



*What happens after
the Search-and-Rescue
phase of an Emergency?*

25TH HOUR

A ONE-DAY TRAINING

**SEPTEMBER 12 2018
9.00AM - 3.30PM**

**PACIFICA GRADUATE INSTITUTE
801 LADERA LANE SB CA 93108**

www.foodbanksbc.org

Summary, Learnings and After-Action Ideas



Introduction:

This White Paper is an opportunity to collect together some of the learnings from the amazing group of disaster professionals taking part in the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County's 25th Hour Disaster Preparedness Conference.

The day was a great opportunity to bring together fresh experiences from the Thomas disasters and also draw on past experience both locally and nationally of those in attendance.

The Foodbank hosted and sponsored the conference because we needed to improve how we train and work with others within the County, both in disaster response and disaster preparedness.

As a Feeding America food bank, we have access to a network of 202 other food banks, each covering a discrete area of the U.S. Typically, this cooperation is around regional food sourcing, advocacy, auditing and training, but the network becomes even more valuable in times of disaster. Within hours, hundreds of thousands of pounds of food and other supplies can be on its way to us with no governmental red tape.

Our network can resupply us from north, south or east if there are road closures, and the Foodbank stands as the central recipient of USDA food for redistribution from our warehouses in north and south county via our local network of 300 member agencies and programs.

These resources are great, but they don't mean much if we can't use them efficiently in a time of need. Hopefully, the take-aways from the conference will better able us to restore key public health services during initial disaster response and remind us that our ability to mesh together will be key in helping to make a bad situation better.

Those who attended the conference and those unable to will find something useful within these pages.

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Keynote Speaker:

Kevin Smith,

*Director of Federal Emergency
Management Administration's (FEMA)
Center for Faith and Opportunity
Initiatives*

James "Kevin" Smith became Director of the DHS Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives in July 2018 (DHS Center). Mr. Smith is a Certified Emergency Manager who has worked with faith- and community-based organizations for more than 20 years. His new federal role is to promote and develop partnerships among the public, faith- and community-based organizations, emergency managers, and first responders to strengthen the resilience of our nation.

During his address Mr. Smith discussed FEMA's work over the past couple of years in regards to the various national disasters that have occurred. He emphasized that the Administration's focus is to build a more resilient workforce in order to respond and recover from disaster.

There are a few important actions taken in order to achieve this: resource sharing between government and agencies, improving capacity for small-scale events in order to increase readiness for large-scale disasters, and improving resilience before disaster occurs in order to minimize the chaos of recovery.

Mr. Smith encouraged attendees to help the Administration build a culture of preparedness in the nation and to prepare for catastrophe rather than limiting plans to what agency capacity is currently. To help in this effort, FEMA is committed to simplifying their systems and language so that disaster victims are able to receive aid with minimal confusion or struggle.

The director finished his address by emphasizing the need for increased disaster insurance nationwide at the family, business and agency level. Insuring your organization means that it can function throughout disaster and meet the needs of clients and employees. Organizations can help before disaster by increasing enrollment of clients in disaster insurance. When natural events occur, this will help families rebuild and recover.

Patrick Crawford, Feeding America's Director of Disaster Services (left) and Kevin Smith (right) | Photos: Jacqueline Pilar



Ms. Suzanne Blake of MIT

Large-Scale Disaster Response Exercise:

The morning session was led by Suzanne Blake of MIT's Office of Emergency Management and Business Continuity. Ms. Blake is the Manager of MIT Emergency Management, which coordinates all of the emergency preparedness, response, recovery, mitigation, communication, and continuity activities for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She, with the feedback of Foodbank and Santa Barbara County staff, designed a tabletop exercise that would cover disaster relief and coordination procedures following an incident that affects the Foodbank's customer community.

The scenario given to attendees was a massive earthquake hitting Santa Barbara County, which would disable many communication lines and shut down the 101 freeway near Gaviota. The quake would also cause massive damage to many buildings including grocery stores, pharmacies and the Foodbank's Santa Maria warehouse, rendering it inoperable.

A news alert was simulated and shown at the conference in order to enhance attendees' awareness. After receiving this situation, conference attendees were asked to discuss in breakout groups what should be done in the community to start relief and recovery efforts. Groups were encouraged to consider the following structure when working through the scenario.

Local meteorologist Alan Rose



Scope	The tabletop exercise covered disaster relief and coordination procedures following an incident that affects the FBSB customer community.
Mission Area(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response • Recovery
Core Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Information and Warning • Operational Coordination • Logistics and Supply Chain Management • Mass Care Services • Operational Communications • Health and Social Services
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Test coordination and relationships between mass care VOADs as well as governmental agencies during the short- and long-term disaster relief and recovery to a major disaster that impacts the Santa Barbara area. 2. Practice effective communication with key mass care partners and the public and provide timely, accurate information and answers to pertinent questions. 3. Exercise operational partnerships in disaster response logistics, including coordinating logistical needs for food distribution in disaster relief. 4. Coordinate people resources, including volunteers, in the aftermath of a major disaster that affects Santa Barbara County. 5. Determine needed plans, procedures, and training in order to maintain an ongoing level of preparedness and coordination between and among VOADs in the Santa Barbara area.
Threat or Hazard	Earthquake





Breakout groups were active participants in the important findings that Ms. Blake gathered at the conclusion of the exercise including Santa Barbara County's strengths and areas in need of improvement.

One big strength is Santa Barbara's experience with past disasters, which has strengthened knowledge and coordination throughout the county. The 211 system has proved to be an effective communication tool in those instances. Furthermore, the number and variety of organizations willing to further preparedness in the county, in addition to the many existing preparedness and response resources that are available and ready to respond to and recover from a disaster, make for a more resilient community.

From attendee feedback, Ms. Blake identified several areas of needed improvement and offered recommendations for next steps.

■ **Area for Improvement 1:**
Redundancy, capacity and clarified roles of VOAD organizations.

Analysis:

Participants noted that while many Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) do not have the capacity or redundancy to continue functioning throughout a major prolonged disaster, there are other cross county redundancies when it comes to meeting common needs after a disaster. Organizations and agencies need a clear, specific role when responding to a disaster to reduce redundancy across organizations, as well as increased capacity to ensure employee, volunteer and public needs are met across the county.

Recommendations:

Strengthen redundancy and capability building within and among VOAD organizations. Consider doing this through cross-training, working with similar VOADs to find redundant skillsets, educating staff and volunteers on disaster preparedness, and developing comprehensive disaster response and continuity plans for the organization (see Area for Improvement #4). Consider creating an MOU among VOAD organizations to specify roles, communication, and coordination. Also consider developing an EOC protocol for VOADs to prevent role confusion when multiple agencies are represented in the activated Operational Area EOC.

■ **Area for Improvement 2:** **VOAD membership.**

Analysis:

Participants noted the need to increase the membership of the Santa Barbara VOAD.

Recommendations:

Educate non-member VOADs about the organization and the benefits of officially joining VOAD. Partner member organizations with non-member organizations to offer mentorship and education about the benefits of joining VOAD. Consider developing promotional material about the VOAD organization to distribute to non-member organizations.

■ **Area for Improvement 3:** **Communication and collaboration.**

Analysis:

A better understanding of and communication and collaboration between agencies and organizations in Santa Barbara County is needed. Organizations and government agencies are at times unfamiliar with the mission of other organizations in the county that participate in disaster response and recovery. Clear education about mission, scope, and role in a disaster for each stakeholder organization is needed across the county to ensure all entities know the function

of each player in disaster response in order to avoid redundancy and ensure public needs are met.

Recommendations:

Consider developing a cross-county collaboration and communication plan that outlines roles in a disaster, how responding VOADs and government agencies will coordinate with each other, and how organizations will communicate during the response to and recovery from a disaster.

■ **Area for Improvement 4:** **Organization level preparedness.**

Analysis:

Participating agencies and organizations noted the need for organization-level emergency preparedness. Emergency preparedness plans, response plans, and business continuity plans at each organization will help ensure the mission of the organization continues and that staff and volunteers remain safe throughout a disaster.

Recommendations:

Ensure preparedness at the organization level through business continuity planning and personal preparedness plans. Consider developing templates for a business continuity plan and a personal preparedness plan to share county-wide so that VOADs and their staff/



volunteers can easily develop these plans. A business continuity plan will ensure continuation of essential functions in a disaster, and the personal preparedness plan will help staff and volunteers be prepared at home so that they can continue to work for the organization without disruption.

■ **Area for Improvement 5:** **Awareness of county-wide plans and procedures.**

Analysis:

Participants noted the need for an increase in awareness of county-wide plans and procedures as well as plans and procedures of partner organizations county-wide.

Recommendations:

Educate organizations across the county about county-wide emergency plans and procedures. To facilitate this, distribute the plans when possible and conduct collaborative training, events, and exercises. Ensure a collaborative planning process when major county emergency plans and procedures need to be developed or updated.

■ **Area for Improvement 6:** **Donations and volunteer management.**

Analysis:

Participants noted the desire to achieve better coordination, training, and management of donations and volunteers in a major disaster.

Recommendations:

Consider developing a county-wide donations and volunteer management plan. Ensure multiple stakeholder organizations are part of the planning process. Review plans that already exist at organizations within the county or relevant organizations in nearby

counties as models for developing the Santa Barbara donations and volunteer management plan.

■ **Area for Improvement 7:** **Public messaging.**

Analysis:

Participants noted the need to improve messaging to the public before and after a disaster to include preparedness and recovery resources, points of information, volunteer/donation information, and options for community members with unique needs (e.g. medical, families with pets, etc.).

Recommendations:

Consider developing standard press releases for relevant VOAD topics, such as requesting donations and volunteers, resource distribution, and information for families with unique needs. Centralize the public information distribution process where possible, and coordinate information distribution with the Operational Area EOC to ensure messages are consistent across the county.

■ **Area for Improvement 8:** **Long-term recovery planning.**

Analysis:

Participants noted the need to increase focus and resources on long-term recovery planning throughout the county.

Recommendations:

Consider developing a county-wide long-term recovery plan through a collaborative planning process that includes relevant stakeholders. Also, consider holding additional county-wide tabletop exercises to test long-term recovery procedures.

Panel Discussion: How Nonprofit Organizations Can Collaborate Most Effectively in a Disaster

The panel of local disaster experts included Barbara Andersen, Chief Strategy Officer at Santa Barbara Foundation, Steve Ortiz, CEO at United Way of Santa Barbara County, Ben Romo, Community Recovery and Engagement Coordinator for the Santa Barbara County Office of Emergency Management, and Erik Talkin, CEO of the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County. Mr. Talkin acted as moderator for the group and spurred discussion about the panel's experience in disaster recovery.

Questions about what challenges were most common after disasters revealed financing and cross agency communication to be the most pressing. Panelists commented on keeping agency mission at the forefront throughout the recovery phase, and not swaying according to where financial help might be available. Additionally, it is important that agencies remain flexible and adaptable to whatever disaster occurs, as some procedures or standards may not apply to various situations.

The challenge of cross agency communication can be exacerbated by competing agendas, exhaustion and burnout and the tendency to forget about past learnings.

Foodbank Emergency Food Boxes

One-week high-quality food supply and emergency tool kit/dust mask



For every box you buy,
we'll donate one to
a family in need.

\$59

suggested donation

Order your disaster boxes online,
pick up at one of three locations:

www.bit.ly/2ByCaaC

www.foodbanksbc.org

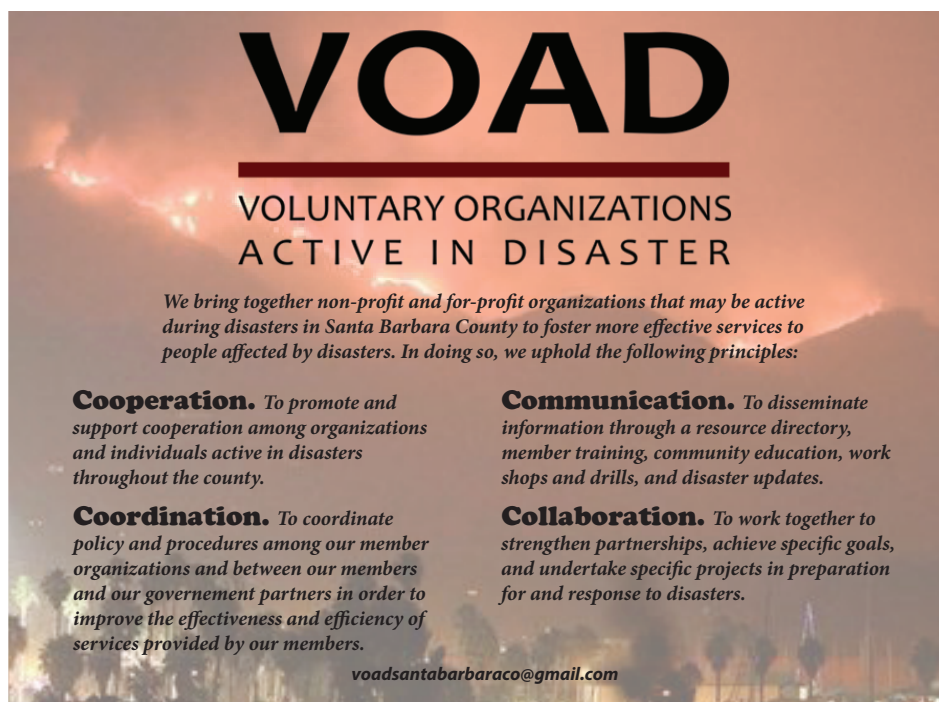


To overcome this panelists encouraged attendees to build on recovery work that has been done in past disasters, as well as make improvements based on existing expertise. Keep communications between agencies, nonprofits and government open in order to recover efficiently.

Finally, the panel emphasized the importance of VOAD in the county. This organization can help community members, nonprofits, agencies and others to organize before disaster and before receiving funding through conversations that focus and clarify needs. Other resources shared were the Community Long Term Recovery Group and Ready SBC.

VOAD: Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

VOAD was a welcome addition to the conference, as their work in recovery has served Santa Barbara for many years. VOAD is dedicated to improving outcomes for county residents affected by disasters by fostering “the Four C’s”—cooperation, communication, coordination, and collaboration—among nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, government agencies, and for-profit companies that are active in disasters.



Our Disaster Preparedness 5-Point Plan:

- 1.) **Create a Disaster Food Box program** to help individuals and households be prepared and be more resilient if access to food becomes limited.
- 2.) **Host a Disaster Preparedness Summit** to train and strengthen communication and collaboration among our 300+ member agencies in the event of an emergency.
- 3.) **Make capital investments** in new vehicles to improve our ability to deliver food.
- 4.) **Recruit and train a new volunteer force** that can be utilized for emergency food distributions when our scheduled distributions are unable to function.
- 5.) **Expand existing education programs and launch new initiatives in food literacy** to strengthen community resilience in disaster. The skills training will teach people how to maintain a nutritious diet even with very limited resources.

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