

# Donations Management Plan

**December 2023**



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Cover Image: Downtown Cincinnati from Mt. Adams at Sunset.  
Photo Credit: Trip Wright

## Approval

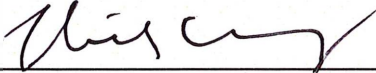
The *Hamilton County Donations Management Plan* outlines how solicited and unsolicited donations will be directed, accepted, managed, and incorporated into the disaster relief effort, as appropriate, within Hamilton County. It is the intent of this document to guide donations management operations so those donations can be utilized most effectively to support disaster response and recovery. This plan is an attachment the *2020 Hamilton County Emergency Operations Plan* which addresses Hamilton County's planned response to disaster situations associated with all hazards such as natural disasters, technological accidents, and human-caused incidents.

This plan was developed using generally accepted emergency management principles and practices. Incorporated are planning elements derived from Federal Emergency Management Agency and Ohio Emergency Management Agency planning documents.

Modifications to this plan may be made under the direction of the Director of the Hamilton County Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency. Plan maintenance and adoption will occur following the established method and schedule outlined in the Plan Maintenance section. However, this plan may be modified in the interim without formal approval.

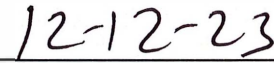
This Plan is approved and supported by the Director of the Hamilton County Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency. The Director of the Hamilton County Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency oversees and implements the county-wide, comprehensive all-hazards emergency management program.

This plan supersedes any previous versions.



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Nick Crossley, Director  
Hamilton County Emergency Management  
& Homeland Security Agency



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Date

## Coordinating Agency

Hamilton County Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency (EMHSA)

## Supporting Agencies

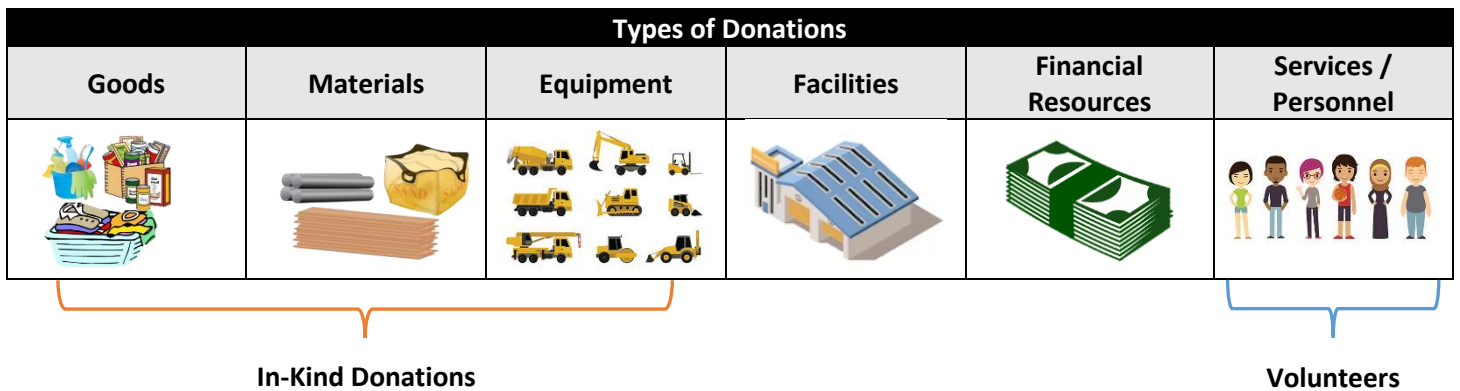
Hamilton County Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD)

- Freestore Foodbank
- Matthew 25 Ministries
- New Life Furniture Bank
- Salvation Army

## Introduction

In the aftermath of a disaster, many people will want to donate money or items to help those affected. When properly managed, disaster donations can be a helpful source of assistance for the recovery process and a way to show the support of the wider community. If not carefully directed, however, unwanted donations can add undue strain on organizations and waste time, money, and effort that could have been better spent elsewhere in the response. Donations are an inevitability with disasters, so it is essential to plan for how to manage them.

Donations can come in many forms, shown below:



All types of donations are either solicited or unsolicited. Solicited donations are those donations that have been requested to fill a specific need in the response or recovery effort. Unsolicited donations are those donations that are initiated by the donor and have not been requested to fulfill a specific need with the response effort. While donations are presumably given for altruistic purposes, unsolicited material donations are the items which place the most strain on receiving agencies.

Additionally, personnel may donate their expertise or time by volunteering; however, this is managed using a separate process. As outlined in *Annex G - Emergency Support Function (ESF) #7 – Resource Management* of the *2020 Hamilton County Emergency Operations Plan*, the Logistics Coordination Section/ESF #7, or the Volunteer Management Unit, if activated, is responsible for coordinating with voluntary, nonprofit, and faith-based organizations supporting the response and recovery effort and locating additional resources including volunteers as needed. Hamilton County COAD will also coordinate with voluntary, nonprofit, and faith-based organizations and advise on organizations who may be available to assist. Unaffiliated volunteers will be managed using the process outlined in the *Hamilton County Spontaneous Volunteer Management Plan*.

Donations will serve an important role in Hamilton County following a disaster. The goal of donations management is to create an efficient process that manages the acceptance and distribution of both solicited and unsolicited donations in order to most effectively support the response and recovery effort and assist disaster survivors.

## Purpose

Lessons learned from previous disasters consistently underscore that defining organizational roles and establishing relationships with organizations prior to an incident promotes a more efficient disaster response and recovery. To that end, the purpose of this plan is to outline how solicited and unsolicited donations will be directed, accepted, managed, and incorporated into the disaster relief effort as appropriate within Hamilton County. This includes identifying organizations who are involved in this effort and delineating their responsibilities.

## Scope

This planning document is a collaborative effort involving multiple agencies to meet the needs and expectations of governmental and non-governmental departments, agencies, and other organizations within Hamilton County. This plan is applicable to the voluntary and nonprofit organizations who manage donations during a disaster and the identified agencies in the Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities section of the plan.

## Relationship to Other Plans

*The Hamilton County Donations Management Plan* is an attachment to the *Hamilton County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP)* which addresses Hamilton County's coordinated countywide response to disaster situations. It is meant to be a standalone document that augments the EOP by addressing one facet of the response, specifically the management of donations.

Other annexes and attachments to the EOP are related to donations management. For example, *Annex G – ESF #7 – Resource Management* describes the operational components as well as roles and responsibilities necessary to coordinate activities related to providing logistical and resource support for responding agencies in Hamilton County. Logistical and resource support may be donated to address the response and recovery needs. Additionally, *Annex O – ESF #15 – Emergency Public Information* establishes how emergency public information activities will be coordinated to meet the needs generated by disasters affecting Hamilton County, OH. Prompt and accurate information to the public is critical in the management of donations. Any emergency public information about donations will utilize the Joint Information System established for the incident and ESF #15.

Additionally, the *2023 Hamilton County Disaster Recovery Framework* outlines the responsibilities of all participating organizations, establishes the process and governance structure for coordinating recovery activities, and addresses the needs of the Whole Community to ensure recovery efforts in Hamilton County are effective, efficient, and equitable. Some recovery efforts will be supported by donations. As recovery efforts may use donations to address resource needs, the *2023 Hamilton County Disaster Recovery Framework* identifies the goal of supporting long-term donations and volunteer management and strategies for doing so. Concepts within the *Hamilton County Donations Management Plan* may influence the transition from short term to long term donations and volunteer management. However, it is a standalone document from the *2023 Hamilton County Disaster Recovery Framework*.

## Situation

Hamilton County is susceptible to a multitude of natural, technological, and human-caused threats and hazards. The *Hamilton County Donations Management Plan* is applicable to the twenty-one hazards that are listed in the *2023 Hamilton County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan* as these hazards, depending on their scope and magnitude, may spur the acceptance of donations and the need to manage them.

## Planning Assumptions

Planning requires assumptions based on statistics, history, behavior patterns, and likely future trends. The following assumptions were made as consideration for the *Hamilton County Donations Management Plan*:

- Hazards may affect one or multiple jurisdictions within Hamilton County. Hazards may also extend beyond the borders of Hamilton County and require a coordinated response and recovery effort between multiple jurisdictions at the local, County, or even State level.
- Donations may arrive with little to no warning. The volume of donations received may disrupt day-to-day donation management channels and overwhelm volunteer organizations not prepared to manage them.
- Depending on the disaster's scope and magnitude as well as the amount of media attention, people and relief organizations inside and outside the area may want to donate money and goods to the relief efforts.
- The vast majority of giving is received within the first six weeks of a major disaster.
- The need for donations will exist well into the long-term recovery phase as unmet needs are identified after other resources are exhausted.
- Donations may be offered that are unusable and/or are unsuitable for the relief effort or disaster survivors.
- Some advertised donation opportunities may be fraudulent and seek to manipulate and take advantage of disaster survivors or donors.
- State and federal assistance will supplement, not supplant, the response provided by governmental and non-governmental departments, agencies, and other organizations. Donations management assistance is provided when local resources are insufficient to meet the demands of the incident.
- Well managed donations will contribute to a positive public perception of the response operations; conversely, poorly managed donations will damage public trust in response and recovery agencies and efforts.
- Financial resources/monetary donations are preferable to in-kind donations because it allows for the purchase of the exact resources to address unmet needs.

## Concept of Operations

Donations management operations are multifaceted. First, it is important to identify what donated resources are needed, then develop the best process to manage solicited and unsolicited donations. Once these are developed, the donations themselves have to be managed and the plan put into action. Given that the public is the source of most solicited and unsolicited donations, a public information strategy is an important element of successful donations management. This section will outline overall activities involved in donations management and describe their operations.

Donations Management Activities	
1.	Identifying Needed Resources
2.	Developing the Donations Management Process
3.	Managing Donations
4.	Public Information

It should be recognized that every situation will present different and unique challenges, complexities, and requirements. While extensive effort and years of experience have been applied to develop, coordinate, and implement this plan, it should be understood that this plan functions to provide guidance and should not be rigidly applied to every disaster.

Donations are best managed by volunteer organizations that have experience in successfully handling donations. During many disasters, the acceptance and management of donations is completed by voluntary and nonprofit organizations as part of their routine disaster operations. In these instances, Hamilton County will refer individuals or organizations offering donations to voluntary and nonprofit organizations active in the response which are accepting them. Agencies receiving donations are responsible for addressing and maintaining their internal policies for donations management, personnel

Hamilton County Donations Management Plan issues, and continuous operations. As resource needs are identified, these will be communicated to voluntary organizations and nonprofits to assist in addressing those unmet needs.

## Identifying Needed Resources

Donations are used to fill identified resource needs from responders and unmet needs of disaster survivors. Understanding current and anticipated needs is critical to donations management. Resource needs for response operations are identified by those responding to the incident and may include the Incident Commander, on-scene logistics section (if established), local jurisdiction, County department, emergency management partners, other responding organizations, or the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), if activated. Understanding the needs of disaster survivors comes from a variety of sources including damage assessments, reports from the media, social media reports, incident command, local emergency operations centers, shelter staff, and caseworkers.

### **Resource Needs from Responders or Overall Response Effort**

Jurisdictions and organizations responding to a disaster may request resources through the Logistics Coordination Section/ESF #7 – Resource Management who will receive, document, and manage resource requests that may be filled through donations. Examples include:

- Supplies for response operations such as food, water, personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, tarps
- Equipment such as generators or dump trucks
- Facilities that may be used to stage or store resources

### **Unmet Needs of Disaster Survivors**

The Planning Coordination Section/ESF #5 – Emergency Management, ESF #15 – Emergency Public Information, the Operations Coordination Section and ESF #6 – Mass Care each may learn of unmet needs of disaster survivors. ESF #6, who is responsible for coordinating the distribution of emergency supplies, shall compile and share unmet needs information with the Logistics Coordination Section/ESF #7 and the Donations Management Unit, if activated.

Impacted residents may need emergency supplies such as:

- Life-sustaining items, such as food, water, medication, medical equipment
- Comfort items, such as blankets, clothing, toiletries
- Other essential items such cleaning supplies, work tools, replacement of lost essential items

## FEMA's Core Capabilities

- **Logistics & Supply Chain Management** – Donations may be utilized to meet unmet needs including essential commodities, equipment, and services in support of impacted communities and survivors. This plan outlines how donations will be successfully managed and incorporated into the disaster relief effort.
- **Mass Care Services** – Providing life-sustaining and human services to the affected population includes the distribution of emergency supplies. Emergency supplies distributed to disaster survivors or affected populations are often donations.
- **Public Information & Warning** – Successful donations management involves working within the Joint Information System to deliver coordinated, prompt, reliable, and actionable information to the public.

## Developing the Donations Management Process for the Incident

While careful planning and consideration should go into developing a donations management process, it is important to do so as quickly as possible. Donations will be offered whether or not a plan has been made, and the issues related to donations management are much more challenging to address the longer it takes to get a structure in place. While planners are still working on a more thorough donations management strategy, a message should be shared with the public in the meantime directing monetary donations to disaster response organizations.

After needs have been identified and it is determined that donations will be an appropriate source to fill the need, a process will need to be developed to manage the acceptance and utilization of donations. The process will be specific to the disaster response and utilize concepts outlined in this plan. EMHSA or the Logistics Coordination Section/ESF #7 – Resource Management and the Donations Management Unit, if activated, will work with partners to develop the donations management process unique to the incident. The complexity of the donation management operation will be driven by the incident. Developing and implementing a donations management plan should be carefully documented.

Factors That Impact Complexity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantity of donations being accepted and managed</li> <li>• Number of organizations or disaster survivors requesting and receiving donated resources</li> <li>• The duration of donations management operations</li> <li>• The size of the facility or operation accepting and managing donations</li> <li>• Any storage requirements for the donated items such as space, electricity, or temperature needs</li> <li>• Any transportation that may be required including any transportation to support obtaining, storing, or distributing donated items</li> <li>• The reception of unsolicited donations</li> </ul>

### Elements in Donations Management Process

In a disaster, planning must address each element in the donation management process, which includes soliciting, accepting, inventorying, storing, distributing, and tracking of donations. Depending on the size and scope of the disaster, some elements may be addressed using a simple process while others necessitate a more formal and multifaceted system. The following sections describe each of these elements and include tables which outline considerations to guide the development of a donations management process.



### *Soliciting Specific Donations*

After a disaster, the public may likely already be trying to donate to the response whether or not specific items have been requested. When there are identified needs that donations are able to address, it is beneficial to specify what items are needed to the public. This should be carefully coordinated with key stakeholders, including the site or organization accepting the donations, the identified the Public Information Officer (PIO), ESF# 15, and the Joint Information Center (JIC), as appropriate. It is essential to have clear and consistent messaging about the type of donations being accepted and the process for donating. It is also important for those soliciting donations to communicate regularly with the organizations distributing items so that when items are no longer needed, the community can be updated in a timely manner.

Despite clearly communicating the specific donation items needed, it should be assumed that unsolicited donations will still be offered at the donation drop-off sites and should be planned for regardless. In some cases, a phone line set up for vetting donations reduces unsolicited donations at the drop-off site, although it requires additional staffing.

Considerations for Soliciting Specific Donations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What specific donations are being accepted?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Develop criteria based on identified unmet needs or anticipated recovery needs</li> <li>○ Consider use, type, brand, size, quantity, new vs. used, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• When and where will donations be accepted?</li> <li>• Will a phone line be established to vet donations?</li> <li>• Are there specific instructions or information the drop-off site/accepting organization wants shared?</li> </ul>



**Considerations for Soliciting Specific Donations:**

- How is all this being communicated to the public?
- What is the process for determining if/when solicited items are no longer needed?

*Accepting Donations*

As previously stated, Hamilton County will partner with organizations that have established donations processes and procedures. There are several pre-identified drop-off locations listed later in this plan which would serve as ideal donations collection points. If there are a variety of donations being accepted and it is likely some donations will not fill a specific need, using a preidentified location with an existing process of managing donations is recommended. However, considerations for accepting donations will be expounded here in case the need arises for a new drop-off site.

When selecting a site, it is important to consider the geographical location(s) of these sites in relation to the disaster, as well as traffic and storage concerns of an individual site receiving a high volume of donors. Although some sites have been preidentified, the organization should be consulted prior to site selection each time, as this may assist with decision-making and ensure stakeholders are on the same page.

A person or group may offer donations prior to bringing them to the drop-off site, which allows the opportunity to evaluate whether the donation will meet an identified need before accepting. However, the majority of items will just be dropped off, and will likely include both solicited and unsolicited donations. Accepting donations includes the process for vetting, receiving, and sorting all received donations.

It is important to predetermine what types of donations cannot be accepted and then clearly and consistently communicate this to the public. Having a rationale on why only certain resources can be accepted will help volunteers working the drop-off site manage these conversations. As noted previously, vetting donations over the phone instead of only at the drop-off location may assist with this effort.

Documentation is an important aspect of accepting donations. Tracking who made donations and what was received will help with overall management as well as recognizing or expressing gratitude to donors. Some of this information is also needed if an applicant for Public Assistance is trying to use the donation as a part of the contribution of the non-Federal cost share. The table below provides an overview of what should be documented.

Depending on the donation, transportation may also need to be arranged to accept it. As appropriate, the Logistics Coordination Section/ESF #7 – Resource Management and the Donations Management Unit will assist with the transportation of needed resources including donations with support from ESF #1 – Transportation Infrastructure.

**Considerations for Accepting Donations:**

- What are the criteria for donations being accepted?
  - Are only new items wanted, or will gently used items be accepted?
  - What items are NOT accepted, and are there other places that could accept those items the site cannot?
    - I.e., if someone brings breakable glassware to Matthew 25 Ministries, which they cannot accept, the person could be referred to New Life Furniture Bank or Salvation Army instead.
- Where and when will donations be collected?
  - Consider when the drop-off site will be closed and how to keep the site secure to prevent unwanted item drop-offs without staff present
  - If there are multiple donation drop-off sites, will items be managed separately or brought to a central location prior to distribution?
- Will additional personnel be needed to evaluate and accept donations?
- How will donations be documented? The process should be able to track the following:
  - Who made the donation?
  - What is their contact information?

**Considerations for Accepting Donations:**

- What was received?
- How much was donated?
- When was the donation received?
- How will donations be organized?
  - Will they be organized by type, who the donation is for, where the location will be distributed, etc.?
  - How does the method used for sorting support inventorying, storing, distributing and/or tracking donations?

*Inventorying Donations*

Inventorying donations refers to creating a detailed catalog or list of all donations received. Having an inventory of available donations will assist with tracking. The same process used to inventory donations may be used to track donations once identified for distribution. There are many inventorying systems that can be utilized, from paper forms to logistics management software. Hamilton County will likely defer to accepting organizations' existing donations inventory processes. An inherent part of inventorying is documentation, so the inventory process is a good time to consider what information needs to be documented that can be tracked at the same time.

An aspect of inventorying that is important to predetermine is how donations are tracked compared to items procured. For example, if donations solicited for an identified need are not sufficient to meet that need, responding organizations may need to purchase those items. In this case, inventorying processes will be all the more important to keep records straight and avoid mixing up donations and purchases. It should be determined ahead of time how best to track and inventory all items and this system should be maintained throughout.

Donations will be distributed throughout the response and recovery, which will lead to continuous changes in inventory quantities and may involve multiple stakeholders. It is important for partners involved in the donations management process to communicate and collaborate throughout the process in order to keep inventory numbers as up to date as possible. With consistent changes, there may be a level of uncertainty, but there should be an understanding of the general state of donated assets and needs throughout the disaster response and recovery. There will likely be some amount of public scrutiny throughout the process, so the more documentation the better when it comes to public donations.

**Considerations for Inventorying Donations:**

- What will be the process for inventorying donations?
  - Will this utilize a new or existing inventory system?
  - Will the same inventory process be used for purchased resources or donations only?
- What information should be documented during the inventory process?
  - What was received?
  - Should any categories being used for sorting be noted?
  - How much was donated?
  - When was the donation received?
  - Where is it being stored?
- How will the inventory be managed/updated with distribution?
  - As donations are distributed, how will the inventory be adjusted to reflect current stock?
  - How will amounts recorded in inventory be verified against current stock to ensure inventory accuracy?
- Current inventory quantity will inform what resource requests can be filled and what resources can be distributed.
  - How will inventory information be coordinated and shared to address unmet needs?
  - How often will this information be shared?

*Storing Donations*

Donations will likely need to be stored until distributed, so it is important to identify storage requirements, including the expected duration storage will be needed. As mentioned above, some items may need to be purchased alongside solicited donations, so it will be important to maintain documentation if purchased and donated items are stored together.

**Considerations for Storing Donations:**

- How much space is needed?
- How long will donations be stored?
- Are there any special storage requirements such as temperature?
- Will any additional equipment (e.g., forklifts, pallets, and shelves) or staff be needed?
- Are there any existing storage locations available?
- Will just one location be used to accept, inventory, store, and/or distribute donations, or will items be moved from drop-off sites to one or more additional locations for storage?
  - How this will be accomplished?
- Will donated resources and purchased resources need to be differentiated in storage?

*Distributing Donations*

Distributing donations is the purpose of collecting them in the first place. The Logistics Coordination Section/ESF #7 and/or ESF #6 – Mass Care may have already established a system to distribute resources, or the responding organizations and partners may also already have protocols and processes to follow regarding supply distribution. Donated resources may be distributed to responders, disaster survivors, or both. Who the donations are being distributed to may change the preferred method of distribution. Examples of response operations that could be supported with donations include canteening operations, feeding operations, or sheltering operations.

The media may have an interest in learning about the distribution sites and possibly visiting the site. All communication with the media should be incorporated into the Joint Information System (JIS) established for the incident and coordinated through ESF #15 – Emergency Public Information.

**Considerations for Distributing Donations:**

- Will one location or multiple locations be utilized?
- Will donations be distributed directly to residents or homes?
- Will donations need to be transported to a pickup location? If so, how?
- An existing system may already be in place to distribute resources.
- Does an existing distribution system exist that can also be utilized to effectively distribute donations?
- Will the distribution site have another purpose such as also serving as a shelter, point of dispensing (POD), or multiagency resource center (MARC)?

*Tracking Donations*

Tracking donations involves monitoring and documenting the status of all donations accepted. Not only should organizations involved in donations management track where donations end up, in rare circumstances, some resources (such as facilities or equipment) may need to be returned to the original owner. This information should also be tracked.

In some disasters, the value of donated resources may be credited towards the calculation of the non-federal share for eligible work following declared disasters. The most current version of the Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG) should be utilized to inform the applicant about what donated resources may qualify and what information needs to be captured. Generally, information to capture includes the following:

- **Individuals:** sign-in sheet, name of individual, title and function (for professional services), days and hours worked, location of work and work performed.

- **Equipment:** Type of equipment and attachments used (including year, make, and model), size/capacity (e.g., horsepower, wattage), location equipment was used, days and hours used (should include usage logs), operator name, schedule of rates (including rate components) if not using FEMA rates, and who donated each piece of equipment.
- **Supplies or materials:** Quantity used, who donated, location(s) used, and invoices or other documentation to validate claimed value.

#### Considerations for Tracking Donations:

- Is there already an established system for tracking resources that can also be used for donations?
- Will the same system being used to inventory donations also be used to track donations?
- Are there any donated resources that will need to be returned to the original owner?
  - If so, how will this be documented?
- The status of donations and overall donation information should be tracked.
  - What information is being tracked and documented?
    - Who made the donation?
      - What is their contact information?
    - What was received?
    - How much was donated?
    - When was the donation received?
    - Where are the donations being stored?
    - Who are the donations being distributed to?
    - When is it being distributed?
    - If applicable, when was the donation returned to the original owner?
  - What are the quantities being distributed to each individual or organization? What are the total quantities of distributed donations?

After a donations management process is established for the incident addressing each element above, it will need to be executed accordingly. Throughout the execution, it should be continually evaluated and adjusted as needed to meet the needs of the disaster. Considerations to be evaluated include but are not limited to:

- Incident information has changed, impacting donations management operations
- The quantity or type of donations has changed
- Areas of improvement have been identified

## Managing Donations

### Managing Unsolicited Donations

During large disasters, there may be an influx of unsolicited donations. Having specific information defining what is being accepted that is clearly and consistently communicated to residents is the best way to prevent being overwhelmed with unsolicited donations; however, previous disasters indicate that even with communication, unsolicited donations will likely be offered.

During a large-scale disaster covered in the media, individuals, and organizations from outside the impacted area may begin collecting donations to assist. These donations will likely greatly contribute to the influx of items. As previously stated, partnering with voluntary organizations that have experience with accepting donations and existing processes to do so will be crucial to managing unsolicited donations.

In Hamilton County, several agencies are willing to accept and manage both solicited and unsolicited in-kind donations after a disaster. The Salvation Army, Freestore Foodbank, New Life Furniture Bank, and Matthew 25 Ministries are each equipped to receive an influx of donations and manage them through their existing processes. The Hamilton County EMHSA or the Hamilton County EOC may support these efforts as requested by obtaining additional needed resources

Hamilton County Donations Management Plan and by adding organizations to the list of willing in-kind donation recipients. EMHSA also has the Hamilton County Public Safety Warehouse that can serve as a donations storage site if needed. However, this site will likely be used to store procured items to meet response and recovery needs rather than donations, unless no other options are available.

#### Donations Management Partners and Sites

The locations of partners that can accept and/or distribute donations throughout the County are listed below and categorized by the items preferred by the recipient organization.

Organization/Site to Accept and/or Distribute Donations	Address	Preferred Donation Type
<b>Salvation Army Cincinnati Center Hill Corps Community Center</b> <b>Phone: 513-242-9100</b>	6381 Center Hill Avenue Cincinnati, OH 45224	Clothes, small household items, food storage if necessary
<b>Salvation Army Cincinnati Citadel Corps Community Center</b> <b>Phone: 513-762-5600</b>	120 East Central Parkway Cincinnati, OH 45202	Clothes, small household items, food storage if necessary
<b>Salvation Army Cincinnati West Side Corps Community Center</b> <b>Phone: 513-251-1424</b>	3503 Warsaw Avenue Cincinnati, OH 45205	Clothes, small household items, food storage if necessary
<b>Salvation Army Warehouse</b> <b>Phone: 513-762-5600</b>	4220 Dane Avenue Cincinnati, OH 45223	Clothes, small household items, food storage if necessary
<b>New Life Furniture Bank Thrift Store</b> <b>Phone: 513-667-1213</b>	12037 Lebanon Road Sharonville, OH 45241	Furniture, household items, clothes, (see website for list of items not accepted)
<b>New Life Furniture Bank Warehouse/Office</b> <b>Phone: 513-313-0530</b>	11335 Reed Hartman Hwy. #134 Blue Ash, OH 45241	Furniture, household items, clothes, (see website for list of items not accepted)
<b>Matthew 25 Ministries Warehouse/Donation Drop-Off</b> <b>Phone: 513-793-6256</b>	11083 Kenwood Road Blue Ash, OH 45242	Accepts most items except household furniture or furnishings, electronics or appliances, glassware, or prescription medication
<b>Freestore Foodbank Community Resource &amp; Distribution Center/ Warehouse</b> <b>Phone: 513-482-4500</b>	3401 Rosenthal Way Cincinnati, Ohio 45204	Packaged/unopened food items
<b>Freestore Foodbank Customer Connection Center &amp; Liberty Street Market</b> <b>Phone: 513-241-1064</b>	112 E Liberty Street Cincinnati, OH 45202	Packaged/unopened food items

During a disaster, donations collected prior to the event may be utilized to assist with the disaster relief effort. Some unsolicited donations may not be able to fill a specific need for the disaster relief effort but could be helpful to individuals in need who were not directly impacted by the disaster. Therefore, organizations accepting donations cannot guarantee that every single donated item will go to disaster survivors, but can assure that all items will go to address a need in the

community. Incorporating these concepts when communicating about soliciting and accepting donations will assist with transparency.

As a last resort, it may be determined that some unsolicited donations are unusable and need to be disposed of. This could include transferring a donation to another organization, repurposing the donation, or discarding the donation. Any accepted unsolicited donations should be evaluated to determine which of these options is most appropriate.

### Managing Donated Facilities

Some disasters may prompt the need for additional facilities. For example, a warehouse may be needed to store supplies, or a large indoor area may be needed for sheltering or storing. Some facilities may be offered at no cost and donated to the response effort. Facility donations have unique characteristics. In order to be incorporated into the response, the facility must meet the specific needs of the response. Facilities are offered significantly less often, and in lower quantities, than most other donations. Therefore, any donated facilities will be managed through the Logistics Coordination Section/ESF #7 – Resource Management.

### Managing Monetary Donations

The most expedient and efficient way to help is by contributing financially through monetary donations. There are many reasons why monetary donations are the preferred form of donation.

1. Cash donations can be utilized to meet specific needs of disaster survivors.
2. Cash is flexible. An item needed in the immediate aftermath of a disaster that is donated (bottled water, for example) may be helpful for a little while, but may become irrelevant and potentially even burdensome once that need is met. Cash, meanwhile, remains helpful regardless of how needs change.
3. Money donated may be utilized to purchase goods and services locally that will help rebuild the local economy rather than flooding the area with free items purchased elsewhere.
4. Receiving monetary donations is less difficult and less labor-intensive than accepting, sorting, inventorying, storing, and distributing in-kind donations.
5. Oftentimes partner organizations can purchase needed items at a lower cost than it takes to receive those items as donations from the public.

All monetary donations will be referred to an established voluntary organization assisting with the relief effort. A Long-Term Recovery Committee may also establish a fund to accept donations to assist disaster survivors. The Emergency Operations Center and the Hamilton County EMHSA will not accept any financial donations.

### Managing Food Donations

In some disasters, food donations may be needed. It is likely that even if food donations are not asked for, individuals will still bring pantry items to donate. Due to the unique storage requirements for food products, food will not likely be able to be accepted, inventoried, stored and distributed using the same system as clothing or other supplies. Food donations for Hamilton County will be managed using the existing system through the Freestore Food Bank. The Freestore Foodbank is responsible for addressing and maintaining its internal policies for donations management, personnel, and continuous operations. The Salvation Army may also be able to store and distribute good items if necessary. The Hamilton County EMHSA or the Hamilton County EOC may support these efforts as requested by obtaining additional needed resources.

It is important to clarify with the public that food donations cannot be homemade or opened/unpackaged. Citizens who are set on baking food for those affected by the disaster should be encouraged to hold bake sales and donate the proceeds, as homemade items dropped off for those in a shelter will not be distributed out of health code concerns. Even when it comes to food, it should be emphasized that cash is best.

### Public Information

One of the first and most critical pieces of managing both monetary and in-kind donations is coordinating public information. Communicating prompt, clear, consistent, and accurate information to the public about donations will assist

in the management of donations. Any emergency public information about donations will utilize the Joint Information System (JIS) established for the incident and ESF #15 – Emergency Public Information. More information about the JIS as well as a sample donation management press release is available in the *2020 Hamilton County Joint Information System Guide*.

As with all public information, special care should be utilized when crafting the message being communicated and determining the methods for disseminating the information. Depending on the unique needs of the disaster, special emphasis should be placed on the following key points:

- Encouraging monetary donations
- Advising residents to only donate to established and reputable voluntary organizations or vetted recipients
- If donations are being solicited, indicate:
  - The specific types of donations needed (i.e., new vs. used, type, brand, etc.),
  - How to donate (i.e., call a phone number for details on how to donate or list dates, times and drop off locations and process)

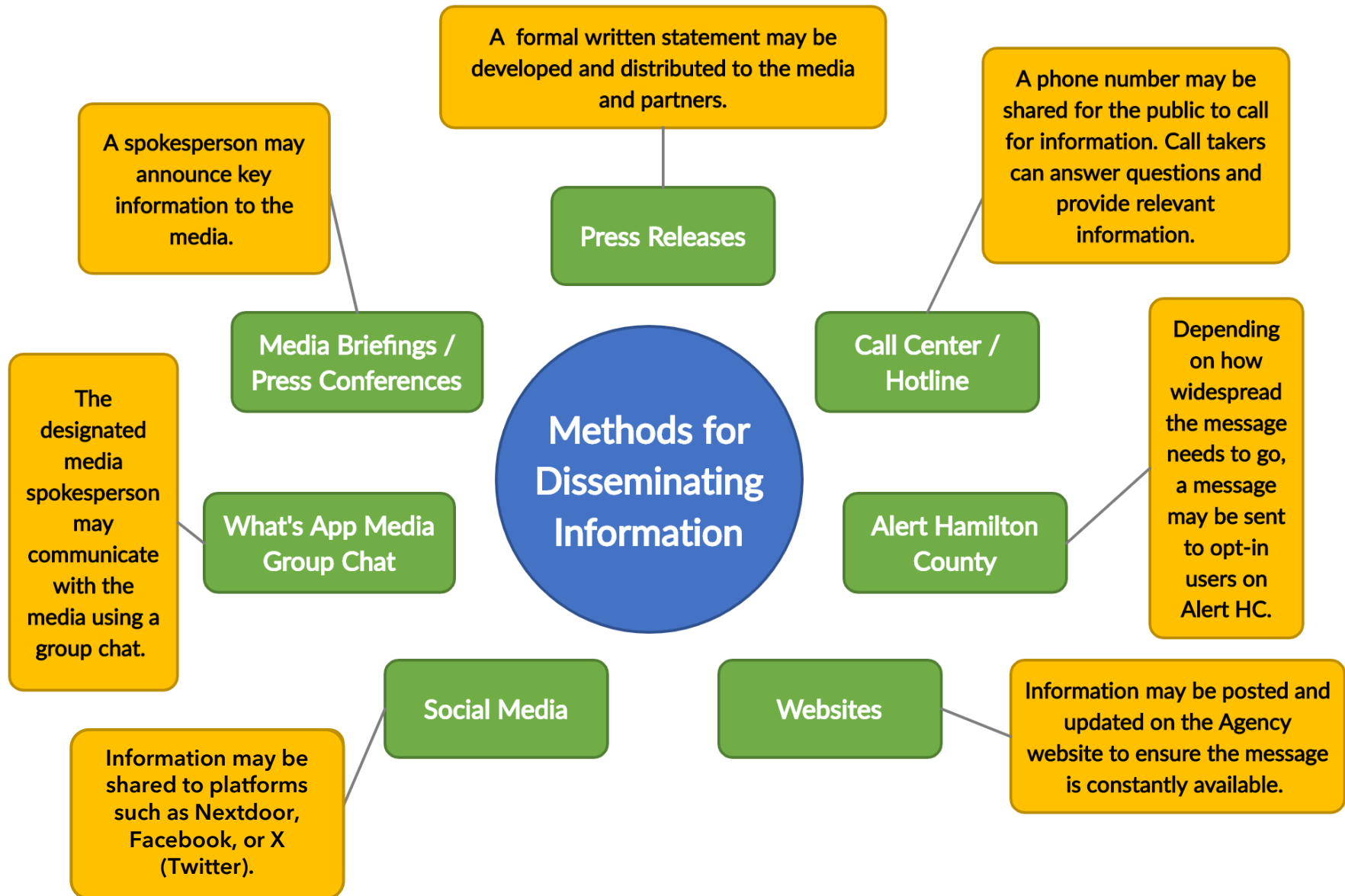
All the organizations listed in this plan as potential donation drop-off sites likely have specific messages they want shared and should be consulted before publishing any donations drop-off instructions. These messages may include, but are not limited to:

- Reaffirming the preference for monetary donations
- They cannot guarantee every single in-kind donation will go directly to the disaster victims, but they will assure they go to help people in need
- There are some restrictions to be made clear prior to opening drop-off site(s) that vary by site and organization
- Call ahead for bulk donations

The method for disseminating information should also be considered and will be determined in consultation with the Public Information Officer, ESF# 15 and JIC. Most likely a variety of media outlets, platforms, and methods will be used simultaneously to get information out to the public. The JIC will play an important role in ensuring a coordinated method is shared, and may also be needed to help identify any misinformation circulating regarding donations.



*Scene of unsolicited donations received in Houston following Hurricane Harvey in August 2017.  
(Photo Credit: Elizabeth Conley)*





## Organization and Assignment of Responsibilities

### Coordinating Agency Responsibilities

#### Hamilton County Emergency Management & Homeland Security Agency will:

1. Designate sufficient representatives (no less than three) to support/staff 24-hour operations at the Hamilton County EOC. The Hamilton County EMHSA will maintain listings of these personnel, 24-hour contact information, and directions for contacting them in the event of communication outages.
2. Coordinate with partners to develop and document the donations management process unique to the incident.
3. Manage acceptance, inventorying, storing, distributing, and tracking of donated resources, as appropriate.
4. Obtain additional resources to support donations management operations.
5. Maintain Hamilton County Public Safety Warehouse as a materiel storage site.

### Supporting Agencies

#### Hamilton County Community Organizations Active in Disasters will:

1. Coordinate with the members of COAD and other voluntary, nonprofit, and faith-based organizations or groups to identify organizations accepting donations and locate additional resources to support donation management operations.
2. Establish the Long-Term Recovery Committee and set up a fund for donations, as needed.

#### Freestore Foodbank will:

1. Manage the acceptance, inventorying, storing, distributing, and tracking of donated items, primarily food resources.
2. Coordinate additional food donation drop-off sites with local network of foodbanks and major partners.

#### Matthew 25 Ministries:

1. Will manage the acceptance, inventorying, storing, distributing, and tracking of donated items as appropriate, including potentially accepting donations unwanted by other areas of the response that align with their donation guidelines
2. May liaise between local corporate partners and ESF #7 and/or Long-Term Recovery Committee for solicitation of specific identified needs.

#### New Life Furniture Bank will:

1. Manage the acceptance, inventorying, storing, distributing, and tracking of donated items, primarily furniture and household material resources.
2. Coordinate with the Long-Term Recovery Committee and other organizations' caseworkers to distribute donated items to affected families as needed.

#### The Salvation Army will:

1. Manage the acceptance, inventorying, storing, distributing, and tracking of donated items, primarily clothing and material resources, and food items if necessary.

## Plan Maintenance

### Evaluation

The *Hamilton County Donations Management Plan* will be evaluated through periodic reviews of the plan and when the plan is implemented during exercises and real-world events. Elements to consider when reviewing the plan include:

- Whether any changes have occurred with identified coordinating agencies or support agencies,
- Whether there were any changes to Hamilton County Emergency Management Program documents that may impact donations management, and/or
- Whether any specific areas of improvement were identified after the plan was implemented during exercises and real-world events.

The Hamilton County EMHSA Preparedness Division is responsible for initiating a review of this plan at least every three years. These reviews may occur more frequently. Reviews will be documented in the Revision History section of this plan.

### Revision

The *Hamilton County Donations Management Plan* will be revised by the Hamilton County EMHSA when plan updates are identified during plan reviews. Plan updates may be based on changes to operations with coordinating agencies or support agencies and/or based on lessons learned and areas of improvement identified through events, drills, exercises, or after-action reviews. Any changes to this plan will be documented in the Revision History section of this plan.

Major revisions, those which significantly alter or establish new policy, must be reviewed and approved by the Hamilton County EMHSA Director. Minor revisions may be made by Hamilton County EMHSA staff as needed without approval.

Plan revision will occur at least every three years in accordance with the review of the plan; however, plan updates may occur more frequently than this timeline.

### Revision History

Regular plan maintenance occurs following the schedule and method outlined in the Plan Evaluation and Plan Revision sections. As plan reviews occur and/or changes are made they are documented in the table below.

#	Date	Section of the Plan	Description of Review/Change	Made By

## Authorities and References

### Authorities

#### Federal

Public Law 100-707 – Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act

### References

“Measuring the State of Disaster Philanthropy.” (2023). The Center for Disaster Philanthropy, <https://disasterphilanthropy.candid.org/>. Accessed October 6, 2023.

#### Federal

Federal Emergency Management Agency. (2020). Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide (PAPPG). Version 4. Retrieved from [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/fema\\_public-assistance-program-and-policy-guide\\_v4\\_6-1-2020.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-06/fema_public-assistance-program-and-policy-guide_v4_6-1-2020.pdf)

#### Local

Hamilton County Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency. (2017). *Hamilton County Spontaneous Volunteer Management Plan*.

Hamilton County Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency. (2023). *Hamilton County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan*.

Hamilton County Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency. (2020). *Hamilton County Emergency Operations Plan*.