



The Ohio VOAD Mission and Our 4 'C' Connection

Ohio VOAD is the forum where organizations share knowledge and resources throughout the disaster cycle—preparation, response, and recovery—to help disaster survivors and their communities. It is affiliated with the National VOAD.

The National VOAD was founded in 1970 in response to the challenges many disaster organizations experienced following Hurricane Camille, which hit the Gulf Coast in August, 1969. Before this, numerous organizations (both government and private) served disaster victims independently of one another. As a result, help came to the disaster victim haphazardly. Unnecessary duplication of effort often occurred, while at the same time, other needs were not met. People who wanted to volunteer to help their neighbors affected by disaster were often frustrated by the variety of organizations in some areas of service and the total lack of opportunities to serve other needs. Further, there was only limited training for potential volunteers.

Information for victims on available services during disasters was woefully inadequate. Likewise, communication among voluntary disaster agencies was very limited and coordination of services was negligible. In fact, mechanisms for this were non-existent. Today, National VOAD and its state organizations provide leadership and voices for the nonprofit organizations and volunteers that work in all phases of disaster—preparedness, response, relief, recovery, and mitigation.

The Ohio VOAD was created in 1991 (after the Shadyside floods in eastern Ohio with a loss of 27 lives) and officially established its bylaws in 1993. The Ohio VOAD was created to foster a more effective response among volunteer organizations to disasters within Ohio. Ohio VOAD took the opportunity to prove how effective it could be during the 1997-1998 flood emergencies coordinating almost 30 other volunteer organizations throughout the state. Ohio VOAD personnel toiled extended hours throughout the emergency in order to provide a broad range of services to disaster victims. Included in these services were meals, drinking water, childcare, clothing, cleaning assistance and supplies, referrals to other type of assistance, counseling and rebuilding services. The involvement of Ohio VOAD made a difference in the lives of thousands of people.

Ohio VOAD is a state-level counterpart to the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters. Its member organizations meet regularly to coordinate, cooperate, communicate, and collaborate about matters of mutual interest with regards to disaster preparedness and response. The Ohio VOAD has a work station in the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The governor's staff work along side the Ohio VOAD in the state EOC. Ohio VOAD works in full partnership with government and private industry.

Ohio Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (OH VOAD) Mission Statement: To bring together voluntary organizations active in disaster services and foster effective response to the people of Ohio in time of disaster through:

- Cooperation: Through interdependence between/among Ohio VOAD members, to generate resources and share information in response to disaster challenges. Sharing the capacities, resources, and abilities of each organization to respond to disaster – updating and maintaining that understanding. Working in concert with all members before, during, and after the disaster.
 - Communication: Through quarterly meetings and networking among our member organizations to maintain open and on-going information sharing through:
 - Internet email
 - An active website

- Conference calls
- Publication of minutes, training manuals, and disaster assessment and response reports
- Schedules meeting

- Coordination: Through commitments to effective responses to disaster survivors by matching services to their unmet needs with:
 - Advanced planning of the disaster response process
 - Preparation of disaster response resources – knowing who has what and where
 - Equipping the membership to operate in a coordinated process at the point of a disaster

- Collaboration: Through working with the Ohio & county EMAs, FEMA, and other organizations to respond to specific disasters. Types of Services Provided
 - Preparedness and/or mitigation
 - Mass care
 - Emergency assistance and casework
 - Emotional and/or spiritual care
 - Recovery
 - Donations management
 - Volunteer management
 - Outreach and/or information and referral
 - Animals and pets services

Ohio Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (OH VOAD) – Our Values

- Our commitment to provide care and compassion for all people.
- Our coordinated, inclusive approach that provides the basis for a nurturing environment in which disaster response agencies will flourish.
- Our quest for excellence by encouraging best practices and mutual accountability in operational synergy.
- Our work being accomplished in a respectful, non-judgmental, and non-discriminatory manner.
- Our networking efforts focus on building trust, mutual respect, and equal partnerships of community service providers.
- Our desire is to provide hope, make a difference, and offer opportunities for true collaboration that are the true lifeblood and soul of the organization.
- Our agreement to adhere to the National VOAD standards of conduct and service delivery.

Ohio VOAD is there – before a disaster! Survival and quick recovery from a disaster depends on education and planning BEFORE the disaster. Ohio VOAD provides education and networking opportunities for member organizations and the general public through quarterly meetings and on-going regional training.

Preparedness includes activities that seek to prevent casualties, expedite response activities, and minimize property damage. Most of our organizations require a level of training to be sure their volunteers are qualified to supply the services being offered.

Early in the response phase, we rely on our established teams to respond – we add volunteers as the response develops. The presence of untrained volunteers can present coordination challenges and even endanger the volunteer or others.

There are two phases to response: emergency and relief.

Emergency Response: First responders in the emergency phase will be local fire and police departments, and search and rescue teams but others who may initially respond include family, neighbors, churches and community-based organizations. The emergency response is characterized by activities focusing on the preservation of life and property. This is usually a very dangerous environment.

Ohio VOAD is there – after a disaster!

- 15% of disasters are handled by first responders (local police and fire, Red Cross, utility companies, etc.)
- 85% of disasters are handled by volunteers!
- Early response ends when disaster area's safety has been restored and access is open to the areas impacted!
- Ohio VOAD responds through long-term recovery groups (LTRG)!!!!

Relief Response: Requires an organized community effort. Basic human needs include medical services and the provision of food, clothing and temporary shelter. Basic cleanup of homes, businesses and streets begins. This includes:

- Utilities being restored.
- Application for assistance beginning.
- People beginning to move into temporary housing or return home.
- Human, material, and financial resources may begin to flow into the community.

Recovery starts soon after impact and lasts an extended period of time, even up to several years. Typical activities include

- restoration of infrastructure and vital life support systems,
- resumption of the routines of daily life, and
- initiation of plans for permanent housing (repairing, rebuilding or relocating of homes).

Human, material and financial resources may dwindle with decreasing public awareness. A strong, well-organized long-term recovery group can maximize the use of available resources to address recovery needs. Additionally, the incorporation of mitigating activities into a community's recovery process may reduce future loss and impact.

Ohio VOAD works through local long-term groups (LTRG) work with local leaders from the impacted community by offering training and support from Ohio VOAD members with the following:

- Establishing leadership and extended committees
- Raising funds, needed donations, & and long-term recovery response teams
- Developing case management capacities to make assessments of "UNMET NEEDS"
- Coordinating long-term recovery response through:
 - monetary donations
 - recovery teams
 - in-kind donations of household items: furnaces, hot water heaters, furniture, etc.

Ohio VOAD Challenges:

- Donation Management
- Monetary
- Household items
- Donation storage
- Flood and health kits
- Early response coordination – new territory – more of our member bodies have entered into early response phase
- Undeclared individual disasters

For more information, please contact us: Chair [Mary Woodward](#) at 740.732.6700 or [The Ohio VOAD Secretary](#)

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