



PROPOSAL FOR A MAINE STATE LONG TERM RECOVERY BOARD TO OVERSEE THE MAINE DISASTER RELIEF FUND

ISSUE

Unmet Needs

In a Maine disaster recovery effort, the impacted population has a variety of private, State and Federal programs to assist with their recovery. Principally, they include private insurance, the National Flood Insurance Program, FEMA Individual and Housing Assistance, and Small Business Administration Loans, and other Federal programs.

Approximately 10% of the population impacted by a disaster will have remaining unmet needs after they have exhausted these forms of assistance. These survivors are usually the most vulnerable members of the community who will not be able to recover from the storm without additional help. Assistance needed by this population includes home repair and replacement, other forms of financial or in kind assistance and health and mental health care.

Long Term Recovery

Voluntary organizations, faith-based groups and local human service providers—usually together as local long term recovery committees—help that 10% of individuals and families with disaster caused unmet needs using an established disaster case management process. These groups identify people with disaster caused needs, set up a system of case management to support those individuals, and attempt to meet the needs with locally raised funds combined with volunteer labor. MEMA and FEMA support this process by providing Voluntary Agency Liaisons (VALs) who help organize the formation of these groups and match them with national VOAD organizations to help with rebuilding homes, cleaning out basements, etc.

The Need for a Statewide Approach

A Statewide Long Term Recovery Board would oversee the Maine Disaster Relief Fund and provide funds, guidance, and coordination to these local groups. The board would also insure that money raised for the Fund could be equitably distributed to all of Maine's residents regardless of the demographics of the areas that are impacted. The board could access the whole of Maine's philanthropic community and could appropriately scale its fundraising efforts based on the number of unmet needs caused by the disaster.

BACKGROUND

Responding to disasters affords the opportunity for many organizations and individuals within Maine to offer goods and services to their neighbors in need. Donors, major philanthropists, foundations and the private sector prefer to donate where their funds will do the greatest good. The challenge for Maine is to create an infrastructure whereby these needed resources are directed in a responsible and equitable fashion.

Maine could enhance the ability of voluntary and faith based groups to provide critical services to those with disaster caused unmet needs by establishing a State Long Term Recovery Board to both raise funds for and oversee the Maine Disaster Relief Fund. This initiative would be a permanent part of Maine's recovery plan and better position Mainers to recover from future disaster events, whether or not they are Presidentially declared disasters.



PROPOSAL FOR A MAINE STATE LONG TERM RECOVERY BOARD TO OVERSEE THE MAINE DISASTER RELIEF FUND

PROPOSAL:

Create a statewide Long Term Recovery Board including Maine VOAD members, private sector leadership, and members-at-large to raise and distribute donated funds, and act as a collaborative point of contact for local recovery needs. The private sector partners and the Maine VOAD organizations will appoint an equal number of members. The private sector partners will appoint business and industry leadership with philanthropic leadership backgrounds and the VOAD will appoint volunteer and faith based leadership involved with disaster recovery.

Representatives from MEMA and the Maine Commission for Community Service would act as advisors or consultants, but the Long Term Recovery Board and the Maine Disaster Relief Fund are not part of the state government. However, as permanent parts of Maine's recovery plans, these two entities are expected to be actively utilized for recovery efforts from future disasters.

Summary

This recovery model has been used in other states with good success. For future Maine disasters, the State has the opportunity to both provide stellar services to individuals and families with disaster caused unmet needs while further preparing the State for future disaster recovery efforts.

Contact

Richard Higgins
Individual Assistance Officer and
State Voluntary Agency Liaison
Maine Emergency Management Agency
72 State House Station
45 Commerce Drive
Augusta, Maine 04333-0072
Tel. 207-624-4425
Cell 207-215-8316
Email richard.higgins@maine.gov