



**NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE
OF THE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**GUIDELINES
FOR
DISASTER RESPONSE**

2001

Central Understandings of Disaster Response

1. The Bishop will invite the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) to participate in the response and recovery. UMCOR will respond with leadership and resources applicable to the need.
2. The role of the Committee on Disaster Response will be to center on organization and training. General Oversight of the disaster response/recovery with the Conference Disaster Response/Recovery Office.
3. An ecumenical approach will be used whenever possible to maximize all assets and to reduce the redundancy of services to a community.
4. Pastoral Care will be provided by local pastors and Conference Resources.
5. Prospective leaders and hired staff will be identified and trained to be ready for "call-up." If a conference disaster leader is hired, that person will participate in the selection of satellite directors and will supervise those persons in consultation with the district superintendent and the district disaster response committee. No pastor serving under appointment will be considered or hired. All payroll will be handled through the treasurer's office.
6. The disbursement of resources will be made available on an as needed basis to the affected areas.

INTRODUCTION

As the United Methodist Church is a connectional system, so too is our church's response to anything that causes strife to God's people. In the case of a disaster not only do local resources come in to play, but Conference and General Church (UMCOR) agencies become available to the situation as needed. This not only provides for a greater response but also serves to bind us together in the helping God's people in need.

DEFINITION OF A DISASTER

A disaster is any specific event which results in overwhelming physical, economic, and/or emotional damage to a community.

PHASES OF A DISASTER

- X **Early Preparation Phase** - A time for planning and training.
- X **When a Disaster Is Imminent Phase** - After alerts, prepare structures, evacuate, or take necessary actions.
- X **After Disaster Strikes - Emergency Phase** - Emergency services in rescue efforts.
- X **Relief Phase** - Damage assessment, emergency assistance for needs, and media coverage.
- X **Recovery Phase** - Six to nine months, or longer. Church becomes more involved with victims.
- X **Aftermath Phase** - Assess methods used.

GETTING READY

A copy of the Conference brochure, "Preparation Guide for Local Churches" is included in this document. Just as disasters vary in definition and magnitude, the response that people of a given area make may vary even more. The approach that the brochure that our North Carolina Conference distributes is interrogatory in nature. In answering the questions posed you define your particular needs and resources in preparing for the next crisis.

LOCAL CLERGY & CHURCH

The local church and its pastor should be familiar with the Conference Brochure entitled "Preparation Guide For Local Churches" to the degree that all the questions are answered. Additional resources may be found on the Conference Website at WWW.NCCUMC.ORG/DISASTER . Also available on the website is the guide "Protecting the Local Church" that will prove helpful in establishing a disaster plan.

DISTRICT

The District Superintendent and District Disaster Coordinator will work together to ensure that their district is adequately prepared in response to the questions posed in the brochure, "Preparation Guide For Local Churches".

RESIDENT BISHOP

All committees are responsible to the Bishop. They will ensure that all the districts have replied to the questions contained in the brochure "Preparation Guide For Local Churches".

CONFERENCE DISASTER RESPONSE COMMITTEE

This Committee will provide guidance and training that will address the questions posed in the brochure. So that each area will be adequately addressed. The Committee will direct the distribution of physical resources through the Marion Edwards Recovery Center and financial resources through funding to the districts superintendents in the affected area. This Committee is responsible for planning training, and administration for disaster relief. The Committee will work directly with Executive Director of Conference Connectional Ministries; the CDR administers grants, the Director of the MERC Warehouse and helps coordinate the work of other boards and agencies in the relief effort.

Committee consists of: 12 District Coordinators and 7 at-large members. Ex-officio Members: Bishop, Executive Director, Conference Connectional Ministries, a representative from: Methodist Home for Children, Pastoral Care section, a representative from Volunteers in Missions, a representative from the United Methodist Men, and the United Methodist Women.

DISASTER RESPONSE COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATION

- X The Disaster Response Committee is directly accountable to the Bishop or his designate.
- X The membership is nominated by Conference Committee on Nominations and elected by the AC.
- X The Chairperson will be elected by the committee membership for a quadrenium.
- X The committee meets quarterly for administrative and training purposes. Additional meetings will be scheduled as needed.
- X Committee members will receive General Church disaster training at locations provided by UMCOR.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

X The committee will administer the following:

The Conference Central Fund is used for the following:

a) Regular administrative expenses of the committee not associated with any particular disaster.

b) Materials and equipment associated with disaster relief in general;

c) Disaster training.

Disaster Response Funds include collections for disaster relief, grants, and a \$100,000.00 Reserve Fund which is always available through the Conference Treasurer for immediate use.

X All funds collected through Episcopal appeals or direct contributions will be used to assist in current disasters within the bounds of the NC Conference. This fund will be used for both grants and administrative costs associated with disaster relief. When collections exceed demand of a current crisis, remaining funds will be used for future disasters. Excess funds collected specifically for disasters within the NC Annual Conference shall be used only with the approval of the Committee on Disaster Response, Bishop, and Cabinet.

X Excess funds collected specifically for disasters within the bounds of the NC Conference will not be used beyond those bounds without the express approval of the Disaster Response Committee and on the recommendation of the Resident Bishop and the Cabinet. Such expenditures may only be made when a crisis of overwhelming magnitude strikes which exhausts all church appeals and which demands a moral decision to commit funds designated for local use. Under no circumstances will the \$100,000.00 Reserve Fund be used for such purposes.

X The \$100,000.00 Reserve Fund shall be used to initiate the disaster relief effort when other existing funds are insufficient. Expended funds will be replenished by those collected in response to Episcopal appeals. The Reserve Fund will not be used unless an Episcopal appeal has been approved.

X The Disaster Response Committee provides guidelines to expedite the relief effort. They are designed to explain the limits of available assistance. *All* monies raised for disaster relief will be made available for the relief effort until either the funding runs out or requests are no longer submitted.

X The local pastor shall be an important link in the assistance effort. DS's are urged to keep before their pastors the needs for direct involvement in the relief effort.

X The CDR set the limits of grants, approves block grants, and considers all waivers. Once the limits of funding are set, authority for approving household grants rests with the DS and his or her designated agents in the affected areas. Only when a request exceeds a specified limit will the Disaster Response Committee determine if the request will be honored.

RECOVERY PHASE

X The Disaster Response Committee shall be responsible for:

1 Establishing grant procedures.

2 Recruit and coordinate volunteer work teams in cooperation with the Conference Disaster Volunteer Coordinator.

3 Coordinate UMCOR resources and training.

4 Work with Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) Disaster Response Committee to coordinate joint recovery efforts within districts.

5 Provide publicity.

- 6 Account for all funds collected and expended within the NC Conference for disaster relief.
- X The Disaster Response Committee shall determine when its involvement in the disaster recovery effort is completed. At this point, any remaining efforts shall be transferred to other conference boards and agencies as appropriate.

AFTERMATH PHASE

- X A review of the disaster should be held after recovery is completed. The meeting should include all key personnel at all levels of the relief effort to review effectiveness and efficiency and to reflect on areas of improvement for future response/recovery. A statistical overview and final report should be compiled based on the information obtained at the review.

Copies of the report should be sent to the Resident Bishop, the Executive Director of the Conference Council on Ministries, the Conference Treasurer, those attending the Aftermath Meeting, and the UMCOR Catastrophic Response Team assigned to this Disaster as well as members of the Disaster Response Committee.

CONFERENCE DISASTER RESPONSE COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

EARLY PREPARATION PHASE

- X Be familiar with the Conference Disaster Response Plan.
- X Serve as representative, or appoint representative, to the state VOAD (Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster) and the North Carolina Interfaith Disaster Response Committee.
- X Lead the Conference Disaster Response Committee and resourcing local churches in preparing for disasters.
- X Schedule training and organization for the Committee, Response Support Team, and others.

WHEN A DISASTER IS IMMINENT

- X Monitor the Media for updates and respond accordingly
- X Contact the Members of the Disaster Response Committee to put them on Alert.
- X If an evacuation is ordered go to the North Carolina Emergency Operations Center, if possible. Notify Bishop and the Director of Council on Ministries of your whereabouts.

AFTER A DISASTER STRIKES

- X Contact all of the District Coordinators effected. Then the Bishop and Conference leadership of extent of disaster and status of response within bounds of the AC.

RELIEF PHASE

- X Contact Department of Emergency Management for an initial overview of the damage. Review information and determine the districts affected. Pass information on to Bishop and affected district superintendents and district disaster response coordinator. If an Episcopal tour is requested by a District Superintendent, the trip should be discussed and planned. The Bishop will be notified of the time and place of the initial meeting.

- X When UMCOR is invited to support the Conference efforts, the Coordinator will, with the UMCOR personnel, complete a disaster assessment.

RECOVERY PHASE

- X Supervise administration and disbursement of any funds or material, and donations provided by the denomination.
- X Assist residents in establishing their own long-term relief program.
- X For very large disasters, hired staff will be secured and given authority to carry out their duties.

FUNDING PROCEDURES

Funding Procedures and forms will be posted on the Conference Website
WWW.NCCUMC.ORG/DISASTER.

- X The following policies apply: *Duplicate grants will be rejected.*
 - X *Who can apply?* All individual households can apply for Emergency Living and Rebuilding Funds.

EMERGENCY BLOCK GRANTS

- X Block Grants are monies that are given to local churches, organizations or agencies providing direct relief to the victims of a disaster, for administrative overhead or direct relief as the situation dictates. Agencies receiving Block Grants will give a written report as to how disbursed monies were spent.
- X Unless previous arrangements are made, funds remaining after the relief effort ceases will be returned to the Disaster Response Committee through the Conference Treasurer. The system of recapture must be clearly explained to the recipient prior to grant approval. The following options may be used:
 - X Checks will be delivered in person by the local pastor or by the designated agent-initiating request.
 - X All surplus monies will be returned to the Disaster Response Committee's account.
 - X A grant may be made on a permanent basis with no expectation for return of funds.
- X Funds may be awarded to individual households to defray emergency living expenses for costs of expenses such as food, clothing, shelter, and medical expenses. They may also include bills for normal living costs which cannot be met due to the effects of the disaster and which are necessary to the health and well being of the family.
- X It is recommended that *checks be made payable to creditors or merchants.*

LIMITS.

- X Allotments will not exceed \$500.00.

RECOVERY PHASE

Rebuilding Funds will be issued to individual households for rebuilding or repair of structures damaged as result of the disaster. Rebuilding Funds may be in the form of a check or a voucher for building materials from the Marion Edwards Recovery Center. Needs and requests will be assessed and handled by a representative of the Marion Edwards Recovery Center.

Limits

- X Limits will not exceed \$2,000.00 per household of monies and/or material from the Marion Edwards Recovery Center.

Application procedures

- X Requests for Rebuilding Funds will be made through the designated office of the Disaster Recovery Ministries.

Grants are approved by Chair of Disaster Response Committee or the Disaster Response Committee.

Grants requests will be forwarded to Conference Treasurer.

SOURCES OF HELP

There are several primary sources of help for you as you organize for disaster relief.

- X The **North Carolina Annual Conference** will help through your District Disaster Response Coordinator. Using the Master Plan for Disaster Relief, the basic foundation for developing an ecumenical effort can be modified for your group. Funding may also be available through a block grant from the Disaster Response Committee.
- X The **United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)** will provide training assistance on request. If you desire help from a UMCOR trainer, contact your District Disaster Response Coordinator.
- X **Church World Service (CWS)**, a division of the National Council of Churches in the USA, provides consultants and resources in support of ecumenical disaster response efforts. CWS has trained consultants in North Carolina and draws others from around the nation.