



# Faith Communities & Donations Management

Appeals for donations and support are part of the fabric of disaster recovery. You may be relying on donations to support your disaster recovery program, or you may be asked to provide guidance to your congregants on how best to support a recovery operation outside your area. Managing material and financial support can allow you to make significant contributions to your community, but it is also very challenging. You can help ensure your success by educating yourself about best practices. This tip sheet will help.

## Fundraising

### • General Principles Related to Fundraising

- Make fundraising the focal point of your plan. Most organizations prefer financial donations because they can purchase services and supplies specifically needed and can help stimulate the local economy in disaster affected areas. Donated goods entail processing and storage costs and should be solicited carefully to ensure you receive what you need in a timely and efficient manner (see tips below).
- There is power in numbers. Work through your networks to develop interfaith and community-wide disaster missions and fundraising strategies that avoid duplication of services and make your message more powerful.
- Make sure your house of worship or network has a clear disaster mission and program that is meeting a particular need.
- Make sure your accounting practices are transparent and well documented. You need to be able to defend the way you are spending your money and distributing goods.
- **Don't spend too soon. Save money for long term recovery.** There are numerous pressures at the beginning of a disaster operation to raise and spend money quickly.
- Communicate clearly what you need and what you intend to do with money. If you are raising money for recovery work within your own community, will funds go directly to your house of worship? A particular program?

### • Organizations and Consortiums That Will Be Doing Disaster-Related Fundraising

- Non-profit Organizations with established disaster programs (many of them faith-based)
- Social Service organizations, to provide disaster-related case-work services and direct assistance
- New organizations that emerge as a result of a disaster
- NYDIS, to support the Unmet Needs Roundtable and other disaster-related programs
- The Human Services Council, to support the coordination of NYC social service organizations providing disaster assistance
- Community foundations and local governments may set up funds for a particular purpose. Your house of worship and faith-based disaster program, if engaged in disaster recovery, may be eligible to apply for these funds

### • Supporting Other Organizations' Programs

Your house of worship may want to support other disaster relief organizations/initiatives as a congregation or you may need to provide guidance to individual members wanting to donate:

- Follow the same principals outlined above. Think about how you would like to receive assistance: The National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) publication "*When Disaster Strikes*" provides good guidance: [www.nvoad.org/disaster](http://www.nvoad.org/disaster).
- If you are raising funds to donate to efforts, know who you're giving to, what the money is used for, what percentage goes to administrative overhead, etc.
- These two links provide good information on the work of disaster organizations: [www.nvoad.org/disaster](http://www.nvoad.org/disaster) (domestic); [www.interaction.org](http://www.interaction.org) (international).

## TAKE NOTE:

- **Plan carefully before engaging in fundraising activities. Fundraising efforts that are mismanaged run the risk of tarnishing the reputation of your house of worship and its ability to support ongoing programs.**
- **Make material donations that are appropriate to the situation.**

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## Material Donations

- Be careful how you ask for items. General press releases to broad audiences WILL result in an influx of goods. And once the spigot is open, it is virtually impossible to turn it off.
- Make targeted appeals that are very specific. Include:
  - Exact quantity and type of goods needed
  - Shipping and warehousing requirements
  - Time constraints
- If you are a service provider and intend to provide items/services to clients, think about:
  - Is consistency important to you? Do you want all your clients to receive the same items? What will you do with those that aren't consistent with your plans?
  - If you will accept donations such as vacations or scholarships, how will you decide which clients will be offered such donations?
- How will you handle offers of goods you don't want or need?
- How will you manage goods that come to your house of worship unsolicited? Even with good messaging, you will receive unsolicited goods, especially if you have a visible presence in the community. Think about:
  - Food – There are a number of safety and legal issues around using donated food items. Work with organizations such as City Harvest and The Food Bank for New York City that have experience working with perishable and nonperishable foods: [www.cityharvest.org](http://www.cityharvest.org) and [www.foodbanknyc.org](http://www.foodbanknyc.org). The U.S. Department of Agriculture also has excellent food safety information: [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov).
  - Coordinate with other organizations who are also receiving goods through the New York City Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NYCVOAD). You may be able to share warehouse space, exchange goods, or get volunteer support for processing donated items. Contact NYCVOAD at 212.669.6100.

## NYC Disaster Donations & Fundraising Systems

- **Unsolicited Donations Warehouses**
  - Governments discourage the public to send unsolicited goods to a disaster scene, for the reasons listed above. However, even with clear public messages that discourage donated goods, people feel compelled to donate goods after disasters. Often, truckloads of goods will come in from neighboring cities.
  - In order to house and distribute these goods, states and localities open donated goods warehouses. In New York, the State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) is responsible for identifying and running these sites. SEMO works closely with the New York City Office of Emergency Management (NYC OEM), which manages the distribution of goods.
  - Faith-based disaster programs such as those run by Adventist Community Services, The Salvation Army, and World Vision play major roles in managing and staffing these warehouses.
  - Your religious organization can tap into this source of goods through NYCVOAD. Priority for distributing goods is usually:
    - 1) Victims and recovery workers
    - 2) Organizations supporting recovery work
    - 3) Nonprofit organizations that can use these items for other programs
- **City or State-Wide Hotlines/Websites**
  - Local and state governments and designated non-profits will provide ways, such as hotlines and websites, for the public to donate funds and offer in-kind goods that are specifically needed. Subscribe to NYDISNET for the latest information or call 311.

## RESOURCES

- State Emergency Management Office (SEMO), [www.semo.state.ny.us](http://www.semo.state.ny.us), 518.292.2200
- NYC Office of Emergency Management (NYC OEM), [www.oem.nyc.gov](http://www.oem.nyc.gov), Call 311
- Adventist Community Services, [www.communityservices.org](http://www.communityservices.org), 301.680.6438
- The Salvation Army of Greater New York, [www.salvationarmy-newyork.org](http://www.salvationarmy-newyork.org), 212.337.7200
- World Vision, [www.worldvision.org/worldvision/wvusufn.nsf/stable/newyork](http://www.worldvision.org/worldvision/wvusufn.nsf/stable/newyork), 1.888.511.6548



## NEW YORK DISASTER INTERFAITH SERVICES

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