



# VOLUNTEER COORDINATION



PREPAREDNESS



RESPONSE



RECOVERY

## This tool will help you to:

- Identify private organizations and businesses that volunteer services in preparation for, and during, a severe pandemic
- Identify lead volunteers and backups for key response areas during a severe pandemic
- Recruit volunteer teams to assist with specific activities to support pandemic preparedness and response

## Who will implement this tool:

- The *municipal leadership team*
- Other municipal staff dedicated to community outreach
- Representatives from non-governmental organizations or other community outreach organizations



## OVERVIEW

Unified communities who recognize the value of collectively and individually helping each other will have a greater chance of surviving any disaster. Although the threat of an influenza pandemic may not seem real, when it strikes it can move quickly from one stage to the next. *The sooner a community prepares, the better able it will be to respond.* This tool will help the municipal leadership team organize unified volunteer systems that build community resilience (the ability to manage and bounce back from a shock) before the pandemic arrives, and fill in gaps that are likely to occur if your municipality's workforce is overwhelmed by the effects of a severe pandemic.

During the 1918–1919 pandemic, community volunteers such as teachers and other persons who were out of work (due to the effects of the pandemic) were essential to helping with social distancing measures. They also helped document who was sick and eased the burden on overflowing healthcare facilities. Control of a modern pandemic will benefit from a similar volunteer system because local government services may be unable to manage on their own.

## ORGANIZING VOLUNTEERS TO REDUCE DEATH AND SUFFERING DURING A PANDEMIC

When we think about building community resilience through a volunteer system, it is helpful to consider three types of volunteer support that can strengthen pandemic preparedness and response efforts.

1. *Services* offered by local organizations and private businesses. For example, providing space for food storage, holding community awareness meetings, providing training for warehouse management, or helping to identify at-risk households. What else can you think of?
2. *Volunteer manpower.* For example, posting flyers, delivering food to isolated households, assisting with home-healthcare, or organizing at-home activities for children when schools are closed. What else can you think of?
3. *Personal resources.* For example, trucks, water or food storage containers, cell phones, water filters, or ham/amateur radios. What else can you think of?

If the pandemic virus has already arrived in your municipality, DO NOT use any communication method that gathers large groups of people together.

Instead, carry out the tasks in steps 1–4 as quickly as possible, respecting **social distancing** practices (i.e. communicating by phone tree, email lists, text message, individual messenger, or amateur/ham radios).

This highlights the importance of organizing volunteer meetings sooner rather than later.

Once the pandemic virus reaches your community, focus group discussions will be more difficult. The best methods to gather this information would be through telephone, email, or text message. If focus groups are held, they should include no more than 3 to 4 people and should be carefully planned using social distancing measures and preferably take place outside. Once again, this highlights the importance of organizing volunteer meetings as soon as possible.

## STEP 1: IDENTIFY POTENTIAL ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES THAT COULD VOLUNTEER THEIR SERVICES FOR PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

- A. Organize a gathering of representatives from a wide variety of community organizations and private businesses. At the meeting, conduct an inventory of the services each group currently offers to the community.
- B. As a group, think creatively about other services each business or organization might be able to offer *in preparation* for pandemic response. For example, an adult education center might be willing to provide meeting space for public education on pandemic preparedness; local storekeepers might be able to help the municipal leadership team identify households that are likely to run out of food during a severe pandemic.
- C. As a group, think creatively about what other services each business or organization might offer *once the pandemic virus arrives* in your municipality in full force. For example, church groups might be willing to offer grief counseling; businesses whose normal commerce has been disrupted might be willing to use their transportation resources to help deliver food, fuel, and other basic necessities.
- D. Once the inventory of services is complete, ask people to determine what type of additional resources or training their business or organization may need in order to provide the newly identified preparedness and response services. For example, a small child care center (that will likely close during a severe pandemic) may be willing to offer space for emergency food storage, but may not know how to properly inventory, store, and ration large quantities of food.
- E. The chart on the following page provides a sample of how you can organize this information (a blank chart for your own information is included as Handout 1).

## STEP 2: IDENTIFY GROUPS THAT MAY BE EXCLUDED FROM SERVICES

Carefully consider each of the services identified in the inventory and try to determine groups in your community that may be excluded from these services. For example, using the sample inventory chart, consider the newly identified services offered by the ABC adult education center (Row 1). This organization has agreed to offer awareness classes on how to prepare for the impact of a pandemic and also to assist households in determining how much food they will need to store. Current students and members of the workforce that pass by this center will know about the availability of these services and will have access to them, but what about widows, the elderly, the disabled, orphans, or people with no transportation?

Session II of Tool 6, *Training for Community Health Responders* provides an easy-to-follow mapping technique that can help communities determine who they need to reach, and where they can find them. Tool 9, *Identification of People Most at Risk of Food Insecurity*, provides in-depth guidance on this same topic.

For each excluded group, hold *focus group discussions* to determine how volunteers can provide better access to the services they will offer before, during, and after a pandemic.

## SAMPLE INVENTORY OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND BUSINESSES

Organization or Business	Services currently offered	What other services could this group offer in preparation for a pandemic?	What other services could this group offer during a pandemic?	What type of additional training or resources does the organization need to provide these services?
ABC adult education center	Provides adult education and serves as computer training center	Provide classes and flyers to spread public education messages on prevention and preparation  Help households to calculate the amount of food they will need to store for 12 weeks	Serve as communication center	Supplies to reproduce education messages  Training on key food security and health messages
Commercial cotton farms	Grows and delivers cotton for export	Donate storage facility for community food stockpiling  Acquire and transport needed community items during trips to district center	Use trucks for delivering food or fuel	Training on food stock storage and tracking  Training on how to manage first-in, first-out inventories
Local merchants and storekeepers	Sells food and supplies	Inform municipal leadership team about households likely to run out of food  Provide area for community food storage  Train others in food inventory management  Spread messages about food shortages in a pandemic	Participate as barter or fair trade shops  Become distribution centers for rations	Training on the food security impact of a pandemic  Awareness training on the consequences of hoarding
Church groups	Provides social support  Mobilizes support for the poor	Identify poor households  Conduct household preparedness education  Provide conflict management training for households	Reduce fear and panic  Conduct surveillance of illness  Provide grief counseling  Distribute food to remote households	Training on food management and distribution  Grief and conflict management training  Fuel and vehicle; horse and cart; other forms of delivery vehicles

Ensure that all lead volunteers are coordinating with health leaders and are up to date on all safety measures regarding the spread of the disease, and that specific actions have been taken to protect their health, such as providing them with masks.

Tool 6, *Training for Community Health Responders* and Tool 4, *Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs): Actions to Limit the Spread of the Pandemic in Your Municipality* offer detailed guidance on safety measures.

### STEP 3: RECRUIT LEAD COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

The next step will be to recruit leaders from among the community volunteers, identify their roles and responsibilities, and ensure that they are provided with any training necessary to carry out their work.

A. As you did in Step 1, call a gathering of representatives from various organizations and private businesses in the community. Potential lead volunteers may include, but are not limited to, representatives from the following groups:

- Business associations
- Local merchants and traders
- Community-based and religious organizations
- School teachers
- Women's groups
- Youth groups
- Municipal government agencies
- Humanitarian and development nongovernmental organizations
- Health centers and hospitals
- Ranch or farmer associations
- Local media
- Entertainers

B. Within each group, identify one person who can participate as a lead volunteer during the pandemic and act as the contact person for response efforts. Given that one in three persons may become ill from the virus, it is essential to have backup alternates. Identify two alternates who can take on the tasks if the lead volunteer becomes ill.

The table on the following page identifies some sample roles and responsibilities for lead community volunteers. These roles and responsibilities are based on information found in many of the other tools in this kit. You may wish to make your own table based on the needs of your municipality (a blank form is provided on page 6). If so, be sure to provide space to record the names of lead volunteers and backup alternates as well as contact information.

Some of the key responsibilities may require training, such as managing food inventories, public service maintenance, or effective risk communication. Identify the key responsibilities that will require training.

Many tools in this kit provide how-to information on various tasks listed in the sample chart. Suggestions for where to go for more information are provided in the table under the key responsibilities.

**SAMPLE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEAD COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS**

(This table does not address the responsibilities of health volunteers. For more information, see Tool 6, *Training for Community Health Responders*.)

Role	Area Leader	Supplies Manager	Communications Leader	Public Educator	Mental Health Monitor	Essential Services Provider
Person responsible/ contact information						
Alternate person(s)/ contact information						
Sample responsibilities Highlight any areas that will require training	Maintain communication with the municipal leadership team Manage neighborhood surveillance and documentation Establish new areas that need specific leadership, such as mental health Maintain contact with the medical authorities	Help coordinate the locations of possible emergency food storage warehouses Coordinate pickup of donated food supplies Coordinate storage of area refrigerators, generators, propane tanks Coordinate barter network systems that track goods available for trade	If phone system fails, maintain ham/amateur radio Coordinate foot, bicycle, or horseback messengers ( <i>be sure they respect social-distancing measures</i> )	Maintain clear, consistent, and up-to-date education directed toward the public Organize at-home school activities for area children	Monitor mental health of response workers and community members Organize mental health treatment for those in need Work with public educators to inform community about maintaining mental health	Recruit and organize volunteers for essential service maintenance such as mechanics, plumbers, electricians, and computer technicians Work with volunteer coordinator and communications leader to assist the community as necessary
Person responsible for providing training						
Tools in this kit that can offer guidance	I5: Disaster Management in a Pandemic	7: Food Security in a Pandemic	I2: Fundamentals of Communication During Crises and Emergencies	I0: Household Food Security Preparedness	I9: Recovery and Resilience	I6: Maintenance of Essential Services

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEAD COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS**

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Role	Area Leader	Supplies Manager	Communications Leader	Public Educator	Mental Health Monitor	Essential Services Provider
Person responsible/ contact information						
Alternate person(s)/ contact information						
Sample responsibilities Highlight any areas that will require training						
Person responsible for providing training						
Tools in this kit that can offer guidance	15: Disaster Management in a Pandemic	7: Food Security in a Pandemic	12: Fundamentals of Communication During Crises and Emergencies	10: Household Food Security Preparedness	19: Recovery and Resilience	16: Maintenance of Essential Services

## STEP 4: RECRUIT VOLUNTEER TEAMS TO ASSIST WITH SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

Many volunteer activities are not complicated nor do they require specialized expertise. Together the municipal leadership team and the lead community volunteers will recruit people who have an interest in improving the chances of pandemic survival for the community as a whole. These groups of volunteers will be organized to help in specific pandemic preparedness and response areas.

- A. Create a widespread public awareness campaign. Organize public meetings, radio and TV interviews or skits, bulletins, and other regular communications through which community members have the opportunity to learn about how volunteer efforts can help protect the community from the impact of a pandemic and reduce death and suffering. Stress the importance of building a unified community that collectively and individually helps each other.
- B. Through the public awareness campaigns, encourage community members to think creatively about how they can contribute to the strength of the whole community to survive an influenza pandemic. This could consist of posters that are placed throughout the community, or perhaps radio or TV hosts brainstorming about all the available assets and skills that people may be able to contribute. For example:
- A truck for transporting supplies
  - Past medical training that can be put to use in home-based healthcare
  - Math skills to help people figure out how much food they need
  - A strong and trusted community reputation to share important health and food security messages
  - Social skills to help with identifying households most at risk
  - Carpentry skills to help build food storage spaces
  - Spare lumber for food storage spaces or as a donation for cooking fuel

(For more information, see Tool 14, *News Media Communication*; Tool 10, *Household Food Security Preparedness*; Tool 11, *Distribution of Emergency Food During an Influenza Pandemic*; Tool 9, *Identification of People Most at Risk of Food Insecurity*; and Tool 6, *Training for Community Health Responders*.)

- C. Establish volunteer recruitment centers where community members can sign up to assist with efforts that take place both before and during the pandemic. At the centers, maintain an updated contact list that includes:
- Contact information: phone, home address, email address
  - The responsibilities or resources the volunteer can offer with no training
  - The responsibilities the volunteer is willing to carry out if he or she receives training
- D. Provide all volunteers with information about their risk of contracting pandemic influenza and the infection control behaviors that they can use to minimize this risk. (For more information, see Session III of Tool 6, *Training for Community Health Responders*.)
- E. Provide volunteers that will be working with the public identification that shows they are assisting the municipal leadership team.



**Remember!** Protecting the health of your volunteers is critical. If the pandemic virus has broken out in your community, make sure each volunteer is up to date on safety measures to limit the spread of the disease.

F. Stay in close contact with the lead volunteers to determine:

- What type of help is most needed in each response area?
- How many volunteers are needed?
- How soon is their help needed?
- Do volunteers need any specific training before they begin to help?

## **WHAT TYPES OF VOLUNTEERS WILL BE MOST NEEDED?**

Highly desired volunteers include, but are not limited to:

- Retired healthcare personnel or people with medical training to provide home-based care to households when all members are sick, or to provide training in home-based healthcare to the community before the pandemic arrives
- People who have recovered from the influenza strain (and who are presumably immune) to deliver food or provide home-based healthcare to needy households during the pandemic
- Skilled laborers to help with the continuity of public services, such as water and sanitation, during the pandemic, or to help households and communities construct food storage spaces during the preparation phase
- Mental health and spiritual counselors to provide grief counseling during and after the pandemic, to help spread messages that will reduce public fear and panic during the pandemic, or to provide conflict resolution workshops with the community before the pandemic
- People with disaster response training to provide medical assistance to households; to transport dead bodies; to transport food, fuel, or water; or to contribute to risk and crisis communication efforts
- People who have trucks and vans that can help meet transportation needs

## **WHAT TYPES OF ACTIVITIES CAN VOLUNTEERS HELP WITH?**

There are few limits to the type of assistance that volunteers can offer. The key will be to define the strengths and available assets of each volunteer and then find activities which maximize their resources in a way that helps the entire community to manage a pandemic response. The chart on the following page identifies some 'pre-pandemic' and 'during the pandemic' volunteer activities. Use this list as a jumping-off point during community meetings, but do not limit actions to those that are listed. By envisioning numerous potential activities that could strengthen the community as a whole, people can be motivated to get involved and work together on common goals.



## SAMPLE VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Pre-Pandemic	During the Pandemic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alerting area leaders of households that may be at high risk of food insecurity during a pandemic</li> <li>• Translating awareness materials into local languages</li> <li>• Assisting with an inventory of private food storage spaces</li> <li>• Spreading awareness messages about how a pandemic might impact food security and livelihoods that:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage households to store foods that will not spoil</li> <li>- Spread messages about the consequences of hoarding</li> <li>- Discuss the importance of proper nutrition to keep immune systems strong</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Helping households figure out how much food they will need to store to maintain nutritional needs during a pandemic wave</li> <li>• Helping households to construct food storage facilities</li> <li>• Transporting donated supplies from other regions</li> <li>• Gathering donations of narrow-mouthed and covered food-product containers to donate to households that may not have adequate means for storing water</li> <li>• Helping households to develop savings plans</li> <li>• Helping households plant gardens; sharing information on growing short-cycle crops</li> <li>• Helping households make plans for barter exchanges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading crisis communication messages through ham/amateur radio channels, posting of flyers, cell phone texting, phone trees, email lists, or person to person while respecting social distancing measures</li> <li>• Providing home-based healthcare</li> <li>• Delivering food rations to isolated or sick households</li> <li>• Delivering nutrient-rich therapeutic foods to households with malnourished children</li> <li>• Becoming a barter coordinator; using cell phone, email, or messengers to help households make barter connections</li> <li>• Delivering fuel and water</li> <li>• Helping area leaders manage neighborhood surveillance and documentation</li> <li>• Connecting people with medical and health training to households with sick members</li> <li>• Organizing at-home school activities for children</li> <li>• Caring for children whose parents are ill or have died</li> <li>• Distributing essential pandemic supplies</li> <li>• Providing security at food distribution sites</li> <li>• Offering psychosocial support and grief counseling</li> <li>• Transporting dead bodies</li> </ul>

### What else might be helpful?



## INVENTORY OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND BUSINESSES

Organization or Business	Services that this group currently offers	What other services could this group offer in preparation for a pandemic?	What other services could this group offer during a pandemic?	What type of additional training or resources does the organization need to provide these services?

