

Statement of Understanding

Between

The American National

Red Cross and

The Administration on Aging



**American
Red Cross**

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Statement of Understanding (SOU) is to continue the working relationship between The American National Red Cross (hereinafter referred to as the American Red Cross or the Red Cross) and the Administration on Aging in preparing for and responding to disaster relief situations at all levels. This agreement provides the broad framework for cooperation between the two organizations in rendering assistance and service to victims of disaster, as well as other services for which cooperation may be mutually beneficial.

II. Concept of Operations

Each party to this SOU is a separate and independent organization. As such, each organization retains its own identity in providing service, and each organization is responsible for establishing its own policies and financing its own activities.

III. Definition of Disaster

A disaster is an occurrence such as a hurricane, tornado, storm, flood, high water, wind-driven water, tidal wave, earthquake, volcanic eruption, drought, blizzard, pestilence, famine, fire, explosion, building collapse, transportation accident, or other situation that causes human suffering or creates human needs that the victims cannot alleviate without assistance.

IV. Authority of the American Red Cross

In providing disaster relief, the American Red Cross has both a legal and a moral mandate that it has neither the authority nor the right to surrender. The American Red Cross has both the power and the duty to act in disaster, and our prompt action is clearly expected and supported by the public.

The American Red Cross authority to perform disaster services was formalized when the organization was chartered by the Congress of the United States in 1905. Among other provisions, this charter charged the Red Cross-

to continue and carry on a system of national and international relief in time of peace and apply the same in mitigating the sufferings caused by pestilence, famine, fire, floods, and other great national calamities, and to devise and carry on measures for preventing the same.

-U.S. Congress, act of January 5, 1905, as amended, 36 U.S.C.

The authority of the American Red Cross to provide disaster services was reaffirmed by federal law in the 1974 Disaster Relief Act (Public Law 93-288) and in the 1988 Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act.

V. Organization of the American Red Cross

The national headquarters of the American Red Cross is located in Washington, D.C. National headquarters is responsible for implementing policies and regulations that govern American Red Cross activities, and for giving administrative and technical supervision and guidance to the chartered units. Chartered units include chapters and Blood Services regions. The Board of Governors has delegated to the duly-constituted volunteer governing board of each chartered unit the authority and responsibility for: (a) governance of the chartered unit, (b) delivery of authorized services in the territorial jurisdiction of the chartered unit, and (c) meeting corporate obligations, in conformance with and subject to the limitations stated in corporate regulations.

The American Red Cross provides the following five (5) services: Armed Forces Emergency Services, Biomedical Services, Disaster Services, Health and Safety Services, and International Services.

Each chartered unit has the authority and responsibility for carrying out the purposes of the American Red Cross, for delivering local American Red Cross services, and for meeting corporate obligations within the territorial jurisdiction assigned in conformity with corporate regulations. The chartered units ("chapters") coordinate their work through voluntary state councils. There are approximately 1200 chapters across the United States.

Each chapter is responsible for providing disaster planning, preparedness, mitigation, education, and response. Each chapter has a disaster leadership team or committee. This team or committee studies the hazards of the locality and surveys local resources for personnel, equipment, supplies, transportation, emergency communications, and facilities available for disaster relief. The chapter disaster leadership also formulates cooperative plans and procedures with local government agencies and private organizations for carrying on relief operations should a disaster occur. Through its nationwide organization, the American Red Cross coordinates its total resources for use in large disasters. Services will be provided to those in need regardless of citizenship, race, religion, age, sex, or political affiliation.

VI. Authority for the Administration on Aging

In response to the growing number of older people and their diverse needs, the Older Americans Act of 1965 was enacted to provide a range of programs that offer opportunities and services to older Americans, especially those at risk of losing their independence. The Act established the Administration on Aging, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which is headed by the Assistant Secretary for Aging.

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The Administration on Aging is the focal point and advocate agency for older persons and their concerns at the Federal level. In this role, the Administration on Aging informs other Federal agencies, organizations, groups, and the public about the valuable contributions that older Americans make to the nation and alerts them to the needs of vulnerable older people. Through information and referral and outreach efforts at the state and community level, the Administration on Aging works to educate older people and their caregivers about the benefits and services available to help them.

The authority and responsibility of the Administration on Aging and the aging network to provide disaster services is found within the charge from the Older Americans Act to serve older persons in greatest need and from Title III, Sec. 310, Disaster Relief Reimbursements, which provides for limited resources to fund disaster response services.

VII. Organization of the Administration on Aging

With headquarters in Washington, D.C., and in partnership with its 9 regional offices, the Administration on Aging is responsible for developing and implementing policies and regulations that govern activities under areas of responsibility for implementation of the Older Americans Act. The Administration on Aging works closely with its nationwide network of State and Area Agencies on Aging and Tribal Organizations to plan, coordinate, and develop community level systems of services that meet the unique needs of individual older persons and their caregivers. The Administration on Aging collaborates with Federal agencies, national aging organizations, and representatives of business to ensure that, whenever possible, their programs and resources are also targeted to the elderly and coordinated with those of the aging network.

Administration on Aging administers key programs at the federal level that are mandated under various titles of the Older Americans Act. The programs help vulnerable older persons to remain in their own homes by providing supportive services. Other programs offer opportunities for older Americans to enhance their health and to be active contributors to their families, communities, and the nation through employment and volunteer programs.

Several titles of the Act provide for supportive-in-home services. Title III supports a range of services, including nutrition, transportation, senior centers, health promotion, and homemaker services. Title VII places emphasis on elder rights programs, including the nursing home ombudsman program, legal services, outreach, public benefit and insurance counseling, and elder abuse prevention efforts. The Administration on Aging awards funds for Title III and VII to the 57 State Agencies on Aging (SUAs) which are located in every state and territory

and for Title VI to Federally recognized Tribal Organizations.

Title III funding is allocated to each SUA through a formula grant based on the number of older persons residing in the state, to plan, develop, and coordinate systems of supportive in-home and community-based services. Most states are divided into Planning and Service Areas (PSAs) allowing programs to be effectively developed and targeted to meet the unique needs of the elderly residing in that area.

655 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) receive funds from the SUAs to plan, develop, coordinate, and arrange for services in each PSA. Some AAAs may serve the needs of elderly people living in a number of counties, while other AAAs may serve the elderly living in a single county.

AAAs contract with some 27,000 public and private agencies and organizations nationwide for the provision of services. Services include:

- **access services** - information and assistance, outreach, case management and transportation;
- **caregiver services** - respite, adult day care, counseling and education;
- **community services** - congregate and home delivered meals, legal, employment and benefits counseling, health promotion and disease prevention;
- **in-home services** - assistance with meal preparation, chores, home repair and modification, rehabilitation, homemaker/home health aides and personal care;

Under Title VI, grant awards are directly made to 225 tribal and native American organizations representing 300 Native American Indian, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiian Tribal organizations to provide supportive and nutrition services.

To respond to Presidentially declared national disasters, the aging network provides two basic types of disaster assistance services which are:

- **Advocacy and Outreach** - these services assure that older persons have access to and the assistance necessary to obtain needed services. These services include locating older persons; getting medical attention if needed, including medications and assistive devices; assisting in the completion and filing of applications for financial and other assistance; and follow-up monitoring to assure needs are met.
- **Gap-filling** - older persons may be reluctant to ask for help and many have unique needs which require individualized time and attention. Relief funds may not cover some of the special care needs in the timeframe required. OAA funds can be used for chore, homemaker, transportation, nutrition, legal, and other temporary or one-time only expenses which help older persons retain maximum independent living.

VIII. Methods of Cooperation

For the best use of available resources, the American Red Cross and the Administration on Aging agree to the following:

1. Maintain a close liaison between American Red Cross national headquarters and the Administration on Aging through conferences, telephone, and electronic communication. Each organization will share current data regarding disasters, declarations, and changes in legislation. The same interaction and liaison will be encouraged at all levels of both organizations.
2. Chapters and the Aging Network are encouraged to participate in training and exercises, as appropriate. Also, these units may perform other cooperative efforts such as disaster planning and preparedness, first aid, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR), health courses, and community disaster education (CDE), as well as providing disaster relief services and supplies.
3. The Red Cross will encourage its leaders in chapters and on disaster operations to share non confidential damage assessment surveys, appropriate referral information, and other vital statistical data with Administration on Aging and aging network personnel. To the extent feasible, this information will include data on the state of older persons affected by the disaster.
4. Administration on Aging personnel, State and Area Agencies on Aging and Tribal Organizations will be encouraged to provide Red Cross units statistical and other data on the elderly population in their jurisdiction on an ongoing basis. This could include identification of senior citizen complexes or other concentrations of elder, homebound individuals, nutrition sites and day care locations, etc. Red Cross will utilize this information in its planning efforts and the data will be included in the demographic section of the unit's disaster response plan.
5. The Administration on Aging will continue to encourage State and Area Agencies on Aging to establish disaster advocacy and outreach programs to serve elderly victims. They will assist clients in completing necessary forms to obtain assistance, explaining/interpreting assistance programs, and arranging/providing transportation for elderly clients.
6. The Administration on Aging will encourage the state and area agencies and Tribal Organizations to make their congregate and home delivered meals programs available to the general public during a disaster upon receiving an official request from the American Red Cross. If approved in writing in advance by Disaster Services at Red Cross national headquarters, the Red Cross may reimburse the state or local AAA for the cost of the meals used in fulfilling an official request.
7. The Administration on Aging, the Aging Network, and the American Red Cross personnel will work closely to ensure the physical and mental health needs of elderly disaster victims are addressed. This will involve encouraging local and national counterparts to coordinate their planning activities so that their capabilities to respond to the needs of the elderly are enhanced.
8. During disaster operations, liaison should be maintained between the national headquarters of the two organizations to ensure cooperation, to expedite services to those in need, and to minimize unnecessary duplication of services. State and Area Agencies on Aging, Tribal Organizations and Red Cross chapters will be encouraged to maintain liaison for similar purposes.
9. The American Red Cross will encourage its service delivery units to communicate with state and local AAAs and local service providers to explore opportunities for collaboration to provide Community Disaster Education (CDE) within their respective communities. Cooperative efforts could include distributing CDE materials to targeted populations within the community through their nutrition sites, senior centers, and meal delivery services, preparing the Administration on Aging's volunteers as CDE presenters, or joint development and implementation of a CDE plan for their local community.
10. Recognizing the need for advising the public of the work of both organizations, the American Red Cross and the Administration on Aging will make every effort, through their public information offices and those of the aging network during the time of disaster, to keep the public informed of their cooperative efforts.
11. The American Red Cross and the Administration on Aging will inform their chapters, State and Area Agencies on Aging, Tribal Organizations and other administrative offices of this agreement and urge full cooperation with each other. The agreement will be widely distributed and may be replicated as appropriate.
12. The Administration on Aging will encourage participation and coordination of services between the State and Area Agencies on Aging, Tribal Organizations and the American Red Cross for mutual services to the community and for disaster response. In support of this activity, both the

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Administration on Aging and the American Red Cross will share respective contact persons with each network and encourage development of on-going liaison and creation of local Statements of Understanding as appropriate.

13. The American Red Cross and the Administration on Aging will actively seek to determine other areas/services within their respective organizations where cooperation and support will be mutually beneficial and to amend this Statement of Understanding accordingly to include such agreements.
14. The two organizations agree that any expenses incurred as a result of cooperation or collaboration under the terms of this Statement of Understanding will be apportioned as agreed to in writing by both parties prior to incurring such expenses.
15. The use of the name and emblem of the American Red Cross by the Administration on Aging shall be allowed only in the case of particular projects undertaken pursuant to the prior express written consent of the American Red Cross and when such projects are in conformity with American Red Cross regulations.

IX. Periodic Review

Representatives of the American Red Cross Disaster Services and the Administration on Aging will meet annually, on or around the anniversary date of this agreement, to jointly evaluate progress in the implementation of the Statement of Understanding and revise and develop new plans or goals as appropriate.

X. Term of Statement of Understanding

This SOU shall be effective on February 15, 2001 and terminate on February 14, 2006. Six months prior to termination, the parties shall meet to review the progress and success of the SOU and determine whether it shall be extended for an additional five years. In no event shall any extension of this SOU be for a period exceeding five years.

It is understood by both parties that at any time this Statement of Understanding may be terminated by written notification from either party to the other.

XI. Miscellaneous

This Statement of Understanding does not create a partnership or a joint venture, and neither party has the authority to bind the other.



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