

### **Mass Care 7-X4, Reunification Support**

Primary Agency: American Red Cross (Red Cross)

Support Agencies: Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)  
Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA)  
Illinois National Guard (ILNG)  
Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)  
Illinois State Police (ISP)  
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)  
Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)  
Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)  
Illinois Secretary of State (SOS)  
Illinois Department on Aging  
Illinois Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (ILVOAD)

#### I. Introduction

##### A. Purpose

1. Provide operational guidance, coordination, processes and strategies for implementation of state support to reunification operations.

##### B. Scope

1. This annex builds upon concepts, policy and guidance provided in IEOP Annex 7, Mass Care.
2. This appendix addresses support to reunification operations through the utilization of local, state, federal, private sector and non-governmental (NGO) capabilities.
3. This appendix addresses reunification operations throughout response and recovery.
4. This appendix does not address the following:
  - a) Requirements for household pet and service animal reunification, see IEOP Annex 7 Mass Care, Appendix 6 Animal Welfare.
  - b) Repatriation of foreign nationals, see IEOP Annex 7 Mass Care, Appendix 5 Emergency Repatriation.
  - c) Site security at all operations, see IEOP Annex 16, Law Enforcement Coordination and Management.

##### C. Policy

1. All policies identified in IEOP Annex 7, Mass Care remain in effect.

2. Individual privacy rights will be respected and information will be safeguarded as required by applicable federal and state laws.
3. SEOC will coordinate with reunification operations to ensure reunifications are done in conjunction with applicable governmental entities to avoid mistaken identity and misuse of reunification systems.

D. Situation Overview

1. An event has occurred resulting in displacement of affected populations and the need for reunification efforts.
2. The needs regarding reunification are overwhelming the Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJs), non-governmental organizations and emergency dispatch centers, and state resources are requested.

E. Assumptions

1. The AHJ, voluntary and community-based organizations will implement reunification operations both independently and in coordination with partners.
2. Many ad-hoc reunification systems will be created during large events. These databases, social media sites and message boards may not be interoperable and will result in duplicative efforts.
3. Missing individuals will include minors, individuals with access and functional needs, individuals with little or no English proficiency, and fatalities.
4. Lack of interoperability among systems designed for reunification, missing persons, unaccompanied minors, fatality management, patient tracking, registries for people with disabilities and evacuation tracking, will contribute to large complexity of tasks such as validating, reconciling, cross-referencing and sharing data.
5. Initial tracking data will be collected in silos by individual entities such as emergency medical services, law enforcement personnel, county and state emergency management, public health officials, hospitals and other healthcare facilities, the medical examiner/coroner's office, non-profit disaster relief organizations and private sector organizations.
6. Social media will be a strong reunification asset used by affected individuals if operational.
7. Local emergency responders also will be affected by the incident and will ensure the care of their families before reporting for duty.
8. Behavioral health support will be required among all populations, particularly children and those individuals separated from family.
9. Agencies and organizations responsible for the temporary care of children (educational, child care, medical, juvenile justice and

recreational facilities), to include guardianship of children separated from parents or legal guardians as a result of disaster, and those overseeing reunification efforts have clearly identified roles and responsibilities.

10. Schools and child care providers have established relationships and share emergency preparedness plans with first responders and/or, local emergency managers.
11. Prior to implementation of this plan, local AHJs are aware and knowledgeable of local and state laws relating to reunification.
12. Protocols to share information among agencies/organizations providing reunification services have been developed through MOUs and routine use agreements and will reduce duplicative efforts and contribute to a more accurate common operating picture.
13. A process for access to reunification systems and coordinated public messaging about availability and accessibility of reunification services to affected individuals and their families will lessen public confusion and result in more effective reunification outcomes.
14. Reunification systems will be utilized at state-recognized disaster shelter locations.
15. Some individuals will use disasters to flee from harmful or illegal situations and will not want to be found.
16. Mutual aid assistance will be available.
17. Resources will be limited by location, training and operational readiness.
18. Just-in-time training will be required.

## II. Concept of Operations

### A. General

1. AHJ(s) have the primary responsibility to ensure that adequate resources are available to meet the reunification requirements of the citizens and visitors to the jurisdiction during an event. AHJs will communicate reunification information and policies within their jurisdictions and amongst responding agencies.
2. Requests for state support will be directed through the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC).
3. State support is based on resource availability, capability, capacity and prioritization of effort through established plans, policies and procedures.

4. Voluntary and community based organizations that traditionally support reunification in a disaster respond with available resources in accordance with the requirements of their charter and coordinate, facilitate and work with emergency management officials.
5. The success of reunification operations is dependent upon:
  - a. individual access to communications to include telephone, cellular phones and internet to connect with email, social media and reunification systems; and
  - b. seamless coordination and the ability to share information among agencies and organizations with reunification responsibilities including evacuees and displaced adults, missing persons, disaster welfare inquiries, medical patients (to include those in facilities and those evacuated), fatalities and children; and
  - c. timely and consistent public messaging to the public on available reunification mechanisms.
6. Unaccompanied minors should, in all cases, be reported to the local police immediately.
7. The Illinois Department of Child and Family Services is the lead for reunification of children and will coordinate its efforts and requests for resources with the Mass Care Coordinator.
8. Accounting for all missing persons, whether alive, injured or deceased, will require effective communication and coordination among multiple agencies and organizations, each of which may have responsibility for a different component of reunification.
9. The American Red Cross, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) and other NGOs that traditionally provide family and/or child reunification in a disaster response in accordance with the requirements of their charters will coordinate, facilitate and work with emergency management officials.
10. A concerted effort is made to incorporate agencies and organizations providing reunification services into the reunification plan and to identify ad hoc groups that may organize during a disaster to provide reunification services or tools and encourage them to participate in coordinated reunification operations.
11. If State and/or Federal family reunification assets are employed, their deployment is done in coordination and cooperation through the SEOC with the principal AHJs and NGOs operating in the area. All organizations participating in this plan retain operational control of their assets and resources.
12. When evacuation sites such as embarkation/debarkation and reception processing centers are utilized, equipment such as cell phones,

- charging stations, telephone/cell phone access and/or computers with internet access will be provided to evacuees to contact loved ones.
13. Sites that have no or limited communications may require deployment of personnel to help survivors register in reunification systems, such as Safe and Well, where hard copies can be transported to locations with connections to be input by workers.
  14. Significant numbers of missing children and/or unaccompanied minors may trigger a request for activation of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's (NCMEC) National Emergency Child Locator Center and/or Team Adam as well as utilization of the Unaccompanied Minors Registry.
  15. Wide-spread communication outages may result in requests for private sector and voluntary resources that can provide mobile telephone banks, charging stations and/or cells on wheels and internet access for communications.

B. Operational Priorities

1. Priorities for reunification operations and the eventual consolidation and closure of operations will be established by the SEOC with regards to:
  - a. Level of restoration and access to critical lifeline and communications technology infrastructure.
  - b. Ability of AHJs, NGOs, service providers and emergency dispatch centers to handle the volume of calls/requests.

C. Organization

1. Direction, Coordination and Control
  - a. State agencies and external organizations retain operational control of resources.
  - b. The governor or designee has the authority to exercise overall coordination of resources belonging to the state or use directive authority.
  - c. The SEOC is the single point of coordination for state support to all operations.
2. Coordinating Elements
  - a. The SEOC will coordinate with responding agencies, organizations and state officials to determine reunification requirements in impacted areas and coordinate reunification operations.
  - b. The Business Emergency Operations Center will coordinate with private communications technology and service providers to

identify functioning locations and support reunification through private sector resources.

c. Element Specific Support Function (ESSF) – Reunification will be activated at the direction of the SEOC manager.

i. Strategic and operational guidance on ESSF operations can be found in IEOP Base Plan, Appendix 4, Element Specific Support Function Coordination and Management.

3. Federal Coordination

a. SEOC liaison officers (LNOs), state agencies, boards and commissions will coordinate with federal counterparts in accordance with enabling authority.

b. Requests for federal reunification resources will be processed through the SEOC (i.e. Postal Service reunification system).

c. The NCMEC can establish the National Emergency Child Locator Center at the request of a State to FEMA after a presidentially declared disaster.

D. System Capabilities and Structure

1. Red Cross resources include the Safe and Well website; Safe and Well Information Field Teams (SWIFT); Emergency Welfare Inquiries; liaison to reunification task force.

2. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children resources include National Emergency Child Locator Center (call center), Team Adam personnel (deployable teams) and the Unaccompanied Minor Registry.

3. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services resources include Administration for Children and Families (ACF) technical assistance and personnel to support assessment teams.

4. A variety of organizations including the American Society for the Protection and Care of Animals, National Animal Rescue and Sheltering Coalition and Humane Society are capable of providing resources to support household pet/service animal reunification.

5. FEMA resources include the National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System (NEFRLS) reunification system and call center, personal and technical assistance.

6. Reunification Modes

a. Access to Reunification Systems

i. Providing access to typical communication channels

using telecommunications and internet services to connect with email and social media as well as formal reunification systems such as the Safe and Well system.

- b. Physical Reunification
  - i. Reuniting family members who are separated geographically by identifying individuals and their families who are safe and in communication but need support traveling to the same location.
- c. Emergency Welfare Inquiries
  - i. Direct service for situations considered to be critical such as a family member with a serious, pre-existing disability, health or mental health condition.
  - ii. In these cases, resources can be directed to locate the missing family member and to either help the client establish direct communication with the inquirer or to relay information back to the inquirer.
  - iii. Multiple agencies including ARC, ILNG, and State Police can provide an Emergency Welfare Inquiry service during a disaster.
- d. Reunification of the Missing, Injured or Deceased with Families
  - i. Support for cross-referencing reports of missing, injured, and deceased persons with information reported in reunification systems, evacuation tracking systems, registries, social media and other information sources.
  - ii. Coordination among participating agencies/organizations is key to the success of this method and may include development of a single technological solution, such as a common database used for reporting, that is shared among agencies.
  - iii. Coordination among reunification operations and health / social service systems (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living, Departments of Aging/Disabilities) to encourage patients/clients to register in reunification systems.
  - iv. This method does NOT include notification to families of deceased disaster victims.
- e. Reunification or Missing Persons Call Center
  - i. A call center established in a facility or managed remotely by call takers operating via a well-publicized single toll-free telephone number.

- ii. Operators take information from those looking for loved ones or making missing persons reports.
    - iii. Call centers can relieve dispatch center call volume.
    - iv. The NCMEC can establish the National Emergency Child Locator Center at the request of a State to FEMA after a presidentially declared disaster.
  - f. Reunification Multi-Agency Coordination Center (R-MACC) and Reunification Coordination System (RCS) (Multi-Agency Reunification Services Plan, 1 May 2015)
    - i. A R-MACC is a facility that co-locates the agencies and organizations involved in reunification operations to include local/state/federal emergency management (mass care), law enforcement, fatality management, health and social services, non-governmental organizations, mental health resources and others in order to facilitate information sharing and to streamline operations. It also may house a reunification / missing persons call center.
    - ii. A Reunification Coordination System (RCS) is the coordinated collaborative process put in place by reunification agencies and organizations to provide reunification services.
    - iii. A national R-MACC, consisting of national organizations with reunification tools and expertise, may be implemented at the request of a state or, potentially, in a multi-state catastrophic incident.
  - g. Family Assistance Center (FAC)
    - i. A Family Assistance Center (FAC) is a facility where individual assistance services, including reunification services, are offered or that is exclusively utilized for fatality management activities.
    - ii. The American Red Cross coordinates and supports FAC during disasters.
- 2. Reunification System Personnel
  - a. Red Cross and its partner organizations are the primary source of reunification personnel.
  - b. Reunification operations staffing requirements will be met through state agency support, activation of mutual aid agreements, service contracts and utilization of spontaneous

volunteers trained to assigned missions and, to the extent possible, made aware of potential risks involved.

- c. Reunification operations facility requirements will be met through activation of state facilities, mutual aid agreements, service contracts and utilization of donated space and accommodations.
- d. Personnel may come from any state agency or external organization providing resources activated through the SEOC.
- e. At the direction of the governor or designee, state agencies may be tasked with providing agency personnel in support of reunification operations.

B. Resource and Logistical Support Requirements

- 1. Resources and logistics support necessary to implement and sustain communications capabilities will be provided through processes established in IEOP Annex 9, Resource Management.
- 2. Shortfalls and/or gaps identified during short, intermediate and long-term recovery will be addressed through processes established in the IEOP.
- 3. Responding organizations will provide initial capabilities and logistics support in accordance with the internal procedures and policies of the AHJ.
- 4. Additional resource and logistics support may be provided through implementation of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, the federal government and/or private sector.

II. Roles and Responsibilities

A. American Red Cross (Red Cross)

- \_\_\_ 1) Coordinate with American Red Cross Disaster Response Operation leadership to determine necessity of, identify and coordinate reunification operations.
- \_\_\_ 2) Identify reunification support requirements and make appropriate resource requests to the SEOC manager.
- \_\_\_ 3) Determine resource providers as necessary (i.e. NECMEC, FEMA, DHHS).
- \_\_\_ 4) Determine appropriate modes for reunification operations.
- \_\_\_ 5) Coordinate with state agencies and local health care providers for patient identification and tracking.

- \_\_\_ 6) Coordinate support for youths in care, and unaccompanied minors with ISP and DCSF.
  - \_\_\_ 7) Coordinate and disseminate public information, crisis communications, educational messaging with SEOC public information officer (PIO) and Red Cross PIO.
  - \_\_\_ 8) Coordinate with SEOC LNOs for resourcing and support of reunification operations.
  - \_\_\_ 9) Ensure force security and protection support for facilities and sites.
  - \_\_\_ 10) Determine the need and coordinate resource requests for staffing and support of facilities and sites.
  - \_\_\_ 11) Coordinate collection, receipt, compilation and development of situational reports on reunification operations.
- B. Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA)
- \_\_\_ 1) Establish critical and essential information priorities.
  - \_\_\_ 2) Coordinate state and federal support of reunification operations.
  - \_\_\_ 3) Coordinate communications support requirements to conduct public information operations
  - \_\_\_ 4) Through memorandum of understanding with Illinois Emergency Services Management Association:
    - a) Provide staff and support to reunification facilities and operations at the local and state levels, as requested.
    - b) Provide generators to reunification facilities and operations.
- C. Illinois National Guard (ILNG)
- \_\_\_ 1) Provide health and wellness checks and accountability.
  - \_\_\_ 2) Assist with emergency welfare inquiries.
- D. Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
- \_\_\_ 1) Support local school districts in the development and maintenance of school emergency preparedness plans and processes that address lockdown procedures, shelter-in-place, evacuation, relocation, and reuniting students with their parents or legal guardians.
- E. Illinois State Police (ISP)
- \_\_\_ 1) Coordinate support to local law enforcement for the resolution of missing person's reports.

- \_\_\_ 2) Coordinate support to local law enforcement in assuming responsibility for unaccompanied minors, as provided for by law.
  - \_\_\_ 3) Coordinate with the Red Cross to facilitate reunification activities.
- F. Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)
- \_\_\_ 1) Support the development of required emergency preparedness plans for child care providers.
  - \_\_\_ 2) Advise on safety requirements for children separated from parents or legal guardians and parents or legal guardians seeking missing children during a disaster.
  - \_\_\_ 3) Provide technical expertise for the support of unaccompanied minors shelters in the event significant numbers of children have become separated from parents/legal guardians.
- G. Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)
- \_\_\_ 1) Coordinate identification and tracking of clients and customers in Illinois Department of Human Services facilities.
  - \_\_\_ 2) Support assignment of external resources and personnel with specialized skills (e.g., food service staff, mental health personnel, health care personnel, private care attendants and logistics staff).
  - \_\_\_ 3) Assist in identifying translators, interpreters and staff experienced in communicating with those with functional needs and other diverse populations.
  - \_\_\_ 4) Support identification and coordination of facilities and staff for reunification operations.
  - \_\_\_ 5) Support coordination of emergency day care services.
- H. Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)
- \_\_\_ 1) Coordinate with local health care providers for patient identification and tracking requirements during reunification operations.
  - \_\_\_ 2) Provide technical assistance for reunification operations including food safety, safe drinking water, sanitary waste disposal, vector control and structural pest control management.
  - \_\_\_ 3) Coordinate the activation of volunteer disaster medical support based on resource availability.
- I. Secretary of State (SOS)
- \_\_\_ 1) Coordinate use of State Capitol Complex facilities.

- \_\_\_ 2) Coordinate Capitol Police support.
- \_\_\_ 3) Provide assistance in the replacement of state identification including drivers' licenses, state ID cards, vehicle titles and license plates.
- \_\_\_ 4) Coordinate communication support for self-identifying foreign nationals.

J. Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA)

- \_\_\_ 1) Coordinate and support the implementation of state and federal disaster assistance programs to meet the needs of elderly populations.
- \_\_\_ 2) Assist with providing Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) to adult populations.
- \_\_\_ 3) Coordinate and manage identification and tracking of elderly populations.
- \_\_\_ 4) Support identification and provision of specialized personnel at designated reunification facilities.

K. Illinois Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (IL VOAD)

- \_\_\_ 1) Coordination reunification operations with NGOs and Faith Based Organizations with the SEOC.

L. Other Organizations: General Considerations

- \_\_\_ 1) At the request of the SEOC manager:
  - i. Identify resources, facilities and personnel available to assist in reunification operations.
  - ii. Coordinate notification, activation and deployment of resources, facilities and personnel available to assist in reunification operations.
  - iii. Monitor and advise the SEOC on sustainment requirements for resources, facilities and personnel providing reunification operations support.

III. Authorities and References

A. Authorities

- 1. All authorities found in IEOP Annex 7, Mass Care

B. References and Resources

- 2. Multi-Agency Reunification Services Plan, as amended  
[nationalmasscarestrategy.org](http://nationalmasscarestrategy.org)