100% of attendees indicating it met or exceeded expectations, and they would attend future conferences.

The HELPNJNOW.ORG website continues to be a platform for individuals and families to find preparedness information, and connect with opportunities to volunteer or donate when disaster strikes. More than 5,000 new visitors found HELPNJNOW.ORG in 2018 including Jenny, whose mother shared the following feedback about how the site helped her daughter: “I’m writing to you on behalf of my daughter, Jenny. Jenny is working on a community project for her youth group that involves compiling resources about disaster preparedness and emergency prepping. Your page, [www.helpnjnow.org/personal-preparedness](http://www.helpnjnow.org/personal-preparedness), was a great help to her. Just wanted to say thanks!” In addition, support from OceanFirst Foundation and New Jersey Natural Gas provided the resources needed to expand the site to include several new hazard-specific preparedness and resources pages, including: Active Shooter, Hurricanes & Flooding, Radiological Hazards & More and Winter Weather. ([http://helpnjnow.org](http://helpnjnow.org))

NJVOAD’s reach grew on social media with an 18% increase in Facebook followers and a 41% increase in Twitter followers. NJVOAD’s email distribution list also expanded by 25%!
In September 2018, NJVOAD was awarded an AmeriCorps Planning Grant to create a *Culture of Preparedness* in New Jersey. This is being accomplished through development of an AmeriCorps program to deliver evidence-informed interventions to school-aged children and youth with take-home components that will involve and engage family members. As a result of this exciting new program, children, youth and families will be equipped with increased knowledge and skills to proactively prepare for, respond to and recover from future hazards. In addition, children and youth will become all-hazards mitigation agents, increasing resilience and preventing violence by knowing the signs and reporting potential threats.

Building resiliency and prioritizing preparedness in our communities requires strong relationships between non-profit, private sector and governmental entities. The following agencies and organizations have joined NJVOAD as key stakeholders committed to creating a *Culture of Preparedness* in New Jersey and beyond: American Red Cross, FEMA, NJ Department of Education, NJ Department of Human Services, NJ Department of State, NJ Disaster and Terrorism Branch, NJ Division of Children and Families, NJ Office of Emergency Management, NJ Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, Rowan College at Burlington County, Save the Children, The Salvation Army and Volunteer Center of South Jersey.

With the generous support of the PSEG Foundation, NJVOAD contracted with Visionlink to develop a Donations Management platform to support post-disaster material donations through the HELPNJNOW.ORG web platform. NJVOAD engaged in multiple design and development sessions to create and customize a platform that communicates actual post-disaster needs and minimizes unwanted donations. Multiple stakeholders were involved in testing the system and providing feedback to build a platform that meets the needs of New Jersey. NJVOAD designed and implemented a virtual exercise to test the system in a simulated disaster environment.

NJVOAD’s Executive Director was nominated to serve on National VOAD’s Donations Management Committee and Long-Term Recovery Group Committee, and continued to serve on the Center for Non-Profit Board of Trustees and the New Jersey Climate Adaption Alliance Advisory Committee.
COLLABORATION: 2018 Board of Trustees and Leadership Staff

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*The Salvation Army*

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**Executive Director***
Kelly Higgs

*non-voting member of Board

RELATIONSHIPS: Stay Connected

The foundation of NJVOAD’s success is relationships. The support, involvement and collaboration among NJVOAD members and partners has helped to advance the VOAD movement throughout 2018 – THANK YOU!

NJVOAD welcomes the opportunity to cultivate new partnerships to further our mission and improve preparedness, resilience, response and recovery efforts throughout New Jersey.

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