



COOPERATION | COMMUNICATION | COORDINATION | COLLABORATION

POINTS OF CONSENSUS

UNITED STATES ISLANDS & ALASKA

The jurisdictions of Alaska, American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands comprise the U.S. Islands and Alaska. Due to the geographic isolation, high cost, logistics, and vast cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity, the challenges in providing disaster services Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS) are formidable. Nevertheless, the members of National VOAD commit to providing the same standard of service throughout the entire Nation. The following four points of consensus will be adopted by National VOAD members performing disaster work in the U.S. Islands and Alaska.

Respecting Culture and Customs

We will endeavor to respect the culture, structures, and customs of the communities in which we work. We commit to continue developing our own personal and organizational cultural competence.

Providing Culturally Appropriate Services

We will endeavor to adapt our service delivery to meet the needs of the local community. This would include developing culturally and linguistically appropriate materials, arranging for interpretive services, and incorporating local dietary preferences.

Engaging the Local Community

We support the whole community approach in all phases of emergency management. This includes intentional outreach to segments of the community that are traditionally underrepresented as well as marginalized groups. We will engage beneficiaries in the process of designing and implementing service delivery programs. We will work with local emergency management and seek out opportunities to partner with local community organizations.

Building Local Capacity

Recognizing that all impacted communities have inherent capabilities, we will build on and further develop these existing local assets. Whenever possible, we will purchase goods locally, contract with local vendors to stimulate economic recovery, and access local human resources when soliciting volunteers. Throughout our response and recovery efforts we will implement measures to reduce the community's vulnerability to future disasters.

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RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The Points of Consensus articulate broad ideals agreed to by members of National VOAD. The following are recommendations of specific actions member organizations can take to actualize those ideals.

Respecting Culture and Customs

1. Establish a cultural competency training program throughout the organization.
2. Identify individuals within the organization who can specialize as Subject Matter Experts on each of the three USIA regions (Alaska, Caribbean, and Pacific).
3. Develop experience within organizational leadership by creating opportunities for visits or even internships with affiliates in USIA regions.

Providing Culturally Appropriate Services

1. Review and revise processes and procedures for operations in USIA by adding specific annexes to plans for each region or making accommodations within the plan for the unique challenges of USIA operations.
2. Train membership in how to effectively and appropriately provide services in USIA before deploying.

Engaging the Local Community

1. Strengthen relationships with USIA affiliates. Initiate regular dialogue and arrange in-person visits.
2. Use technology such as video-conferencing, webinars, and social media to engage.
3. Solicit input and feedback from USIA affiliates. Invite them to provide training to the larger organization.

Building Local Capacity

1. Provide training and mentoring to USIA affiliates on topics such as fund-raising, disaster case management, long-term recovery group development, public information, and VOAD leadership development.
2. Create deployment or internship opportunities for USIA affiliates to gain experience.
3. Create expectations that local affiliates participate in VOAD and uphold the 4 C's in working with local networks.
4. Provide funding to affiliates to enable them to provide services, get training, and participate in VOAD.
5. Pre-stage disaster supplies within the USIA jurisdictions.