Introduction to Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
What is a VOAD?

**Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster;**

National movement with a presence in all 50 states, 4 territories and the District of Columbia;

Non-profit, non-partisan, membership-based organization;

Forum where organizations share knowledge and resources throughout the disaster cycle—preparation, response and recovery—to help disaster survivors and their communities;

The state of NJ is represented by NJVOAD, which supports county and regional COADs, and participates at the national level.
NJVOAD Mission

NJVOAD – a coalition of organizations that contribute to developing and sustaining community resilience 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.
It Takes a VOAD

Guiding principle: to build and strengthen relationships and partnerships to provide the most effective and efficient services and resources to communities and individuals in need.

Just as “it takes a village” to raise a child, it takes a VOAD to bring organizations together to help a community and individuals recover from a disaster. This approach:

- Eliminates or reduces duplication of services;
- Creates effective coordination of resources;
- Provides a consistent and coordinated message;
- Builds trust in communities.
The 4 C’s

**Cooperation:** recognizing that we need each other, acknowledging that each member organization adds value, and understanding that our common goals for the community are best achieved when we work together.

**Communication:** fostering a climate of openness which promotes sharing of information among members, and actively disseminating information to partners through social media, newsletters, directories, research and demonstration, case studies, and critique.

**Coordination:** establishing processes to work together in a non-competitive manner to effectively utilize resources among member organizations and state and national partners.

**Collaboration:** identifying shared goals and developing strategic partnerships to actively work together to accomplish the VOAD mission.
Recent NJ Disasters

- Tropical Storm Floyd – September 1999
- September 11th
- Hurricane Irene – August 2011
- Derecho – June 2012
- Hurricane Sandy – October 2012
- Winter Storm Jonas – January 2016
- COVID-19 Pandemic – March 2020

Local and regional risks (e.g. airplane crashes, train derailments, highway accidents, pipeline explosions, home & industrial fires)
VOAD Purpose

Building and strengthening relationships between governmental and non-governmental organizations

Preparedness education and community awareness

Advance planning / convening pre-disaster

Providing disaster response support in coordination with Office of Emergency Management (OEM):
  ◦ Coordinating volunteers
  ◦ Coordinating food distribution
  ◦ Coordinating member resources
  ◦ Maintaining lines of communication among all members

Establishing a Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG) as a COAD Committee to support ongoing recovery (when needed)
VOAD/COAD Activities

Multi-Agency Resource Centers set-up after seasonal flooding

Online Donations Management System created and used for flooding

Managed Volunteer Management Database to be used by partner organizations and Governor’s Office during COVID-19 response

Regional trainings on relevant topics (e.g. Asset-Based Community Development; active shooter; Continuity of Operations; disaster recovery)

Response to local and statewide emergency events (e.g. COVID-19; Winter Storm Jonas; Superstorm Sandy; localized flooding; home and industrial fires)
VOAD/COAD Benefits

Community Benefits:
- Increased preparedness for whatever disasters lie ahead
- Increased communication, coordination, collaboration and cooperation between all sectors

Organizational Benefits:
- Networking and coordination during “blue sky” periods, as well as in disaster times
- Sharing of resources and knowledge to avoid duplication of efforts

Personal Benefits:
- Increased awareness of community risks and responses to potential disasters
- Relationships and partnerships with like-minded professionals
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample COAD Member List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CERT (Community Emergency Response Team)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Air Patrol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Action Agency/Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County OEM (Office of Emergency Management)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Health Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Mental Health Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food pantries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For-profits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitat for Humanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Next Steps - Get Involved!

Become a COAD or NJVOAD member

- All organizations involved in disaster preparedness, response and/or recovery are eligible and encouraged to join their local COAD, and/or NJVOAD if they have a multi-county service area.
- Meetings are generally held once each quarter.

For more information about your local COAD, visit: http://www.njvoad.org/coads/

For more information about NJVOAD, contact: Keith Adams at kadams@njvoad.org