HOMELESS VETERANS’ REINTEGRATION PROGRAM (HVRP)
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN FOR NATURAL DISASTERS

Purposeful Preparedness
Preparing for disasters is critical for ensuring the safety and security of any resident in your community. Purposeful preparedness ensures that key needs for homeless Veterans are met whether there is shelter in place or evacuation is required. Key needs include water/food, shelter, and reunification to services and/or family.

Make a plan that concentrates on where homeless Veterans in your area reside, how they will be transported to safety in a place where their needs are met, including where they will be housed and specific health and safety requirements that need to be addressed.

Serving Homeless Veterans Outside Grant-Approved Service Delivery Areas
In cases where there is a Federally Declared Major Disaster Area that is not included in the grant-approved service delivery area, Veterans Program Letter (VPL) 05-09, Sections VI-IX provides instructions on the steps a grantee can take in order to provide HVRP services outside their SDA.

Review the VPL here:

STEP 1: IDENTIFY LOCAL PARTNERS
Local governments are the first line of defense against emergencies and disasters. Connect with local emergency response personnel in your area and see how they can assist you and your team in a natural disaster. Work together to incorporate the homeless Veteran population into your emergency response plan. This can include the Preparedness and Disaster Event Checklists listed above as well as Community Emergency Response Teams, Medical Reserve Corps, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), homeless services, hospitals, local fire and police departments.

Contact local Veteran Affairs (VA) or other military services to assist in outreach and relief efforts. VA and military services may have options to assist the homeless Veteran population in the event of a natural disaster. These service groups understand that Veterans, being former military, are skilled at executing orders and commands and can potentially provide ideas on how to communicate with Veterans so they are proactive in their emergency preparedness efforts.

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STEP 2: BUILD A TEAM

Within your organization, you will need to build a team to address the specific response plan for the homeless veteran population in the event of a natural disaster.

Your emergency response team should fulfill the following priorities:

• Communicate plans with homeless the Veteran population
• Assist with evacuation
• Provide shelter and provisions

STEP 3: BUILD A PLAN

As a team, it is important to build a plan. Your plan specifically delineates roles, responsibilities, and fulfill the following requirements:

1. Communication Requirements
   Communication management plans are key to ensuring that your team is kept informed of the current plan, objectives, audience, methods and frequency of communication. Important emergency preparedness communications include:
   • Outreach between Grantee and Veterans
   • Will outreach be direct between Grantees and Veterans?
     • If so, how can Veterans keep in touch with Grantee?
   • Will outreach incorporate Military/Veteran Organizations?
     • Is there an advocacy group to assist Veterans with accessing meds, benefits, and important VA documents?
   • What is your outreach timeline? The timeline for outreach starts at the first alert for impending natural disaster.
   • Are there disabled Veterans in your population that require special care?

2. Evacuation Requirements
   In order to bring your homeless Veteran population to safety, you must have an evacuation plan. Important information to obtain when developing your evacuation plan include:
   • Learn types of disasters in your area
   • Identify local, emergency, evacuation and shelter plans for each disaster. Are there teams identified to assist in each area?
   • How will Veterans be evacuated and where will they go?

3. Shelter Requirements
   Once your homeless Veteran population is evacuated, they will need to be taken to shelter. Important information to obtain when developing the plan for shelter include:
   • Which shelters in your area will house the Veterans in your area?
   • How will your team transport the Veterans to best shelters ahead of time?
   • Does Veteran have access to water and food? Are there supplies that will be provided?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. National Homeless Organization
   https://nationalhomeless.org/natural-disasters/
2. Ready.gov
   https://www.ready.gov/
3. National Center for Disaster Preparedness
   https://ncdp.columbia.edu/library/preparedness-tools/the-ncdp-model-for-disaster-preparedness
4. State and Local Emergency Websites
5. Federal Emergency Management Agency
   www.fema.gov
6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
   https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/index.html

For more on this and other issues reach us at contact@nvtac.org