

# RIO TEXAS CONFERENCE

## DISASTER RESPONSE MINISTRY MANUAL



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# Preface

The Rio Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church is committed to providing assistance following disasters. This manual is prepared in response to this commitment. It outlines the organization and protocols for disaster response and recovery in the conference. In addition, this manual sets out the duties of individuals in the church and provides information regarding various operational aspects of disaster relief and response, such as management of donated goods.

This manual provides a source of policies and procedures that guide disaster response ministry in the Rio Texas Conference. It also provides guidance for various individuals (e.g. pastors and conference leadership) who are not part of the established disaster response structure but may be called upon to provide service when disaster strikes.

# Background Information

## Phases of Disaster

It is useful to identify phases of disasters because the activities of various individuals and entities will vary greatly depending on the phase of the disaster in which they find themselves. For purposes of this document, five disaster phases will be identified. These range from preparing ourselves for disaster to reviewing the response effort with a goal of improving future responses.

The **Readiness Phase** is the period between disasters when planning is done and preparations are made. It is also a time when relationships are built among entities that may be impacted by a disaster or may respond after a disaster occurs.

The **Rescue Phase** is the period immediately after the disaster. The primary activity during this phase is by trained emergency personnel. The disaster area may be evacuated and residents may not be allowed to return to their homes. Outside groups such as Early Response Teams will not be allowed to enter the area. The rescue phase is a time when responders can begin to muster and plan for impending deployment.

The **Relief Phase** is the period when clean up occurs and homes are protected from further damage. Families may return to their homes or may be in shelters or temporary housing. Early Response Teams are deployed during this phase to assist families make their homes safe, sanitary and secure as well as serve the community as needed. Preliminary work to organize for long term recovery begins during the relief phase.

The **Recovery Phase** is the time it takes to get families and the community to a new normal following the disaster. This period requires extensive volunteer and financial support to assist with repair and rebuilding of homes. The work generally is under the direction of a community based Long Term Recovery Group. The Rio Texas Conference works cooperatively with the long term recovery groups during the recovery phase.

The **Review Phase** occurs at the end of the Rescue, Relief and Recovery phases. During review, those involved evaluate the activities to determine what worked well and what could have been done better. Based on this review, all parties involved will initiate action to promote continuous improvement of disaster response ministry.

# Levels of Disaster

Disaster levels are highly subjective and relate more to the ability of a community to respond than to the specific damage done.

- **Low Level:** Involves a limited number of households. Community resources are adequate to provide for affected residents. The local United Methodist Church members should provide assistance as they are able. The District Disaster Response Coordinator should be notified of response activities.
- **Medium Level:** Involves an entire community or several scattered communities. Assistance provided by organizing district response through the Conference or District Disaster Response Coordinator. Early Response Teams may be deployed, depending on the needs of the community.
- **High Level:** Involves a wide area and requires a massive response by state and national agencies. The Disaster Response Committee organizes a conference-wide response to the crisis and assists districts and local churches. Early Response Teams may be invited to cross conference boundaries in response to high level disasters.

## The Role of UMCOR in Disaster Response

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is a partner agency of Rio Texas Disaster Response. They support domestic disaster response in three primary areas:

- **Training** – They provide training and credentialing of Early Response Teams (ERTs), Disaster Case Managers for long-term recovery as well as training resources such as the Connecting Neighbors curriculum. In addition, they support training workshops at the jurisdictional and national level that provide training opportunities for disaster response personnel.
- **Funding** – UMCOR provides grants to supplement the resources available in the conference. Emergency grants of up to \$10,000 are available to meet needs in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. Recovery Grants provide larger amounts of funding for recovery efforts. They may be for specific programs such as case management or for more general items like meeting unmet needs.
- **Consultation** – UMCOR provides a variety of consultation services to meet special needs related to disaster response. For example, they may be called upon to provide advice to disaster response leadership during large disasters, to communities attempting to establish long term recovery organizations, or to congregations with spiritual and emotional crises as they recover from disaster.

# Rio Texas Conference Disaster Response Committee

*The Rio Texas Conference Disaster Response Committee establishes policy and procedures for disaster response ministry.*

The **Conference Disaster Response Committee** relates to the Conference Mission Vitality Center. The functions of the Conference Disaster Response Committee are to:

- Set broad policies and procedures related to disaster response
- Prepare and maintain a Conference Disaster Response Manual
- Facilitate disaster response planning throughout the conference
- Monitor the progress of the response
- Evaluate response effectiveness

Members of the committee are the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator (serves as chair), all district Disaster Response Coordinators, Conference United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) Coordinator, the Disaster Response Communications Coordinator, the Martinez Disaster Response Center Coordinator, and at-large members as appropriate to achieve the disaster response mission. The Director of Outreach Vitality serves as an ex-officio member of the committee

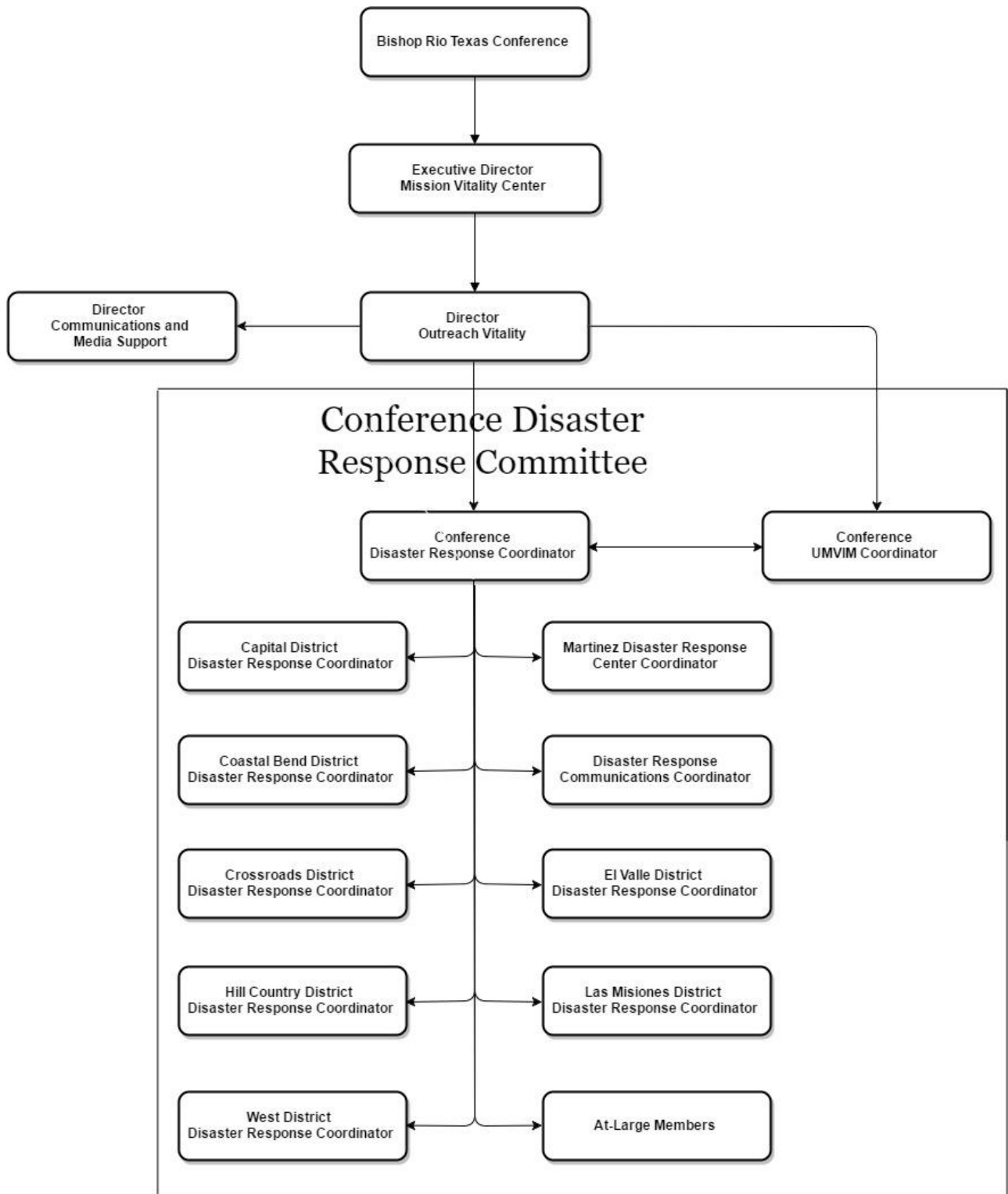
The Committee will meet at least one time per year. Additional meetings may be called by the Chair or at the request of three members of the committee.

## Executive Committee

A Conference Disaster Response Executive Committee will be elected by the Conference Disaster Response Committee at the beginning of each year. The committee will be comprised of the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator (chair) and two members of the Conference Disaster Response Committee.

The Executive Committee is given authority to act quickly when extraordinary circumstances deem it necessary, without consent by the full Committee. In addition, the executive committee must approve budgeted purchases greater than \$800 (see Financial Policies and Procedures).

# Organizational Chart of the Disaster Response Committee





# Duties and Responsibilities of the Disaster Response Committee Members

## The Conference Disaster Response Coordinator

### Primary Roles:

- Provide leadership to all phases of the disaster response ministry
- Coordinate and communicate disaster response plans and activities with Rio Texas Conference leadership
- Communicate Rio Texas Conference disaster response needs with UMCOR and the South Central Jurisdiction UMVIM/Disaster Response Coordinator
- Coordinate Rio Texas Disaster Response with Texas Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (TVOAD), regional VOADs, Texas Department of Emergency Management and other organizations responding to disasters in the geographic area of the Rio Texas Conference

### Readiness Phase

- Develop and maintain a current conference disaster response manual
- Work with District Superintendents and conference leadership to fill District Disaster Response Coordinator positions and other positions on the Conference Disaster Response Committee
- Work with District Disaster Response Coordinators and UMCOR authorized Early Response Team (ERT) trainers to schedule ERT training
- Establish working relationships with Texas VOAD and its members

### Rescue Phase

- Establish an appropriate communications system for the disaster (e.g. periodic conference call)
- Work with the District Disaster Response Coordinator to recruit an ERT On-Site Manager for the disaster

### Relief Phase

- Work with the District Disaster Response Coordinators to assess needs following the disaster
- Ask the Bishop to request an UMCOR Emergency Grant if resources are needed
- Determine when and where ERTs are to be deployed and issue a call for deployment at the appropriate time
- Work with the warehouse manager and affected communities to identify needs for flood buckets and have them delivered to appropriate sites
- When needed, contact the South Central Jurisdiction to issue an invitation to ERTs from outside the Conference
- Provide assistance to local communities as they establish Long Term Recovery Organizations
- Monitor the response leadership for burn out and stress

### Recovery Phase

- Determine recovery needs of the community and how the Rio Texas Conference can assist in providing resources to meet those needs

- Apply for UMCOR Recovery Grants as deemed appropriate
- Encourage local and district leaders to serve on the Long Term Recovery Organizations
- Work with the Conference UMVIM Coordinator to recruit volunteers to assist with recovery work
- Work with conference and district leadership to help raise funds to assist families in long term recovery

### **Review Phase**

- Conduct an after action review of the Conference Disaster Response effort. (After action reviews should be conducted at the end of relief activities as appropriate and not only at the close of all response activities)
- Complete close-out reports for grants
- Modify Conference Disaster Response Manual based on successes and failures identified in the after action reviews

# **District Disaster Response Coordinators**

## **Primary Roles**

- Serve as the primary point person for disasters in the district
- Communicate and coordinate disaster response activities and programs to district leadership and churches
- Serve on the Conference Disaster Response Committee

## **Readiness phase**

- Encourage churches in the district to develop disaster response plans
- Establish a working relationship with area emergency management personnel and other groups or agencies who may be involved in disaster response and recovery
- Encourage volunteerism and promote the need to participate in available disaster response trainings
- Establish and foster development of ERT clusters
- Assess the capacity of the churches in the district to host ERTs and UMVIM Teams
- Assess the availability of other resources in the local area to host teams (Campgrounds, other churches, youth camps, etc.)

## **Rescue Phase**

- Contact pastors in affected area to plan a visit
- Communicate the needs to the District Superintendent in the event that pastors, congregants or church property experienced damage
- Plan a preliminary visit to the affected area as soon as it is safe and the area is open. The District Disaster Response Coordinator might be accompanied by the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator, District Superintendent and pastors from the affected communities as available and deemed appropriate
- Contact Emergency Management Office(s) in the affected area to determine needs and offer assistance
- Assist the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator in identifying, recruiting and training an On Site Manager for the event

## **Relief Phase**

- Work with conference leadership to coordinate ERT assignments and accommodations
- Maintain contact with Emergency Management Office to determine needs and offer assistance
- Monitor ERT record keeping and ensure that appropriate records and forms are forwarded to the Conference Communications Coordinator

## **Recovery Phase**

- Offer assistance in the organization of a Long Term Recovery Committee. (This may actually happen during the relief phase of the disaster)
- Ensure ongoing participation and communication with the Long Term Recovery Committee
- Work with District UMVIM Coordinator to recruit volunteers for long term recovery
- Monitor Long Term Recovery record keeping

**Review Phase**

- Participate in after action reviews

# **Disaster Response Communications Coordinator**

## **Primary Roles**

- Maintain digital and hard-copy records associated with disaster response and recovery, especially volunteer hours, individual volunteer liability releases and property access forms
- Maintain the ERT database in conjunction with Conference Disaster Response Coordinator, ERT Trainers and the person assigned to create ERT badges
- Act as the communications link between the Conference Disaster Response Committee leadership and volunteers in regards to disasters
- Establish and maintain a presence on current Social Media in order to maintain open communications with the Conference Disaster Response Committee leadership and volunteers throughout the various phases of disasters
- Provide current information to the Conference Communications Office regarding disaster response accomplishments and opportunities
- Maintain backup of digital data files

## **Readiness phase**

- Maintain accounts in appropriate social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) so that they are viable means of communication when needed
- Use email, social media and other methods to reach out to and connect with those who may be willing to volunteer in the event of a disaster
- Publicize and advertise all available training and networking opportunities

## **Rescue Phase**

- Communicate anticipated deployment needs to District Disaster Response Coordinators and ERTs

## **Relief Phase**

- Communicate known needs to ERTs and other volunteers through social media, email and other available means
- Coordinate with Conference and District Disaster Response Coordinators, Cluster Leaders and On-Site Managers for the reporting and retention of volunteer hours, individual volunteer liability releases and property access forms

## **Recovery Phase**

- Communicate known needs to volunteers through social media, email and other available means
- Assist the Conference UVMIM Coordinator with the reporting and retention of volunteer hours and other forms

## **Review Phase**

- Participate in after action reviews

# **Martinez Disaster Response Center Coordinator**

## **Primary Roles**

- Oversee the operations of the Martinez Disaster Response Center
- Coordinate the distribution of UMCOR kits in response to a disaster
- Provide monthly inventory of UMCOR kits to UMCOR Sager Brown

## **Readiness phase**

- Work with the UMVIM Coordinator to recruit volunteers to assist with warehouse functions
- Work with volunteers to verify and process UMCOR kits received by the warehouse
- Prepare kits received at the warehouse for shipment

## **Rescue Phase**

- Make plans to ship cleaning kits (and other kits if needed) to appropriate areas

## **Relief Phase**

- Ship cleaning kits (and other kits if needed) to appropriate areas as directed

## **Recovery Phase**

- Communicate the need for restocking kits to the desired level

## **Review Phase**

- Participate in the after action review

# **Conference UMVIM Coordinator – (Disaster Response Responsibilities)**

## **Primary Roles:**

- Recruit and organize volunteers for long term recovery needs
- Serve on the Conference Disaster Response Committee

## **Readiness phase**

- Serve as a member of the Disaster Response Committee
- Work with the Conference Disaster Response Committee in the planning process
- Make certain that appropriate Early Response Team and UMVIM/Team Leader Trainings are conducted

## **Rescue Phase**

- N/A

## **Relief Phase**

- Assist in the deployment of ERTs
- Begin planning for Long-Term Recovery

## **Recovery Phase**

- Recruit and deploy UMVIM teams to assist in the recovery operations of Long Term Recovery Organizations
- Maintain records of the volunteer contributions to the recovery effort and forward them to the Disaster Response Communications Coordinator

## **Review Phase**

- Participate in after action reviews

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# Duties and Responsibilities of Conference Leadership

## The Role of the Bishop

### Primary Roles:

- Serve as a symbol of a caring church in the response to disasters
- Provide leadership to the disaster response effort by assuring that personnel and resources are in place so the church is prepared to respond to disasters
- Encourage congregations in the Conference to provide financial and volunteer resources to the disaster response effort

### Readiness phase

- Appoint a Conference Disaster Response Coordinator
- Review the Conference Disaster Response Manual and make suggestions as appropriate
- Ensure familiarity with the Disaster Response Manual by the Cabinet and Extended Cabinet

### Rescue Phase

- Request an Emergency Grant from UMCOR as determined in discussions with the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator and the Director of Outreach Vitality
- Communicate with District Superintendents in affected area(s) to ensure them that they have the support of the Bishop

### Relief Phase

- Visit the affected area when appropriate, to demonstrate the support of the church to the community
- Depending upon the extent of damage, issue a Bishop's call for a special offering designated for "Conference Disaster Response and Recovery Efforts"
- Monitor the District Superintendents and Pastors in the affected area for burn out and stress

### Recovery Phase

- Provide continuing encouragement to the recovery effort
- Monitor the district superintendents and pastors in the affected area for burn out and stress

### Review Phase

- Depending on availability and the size of the disaster, participate in the after action review



# **The Role of District Superintendents**

## **Primary roles:**

- Serve as pastor to pastors during a disaster
- Appoint a District Disaster Response Coordinator

## **Readiness phase**

- Communicate the Conference Disaster Response Manual to district leadership and churches
- Encourage churches in the district to plan for disasters by using UMCOR's Connecting Neighbors program

## **Rescue Phase**

- Contact pastors in the affected area to determine the extent to which churches and communities have been impacted and offer assistance as appropriate
- Communicate disaster response needs to District and Conference Disaster Response Coordinators
- Participate in conference calls organized to facilitate communication among conference entities responding to the disaster
- Encourage giving to the Conference Disaster Response Fund

## **Relief Phase**

- Assess damage to churches and assist congregations to make temporary arrangements for facilities where necessary
- Monitor pastors in the affected area for burn out and stress
- If available, accompany Conference Disaster Response Coordinator, District Disaster Response Coordinator and pastors to make an assessment tour of the affected area and area churches when it is safe to do so
- Invite the Bishop to visit the affected area and churches as appropriate
- Offer support to churches in the affected area as they minister to the community in the aftermath of the disaster
- Encourage giving to the Conference Disaster Response Fund

## **Recovery Phase**

- Monitor pastors in the affected area for burn out and stress related problems
- Offer support to churches in the affected area as they minister to the community in the aftermath of the disaster
- Encourage giving to the Conference Disaster Response Fund

## **Review Phase**

- Participate in after action reviews

# **The Role of United Methodist Pastors**

## **Primary Roles:**

- Minister to the congregation and community in times of disaster
- Serve as a contact for the disaster response leadership regarding the situation on the ground when a disaster occurs in the community

## **Readiness phase**

- Encourage the church and members of the congregation to plan for disaster
- Designate a Disaster Response Coordinator

## **Rescue Phase**

- Assess damage to church property and assess the needs of the community
- Provide support to disaster responders as resources permit
- Communicate the needs of the community to the District Disaster Response Coordinator

## **Relief Phase**

- Provide support to disaster responders as resources permit
- Seek opportunities to minister to the community in the aftermath of the disaster

## **Recovery Phase**

- Seek opportunities to minister to the community in the aftermath of the disaster
- Monitor the recovery of disaster survivors in the congregation giving special attention to anniversaries and other events that may give rise to emotional crises

## **Review Phase**

- Participate in after action reviews
- Conduct an after action review in the church and revise the church disaster response plan as needed

# **The Role of the Director of Outreach Vitality**

## **Primary Roles**

- Serve as the primary contact and communication link between the Disaster Response Committee and the Conference administration by serving as an ex-officio member of the Conference Disaster Response Committee
- Provide administrative support to the Conference Disaster Response Committee
- Serve as the administrative official relative to employment of disaster response workers (e.g. case managers) and for the payment of funds

## **Readiness Phase**

- Foster an environment that encourages training and preparation for disasters in the Conference
- Ensure that the Bishop and Cabinet are kept apprised of the need to encourage preparation for disasters

## **Rescue Phase**

- Work with the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator and the Bishop to determine if an UMCOR Emergency Grant should be requested
- Provide administrative support as the Conference Disaster Response Committee responds to the disaster

## **Relief Phase**

- Provide administrative support as the Conference Disaster Response Committee prepares to respond to the disaster.
- Monitor disaster response leadership for burnout and stress

## **Recovery Phase**

- Participate with the Conference Disaster Response Committee to evaluate the need for grant assistance from UMCOR
- Provide administrative support to apply for and report on UMCOR grants
- Cooperate with UMCOR leadership to recruit volunteers for the recovery effort

## **Review Phase**

- Participate in the after action review

# **The Role of the Conference Director of Communications and Media Support**

## **Primary Roles**

- Provide communications and media support to promote the disaster response effort
- Provide advice to the Conference Disaster Response Committee regarding promotion of disaster response activities

## **Readiness phase**

- Provide timely publicity of Disaster Response activities and needs to foster awareness of disaster response in periods when disasters are not in the news

## **Rescue Phase**

- Increase awareness that the conference is working with those in need by publicizing ongoing preparations and plans
- Assist in publicizing the impending deployment of Early Response Teams so that ERT members are making plans to deploy when called

## **Relief Phase**

- Provide information on the need for financial support and the procedures for making gifts to the Conference Disaster Response Fund
- Provide information to the church regarding in-kind gifts that are needed and in-kind items that are not needed

## **Recovery Phase**

- Provide timely information on the ongoing long term recovery effort in disaster areas and how the church can provide financial support and volunteer workers to assist with home repairs and other recovery activities

## **Review Phase**

- Participate in the after action review with a special eye toward the publicity and communication efforts throughout the different phases of the disaster

# Financial Policies and Procedures

## Sources of Funds

Disaster ministry of the Rio Texas Conference is funded from designated gifts to the Conference Disaster Response Fund and from grants. Historically UMCOR has been the primary source of grant funds. It is anticipated that additional sources of grant funds will be required to adequately respond to future disasters.

Gifts from churches and individuals are the primary way that we fund disaster response within the conference. Checks should be made to “Rio Texas Conference” with “Disaster Response Fund” in the memo line.

Gifts to the Disaster Response Fund may be undesignated or designated to a particular purpose (e.g. a particular disaster or warehouse operations). The Conference Disaster Response Fund is designated as a Conference Advance Special (#2050). The Conference Disaster Response Coordinator will actively encourage support of the disaster ministry through gifts to the Conference Disaster Response Fund. A special Bishop’s Appeal may be requested following especially devastating disasters.

UMCOR grants received by the Conference have included: Emergency Grants and Recovery Grants. Emergency Grants, up to \$10,000, are requested by the Bishop based on a budget provided by the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator. Recovery Grants may be for any amount but generally for \$100,000 or less. The Conference Disaster Response Coordinator, in consultation with appropriate individuals related to the recovery effort, will apply for these grants. Examples of recovery needs supported by UMCOR include case management, construction management or repair and rebuilding assistance.

## Budget

A budget will be approved by the Conference Disaster Response Committee each calendar year. The budget will be based on discretionary funds available in the Conference Disaster Response Fund on January 1 of each year. Budgeted expenditures up to \$800 can be authorized by the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator. For budgeted expenditures greater than \$800, the Coordinator must obtain authorization from the Executive Committee. If the Executive Committee cannot agree, the expenditure must be approved by a majority vote of the Conference Disaster Response Committee.

A revised budget must be approved in order to spend additional discretionary funds that become available during the year. The Disaster Response Committee must approve expenditures in excess of budgeted amounts.

## Grant Funds

Grants received must be spent in accordance with the budget approved by the funding agency. Where specific authorization is necessary, the authorization should follow the same

protocols as for budgeted funds in the Conference Disaster Response Budget.

A contingency reserve equal to 15 percent of program expenses involving personnel hired under the grant will be included in the Conference Disaster Response Budget. The reserve is to be used in the event of budget overruns. The Disaster Response Coordinator should monitor grant expenses and report and explain potential budget overruns to the Committee at the earliest possible date.

# Disaster Response Protocols

## Relief Phase

### Early Response Teams (ERTs)

An Early Response Team is a *specialized, trained and credentialed team of volunteers* that responds in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, if and when requested.

The **primary task** of the Early Response Team is to provide a caring Christian presence in the aftermath of a disaster. They do this through tasks such as removing debris, installing temporary roof tarps, cleaning out flooded homes and generally trying to stop further damage to property following a disaster.

### ERT Call-Out Procedures

Early Response Teams or individuals trained for early response should not self-deploy. The Conference Disaster Response Committee and UMCOR have established the following protocols and procedures for deploying Early Response Teams.

- When a disaster occurs, the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator will direct the Disaster Response Communications Coordinator to send a “heads up” email to ERTs and to share relevant information on available social media.
  - Generally, the initial notification will come at the onset of the disaster during the rescue phase, alerting ERTs to prepare
    - Church team leaders and cluster leaders should reach out to their people and encourage initial planning
    - Individuals should make preparations and communicate their availability to the church team or cluster leader
  - District Disaster Response Coordinators and Cluster Leaders are encouraged to reach out to those in their areas and reinforce the impending needs and to encourage participation
- After consulting with the District Disaster Response Coordinator and local authorities, the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator will issue a call for ERTs to deploy at the appropriate time and approved locations.
- The call for deployment will provide details about registration of team or individuals, on-site management of ERTs for the event and information about overnight accommodations for ERT members.
- Procedures for forming teams made up of individuals and partial teams will be developed to provide opportunities for all trained individuals to deploy.
- ERTs need to remember that the Response Phase will last from several days to weeks. Even if they cannot respond initially, there will likely be additional opportunities, and they should plan to respond as they can.

## **On -Site Manager**

The Conference Disaster Response Coordinator will identify and designate an On-Site Manager who will act as the point person for United Methodist Disaster Response in a community and will assist in the establishment of a hosting site for ERT's. Whenever possible, a host site should provide the following:

- Accurate information to teams outside the affected area
- Relief for locally affected people
- Housing for the teams, bath/shower facilities or their nearest location
- Materials resources
- Assessment for homes/families that need ERT assistance

Specific, just-in-time training will be provided for the On-Site Manager by the conference disaster response leadership as needed.

## **Recovery Phase**

Teams that deploy to assist in long term recovery are under the general direction of the Conference UMVIM Committee. The role of the Conference Disaster Response Committee is to foster relations with Long Term Recovery Committees and maintain a list of needs for recovery teams. Additionally, the committee may assist with UMCOR funding requests, development of, and participation on Long Term Recovery Committees, coordination and training of Disaster Case Managers related to Long Term Recovery Committees and other roles where disaster response expertise is needed.



# Other Concerns and Procedures

## Principle of Cooperative Effort

Rio Texas Disaster Response Ministry works in cooperation with other organizations and government agencies. These may be denominational (e.g. Baptist Men, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and Salvation Army), secular nonprofit (e.g. American Red Cross and Food Bank), or governmental (e.g. Federal Emergency Management Agency, Texas Department of Emergency Management and city and county departments of emergency management). Efforts to promote cooperation are fostered by participation in the Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (TVOAD) and in regional VOADS.

Long Term Recovery offers special opportunities for cooperation by participation in Long Term Recovery Organizations. This begins by participating in the organization of these groups after a disaster but extends to cooperation during the recovery. For example, Rio Texas Disaster Response Funds may be used to fund unmet needs identified by the Long Term Recovery Organization's Unmet Needs Committee, or UMCOR funding may be sought for Case Management work in cooperation with the Long Term Recovery Organization.

## Training and Equipping

There are various resources available to help equip churches, groups and individuals to do disaster response and recovery better.

**Connecting Neighbors** – This curriculum is designed to help churches in three areas and can be presented to applicable groups in the church as needed:

- **Personal Preparedness** – Great for small groups to help people begin to prepare for disasters
- **Preparing the church** – A tool for clergy, administrative staff, trustees or Church Council planning for protection of church facilities, furnishings, equipment and data in the event of disaster.
- **Outreach** – In the aftermath of disasters, churches are always looked to as a resource and for leadership through difficulty. This segment will help you plan how you can be that “shining light on a hill” in the community.

### Early Response Team

- Basic training and certification
- Recertification
- Advanced Courses
  - On-Site Coordination
  - Assessment
  - Team Leader
  - Cleanout
  - Chainsaw Operator

For more information, see Appendix B, go to [www.riotexas.org](http://www.riotexas.org) or contact the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator

## Donated Goods

In the aftermath of a disaster, people and congregations who want to help are good at collecting items they hope survivors will need. It is important that only the needed items are collected and a plan is in place to distribute them to those who need it. Useful guidelines to consider before collecting items for disaster survivors include the following:

- **No clothing!** Seventh-day Adventists and other organizations specialize in this area. Donate clothing directly to these organizations
- Never send supplies unannounced or unexpected
- In-kind (non-cash) donations will be received based on specific needs or otherwise redirected to other agencies
- Location for collection/distribution of donated goods will be determined by local coordinator based on available space and specific needs
- **Cash donations are recommended** and should be sent to the Conference Treasurer designated for the **Conference Disaster Response Fund**. Donated funds are used in the immediate aftermath of a disaster as well as during long term recovery after a disaster. These funds can also be used to leverage UMCOR and other grants thereby helping even more survivors.

## Martinez Disaster Response Center

The Martinez Disaster Response Center is located at 601 Methodist Encampment Road in Kerrville, Texas, at the edge of the Mount Wesley Conference Center. It serves as a warehouse for disaster response equipment and supplies and a collection site for UMCOR kits. The coordinator of the center serves as a member of the Conference Disaster Response Committee.

The center is a member of the UMCOR Relief Supply Network and serves as an official site for collection and distribution of UMCOR kits. The center maintains an inventory of kits needed to respond to disasters in the Rio Texas Conference or other conferences in the region. Kits not needed for inventory are transported to UMCOR Sager Brown twice each year.

Groups or individuals wishing to make UMCOR kits are encouraged to consult the UMCOR home page for information on kits needed at any given time (<http://www.umcor.org/UMCOR/Relief-Supplies>). A substantial inventory of cleaning kits (flood buckets) is maintained at the center so they are almost always welcome.

Kits may be delivered directly to the center or the Conference Center in San Antonio but you should make contact before they are delivered. The Center does not have staff, so those planning to deliver supplies directly to the Center, should contact St. Paul's UMC in Kerrville to obtain a key (830-895-2212) Contact the Outreach Vitality office if you plan to deliver them to San Antonio (210-408-4500).

# Appendix A - Disaster Documentation Maintenance Protocol

## Background

Collection and maintenance of documentation associated with Disaster Response and Recovery is essential in order for the Conference Disaster Response Committee to properly report the efforts pertaining to a disaster. These data are used for:

- Justification of and reporting for UMCOR funding, as well as overall reporting to the Conference leadership and churches regarding the effort
- Reporting back to the churches in the conference the work being done as a way to “celebrate” what has been done
- Assisting communities to properly track volunteer hours which can be used as local matching funds required for FEMA grants.

## Assignment

- The Disaster Response Communications Coordinator will work with the Mission Vitality Administrative Assistant to collect and maintain all records pertaining to Disaster Response and Recovery efforts within the Rio Texas Conference, as well as by teams from the Rio Texas Conference working with other conferences. Normally, these records will be collected in hard copy (paper) and digital formats.
- This will require close coordination with the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator, District Disaster Response Coordinators, Cluster Leaders, ERT Team Leaders and On-site managers. During the event, this will require daily communication to ensure that we capture all of those working in the Conference, including those from outside the Conference working in our area.

## Document Format

- Team Leaders are encouraged to use appropriate technology to capture and send digital images of documents whenever possible. This reduces the amount of paper being traced, mailed and maintained, and expedites the transmission to the Conference, while relieving the burden of tracking a lot of paper until the end of the deployment for the Team Leader. One of the best ways to do this is by using a smart phone app such as CamScanner or iScanner. These apps can use the phone’s camera phone to create a pdf formatted document that can be e-mailed immediately.
- The only documents that must be maintained in hard-copy format are the signed liability release forms for Team Members and Property Owners

## Documents Required to be Maintained

- **Response Phase**
  - **ERT Team Leaders** should be directed to collect and transmit the following documents
    - Individual Volunteer Liability Release Forms (Hard Copy Original)
    - Homeowner Liability Release Forms (Hard Copy Original)
    - Assessment Forms (if used)

- Daily Hours
  - **Assessment Team Leaders**
    - Assessment Forms
    - Individual Volunteer Liability Release Forms (Hard Copy Original)
    - Homeowner Liability Release Forms (Hard Copy Original)
- **Recovery Phase**
  - Daily Work Hours
  - All pertinent documents related to Disaster Case Management
- **Document Maintenance Procedures**
  - **Paper Copies**
    - Hard copies of the Individual Volunteer Liability Release Forms and Homeowner Liability Release Forms will be mailed to Mission Vitality Administrative Assistant at the Rio Texas Conference upon completion of a deployment
    - The forms will be filed by year, and will be maintained for a period of seven years
  - **Digital Copies**
    - The Conference has online capacity for storage of digital copies on an online storage account
    - The Conference Communication Coordinator will create a folder online for each month when teams work
    - The folder will contain an Excel Spreadsheet for the month that will contain room to record the following data:
      - Date
      - Event
      - Community
      - Address(es) for Team Work
      - Homeowner Last Name(s)
      - Team Leader Name
      - Total number of workers
      - Total hours worked
    - As Daily Work Logs come in, the Communications Coordinator will enter the data into the spreadsheet and then file the Logs in the folder
    - Any other documents that come in will be filed as well. These will include, but are not limited to:
      - Scanned liability release forms
      - Assessment forms

# **Appendix B - ERT Training and Badging Protocols**

## **Basic Early Response Team Protocols**

- Members of ERT teams must be at least 18 years old.
- Trained ERT team members receive an UMCOR national badge.
- To receive a badge
  - Trainees must complete the entire training course.
  - The class must be taught by authorized UMCOR trainers.
  - Individuals must submit to a criminal background check.
- When questions are raised in background checks they are reviewed by the Assistant to the Bishop, the Director of Outreach Vitality and the Conference Disaster Response Coordinator to determine the individual's suitability for service as an Early Response Team member. They may determine the individual is eligible without restriction, eligible with restrictions or not eligible to serve.
- Badges expire after three years and must be renewed, including a new background check. (See recertification protocols below.)

## **Early Response Recertification Protocols**

- Early Response Team members receive badges when they complete the ERT training class and a Conference background check. This badge is valid for three years and then team members must be recertified. Team members should begin the recertification process at least a month before their expiration date printed on their badge.
- In the Rio Texas Conference, ERT recertification requires a Conference Background check and candidates must complete additional training. This training requirement may be fulfilled by any of the following:
  - Complete the on line Basic ERT Recertification training
  - Complete special advanced ERT courses offered by the Conference
  - Retake the Basic ERT training class

## **Chain Saw Protocols**

- Chain Saw Training is done by the Rio Texas Conference. The following protocols are established relative to chain saw operation by Early Response Teams.
  - Only Conference trained chain saw operators may operate chain saws.
  - A current ERT Badge is required in order to be designated as a chain saw operator.
  - Chain saw operators must be at least 18 years old. (This is the minimum age for ERT members.)
  - Chain saw operators must complete the chain saw training including the following elements:
    - Classroom instruction in chain saw safety, maintenance, operation and

- cutting procedures.
  - Field demonstrations of chainsaw operation and cutting procedures by qualified instructors.
  - Hands on instruction for volunteers in chainsaw operation and cutting procedures.
- Operators must use all personal protective equipment including helmet, ear protection, eye protection, steel toed shoes, protective chaps, and approved gloves when operating a chain saw.
- Only Conference owned or approved chain saws may be used.
- A Permission to Enter Property and Liability Waiver must be signed by the property owner before a chain saw crew can work on a site.
- Each chain saw operator must sign a Liability Waiver before deploying on a chain saw team.
- Each chain saw crew must have a designated safety officer who will monitor safety procedures on the work site.
- Chain saw crews must abide by all ERT protocols adopted by the Conference Disaster Response Committee.

## Appendix C Additional Resources

Organization	Website	Facebook
<b>UMC</b>		
UMCOR	<a href="http://www.umcor.org/">http://www.umcor.org/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/UMCOR">https://www.facebook.com/UMCOR</a>
SC Jurisdiction UMC VIM/DR	<a href="http://www.scjumc.org/mission/">http://www.scjumc.org/mission/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/scjumc">https://www.facebook.com/scjumc</a>
Rio Texas Conference	<a href="http://www.riotexas.org">www.riotexas.org</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/RioTexas">https://www.facebook.com/RioTexas</a>
RTC Disaster Response	<a href="https://riotexas.org/disaster-response">https://riotexas.org/disaster-response</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/RioTXDR">https://www.facebook.com/RioTXDR</a>
Capital District Disaster Response	<a href="http://www.capitaldistrictdisaster.org/">http://www.capitaldistrictdisaster.org/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Capital-District-Disaster-Response-294622010953362/">https://www.facebook.com/Capital-District-Disaster-Response-294622010953362/</a>
Texas Conference	<a href="http://www.txcumc.org/disasterrecovery">http://www.txcumc.org/disasterrecovery</a>	
Central Texas Conference	<a href="http://www.ctcumc.org/disasterresponsenewsandinfo">http://www.ctcumc.org/disasterresponsenewsandinfo</a>	
Oklahoma Conference	<a href="http://oklahomaunitedmethodistchurchdisasterresponse.org/">http://oklahomaunitedmethodistchurchdisasterresponse.org/</a>	
Louisiana Conference	<a href="http://www.louisianadisasterresponse.com/">http://www.louisianadisasterresponse.com/</a>	
North Texas	<a href="http://www.ntcmissionaloutreach.org/">http://www.ntcmissionaloutreach.org/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/ntcdisasterrelief/">https://www.facebook.com/ntcdisasterrelief/</a>

<b>NGOs</b>		
National VOAD	<a href="https://www.nvoad.org">https://www.nvoad.org</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/NVOAD/">https://www.facebook.com/NVOAD/</a>
Texas VOAD	<a href="https://txvoad.communityos.org/cms/home">https://txvoad.communityos.org/cms/home</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/NVOAD/?ref=ts">https://www.facebook.com/NVOAD/?ref=ts</a>
Central Texas VOAD	<a href="http://centraltxvoad.com">centraltxvoad.com</a>	
American Red Cross	<a href="http://www.redcross.org/">http://www.redcross.org/</a>	
<b>Government</b>		
Texas Dept of Emergency Management	<a href="http://www.dps.texas.gov/dem/index.htm">http://www.dps.texas.gov/dem/index.htm</a>	
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	<a href="https://www.fema.gov/">https://www.fema.gov/</a>	
<b>Long Term Recovery Groups</b>		
Bastrop County Disaster Recovery Center		<a href="https://www.facebook.com/BCDRC/">https://www.facebook.com/BCDRC/</a>
Blanco River Regional Recovery Group	<a href="http://www.br3t.org/">http://www.br3t.org/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/BR3Volunteers/?fref=ts">https://www.facebook.com/BR3Volunteers/?fref=ts</a>
Coastal Bend Disaster Recovery Group	<a href="http://prod.info.com/dashboard/portal.aspx?gid=52438D2F58F242C5A251D62D585CAFF4">http://prod.info.com/dashboard/portal.aspx?gid=52438D2F58F242C5A251D62D585CAFF4</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/CBDRG/">https://www.facebook.com/CBDRG/</a>
Mission Border Hope (Eagle Pass)	<a href="http://www.missionborderhope.org/">http://www.missionborderhope.org/</a>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/mborderhope">https://www.facebook.com/mborderhope</a>
Travis Austin Recovery Group	<a href="https://targroup.wordpress.com/">https://targroup.wordpress.com/</a>	



