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# **COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN DISASTER**

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## **Indiana COAD Guidance Manual**

**Developed by Steve Cain of Purdue University  
In cooperation with the State of Missouri  
& University of Missouri Extension**

**Draft July 2009**

# **Community Organizations Active in Disaster Guidance Manual**

This document was written to help all community organizations and individuals understand how collaborative efforts can prepare communities for disaster. The main goals of these collaborations are to help communities avoid some disasters and recover from other unavoidable disasters.

**Revised July 2009**

## Foreword

This document is intended to assist communities or geographic areas across the state to establish Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COADs). COADs provide the platform for launching unmet needs groups in their communities in the event of a disaster event, but they also do much more. Permanently established COADs will encompass the phases of emergency management: mitigation, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

COADs will use community disaster education, hazard analysis, training exercises, classes for community leadership, local emergency management plans, and the expertise of its members to bring holistic disaster awareness to its community and citizens.

The Indiana Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster and its members support the development of these groups by participating and providing start-up leadership in COADs through local partner participation and advancing the concept of collaboration and communication at the state level.

This document is intended for the emergency management community, local citizens, government agencies, private and not-for-profit agencies and other civic organizations who wish to serve their community in any or all of the phases of emergency management. For further information contact Steve Cain, INVOAD chairman and Purdue Extension communication specialist at (1-888-398-4636) or [cain@purdue.edu](mailto:cain@purdue.edu).



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## **I. Mission of a Community Organization Active in Disaster**

A Community Organization Active in Disaster (COAD) is an organization, based within a community or geographic area, which is composed of representatives from public, private and not-for-profit agencies. A COAD will enhance the community's ability to mitigate, prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters, thus ensuring that human needs inherent in a disaster situation are evaluated and addressed.

## **II. Introduction**

### **What is a "COAD"?**

Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COADs) proactively look for ways to mitigate against disasters at the local level. Because COADs represent many human service providers and have a concern for community resilience, and the relief and recovery of disaster victims, they can be a launch pad for disaster preparedness. COADs have a broad mission: to strengthen area-wide disaster coordination by sharing programs, policies, information, joint planning and training.

### **COADs will be active in all phases of emergency management:**

#### **Mitigation**

Any activity taken to eliminate or reduce the degree of long-term risk to human life, property and the environment from the effects of natural and technological hazards.

#### **Prevention**

Any activity taken to avoid hazards and minimize the negative consequences of a disaster.

#### **Preparedness**

Any activity taken in advance of an emergency that improves emergency readiness posture and develops or expands operational capabilities.

#### **Response**

Any action taken immediately before, during or directly after an emergency occurs to save lives, minimize injuries, lessen property and environmental damage, and enhance the effectiveness of recovery.

#### **Recovery**

A short-term activity to return vital life support systems to minimum operating standards and/or a long-term activity designed to return the affected people and areas to their pre-disaster conditions.

### **When is a COAD organized?**

The sooner the better!

Communities and citizens are unquestionably better served if a COAD is in place for planning and education long before a disaster strikes. The perfect window of opportunity for creation of a COAD may seem to be after a disaster occurs when there is increased interest and multiple organizations are emerging to provide services. The reality, however, is that organizing a COAD in the midst of a crisis may impede the recovery process.

### **Who participates in a COAD?**

COADs will include any agency, individual or organization with a role to play in any phase of emergency management. This includes disaster services agencies, emergency management agencies, and public, private or not-for-profit organizations with an interest in addressing a community's emergency management needs. The COAD will be a collaborative working group in which all the participants are equal partners united by common goals.

### **What is a disaster?**

Disaster means any natural or human-caused catastrophic event that results in damage, loss, hardship, or suffering. Disasters may be restricted to individual households, or may expand to be local, regional, statewide, or national in scope. Larger disasters typically overwhelm a community's ability to respond.

## **III. How to Start a COAD**

Once you and others in your community decide you need a COAD, there are some simple steps to starting a COAD.

1. Talk to your emergency manager. A COAD's long-term survival and successes are dependent on cooperation with Emergency Manager.
2. Contact the Indiana Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. INVOAD can help you with information about what a COAD does. INVOAD President, Steve Cain (Purdue Extension Disaster Specialist) has assisted several Indiana communities in setting up COADs. He can lead you through the beginning phases. Contact Steve Cain at Purdue University, 615 West State Street, West Lafayette, IN 47907; 765-494-8410; cain@purdue.edu .
3. Call a meeting of local leaders to discuss forming a COAD. This should include any agency, business, civic group, faith based organizations, and others who are involved in any phase of disaster.
4. If that group decides to form a COAD, call a public meeting open to anyone in the community to discuss forming a COAD. At that meeting or in future meetings, form a working group to adopt a name for the COAD, name officers, and set up by-laws or operating guidelines. At the least, a COAD should meet about four times per year.
5. Contact INVOAD (contact info in step 2) and let them know you have formed and provide contact information.

Congratulations, your community has a Community Organization Active in Disaster.

#### **IV. Guiding Principles and Goals of a COAD**

All disasters are local. Every COAD must determine how best to carry out its community's pre- and post-disaster aspirations and priorities while meeting the needs of its citizens. However, as a starting point, COADs may wish to adopt the suggested concepts below:

##### **Principles**

- A COAD should provide a forum for information sharing, communication, cooperation and collaboration between agencies involved in emergency management.
- A COAD should be a resource to citizens of the local community during all phases of emergency management.
- A COAD should support and be a resource to community emergency management in all five phases: mitigation, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

When developing a COAD, the bylaws for the Indiana Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster (INVOAD) may be helpful. See the INVOAD bylaws on page 17.

##### **Suggested Goals and Objectives**

Imagine that the COAD is perfect. It has accomplished everything it needs to do before a disaster occurs. What would such a COAD look like?

The ideal characteristics of a COAD can become its goals and objectives. In order to measure the effectiveness of a COAD or evaluate it, one can measure it against the accomplishment of these goals and objectives. The following is a list may be helpful.

##### **Goal 1: An interagency group is in existence and has assumed responsibility for coordinating interagency activities related to emergency management.**

- This interagency group will most likely come into existence through one of two methods (although other methods are possible):
  - a. An existing group has assumed the responsibilities for these activities.
  - b. An independent inter-agency group has formed and assumed responsibilities of a COAD.
- All appropriate agencies are engaged in the COAD process.
- COAD groups or subgroups meet as often as necessary to ensure that the goals as defined below are being accomplished.

**Goal 2: The COAD or subgroup is prepared to begin functioning as an unmet needs committee immediately following a disaster.**

- All appropriate participants have been identified.
- All appropriate participants have met and are oriented as to the unmet needs committee process.
- All participants have been trained on issues of client confidentiality.
- A release of confidential information form has been developed or identified for use by participating agencies.
- Leadership has been identified.
- A mechanism is in place for activation of the unmet needs committee.
- A mechanism has been developed for taking and sharing meeting minutes.
- All participants understand the "delivery sequence" of services to disaster victims that is currently used nationwide to prevent duplication of benefits.
- The COAD has a plan for dealing with cash and in-kind donations.

**Goal 3: A plan exists, involving all appropriate agencies, to respond to and utilize volunteers in the event of a disaster.**

- All appropriate agency volunteer coordinators have been identified.
- All appropriate agency volunteer coordinators have met.
- All appropriate agency volunteer coordinators have been trained in effective volunteer management regarding training, placement and supervision.
- All appropriate agency volunteer coordinators have been trained in special issues related to managing disaster volunteers including stress, debriefing, safety and liability.
- Working agreements between organizations have been established relating to delineating primary responsibility for intake, skills assessment and referral of spontaneous unaffiliated volunteers.

**Goal 4: A plan exists for managing the receipt and distribution of in-kind donations of supplies and materials in the event of a disaster.**

- The plan identifies those agencies that have agency procedures to handle in-kind donations and that intend to participate in a donation-receiving role.
- The plan coordinates communication with media and the community on all agencies' needs.
- The plan determines how all appropriate agencies share information on what supplies each agency has, and how those supplies/resources will be shared and distributed between agencies.
- The plan ensures that federal and state resources for supporting donations management are identified and procedures are in place utilizing these resources.

**Goal 5: COAD members have an awareness of emergency management issues and have received appropriate training.**

- The training needs of COAD members have been identified.

- Sources of training have been identified and shared with the COAD. This training may be provided by members of the COAD or by other sources such as state agencies, INVOAD or FEMA.
  - INVOAD member listing- go to <http://www.invoad.com/index.php> and click “Members” or see the list at the back of this manual.
  - Indiana Department of Homeland Security- go to <https://oas.in.gov/hs/training/public/calendar.do> for a calendar of training sessions.
- Agencies are committed to taking advantage of available training prior to a disaster.



## IV. How to Organize a COAD

### A. Explore existing inter-agency groups that could assume the COAD role

If there are other interagency groups, examine those groups' goals and objectives to determine how closely they match those of a COAD. If compatibility exists, then seek to have one group to assume COAD goals and objectives. If there are no existing groups, such as a Local Emergency Planning Committee or the Citizen Corps, then explore forming a COAD.

### B. Appropriate agencies to involve

The goal of organizing a COAD is to involve as many agencies as possible. Appropriate agencies to involve in a COAD are those that conceivably play a part in emergency management, including human services, emergency management or other response agencies. Some agencies may be more active in one phase than another. COADs can consider the desirability of including more than one individual from a particular agency; for example, the volunteer manager, the donations manager, and the individual case manager could all have appropriate roles on the COAD. The individual representative should have at least some decision-making authority for his area of involvement.

## V. Phases of Emergency Management

Emergency management has five phases: mitigation, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. COADs have the opportunity to be involved in all phases.

### A. Mitigation

Mitigation is any activity taken to eliminate or reduce the degree of long-term risk to human life, property and the environment from the effects of natural and technological hazards. Mitigation activities that might involve COADs are as follows:

1. Involvement in the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC).
2. Participation in special mitigation events such as severe weather awareness week.
3. Participation in community disaster education.
4. Monitoring mitigation efforts in the community.

### B. Prevention

Prevention is any activity taken to avoid hazards and minimize the negative consequences of a disaster. Prevention activities that might involve COADs are as follows:

1. Involvement in Citizen Corp.
2. Help citizens understand terrorist risks.

## **C. Preparedness**

Preparedness is any activity taken in advance of an emergency that improves emergency readiness posture and develops or expands operational capabilities. Preparedness activities that might involve COADs are as follows:

1. Education, orientation and training for agencies and individuals involved in the COAD.
2. Participation in community disaster planning efforts and creating or developing plans for COAD agencies.
3. Creating a resource guide of agencies and services that may support disaster operations.
4. Interaction and collaboration with emergency management agencies.

## **D. Response**

Response is any action taken immediately before, during, or directly after an emergency occurs to save lives, minimize injuries, lessen property, and environmental damage and enhance the effectiveness of recovery. Response activities that might involve COADs are as follows:

1. Participation in donations management.
2. Supporting volunteers and volunteer management, especially emergent volunteers.
3. Providing support and human services to primary disaster response organizations.

## **E. Recovery**

Recovery is any short-term activity to return vital life support systems to minimum operating standards and/or a long-term activity designed to return the affected people and areas to an acceptable standard of safety and sustainability. Recovery activities that might involve COADs are as follows:

1. Create an unmet needs committee in the community.
2. Support ongoing recovery operations with human services, referrals, and resources.
3. Support ongoing donations and volunteer management.
4. Advocate for disaster victims.

## **Conclusion**

This manual was designed to provide guidance on the formation, organization, and goals of a Community Organization Active in Disaster. These COADs and the collaboration they facilitate are invaluable to the disaster management system of Indiana.

For more information:

Purdue Extension Disaster Education Network- <http://www.extension.purdue.edu/eden/>  
INVOAD- <http://www.invoad.com/index.php>  
Indiana Department of Homeland Security- <http://www.in.gov/dhs/>



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## **Additional Information Sources**

INVOAD (Indiana Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster)

<http://www.invoad.com/index.php>

NVOAD (National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster)

<http://www.nvoad.org/>

INVOAD Long-term Recovery Manual

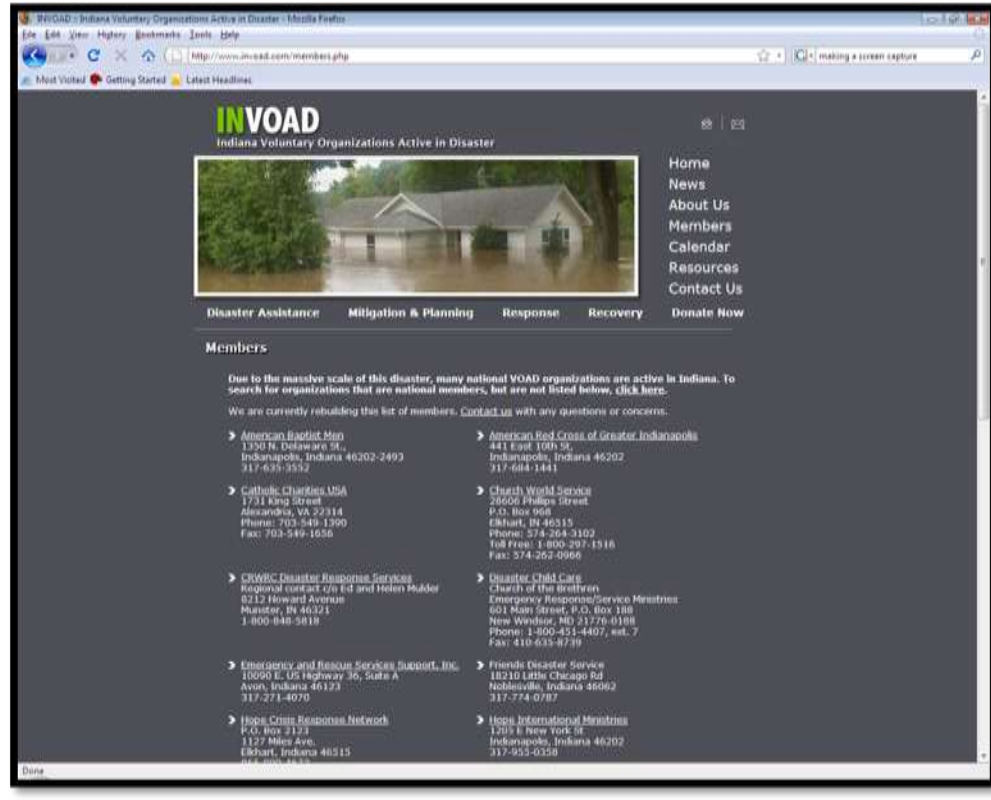
[http://www.invoad.org/files/LTRManual\\_2008.pdf](http://www.invoad.org/files/LTRManual_2008.pdf)

FEMA Region V

<http://www.fema.gov/about/regions/regionv/index.shtm>

Indiana Department of Homeland Security

<http://www.in.gov/dhs/>



## INVOAD Members List

<http://www.invoad.com/members.php>

**American Baptist Men**  
 1350 N. Delaware St.  
 Indianapolis, IN 46202-2493  
 317-635-3552

**American Red Cross of Greater Indianapolis**  
 441 East 10th St.  
 Indianapolis, IN 46202  
 317-684-1441

**Catholic Charities USA**  
 1731 King Street  
 Alexandria, VA 22314  
 Phone: 703-549-1390  
 Fax: 703-549-1656

**Church World Service**

28606 Phillips Street  
 P.O. Box 968  
 Elkhart, IN 46515  
 Phone: 574-264-3102  
 Toll Free: 1-800-297-1516  
 Fax: 574-262-0966

**CRWRC Disaster Response Services**  
 Regional contact c/o Ed and Helen Mulder  
 8212 Howard Avenue  
 Munster, IN 46321  
 1-800-848-5818

**Disaster Child Care**

Church of the Brethren  
Emergency Response/Service Ministries  
601 Main Street, P.O. Box 188  
New Windsor, MD 21776-0188  
Phone: 1-800-451-4407, ext. 7  
Fax: 410-635-8739

**Emergency and Rescue Services Support,  
Inc.**

10090 E. US Highway 36, Suite A  
Avon, IN 46123  
317-271-4070

**Friends Disaster Service**

18210 Little Chicago Rd.  
Noblesville, IN 46062  
317-774-0787

**Hope Crisis Response Network**

P.O. Box 2123  
1127 Miles Ave.  
Elkhart, IN 46515  
866-909-4673  
574-522-2547  
Fax: 574-294-5707

**Hope International Ministries**

1205 E New York St.  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46202  
317-955-0358

**Indiana Association of United Ways**

3901 N. Meridian St. Ste. 306  
Indianapolis, IN 46208-4026  
317-921-1394

**Indiana Crisis Assistance Response Team  
(I-CART)**

8605 Allisonville Road, #140  
Indianapolis, IN 46205-1552  
317-596-2202

**Indiana 211 Partnership, Inc.**

3901 N Meridian St, Ste. #306  
Indianapolis, IN 46208-4026

317-921-7527  
Fax: 317-921-1397

**Indiana Lions Club**

8780 Purdue Road, Suite #10  
Indianapolis, IN 46268-1173  
317-824-1024  
Fax: 317-824-9608

**Indiana Salvation Army**

3100 N Meridian St  
Indianapolis, IN 46208  
317-937-7000  
Toll Free: 800-589-1037  
Fax: 317-937-7010

**Indiana Department of Homeland  
Security**

302 W. Washington Street E-208  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
800-669-7362

**Lutheran Disaster Response**

8765 West Higgins Road  
Chicago, IL 60631  
800-638-3522 ext. 2748  
773-380-2748  
Fax: 773-380-2707

**Marion County Medical Reserve Corps**

3838 N Rural Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46205  
317-221-3133  
Fax: 317-221-3196

**Mennonite Disaster Service**

1018 Main St  
Akron, PA 17501  
717-859-2210  
Fax: 717-859-4910

**Office of Faith-Based and Community  
Initiatives**

302 W Washington St, RM E220  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
317-233-4273  
Fax: 317-233-5660

**Purdue Extension**

c/o Steve Cain  
615 W. State Street  
West Lafayette, IN 47907-2053  
765-494-8410  
Fax: 765-496-1117  
Cell: 765-412-2547

**Southern Baptist Convention**

PO Box 51  
Worthington, IN 47471  
812-875-2778

**St. Vincent's DePaul**

58 Progress Parkway  
St. Louis, MO 63043-3706  
314-576-3993  
Fax: 314-576-6755  
[usacouncil@svdpusa.org](mailto:usacouncil@svdpusa.org)

**United Church of Christ**

100 W 42nd St  
Indianapolis, IN 46208  
317-924-1395

**United Methodist Church, South Indiana  
Conference**

611 Peachtree Lane  
Danville, IN 46122  
317-745-7511

# **By-Laws of the Indiana Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (INVOAD)**

## **Article I. Name and Relationships**

Section A. The name of this organization is Indiana Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (INVOAD). INVOAD is a state counterpart of the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD).

Section B. The business address of the INVOAD will be designated by the president.

Section C. The entire state of Indiana will be included in (INVOAD).

## **Article II. Purpose**

The purpose of this organization shall be to bring together voluntary organizations active in disaster services to foster more effective response to the people of Indiana in times of disaster through:

- Cooperation (creating a climate for cooperation, information and meeting together)
- Coordination (fostering a common understanding and providing a liaison with public offices)
- Communication (publishing and disseminating information)
- Education (increasing mutual awareness and understanding of each organization)
- Convening Mechanism (arranging meetings, conferences, and training as necessary)
- Legislation (encouraging effective disaster relief legislation and policy)

INVOAD seeks to ensure the availability of needed services and to encourage uniform impartial provision of these services.

## **Article III. Membership**

Section A. INVOAD is not intended to be a competing agency but an umbrella organization of existing agencies. Each member organization maintains its own identity and independence, yet works closely with other agencies to improve service and eliminate unnecessary duplication.

Section B. Organizations eligible for membership are those with not-for-profit structures with a stated policy of commitment or resources to meet the needs of people affected by a disaster without discrimination.

Section C. Interested governmental agencies, both local and state, may maintain an associate membership without vote.

Section D. Membership in INVOAD shall be at least, the organizations present in the state who are members of National VOAD. Additional voluntary organizations in Indiana may be accepted as members by a majority vote of the membership. Any number of representatives may attend the annual and regular meetings with voice. Each member organization will have only one (1) vote and the responsibility for selecting that voting delegate.

Section E. Membership will be contingent upon conditions specified in above paragraphs and other criteria as established by INVOAD. A recommendation for involuntary termination of members will

be reviewed by the executive committee and then presented to the membership for a majority vote. Criteria for involuntary termination of membership would include:

- (1) Failure to comply with the requirements of Section B of this article;
- (2) Evidence of misuse of disaster resources;
- (3) Withdrawal of organization from state activities; or
- (4) Other acts of malfeasance.

#### **Article IV. Meetings**

Section A. There will be a minimum of four regular business of INVOAD per calendar year. The annual meeting may coincide with one of the regular meetings. The annual meeting shall be held during the period of January 1st to March 31st.

Section B. Formal notification by mail and/or electronic mail no less than two weeks in advance to all members shall constitute proper notice for the conduct of business at any regular or annual meeting. Each member organization may have an unlimited representation but only one (1) vote at each meeting.

Section C. Decisions on any question at a meeting in INVOAD shall be by a majority vote of the member organizations present and voting. The next meeting site and date may be decided on as an act of business at each meeting. It may be delegated to the INVOAD officers if no consensus is reached.

Section D. Unless otherwise stated by the by-laws, Roberts Rules of Order shall be considered the general rules for the conduct of meetings.

Section E. Minutes will be taken by the INVOAD Secretary or a member designated by the chairperson in the secretary's absence. Said minutes shall be distributed and approved at the next regular meeting.

#### **Article V. Nominations**

Section A. Nominations for the Executive Committee shall be made by a nominating committee that shall consist of three (3) persons each from a separate organizations (two of which must be voting members) appointed by the INVOAD president or designated chair and approved by voting members present at a regular meeting of INVOAD.

Section B. The nominating committee will serve only until an election takes place.

#### **Article VI. Executive Committee**

Section A. The Executive Committee shall consist of five persons elected from the voting membership. There will be representatives from different organizations. The executive committee will be elected at the annual meeting and will serve a two (2) year term.

Section B. The Executive Committee shall have the power to fill vacancies until the next election.

Section C. The Executive Committee shall elect from its own members a president, vice-president, secretary/treasurer. The term of office is for two (2) years, with a maximum of three (3) consecutive terms.

Section D. The Executive Committee shall meet when called by the president as necessary to conduct business or by any two (2) other members of the Executive Committee. A quorum of four (4) Executive Committee members shall be required to conduct business.

Section E. The Executive Committee shall have the power to act for INVOAD between regular meetings within the adopted guidelines of the organization.

#### **Article VII. Budget and Finance**

Section A. INVOAD is not a fundraising nor disbursing organization. Any funds collected will be used to meet the administrative expenses of the organization.

Section B. INVOAD funds can be withdrawn by proper signature of any two (2) officers with prior concurrence from the executive committee.

Section C. In the event of the dissolution of INVOAD, any remaining funds shall be disbursed to INVOAD headquarters to be held for future reinstatement of INVOAD.

#### **Article VIII. Amendments**

Section A. Proposed amendments must be distributed no less than two (2) weeks prior to a meeting at which the amendments will be considered.

Section B. Amendments to these by-laws may be made by a two-thirds majority vote of voting members attending. Amendments may be presented at annual or regular meetings or by mailing.