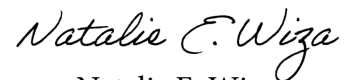


07.15.25

Explanatory Document

The purpose of this partial document is to provide Aurora City Council members more information regarding the benefits of entering into a Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement with our local grassroots non-governmental organizations.

To review the entire document *How to Develop Agreements for Mass Care Services: A Guide for State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Governments and Non-Governmental Organizations* (July 2022) please use this [LINK](#)



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CHAPTER 2: USING NON-GOVERNMENTAL RESOURCES

Chapter 2 reviews the benefits of using NGO resources, highlighting their ability to fill significant SLTT government capability and resource gaps. The chapter also provides a brief case study to demonstrate the effective use of NGO resources during an incident. For SLTT governments and NGOs with MOAs already in place, this chapter serves as an additional resource and guidance for future MOAs. This guidance does not intend to suggest that SLTT governments and NGOs must revise existing MOAs.

Benefits of Leveraging NGO Resources and Capabilities

SLTT governments alone often do not have all the necessary capabilities and resources to conduct preparedness activities, build community resilience, or respond to and recover from an incident. **NGOs can provide a range of resources, support capabilities, innovative technology, and expertise to SLTT governments.** Moreover, these NGO partners are critical to the effective planning of incident operations, especially where their capabilities and expertise provides vital—and often irreplaceable—contributions to life-sustaining operations.

Table 1 below lists more specific benefits of leveraging NGO resources and capabilities to fill SLTT government gaps.

Table 1: Key Benefits of Using NGO Resources and Capabilities

Benefit	Description
Enables a Ground-Up Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Many, though not all, non-governmental organizations (NGO) conduct their work in a ground-up manner using local capacity, local and regional organizations, familiarity, and close relations with the community to implement programs.⁶NGO presence in local communities may also result in economic benefits as NGO staff frequent local businesses.
Provides Community-Specific Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">NGOs often have vital community-specific knowledge after a disaster because they can more quickly identify community assets and deficits.Many NGOs are a permanent part of a given community and focus directly on community development and resilience-building during response and recovery.Many NGO personnel live in the community and can provide information about those who are underserved and/or have traditionally experienced inequitable outcomes after an incident. They also are well established and can provide information on historical inequities that may impact response and recovery.
Ensures Unity of Effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Close coordination between state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) governments and NGOs creates a unity of effort and can provide mutually beneficial, incident-specific support.

⁶ This may not always be the case for larger NGOs; particularly those with national or international organizational presence.

Benefit	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of NGO resources and services can support survivors and responders and help stabilize an incident more quickly, as NGO resources are often more readily available and can often deploy faster. This promotes the community's physical and economic recovery. • As part of the coordination of NGO resources and capabilities, SLTT governments can more easily engage NGOs in problem-solving discussions.
Strengthens Community Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs are instrumental in providing direct services, including health, animal welfare, and employment programs, and often serve as the link in connecting community members to financial services. • NGOs are a critical component of collaborative community efforts, including strengthening social networks by enhancing connections between residents and community organizations and participating in long-term recovery committees (or similar entities), which connect survivors with local agencies and services. • NGOs work on a continuous basis to increase community and individual resilience by developing economic resources; providing additional funding, supplies, and personnel; reducing risk; reducing resource inequities; and attending to areas of social vulnerability in communities, including underserved populations. • NGOs also provide aid, services, and social supports to persons with disabilities and others with access or functional needs, as well as other underserved populations.
Supports Underserved Areas and Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many NGOs support underserved areas and populations, bringing an expanded level of access to survivors through their prior work. For example, community members using a food pantry prior to an incident may have a significant level of trust with the pantry and its staff. This pre-existing relationship may cause them to be more willing to access disaster assistance because they can access it through a trusted source. • NGOs embedded in rural areas may have the clearest understanding of where the pockets of vulnerable populations are located and areas experiencing historical inequities.
Augments the Available Trained and Certified Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs increase the availability of certified and trained individuals—including those with critical technical expertise—and specialized supplies and equipment (especially in medical, animal welfare, and disability programs). • NGOs with a national presence can surge staff and resources to an incident from other locations around the country when needed. This includes surging in staff with experience working with specific underserved communities or other relevant knowledge (e.g., language fluency, cultural and historical awareness).
Provides Highly Adaptable Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many NGOs, both large and small, are highly flexible and have the capacity to adapt rapidly to changing environments.
Enhances Support for Underserved Communities Including Individuals with Disabilities and Others with Access and Functional Needs, such as people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many NGOs are a useful resource for services and resources related to individuals with disabilities, access and functional needs, and those with LEP. • NGOs can support the delivery of childcare or mental health resources. • NGOs can assist these underserved populations with applying for and navigating government support programs.

Benefit	Description
Enhances Public Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NGOs traditionally have relationships with the media, enabling them to create public awareness and maintain focus on issues they consider important. These relationships can be useful during incidents, raising awareness of the situation and encouraging donors to provide support.• Many NGOs can have a nimble social media presence to help spread messaging about community (including SLTT) recovery programs, shelters, and other information. This is especially important for communities that do not typically interface with traditional government information sources.
Provides Grant Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some NGOs provide grant funding covering costs not supported by jurisdictions (e.g., care for animals not defined as a household pet in the FEMA Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act reimbursement guidelines).

Case Study: Effective Use of Non-Governmental Resources

This section includes a brief case study summarizing an example of an SLTT government using **NGO resources effectively**, leading to **mutually beneficial outcomes** for the SLTT government and the NGO.

Providing Feeding Assistance with Non-Governmental Resources

World Central Kitchen is a not-for-profit organization devoted to providing meals to survivors in the wake of natural disasters. World Central Kitchen developed a program model that helps local jurisdictions mobilize restaurants to produce nutritious meals, which World Central Kitchen then distributes at community feeding sites or through individualized deliveries. These programs help to feed residents and financially support restaurants and the local economy, filling a key food assistance gap that exists in many SLTT governments.



A chef prepares meals for World Central Kitchen to distribute to the community.

When the effects of COVID-19 pushed local soup kitchens and food banks that supported underserved communities in Oakland and Alameda County to their breaking point in April 2019, the City of Oakland solicited help from non-traditional partners. For example, World Central Kitchen signed an MOU with the City of Oakland, California to assist in meal delivery for Oakland residents in need. World Central Kitchen first engaged the Mayor's Office to identify the correct internal lead to coordinate the agreement. They worked with the City's Director of Interdepartmental Operations and other stakeholders at the city and state level to jointly determine their scope of services and identify residents in need of meals. World Central Kitchen then recruited 131 restaurants across both Oakland and Alameda County who represent wide geographic, cultural, and size ranges to assist in preparing meals. They oversee the coordination of meal preparation and

distribution, ensuring participating restaurants meet World Central Kitchen Restaurant Partner Guidelines and that the intended recipients receive the prepared meals.

As part of this relationship, World Central Kitchen coordinates weekly with the City of Oakland to:

- Provide updates on their progress,
- Discuss weekly meal counts and distribution methods, and
- Identify community needs.

As of September 2021, World Central Kitchen prepared and delivered approximately 190,000 meals for individuals in need across Oakland and Alameda County. For additional examples of the effective use of non-governmental resources, refer to the [FEMA Interagency Recovery Coordination Case Studies](#).

CHAPTER 3: INTRODUCTION TO MEMORANDUMS OF AGREEMENT AND MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING

Chapter 3 defines MOAs and MOUs, clarifying the nuances between the two types of memorandums. This chapter also identifies the benefits of developing MOAs and MOUs as mechanisms for leveraging NGO resources and capabilities during incident response and recovery, as well as for certain preparedness activities.

Defining Memorandums of Agreement and Understanding

MOAs and MOUs help identify and determine who will assist with providing mass care services, the relevant resources, and the location of where the services and resources are necessary.⁷ MOAs and MOUs should facilitate rapid, short-term deployment of support before, during, and/or after an incident has occurred. They are written agreements between organizations needing specific goods or services from one organization to support the other. Organizations often use these documents to clarify or memorialize roles, relationships, and expectations, but MOAs and MOUs are not intended to be legally binding or enforceable in court.

Memorandums of Agreement

MOAs are documents written between parties facilitating cooperative work on an agreed upon project or to meet an agreed upon objective. MOAs describe in detail, the specific responsibilities of, and actions taken by, each of the parties to accomplish their shared goals. MOAs additionally allocate and minimize the risks of each party's participation.

Example Memorandum of Agreement

The Michigan State Police, Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division and the Food Bank Council of Michigan developed an MOA to facilitate the distribution of emergency food supplies to Michigan residents negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The MOA outlined the specific details of the agreement, including roles and responsibilities, reporting and information sharing requirements, MOA points of contact, and other details necessary to ensure a clear and effective agreement.

⁷ SLTT governments cannot transfer their responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, and other civil rights laws using an MOA/MOU. Additionally, any NGO working on behalf of an SLTT government is responsible for meeting the same legal requirements as the SLTT government.

Memorandums of Understanding

MOUs are documents describing a bilateral agreement between parties, expressing a convergence of will between the parties and indicating an intended common line of action—rather than a legal commitment. MOUs also describe very broad concepts of mutual understanding, goals, and plans shared by the parties. These documents do not create duties or legally enforceable liabilities or obligations for any party involved.

In practice, MOAs and MOUs are terms that the emergency management community often uses interchangeably. For simplicity, the remainder of this document will standardize both terms as “MOA”. The guidance provided in this document is relevant to both types of memorandums.

Example Memorandum of Understanding

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) coordinated with the California Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (CSBDR) of the California Southern Baptist Convention to develop an MOU ensuring the swift delivery of needed services to survivors. The MOU codified the commitment of CSBDR’s collaboration with the CDSS by working with its local partner churches, in accordance with CDSS directives. Requested services included providing relief ministries; food at mobile and fixed sites; emotional and spiritual care; and assisting with personal property recovery.

Benefits of Developing Memorandums of Agreement

Developing MOAs allows SLTT governments and NGOs to be better prepared for incidents. Having these agreements in place prior to an incident streamlines the delivery of mass care services for the impacted community. They may also provide support to continuity planning in both the public and private sectors. MOAs outline clear objectives and provide both parties with opportunities to outline their requirements and expectations throughout the activation of the MOA. Moreover, MOAs can help establish clearly defined timelines, and establish costs (where costs are knowable).

Detailing this information reduces uncertainty around each party’s responsibility, avoids duplication of effort, and enhances the decision-making process. MOAs additionally provide the framework for future collaboration by identifying points of contact for each entity, while also establishing realistic assessments of available resources. Moreover, MOAs can lay the groundwork for developing partnerships that address inequities and help ensure equitable outcomes following an incident that leads to activation of the MOA.

As noted above, the development of MOAs is not restricted to response and recovery efforts. Although SLTT governments and NGOs tend to prioritize MOAs related to enhancing the delivery of mass care services and resources during an incident, **SLTT governments and NGOs may also develop MOAs addressing preparedness considerations.** For example, SLTT

governments and NGOs may develop MOAs addressing inventory maintenance, joint trainings and exercises, and other necessary preparedness efforts.

Specific benefits for SLTT governments include the following:

- Formal relationships with NGOs provide insight and details that aid in planning and prioritization for gaps in resources.
- MOAs establish basic reporting for response and recovery efforts, as well as for donated resources related to mass care activities.
- Many NGOs specialize in assisting vulnerable populations and act as a trusted messenger to transmit accessible information from SLTT governments and other sources, which is important for marginalized and underserved communities to reduce inequities in access to services.
- MOAs enable NGOs to serve as force multipliers for SLTT governments' capabilities and resources.

Specific benefits for NGOs include the following:

- MOAs limit the number of people from the same agency reaching out to an NGO for the same information.
- MOAs enhance situational awareness by allowing participation of NGOs in coordination calls or during situation reports.
- MOAs provide an enhanced level of understanding between NGOs and SLTT government partners and may assist in establishing a process for resource requests to sustain and/or expand services in response to an incident.
- Developing MOAs maximizes potential reimbursement opportunities which, if enabled, can lead to a more timely and effective response by the NGO.

Identifying Reimbursement Details in MOAs Can Improve Outcomes

During the 2019 Oklahoma floods, MOAs were in place between the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management and certain Oklahoma Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) members, helping to manage the flow of unsolicited donations. Having these MOAs in place during the floods allowed the VOAD's donation management members to rapidly set up a main multi-agency warehouse and several forward reaching warehouses. **Knowing that the costs associated with this distribution system were reimbursable by the state, as explicitly stated in the MOAs, allowed this process to move forward quickly.** This proved to not only be highly effective in supporting response efforts but was also extremely cost effective for the state compared to their previous model of operating these warehouses directly.