

Preparing Your Agency for Disaster Volunteers

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Is your agency prepared for disasters? Have you thought about the impact an emergency situation would have on your business? On demands for your services? On your staff? On your regular volunteers?

Spontaneous volunteers can help alleviate some of the difficulties you will face in regard to staffing and maintaining or expanding services. Plan for this unexpected but valuable resource and you will be miles ahead!

If you're in the San Francisco Bay Area, our Volunteer Center partners can help your organization involve spontaneous volunteers to effectively respond to a disaster. Take advantage of our technical assistance and training by contacting your local Volunteer Center.

If you live outside of the San Francisco Bay Area, go to Points of Light Foundation at www.pointsoflight.org.

For plans and forms, click here to go to our [Resources](#) page.

Recruiting Volunteers for Your Agency or Organization

It is difficult to predict whether your agency will be besieged with offers of help or will have to actively recruit to get the assistance you need. Your agency's experience in past disasters will give you an idea of what to expect. In the event that you do need to recruit volunteers, here are some suggestions.

Your community's Volunteer Center is your best bet. In the Bay Area, contact [The Volunteer Centers of the San Francisco Bay Area](#). Volunteer Centers across the country refer individuals and groups to volunteer opportunities throughout the year. Many of these centers will provide the same service following a disaster.

You can also expedite volunteer recruitment by developing linkages with other resources before a disaster happens. By establishing relationships with possible volunteer sources now, you will increase your agency's effectiveness if a disaster occurs. Here are some potential sources of volunteers:

- Congregations
- Family members and friends of current volunteers
- Inter-agency coordinating groups
- Local corporations and large businesses
- Neighborhood associations
- Other agencies
- Schools, colleges and universities
- Service clubs
- Trade unions

If there is no volunteer clearinghouse in your area, contact the media following a disaster for help with getting your message out.