

**This file contains the “training and exercise” version of the position descriptions for the various staff roles of the Volunteer Reception Center. The text in red represents the functions that will actually be done during a VRC exercise. The remaining text represents functions that must be done in a real disaster VRC, but are not practical to do in an exercise.**

**It is helpful to tape the position descriptions to the appropriate tables and allow trainees to read and become familiar with their roles prior to starting the exercise. Asking them to describe for the rest of the participants what will happen at their station gives them an opportunity to confirm their understanding and ask questions.**

## VRC Staff Tasks – VRC Director

**Your job is to oversee the operation of the Volunteer Reception Center. You will:**

- Clearly designate one entrance and one exit
- Set up the room for efficient flow of volunteers and information
- Brief and assign tasks to staff and volunteers of the center
- **Monitor the operation and make staffing changes when necessary**
- **Maintain all records of safety and job training provided to volunteers, and hours worked in the VRC by employees and volunteers**
- Turn all records in to the County Budget Department weekly or at end of the activation

**You should meet and thank all volunteers who help in the VRC and instruct them to sign in and out on the Volunteer Sign-in / Sign-out Record daily.** Instruct paid staff to sign in on the Employee Sign-in / Sign-out Record daily. In a fast paced disaster response, both paid and volunteer staff will need regular reminders to sign in and out.

### **Items needed:**

- ID badge
- Tables and chairs (see sample room layout for details)
- “Go Box” containing office supplies and forms to stock your VRC for the first 2-3 days
- Items on the Supplies and Equipment list

## **VRC Staff Tasks – Greeters** (Station #1 Registration)

Ideally, you will be working with a partner, orienting volunteers inside and outside the volunteer entrance. **Your job is to greet people with a friendly and firm demeanor, determine the purpose of their visit and direct them accordingly.**

- **If they are there to volunteer, thank them, give them a “Volunteer Instructions” sheet and ask them to fill out a registration form. When the form is completed, direct them to the next available interviewer at Station #2.**
- **If they are media personnel, direct them to the Public Information Officer.**
- If they are disaster survivors, refer them to the appropriate relief organization.
- If they are bringing cleaning supplies, nonperishable food, etc., to donate, refer them to an agency that is accepting donated goods.

If there is a long wait, some volunteers may not understand the reason and may become impatient. **Please thank everyone for volunteering**, briefly explain the process and ask everyone to be patient or, if they prefer, to come back later.

### **Items needed:**

- ID badge
- Sign (Station #1 Registration)
- Table or clipboards and chairs for volunteers to use for filling out their forms
- Supply of “Volunteer Instructions” handouts
- Supply of Disaster Volunteer Registration Forms
- Pens
- Flag or hat to summon runners

## VRC Staff Tasks – Interviewers (Station #2 Interviews)

**Your job is to do a quick interview of the prospective volunteer and refer him/her to a job at an agency appropriate to his abilities and interests. Requests for volunteers will be posted on a board in front of you (behind the volunteers being interviewed) and will be erased as the needs are filled.** If the VRC has a computer system, you might also receive a printed list of the current needs.

**When a new volunteer approaches, ask for his/her registration form. With the volunteer, verify its completeness and accuracy, and use it as a guide from which to inquire more about the volunteer's skills. At the conclusion of the interview, keep his registration form. When the volunteer accepts an assignment, complete a Referral form, filling in all information requested, give it to the volunteer and instruct him to report to Data Coordination (Station #3).**

Before you **signal the Greeter that you are ready for another interview**, take a minute to jot down in the "Notes" section anything about the volunteer you feel is important and that the volunteer did not include on his registration form (a special skill, an obvious physical limitation, etc.) If your center decides to use the blind field labeled "Office Use Only\*," check the appropriate box. Place his registration form in the file.

### Key points to remember are:

- **Disaster registration differs from a "normal" volunteer intake – there is less time to try to fit each volunteer into an ideal assignment.**
- Refer the volunteer on the spot if possible – it may be impossible to contact him later. If the volunteer has special training or unusual skills that you think might be needed soon, ask him to wait in the sitting area and to check the volunteer request board for new requests for their specialized skills.
- Be sure to watch for volunteers who would work well in the Volunteer Reception Center. (It may seem self-serving, but if the VRC has sufficient staff and works effectively, the community will benefit!)
- It is likely that some volunteers will exhibit the stress of the disaster – they may be victims themselves. An extra measure of patience and understanding is needed.
- **You may be called upon to train new volunteers to assist with the interviewing.**

*\*The VRC Director should determine appropriate use of the "Office Use Only" field. It is intended to provide a customizable "blind" field in which special information can be noted about volunteers. If, for future referral of that volunteer, it would be helpful to know his general level of ability to work independently, boxes 1-5 could be coded: **1.** Learns quickly, able to supervise the activities of others; **2.** Would work well independently, good decision making skills; **3.** Needs some supervision and assistance with decision making; **4.** Needs close or constant supervision; and **5.** Has a mental, physical or emotional limitation to consider in making a referral.*

### Items needed:

An ID badge for each interviewer  
2-3 tables and 8-12 chairs (see floor plan)  
Sign (Station #2 Interviews)  
Supply of Referral forms  
Flag or hat to summon runners  
Pens  
File for maintaining Volunteer Registration Forms in alphabetical order

**VRC Staff Tasks – Data/Agency Coordinator**  
(Station #3 Data/Agency Coordination)

**When a volunteer brings you his Referral form, pull the corresponding Request for Volunteers form from the file. Enter his name and the date of the referral on the bottom of the Request form. Place your initials in the appropriate box on his Referral form. Direct the volunteer to Station #4 for a Safety Briefing.**

**As you have time, call the agency contact to let him know who or how many volunteers have been referred. Confirm with the agency contact whether you should continue referring volunteers or close out the Request.**

**When a Request has been filled, raise your flag or put on the hat to call a runner and ask him to confirm that the request has been removed from the board.**

**Enter the date and reason the request was closed (completed, no longer needed, etc.) at the bottom of the Request form.** If your Requests for Volunteers have been entered into a computer database, be sure to enter the date and reason the Request was closed as soon as possible. Place open Requests in one file and closed Requests in the other, alphabetically by agency.

You may have to call an agency contact to clarify the agency's Request. When you speak with an agency contact, record the information on the Request form in the section called "Follow-up Contacts with Requesting Agency."

**Items needed:**

- An ID Badge for each staff member
- Sign (Station #3 Agency / Data Coordination)
- Two tables and four chairs
- Phone
- Two sets of files – one for open Requests for Volunteers and one for closed out Requests
- Pens
- Computer, if available, networked to the computers at the Phone Bank station
- Flag or hat to summon runners

## VRC Staff Tasks – Phone Bank Staff

**You will be handling two types of calls, those from agencies requesting volunteers and those from people wanting to volunteer. The information you record about each call must be complete and in sufficient detail to facilitate matching volunteers to the needs. DO take control of each call immediately. It is much more efficient to ask the questions in the order in which they appear on the form. (If the caller takes control you will find yourself scribbling in the margins and will not get all the required information.)**

**When an agency calls to request volunteers, fill out a Request for Volunteers form while you are speaking with the agency caller.** If there is a computer available for entering the request into a database, Data Entry staff should enter the need as soon as possible, or could enter the data directly while speaking to the caller.

**Next, call a runner by raising the flag at your station. Ask the Runner to post the volunteer request on the board in view of the Interviewers (Station #2) and then to give the Request for Volunteers form to the Data Coordinator (Station #3).**

When people call to volunteer, thank them and give them the following registration options:

- They may register in person at the VRC, and will be given instructions when they arrive.
- They may register on-line, and will be e-mailed regarding possible assignments and given further instructions. If the caller represents a group that wishes to volunteer together, ask him to be patient while you determine where they can be of most help. It might take one day or several to match a volunteer with a need, especially if he is coming from out of town.

When a match (a mission) is found for that volunteer, e-mail or call him back. Ask him to print the registration form he completed on-line and schedule a time for him to come to the VRC to turn in his signed registration form and complete the registration process.

### **Items needed:**

- An ID Badge for each staff member
- Sign (Phone Bank)
- Supply of Request for Volunteers forms
- Flag or hat to summon a runner
- Two tables and four chairs
- Phones
- Pens

## **VRC Staff Tasks – Data Entry**

Your job is to enter the information from the Volunteer Registration and Request for Volunteers forms into the database so that an accurate record can be maintained of who participated in the recovery effort, what kinds of work they did and when it was performed.

After the initial influx of volunteers has subsided, you may have time to begin entering the referrals recorded on the Request for Volunteers forms and to close out the completed Requests. As needed by VRC staff, print updated lists of the unfilled Requests and ask a Runner to distribute copies to Phone Bank staff, Data Coordination, Interviewers and, if requested, the VRC Director.

Even if you are familiar with the software being used by the VRC, please ask for a brief orientation before beginning your first shift. Accuracy is more important than speed. The information you enter will be used to document the number of agencies and volunteers participating in the relief effort and the number of hours served.

**If you have difficulty using the computer, please ask for help immediately. Do not attempt to fix the problem yourself.**

### **Items needed:**

- An ID Badge
- One table and two chairs
- Printer
- Pens
- Flag
- One or more computers (multiple computers should be networked to provide all users access to information on the status of volunteer requests and the availability of volunteers.)

**VRC Staff Tasks – Safety Trainers**  
(Station #4 Safety Briefing)

**Your job is to brief all new volunteers on what to expect at their job sites, how to be safe while volunteering and how to take good care of themselves after their experience. When a small group has gathered, thank the volunteers for offering to help. Pass around a clipboard with an attendance sheet and check to be sure that all participants have signed it.**

**Read the entire Safety Training sheet slowly, emphasizing the importance of following supervisors' instructions at the worksite. Encourage everyone to attend a debriefing, if available, at the end of their shift.** Ask if there are any questions. If a question arises to which you do not know the answer, put on the hat to summon a runner. Ask the runner to summon the VRC Director or other VRC staff to answer the question. **At the conclusion of the briefing, direct volunteers to Station #5 Volunteer ID.**

**Attach a copy of the safety briefing script/handout to the attendance sheet for each class, file them in the folder and turn them in to the VRC Director daily.**

**Maintenance of these records is important to help protect the Volunteer Reception Center, voluntary agencies and emergency management officials from liability, should a volunteer be injured on the job.**

**Items needed:**

- An ID Badge
- Sign (Station #4 Safety Training)
- 10 or more chairs, preferably in a semi-circle so everyone is
- Clipboard with attendance sheets
- Pen
- Stapler
- Flag or hat to summon runners
- List of additional training required by specific worksites, training locations and instructors
- A supply of Safety Training handouts

**VRC Staff Tasks – Volunteer ID Staff**  
(Station #5 Volunteer ID)

**Thank all volunteers for coming out and ask to see their Referral forms. Clearly write on an ID wristband the name of the volunteer, dates he/she will be working, and the name of the agency to which the volunteer was referred, as shown on their Referral form. Place the ID wristband securely on the volunteer's wrist.**

**Explain to the volunteers that the ID will be “good” only for the date(s) written on the band. Authorities may not permit them to enter any of the disaster impacted areas on any other day, without a current ID wristband. If volunteers plan to work more than one day, you may write the beginning and ending dates of their service.**

Some volunteers will be required to take additional training for their particular work. When your briefing is concluded, direct those volunteers to where job training is being provided. Direct all others to the exit or to transportation to their work sites.

For this exercise, please ask participants to take a seat in the sitting area in the middle of the room. **They will trade places with a VRC staff member as time allows.**

**If you need assistance, please raise your flag or put on the hat to summon a Runner.**

**Items needed:**

- An ID Badge
- Two tables and four chairs
- Sign (Station #4 Volunteer I.D. Tags)
- Supply of volunteer ID wristbands
- Fine point indelible markers
- Scissors
- Flag or hat to summon runners

## VRC Staff Tasks – Runners

Your job is to carry information from one station to another within the VRC. When a station needs you to pick up forms, restock their supplies or escort a volunteer from one place to another, they will signal you by raising a flag or putting on a hat at their station.

Please watch carefully for this signal and respond promptly, in order to keep the information and volunteers moving smoothly through the registration and referral process.

One Runner should be stationed at the board on which Requests for Volunteers are posted. As a volunteer is referred, place a tally mark or otherwise indicate next to that request the number of volunteers referred. This prevents referring too many volunteers to a request.

Runners posting new Requests for Volunteers on the board, should use only the markers provided and write neatly and large enough so that the interviewers can see the requests clearly. After posting the request on the board, give the Request form to the Data Coordinator (Station #3).

### Items needed:

- An ID Badge
- Dry erase marker or water soluble marker (Dry erase markers should not be used on a laminated “portable white board.”)
- Dry eraser or damp sponges