

**NATIONAL MASS CARE EXERCISE 2013**  
**AFTER ACTION REPORT**  
*July 1, 2013*





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## Executive Summary

The 2013 National Mass Care Exercise was conducted May 20-23, 2013 in Tallahassee, Florida in conjunction with the 2013 Florida Statewide Hurricanes “KIRK and LAY” Exercise. Sponsored by the Florida Division of Emergency Management, FEMA and the American Red Cross, 60 players, controllers and evaluators representing the whole community and all levels of government, nongovernment and private sector agencies participated. This Exercise built upon the experience of the 2012 Hurricane Gispert Exercise, the largest national mass care exercise ever conducted.

The scenario included two hurricanes and hazardous materials events impacting densely populated counties in Florida. The first hurricane, Lay, made landfall on Florida’s eastern coast as a Category 4 hurricane, passed over the peninsula and made a second impact in the Florida Panhandle as a Category 2 storm. The second hurricane, Kirk, passed along the Eastern coast of Florida as a Category 2 storm before making landfall near Savannah, Georgia. Three hazardous materials spills in Jacksonville, Gainesville and Tampa, Florida further complicated the scenario by effectively cutting off critical commerce routes into the State.



This scenario gave participants an opportunity to test feeding and sheltering coordination in a triple impact event with high population density, large damage amounts and significant logistics complexities. The exercise also addressed the call in the National Mass Care Strategy (NMCS) for “an annual national Mass Care system exercise that focuses on establishing state to federal coordination systems and integrating staff from key federal, NGO, faith-based organizations and the private sector into an effective Mass Care multi-agency coordination structure.”

The 2013 National Mass Care Exercise was designed to test the concepts of state Sheltering and Feeding Task Forces. The state mass care task force concept was previously tested during the 2012 Florida Hurricane Exercise. Following that exercise a number of procedures were developed to support state mass care task force operations. These new job aids, processes and operating guidelines were used during exercise play and evaluated by the players.

Observers who attended both exercises (2012 and 2013) noticed marked improvement in the rapidity with which task forces stood up, coalesced and achieved operational objectives. This improvement is attributed to wider acceptance of the state mass care task force concepts; broader institutionalization of these concepts; and fine tuning of procedures developed by the Florida State Mass Care Coordinator, the American Red Cross and FEMA.

The exercise ran over a period of four days. During exercise play the following was accomplished:

- Integration of mass care personnel from six other states (Texas, California, Washington, Mississippi, Alabama and Maine) into the Florida Mass Care operation in a simulation of an EMAC deployment;
- Integration of local emergency management personnel from the City of Tallahassee into ESF 6 EOC administrative positions in a simulation of an in-State Mutual Aid request;
- The simultaneous establishment and use of two state Mass Care Task Forces (Feeding and Sheltering) with federal, state, NGO and private sector participation in each Task Force;
- Use of FEMA IA-TAC contractor personnel as mass care planners in the mass care task forces;
- Utilized Multi-Agency Feeding Task Force procedures for the purchase of bulk food for the voluntary agencies using state and federal resources, to include detailed coordination with the private sector food companies on each food order and the incorporation of available USDA commodities.
- Utilized Multi-Agency Sheltering Task Force procedures for estimating the size of post-event short-term shelter populations and thereby using that estimate to determine Functional Needs Support Service resource requirements by kind and quantity.
- Implemented State procedures for identifying the need for household food distribution and assembling the resources to meet that need;
- Utilized the following NIMS Mass Care Resource Typing documents released by FEMA;
  - Field Kitchen Unit
  - Field Kitchen Manager
  - Shelter Management Team
  - Shelter Manager
  - Temporary Child Care Support Services Team
  - Temporary Child Care Support Services Team Leader
  - State Mass Care Coordinator
- Tested the following mass care procedural documents suitable as templates for states nationwide:
  - 2013 State of Florida Multi-Agency Feeding Plan
  - 2013 State of Florida Multi-Agency Shelter Support Plan
  - 2013 Multi-Agency Sheltering Task Force SOG
  - 2013 Multi-Agency Feeding Task Force SOG
  - 2013 Florida ESF 6 SOG
  - 2013 Florida Estimated MC Requirements Spreadsheet

The exercise identified a number of challenges that must be addressed by the national mass care community. In order to meet the requirements of a large event States must be able to expand their mass care coordination capabilities by requesting and receiving trained mass care personnel from FEMA, the other states through EMAC and from the NGO's. For this concept to function effectively the national mass care community must agree on a defined standardized state mass care coordination process that is trained and exercised by the new arrivals prior to the disaster. This and future National Mass Care Exercises are the ideal venue for reaching a consensus on state mass care coordination processes for large events.

Doctrine for state mass care coordination procedures and mass care task forces was developed, trained and exercised almost simultaneously during the four days of the event and this was a major complication for the exercise organizers and participants. The effectiveness of the exercise was hampered by the wide variance in training and experience levels. Nevertheless, the lessons learned by

the participants increased the national mass care capability. Widespread attendance of the FEMA-developed Mass Care/Emergency Assistance Planning & Operations Course by FEMA, state and NGO mass care practitioners can address some of these training issues.

All of the participants benefited from the training offered by the exercise and from the professional development opportunities that came from interaction with such a broad array of experienced mass care professionals from so many agencies across the nation.

### Exercise Overview

#### Exercise Details

**Exercise Name**

2013 National Mass Care Exercise

**Type of Exercise**

Functional

**Exercise Start Date**

May 20, 2013

**Exercise End Date**

May 23, 2013

**Duration**

4 Days

**Primary Locations**

State Emergency Operations Center—Tallahassee, Florida

National Response Coordination Center—FEMA Headquarters, Washington, DC

Disaster Operations Center—American Red Cross Headquarters, Washington, DC

**Sponsor**

Florida Division of Emergency Management

Federal Emergency Management Agency

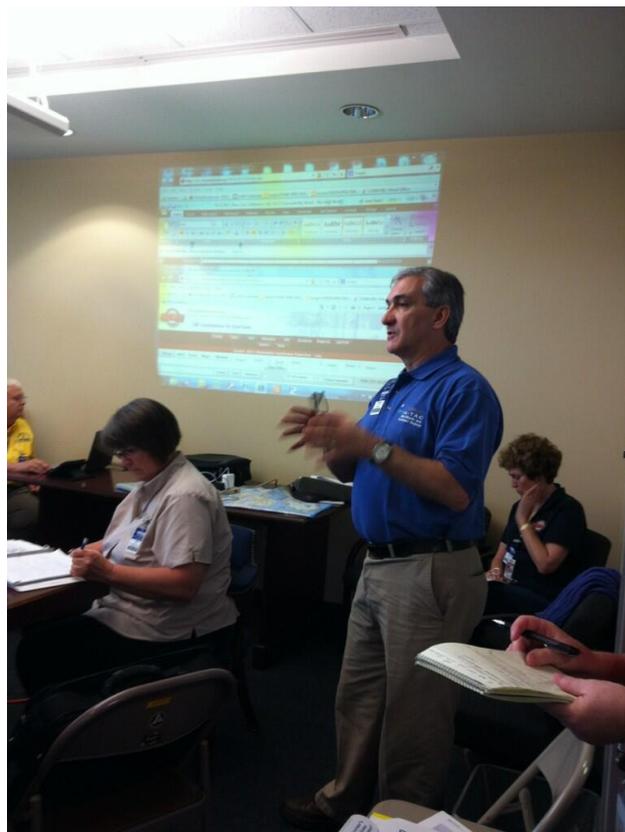
American Red Cross

**Program**

State Training and Exercise Program

**Missions**

Preparedness, Response and Recovery



**Mass Care Exercise Objectives**

- National Exercise Objectives
  - Evaluate state-to-federal coordination systems for mass care
  - Integrate staff from key NGOs, faith based organizations, and the private sector into an effective mass care multi-agency organization.
- State Exercise Objectives
  - Validate State Multi-Agency Feeding Task Force operational procedures
  - Validate State Multi-Agency Shelter Task Force operational procedures
  - Validate State ESF 6 operational procedures for reception and integration of EMAC mass care personnel

**Documents Evaluated in the Exercise**

- 2013 State of Florida Multi-Agency Feeding Plan
- 2013 State of Florida Multi-Agency Shelter Support Plan
- 2013 Multi-Agency Sheltering Task Force SOG
- 2013 Multi-Agency Feeding Task Force SOG
- 2013 Florida ESF 6 SOG
- 2013 Florida Estimated Mass Care requirements spreadsheet
- National Incident Management System Resource Typing of:
  - Field Kitchen Unit
  - Field Kitchen Manager
  - Shelter Management Team
  - Shelter Manager
  - Temporary Child Care Support Services Team
  - Temporary Child Care Support Services Team Leader
  - State Mass Care Coordinator

**Scenario Type**

Catastrophic Hurricanes and Hazardous Material Spill

**Exercise Evaluation Team**

- Justin Breeding - FEMA
- Alvin Miguez – Salvation Army
- Kam Kennedy – Red Cross
- Amy Mintz – Red Cross
- Ann Reynolds – Red Cross

**Number of Participants**

See Appendix A for a complete roster of all players, controllers and evaluators

- Players—52
- Controllers—4



- Evaluators—5
- Agencies—26 agencies representing all levels of government (local, federal and state); nongovernmental, private sector and academic agencies; and State Mass Care Coordinators from three states (California, Texas and Washington).

## Background

The State of Florida’s annual Hurricane Exercise was conducted from May 20 through May 23, 2013. The purpose of the Mass Care portion of the exercise was to conduct a National Mass Care Exercise to enhance interagency coordination and cooperation by involving federal, state, and county governments in response to two major hurricanes threatening the eastern coast of Florida and hazardous materials spills jeopardizing multiple major transportation arteries within the state. The exercise acquainted and trained new and existing State Emergency Response Team (SERT) members along with volunteer and private sector organizations on their mission essential support functions as they relate to response and recovery activities.

As part of the 2013 exercise, Florida’s Emergency Support Function (ESF) 6 exercised two Mass Care task forces including:

- Multi-Agency Shelter Task Force (MASTF)
- Multi-Agency Feeding Task Force (MAFTF)

In an effort to further disseminate the task force concept throughout the country, FEMA and the American Red Cross provided travel funding for state mass care personnel from six other states to attend the exercise. These states included Alabama, Mississippi, Maine, California, Texas and Washington. Response operations curtailed travel for a representative coming from Oklahoma.

In addition to state representatives, numerous representatives from nongovernmental organizations, the private sector and agencies within the State of Florida also participated in the exercise. A complete list of the organizations represented can be found in Appendix A.

## Overview of Exercise Objectives

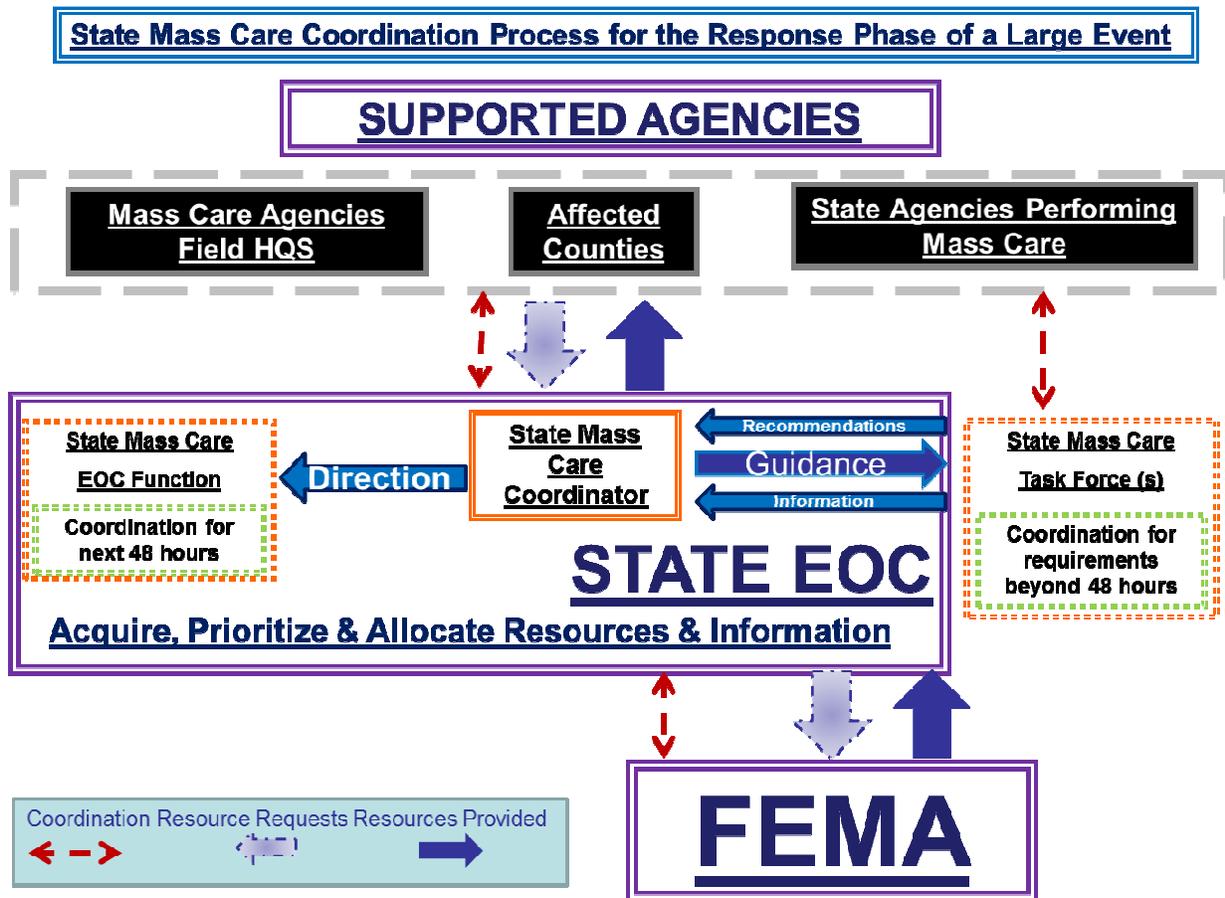
**Evaluate state-to-federal coordination systems for mass care and integrate staff from key NGOs, faith based organizations, and the private sector into an effective mass care multi-agency organization.**

The size, composition and variety of the States in the Union dictate that there will be 50 ways to respond to the normal course of disasters that afflict each jurisdiction. When the size of the disaster overwhelms the State and requires a national mass care response, then the State must expand their mass care coordination capabilities to meet the requirements of the event.

Expanding this capability requires requesting and receiving trained mass care personnel from FEMA, the other states through EMAC and from the NGO’s. These additional personnel will arrive with little or no knowledge of the geography, processes, legal restrictions or unique peculiarities of the requesting state. These personnel must be organized and employed as they arrive, piecemeal, in the midst of a large disaster.

There are two important ways that states can prepare for such an eventuality. First, they can develop plans and operational procedures during Preparedness that identify and assign roles for these additional personnel. The State of Florida developed these plans and procedures and were able to test them during this exercise.

The second way that they can prepare is by developing their plans and operational procedures in accordance with a standardized state mass care coordination process that is utilized in other states and familiar to the new arrivals. In order to “Standardize Mass Care Practices” at the state level, as called for in the NMCS, states and the national mass care community must develop and socialize a state mass care coordination process for the response phase of a large event. A proposed schematic of such a process is shown in the graphic below. This graphic summarizes lessons learned during the 2013 National Mass Care Exercise as well as the 2012 Hurricane Gispert Exercise.



In order for the state mass care coordination process to function effectively the state must designate a State Mass Care Coordinator trained to perform those duties, as the NMCS has recommended. FEMA has published Interim Guidance for the [State Mass Care Coordinator](#) Job Title and is in the final stages of delivering to the Emergency Management Institute a course (Mass Care/Emergency Assistance Planning

& Operations Course) tailored to train federal, state and NGO personnel in the state mass care coordination process.

The coordination graphic emphasizes two important points. First, the mass care task forces play a planning and coordination (as opposed to operational) role in a large event and focus on mass care resource requirements beyond 48 hours in the future. Appendix B of this AAR outlines some proposed organizational structures for these task forces.

Second, the State Mass Care Coordinator is responsible for acquiring, prioritizing and allocating resources to the affected counties, the mass care agencies field headquarters and those state agencies performing mass care. Those state agencies responsible for mass care, such as sheltering, have an operational role in the event. Although the State Mass Care Coordinator often works for these agencies, in a large event that person cannot simultaneously perform the operational mass care role of their agency and the overall responsibility of coordinating state mass care support. The coordination graphic demonstrates this distinction.

### **Validate State Multi-Agency Feeding & Shelter Task Force operational procedures**

The 2012 Hurricane Gispert Exercise provided enormous practical experience in the internal functioning of a mass care task force, the difficulties in maintaining communications with the ESF 6 desk in the State EOC as well as situational awareness of the disaster, and the very real problems of assembling a diverse group of individuals into an effective organization. The 2013 Mass Care Exercise made progress in addressing these multiple issues but left plenty of additional improvements for the 2014 National Mass Care Exercise to resolve. Appendix B of this AAR proposes ways to mitigate some of these problems by structuring the task forces according to required capability.

Doctrine for a mass care task force was developed, trained and exercised almost simultaneously during the four days of the event and this was a major complication for the exercise controllers. As identified in the NMCS, the lack of a standardized mass care training program resulted in participants arriving at the exercise without a common base of knowledge.

In furtherance of the NMCS, exercise participants worked on the development of “a standard set of national basic planning assumptions, capability estimates, and resource matrixes for sheltering and feeding.” Appendix C of this AAR presents some standardized procedures that allow states to forecast shelter and feeding resource requirements. These procedures were tested during the exercise and proved useful for task force planning.

The capability of the mass care task forces was increased through integration of the private sector into task force staffing and procedures. The use of the CH2MHill IA –TAC contractors as mass care planners in the task forces was particularly effective. The private sector food companies (Sysco & U.S. Foods) were able to improve their own internal procedures through a better understanding of the requirements of the voluntary agencies that must prepare and distribute the food.

### Validate State ESF 6 operational procedures for reception and integration of EMAC mass care personnel

A lesson learned from the 2012 Hurricane Gispert exercise was that as the State ESF 6 organization expanded to meet the requirements of the event not all of the additional positions required mass care expertise. In fact, many of the ESF 6 positions in the EOC and even a few in the mass care task forces were generic emergency management jobs that could be performed by persons without mass care expertise who instead had experience in an EOC or ICS training.

The job descriptions and tasks for ESF 6 in the EOC were tailored to be familiar to individuals with ICS training or experience as a Situation Unit Leader or Resource Unit Leader. Persons who meet these qualifications are available in the state or even within the area. State ESF 6 coordinated with the City of Tallahassee Emergency Management and was able to secure Tallahassee Police Department employees who had been identified for and received training in emergency management but had little opportunity to exercise those skills. These City employees performed the ESF 6 online training on EOC and ESF 6 operational procedures prior to the exercise. Their integration into the exercise was successful and they reported that they had received excellent training as a result of their participation. This model will be utilized by State ESF 6 in future exercises and even during large events by requesting these personnel through in-State Mutual Aid.

### Evaluator Comments and Task Force Feedback

Throughout the exercise, participants were given numerous opportunities to provide feedback. Each day following exercise play, participants attended a de-brief. They were also provided with evaluation forms and encouraged to note their recommendations throughout exercise play.

Evaluators and Controllers were stationed with each Task Force and at the EOC ESF6 desk during play. These individuals were de-briefed individually each day. This process of daily de-briefing and individual interviews resulted in a rich dialogue on ways to improve and fine-tune the task force concept in order to ensure its efficacy not only in the State of Florida but also nationwide.

A discussion of the feedback provided follows. Notes from the de-brief sessions are provided in Appendix D.

#### General Feedback

Participants found great benefit to the task force concept and the exercise. Participants universally noted there was excellent open communication in the task forces and a good mix of seasoned and new players which encouraged a lot of brainstorming, discussion and learning.



Those who participated in the 2012 Hurricane Exercise noted a marked improvement in each Task Force's ability to form and begin work. All of the participants indicated that they were aware of Task Forces and a small percentage had seen utilization of a feeding or sheltering task force concept in recent response operations. Participants from California, Texas and Washington noted that their states have concepts similar to the Task Force concept, but that they had not been exercised as yet.

Throughout the exercise, participants were engaged and interested. In the daily de-briefs participants indicated their desire to help refine the Mass Care Task Force concept and shared a vested interest in making recommendations that would benefit national implementation.

### **Exercise Feedback**

Participants provided a number of comments intended to improve exercise play. These comments may be helpful to exercise planners in future National Mass Care Exercises.

#### **Preparing for the Exercise**

Participants noted that there was an overwhelming amount of information provided prior to the exercise. Several participants suggested providing a simple guide to the support documents and tools that would help them prepare for the exercise in a more linear fashion. Participants also noted that they appreciated the pre-exercise conference call but felt that communication could have been even more effective if conference calls had been conducted separately by exercise position so that players, display processors, Team Leaders, etc. could meet individually and have an opportunity to ask questions relevant to their positions.

Participants wanted to be informed of what equipment they should bring with them (laptops, phones, blackberries, etc.). They also wanted training on specific tools they would need to use or specific processes they would need to complete during the exercise. A lot of discussion occurred as to whether or not the Task Forces should complete Action Request Forms (ARFs) during the exercise. Participants also wanted to ensure that each organization represented in the exercise came prepared to share their capabilities and available resources so that shortfalls could be more rapidly identified.

In terms of the facilities provided, participants indicated that it was important to provide a large enough room for all players, evaluators, controllers and observers to operate comfortably, and if possible, "working rooms" for sub-teams to work independently on specific issues. Participants were very pleased to have connectivity to the main exercise via Gator and Constellation and suggested that an additional projector might be helpful so that work and exercise information could be seen at the same time. Equipping the Task Force Rooms with a printer was also requested as was providing instructions on how to access Gator and Constellation along with User IDs and Passwords.

#### **Exercise Roles**

Participants appreciated the depth of experience and subject matter expertise provided by the participants, evaluators and control staff but also noted that all players need to understand their roles before the exercise begins. "Players should play; controllers should observe and steer the group if needed; and evaluators should only observe."

In terms of the makeup of each Task Force, participants noted that the right players were at the table. One suggestion was made that having a representative from ESF-8 (at the state level) would be help on the Shelter Task Force as this individual could advise on State Laws affecting nursing and medical license reciprocity.

### Exercise Play

While there was a marked improvement in communication from the 2012 exercise, participants noted that it was still difficult to maintain situational awareness with the EOC. Participants suggested that the Display Processor position might be too busy to also serve as a communications liaison and felt that an additional position needed to be added.

Other suggestions that were given to improve communications included:

- Developing and clearly communicating a consistent, daily Task Force battle rhythm that does not conflict with the EOC operational rhythm
- Developing and clearly communicating daily reporting requirements to the Mass Care Coordinator from the Task Forces and the ESF6 desk
- Ensuring the distribution list for the exercise included all players as well as evaluators and controllers
- Distributing the Mass Care agenda to the players (including ESF6 partners) to avoid duplication of effort



### Concept Feedback

In the daily de-brief sessions, robust discussion was held on ways to improve and fine-tune the Task Force concept as a whole. Feedback ranged from best practices for Task Force adoption to ways the Task Force structure could be improved.

Many felt that establishing Task Forces in advance at the State level and in larger metropolitan areas would be helpful. In this way Task Force members would already know one another and have exercised together before a disaster happens. Many also felt that strong Task Force Leaders should be developed pre-disaster.

Several participants noted, however, that staffing would be a significant challenge in a real event as the same subject matter experts would be needed in a lot of different places in a real disaster.

The possibility of virtual Task Force operations was discussed and many participants felt that if member relationships were in place pre-disaster virtual operation would be feasible.

### Task Force Materials Feedback

Participants unanimously indicated their appreciation for the Task Force materials, the work that has gone in to developing them, and the level of detail provided.

### Ease of Use

Participants felt both the guides and Task Force Checklists could be more user-friendly by reducing redundancy and categorizing the checklists by timeframes. Additionally, participants noted that many task force participants might not be emergency management professionals and therefore language in all of the materials needed to be accessible to a more general audience.

### Tools to Consider

Participants suggested several tools they would like to see including:

- Expanded logistics support to include Mass Care items such as Sanitation Packs for kitchens.
- Flow chart of the critical path for the Feeding Task Force.
- Pre-scripted ARFs for catastrophic events.
- GIS mapping of all service delivery locations including shelters, kitchens, mobile feeding routes, etc.
- A list of specific resources a Task Force is response for coordinating.
- Regional evacuation studies and behavioral analysis.
- Tool kit that will help EMAC'd resources to come up to speed quickly.
- After Action Reports/Lessons Learned from previous, similar disasters



## Recommendations

Based upon the lessons learned from the exercise, the following courses of action are recommended:

- Standardize the state mass coordination process for large events. Based on Lessons Learned from the Exercise the process should contain at least the following elements:
  - A trained State Mass Care Coordinator empowered to represent the state with the voluntary agencies during an event
  - A daily State Mass Care Conference Call that coordinates the acquisition, prioritization and allocation of federal and state mass care resources to the counties, the mass care agencies field headquarters and the state agencies performing mass care
  - One or more mass care task forces activated according to criteria established in a state mass care (feeding or sheltering) plan
  - A standard procedure or operational guide for each designated mass care task force that assigns the task force responsibility to plan and coordinate for mass care resource requirements in the future (typically for the period beyond 48 hours)
- Train more federal, state and NGO personnel in state mass care coordination procedures
  - Get the Mass Care/Emergency Assistance Planning & Operations Course adopted by the Emergency Management Institute
  - Have FEMA regions, in coordination with their state and NGO partners, identify personnel for training and allocate resources toward that end
- Continue to support the National Mass Care Exercise annually and pursue the feasibility of holding such an exercise in other FEMA Regions
- Identify federal, state and NGO personnel that would benefit from this type of exercise and allocate funds for their future participation



Appendix A—List of Exercise Participants

Last Name	First Name	Position	Organization
Adams	Rob	Resource Unit Leader	City of Tallahassee
Beall	Delton	Florida Baptists Feeding Task Force Representative	Florida Baptists
Boyd	Beth	Feeding Task Force Controller	ARC
Breeding	Justin	Evaluator #3	FEMA Region VI
Brislain	Rebecca	FAFB Feeding Task Force	Florida Association of Food Banks
Bush	Sue	MAFTF Leader	Washington
Campbell	Ian	ARC Chapters/Regions	ARC
Cherry	John	Department of Education liaison	DOE
Clark	Kathy	Salvation Army State liaison	TSA
Cory	Sandy	Display Processor	CH2MHill
Damitz	Pam	Department of Elder Affairs liaison	DOEA
Draper	Barry	FAFB Feeding Task Force	Florida Association of Food Banks
Falino	Mike	FTF Mass Care Planner	CH2MHill
Fallis	Clay	Situation Unit Deputy	City of Tallahassee
Fillingim	Charles	Florida Baptists Feeding Task Force Representative	Florida Baptists
Galifianakis	Katherine	ARC Shelter TF Rep	ARC
Hanna	John	USDA-FNS SE Region	USDA
Harris	Eddy	Agency for Persons with Disabilities liaison	APD
Hawa	Sharon	Children SME	NCMEC
Head	Brian	Private Sector Feeding Task Force Representative	Sysco
Hochstetler	Beth	Private Sector Feeding Task Force Representative	Sysco
Holdredge	Bob	Red Cross State liaison	ARC
Howard	Matt	ESF 6 Recovery Coordinator	DCF
Hubert	Wayne	Mass Evacuation	Maine
Janacek	Andy	Situation Unit Leader	DBPR
Jewett	Larry	Private Sector Feeding Task Force Representative	Sysco
Keener	Mark	Private Sector Feeding Task Force Representative	Sysco
Kennedy	Kam	Documentation	ARC
Logan	Ryan	FEMA Region IV	FEMA Region IV
Lytle	Bob	STF Mass Care Planner	CH2MHill

## Appendix A—List of Exercise Participants

Last Name	First Name	Position	Organization
McBroom	Tracy	Mass Evacuation	California
McGee	Zach	FAFB Feeding Task Force	Florida Association of Food Banks
Merkison	Page	Department of Elder Affairs liaison	DOEA
Migues	Alvin	Evaluator #2	TSA
Miller	Warren	Deputy Shelter Task Force Leader	Mississippi
Mintz	Amy	Evaluator #1	ARC
Mott	Peggy	Shelter Task Force Controller	FEMA HQS Mass Care
Newhouse	Susan	Display Processor	City of Tallahassee
Newman	Peter	Deputy ESF 6 Coordinator	DBPR
Norris	Steve	Florida Baptists Feeding Task Force Representative	Florida Baptists
Powers	Robby	Display Processor	City of Tallahassee
Radwanski	Karen	ARC Feeding Task Force Representative	ARC
Reynolds	Ann	Evaluator #1a	ARC
Rocks	Lance	TSA Feeding Task Force Representative	TSA
Schell	Rhonda	Private Sector Feeding Task Force Representative	U.S. Foods
Schoening	Julie	Deputy MAFTF Leader	Alabama
Schofield	Rick	Lead Controller - DRO	ARC
Sheffield	Michelle	ESF 8 Special Needs	DOH
Sherk	Katie	Red Cross State liaison	ARC
Shine	Larry	Shelter Task Force Leader	Texas
Smith	Kevin	TSA Florida Division	TSA
Stark	Jerry	Private Sector Feeding Task Force Representative	Sysco
Sullivan	Janae	FEMA Rep	FEMA Region VI
Trimble	Sarah Jo	Florida Baptists Feeding Task Force Representative	Florida Baptists
Van Treese	Gloria	ESF 11 Food & Water rep	DACS
Vaughan	Bryan	State Disability Coordinator	DEM
Whitehead	Mike	State Mass Care Coordinator	DBPR
Williams	Frederick	FEMA Rep	FEMA Region VI

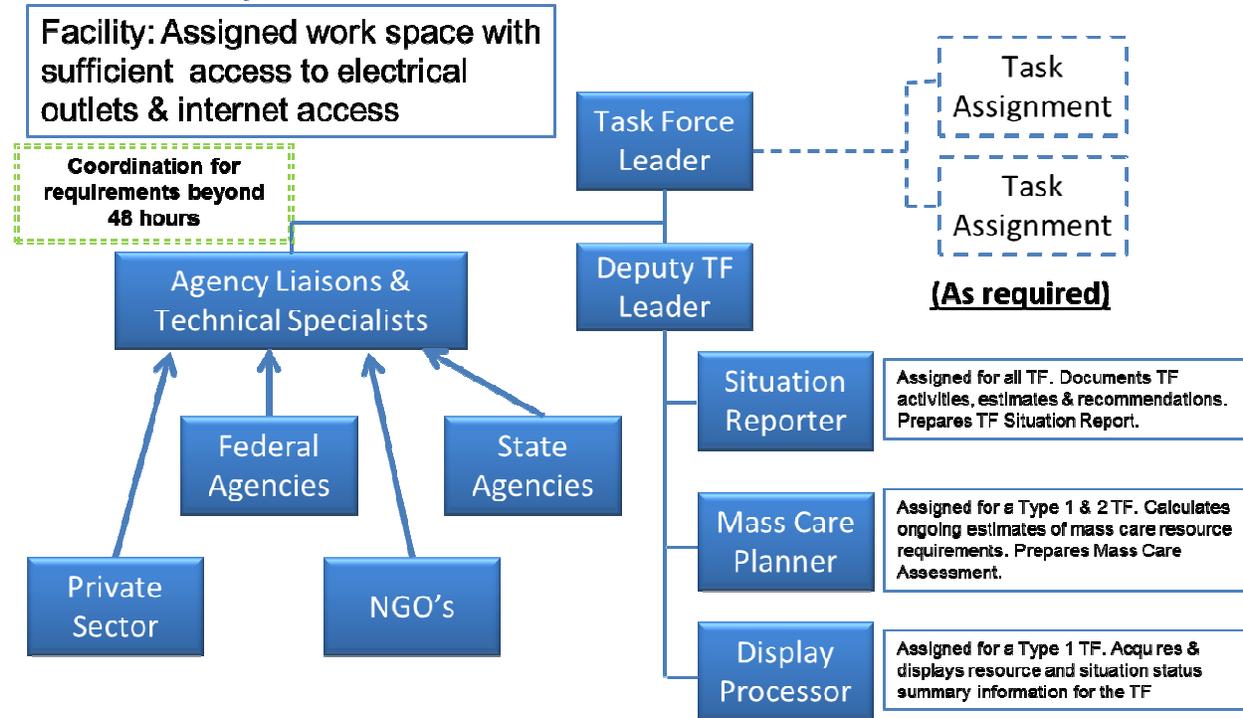
## Appendix B—Mass Care Task Force Organization and Structure

NIMS defines a Task Force as: “Any combination of resources assembled to support a specific mission or operational need. All resource elements within a Task Force must have common communications and a designated leader.” The size and organizational structure of a mass care task force (MCTF) is determined by the desired capability. Capability is defined as “the means to accomplish a mission, function or objective based on the performance of related tasks, under specified conditions to target levels of performance.” (National Preparedness System, November 2011).

The desired capability of a mass care task force can be derived from the coordination complexity of the event. Coordination complexity is the degree to which the size and nature of an event increases the volume of required agency interactions and degrades the ability of an Emergency Operations Center to function without additional procedures and staff.

The State of Florida established three complexity levels for mass care and used these levels to determine the type of mass care task force needed. During the exercise two Type 1 Mass Care Task Forces were established with identical structures. Based on feedback from the participants the Type 1 structure was adjusted as follows:

### Type 1 Mass Care Task Force

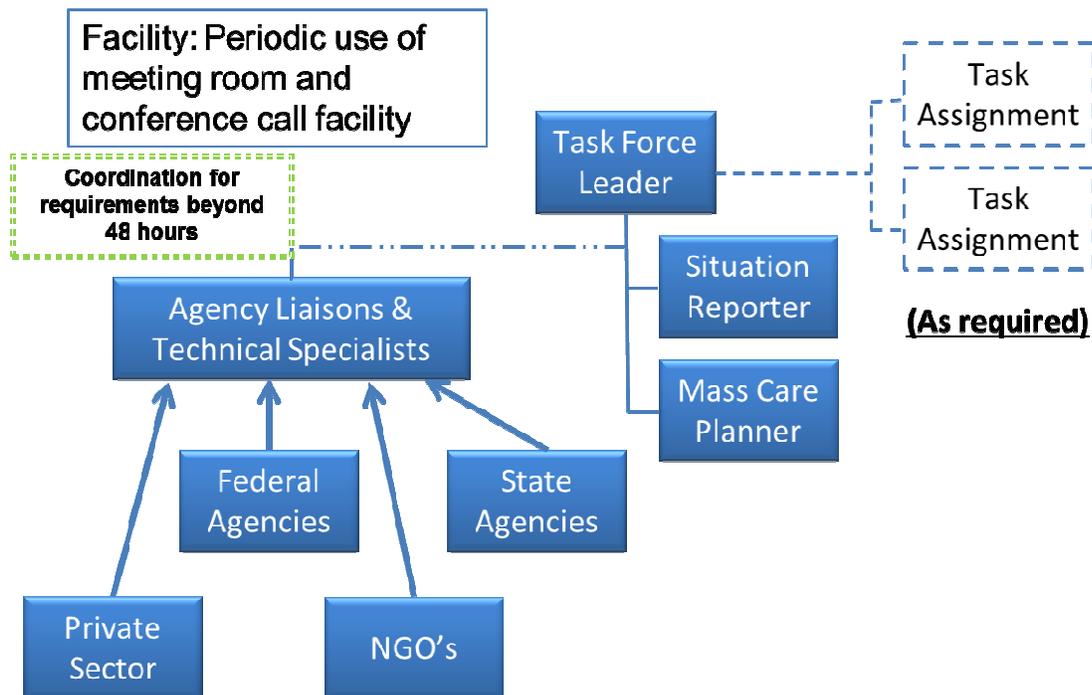


A Type 1, 2 or 3 MCTF is established upon determination of the Coordination Complexity Level. A Type 1 MCTF is assigned a room in a building adjacent to the EOC in order to maintain continuous operation. A Type 2 MCTF operates within and externally to the EOC using periodic meetings and conference calls. A Type 3 MCTF functions primarily through conference calls.

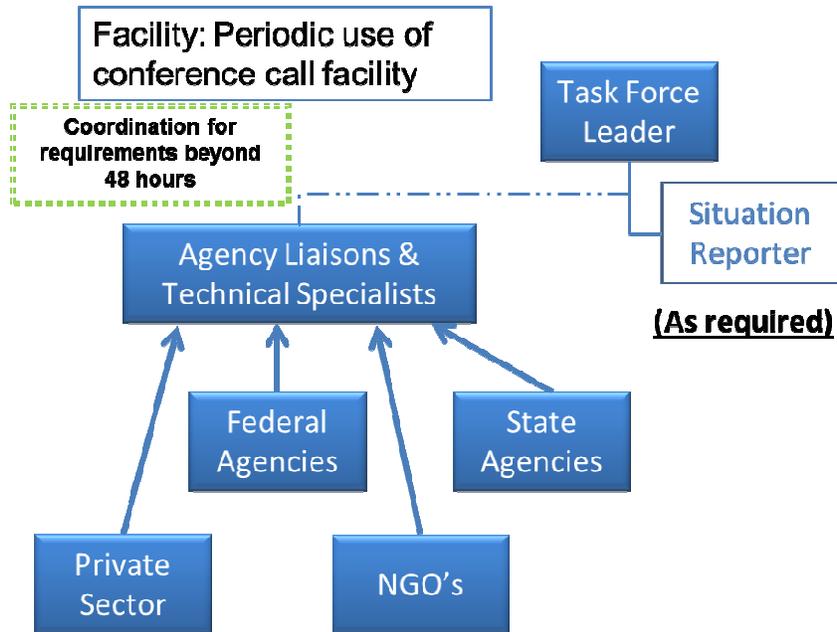
A lesson learned from this exercise was that the TF Leader needed the ability to further task organize the TF in order to complete multiple, simultaneous assignments. As required, the TF Leader could assign two or more Agency Liaisons and/or Technical Specialists to complete one or more specific tasks. These individuals would work together until the assignment was completed.

Examples of a Type 2 and a Type 3 MCTF structure, as well as a state mass care task force resource typing document are shown below.

## Type 2 Mass Care Task Force



## Type 3 Mass Care Task Force



## Appendix B—Mass Care Task Force Organization and Structure

State Resource Typing document for a Mass Care Task Force.

 <b>Florida State Emergency Response Team</b>						
DESCRIPTION						
A State Mass Care Task Force assists the State Mass Care Coordinator in planning and coordinating assigned goals and objectives of the state Mass Care Plan.						
RESOURCE CATEGORY			RESOURCE KIND			
Mass Care			Task Force			
OVERALL FUNCTION			COMPOSITION AND ORDERING SPECIFICATIONS			
This Task Force operates under the direction of a Task Force Leader to ensure coordinated support of mass care operations in the affected area and in host communities.			The Type of Task Force selected depends on the Coordination Complexity of the event. A Type 1 or 2 Mass Care Task Force Leader may also need to be requested.			
RESOURCE TYPES			TYPE I	TYPE II	TYPE III	NO TYPE IV
COMPONENT	METRIC / MEASURE	CAPABILITY	(COORDINATION COMPLEXITY LEVEL 1)	(COORDINATION COMPLEXITY LEVEL 2)	(COORDINATION COMPLEXITY LEVEL 3)	
Personnel	Per Task Force	Management & Oversight	- One Type 1 Mass Care Task Force Leader - One Deputy Mass Care Task Force Leader	One Type 2 Mass Care Task Force Leader	Same as Type II	Not Applicable
Personnel	Per Task Force	Resource Acquisition & Allocation	Mass Care Planner	Mass Care Planner	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Personnel	Per Task Force	Coordination of Summary Information	Display Processor	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Personnel	Per Task Force	Situation Assessment	Technical Specialists	Same as Type I	Same as Type I	Not Applicable
Personnel	Per Task Force	Coordination with other MACS Elements	Agency liaisons assigned to task force	Agency liaisons available for meetings & conference calls	Agency liaisons available for conference calls	Not Applicable
Procedure	Per Task Force	Coordination with other MACS Elements	Task Force Conference Call Agenda Template	Same as Type I	Same as Type I	Not Applicable

## Appendix B—Mass Care Task Force Organization and Structure

Procedure	Per Task Force	Coordination with other MACS Elements	Task Force Meeting Agenda Template	Same as Type I	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Procedure	Per Task Force	Coordination of Summary Information	Task Force Situation Report Template	Same as Type I	Same as Type I	Not Applicable
Procedure	Per Task Force	Situation Assessment	Task Force Situation Assessment Template	Task Force Situation Assessment Template	Task Force Situation Assessment Template	Not Applicable
Procedure	Per Task Force	Resource Acquisition & Allocation	Task Force Resource Assessment Template	Task Force Resource Assessment Template	Task Force Resource Assessment Template	Not Applicable
Procedure	Per Task Force	Incident Priority Determination	Incident Priority Determination Template	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Facilities	Per Task Force	Continuity of Operation	Assigned work space	Periodic use of meeting room and conference call facility	Periodic use of conference call facility	Not Applicable
Equipment	Per Task Force	Situation Assessment	Assigned projector	Periodic use of projector	Not Applicable	

### Comments

- NIMS span of control criteria should be applied when assigning staff.

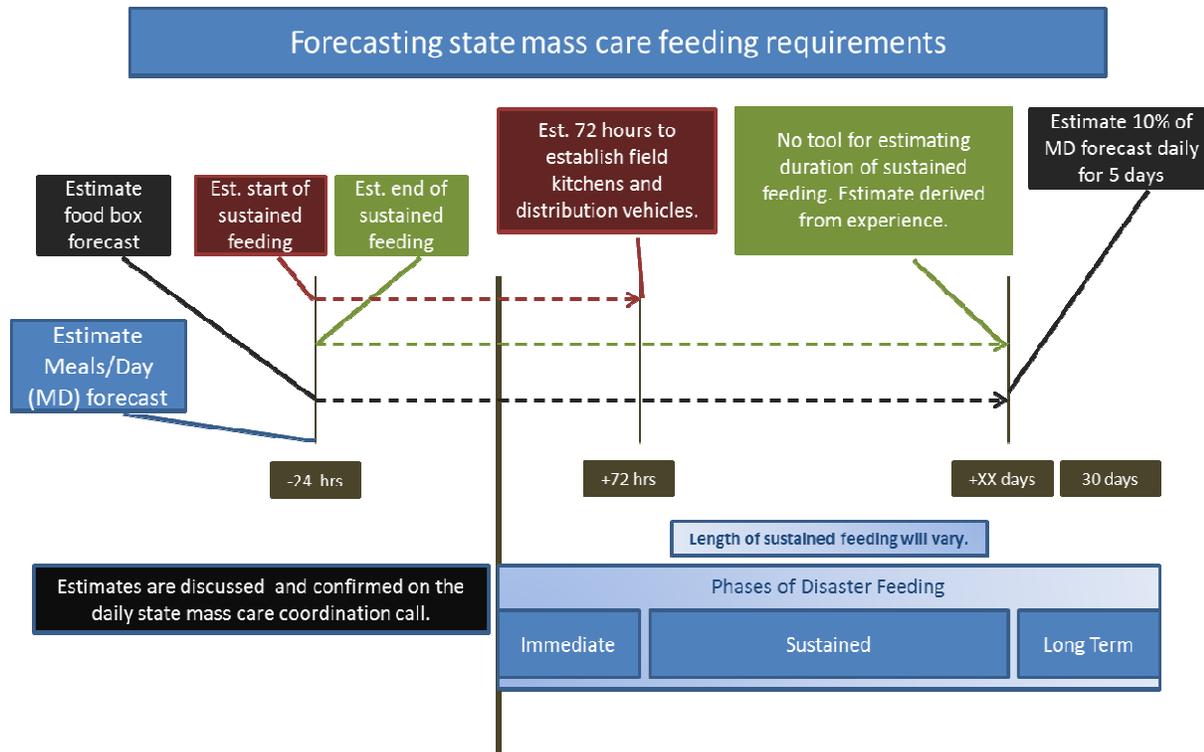
### References

1. *Shelter Guidance Aid and Mega-Shelter Planning Guide*, <https://nmcs.communityos.org/cms/resources>
2. Household Food Distribution in a Disaster. <https://nmcs.communityos.org/cms/resources>

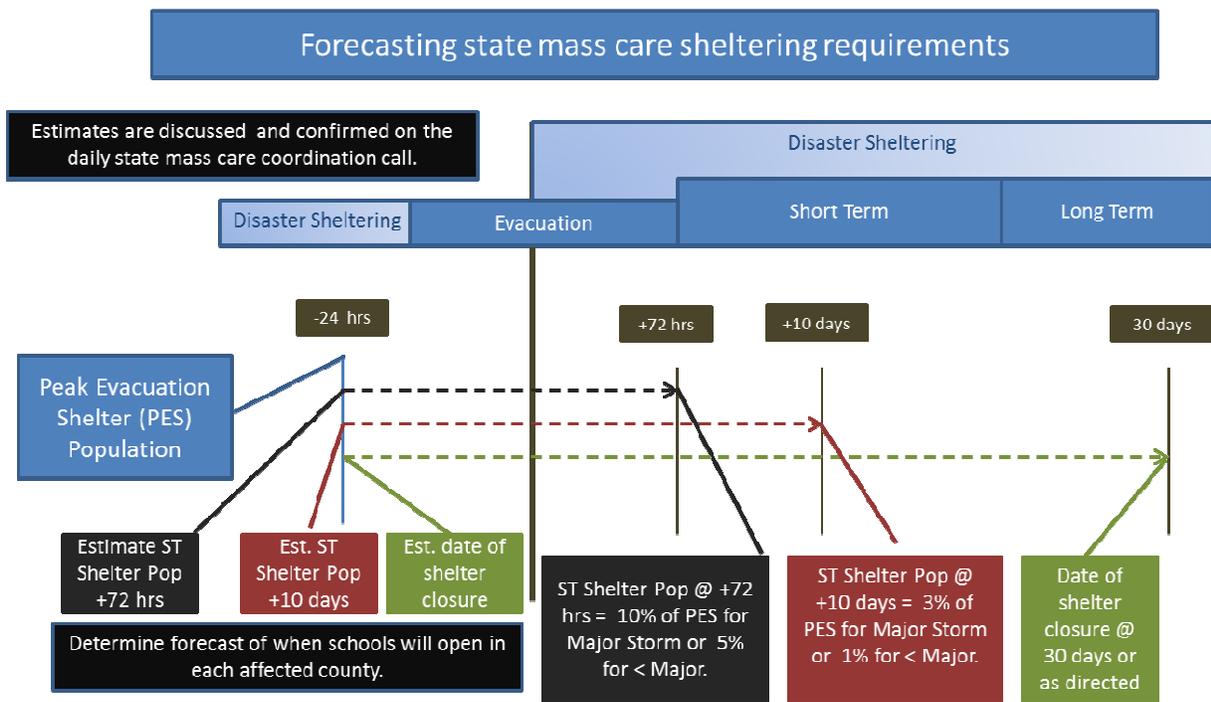
Appendix C – State Mass Care Shelter & Feeding Forecasts

Forecasting State Mass Care Disaster Feeding requirements		
Time of forecast	Estimate/Forecast	Procedure
24 Hours prior for a Noticed Event or within 12 hours after for a No-Notice Event.	Meals/Day production & distribution required	Divide affected area into High Intensity, Medium Intensity and Low Intensity and use Table below
	Estimate date/time start of sustained feeding	Estimate 72 hours post Event to establish field kitchens, logistics and distribution vehicles. Discuss on daily mass care conference call and adjust as required.
	Estimate date/time end of sustained feeding	Discuss on daily mass care conference call and adjust as required. Estimate can be derived from the collective judgment of experienced mass care practitioners.
	Estimate food boxes required for long term feeding	Estimate 10% of Meals/Day requirement will need to be prepared and delivered daily for 5 days, beginning on estimated date/time end of sustained feeding.

Estimating Disaster Meals/Day required		
Intensity	Estimate procedure	Output
Low	Sum of population affected by Low Intensity event X 2%	X
Medium	Sum of population affected by Medium Intensity event X 7%	Y
High	Sum of population affected by High Intensity event X 23%	Z
Estimate of Meals/Day production & distribution capability required		X + Y + Z



Forecasting State Mass Care Disaster Sheltering requirements		
Time of forecast	Estimate/Forecast	Procedure
24 Hours prior for a Noticed Event or within 12 hours after for a No-Notice Event.	Peak Evacuation Shelter (PES) Population	Derived from Hurricane Evacuation Studies or other planning document.
	Estimate +72 hours short-term shelter population	For a Major Storm, estimate 10% of the PES population. For less than a Major storm, estimate 5% of the PES population.
	Estimate +10 days short-term shelter population	For a Major Storm, estimate 3% of the PES population. For less than a Major storm, estimate 1% of the PES population.
	Estimate date shelters will close	Estimate 30 days from start of Event and adjust as required.



## Appendix D —Exercise Feedback

During the 2013 National Mass Care Exercise, feedback was collected in a variety of ways to ensure a robust After Action Report. One-on-one interviews were conducted with the controllers and evaluators located at the ESF-6 desk and observing activity in the Shelter and Feeding Task Force meeting rooms. Player feedback was collected via an evaluation form and through a daily de-brief at the end of each day of play.

When collecting feedback, players, evaluators and controllers were asked to think about their feedback in terms of improving the exercise, improving the task force concept and improving the materials for a real life incident. The following presents all of the evaluative comments and observations captured throughout the exercise. These comments are organized by broad common themes into four main categories (Exercise, Concept, Materials and General Comments).

### Exercise

*This section reflects comments that were intended to improve exercise play and may be helpful to exercise planners in future National Mass Care Exercises.*

#### Preparing for the Exercise

- Explain the tools (spreadsheet) or provide training on the spreadsheet prior to the start of the exercise.
- If ARF completion is a responsibility of a Task Force (TF) provide training on ARF completion prior to the start of the exercise.
- Create a complete picture of service delivery locations that includes Food Banks, Churches, The Salvation Army and Red Cross.
- Provide a room large enough to accommodate all the players and activity that will be occurring there.
  - Provide “working rooms” for sub-teams to work independently on specific issues.
- Organizations should come prepared to provide information on the full scope of their capabilities. For exercise purposes it may be important to pre-identify what availabilities there are as organizations may not wish to share their shortfalls.
- Ensure distribution lists are complete for daily updates and other information so that participants remain informed during the exercise (include e-mails and cell phone numbers).
- Ensure that players understand the “strategic” role of the TFs.
- Provide position-specific conference calls before the exercise to ensure that each player knows and understands his/her role and has an opportunity to ask questions and obtain clarification.
- A lot of excellent information was provided before the exercise, but there was so much it was almost overwhelming. Might be helpful to provide a one-page “Preparing to Play” guide for each TF position with a road map of the order in which to read things and a brief description of each of the documents, its purpose and its use in the exercise.
- Inform participants of the equipment they should bring with them to the exercise (i.e., lap tops, phones, blackberries).
- Ensure the artificialities built into the exercise play have some basis in fact.

- Ensure players understand how to use the tools. If this were a real event, there might need to be a quick, concise tool kit to get people up to speed rapidly.
- Ensure that pre-exercise work assignments that will drive exercise play are completed, i.e. – this exercise started on Day 4 but the TF had to spend time up front entering in the information from the first 4 days.
- Provide fewer documents as pre-reads, more concise guidance, and reduce redundancies in the current guidance.
- Very important to have individuals who are well-versed in the attributes of the state serving on the TF. With a good balance of subject matter expertise and state expertise – TFs would be more productive.

### Exercise Play

- Ensure that “local expertise” familiar with the state geography and systems is represented on each TF.
- Copy Exercise Evaluators on TF communications and other exercise communications so they can adequately evaluate exercise play.
- Find a way to help players get into a “strategic” mindset quickly.
- Ensure that players understand the process for coming up with a “requirements” number.
- Clarify at the onset of the TF the specific roles of each player, revisit this as needed.
- Use TF Checklist to delegate certain tasks, as appropriate. Not everyone needs to work on everything.
- Three different sets of projections were developed – one by the Shelter Task Force (STF), one by the Feeding Task Force (FTF) and another given out by the exercise itself. Does something need to be refined in the matrix so there is closer alignment between these projections? Could training be provided pre-exercise to ensure more consistency or could a common set of planning factors be provided initially?
- The projections of affected populations and therefore feeding and sheltering populations were developed using the cone and hurricane intensity. Consideration should be included of the additional numbers that may be affected by storm surge or inland flooding (or more seriously impacted by these than the winds).
- Would there be some benefit to having an ARF facilitator in the task force?
- Ensure that the TF knows the expectations for its work product each day, including expected briefing slides or other deliverables the ESF6 expects/requires.
- Ensure event triggers and their corresponding response protocols are identified, i.e. in a catastrophic event the following forward-planning response will be required – food order, expanded shelter capacity, etc.
- Provide pre-scripted ARFs to speed process.
- Provide a static view of Constellation so we’re not moving between different projects. Another projector in the room would be helpful.
- It might be useful, if large numbers of people are coming to play, to have a “shadow” team and a “lead” team. With the two teams switching roles mid-way through the exercise. It would provide additional training for all the participants.
- Perhaps next year we could test the concept of a virtual team.

- Special needs shelters weren't included in the scenario although the agency responsible for special needs shelters was on the STF.
- Emphasis on the response phases may not be quite as necessary with a forward-planning TF.
- TFs liked the visits from the Mass Care Coordinator and are glad of that connectivity.

### Communication

- Develop a battle rhythm and reporting requirements and communicate this to the TFs and ESF6 desk to improve communication.
- Establish a brief meeting time each morning for TF leads with the Mass Care Coordinator.
- There was a lack of situational awareness with the EOC. We recognized a need to establish a liaison and that helped the situation.
- The Display Processor may be too busy to be the communication liaison.
- Provide more effective communication between the EOC floor and the TFs.
- The agenda for the Mass Care conference call was not sent to all the ESF-6 partners which caused duplication of effort.
- TFs had difficulty maintaining situational awareness of the current operating picture. While they don't need to have detailed information about what is occurring, they do need to be aware of big picture items that could impact forward-planning.
- Gator and Constellation are Excellent!

### Exercise Roles

- Our evaluator yesterday did a great job. He didn't speak. He hung around the third orbit and he observed. I really feel like he was present, but he was in that outside role.
- I give our controller very high marks. I like the model of having the controller engaged and guiding an inexperienced group. Overall very helpful.
- Ensure team members, controllers and evaluators understand their roles before play begins. Players should play; controllers should observe and steer the group when they need assistance; evaluators should only observe.

### Concept

This section reflects comments that were intended to improve the Task Force concept as a whole.

### Communication

- Determine the essential elements of information (EEI) that should be provided concerning sheltering and feeding. Make sure this is shared according to a set TF battle rhythm.
- Need to ensure more consistency on numbers between EOC and the TFs.

### Best Practices

- Establish TFs in advance at the State level and in larger jurisdictions. TF team members should know one another already and have exercised together before a disaster happens.
- The state should model TF development behavior for county and local.

- Develop strong TF leaders pre-disaster. The TF leader should probably be a state person or at least someone who is well-versed in state response protocol.
- TF members need to have a high level of knowledge and expertise about operations of the organization at a state level.
- Ask the food companies to bring a dietician in so that we can ensure food substitutions are still providing appropriate nutrition.

### Task Force Structure

- Include a representative from ESF-8 on the STF.
- Display processor can't be the communicator with the other TF.
- There may be too many people on the task force, but this is probably an artificiality of the exercise.
- Important to determine a battle rhythm for the TFs and standardized reporting expectations.
- Our challenge is people. In a real event, we wouldn't be people-rich. We're working the same people in many of the groups. What we're seeing in the TFs will help us identify the training that we need and help us determine the limitations of what the TF can do.
- The revelation for me is that the TFs are hurting our ability to make decisions in the EOC. We don't have enough multiple experts in enough multiple disciplines to do the job.
  - Clearly define responsibilities of the EOC and the TFs – Perhaps the EOC should concentrate on the tactical – where the kitchens go and the TFs concentrate on strategy.
  - We can tell the EOC how many gallons of fuel they'll need, but we can't tell them where the assets are.
- If member relationships are in place pre-disaster, TFs could probably operate virtually.
- The organization that co-leads sheltering and/or feeding with the state should serve as a co-lead or deputy on the task force.
- VOAD should be a part of the TFs.
  - Could the TF meet in conjunction with the VOAD or be subcommittees of the VOAD.
  - VOAD members were present but there wasn't a liaison for the VOAD. We weren't necessarily thinking about other VOAD organizations that might have had resources.
  - They are on the Mass Care conference call
  - If we're building a National Task Force for sheltering and feeding – I need those VOADS to provide me advice at the state level. Some state VOADs are robust and some are wimpy.
  - Caution – we're building a concept and want it to be user-friendly for any state to adopt.
  - There is a difference between a Task Force and a Committee. The NVOAD has a Committee that meets and plans for Mass Care. But – the TFs are pop-ups that act when there is a specific disaster is operating.
- We need a liaison with Pet Sheltering.
- Might be helpful to have a more structured approach to the work group with defined sub-groups and tasks. These sub-groups could work individually and report back to the whole group at intervals.
- Conflicting guidance between EOC and TF.
- Job sheets for other members of the TF so they have a checklist too
- Vendors brought up good points about what they need from us (notice and numbers ASAP), ensure revisions to numbers are known quickly as well.
- Administrative log, IT support POCs would be helpful.

- A balanced approach to shelter planning is essential. The TF make-up should be well-balanced to address all potential planning issues. For instance, the Shelter TF had no representatives focused on infants/children’s or pet owner’s issues and needs and several representatives from disability and elderly issues. No one seemed to be an advocate for the overall general shelter population. Some of this is probably due to the artificiality of the exercise. Issues related to specific groups could be addressed by smaller working groups within the TF.

## Materials

This section reflects comments that were intended to improve Task Force materials and tools.

### Ease of Use

- Reduce redundancy in the guide.
- The TF Checklists are a little hard to follow. Edit the TF checklists to make them more user-friendly:
  - Break them into categories by timeframe such as pre-deployment, daily, short-term, long-term.
  - Ensure language is accessible for lay-persons.
  - Include all possible equipment/supplies that agencies (including State logistics, VOADs, food vendors, and contractors) would have available for the disaster, and pre-identify the source so that all see the same information.

### Tools to Consider

- Have access to After Action Reports/Lessons Learned from previous, similar disasters, and possibly summarize their outcomes, to be used as the initial plan/way forward for the current situation, then site-adapted to meet current needs.
- Expand log support to include all the support elements for Mass Care such as San Packs for Kitchens, etc.
  - According to the FTF Operational Procedures, there is an Appendix that tells what items are automatically ordered for a Kitchen site.
  - There is a standard list of things that the state would order including replenishment.
- Food Bank specific – how does the Food Bank replenish. The FTF needs to ensure that they don’t take away the Food Bank safety net for the community at large. They need to consider replenishment and ensure the FB can continue its day-to-day operations without depletion.
- Possibly need a standardized fuel calculation model. There is one in the spreadsheet, but the resources that Food Banks were providing weren’t calculated in. The Food Banks know what they use normally – but don’t know what they’d use on disaster routes. If there is something that would allow us to plug in the size of the truck, the amount of miles and then calculate – that might be really helpful.
  - Could possibly extend the table and include the additional
- Develop a “Super Spreadsheet” for sheltering planning. The spreadsheet used in the exercise was primarily designed for estimates for feeding planning. Only a few of the tabs were applicable to sheltering (FNSS Est, FNSS ARF, PAS Est). These tabs should probably be transferred to a Sheltering Spreadsheet since these would be addressed by the Sheltering TF not the Feeding one. The spreadsheet should also include estimates of needed fuel, transportation, other equipment and supplies, etc. for shelters.

- The shelter and feeding spreadsheets should also consider requirements for baby food and supplies. As shelters become short or long term, we'll need baby food, diapers, cribs, etc. Perhaps this can be a tab on the Super Spreadsheet.
- Create a flow chart of the critical path for feeding for the FTF. Things do vary from one event to another, but every event has a critical path.
- Pre-scripted ARFs – particularly for catastrophic events.
- GIS mapping of all service delivery locations.
- Include list of inventory included in San-Packs, Kitchen support packages, etc. Having this on the web would be excellent.
- Possible formula for transitioning from one phase to another in food box provisions:
  - Method for augmenting mobile feeding:
  - Planning Factors: # of people impacted, ratio that live in poverty, and the percentage of affected population already receiving distribution. These will all be planning factors. Deduct the percentage of the population already receiving assistance.
  - Formula: Take the gross population of the area of electrical outage, multiply by the percent of the population that lives at or below the poverty level and subtract the number of individuals already receiving food bank assistance, this equals the number who will need food boxes.
  - Method for transitioning off of mobile feeding
  - Formula above + last number of prepared meals distributed via mobile feeding.
  - Some concerns were expressed about this formula.
  - This formula was really to establish a baseline of services that we were already providing so that as we looked at our transition out – how do we know what we've already been doing. We want to know what's incremental to what we're already providing.
  - Need to address the portability and culture of food boxes as well as the food infrastructure.
- Somewhere in the Task Force document we need to identify the specific resources that the TF is tasked with coordinating.
- Provide TFs with the regional evacuation studies, particularly the behavioral analysis.
- Website very helpful!
- Work towards having nationally standardized forms for TFs.
- Translate the concept of operations for the strategic arena.
- Give more thought to a tool kit that will help EMAC'd individuals come up to speed fast!
- Modify the STF Checklist so it is more strategically focused (less operational).
  - The operational phases are great for operational focus, but not for forward planning focus.
  - A recommendation is to re-evaluate the sheltering task force guidance and template and modify it to make it more planning focused as opposed to operational focused.
- Clearly define communication flows.
- Possibly provide a shift-change checklist or transition checklist.

## General Comments

This section provides general comments that were intended to highlight the TF experience and its benefits.

## Communication

- Great open communication.
- A lot of times when we have the MC calls at the State level we don't get County participation. That is incredibly helpful. Need to make sure globally the Counties are reporting in. In Mass Care it's more voluntary. Somehow we need to take the strength today and turn it into something we can use better around the country.

### Exercise Play

- Structured, a master scenario events list (MSEL), is super. I like it much more.
- Liked the brainstorming. There are many people from different geographic areas and we started from the ground up. The brainstorming is vital. We don't have to re-invent the wheel.
- TF formation occurred more rapidly this year.
- Having the meeting on Sunday helped us know what we needed to work on and to learn about Florida.
- This exercise is a great scenario because you may have capacity but you can't move it because the storm is coming.
- TX, CA, and WA have similar concepts but have not exercised as yet.
- Having fun! Learning a lot!
- TF struggled a little with becoming strategic. Had difficulty making the leap from operational to strategic.
- Excellent discussion on the topics of ADA/ADL's

### People

- Great mix of seasoned players and new players.
- Having an experienced deputy and controller has been very helpful.
- Visitors from small rural states realize how immature their process is.
- As an NGO, the responsiveness of the staff, mass care support is incredible.
- The IA-TAC contractor has been really good to have in helping to speed things along. That's been very helpful. If we would have had someone in that planning role that was less knowledgeable it would have been a challenge.
- I hope that the group has appreciated the opportunity to have open conversations and learn.
- There were some great conversations about laws that might be different in different states (such as service animals). Helps to have this information and know that there needs to be a connection with ESF-17 in the State of Florida.
- Need to ensure that there is a focus on access and functional needs.
- Need an ESF-8 representative at the table which would have been useful for providing answers to several legal questions regarding reciprocity of certification and licenses.
- Great subject matter expertise around sheltering.
- Shelter Task Force had good group leadership able to get the group back on track as needed.
- Cooperative work group – we worked well together.

### Task Force Operations

- Be careful assigning too many leads in addition to the task force leader.
- Hold a 15 minute Task Force leader only brief on the priorities for that group for each day. This will give the TF leads and the mass care coordinator an opportunity to calibrate activity.

- Post tasks/priorities and when they are due.
- The TFs must multi-task.
- Ensure voice/data connectivity with EOC in advance of TF standing up.
- Have display processor capture planning assumptions or projections.
- Consider having a Just In Time training for display processors so they know how to get into various info sources, know what information is important to capture and understand the reporting expectations and TF battle rhythm.

### **Equipment, Materials and Tools**

- TF lead or deputy should provide an orientation to the matrix for all TF members
- The TF rooms need printers.
- The equipment used in the TF rooms should be checked in advance to ensure it works correctly.
- Please provide passwords and instructions for connecting to internet access.
- The spreadsheets are great to use to calculate projections.
- Information on county demographics was easy to find.
- Having the maps and the expectations outlined really helped. The posters on the wall helped. Clarified expectations.
- Mass Care Assessment tool is tremendous!
- The checklist for the FTF Lead helps to get the Lead grounded.
- Standardized menus helped us immensely.
- Love the Constellation more than Web EOC.
- Shelter overlay is something that CA is looking at doing.
- When you start with kitchens you can overlay kitchens and shelter sites. That is really helpful.
- The plan is really good. Very detailed.
- The spreadsheet is great.
- Commonly Used Shelter Items should be changed to Commonly Used Mass Care Items. Keep it to one – but lump it together.
- Several of the injects were very smart. Reunification is a smart thing to do.
- We should use the white boards more to keep track of assumptions
  - Flip chart might be helpful as well.
- Need to identify what the Special Needs and General Population shelter differences are when ordering. Should ESF-8 or ESF-6 order this?
- Need to have some understanding of the geography. There will probably always be particular things about each state so it might be helpful to have a briefing about the unique aspects of the State.