



Disaster Volunteers Program Guide

October 2021

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BACKGROUND

Florida International University (FIU) Department of Emergency Management's (DEM) mission is to guide the University's all-hazard preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation needs by coordinating information and resources to protect students, faculty, staff, and visitors, and restoring operations as soon as possible following a disaster. To successfully accomplish this mission, DEM collaborates with stakeholders and the University community. As part of the 2017 Hurricane Irma After-Action Review, the University found it imperative to better engage the University community as well as provide support necessary to effectively activate and run emergency operations such as sheltering. An adequate and trained workforce is one of the most critical elements of a successful operation; therefore, the Office of the President issued a directive to build a database of at least 200 FIU volunteers that could be called upon to support emergency operations.

In 2018, with the support of the Office of the President, DEM introduced the FIU Disaster Volunteers Program. The Disaster Volunteers Program is a cadre of trained and motivated FIU students, faculty, and staff who may be called upon to assist the University with sheltering operations, administrative services, logistical support, call center operations, or other disaster-related tasks either before, during, or after a disaster. Volunteers will be trained in topics such as disaster preparedness, first aid, sheltering operations, etc. As a Disaster Volunteer, individuals will have the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of emergency management, build upon their skillset, and help the University prepare for, respond to, and quickly recover from an emergency. Additionally, disaster volunteers bring varying perspective, fresh talent, and skills to emergency management that could directly support the mission.

Disaster Volunteer assignments are strictly unpaid and without financial compensation. FIU does not provide funds or reimbursement for travel, lodging, or other expenses.

The purpose of this Program Guide is to describe the activities of the FIU Disaster Volunteers Program. This serves as a guidance document and can be modified depending on the circumstances.

RECRUITMENT

FIU Department of Emergency Management is responsible for the recruitment activities associated with the FIU Disaster Volunteers Program. Recruitment efforts will be in collaboration and coordination with other FIU units such as the Division of Information Technology, Division of External Relations, etc. Prospective candidates are always welcome to apply year round via the DEM website at <http://dem.fiu.edu/>. Additional outreach and recruiting activities such as a newsletter submission and e-mail announcement will occur as needed.

Review and Selection Process

FIU Disaster Volunteer applications are available throughout the year. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis. To apply, candidates are asked to complete an application form through the DEM website. Complete applications will include the following information:

- Name, Panther ID, Relationship to FIU
- Contact information: Phone number, FIU e-mail address
- Languages spoken
- Emergency contact information
- List of talents or skills, certifications/licenses
- Orientation/training availability

Applicants should not include any sensitive personal information such as social security numbers or personal health information.

Only complete applications will be considered.

Selection Criteria

Selection will be made without regard to race, national origin, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, etc. All completed applications are saved and entered into the database; however, applicants must meet the following criteria to be eligible to receive a volunteer assignment:

- Be an individual associated with FIU as a current faculty, staff member, or student
- Possess an active Panther ID and FIU e-mail account
- Complete the Disaster Volunteer Orientation/Shelter Operations Training

Volunteer Database

The Department of Emergency Management limits the number of viewers to a reasonably manageable number. However, DEM will have at least one person who has database access privileges. To gain access to the database, contact DEM at dem@fiu.edu.

Mailbox and Listserv

For inquiries, volunteers are directed to the official DEM account (dem@fiu.edu). This account is restricted to DEM staff. To communicate the active Disaster Volunteer database, DEM uses an FIU listserv. The account is disaster-volunteers@fiu.edu. The Disaster Volunteers listserv is used to communicate training announcements, feedback surveys, and a call for volunteers.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Department of Emergency Management

The FIU Department of Emergency Management functions as the primary lead for the Disaster Volunteers Program and is responsible for oversight of the Program. DEM shall be responsible for, but not limited to the following:

- Serve as the primary lead and provide program oversight
- Function as a liaison between the Disaster Volunteer Program and the University
- Lead for volunteer recruitment, selection, and execution of the Program
- Coordinate and collaborate with internal and external partners for training and development opportunities
- Administer and review feedback surveys that could be used to improve the Program
- Manage the volunteer database, DEM mailbox, and listserv
- Provide orientation for new applicants
- Share training and development opportunities with active volunteer database
- Provide volunteers with a certificate of completion upon the successful completion of training sessions

Volunteer Management (for emergencies only)

During an activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), the Volunteer Management Unit Lead is responsible for managing the FIU Disaster Volunteers Program. Responsibilities shall include, but is not limited to the following:

- Function as the liaison between the Program and the EOC staff
- Provide supervision and direction to volunteers
- Assist with creating and issuing volunteer assignments
- Communicate EOC needs and volunteer assignments via listserv and/or FIU Alert¹
- Liaise and coordinate with other EOC units using Disaster Volunteers to support emergency operations
- Ensure that volunteers complete FIU Liability forms (see Attachments) before accepting assignment
- Ensure that volunteers have adequate credentials, equipment, and other material for volunteer assignments
- Conduct on- and off-boarding with Disaster Volunteers
- Provide sufficient updates regarding the Program to the EOC Operations Section Chief
- Address and refer concerns and issues regarding the implementation of the Program
- Contribute to after action reviews and administer post-event evaluations

EXPECTATIONS

FIU Department of Emergency Management is expected to provide oversight to the Disaster Volunteers Program, address any leadership inquiries regarding the Program, maintain and update the volunteer database, and share upcoming training opportunities.

FIU Disaster Volunteers are expected to meet university policies and procedures as well as the FIU Faculty Handbook, FIU Student Handbook, and other policies and procedures

¹ FIU Alert is an emergency notification system used to notify the FIU community of any imminent or immediate threat to life safety.

by the Division of Human Resources. Disaster Volunteers are expected to maintain a professional demeanor, contribute, take initiative, and ask questions.

With the assistance of DEM, the Volunteer Management Unit (at time of an emergency) is expected to manage the Program, respond to all inquiries, and assist in resolving volunteer and program issues. The unit lead will ensure the database is properly maintained and current.

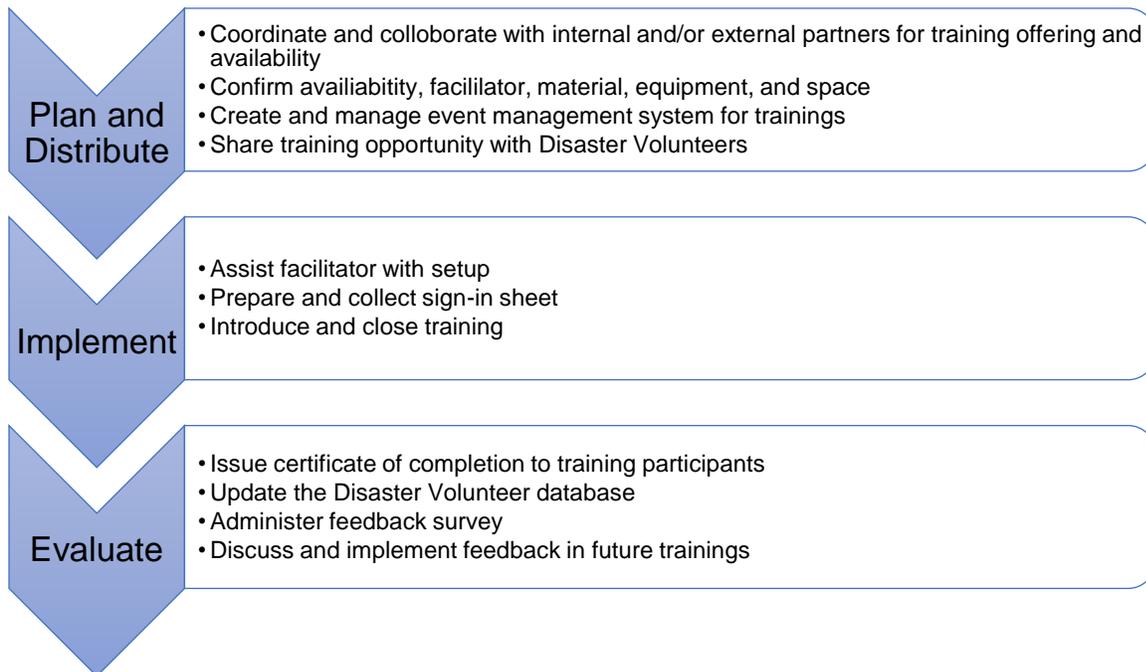
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

FIU Department of Emergency Management strives to offer at least four training and development opportunities each year for the Disaster Volunteer Program participants. At minimum, FIU Disaster Volunteers are required to complete the Orientation and the American Red Cross Sheltering Operations training. Throughout the year, other training offerings will include:

- National Weather Service SKYWARN® Storm Spotter Program
- Stop the Bleed—Hands Only CPR, AED, and Bleeding Control
- Florida Department of Health—Miami-Dade Closed Points of Dispensing Operations
- FIU Police: Active Shooter Awareness and Preparation
- Psychological First Aid

Furthermore, DEM will share additional trainings through the DEM website. Training and development opportunities are subject to change based on need and availability.

Training and development process:



FIU Disaster Volunteers are encouraged to participate in as much training as permitted by availability.

POINTS OF CONTACT

Name	Title	E-mail Address	Phone #
Amy B. Aiken	Director, DEM	abaiken@fiu.edu	305-348-6975
Marc Jean	Assistant Dir., DEM	mjean@fiu.edu	305-348-1779
Annette Flores	Planner, DEM	annflore@fiu.edu	305-348-0670
DEM	-----	dem@fiu.edu	305-348-0670
Crystal Gomez	Senior Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Operations and Chief of Staff/ Volunteer Management Unit Lead	crgomez@fiu.edu	305-348-2111

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- 1) [FIU Office of the General Counsel: Release, Waiver of Liability, and Assumption of Risk Form \(Internal-Adults\)](#)
- 2) [FIU Division of Human Resources: FIU Volunteer Application-Applicant Form \(A\)](#)
- 3) [South Florida | American Red Cross](#)