



OSWEGO COUNTY LOCAL HUMAN NEEDS COMMITTEE

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Local Human Needs Committee and LHN Annex to the Oswego County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan

Introduction

The purpose of the Local Human Needs Committee is to establish a network of human services to assist the residents of Oswego County in the event of a disaster. The objective of the LHN is to work in coordination with the Oswego County Emergency Management Office and the County's Emergency Operations Center in providing food, shelter, health related needs, transportation, communication, animal care, and a pool of volunteers to the residents of Oswego County in the event of a disaster.

The committee was formed in 1998, sanctioned by the Chairman of the Oswego County Legislature, and meets as necessary. The LHN has exercised its Local Human Needs Plan through several exercises coordinated with the Emergency Management Office.

Subcommittees

The LHN's six subcommittees are carrying out the work of the committee according to their missions.

Food and Shelter

This subcommittee will coordinate food and shelter resources for people in Oswego County during a disaster with a community perspective, working closely with municipalities, the American Red Cross, and other agencies. Members have compiled listings of resources from surveys filled out by city, town and village personnel, and are working on distribution protocols.

Health

This group's mission is to provide effective, efficient and accessible health care services for county residents during a disaster. An early project was compiling a listing of senior citizen housing, residential health care facilities, and homes for special needs individuals and working with them on emergency plans. The subcommittee has also worked with the County Health Department on a implementation plan for the Strategic National Stockpile if it should be needed in a bioterrorism event.

Transportation and Communications

Members have worked on ways to provide effective and reliable communications and accessible transportation of both supplies and people to support the human needs of Oswego County during a disaster. They have compiled listings of resources, and works closely with the Oswego County Emergency Communicators/Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES - ham radio operators) and Windstream to ensure emergency communications are available.

Volunteers

To prevent a "disaster within a disaster", this subcommittee's members decided their mission would be to provide for the means of organization, assignment and utilization of volunteer human resources to county residents in a disaster. The Volunteers Subcommittee has worked with the Food and Shelter Subcommittee on management of donated goods.

Animals in Disaster

The subcommittee, formed in June 2002, decided its mission is to provide animal related education, information and resources to residents of Oswego County in the event of a natural disaster. To do that, members have compiled listings of people, businesses and agencies that would be willing to provide resources or time to helping the animal population in a disaster. A recent project is completion of a brochure on Pet Safety.

Disaster Mental Health

This subcommittee formed Summer of 2006. The mission of this subcommittee is to establish a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated mental health plan to respond proportionately to the needs of individuals impacted by environmental and man-made disasters in Oswego County to minimize the adverse affects of stressful situations and/or traumatic events affecting individuals within Oswego County.

No matter how large or small, local communities are expected to provide an immediate disaster response to address and mitigate the potential psychological consequences following a disaster. In the event of a large scale incident, The Mental Health Response plan would be implemented by the County's Emergency Management Office (EMO). In the event of a smaller incident or routine emergency where the EMO is not involved, the Mental Health Response would stand alone under the direction of the Director of Community Services to coordinate a response tailored to meet the identified needs of those requesting assistance.

LHN Key Functions in a Disaster

Command and Control

In the event of an emergency, Oswego County will utilize the Incident Command System to manage the event. The County Director of Emergency Management reports to the Chairman of the Legislature and is responsible for implementation of the Oswego County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan. Portions of the plan may be activated as deemed necessary based on the level of response.

Emergency Operations Center

The purpose of an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is to provide a place where local government and agency officials can do together what they cannot do separately. It is a place where all official problems, actions, and requirements can be voiced, displayed, and acted upon, and where decisions can be made to guide actions in the future.

Oswego County's EOC will include representatives of fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, public works, utilities, public information, and other governmental and some private agencies as necessary to coordinate overall response to the disaster.

Local Human Needs Coordinating Center

To assist the EOC during an emergency and upon direction of the Director of Emergency Management, the LHN Coordinating Center will identify available resources to meet the needs of at-risk individuals and communities. The center will take direction and coordinate response with the EOC through the LHN Liaison resident within the EOC who will maintain contiguous operations. The structure of the LHN Coordinating Center is around the subcommittee functions of Food and Shelter, Health, Transportation and Communications, Volunteers and Animals in Disaster under the direction of a Center Manager.

Volunteer Staging Area

In concert with the LHN Coordinating Center, the Volunteers Subcommittee will staff a volunteers staging area that will coordinate, register and assign volunteers to various tasks during the emergency according to skill and qualifications.

Volunteers are needed!

The Oswego County Local Human Needs Committee needs volunteers to fill the staff positions in the LHN Coordinating Center as well as to continue the ongoing work of the committee.

Meetings are held monthly or as needed, at the Oswego County Emergency Management Office, 200 North Street in Fulton. For more information, call EMO at 315/591-9150 or e-mail Director Patricia Egan at eganp@oswegocounty.com.

LHN Staff Positions during a Disaster or Activation

LHN Liaison: This position is stationed at the Emergency Operations Center, and maintains a telephone link to the LHN Center Manager at the LHN Coordinating Center. The liaison relays information from the Director of Emergency Management and EOC briefings to the LHN Center Manager, and relays information from the LHN Center Manager to the Director and EOC.

LHN Coordinating Center Manager: This individual has overall responsibility for management of the center. The manager advises the Director of Emergency Management on LHN Center activities and concerns, and directs coordination among the LHN subcommittees staffed at the Center. The manager ensures that personnel in the LHN Center have current information about the disaster and EOC activities.

LHN Center Assistant Manager: The assistant manager is the right-hand of the LHN Center Manager, providing clerical assistance and ensuring administrative needs are met. The assistant manager ensures logs and records are maintained.

Subcommittee roles: Each subcommittee, except Volunteers, has a staff position at the LHN Center that is responsible for carrying out that subcommittee's mission. Checklists and operating guidelines are provided for each position. Staff positions field requests for resources and coordinate with other subcommittees to fill those requests.

Food & Shelter Subcommittee: This staff position during a disaster will work closely with the American Red Cross's representative to ensure coordination among shelters and feeding sites opened during the disaster.

Health Subcommittee: This staff position will work closely with the County Health Department representative at the Emergency Operations Center to ensure that health issues are adequately resolved during a disaster.

Transportation and Communications Subcommittee: This staff position will receive requests from other LHN Subcommittees for either communications or transportation during a disaster and will work with providers to meet them. The Oswego County Emergency Communicators (RACES), an amateur radio group, is closely aligned with the Transportation & Communications subcommittee.

Animals in Disaster: This staff position will provide information on care for pets and other animals during a disaster and will try to assist in meeting any needs in the community.

Volunteers: The Volunteers Subcommittee maintains a Volunteers Staging Area at the County Airport, which will be activated if the need for volunteers arises. Volunteers Subcommittee staff report to the Staging Area unless otherwise directed. This subcommittee will coordinate requests for assistance with individuals and groups offering support.

Disaster Mental Health

The Oswego County Director of Community Services will receive requests from EOC / LHN Coordinating Center Manager and other LHN Subcommittees for mental health related supports during a disaster and will coordinate the Disaster Mental Health Response Team to develop and implement an appropriate response to sites or agencies in need.