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**Enhancing Services to Disaster Clients**

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**Q What's the focus of the new service delivery model?**

**A** This new model continues our focus on strong mass care and health/mental health services and reinvigorates client casework. In the new model, clients will have more in-depth contact with caseworkers in shelters and through outreach. We will continue to focus on meeting our clients' emergency needs, just as we always have.

**Q Why are we making this change?**

**A** Our goal is to enhance the services the Red Cross provides to clients following a disaster, to improve the client and volunteer experience, and to develop a more cost effective disaster model.

**Q Why are we moving away from financial assistance?**

**A** In large scale disasters, our federal partners bring financial resources quickly. We have also seen in the disasters of the past several months that we can meet client needs without wide scale financial assistance. We reduce duplicating efforts and resources, and we focus our attention on those areas where the Red Cross has expertise or a unique role.

**Q How will we help people who may not qualify for federal assistance?**

**A** We will meet their emergency needs through our Mass Care services, health/mental health services, and during the casework process with additional referrals, recovery planning and in kind donations.

**Q Will client assistance cards still be used to meet the health and mental health needs of clients?**

**A** Yes. Health and mental health volunteers will continue to use client assistance cards to meet specific client needs such as prescription medication, doctor bills or medical supplies, as defined by their current procedures.

**Q Is financial assistance as part of the local disaster services program being eliminated?**

**A** No. Chapters will be able to offer financial assistance for local disasters using the current price guide. Currently, Red Cross service delivery, including emergency financial assistance, varies in great degree from chapter to chapter. Over time, the organization will seek to level service delivery and bring more consistency across local disaster programs.

**Q Is the role of client casework volunteers being diminished?**

**A** Absolutely not. In the new model, we are elevating the role of client caseworkers. Over the past several months, we've seen that we often can meet the needs of clients without emergency financial assistance. That means our caseworkers spend more time connecting with families and providing access to available resources from local, state, and national partners (government and non-government). In addition, the caseworker is spending valuable time with the client explaining the often challenging recovery

process, and sharing critical information about where they can obtain resources to meet their immediate needs.

**Q What's the cost savings between the new model and the previous model?**

**A** Obviously, we expect a cost savings, but it's difficult to quantify until the program is more fully defined. There is a cost savings in reducing financial assistance, including lower IT costs and a reduction in the "back office" costs of processing financial assistance. However, this savings will be partially offset by the more "hands on" casework process that will require more staff deployed for longer periods of time.

**Q What is being done to ensure that this plan is sustainable for the future?**

**A** We're implementing a gradual approach to this plan that ensures that we can build on successes or make changes along the way. First, the client casework elements will be rolled out with training and guidance specifically for large operations. Modifications for sheltering, bulk distribution and public information will follow. This incremental approach will allow for adaptability and will allow chapters to engage in appropriate review and revision.

**Q How can we be sure that this model meets clients' needs?**

**A** The disasters of the past eight months have shown that we can successfully meet client needs without large scale emergency financial assistance. We also convened focus groups with clients, volunteers and staff to evaluate the new model, and their feedback tells us that we are on the right track. Moving forward, we are keeping the program very flexible so we can make changes or build on successes as we learn more from chapters, clients and partners.

**Q Can we engage our corporate, community and foundation partners in discussion about this new model before it is rolled out?**

**A** Although public rollout of the new model is still weeks away, constructive conversations around the value of in-depth casework, our role as the premiere mass care provider, and long term risks and challenges as we build our shelter programs are appropriate.

**Q What's the timeline for rolling out the new service delivery model?**

**A** The new service delivery model will be rolled out over the next year in a gradual process, with the initial effort this summer focused on client casework during larger disasters.

**Q Will this plan impact local partnerships?**

**A** Yes. This plan needs the help of chapters to succeed. Specifically, we need chapters to build more relationships with faith based organizations and diverse and inclusive community groups before a disaster happens. These relationships need to focus on identifying and meeting client needs after a disaster, ensuring services can be provided in a culturally sensitive manner, and ensuring the partnerships reflect the diversity of the community. This will increase resources and will help the Red Cross know where clients can get additional services.

**Q What types of in-kind donations will be needed as a result of the new plan?**

**A** Donations of new products will be an important part of the new program. The Red Cross, with its focus on emergency needs, will continue to seek ways to connect clients with available community resources or supplement those resources through emergency distribution. Critical items for recovery will be identified prior to events and communicated to donors in advance to help ensure an adequate supply.

**Q What type of clothing will be distributed to Red Cross clients?**

**A** This will vary somewhat depending on the type of disaster but we will work with clients to meet their needs. In short, if a client needs clothing or other personal items while staying in a Red Cross shelter, the shelter manager, in coordination with the caseworker or the health services contact, will work to provide specific and appropriate items to meet the client's needs.

**Q Will donated gift cards be used to help clients?**

**A** This is to be determined. Use of gift cards that are acquired as in-kind donations is currently being evaluated.

**Q Can we work with businesses to offer discounts to Red Cross clients who have CAC Cards and Vouchers?**

**A** Yes. As chapters develop resource lists, it is possible that local businesses will be able to participate with discounts, specials and donations to disaster clients.