

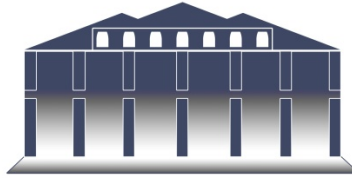
**Better Coordination with Nonprofit Volunteer
Organizations During Preparedness Can Improve
Disaster Recovery**



**Final Report to the Joint Legislative
Program Evaluation Oversight Committee**

Report Number 2020-12

December 14, 2020



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December 14, 2020

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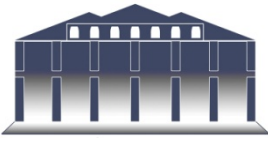
Session Law 2019-250 directed the Program Evaluation Division to examine the Department of Public Safety's coordination with nonprofit organizations for disaster recovery planning.

I am pleased to report that the Department of Public Safety cooperated with us fully and was at all times courteous to our evaluators during the evaluation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kiernan McGorty".

Kiernan McGorty
Acting Director



PROGRAM EVALUATION DIVISION

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

December 2020

Report No. 2020-13

Better Coordination with Nonprofit Volunteer Organizations During Preparedness Can Improve Disaster Recovery

Highlights

IN BRIEF: The Department of Public Safety's Division of Emergency Management (NCEM) coordinates with local emergency management agencies and nonprofit volunteer organizations to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. A majority of stakeholders perceive NCEM's coordination with nonprofit volunteer organizations as sufficient. However, opportunities exist for improvement. Specifically, coordination could be strengthened by engaging nonprofit volunteer organizations through communication, training, and formal agreements; issuing guidance to local governments; and establishing at least one dedicated Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) position.

Background: Session Law 2019-250 directed the Program Evaluation Division to examine the Department of Public Safety's coordination with nonprofit organizations for disaster recovery planning. Such planning is often referred to as disaster preparedness and consists of activities that build, sustain, and improve operational capacity to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from disaster incidents by ensuring entities are as prepared as possible to respond to disasters.



An example of a disaster preparedness activity would be the development of a state emergency operations plan or recovery framework that outlines roles and responsibilities of both governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in managing disasters.

Disaster recovery refers to short-term and long-term activities that seek to return community systems to normal. Portions of the recovery phase sometimes overlap with the response phase, but recovery lasts much longer, often from several months to years.



An example of a disaster recovery activity would be rebuilding homes in a community that experienced a loss in its number of residential properties, as opposed to providing shelters, which would be a disaster response activity.

NCEM's coordination with nonprofit volunteer organizations can be improved with better engagement during disaster preparedness. Effective coordination requires stakeholders be aware of, agree to, and commit to roles and responsibilities for disaster activities. This evaluation found some nonprofit volunteer organizations did not know

whether they were included in state preparedness plans, had not received copies of planning documents, or did not agree to being included.

Recommendation:

The General Assembly should require NCEM to distribute preparedness plans to nonprofit volunteer organizations, verify that nonprofit volunteer organizations know and agree to their roles and responsibilities, and explore the use of memoranda of understanding.

Local governments need guidance from NCEM on how to coordinate with nonprofit volunteer organizations, COADs, and LTRGs for preparedness and recovery. Effective coordination at the local level is extremely important because all disasters begin and end within individual communities. The Program Evaluation Division found local emergency management agencies struggle in coordinating with a statewide nonprofit partner (i.e., NC VOAD) and also struggle to coordinate with two types of local nonprofit groups—community organizations active in disaster (COADs) and long-term recovery groups (LTRGs). Issues involving coordination at the local level hinder preparedness and recovery for communities.

Recommendation:

The General Assembly should direct NCEM to provide guidance to local emergency management agencies to improve coordination with nonprofit volunteer organizations.

North Carolina needs a dedicated Voluntary Agency Liaison.

A dedicated Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) serves as a central point of contact and coordination between government agencies and nonprofit volunteer organizations active in disasters. Having at least one VAL at the state level is considered a best practice.

NCEM has a position designated to fulfill these responsibilities that also performs other tasks that constitute a majority of the position's duties; only 20% of the position's activities consists of VAL-related tasks. Multiple stakeholders in federal and local government as well as nonprofit volunteer organizations find the effectiveness of this arrangement to be limited because of the position's split responsibilities.

The agency recently established a VAL position and is using supplemental federal grant funding to support it. However, the essential job functions of this new position do not resemble that of a dedicated position. Additionally, the funds used to support the position are designated for response to the ongoing coronavirus public health emergency and are set to expire in 2022. Federal funds can be used to fully support dedicated VAL positions beyond the expiration of the current funding source.

Recommendation:

The General Assembly should require NCEM to report on the effectiveness of VAL activities.

Purpose and Scope

Session Law 2019-250, Section 3.5(f) directed the Program Evaluation Division to perform an evaluation of the Department of Public Safety's (DPS's) coordination with nonprofit organizations for disaster recovery planning.

This evaluation addressed three research questions:

1. What are the benefits and challenges of coordinating with nonprofits?
2. How do the Division of Emergency Management's (NCEM's) current practices of coordinating with nonprofits for disaster recovery planning compare with best practices that ensure sufficient coordination?
3. Does NCEM effectively and efficiently coordinate with nonprofits for disaster recovery planning?

The Program Evaluation Division collected and analyzed data from several sources, including

- interviews with and queries of NCEM;
- site visit to the North Carolina State Emergency Operations Center;
- surveys of local emergency management agencies and volunteer organizations that provide disaster services in general;
- a focus group survey of local emergency management agencies and nonprofit volunteer organizations involved in the Western North Carolina Wildfires of 2016 and Hurricane Florence in 2018;
- after-action reviews of the Western North Carolina Wildfires of 2016 and Hurricane Florence in 2018;
- reviews of state and local emergency preparedness plans, state disaster-related contracts, state and local disaster-related grant information, and disaster-related state position descriptions;
- reviews of federal disaster-related funding options for state and local emergency management agencies and their use at the state and local level;
- interviews with and queries of nonprofit volunteer organizations, including North Carolina Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NC VOAD); practitioners, academics, national emergency management and disaster recovery experts; other states' emergency management agencies; and officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Background

North Carolina is susceptible to a variety of disasters such as winter storms, hurricanes, flooding, wildfires, and other life-threatening emergencies that require emergency management efforts. Effective emergency management allows communities to have greater disaster resilience, meet immediate needs more quickly, and experience speedier recoveries. As Appendix A shows, North Carolina has suffered several natural disasters in the past 10 years that resulted in disaster declarations.¹ It is vital that state and local emergency management agencies are adequately prepared in order to respond to and recover from disasters.

Comprehensive emergency management is an ongoing process that begins with mitigation and preparedness activities conducted prior to disaster events to ensure entities are ready to respond and communities can recover. As Exhibit 1 shows, there are four phases of comprehensive emergency management. One key element of emergency management is the feedback of information gleaned from previous disasters; lessons learned can help improve future preparedness and, to the extent possible, limit losses caused by disasters. Feedback loops are proven ways to improve efforts because they seek the feedback of stakeholder groups and provide entities with firsthand knowledge regarding where opportunities for improvement exist. The four cyclical phases of emergency management for disasters are mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

- **Mitigation phase.** This phase focuses on activities that eliminate or reduce the probability of the occurrence of a disaster and/or reduce the severity of its impacts, should it occur. Examples of mitigation activities include encouraging the vacating of flood-prone properties, hardening infrastructure such as power or water facilities, and elevating homes above base-flood elevation.
- **Preparedness phase.** This phase focuses on activities that build, sustain, and improve operational capability to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from disaster incidents by ensuring entities are as prepared as possible to respond to disasters. Examples of preparedness activities include developing plans, implementing training for public safety personnel, and conducting exercises that test and evaluate plans and response capabilities.
- **Response phase.** This phase focuses on the immediate response of governments, nonprofit organizations, and others to provide for the direct needs of those affected by a disaster or emergency. Examples of response activities include, but are not limited to, search and rescue, debris and road clearance for flood fighting, firefighting, emergency medical services, distribution of commodities, and auxiliary communications. During this phase, nonprofit volunteer organizations are primarily involved in mass

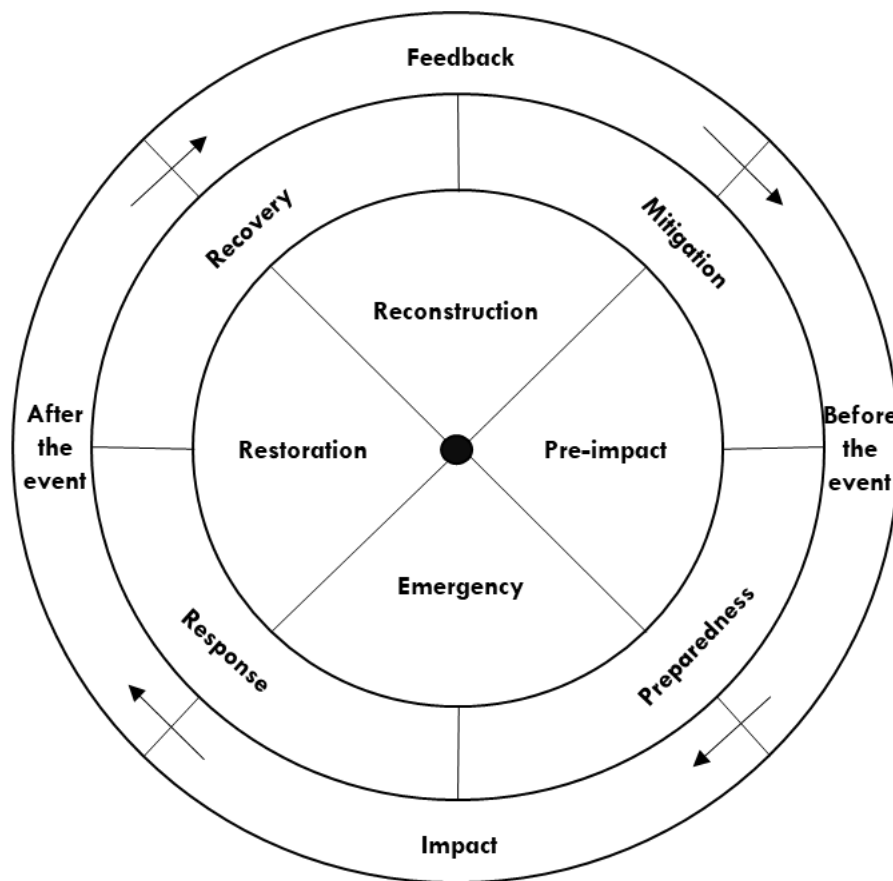
¹ Several types of disasters can be declared: governing bodies or lead executives in a local government may declare a state of emergency, the Governor or General Assembly may declare an emergency exists, or the President may issue an emergency and major disaster declaration.

care services such as providing water, meals, emergency sheltering, and temporary housing to survivors.

- Recovery phase.** The recovery phase focuses on short-term and long-term activities that seek to return community systems to normal. Portions of the recovery phase sometimes overlap with the response phase, but recovery lasts much longer and can range from a few months to years depending on a disaster’s impact. Recovery programs exist to support disaster survivors, manage the economic impact of storms, repair damage to homes, return communities to safe and sanitary conditions, and assist in the repair and restoration of damaged infrastructure. Volunteer nonprofit organizations are key partners in the recovery phase. They conduct casework and counseling for survivors, repair homes damaged by storms, assist with debris and tree removal, and coordinate local volunteers.

Exhibit 1:

Emergency Management is a Cyclical Process with Four Phases That Benefits From a Feedback Loop



Source: Program Evaluation Division based on Alexander, David. 2002. Principles of Emergency Planning and Management. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

During every phase of a disaster, it is essential that the numerous entities involved—federal, state, and local governments, private sector entities, and individual nonprofit organizations—understand their roles and responsibilities and coordinate. Aside from NCEM, other statewide entities also coordinate disaster-related activities.

- **North Carolina Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NC VOAD).** Across the country, many states have their own Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), which are umbrella organizations made up of public, private, and nonprofit volunteer organizations that are active in every phase of a disaster.² State VOADs enhance the ability of all communities to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. It is important to note that VOADs do not provide direct services but instead offer a network through which individual organizations can more effectively address their missions and service goals during all disaster phases. North Carolina's subunit of the national VOAD association is the North Carolina Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (NC VOAD). This organization meets quarterly, and its official membership consists of 55 individual organizations; however, its activities reach more than 250 nonprofits performing disaster activities across the state. The objectives of NC VOAD are to convene meetings; encourage member outreach efforts; and seek affiliations and cooperative working relationships with other public, religious, private, and local/state/federal governmental organizations and agencies that support and serve disaster recovery. NC VOAD does not require members to pay membership dues unless the member organization wants to be able to vote on official organizational decisions; thus, many participating nonprofit groups are non-voting members that still participate on calls and coordinate with NC VOAD for response and recovery efforts.

Because of the size of the group, NC VOAD does much of its work within focused committees. These committees oversee issues such as housing, donation management, and communications. This committee-centered arrangement helps NC VOAD know the capacities of its member organizations within these areas when it is time to utilize their resources and also helps to avoid duplication of services. Exhibit 2 illustrates these committees and their corresponding purposes.

² An umbrella organization is an organization that controls or organizes the activities of several other organizations, all of which have a similar purpose.

Exhibit 2: NC VOAD Has 13 Committees to Address Disasters, Avoiding Duplication of Services



Board Purpose and Practice Review

Evaluate the structure of the North Carolina VOAD Board and make recommendations regarding the following two topics: 1) whether adjustments to the size of the board would be beneficial to the organization and 2) whether the board is expected to be a “working board” or an “oversight board”



Communications

Work on increasing consistency and improving branding and messaging for NC VOAD among member agencies and the general public



Disaster Case Management

Share challenges and best practices involving disaster case management and advocate for improvements



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Develop recommendations to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout all aspects of North Carolina VOAD activities



Donation Management

Coordinate and plan for coordination between agencies to understand what supplies are needed in the community and what supplies are available from local and national agencies



Housing

Collaborate to discuss and advocate for all housing-related issues for both renters and homeowners



Long Term Recovery Groups

Help local Long Term Recovery Groups stand up, maintain, and flourish both immediately following and long after an event



New Member Recruitment

Conduct outreach efforts to share the mission and benefits of NC VOAD and encourage new groups to become members



State Emergency Response Team (SERT) Members

Ensure individuals are trained on Emergency Operations Center (EOC) procedures to maintain an NC VOAD seat at the EOC during a disaster



Resource Coordination

Coordinate and share information regarding what service providers are available across the state



Spiritual and Emotional Care

Coordinate trainings and workshops to foster emotional and spiritual care across an impacted area



Training & Meetings

Assist with planning for NC VOAD quarterly meetings and plan trainings between meetings



Volunteer Management

Coordinate and plan for efficient communication and spontaneous use of volunteers immediately after an event

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on information from NC VOAD.

- **North Carolina Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service.** Located in the Governor's office, the Commission (VolunteerNC) is a centralized state entity established to coordinate volunteer efforts across various issues, ranging from disaster assistance to the AmeriCorps program. VolunteerNC is the state lead for donations and volunteer management during disasters. In addition to NCEM, it works closely with NC VOAD, the NC Office of Recovery and Resiliency (NCORR), Long Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs), North Carolina Inclusive Disaster Recovery (NCIDR), and other organizations active in disasters by providing resources, training, updates, and other pertinent information during all disaster phases.

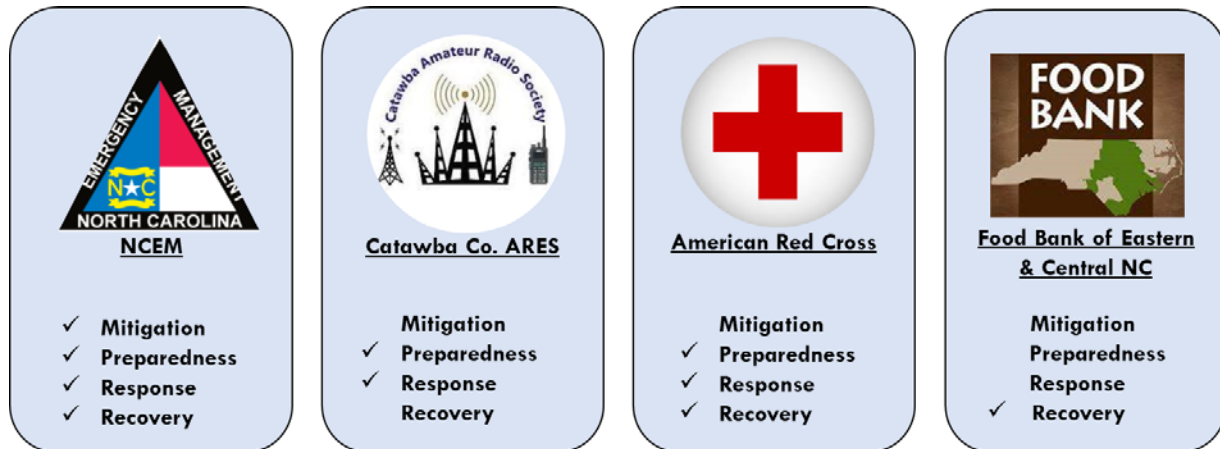
In addition to statewide groups representing and coordinating multiple nonprofit volunteer organizations, local coordinating groups also assist communities. Local entities have several advantages relative to statewide organizations, such as greater knowledge of resources available in a community, insight into the capacities of participating nonprofit organizations, and the ability to communicate more frequently amongst themselves. The two primary types of local coordinating groups are community organizations active in disasters (COADs) and long-term recovery groups (LTRGs). According to interviews with subject matter experts and NC VOAD leaders, such groups can become permanent staples in communities when members are dedicated to long-term collaboration and have access to financial resources.

- **Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COADs).** A COAD is a group of community organizations, businesses, nonprofits, and individuals working together to plan and deliver community responses in a variety of emergency and disaster situations. Local emergency management agencies can be included in COADs. COADs focus on preparedness rather than disaster response or recovery. These locally focused entities perform very similar activities to national and state VOADs. One primary difference is the size and scope of these organizations, with COADs typically focusing on local or jurisdictional disaster coordination efforts. North Carolina currently has two active COADs (Brunswick and Forsyth Counties), with a third in the planning stages (Buncombe County).
- **Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs).** LTRGs are cooperative bodies of representatives from faith-based, nonprofit, government, business, and other organizations working within a community to assist individuals and families as they recover from disasters. Many LTRG participants in North Carolina are involved with NC VOAD. Volunteers within LTRGs are not full-time or paid and assist with disaster recovery in their free time. There are currently 15 LTRGs active across North Carolina counties. Finding 3 provides more details on COADs and LTRGs, including how they form as well as their benefits and challenges.

Exhibit 3 provides examples of statewide and local groups that work together within and across different disaster phases. All of the entities shown perform an activity within a disaster phase; however, in most

instances entities do not work across every phase. Appendix B provides a full list of entities and the corresponding disaster phases in which they perform activities.

Exhibit 3: Examples of Statewide and Local Entities Providing Services by Disaster Phase



Note: ARES stands for Amateur Radio Emergency Service.

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on information from NCEM.

“Coordination is vital to our success in most of our realms and VOADs help with that.”

Source: NCEM

Coordination is the effective and efficient cooperation of independent units for the purposes of eliminating fragmentation, gaps in service delivery, and unnecessary duplication of services. Coordination is most effective when it is

- **clear**—roles and responsibilities are defined, and points of contact are centralized and easy to identify;
- **encompassing**—organizations and their resources are fully utilized; and
- **aligned**—organizational missions and activities clearly complement each other.

Emergency management agencies perform two types of coordination during a disaster: vertical coordination and horizontal coordination.

1. **Vertical coordination** occurs up and down the ladder of stakeholders, which often includes the three levels of government as well as nonprofit organizations. Vertical coordination aligns with one of the main roles of the State—to support local and community recovery efforts.
2. **Horizontal coordination**, by contrast, primarily occurs cross-sectionally across various state agencies.

Maintaining both types of coordination allows emergency management agencies to ensure information is being shared across government and between stakeholders.

Certain factors can facilitate coordination, and it is important for emergency management agencies to be aware of these factors when developing preparedness plans and performing planning activities.³

The National Response Framework developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is the nationally recognized approach for improving coordination to increase preparedness for catastrophic incidents. One key element of the Framework is its “whole community” approach, which encourages emergency management agencies at both the state and local level to seek and include feedback from a wide range of entities across sectors, such as nonprofit volunteer organizations, to foster better coordination and working relationships. Taking a “whole community” approach should be reflected in state and local preparedness documents. As Exhibit 4 shows, NCEM follows this approach.

Exhibit 4: NCEM Employs Several Planning Efforts Consistent with Best Practices

Factors Facilitating Coordination	Forms of Planning	Example Plans in North Carolina
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of goals or expectations about what the organizations will and will not do • Sharing leaders and/or overlapping board memberships • Ensuring representation of diverse roles and interests • Ensuring similar resource supplies across partner agencies • Promoting high rates of environmental change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – driven by policies and established planning priorities • Operational planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – describing roles and responsibilities – focusing on coordinating and integrating activities for the whole community • Tactical planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – identifying specific projects and managing resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazard Mitigation Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – identifies hazards that could potentially affect North Carolina and identifies actions to reduce the loss of life and property from a disaster • Emergency Operations Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – describes a system for effective use of resources to preserve the health, safety, and welfare of those affected during emergencies • Disaster Recovery Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – sets standards for infrastructure, resiliency, communications, and outreach and addresses VOADs

Note: Some researchers contend that shared leadership across organizations can produce negative effects because it concentrates power.

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on a review of practitioner and academic literature.

Taking a “whole community” approach during preparedness provides numerous benefits to all partners, including local emergency management agencies and nonprofit volunteer organizations that assist with disaster recovery. However, as with any approach, there are also challenges. Exhibit 5 lists the benefits and challenges that local emergency management agencies and nonprofit volunteer organizations face in coordinating for disaster recovery.

³ For the purposes of this report, the term “preparedness plan” is used to describe any emergency management plan put in place before a disaster that aims to mitigate the loss of life and/or property and return communities to a pre-disaster setting.

Exhibit 5: Nonprofit and Local Emergency Management Agencies Experience Different Benefits and Challenges in Coordinating for Disaster Recovery

Entity	Example Benefits of Coordination	Example Challenges of Coordination
Nonprofit organizations coordinating with local governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less constrained by regulation • provide faster delivery of assistance to survivors • fill in service gaps that government cannot meet • can involve larger assistance networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tend to work in silos themselves, which can lead to duplication of services • resource disparities amongst organizations because they are heavily reliant on independent donations and not government funds • lack of guidance from emergency management agencies regarding how to provide services can limit the effectiveness of service delivery
Local governments coordinating with nonprofit organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improves capability of local governments through pre-identification of when and how the State offers support for local government post-disaster planning, capacity needs, recovery management, and technical assistance • ensures efficient use of funds and resources • promotes continuity of services • increases staff creativity and reduces fragmentation of services • represents larger geographical areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only one state office potentially coordinating with hundreds of local governments • resource disparities in terms of time that can be spent on activities during preparedness phase prior to a disaster • limited but thorough networks • duplication of services owing to the fact that nonprofits tend to work in silos

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on practitioner and academic literature.

Overall, numerous entities coordinate in disaster recovery. Lack of coordination between any level of government and nonprofit volunteer organizations can hinder relationship building. A mutual willingness to work with one another, communicate, and coordinate in recovery efforts is essential. It prevents duplication of services, enables nonprofit volunteer organizations to provide services more rapidly, and ensures efficient use of state funds. Preparedness for and recovery from a disaster are both essential components of the emergency management process that require intentional and long-term efforts.

Given the likelihood of future disasters affecting North Carolina and legislative interest in ensuring maximum coordination with nonprofit organizations, this evaluation explores current and potential methods to improve coordination. There are best practices the State can adopt to improve how it works with nonprofit volunteer organizations. Adopting these practices will require taking a coordinated and thorough approach to the preparedness process with all stakeholder groups.

“Response is so short lived. Recovery goes on for years.”

Source: NCEM

Findings

Finding 1. Coordination with nonprofit volunteer organizations and local emergency management agencies can be improved with more communication, training, and guidance from NCEM.

Coordination among partner organizations is effective when there is sufficient and adequate engagement aligning each entity's goals and outlining each entity's responsibilities. Each level of government as well as public and private sector partners must work well together and cooperate with one another to eliminate fragmentation, gaps in service delivery, and unnecessary duplication of disaster services. In North Carolina and across the country, one of the main roles of a state emergency management agency is to support local recovery efforts when needs exceed a local government's capacity. There are several practices state emergency management agencies can employ to ensure that local governments, and by extension all stakeholders, can coordinate effectively to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disaster incidents:


- Establish clear leadership, coordination, and decision-making structures.
- Align and define stakeholder roles and responsibilities.
- Develop partnerships to access all potential resources.
- Identify capacity limitations of local communities.
- Ensure local emergency management agencies can locate, coordinate, and manage resources for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

NCEM performs some of these practices well, but others can be improved.

Strong physical indicators of coordination exist at the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC).⁴ Effective coordination between emergency management agencies and nonprofit volunteer organizations can be measured in terms of physical indicators (e.g., dedicated work areas in shared spaces). Physical indicators of coordination are important because they represent opportunities to build and strengthen organizational relationships and help to address resource disparities among nonprofit partners. Exhibit 6 lists some of the indicators the Program Evaluation Division observed at the EOC.

⁴ An emergency operations center (EOC) is a physical (e.g., a conference room) or virtual (e.g., telephone conference call) location designed to support emergency response, business continuity, and crisis communications activities.

Exhibit 6: State Emergency Operations Center Has Several Physical Indicators of Coordination

	Indicator of Coordination	Indicator Presence
	• Liaison personnel between NCEM and nonprofits	✓
	• Facility access to the EOC	✓
	• Appropriate identification for each nonprofit	✓
	• Computers for nonprofit use	✓
	• Designated work areas for nonprofits	✓
	• Access to state software (e.g., WebEOC) for nonprofits	✓
	• Access to organizational email for communication	✓
	• Dedicated phone line for communication	✓
	• Additional resources for conference calls	✓

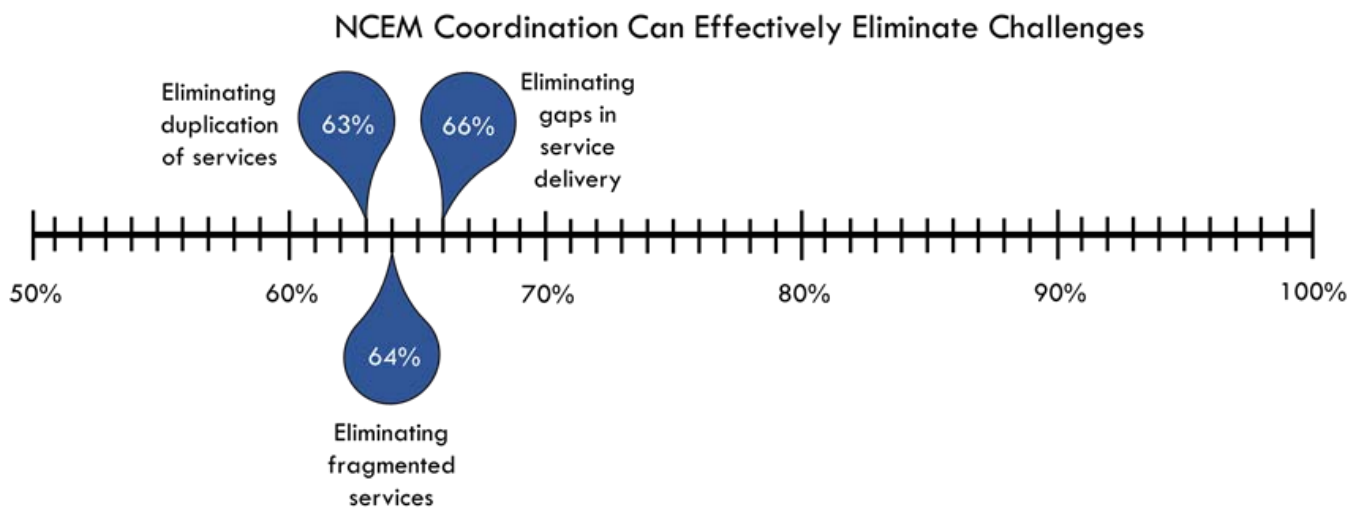
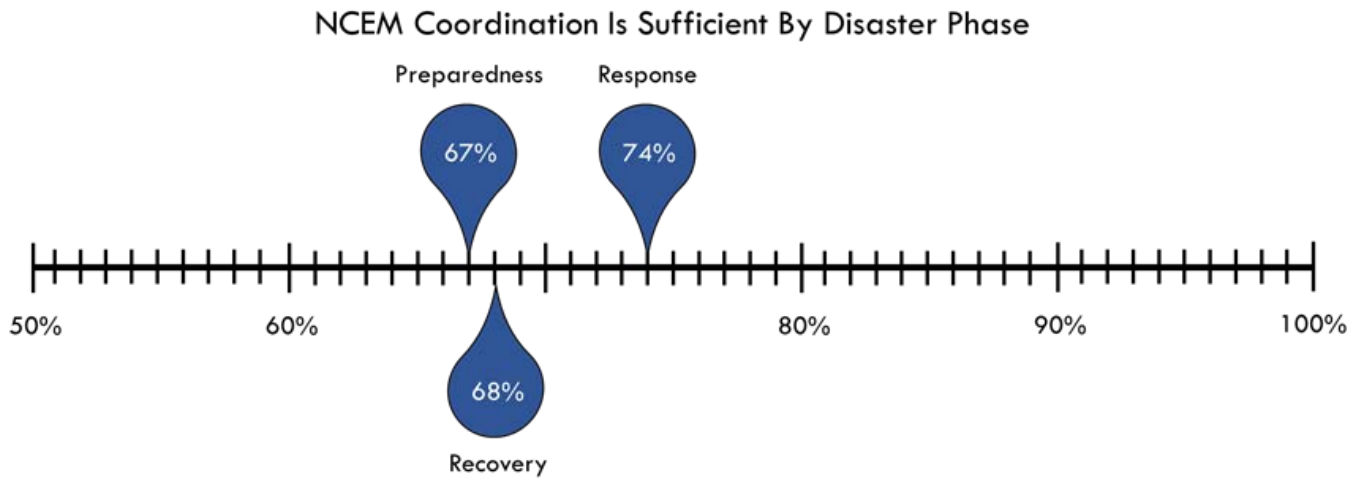
Note: WebEOC is the online web-based platform for North Carolina’s Emergency Operations Center. It is used to manage disasters and track requests, resources, and disaster-related activities.

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on academic and practitioner literature, interviews with subject matter experts, and site visit.

Local emergency management agencies have a generally favorable perception of their coordination with NCEM. In response to a Program Evaluation Division survey, most local emergency management agencies (79%) indicated their coordination with NCEM for all disaster phases is either very good or excellent. Local emergency management agencies further stated that common coordination challenges such as staff commitment and communication are not challenging when it comes to their interactions with NCEM. Instead, local emergency management agencies identified their greatest challenge as being concern about the redirection of scarce resources (e.g., funding). However, when asked how challenging they found this concern to be, most respondents (74%) rated the concern as not challenging to only somewhat challenging.

A majority of nonprofit volunteer organizations surveyed perceive NCEM coordination as sufficient and capable of alleviating common challenges. Similar to the question posed to local emergency management agencies, the Program Evaluation Division asked nonprofit volunteer organizations to rank the challenges they face in coordinating for disaster recovery. Nonprofit volunteer organizations identified resource disparities as being most challenging whereas lack of guidance from NCEM on how to provide disaster services was deemed least challenging. Exhibit 7 provides an overall view of how nonprofit volunteer organizations perceive NCEM’s coordination by disaster phase and challenge.

Exhibit 7: A Majority of Nonprofits Perceive Coordination with NCEM as Sufficient and Effective



Source: Program Evaluation Division based on survey of nonprofit volunteer organizations.

In addition to coordination with NCEM, local emergency management agencies and nonprofit volunteer organizations also coordinate amongst themselves. Government agencies need to abide by stringent laws, regulations, and policies when managing disasters. In contrast, nonprofit volunteer organizations have the flexibility to be innovative, respond to disasters quickly, and focus more of their attention on areas with the greatest need. When the Program Evaluation Division surveyed local emergency management agencies about the benefits of coordinating with nonprofit volunteer organizations, most reported that the greatest benefit of working with nonprofit volunteer organizations is their flexibility. Because nonprofits experience fewer constraints from imposed regulations, they are able to provide services more expeditiously than state agencies. Local emergency management agencies would like to

- engage with nonprofit partners before disasters,
- continue conversations with nonprofit partners after the disaster response phase has ended, and

- share in the capabilities of statewide nonprofit volunteer organizations.

Opportunities exist to improve coordination among NCEM, local emergency management agencies, and nonprofit volunteer organizations.

The Program Evaluation Division identified communication and training as areas in which nonprofit volunteer organizations think coordination with NCEM could be improved.

- **Nonprofits overwhelmingly want to communicate with NCEM in general (75%) and specifically during disaster recovery (87%).** Communication, which can range from basic forms of coordination such as phone calls and emails to informal or formal meetings, is necessary for sufficient preparedness because it engages stakeholders and directs responsibilities. When asked how their current level of contact with NCEM—both during and outside of disaster recovery—compared to their preferred level of contact, nonprofit volunteer organizations reported a desire for more communication with NCEM. The Program Evaluation Division’s identification of effective communication as an important factor to nonprofit volunteer organizations in their relationships with NCEM is exemplified by the following statements:

“Make sure information is sent out in a timely manner”

“Daily stakeholder meetings during the initial phases of recovery”

“More communication”

Source: Nonprofit volunteer organizations

The Program Evaluation Division found challenges to communication when requesting contact information for each nonprofit volunteer organization. In response to this request, NCEM provided a list of 308 contacts at various nonprofit organizations with which NCEM regularly coordinates for disasters. Of these 308 contacts, 136 email addresses (53%) were missing or out of date. The list of out-of-date contacts included individuals from large-scale nonprofit partners with which NCEM is in constant contact (e.g., the American Red Cross, the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina, and the United Way of North Carolina). The lack of an updated contact list inhibits effective vertical coordination because partner organizations are unable to easily communicate and engage with each other. Absent updated contacts for nonprofit organizations, valuable time that should be spent on disaster response and recovery services is redirected to administrative tasks.

- **Offering training to nonprofit volunteer organizations can improve coordination.** Training is one method of disaster preparedness that can improve coordination during response and recovery because it enables organizations to be better equipped to meet needs and adhere to standards. When entities such as nonprofit volunteer organizations are not trained to perform disaster services, they are more likely to perform activities that, although well-intentioned, can disrupt successful recovery. For example, after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, nonprofit volunteer organizations in Louisiana began building and repairing homes for disaster survivors that did not meet newly updated building standards put in place for disaster preparedness.

In a survey of nonprofit volunteer organizations in North Carolina, 58% of respondents stated that they have never received training from NCEM. Further, almost half of responding nonprofit volunteer organizations (48%) have not received training at all from any source. Of those entities that have received training, the Program Evaluation Division found more respondents received training directly from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) than from NCEM. The Program Evaluation Division's survey identified training as a key area for improvement, as exemplified by the following statements from nonprofit volunteer organizations:

"More training"

"Provide training, information, best practices, contacts for other resources, what to expect, etc."

*Source: Nonprofit volunteer organization
and long-term recovery group*

A majority (56%) of local emergency management agency respondents agreed that their local government would benefit from additional state activities to help them coordinate with nonprofit volunteer organizations. It is considered a best practice for local governments to be prepared for disasters at a level similar to a state emergency management agency, which includes creating and maintaining preparedness plans. An effective preparedness plan builds local capacity by preparing stakeholders to anticipate the needs and challenges of the post-disaster recovery phase before a disaster even occurs. As a result, local community leaders, much like the State, must engage all community partners to successfully plan for an inclusive recovery effort. NCEM can provide guidance to local emergency management agencies, informing them as to what organizations, resources, and services they should incorporate in preparedness plans.

For example, although many local emergency management agencies include nonprofit volunteer organizations in their preparedness plans, they lack indications of a formal partnership between local emergency management agencies and the statewide NC VOAD.^{5, 6} Additionally, in the Program Evaluation Division’s survey, 48% of local emergency management agencies agreed that coordination between NC VOAD and local emergency management agencies can be improved. Exhibit 8 provides examples of local government preparedness plans and how they incorporate nonprofit partners.

Exhibit 8: Examples of Nonprofit Roles and Responsibilities in Local Preparedness Plans

County	Nonprofit Volunteer Organizations	Example of Responsibilities
Buncombe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Red Cross Salvation Army Hearts with Hands Amateur Radio Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Red Cross liaison provides food for emergency responders and answers inquiries about injured or missing family members Salvation Army and Hearts with Hands provide support with counseling services for disaster victims
New Hanover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salvation Army Local chapters of the American Red Cross and United Way Amateur Radio Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salvation Army supports the distribution of food and clothing to disaster survivors
Lenoir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Red Cross Lenoir County Chapter of American Red Cross Salvation Army United Way of Lenoir County Harvest Ministries Other local nonprofit partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Red Cross fulfills several responsibilities, the most significant being the provision and maintenance of shelter areas before, during, and after disasters

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on information contained within local governments’ emergency operations plans.

NC VOAD fulfills a number of important roles for disaster preparedness and recovery at the local level, including

- assisting with the formation of COADs and LTRGs;
- acting as one of the main statewide nonprofit partners with which NCEM consistently coordinates for all disaster phases; and
- partnering with other major nonprofit volunteer organizations.⁷

As an organization that provides support to many nonprofit volunteer organizations, NC VOAD could help local communities better prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. Coordination is best when there is clear, aligned, and encompassing engagement between stakeholders; therefore, NC VOAD’s absence from local preparedness plans likely inhibits local emergency management agencies.

⁵ Some survey respondents stated that they communicate with NC VOAD, but no local EOPs include the organization.

⁶ The survey was sent to all 100 counties; 52 counties responded. The Program Evaluation Division then identified plans in both respondent and non-respondent counties, when possible. In instances in which a plan could not be found, the Division contacted counties. Eighteen counties agreed to share their plans with PED, whereas some counties declined this request. Lumberton Emergency Services Department is the designated emergency management department for Robeson County.

⁷ Examples of national and statewide nonprofit volunteer organizations include the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, Food Banks of North Carolina, and Baptists on Mission.

“The State could improve its coordination with nonprofit partners during disaster preparedness by helping the NC VOAD group better fit into their role as a resource coordination element and not a command and control organization. Our local nonprofit agencies are amazing and always step up to the plate, but when NC VOAD comes in on large disasters, they tend to sour relations instead of helping them make a better impact.”

Source: Local emergency management agency

The Program Evaluation Division reviewed two specific disaster incidents, the Western North Carolina Wildfires of 2016 and Hurricane Florence in 2018, to further examine coordination between NCEM and nonprofit volunteer organizations (see Exhibit 9). A survey of local emergency management agencies and nonprofit volunteer organizations involved in each of these disasters revealed that challenges generally involved coordination between nonprofit organizations themselves rather than between nonprofit organizations and NCEM.

As described in the Background, feedback loops are crucial to the effectiveness of emergency management. After-action reviews are the most common form of feedback that emergency management agencies undertake following disaster incidents. After-action reviews are effective when stakeholders are able to openly provide feedback that is then incorporated into an emergency management agency’s policies and procedures and/or preparedness plans to improve disaster efforts in the future.

The Program Evaluation Division examined after-action reviews for each of these two disasters and found stakeholders seemed to openly provide feedback and NCEM appeared responsive to making suggested improvements. However, recommendations from nonprofit volunteer organizations were minimal, either indicating they chose to provide little feedback or had little feedback because coordination was effective.

In summary, strong physical indicators of coordination exist between NCEM and nonprofit volunteer organizations. A majority of local government emergency management agencies and nonprofit volunteer organizations perceive NCEM’s coordination as sufficient during different disaster phases and as capable of preventing many of the common challenges associated with disaster efforts such as fragmentation, gaps, and duplication of services. However, the Division found that NCEM can improve its coordination by increasing communication and offering training to nonprofit partners. Further, local emergency management agencies struggle to coordinate effectively with NC VOAD. NCEM can mitigate this challenge by instructing local governments to include NC VOAD in local preparedness plans, which would make stakeholder roles and responsibilities clearer at the local level. In assessing coordination for two specific disaster incidents, the Program Evaluation Division found few challenges to coordination, and nonprofit volunteer organizations provided little feedback on ways NCEM could improve coordination for these events.

Exhibit 9: PED Findings for Western Wildfires (2016) and Hurricane Florence (2018)



Disaster Timeline

- October 23-Dick’s Creek Fire (729 acres) begins
- October 25-Boteler Fire (9,036 acres), Cherokee Fire (756 acres), and Chestnut Knob Fire (6,435 acres) begin
- November 2-Cliffside Fire (110 acres) and Knob Fire (1,130 acres) begin
- November 3-Tellico Fires (13,874 acres) begin
- November 4-Maple Springs Fire (7,788 acres) begins
- November 5-Party Rock Fire (7,142 acres) begins
- November 7-NCFS issues bans on open burning in 25 western counties
- November 8-NCFS announces evacuations related to the Party Rock Fire
- November 10-Governor McCrory declares a state of emergency
- November 11 to 14-NCFS announces additional evacuation orders in Buncombe and Rutherford Counties
- November 17-Cathey Gap Fire (123 acres) begins
- November 20-Clear Creek Fire (3,163 acres) begins
- November 21-Horton Fire (1,450 acres) begins
- November 23-Camp Branch Fire (3,422 acres) begins

Wildfire Season of 2016

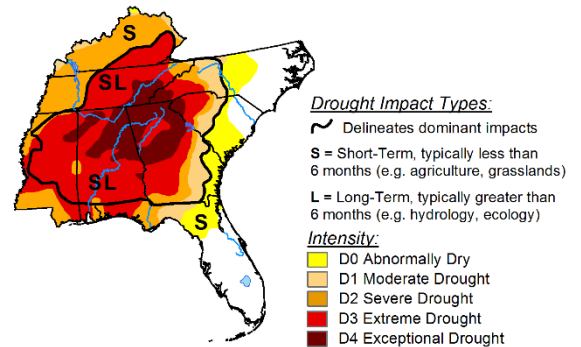
In October and November 2016, more than 20 wildfires burned more than 59,000 acres in western North Carolina, making it the state’s worst wildfire season by acres burned in 30 years. Officials ordered evacuations in five counties and issued burn bans in 25 counties. In response to the disaster, Governor Pat McCrory declared a state of emergency on November 10, 2016. In total, more than 5,000 firefighters from around the country were enlisted to help fight the fires.

Difficulty of Fighting Fires in the Southern Appalachian Mountains

The Southern Appalachian Mountains (SAM) region, which stretches from northeast Georgia to central North Carolina, already experiences a large number of wildfires relative to other parts of the Southeast. The rugged terrain makes it harder for firefighters to reach more remote areas; often, they must construct firelines by hand because the mountain slopes are too steep for bulldozers or other heavy machinery.

Drought Conditions Led to Abnormally Active Wildfire Season

The southeastern United States experienced an “exceptional” drought in 2016, which is the most extreme level on the U.S. Drought Monitor’s drought intensity scale. The drought officially began in March, with below-normal rainfall throughout the spring and above-average temperatures in the fall. At a weather station in Asheville, North Carolina, the three months between August 28, 2016, and November 27, 2016, were both the driest and warmest in the station’s 149-year history. In combination, these conditions set the stage for an abnormally active wildfire season in 2016.



The North Carolina Forest Service urges caution when burning, saying this year’s fire season has “the potential to be bad.”

By the Numbers

Five nonprofit organizations were members of the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) and had access to NCEM’s WebEOC platform prior to the wildfires.



1
Point of Distribution

5
Shelters

10
Human Services Resource Requests

581
Significant Events in WebEOC

7,880
Volunteers



FEMA Public Assistance Paid
\$11,317,205



FEMA Public Assistance Matching
\$3,028,381



State Public Assistance Paid
\$719,419

Benefits of Coordination

When the Program Evaluation Division asked nonprofit volunteer organizations and local emergency management agencies to list the benefits of coordination with or among state or local governments during recovery, respondents most commonly cited the State’s **ability to manage logistics** and **provide assistance** as needed. Respondents also valued **having an opportunity to collaborate** with county governments and NCEM.

Respondents also mentioned communication, training, and preventing duplication of effort as additional benefits of government and nonprofit organization coordination.

Challenges of Coordination

When asked to describe the challenges of coordinating with government, 67% (4 of 6 respondents) stated there were **none**. Of the respondents who listed challenges in general, one stated the biggest challenge was **working with volunteers** who were unfamiliar with disaster recovery, and the other stated that occasionally there were **disputes about which agency or organization was in charge**.

One local emergency management agency stated, “There’s a huge assortment of [nonprofits and] volunteer organizations across the state...It is EXTREMELY difficult to herd all these folks in one direction as they have a ‘mission’ that is not always consistent across the board. While everyone wants to help, few want to help with what exactly is needed during a crisis. The majority of these folks are gone during the true ‘recovery’ phase.”

HURRICANE FLORENCE

Disaster Timeline

- August 31-Tropical Depression Six forms in the far eastern Atlantic Ocean
- September 1-Tropical Depression Six upgraded to Tropical Storm Florence
- September 5-Tropical Storm Florence becomes Category 4 Hurricane Florence
- September 7-Gov. Cooper declares state of emergency
- September 11-Gov. Cooper issues executive order requiring mandatory evacuation of all coastal islands
- September 14-
 - Hurricane makes landfall near Wrightsville Beach as a Category 1 hurricane
 - Wilmington records wind gusts of 105 mph
 - 10.1-foot storm surge is recorded in New Bern
 - Record flooding begins in several southeastern areas because of high river levels, particularly at the Little Black, Lumber, and Cape Fear Rivers
 - President Trump issues a major national disaster declaration for North Carolina
- September 17 and 18-Hurricane Florence causes flooding in Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts
- October 16-General Assembly and Governor Cooper enact Session Law 2018-136 establishing the North Carolina Office of Recovery and Resiliency (NCORR)

Overview

On September 14, 2018, Hurricane Florence made landfall in North Carolina, impacting both the central and eastern parts of the state. Florence brought record-breaking rainfall, creating a devastating flood event that damaged infrastructure, businesses, and schools. On the same day of landfall, the President granted an expedited major disaster declaration allowing North Carolina to receive federal aid in the form of individual and public assistance for citizens and local governments. Damage losses in the state due to Florence totaled \$22 billion.

Impacts of Hurricane Florence

In North Carolina, Hurricane Florence caused maximum storm surge inundation estimated to be 8 to 11 feet above ground level in some areas, with a maximum total rainfall of around 36 inches near Elizabethtown. This activity broke the previous record set in Southport during Hurricane Floyd in 1999. Additionally, the hurricane produced 27 tornados and led to 1 million customers losing electricity. There were 15 direct fatalities in North Carolina due to Florence, 11 due to freshwater flooding and 4 due to wind, as well as an additional 25 fatalities indirectly associated with the hurricane. Florence flooded an estimated 74,563 structures, and 5,214 people were rescued.

Disaster Recovery Efforts

Nearly 140,000 residents registered for disaster assistance after Hurricane Florence, and 42,287 residents visited one of 26 Disaster Recovery Centers. In addition, 57,920 individuals volunteered in some way to assist with response or recovery. Congress approved \$133.9 million in FEMA Individual Assistance funds, \$317.9 million in FEMA Public Assistance funds, and \$542.5 million in Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funds for the State. In addition, the U.S. Small Business Administration has approved grants or loans for more than 10,000 applicants (totaling over \$405.04 million), and the National Flood Insurance Program has paid more than 15,000 claims (totaling more than \$615 million).

The National Hurricane Center's Tropical Cyclone Report for Hurricane Florence stated, "Florence caused devastating freshwater flooding across much of the southeastern United States and significant storm surge flooding in portions of eastern North Carolina."

By the Numbers

Five nonprofit organizations were members of the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) and had access to NCEM's WebEOC platform prior to Hurricane Florence making landfall



44

Points of Distribution

26

Shelters

100

Human Services
Resource Requests

4,138

Significant Events in
WebEOC

57,920

Volunteers



FEMA Public Assistance Paid
\$317,886,772



FEMA Public Assistance Matching
\$97,395,164



State Public Assistance Paid
\$25,229,773

Benefits of Coordination

When asked about the benefits of coordinating with or among state or local governments during recovery, 37 of 43 respondents replied positively regarding fostering relationships with government entities. Specific benefits most commonly cited included better access to information and information sharing; greater access to resources, funding, and other opportunities that would not be available without government support; and improved ability to meet the needs of victims.

Thirteen respondents specifically mentioned the importance of **fostering relationships with local governments**, and some said **those relationships might be even more critical than having a relationship with the State**.

Challenges of Coordination

The challenges nonprofit organizations cited varied significantly, but the most common were that **nonprofits were limited in their capacity/ability to coordinate** (8 respondents), **nonprofits had limited resources** (5 respondents), **government was not always timely in getting information/resources to nonprofit organizations** (4 respondents), and **nonprofits had a hard time identifying partners and building relationships** (4 respondents). The most common suggestions were for **more accurate and timely information** (5 respondents) and for **more time to be spent building relationships** (4 respondents).

One nonprofit stated, "Guidance from the State was helpful. We worked closely with DPS-Emergency Management and the NC Commission on Volunteerism. It's been great having multiple resources within NC Volunteer to coordinate recovery efforts. It would be helpful if DPS-Emergency Management increased resources around a State VAL [see Finding 4]. The position of State VAL has been incredibly beneficial, but only having one for our whole state has been a challenge."

“Recovery efforts are largely dependent on the effectiveness of volunteer organizations.”

Source: NCEM

Finding 2. The State could further improve disaster coordination by more effectively engaging nonprofit volunteer organizations regarding their roles and responsibilities and exploring the use of more formal agreements.

As described in the Background, the “whole community” approach to disaster preparedness aims to include all stakeholders:

- federal and local governments,
- other state agencies,
- private sector partners, and
- nonprofit volunteer organizations.

Effectively including these groups is vital to the success of recovery efforts because it ensures that all partner organizations clearly understand their individual roles and responsibilities as well as the resources available through partnerships should a disaster occur.

Effective stakeholder coordination requires partner agencies to be aware of and agree to their roles and responsibilities, which are subject to change following formal revisions to preparedness plans. In North Carolina, the Department of Public Safety’s Division of Emergency Management (NCEM) seeks to include partner organizations in its preparedness plans. NCEM regularly updates preparedness plans through a formal revision process that ensures a record is maintained of all document changes. NCEM also uses a distribution list that specifies the stakeholder organizations included in preparedness plans as well as the number of copies of applicable documents each partner receives. Ensuring all stakeholders, including nonprofit volunteer organizations, are included in the revision process and the distribution list helps ensure organizations have an up-to-date understanding of their roles and responsibilities as outlined in preparedness plans.

North Carolina’s Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (NC VOAD) is not included in NCEM’s distribution list. As discussed in the Background, NC VOAD is a nationally affiliated nonprofit umbrella organization that coordinates with government and more than 250 nonprofit volunteer organizations for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery throughout the state. NC VOAD is one of the main nonprofit volunteer organizations NCEM relies upon to provide support during times of disaster. State Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs) referenced NC VOAD a combined 60 times from 2017 to 2019, yet the organization was not included on distribution lists, and therefore did not receive copies of updated plans.

When surveyed, 45% of responding nonprofit volunteer organizations (n=36) active in North Carolina indicated they did not know whether they were included in state preparedness plans. Additionally, one nonprofit volunteer organization included in the State’s EOP neither knew about nor agreed to the support it was outlined to provide. Failure to communicate to nonprofit volunteer organizations a designated role or responsibility within preparedness documents is not a problem unique to North Carolina. A review of Florida’s Comprehensive Emergency

Management Plan found that 10 nonprofit entities did not know whether they were listed in the plan.

In New Jersey, statements of approval are signed by both nonprofit partners and the state’s emergency management agency to ensure that roles and responsibilities are communicated and approved by all involved parties. As shown in Exhibit 10, nonprofit volunteer organizations would prefer to be more involved in disaster preparedness in North Carolina. Including nonprofit volunteer organizations in disaster planning is important because good preparedness increases the likelihood of an effective disaster response and recovery.

Exhibit 10:

Nonprofit Volunteer Organizations Want to Be More Involved in Disaster Preparedness

- **76% were not involved in developing preparedness plans**
- **53% of those involved would like to be more involved**
- **48% think NCEM can improve coordination for planning**

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on survey results.

Formal agreements such as memoranda of understanding (MOUs) provide opportunities to improve coordination between the State and its nonprofit partners. MOUs define areas of understanding between two parties. They also outline each party’s planned course of action, although actions taken by either party are not contingent on any action taken by the other. MOUs can also serve as valid contracts that, when agreed upon, bind organizations to specific activities. Exhibit 11 details the benefits and challenges of MOUs as they pertain to emergency management.

Exhibit 11: Benefits and Challenges of Memoranda of Understanding in Emergency Management

Benefits of MOUs	Challenges of MOUs
• Facilitate joint regional preparedness	• Require regular updates
• Multiply response resources available	• Create expectations of mutual resources
• Ensure timely arrival of resources	• Limit organizational flexibility
• Reduce administrative conflict	• Increase complexity of relationships
• Minimize risk of post-response litigation	• Apply standardization to unique communities
• Avoid gaps in operations	• Hinder broader nonprofit involvement
• Clarify organizational expectations	• Founded on expectation that nonprofits want formal engagement

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on a review of academic and practitioner literature.

State emergency management agencies can have MOUs in place with nonprofit volunteer organizations. Some states have sought to maintain memoranda with nonprofit volunteer organizations in efforts to mitigate ambiguity and promote engagement, but approaches vary on the use of these forms of agreement. Nationally, almost all states, including North Carolina, have a formal agreement with the American Red Cross that outlines its assistance to states as a congressionally chartered disaster relief organization. Examples of other state approaches include

- **South Carolina.** State emergency management has 12 memoranda with nonprofit volunteer organizations and other state agencies. Such MOUs are limited to agreements with organizations that have a role at the state's emergency operations center.
- **Florida.** State emergency management has more than 30 memoranda with state and local nonprofit volunteer organizations as well as other state agencies.
- **Georgia.** State emergency management has one memorandum in place with the American Red Cross but no other nonprofit volunteer organizations.

North Carolina has a formal disaster-related memorandum of understanding with the American Red Cross and more than 60 informal agreements with nonprofit entities at the state level. Having MOUs with nonprofit volunteer organizations in place before a disaster occurs can increase the number of resources available and clarify expectations for organizations. Not having MOUs in place with nonprofit volunteer organizations before disasters occur means that roles and responsibilities are not always clear to the organizations involved, leading to confusion during times of disaster. However, MOUs can also increase the complexity of the relationship between nonprofits and state entities.

The Program Evaluation Division asked nonprofit volunteer organizations about their forms of agreement with NCEM and found that 74% of respondents—including NC VOAD, Habitat for Humanity, and Operation BBQ Relief—stated that they have no agreements in place with the State. This lack of MOUs in place could lead to a lack of clarity on the part of the organizations involved and could contribute to confusion during recovery.

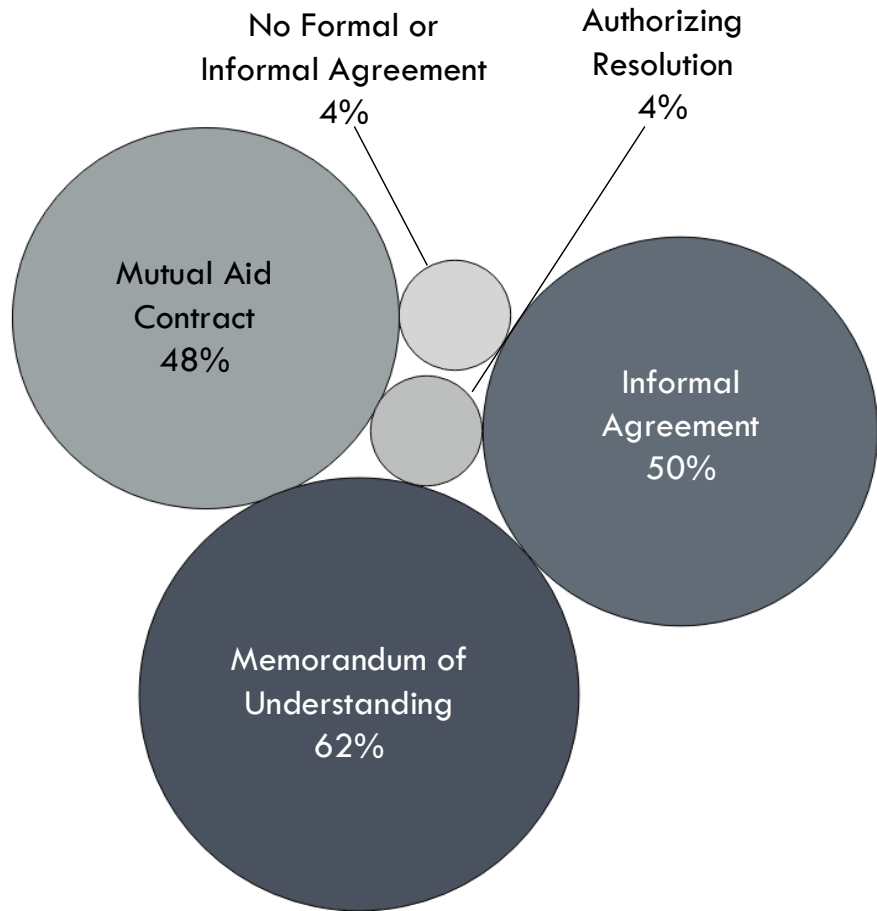
The Program Evaluation Division found examples of confusion among nonprofits and NCEM regarding whether forms of agreement are actually in place. In a survey, some nonprofit volunteer organizations state they are engaged in a formal MOU or contract with NCEM, whereas NCEM reports the arrangements for disaster services with those organizations as being informal.⁸ For example, NCEM reported its arrangements with the American Red Cross are informal. However, the American Red Cross subsequently provided a copy of its MOU with NCEM, thereby establishing it as a formal agreement.

Local emergency management agencies also use MOUs or informal arrangements. In contrast to the State, many local emergency management agencies reported having MOUs with nonprofit volunteer organizations. In fact, MOUs were cited as the most common form of arrangement by local emergency management agencies for coordination with nonprofits for disaster-related activities, followed by mutual aid contracts and informal agreements. Exhibit 12 shows the prevalence of different types of agreements between local emergency management agencies and nonprofit partners.

⁸ NCEM enters into formal agreements with nonprofit volunteer organizations for the distribution of grant funds (e.g., financial assistance) to provide shelter, housing repair, and other emergency and disaster recovery services.

Exhibit 12:

Local Governments Use a Variety of Agreements in Coordinating with Nonprofits



Note: Percentages do not total 100% because local emergency management agencies can be included across categories if they have multiple forms of agreement with nonprofit partners.

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on survey of local emergency management agencies.

In summary, including nonprofit volunteer organizations in the planning process during the disaster preparedness phase is important because these organizations play a large role during disaster recovery. Some nonprofit volunteer organizations are unsure whether they are included in state preparedness plans, making it difficult for them to agree to or fulfill the obligations to which they have been assigned when a disaster does occur. Some states have sought to rectify similar issues by entering into MOUs with nonprofit volunteer organizations; this approach has benefits and challenges. In North Carolina, there is only one state-level disaster-related memorandum in place, with the American Red Cross. However, many local governments do rely on MOUs in addition to other types of agreements with nonprofit volunteer organizations for disaster services.

Finding 3. Local governments struggle to coordinate with community organizations active in disaster (COADs) and long-term recovery groups (LTRGs), which are important to community preparedness and recovery; a permanent network of these groups could improve recovery.

Preparedness and recovery are disaster phases with unique objectives; preparedness ensures communities can prevent casualties and minimize damage, whereas recovery involves the implementation of plans and structures to provide needed resources to disaster survivors and return a community to its pre-disaster state. Preparedness is a continuous process of education and awareness that identifies and improves community readiness. Recovery occurs after communities “move from shock to action” and may last weeks to years after a disaster. Both disaster preparedness and disaster recovery are most effective when coordination with local groups takes place.

COADs and LTRGs work with local emergency management agencies during disaster preparedness and recovery. As the Background discusses, COADs and LTRGs are groups of stakeholders that work within a community either before or after a disaster.

- **COADs** help communities better prepare for a disaster. They also help communities identify local agencies and volunteer organizations familiar with the area and can provide services.
- **LTRGs** help communities with the transition from national organizations providing services to the local community providing services during disaster recovery efforts. In most instances, local disaster recovery efforts begin at emergency relief centers with ad hoc groups and then transition into LTRGs for coordinating resources and volunteers to distribute donated materials and rebuild communities.

Local emergency management agencies, private sector partners, and nonprofit volunteer organizations can be prospective partners/members of COADs and LTRGs. The presence of these more localized umbrella organizations is important because their members are often more aware of the unmet needs of their communities and can respond more quickly than state and national organizations. However, the most important attribute of each of these groups is that they are offered state support (e.g., training and advice) when they seek it out but operate at the local level and are grounded in the communities they serve. Exhibit 13 outlines the process for forming a COAD or LTRG and enumerates their respective benefits and challenges.

Exhibit 13: Definition, Process, Benefits, and Challenges of COADs and LTRGs

Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COADs):
a collaborative working group that convenes organizations and agencies for the purpose of planning, preparation, and relationship building in advance of future disasters

Process for establishing a COAD:

- Step 1 – Form and define the recovery organization
- Step 2 – Define the geographical area the organization will serve
- Step 3 – Determine available resources
- Step 4 – Assign and delegate areas of responsibility
- Step 5 – Establish procedures for providing services to victims and the disaster-affected area
- Step 6 – Share organizational mission with the public

Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs):
a cooperative body that is made up of representatives from faith-based, nonprofit, government, business, and other organizations working within a community to assist individuals and families as they recover from disasters

Process for establishing an LTRG:

- Step 1 – Bring together prospective partners and other stakeholders to discuss impact of the disaster and possible approaches to recovery
- Step 2 – Create a mission statement for the overall goal of recovery and focus of the LTRG
- Step 3 – Establish a framework for an LTRG governance structure
- Step 4 – Set a regularly scheduled meeting and provide information to partners
- Step 5 – Collect information on the size and scope of the disaster

Benefits

There are several benefits associated with the establishment and implementation of LTRGs and COADs:

- Only local organizations can accept and provide management for donations (e.g., food, clothing, money, etc.) that are sent directly to communities in need.
- Local citizens are familiar with the unique geography, people, culture, and history of the community, which is often necessary for gathering and evaluating information about victims' needs, accessing resources, and adequately allocating those resources.
- Only a local organization can effectively coordinate resources and ensure a balanced response for the disaster-affected area.

Challenges:

Although there are several benefits to the formulation of an LTRG or COAD, there are also some challenges:

- COADs and LTRGs may address the same needs as organizations, which may cause an overlap of resources.
- COADs and LTRGs may struggle to meet applicable state and federal laws for hiring, retention, and termination of staff given the time-limited nature of disaster recovery.
- LTRGs may lack the capacity to fulfill their missions before the recovery phase.

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on information provided by the National VOAD, NC VOAD, and other literature sources.

There is limited coordination between local emergency management agencies and COADs and/or LTRGs, which can cause challenges. When local emergency management agencies were asked how well coordination is conducted between COADs and LTRGs and their respective local government, local emergency management agencies describe coordination with COADs and LTRGs as average. There are no roles or responsibilities outlined for COADs or LTRGs in state preparedness plans. Additionally, only one LTRG is mentioned in a local government emergency management preparedness plan.

A network of permanent COADs and LTRGs could improve disaster preparedness and recovery. The formation and management of these organizations is important because the State's ability to recover from disasters is dependent on the strength of individual communities. Further, a strong network of community organizations such as COADs and LTRGs could improve preparedness and long-term recovery at the local level.

Often, COADs and LTRGs are temporary organizations that form to help communities during disasters. However, with dedicated members and regular collaboration among organizations, some groups become permanent and thus more effective within their communities.

Establishing COADs and/or LTRGs throughout the state can ensure local emergency management agencies have the resources and capability to prepare for and respond to a disaster. NCEM and the North Carolina Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service (VolunteerNC) understand the value of these groups and actively work to help communities establish them. Currently there are 15 LTRGs and three COADs in North Carolina.

NC VOAD is the primary entity that works to develop COADs and LTRGs in North Carolina. Coordination is one of NC VOAD's primary values, which it accomplishes through planning and by preparing member organizations to work together to respond to disasters and match services to need. NC VOAD understands that all disasters are local and that community members know best how to rebuild and restore their communities. Some local emergency management agencies coordinate with local and state partners, whereas other local agencies only coordinate with local partners. Although NC VOAD does not provide direct services to communities or survivors, the organization is able to connect local governments with local nonprofit volunteer organizations and facilitate the perpetuation of COADs and LTRGs through training and capacity building.

“The best response is to enable recovery at the local level and assist the LTRG in that county.”

Source: Former NC VOAD Board Chair

“We want to build capacity in [our] communities [with a] common understanding so folks know what to do.”

Source: NJ VOAD

The New Jersey VOAD has worked to increase its number of active COADs and LTRGs. Following the major disasters of 9/11 and Hurricane Sandy, the New Jersey VOAD sought to increase its number of COADs and LTRGs to promote local disaster preparedness and recovery. It actively promoted and supported the creation of these local groups, encouraged local emergency management agencies and nonprofit volunteer organizations to become members, and offered trainings.

Currently, New Jersey has 18 COADs and 25 to 100 additional local organizations, including 15 LTRGs. To become a member of a New Jersey COAD, nonprofit partners are required to

- have a disaster-focused mission,
- operate with formal agreements,
- maintain norms for response and for their relationships with other organizations in the COAD,
- not discriminate against membership, and

- meet on a quarterly basis.

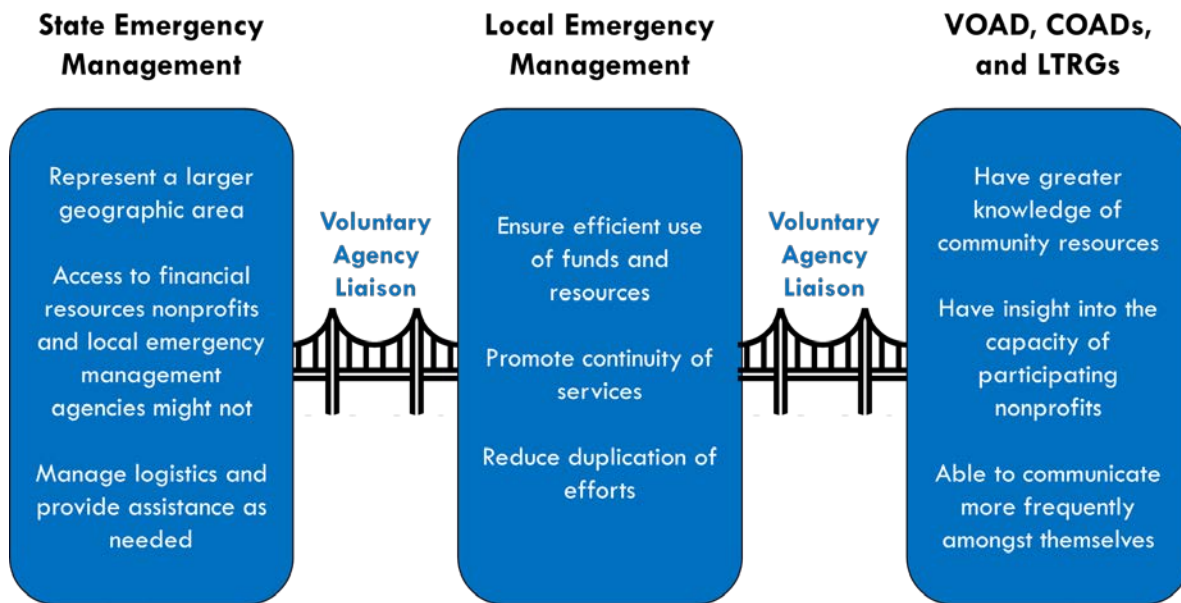
The most significant advantage of establishing COADs or LTRGs throughout North Carolina would be the resulting improvements to engagement and coordination between local emergency management agencies and nonprofit volunteer organizations during disaster preparedness and recovery.

In summary, local emergency management agencies sometimes struggle to work with nonprofit volunteer organizations. This issue could be remedied by establishing a more robust network of COADs or LTRGs that would help coordinate local efforts with nonprofit partners. The formation of a COAD or LTRG would help ensure communities minimize damage to citizens and property, provide faster response, and sustain long-term recovery efforts. State VOADs can help establish COADs and LTRGs that create norms for preparedness, response, and recovery. NCEM and NC VOAD could facilitate this relationship by connecting local emergency management agencies with nonprofit volunteer organizations to aid in disaster preparation, response, and recovery.

Finding 4. NCEM lacks a dedicated position to facilitate coordination and serve as a liaison between the State and nonprofit volunteer organizations, even though the need exists and federal funds could fully support such a position.

A common way for states to ensure an effective coordinated relationship between government and nonprofit volunteer organizations is by having a dedicated Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL). The VAL position serves as a central point of contact and coordination between government agencies and nonprofit volunteer organizations active in disasters. VALs are specially trained to build, maintain, and manage relationships with nonprofit organizations to ensure that disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts are optimally coordinated. These positions represent the bridge between state and local government and nonprofits (including COADs and LTRGs), ensuring that nonprofits are engaged and that relevant information is being disseminated amongst stakeholders. Exhibit 14 demonstrates how VALs connect various stakeholders to maximize their unique strengths.

Exhibit 14: VAL Position Connects Stakeholders to Maximize Strengths



Source: Program Evaluation Division based on information from NCEM, FEMA, and other research.

“It’s all about the relationships, all about encouraging partners [to] understand and recognize the four Cs: collaboration, coordination, communication, and cooperation.”

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency

Government agencies and nonprofit organizations benefit from the presence of a fully dedicated Voluntary Agency Liaison. Benefits of a fully dedicated VAL position include the following:

1. Having a centralized and available point of contact for nonprofit organizations alleviates confusion in nonprofit-to-government communication.
2. Consistently working with the same person or group of people can help nonprofits better understand an agency’s capacity and the types of services it offers.
3. Building a strong relationship with a VAL can increase the trust nonprofits have in government.

Some nonprofits are hesitant to work closely with government agencies because they see government as slow, perceive funding and reimbursements as unreliable, and find grant reporting requirements to be burdensome. A dedicated VAL position can assuage concerns in these areas and help nonprofits navigate complex processes, thus building a stronger foundation for future coordination.

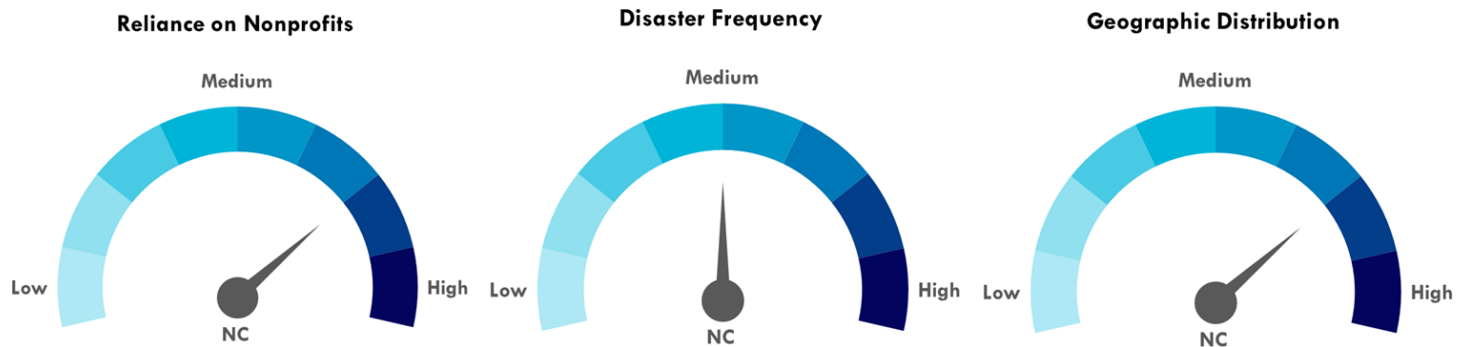
North Carolina ranks relatively high on the need for at least one VAL position. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) stresses that states should create and manage VAL positions in a way most suitable to their particular needs. In defining level of need for VALs, FEMA encourages states to consider the following three questions:

- How much reliance is there on nonprofit volunteer organizations?
- What is the frequency and scale of disaster events being faced?
- How are disasters distributed geographically across the state?

To determine the necessity and potential benefits of VAL positions, states can assess how they rate according to these three questions. As shown in

Exhibit 15, the Program Evaluation Division applied these conditions to North Carolina and found the state ranks between the middle and higher end of the scale on all three considerations. Having a heavy reliance on nonprofit organizations, a medium frequency of disasters, and a large geographic distribution collectively demonstrates that a dedicated VAL position would be beneficial to North Carolina.

Exhibit 15: North Carolina Meets Federal Conditions Indicating the State Would Benefit from a VAL



Source: Program Evaluation Division based on expert interviews, research, and information from NCEM.

FEMA suggests that all states designate a dedicated VAL solely focused on VAL-oriented tasks. Effectively performing VAL duties means the position

- consistently maintains relationships with nonprofit organizations that often have high amounts of turnover,
- supports local emergency management agencies and nonprofits during all disaster phases, and
- maintains open lines of communication at all times involving different levels of government and nonprofits.

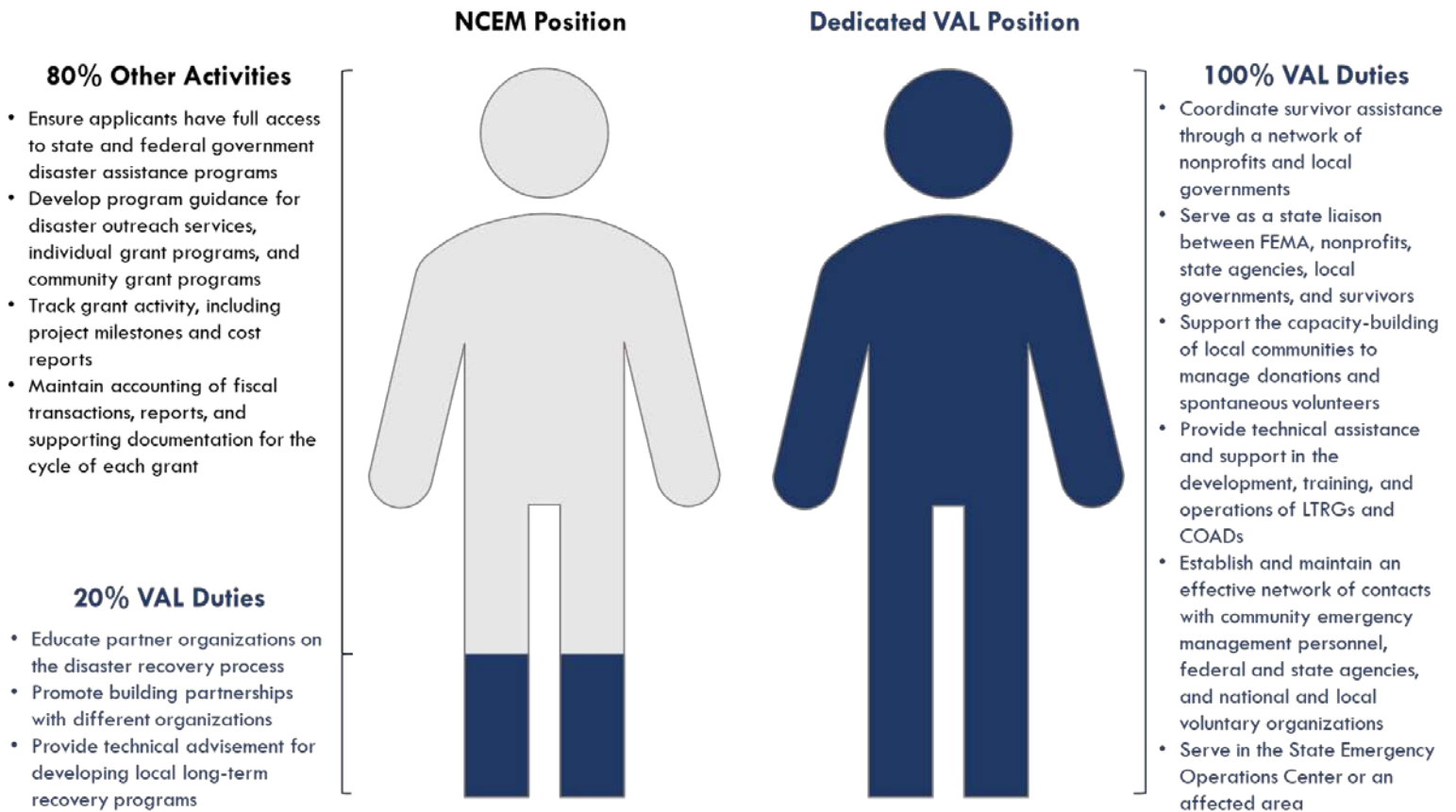
Given the breadth of these responsibilities, FEMA suggests that all states designate a dedicated VAL solely focused on VAL-oriented tasks. Because disasters happen continuously across the state and recovery efforts sometimes span many years, several nonprofit organizations surveyed by the Program Evaluation Division stated that it was unrealistic to expect one non-dedicated VAL to perform all of the position's necessary duties.

In North Carolina, a portion of one position within the North Carolina Department of Public Safety's Division of Emergency Management (NCEM) has been assigned to perform VAL duties. This position has a stated mission to "establish, foster, and maintain relationships among government, voluntary, faith-based, and community partners to strengthen capabilities and support the delivery of inclusive, equitable services by empowering communities to address disaster-related unmet needs."

However, the position is classified as a Community Development Specialist, has a working title of Grants Manager, and is largely focused on tasks like tracking grant activities. By contrast, a dedicated Voluntary Agency Liaison position would be more thoroughly focused on maintaining a network of contacts with nonprofit partners. Nonprofit organizations and other government entities believe the position currently acting as a VAL in North Carolina is helpful; however, its effectiveness in performing VAL duties is

limited because the position is not solely dedicated to those tasks. As shown in Exhibit 16, only 20% of the position’s time is allotted for outreach with the public and private sector, limiting the degree to which the position can engage with nonprofit organizations for disaster recovery planning.⁹ In comparing the VAL-oriented activities of North Carolina’s position to a full-time dedicated VAL in another state, the Program Evaluation Division found there are several specific liaison functions not being performed.

Exhibit 16: Position Fulfilling VAL Responsibilities for the State Is Not Fully Dedicated



Source: Program Evaluation Division based on information from NCEM, OSHR, and other research.

There is evidence that system-level improvements in government-nonprofit relationships were realized when the current Grants Manager position was able to devote more time to performing VAL duties.

Overall, relationships between NCEM and nonprofit volunteer organizations have improved since Hurricane Matthew in 2016 as increased engagement has subsequently increased trust.¹⁰ This shift toward more frequent communication and contact has also helped nonprofit volunteer organizations coordinate amongst themselves because they have become more aware of unmet needs and can better determine which of

⁹ This position, designed to serve a VAL function, is currently fully supported with funds from the State’s allotment of the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG). Because VAL positions can be supported in whole with EMPG funds, any future VAL position in North Carolina could be supported in this same manner.

¹⁰ The current position fulfilling VAL duties focused more on engaging nonprofit partners following Hurricane Matthew.

“Provide more than one outreach person. It’s unfair to the one person running around the whole state providing excellent resources...we are setting [the position] up for failure.”

Source: Long-term recovery group

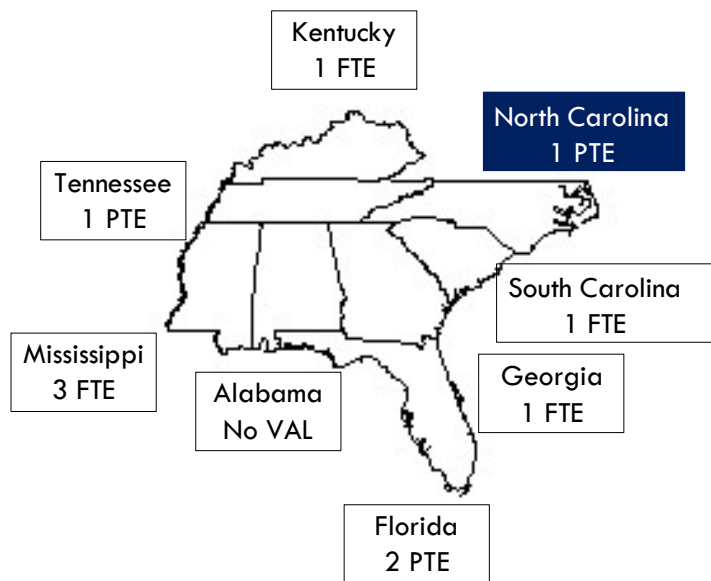
their organizations could provide services. The presence of a dedicated VAL devoted exclusively to developing and strengthening NCEM and nonprofit relationships could increase coordination even further. Additionally, challenges to effective communication such as those identified in Finding 1 could be mitigated by a dedicated VAL position that is in constant contact with nonprofit volunteer organizations.

States take different approaches in determining the number of dedicated VAL positions needed and their respective funding sources, with some states using already-available federal funds to support the position(s).

To prevent coordination issues, several states have dedicated VALs working in various government agencies or departments. Some states, including Florida, California, and Mississippi, have more than one VAL operating at the state level. In addition to the Program Evaluation Division’s assessment of the necessity of a VAL according to FEMA’s recommendations, stakeholders at the federal, state, and local level stated that North Carolina should consider having more than one full-time dedicated VAL position. States fund the VAL position in different ways, with some states using federal funds, some using recurring state appropriations, and some using a combination of the two approaches. VAL positions can be supported in full through the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG).¹¹ NCEM currently uses EMPG funds to fully or partially support 104 positions within DPS. Appendix C provides federal guidance on the permissible use of EMPG funds. Exhibit 17 spotlights the characteristics of VAL positions in all states of FEMA Region IV.

Exhibit 17:

States in FEMA Region IV Have Different Approaches to VAL Positions



Note: FTE stands for full-time equivalent position and PTE stands for part-time equivalent position.

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on information from FEMA and research on other states.

After reviewing the Program Evaluation Division’s draft report, NCEM informed and provided documentation to the Division that it has established a dedicated full-time VAL for North Carolina and will use federal EMPG

¹¹ In Fiscal Year 2019–20, North Carolina received \$9.4 million in EMPG funding.

COVID-19 Supplemental (EMPG-S) funds to support this position. EMPG-S funds are different from EMPG funds in that they are separate and distinct from any funding awarded through the EMPG program and are targeted at assisting state and local governments with public health and emergency management activities that support the prevention of, preparation for, and response to the ongoing coronavirus public health emergency. North Carolina received \$2.6 million in EMPG-S funds, and the program is set to expire in January 2022.

In summary, contrary to FEMA best practices, North Carolina lacks a dedicated VAL that solely performs the position's important duties. Committing at least one dedicated position to conducting VAL-specific tasks would improve coordination between NCEM and nonprofit volunteer organizations across the state. Further, a dedicated VAL could ensure contact information for nonprofit volunteer organizations and other stakeholders is updated regularly. NCEM has recently established this position and is using supplemental federal grant funding to support it. However, the State can continue to support a dedicated VAL position through federal grant funding even after this funding source expires.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. The General Assembly should direct the Department of Public Safety's Division of Emergency Management to provide guidance to local emergency management agencies to improve coordination with nonprofit volunteer organizations.

As described in Finding 1, local emergency management agencies would benefit from additional state guidance on how to effectively coordinate with nonprofit volunteer organizations. Effective coordination at the local level is important because all disasters begin and end within individual communities, with the State offering support to improve preparedness, facilitate response, and promote recovery. Local emergency management agencies struggle in working with one of the State's major nonprofit partners, North Carolina Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NC VOAD); this challenge in coordination is likely the result of local preparedness plans not outlining NC VOAD's roles and responsibilities.

Additionally, and as outlined in Finding 3, a permanent network of local nonprofit coordinating groups referred to as community organizations active in disasters (COADs) and long-term recovery groups (LTRGs) play an important role in disaster preparedness and recovery for local communities. In North Carolina, there are currently 15 LTRGs and three COADs.

The General Assembly should direct the North Carolina Department of Public Safety's Division of Emergency Management (NCEM) to provide annual guidance to local emergency management agencies that directs them to

- outline within local preparedness plans the roles and responsibilities of NC VOAD in communities during all disaster phases,
- obtain membership within COADs or LTRGs where applicable, and
- seek to develop COAD or LTRG partnerships with local private and public sector organizations, including nonprofits, if none exist.

NCEM should report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety, Joint Legislative Emergency Management Oversight Committee, and House Select Committee on Disaster Relief by December 1, 2021 on the implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation 2. The General Assembly should require the Department of Public Safety's Division of Emergency Management to ensure that the distribution list for preparedness plans includes all nonprofit volunteer organizations mentioned in those plans and to establish criteria for more formal agreements.

As discussed in Finding 2, the North Carolina Department of Public Safety's Division of Emergency Management (NCEM) can improve how it engages with nonprofit volunteer organizations during the preparedness phase by ensuring that nonprofits know whether specific roles and responsibilities have been outlined for them in state preparedness plans. A simple way to achieve this objective would be to ensure that every nonprofit partner included in preparedness plans is included on NCEM's distribution list for

those plans. Another means of improving preparedness through better engagement would be through the use of formal memoranda of agreement between NCEM and nonprofit volunteer organizations, as other states have done.

In order to improve preparedness and ensure that nonprofit volunteer organizations know and agree to their outlined roles and responsibilities related to disasters, the General Assembly should require NCEM to include North Carolina Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NC VOAD) and other nonprofit volunteer organizations, as is necessary, in the distribution list for state preparedness plans such as the State's Emergency Operations Plan. In addition, NCEM should be required to obtain written verification that all entities received their designated copies of preparedness documents, which will ensure expectations have been communicated for disaster response and recovery.

The General Assembly should also require NCEM to establish policies and procedures for determining when and how the State should incorporate the use of more memoranda of understanding or agreement with nonprofit volunteer organizations.

NCEM should report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety, Joint Legislative Emergency Management Oversight Committee, and House Select Committee on Disaster Relief by December 1, 2021 on the implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation 3. The General Assembly should require the Department of Public Safety's Division of Emergency Management to report on the effectiveness of Voluntary Agency Liaison activities.

As detailed in Finding 4, having a dedicated Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) at the state level is considered a best practice, and North Carolina meets conditions indicating the State would benefit from having one or more VALs. The North Carolina Department of Public Safety's Division of Emergency Management (NCEM) has assigned a portion of one position to fulfill these responsibilities and stated it has recently established one dedicated full-time VAL. However, the responsibilities outlined for this position do not resemble that of a dedicated position. Given the current job description of the VAL position, an oversight mechanism is necessary to ensure the position remains solely focused on performing VAL-oriented tasks.

NCEM has used supplemental federal funding that will expire in 2022 to support the newly established VAL position. Federal funds that North Carolina already receives can be used to fully support all VAL positions going forward.

To confirm the ongoing dedicated full-time status of the newly created VAL position, the General Assembly should direct NCEM to report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety, Joint Legislative Emergency Management Oversight Committee, and House Select Committee on Disaster Relief by December 1, 2021 on outputs and

outcomes associated with the essential job functions of the VAL position including

- updating contact information;
- developing a resource registry for nonprofit volunteer organizations;
- developing operational guidance for recruiting and developing community organizations active in disaster (COADs) and long-term recovery groups (LTRGs) where none currently exist;
- training existing COADs and LTRGs on operational capacity;
- taking part in recommended training modules; and
- any other strategies used for maintaining partnerships with nonprofit volunteer organizations at both the state and local level.

NCEM should report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety, Joint Legislative Emergency Management Oversight Committee, and House Select Committee on Disaster Relief by December 1, 2021 on the implementation of this recommendation.

Appendices

Appendix A: Description of Disaster Events in North Carolina Since 2011

Appendix B: Matrix of Stakeholder Participation by Disaster Phase

Appendix C: Use of Emergency Performance Management Grant Funds

Agency Response


A draft of this report was submitted to the North Carolina Department of Public Safety to review and respond. Its response is provided following the appendices.


Program Evaluation Division Contact and Acknowledgments


For more information on this report, please contact the lead evaluator, Adora Thayer, at Adora.Thayer@ncleg.gov.


Staff members who made key contributions to this report include Allie Jaarsma, Brent Lucas, and Sidney Thomas. Kiernan McGorty is Acting Director of the Program Evaluation Division.

Appendix A: Description of Disaster Events in North Carolina Since 2011

 **Name:** Central and Eastern NC Tornadoes
Date of Impact: April 16, 2011
Location: Wake, Cumberland, several other counties
Impact: Over 6,000 homes and business destroyed or damaged


 **Name:** Eastern NC Tornadoes
Date of Impact: April 25, 2014
Location: Central Carolina
Impact: At least 327 homes and businesses damaged and/or destroyed


 **Name:** Guilford/Rockingham Tornado
Date of Impact: April 15, 2018
Location: Guilford and Rockingham Counties
Impact: An estimate of 1,017 structures damaged or destroyed; at least 95% damages sustained in Greensboro city limits


 **Name:** Simmons Road Fire
Date of Impact: June 20, 2011
Location: Bladen and Cumberland
Impact: Over 5,400 acres of land destroyed


 **Name:** Party Rock Fire
Date of impact: November 5, 2016
Location: Chimney Rock State Park
Impact: Over 7,000 acres destroyed

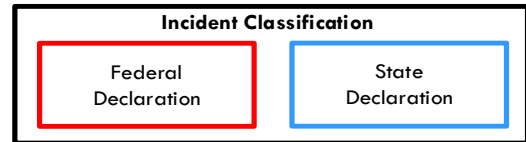
 **Name:** Chestnut Knob Fires
Date of Impact: November 11, 2016
Location: South Mountain Park in Burke County
Impact: At least 6,435 acres were impacted within a matter of weeks


 **Name:** Western wildfires
Date of Impact: December 8, 2016
Location: Western Carolina
Impact: More than 59,000 acres of land was destroyed


 **Name:** Ebola
Date of Impact: March 23, 2014
Location: United States
Impact: National outbreak prevention


 **Name:** Severe Storms, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides
Date of Impact: July 3, 2013
Location: Central Carolina
Impact: Days of heavy rainfall caused flooding and landslides in several mountain counties.


 **Name:** Severe Storms, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides
Date of Impact: September 25, 2013
Location: 19 counties and Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
Impact: Multiple private and public structures damaged





 **Name:** Severe winter storms
Date of Impact: January 28, 2014
Location: Southeast Carolina
Impact: Combination of sleet, snow, and some freezing rain; subfreezing temperatures allowed melted snow to refreeze over several days


 **Name:** Winter weather
Date of Impact: December 9, 2018
Location: Central and Western Carolina
Impact: More than 300,000 lost power, more than 600 automobile collisions


 **Name:** Hurricane Irene (Category 3)
Date of Impact: August 26, 2011
Location: Eastern and Central Carolina
Impact: 660,000 people without power, 2 to 15 ft of rainfall, 270 roads and 21 bridges closed

 **Name:** Hurricane Matthew (Category 1)
Date of Impact: October 8, 2016
Location: 66 counties, the hardest hit areas were the lowest-income counties in the State
Impact: Significant damage to the state's agriculture industry, extreme rainfall

 **Name:** Tropical Storm Alberto
Date of Impact: May 25, 2018
Location: Western Carolina
Impact: Thousands of people without power, 7 to 14 inches of rainfall, and 75 residents in Black Mountain evacuated

 **Name:** Hurricane Florence (Category 1)
Date of Impact: September 14, 2018
Location: Eastern and Central Carolina
Impact: Storm surge was 9 to 13 ft, extreme flooding, major highway and roads closures

 **Name:** Hurricane Michael (Category 1)
Date of Impact: October 11, 2018
Location: Central Carolina
Impact: 500,000 without power, extreme rainfall and flooding

 **Name:** Hurricane Dorian (Category 1)
Date of Impact: September 6, 2019
Location: East Carolina
Impact: More than 200,000 without power, eye of storm hit Outer Banks causing severe damage, 800 people trapped on the Ocracoke Island of the Outer Banks.

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on information from NCEM and research.

Appendix B: Matrix of Stakeholder Participation by Disaster Phase

Stakeholder	Mitigation	Preparedness	Response	Recovery
State Agencies				
Agriculture and Consumer Services Emergency Programs		✓	✓	✓
Department of Commerce		✓	✓	✓
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources		✓	✓	✓
Department of Environmental Quality		✓	✓	✓
Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services		✓	✓	✓
Department of Insurance		✓	✓	✓
Department of Justice		✓	✓	✓
Department of Labor		✓	✓	
Department of Revenue		✓	✓	
Department of Transportation		✓	✓	✓
Department of Public Instruction		✓	✓	✓
Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management	✓	✓	✓	✓
NC Governor/NC Commission on Volunteerism & Community Service	✓	✓	✓	✓
NC Office of State Human Resources/Office of State Personnel		✓	✓	
Secretary of State		✓		
State Auditor		✓		
State Highway Patrol	✓	✓	✓	✓
State Treasurer		✓		✓
University of North Carolina System				✓
Local Government Agencies				
Alamance County Rescue			✓	
Alexander County Rescue Squad			✓	
Appalachian Mountain Rescue Team			✓	
Ash-Rand Rescue Squad and EMS			✓	
Black Mountain Fire			✓	
Brunswick County Fire			✓	
Brunswick County Technical Search Team			✓	
Brunswick Search and Rescue, Inc.			✓	
Buies Creek Fire Rescue			✓	
Buncombe County Rescue Squad			✓	
Burke County Search and Rescue			✓	
Carteret Local Food Network			✓	
Catawba County Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)		✓	✓	
Catawba County Sheriff's Office			✓	
Chocowinity EMS			✓	
Cleveland County FIRST Team			✓	
Cove City Fire and Rescue			✓	
Crystal Coast Habitat for Humanity		✓		✓
Cumberland Disaster Recovery Coalition		✓		✓
Davie County Rescue Squad			✓	
Forsyth County Swiftwater Rescue			✓	
Gamewell Fire Department Search and Rescue			✓	
Gaston EMS & Search and Rescue			✓	
Habitat for Humanity of Goldsboro-Wayne				✓
Harnett County Search and Rescue			✓	

Stakeholder	Mitigation	Preparedness	Response	Recovery
Haywood County Search and Rescue			✓	
Henderson County Rescue Squad			✓	
Hope Mills Fire Department			✓	
Johnston County Search and Rescue Team			✓	
Linville-Central Rescue Squad, Inc.			✓	
Lumberton Rescue Squad			✓	
McDowell Local Food Advisory Council			✓	
Nash County Search and Rescue			✓	
NE Search and Rescue			✓	
No. 9 Township Fire and Rescue			✓	
Pamlico County Emergency Management			✓	
Parkway Fire Department			✓	
Pineland Search and Rescue			✓	
Robeson County Disaster Recovery Committee (RCDRC)		✓		✓
Robeson County Search and Rescue Team			✓	
Rockingham County Search and Rescue Team			✓	
Rockingham County Water Rescue			✓	
Rowan County Rescue Squad			✓	
Sandhills Center Crisis Counseling				✓
Scotland DCCS				✓
Shalotte Fire and Rescue			✓	
Shelby Fire Department			✓	
South Orange Rescue Squad			✓	
Thomasville Rescue Squad			✓	
Transylvania County Emergency Management - ERT			✓	
Vanceboro Rural Fire Department			✓	
Nonprofit Organizations				
Adventist Disaster Relief			✓	✓
Alliance of Disability Advocates		✓	✓	
Alpha Life Enrichment Center, Inc.		✓		✓
Amateur Radio			✓	
American Red Cross (ARC)		✓	✓	✓
American Red Cross of NC		✓	✓	✓
Autism Society of NC		✓		
Billy Graham		✓	✓	✓
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association				✓
Catholic Charities-Diocese of Charlotte			✓	✓
Catholic Charities-Diocese of Raleigh			✓	✓
Central Carolina K9 Search			✓	
Central North Carolina Search and Rescue			✓	
Christian Aid Ministries				✓
Christian Church/Disciples of Christ			✓	✓
Christian Reformed World Relief				✓
Christus of the Nazarene				✓
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints		✓	✓	✓
Church of the Brethren		✓	✓	✓
Church World Service		✓	✓	✓
Civil Air Patrol (CAP)			✓	

Stakeholder	Mitigation	Preparedness	Response	Recovery
Coastal Carolina Presbytery				✓
Coastal Carolina Search Team			✓	
Coastal Community Action				✓
Community Based Care		✓	✓	✓
Community Care of NC				✓
Community Comes First, Inc.				✓
Convoy of Hope		✓	✓	✓
Day One Disaster Relief.org				✓
Disability Resources Center		✓	✓	✓
Disability Rights NC		✓	✓	✓
Disaster Philanthropy				✓
Disaster Relief USA (DRUSA)				✓
Disciples of Truth				✓
Distress Hotline, Counseling & Support				✓
EasterSeals UCP NC and VA Inc.				✓
Eastern Carolina Human Services Agency, Inc.				✓
Eastpointe				✓
Economic Institute				✓
ElectriCities of NC, Inc.			✓	
Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina		✓	✓	✓
Evangelical Free Church of America			✓	✓
Faith in Rural Communities - NC Rural Center				✓
Feeding the Carolinas		✓		✓
First in Families		✓		
Food Bank of Central & Eastern NC				✓
Food Bank of NC				✓
Fuller Center Disaster Rebuilders				✓
Genesis 457 Community Development Corp				✓
Golden Leaf Foundation				✓
Greene Lamp Community Action				✓
Habitat for Humanity				✓
HandsOn Northwest NC		✓		✓
Harvest Connection				✓
Healthcare Ready		✓		✓
Hearts with Hands			✓	✓
Helping Hands				✓
His Glory STRAT-NC				✓
Hispanic League		✓		✓
Homes of Hope				✓
Hope AACR				✓
HOPE Animal-Assisted Crisis Response			✓	
Hope Heroes NFP, formerly Hardest Hit Family Relief Fund				✓
Hope4NC				✓
Housing of New Hope				✓
Humanity Road				✓
Integrity Community Development Center, Inc.		✓		✓
Inter-Faith Food Shuttle				✓
Interfaith Outreach				✓

Stakeholder	Mitigation	Preparedness	Response	Recovery
Islamic Relief USA			✓	✓
Jewish Family Services				✓
Kingdom Community Development Corp.				✓
Knights of Columbus-North Carolina Council		✓	✓	✓
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Rural			✓	✓
Love Out Loud				✓
Lutheran Services Carolinas		✓	✓	✓
Meals on Wheels Wake County		✓	✓	
Mennonite Disaster Services			✓	✓
Mercy Medical Airlift				✓
Mid-East Commission		✓		✓
Miracle Relief Collaboration League				✓
Monarch NC		✓	✓	✓
MX Network				✓
National Alliance on Mental Illness				✓
National Association of Social Workers - NC Chapter			✓	✓
National Disaster Medical System			✓	
National Headquarters Presbytery				✓
National VOAD		✓	✓	✓
Nazarene Disaster Response		✓		✓
NC Apartment Association				✓
NC Association of County Commissioners				✓
NC Association of Community Development Corp.				✓
NC Association of Fire Chiefs		✓		
NC Association of Hazmat Responders		✓		
NC Association of Rescue and EMS		✓		
NC Association of Volunteer Administration			✓	✓
NC Center for Nonprofits				✓
NC Community Foundation				✓
NC Council of Churches				✓
NC Electric Membership Cooperative	✓	✓	✓	✓
NC Emergency Management Association	✓	✓	✓	✓
NC Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation/NC State Grange				✓
NC Homebuilders Association				✓
NC Housing Coalition				✓
NC Inclusive Disaster Recovery Alliance				✓
NC Interfaith Council			✓	✓
NC Justice Center				✓
NC K9 Emergency Response Team			✓	
NC League of Municipalities				✓
NC Metro Mayors Coalition				✓
NC Mobile Home Association				✓
NC Nursery and Landscape Association				✓
NC Peanut Growers Association				✓
NC Pork Council				✓
NC Pro Bono Resources				✓
NC Project Lifesaver Specialized Team			✓	
NC Rural Center				✓

Stakeholder	Mitigation	Preparedness	Response	Recovery
NC Search and Rescue Dog Association			✓	
NC Small Grain Growers Assoc				✓
NC State Bar/Legal Aid of NC			✓	✓
NC State Firefighters Association		✓		
NC State University Cooperative Extension				✓
NC Sweet Potato Commission Inc.				✓
NC Troopers Association K9 Search and Recovery			✓	
NC Young Lawyers Association				✓
NC Coalition to End Homelessness				✓
NC Local Government Information Systems Association		✓	✓	✓
NC Manufactured and Modular Homebuilders Association				✓
NC VOAD	✓	✓	✓	✓
New Bern Preservation Foundation				✓
No Town Left Behind	✓	✓	✓	✓
NC Baptist Men/Baptist on Mission	✓	✓	✓	✓
One Christian Network				✓
Operation BBQ Relief			✓	
Operation Blessing International			✓	✓
Operation Hope				✓
Outreach of America				✓
Partnership for Children of Johnston County Inc.				✓
Pender County Christian Services				✓
Pilots for Christ				✓
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance		✓	✓	✓
Presbytery of the Coastal Carolinas				✓
Presbytery of the James Disaster Response Team				✓
Rural Advancement Foundation International				✓
Reach Global Crisis Response				✓
REAL Crisis Intervention, Inc.				✓
Rebuilding Together of the Triangle				✓
REDS Team			✓	
Resources for Seniors Inc.				✓
Rural Forward NC				✓
Safer Communities Ministry				✓
Salvation Army Gastonia, NC		✓		✓
Salvation Army North and South Carolina		✓	✓	✓
Salvation Army Raleigh, NC		✓		✓
Samaritan's Purse			✓	✓
Sandhills Habitat				✓
Save the Children				✓
SBP USA, formerly St. Bernard Project				✓
Southern Pride Search and Rescue Dogs			✓	
South Mountain Children and Family Services				✓
St. Clair's Church of Christ Disaster Relief Program				✓
Step Up Ministries				✓
Team Rubicon		✓	✓	✓
Technical Assistance Collaborative Inc.				✓
Telephone Pioneers			✓	

Stakeholder	Mitigation	Preparedness	Response	Recovery
The Cornerstone Community Development Corp.		✓		✓
The Green Chair Project				✓
The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Southeastern District			✓	✓
Trillium Health Resources		✓	✓	✓
Tzu Chi Foundation USA				✓
Unite Us				✓
United Church of Christ Southern Conference			✓	✓
United Methodist Church Western NC Conference			✓	✓
United Methodist Church-NC Conference			✓	✓
United Way 2-1-1				✓
United Way of NC				✓
United Way of Stanly County				✓
Virginia Baptist Disaster Response				✓
Voluntary Action Center of Triangle United Way				✓
Wake Canine Search and Rescue, Inc.			✓	
Week of Compassion - Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)				✓
Wilmington Area Rebuilding Ministry			✓	✓
World Renew				✓
Zakat Foundation of America				✓
Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COADs) & Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs)				
Bertie Interfaith LTRG				✓
Brunsko VOAD				✓
Buncombe COAD				✓
Carteret Long-Term Recovery Alliance (CLTRA)				✓
Columbus County Disaster Response				✓
Craven County Disaster Recovery Alliance				✓
Cumberland County Recovery Coalition				✓
Disaster Recovery Group of Duplin County				✓
Forsyth County COAD				✓
Kinston Area Recovery Efforts (KARE)				✓
New Hanover Disaster Coalition				✓
Pamlico County Disaster Recovery Coalition				✓
Pender County LTRG				✓
Disaster Recovery Partner for Pitt County				✓
IMPACT Sampson				✓
Robeson County Disaster Recovery Committee (RCDRC)				✓
RISE				✓
Wake Interfaith Disaster Team	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: Program Evaluation Division based on information from NCEM, NC VOAD, and other research.

Appendix C: Use of Emergency Performance Management Grant Funds

Per the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) provides state, local, tribal, and territorial emergency management agencies with the resources required for implementation of the National Preparedness System and is a tool for helping achieve the National Preparedness Goal of a secure and resilient nation. The EMPG's allowable costs support efforts to build and sustain core capabilities across mission areas of prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery. As discussed in Finding 4, EMPG funds can be used to fully support a Voluntary Agency Liaison position as specified in the following EMPG provisions.

Allowable costs

Management and Administration (M&A)

- M&A activities are those defined as directly relating to the management and administration of EMPG funds, such as financial management and monitoring. It should be noted that salaries of state and local emergency managers are not typically categorized as M&A unless the state or local emergency management agency chooses to assign personnel to specific M&A activities.
- If the State Administrative Agency (SAA) is not the emergency management agency, the SAA is not eligible to retain funds for M&A. M&A costs are allowable for both state-level and local-level emergency management agencies. The state emergency management agency may use up to 5% of the EMPG award for M&A purposes. In addition, local emergency management agencies may retain and use up to 5% of the amount received from the state for local M&A purposes.

Indirect Costs

- Indirect costs are allowable under this program as described in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, including 2 C.F.R. § 200.414. Applicants with a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement that desire to charge indirect costs to an award must provide a copy of their negotiated indirect cost rate agreement at the time of application. Applicants that are not required by 2 C.F.R. Part 200 to have a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement but are required by 2 C.F.R. Part 200 to develop an indirect cost rate proposal must provide a copy of their proposal at the time of application. Post-award requests to charge indirect costs will be considered on a case-by-case basis and based upon the submission of an agreement or proposal.

Whole Community Preparedness

- EMPG funds may be used to foster whole community preparedness for disasters and emergencies as stated in the FEMA Strategic Plan, particularly Part 1.3. Recipients and DHS/FEMA must learn from and work with a broad and inclusive base of stakeholders to understand the circumstances and challenges different groups of people face, particularly those who may have the hardest time in the aftermath of a disaster, such as the aging population and those with access and functional needs. By engaging these stakeholders, EMPG recipients can help DHS/FEMA develop and promote a suite of well-targeted solutions for individuals and communities to adopt. Recipients should coordinate preparedness initiatives with DHS/FEMA and whole community partners to efficiently apply federal funding to reach the goal of individual and community resilience.



North Carolina Department of Public Safety

Prevent. Protect. Prepare.

Roy Cooper, Governor

Erik A. Hooks, Secretary

December 4, 2020

Dr. Kiernan McGorty
Acting Director, Program Evaluation Division
300 North Salisbury Street, Suite 100 LOB
Raleigh, NC 27603-5925

Dear Dr. McGorty,

I want to express my appreciation for the work performed by the Program Evaluation Division (PED) in studying the Department of Public Safety Division of Emergency Management's (NCEM) coordination with nonprofit organizations for disaster recovery planning as directed by Session Law 2019-250. I am grateful for the opportunity afforded to DPS to provide input as to how improvements can be made regarding our coordination with nonprofit organizations. I also want to thank you for the opportunity to review and respond to the final draft report. DPS is in general agreement with the overall report.

Recommendation One states the General Assembly should direct NCEM to provide guidance to local emergency management agencies to improve coordination with nonprofit volunteer organizations. The Department shares the sentiment that providing guidance to local emergency management agencies can improve coordination and has already begun to develop this guidance with the understanding that it will constantly be refined.

Recommendation Two states the General Assembly should require NCEM to ensure the distribution list for preparedness plans includes all nonprofit volunteer organizations mentioned in those plans and to establish criteria for more formal agreements. The Department agrees that nonprofit volunteer organizations are more equipped to effectively assist when roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. We will continue to coordinate with our nonprofit volunteer partners and ensure they receive all of our preparedness plans. In addition, we will work towards developing criteria and assessing the need for more formal agreements.

Recommendation Three states the General Assembly should direct NCEM to report on the effectiveness of Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) activities. As indicated in Finding Four, PED shares NCEM's recognition of the value of having a dedicated VAL position. We are pleased to have already onboarded an experienced, bi-lingual, full-time Voluntary Agency Liaison that is supported with federal funds. However, the Department disagrees with PED's assertion that the responsibilities of the VAL position do not resemble a dedicated position. This position is classified as a Program Coordinator IV and has a working title of Voluntary Agency Liaison.

Further, the increased requirements for oversight and associated reporting requirements, as prescribed in Recommendation Three, are not supported by the findings of the evaluation and are unwarranted. As cited in this report, 79% of local emergency management agencies indicated coordination was very good or excellent and a majority of non-profits indicate NCEM coordination as sufficient and effective. We believe the additional hiring of a dedicated VAL (who is already in place) will continue improving the Department's efforts to enhance nonprofit coordination. However, the requirement to report to multiple oversight committees on the essential job functions of a specific federally-funded position is not an appropriate usage

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of legislative oversight. Evaluation of specific positions and associated job functions should be handled at an organizational level as part of the annual performance review.

The Department recognizes that we can always improve operations and we strive to utilize continuous process improvement to advance how we support our partners. Again, thank you for the opportunity to review and respond to PED's report entitled "Better Coordination With Nonprofit Volunteer Organizations During Preparedness Can Improve Disaster Recovery." We will always strive to have better coordination with all of our State Emergency Response Team partners.

Sincerely,



Erik A. Hooks
Secretary/Homeland Security Advisor
N.C. Department of Public Safety