

## ***Volunteer Mobilization Center (VMC) Operations***

### **What is a Volunteer Mobilization Center?**

- A Volunteer Mobilization Center is a registration and referral center for spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers (community members) who respond to an emergency or national disaster by wanting to volunteer.

### **Who does it help?**

- Volunteer Mobilization Centers enhance the effectiveness of first responders, disaster response, and recovery agencies and community members by serving as a clearinghouse for disaster volunteerism.
- First responders can fulfill their duties without the added responsibility of registering volunteers. Experienced volunteer coordinators can be recruited to manage volunteers, to ensure meaningful and quality volunteer experiences. Community members can provide meaningful and effective service. Lead Agencies that are active in disaster can direct volunteers where most needed.

### **Why are Volunteer Mobilization Centers necessary?**

- Volunteer Mobilization Centers provide spontaneous volunteers with an alternative to arriving at sights where the presence of volunteers may hamper first responders in the performance of their duties or endanger themselves or others.
- After a disaster or national emergency people who are *unaffiliated* with disaster response or recovery organizations are moved to action. Disaster response and recovery organizations may require additional volunteers to enhance their services during response and recovery periods.
- It is the mission of Volunteer Mobilization Centers *to facilitate the referral* of spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers to activated disaster response and recovery organizations in need of additional volunteers.
- After the attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center in 2001 more than 4,000 spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers appeared in Manhattan alone. In some cases their presence hampered first responders and hindered recovery efforts. Many volunteers became frustrated due to little or no direction, which added to the confusion; causing in some cases, further delay in rescue efforts.

### **Who staffs a Volunteer Mobilization Center?**

- Trained community volunteers and community volunteer managers will staff Volunteer Mobilization Centers. Teams of volunteers may be assembled based upon geographical location.

### **When is Volunteer Mobilization Center activated and how?**

- In Howard County, MD, notification will come from the Department of Citizen Services to the Volunteer Center Serving Howard County.
- *Volunteer Mobilization Centers DO NOT self-deploy.*

### **Where will Volunteer Mobilization Center be located?**

- To Be Confirmed as determined by the incident.
- By actively engaging community volunteers in a concrete and productive fashion, a VMC can help to lessen the confusion and panic in times of disaster.
- Spontaneous Volunteers can be effectively utilized in a way that can *complement* response efforts rather than complicate them and lay the foundation to help rebuild our community.