

Great Plains Disaster Response Team Strategic Plan – 2015-16

MISSIONAL PRIORITY: (from Great Plains Plan of Organization)

1. Enhancing the ministry of local churches

- iii. Engaging the community. We will seek to equip local congregations to understand and to connect with the community, with a particular emphasis on going beyond the walls of the church to witness and to serve.

Strategy:

Provide training in disaster response to enable local churches to develop disaster response teams to respond locally, regionally, and nationally.

Goals:

Conduct an Early Response Team training in each region during the period of 2015-2016.

Certify at least one person per region as an UMCOR Early Response Team trainer.

Conduct a basic disaster response class in each district to prepare clergy and members of local churches to respond to disasters within their area.

Conduct training in spiritual and emotional care to enable local churches to provide both spiritual and emotional care to people who have experienced a disaster or are experiencing a spiritual or emotional crisis.

Strategy:

Provide Connecting Neighbors / Local Church Disaster Planning classes to local churches upon request. This will provide guidance on developing a disaster response plan to include mitigation, church response to disasters, and coordination with other local churches, disaster response agencies, and the greater community.

Goals:

Conduct Connecting Neighbors / Local Church Disaster Planning classes at local churches upon request.

Provide handbooks specific to the roles and responsibilities of local churches, local pastors, and district superintendents for use as reference materials when disaster response is needed in their area.

Strategy:

Encourage local churches to expand their ministry beyond the walls of the church by applying disaster response training and concepts to local missions, and providing support for missions.

(Support could include: advice on planning and implementing local missions; or use of disaster response tools, when available.)

Goals:

Provide training to local churches that will equip members with the knowledge to plan, lead, and execute local missions within their communities.

Provide opportunities for local churches to reach beyond their communities through disaster response missions within the conference and throughout the jurisdiction and nation.

Provide logistical support to disaster response teams engaged in mission both locally and throughout the conference. This could include providing team scheduling, on-site leadership, housing, tools and equipment, and funding for materials.

MISSIONAL PRIORITY: (from Great Plains Plan of Organization)

1. Enhancing the Ministry of Local Churches

- iv. Transforming service to the world. We will connect congregations to the needs of the world and offer them strategies and opportunities to address both immediate and systemic needs.

Strategy:

Connect congregations with the needs of the world.

Goals:

Keep congregations informed of the needs of people who have been affected by disasters within the conference and throughout the connection by providing articles in the GPCconnect, direct e-mail to trained volunteers and other sources as available.

Strategy:

Provide opportunities for local churches to address needs.

Goals:

Provide opportunities for mission trips that can address the needs of disaster survivors. This can include arranging mission trips to include scheduling, providing housing, on-site leadership, tools and equipment, and materials.

Support local missions by providing guidance and support.

STRATEGY:

Encourage local churches to reach beyond the walls of the church by working cooperatively with other local United Methodist Churches, other denominations, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD's), Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD's), local service organizations, community groups, and government agencies (Emergency Management, Social and Rehabilitation Services, etc.)

Goals:

Provide a framework for cooperation with other churches and organizations through Connecting Neighbors/Local Church Disaster Plan training.

Encourage local churches to adapt the training in disaster response to local missions.

Encourage local churches to identify local mission opportunities through cooperative relationships with other churches, community organizations, and social services agencies.

STRATEGY:

Remove barriers that prevent people from getting involved in disaster response and prepare more people and congregations for disaster response in our conference.

Goals:

Increase the opportunity for members trained at the Basic Disaster Response level, or who have not been trained to work at disasters by assignment to teams under the supervision of trained Early Response Team members.

Develop a conference level Early Response training and deployment program to supplement the UMCOR Early Response Team training and to reduce delays inherent in the UMCOR training and deployment system.

MISSIONAL PRIORITY: (from Great Plains Plan of Organization)

3. Leadership Development

- b. Developing spiritual leaders. Recognizing that the church is most fruitful when the gifts of all its members are employed in service to Christ, we will encourage the ministry of the laity with both leadership training and spiritual growth opportunities.

Strategy:

Provide leadership training to both clergy and laity in the areas of disaster response, missions, and local missions.

Goals:

Provide Early Response Team training to develop knowledge and leadership for disaster response teams. This training is readily adaptable to leading local missions teams.

Provide training in spiritual and emotional care to prepare members to properly respond to the spiritual and emotional needs of those who have experienced disaster or are experiencing a spiritual or emotional crisis.

Strategy:

Provide spiritual growth opportunities.

Goals:

Provide daily devotions and debriefing guidelines for team members so that they actively look for the presence of God in the mission, the team members, and the people they are serving.

Share with everyone where you have seen God at work in your mission work. Share where the power of God has been at work in your life and ministry and how it has been spiritual awakening for you and others.

Develop and implement spiritual and emotional care protocols.

Develop Spiritual and Emotional Care Teams to deploy with Early Response Teams. Includes recruitment and training of volunteers.

MISSIONAL PRIORITY: (from Great Plains Plan of Organization)

3. Leadership Development

- c. Building lay and clergy partnerships. We will offer lay and clergy leaders processes and opportunities to strengthen their partnerships as spiritual leaders so that the gifts of each can be used to build up the whole body of Christ.

Strategy:

Build lay and clergy partnerships.

Goals:

Build lay/clergy partnerships through including both lay and clergy in training for disaster response, local church disaster planning, and spiritual and emotional care.

Build lay/clergy partnerships by encouraging both lay and clergy to participate on disaster response and local mission teams.

Build lay/clergy partnerships by encouraging participation in development of local church disaster plans.

Build lay/clergy partnerships by encouraging both lay and clergy to participate on spiritual and emotional care teams.

Provide training, reference materials, and support to local churches, local pastors and District Superintendents regarding their roles and responsibilities in disaster response.

Develop lay/clergy district disaster response leadership teams that can respond to disasters and act as leaders of the disaster response operations and spiritual and emotional care teams. (Includes recruitment, training, and equipping team members.)

MISSIONAL PRIORITIES (identified by the team)**Strategy:**

Equip early response trailers with standardized minimum equipment and supply inventories to provide needed equipment and supplies for Early Response Teams regardless of location.

Goals:

Develop a standardized minimum equipment inventory for ERT trailers.

Purchase equipment to bring all ERT trailers to the minimum inventory. (This will be accomplished utilizing UMCOR grant and Disaster Response funds.)

Develop a minimum standard inventory of disaster response supplies to be available on each early response trailer.

Acquire needed disaster supplies to stock the ERT trailers through donations and/or Disaster Response funds.

STRATEGY:

Upgrade the hot foods trailer ministry to increase the capabilities of providing hot food service to survivors and work teams at disaster sites.

Goals:

Make needed repairs to the hot foods trailer and upgrade equipment to provide a minimum capacity of serving 500 persons per meal. (Funded through an UMCOR grant.)

Recruit and train additional volunteers to transport, set up, and operate the hot foods trailers.

STRATEGY:

Partnerships and networking with other organizations.

Goals:

Continue to partner with UMCOR to provide needed supplies and funding to meet the needs of disaster survivors.

Continue to partner with other conferences in the South Central Jurisdiction in the areas of training and mutual aid disaster response.

Continue to participate in the jurisdictional Disaster Response Coordinators/VIM group.

Continue to collaborate and work with ecumenical agencies, other denominational agencies, VOAD agencies, and governmental agencies in responding to disasters.

Continue to be active participants in long-term recovery efforts by participating in long-term recovery committees, providing financial assistance for repair/rebuilding, and providing volunteer teams.

STRATEGY:

Provide needed staff to support the efforts of volunteers and to insure completion of administrative duties.

Goal:

Hire an assistant conference disaster response coordinator to assist and/or act as the conference coordinators designee to ensure that duties are completed and adequate support is provided to volunteers.

RESOURCES NEEDED:

The following resources will be needed to accomplish the above goals:

- A. Budgeted funds for meeting expenses of the Disaster Response Team.
- B. Budgeted funds for reimbursement of expenses incurred by the Regional Disaster Response Coordinators, District Disaster Response Coordinators, and trainers when functioning in their assigned capacities.
- C. Budgeted funds for the production and distribution of training materials and informational brochures.
- D. Budgeted funds for an assistant conference disaster response coordinator. ^{1, 2}

¹. Our experience with disaster responses since the inception of the Great Plains Conference has demonstrated the need for an assistant disaster response coordinator at the conference level. The demands of responding to multiple disasters; implementation of training programs; recruitment of volunteers; administering grant programs; maintaining records of training, badging, and response records; maintaining financial management of both budgeted and disaster funds; coordinating with other disaster response organizations; and myriad other administrative duties drive the rationale for this request.

². This position was recommended by the Great Plains Area Disaster Response Committee to the Transition Team. Our experience since the formation of the Great Plains Conference has demonstrated the need for this position.