

I. Community Response/Outreach Worker Profile

Community Response is an essential element in the delivery of disaster assistance programs. Individuals assigned to Community Response (CR) should be:

1. Knowledgeable about the state's response and recovery operations
2. Able to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing
3. Able to adapt to a variety of situations
4. Able to function alone or as part of a team
5. Innovative and sensitive, empathetic and responsive to people under stress
6. Knowledgeable about Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)/State Disaster Assistance Programs

II. Functions and Responsibilities:

The State Community Response Coordinator and Program Managers use Community Response (CR) Field Workers to:

1. Disseminate and gather information
2. Identify hidden or unspecified problems
3. Locate unreported areas of damage and inform CR Coordinator
4. Report on the effectiveness of program activity; and
5. Assist the community in identifying available programs

III. Community Response Tasks to Accomplish the Above:

Community Response (CR) Field Workers and Team Leaders have a responsibility to become as knowledgeable as possible about the area which they are assigned. By using the opportunities listed below, as well as those identified from other resource contacts, Community Response (CR) staff will be able to achieve that goal.

1. Attend federal and state meetings to identify contact points, meet local officials, and develop telephone listings for future use.
2. Attend Infrastructure Applicants' Briefings to learn about the application process and qualifying types of damage. Also, be there to network with public entities and be an information point of contact for disaster assistance information.
3. Identify and establish contact with community resource groups in the area and other convenient communication outlets that may provide information to the community (previously unutilized church groups, volunteer agencies, community leaders, etc.). Provide the CR Coordinator with information about these groups.
4. Identify government agencies such as the Department of Health, the Department of Children and Families, and the Department of Transportation that regularly operate in the area and establish contacts with field-level workers in those departments.
5. Attend community meetings such as town halls, church groups, homeowners associations, and meetings with groups that provide legal or social services.
6. Establish a good working relationship with Disaster Recovery Center Managers, temporary housing, and Public Information Officers (PIO's) to ensure that two-way communication is pertinent and effective.
7. Identify unreported areas of damage, special demographics, religious or political issues, language barriers, and other unusual circumstances. Relay these essential pieces of information to the Community Response (CR) Coordinator for appropriate action; and
8. Community Response will co-locate with Comfort Stations and Disaster Recovery Centers to more easily distribute information on resources available from these centers to survivors. Community Response also benefits from co-location because it is easier to facilitate information sharing from DRC staff about disaster specific assistance issues and it is easier to control the spread of inaccurate information from a centralized site.

IV. Knowledge Needed to Accomplish Effective Community Response:

Information gathering and dissemination are major functions of Community Response (CR). It is essential to begin compiling basic information immediately. The following are some specifics:

A. General Information from the Joint Field Office:

1. Information on the Joint Field Office (JFO) location
2. Copy of the declaration identifying the incident period (the official period during which assistance is available) and the area affected
3. Area of assignment
4. Disaster Recovery Center locations, staffing, and hours of operation
5. Tele-registration number
6. Helpline information number
7. Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) information
8. Dates of federal and state meetings
9. Roster of Florida Division of Emergency Management staff
10. Chain of Command, and
11. Comfort Station locations

B. Information about the Assigned Territory:

County Information

1. Emergency Management Director
2. Transportation system
3. Highway routes, conditions, etc
4. Population factors (special populations, elderly, income levels, cultural factors, language spoken), and
5. County Community Chair