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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Terence R. McAuliffe, Governor
The Honorable Brian Moran, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security
The Honorable John Harvey, Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs
The Honorable Thomas K. Norment, Jr., Co-Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Emmet W. Hanger, Jr., Co-Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable S. Chris Jones, Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee
Mr. Daniel Timberlake, Director of the Department of Planning and Budget

FROM: Jeffrey D. Stern, Ph.D. 

SUBJECT: Report on the Commonwealth's Emergency Shelter Capabilities and Readiness

In accordance with Item 393 (B) of the 2014 Appropriations Act, I am pleased to submit the 2016 Report on the Commonwealth's Emergency Shelter Capabilities and Readiness. Please contact me if you have any questions or need any additional information concerning this report.

JDS

Enclosure

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Annual Report on the Commonwealth's Emergency Shelter Capabilities and Readiness

Item 393 (B) of the 2014 Appropriations Act

October 2016

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Preface

Item 393(B) of the 2014 Appropriations Act established a sheltering coordinator position within the Virginia Department of Emergency Management “to improve the safety and security of the citizens of the Commonwealth upon evacuation and subsequent housing in a local or state shelter.” The duties of the sheltering coordinator are outlined as follows:

The Coordinator shall be responsible for, but not be limited to, improving and coordinating the Commonwealth’s sheltering preparedness and capabilities in the event of evacuations due to natural or man-made disasters by reviewing, evaluating, and developing a state-wide master plan for the operation of state and local emergency shelters in the Commonwealth. The Coordinator shall establish an integrated system for coordinating the planning and operation of state emergency shelters, and facilitate cooperation among local entities and state agencies in the sheltering preparedness efforts in the Commonwealth.

This report, in accordance with Item 393(B) of the 2014 Appropriations Act, provides a status update on the Commonwealth’s emergency shelter capabilities and readiness.

Executive Summary

Virginia is vulnerable to a variety of hazards and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management is working diligently to ensure localities and the Commonwealth have adequate plans to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee's (JLARC) report *Review of Disaster Preparedness Planning in Virginia* (2013) identified several findings, including inadequate sheltering capacity in the Hampton Roads region in the event of a category 3 hurricane. This report outlines the state, local, and regional efforts to date to improve sheltering capacity and overall sheltering and mass care capabilities with the Commonwealth. Recommendations for closing remaining gaps and improving long term strategies are listed below, and described in greater detail in this report.

- Use the industry standard planning percentage of 10 percent for shelter planning.
- Identify additional sheltering options when developing the sheltering strategy, including locally-initiated and Commonwealth-initiated regional shelters.
- Co-lead the Virginia Mass Care Task Force development of a comprehensive, integrated sheltering strategy that effectively augments and enhances local and regional sheltering capabilities.
- Re-evaluate the State-Managed Shelter Plan and identify more feasible alternatives for state support of sheltering.
- Identify shelter facilities using an all-hazards approach.
- Increase the number of available shelter facilities in regions that currently do not have adequate capacity.
- Create resource and asset packages to support local and regional shelters, and preposition them when possible to ensure availability and rapid deployment.
- Identify additional shelter staffing resources and create a flexible system that allows localities to request the staffing help the localities need, when it needs it.
- Promote grant funding opportunities for shelter retrofits and enhancements.
- Identify or develop shelter specific training to address identified training gaps, including just-in-time disability integration training.

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MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE 2015 REPORT

Since last year's report, the Sheltering Coordinator, with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), conducted 13 regional listening sessions on sheltering with local and community stakeholders across the Commonwealth to identify needs and gaps in local and state-managed shelters, identify best practices and suggestions, and to discuss the goals for and development of the statewide sheltering strategy. Following the regional sessions, the Sheltering Coordinator aggregated the input, questions, concerns, and suggestions into a comprehensive report and provided it to emergency management and community stakeholders across the Commonwealth. This report will be used to guide the development of the statewide sheltering strategy.

During this period, the Sheltering Coordinator worked with VDEM's Disaster Response and Recovery Officers representing Central Virginia, Northern Neck, Middle Peninsula, Eastern Shore, and Hampton Roads to update and enhance data on local shelters in the Hampton Roads and Central Virginia regions using an all-hazards approach. In addition, the Sheltering Coordinator also gathered information on available staffing, resources, and assets.

Additional Sheltering Coordinator activities in the past year included:

- Reviewing all assessments, reports, and related documents to identify critical and common sheltering gaps.
- Conducting mass care coordination calls with regional coordinators and localities to identify emerging needs related to sheltering, mass care, pet sheltering, and public health during emergency activations in 2015 and 2016.
- Conducting disability partner calls with regional coordinators, FEMA, and disability service agencies and organizations to address anticipated and emerging concerns and needs during emergency activations in 2015 and 2016.
- Actively engaging with state agencies through the Access and Functional Needs Advisory Committee to support individuals with disabilities during sheltering operations and housing recovery.
- Deploying to South Carolina following historic flooding in October 2015 to observe sheltering operations. The Sheltering Coordinator worked at the state emergency operations center, visited FEMA's Joint Field Office, and visited the American Red Cross disaster operations headquarters. Upon her return, the Sheltering Coordinator provided VDEM with a comprehensive report on observations and takeaways for the Commonwealth.
- Deploying with FEMA to Mississippi as a Disability Integration Advisor in February 2016 where FEMA was providing recovery assistance following a series of tornadoes. During this deployment the Sheltering Coordinator gained knowledge and experience about federal recovery operations, state to federal interactions during a federally declared disaster, and learned a substantial amount about disability integration and federal individual assistance and community recovery groups.
- Working with the Virginia Medically Vulnerable Populations Group on a preparedness video, Dare to Prepare, that provides preparedness education to Virginians with family members who use medical equipment.

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- Working with a group of subject matter experts on mitigation, resilience, and alternative energy to develop and submit a proposal to merge the Governor's solar initiative with the Governor's initiatives to increase sheltering capabilities.
- Providing technical assistance to localities and regional entities in support of sheltering and access and functional needs planning, including:
 - The Central Virginia Emergency Management Alliance to create a comprehensive shelter staff training program.
 - The Medical Reserve Corps Coordinator in the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County to establish a Functional and Access Needs Support (FANS) Team volunteer program.
 - James City County to develop a set of engineering standards and to conduct engineering assessments of local shelters. The standards, once complete, will be available to other localities in the Commonwealth.
 - The City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County to plan and conduct an overnight shelter exercise.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SHELTERING

Shelter operations are a local government responsibility to be provided in accordance with local Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs). In the Commonwealth of Virginia, local governments are legally responsible for the safety and security of its residents and visitors, which includes sheltering.

LOCAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Commonwealth of Virginia Emergency Operations Plan (COVEOP) specifies local responsibilities for public shelter facilities. These include provisions for feeding, overnight sleeping accommodations, back-up power, augmented communications, a medical aid station, security, traffic control, fire inspections, and procedures for operating public shelters. The COVEOP also states that all localities should have a clear, comprehensive shelter plan as part of its local EOP, and that localities are solely responsible for establishing and maintaining a refuge of last resort.

STATE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Commonwealth's role is to support localities by helping the locality meet the needs and obligations that exceed its capabilities. The specific roles and responsibilities for state agencies are addressed in the Mass Care, Emergency Assistance, Housing and Human Services, and the Mass Care and Sheltering Annexes of the COVEOP.

CURRENT SHELTERING STRATEGY

Sheltering options within the Commonwealth currently include local shelters, refuges of last resort, and state-managed shelters. Local shelter capacities range from fewer than 50 to more than 500 individuals in larger cities. Most local shelters are intended for smaller, localized events, particularly those outside the three largest population centers: Northern Virginia, Richmond, and

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Hampton Roads. State-managed shelters are intended for catastrophic events for up to 30 days. Presently, there are very few regional sheltering agreements between localities.

SHELTER FACILITIES, CAPACITIES, AND CAPABILITIES

Efforts have been made to identify and catalog local shelter facility capacities in hurricane-prone regions of the state. This single-hazard identification of shelter facilities has led to an underestimation of regional shelter capabilities and does not reflect shelter facilities that could be used in non-high wind events.

The Sheltering Coordinator is working to identify shelters statewide by the type of hazard for which they are viable. A true estimation of shelter capacities and capabilities in other areas of the Commonwealth is not available, since data collection efforts to date have focused on hurricane-prone regions of the Commonwealth.

CURRENT CAPACITY

The Commonwealth has been very focused on sheltering capacity gaps, particularly in the Hampton Roads region. This focus was the direct result of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee's (JLARC) report, *Review of Disaster Preparedness Planning in Virginia* (2013). Determining current capacity has been difficult and previous assessments have produced varying results.

The JLARC Report provided data regarding current capacity to shelter Hampton Roads evacuees in the table, *Current State and Local Shelters Lack the Capacity to Shelter Approximately Half of Evacuees During a Category 3 Hurricane* (pages vii, 67). The table provides the estimated number of evacuees for each category of hurricane and compares it to current sheltering capacity within Hampton Roads and the State-Managed Shelter (SMS) Program. This data indicates that localities and the Commonwealth would be unable to shelter 10,595 people in a category 2 hurricane; 45,000 people in a category 3 hurricane; and 96,000 in a category 4. This analysis is based upon the assumption that 100 percent of evacuees will seek shelter at local or state-managed shelters. The industry standard shelter planning percentage is 10 percent. This planning percentage is used by both the State of Florida and the American Red Cross, the leading experts on sheltering and hurricane impacts. Additionally, experience and analysis of previous events indicate that 100 percent of evacuees will not seek shelter at a government or non-governmental shelter. For example, according to the *Hurricane Sandy After Action Report* (May 2013), New York City reported that only 6,800 people sought shelter before, during, or after the storm. More than one million residents lived within the Hurricane Sandy storm surge zone and 375,000 of these residents were within the mandatory evacuation zone. In this instance, less than 1 percent of individuals in the storm surge impact area and 1.8 percent of individuals in the mandatory evacuation zone sought shelter.

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Using the standard planning percentage of 10 percent provides planning assumptions that are more realistic and provides a baseline from which to focus planning efforts and funding. By applying the 10 percent planning percentage to JLARC's evacuee estimations, it reveals that there is not a critical capacity gap in sheltering.

Category Hurricane	Within Hampton Roads				Outside Hampton Roads				Evacuees Without Shelter	
	# of evacuees	# Seeking Shelter (10%)	Shelter capacity	Evacuees without shelter	# of evacuees	# Seeking Shelter (10%)	Shelter capacity	Evacuees without shelter	Number	Percent of all evacuees
2	36,000	3,600	80,000	0	30,000	3,000	19,405	0	0	0%
3	103,000	10,300	58,000	0	50,000	5,000	15,694	0	0	0%
4	127,000	12,700	31,000	0	90,000	9,000	15,694	0	0	0%

* Source: JLARC staff analysis of 2011 Regional Catastrophic Planning Grant data and 2013 VDSS State-Managed Shelter data.

Based on an analysis of the various reports and assessments that have been completed since 2009, any gap in sheltering capacity that may exist in Hampton Roads will only occur during a category 3 or higher hurricane event and could potentially be remedied through increased funding for engineering assessments, facility upgrades, and retrofits that would bring the buildings up to current building code standards for emergency shelters.

VDEM continues to obtain accurate, shelter information in the annual Local Capabilities Assessment for Readiness (LCAR) Report as recommended in the JLARC report. This will help ensure that all localities are reporting its shelter locations, capacities, and capabilities annually.

CURRENT CAPABILITY

While the gap in sheltering capacity may be less of a concern than previously thought, there is, however, a substantial gap in sheltering capabilities across the Commonwealth. Like capacity, capability also limits the number of individuals that can be sheltered. If a locality has the floor space (capacity) for 500 individuals but only has staffing and resources (capability) to support 150, the number of individuals that locality is able to shelter without assistance is only 150.

Currently, data on shelter facilities only reflects pet sheltering capabilities and the ability to house individuals with medical needs. Sheltering information to be collected through the 2017 LCAR will include information on both capacity and the following capabilities:

- Staffing
- Supplies: Cots, mats, blankets, etc.
- Facility accessibility
- Backup power
- Showers
- Laundry facility or capability to provide laundry services
- Staffing

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- Pet sheltering
- Functional needs support services: Services provided to individuals with access and functional needs to ensure equal access to the shelters and shelter services

MOST SIGNIFICANT CAPABILITY GAPS

Staffing was the most common and critical need identified in previous assessments and during the 2015 Regional Listening Sessions held by VDEM. The majority of localities know whether the locality has a staffing deficit, but providing specific numbers on the extent of the deficit can be difficult due to the amount of coordination needed between multiple local and state agencies. Specific sheltering concerns identified in the Regional Listening Sessions include concerns about the availability American Red Cross to staff shelters, the need for Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) staff to return to their regular work quickly, and the identification of additional staffing options. The personnel commitment for recovery sheltering alone would put a significant strain on VDSS personnel, who must balance the operation of both local and state-managed shelters with their regular, on-going client caseloads, and the additional responsibilities for operating disaster survivor assistance programs.

ACCESSIBILITY OF BUILDINGS AND PROGRAMS

Disability integration and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance is a tremendous concern prevalent across the Commonwealth. This concern was identified in multiple sheltering assessments including the Regional Listening Sessions, the *In-Season Review of Hurricane Preparedness for Hampton Roads*, and the *Review and Assessments – A Look at Virginia's Hurricane Planning and Preparedness*. The key issues identified by localities at the sessions include training on ADA compliance and functional needs support services and adequate resources to support individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.

An additional concern identified by VDEM is the pervasive assumption by local emergency managers that all school buildings are ADA compliant. This is an inaccurate assumption that has become evident in previous disasters across the country. Additionally, some local emergency managers report having challenges working with school districts to ensure physical accessibility to school facilities.

PET SHELTERING

Pet sheltering was identified as a challenge across the Commonwealth in the Regional Listening Sessions, the Hampton Roads Capability Assessment (2011) and the Virginia Regional Preparedness Measure (2013). The key issues include a lack of facilities, supplies, staffing, and a need for training.

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) is the responsible entity for pet sheltering and feeding in the COVEOP; however, the agency has informed VDEM it is no longer capable of providing this service due to the reduction in federal grants available to support this program. VDEM is currently working on establishing memorandums of agreement with

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localities and non-profit groups for the use and maintenance of pet shelter supply trailers that VDACS returned to VDEM.

TIME CONSTRAINTS AND OPERATING COSTS

There are several challenges to the State-Managed Shelter Program that make state-managed shelters impractical as pre-landfall, evacuation shelters. First, sheltering during both the initial response and recovery from a disaster will present significant challenges due to the required lead time to open a SMS. VDSS has documented that it will need a minimum of five days to open a SMS. However, predictions for landfall locations are unreliable five days out. For example, in 2015, Hurricane Joaquin was headed toward the United States with possible landfall in the Chesapeake Bay on Saturday, October 3. On Sunday, September 27, six days pre-landfall, the various projected trajectories for the storm showed landfall occurring anywhere from northern Florida to New York. On Thursday, October 1, what would have been two days before landfall, trajectory predictions still showed a range of landfall possibilities from south of Wilmington, NC to Norfolk, VA or no U.S. landfall at all. Hurricane Joaquin did not end up making landfall on the U.S. mainland.

Modeling programs, although improving in accuracy, have limited reliability five days before landfall. It is hasty to activate a shelter plan at that time that could cost the Commonwealth between \$4–60 million or more. Given the costs and significant challenges associated with the state-managed shelter plan, it may be beneficial to reconsider how the Commonwealth approaches sheltering.

Lastly, the cost for supplies and equipment to open and operate a SMS will range from \$4–10 million for the first seven days. The following weeks are expected to have lower operational costs. However, this operational cost does not include staffing costs or overstock, warehousing, cleaning, and storage for the items purchased, nor does it include post event surplus.

FUNDING

Funding was another frequently discussed topic at each Regional Listening Session with the key needs identified as retrofits to shelter facilities, emergency backup power, and equipment and supplies for both people and pet sheltering.

Assessments, retrofits, and upgrades: Building codes are an important consideration when selecting a shelter facility and identifying retrofits required hardening existing structures. Building code standards have recently changed for new structures identified as emergency shelters but existing structures are not required to retrofit buildings to meet the new building code standards. These codes need to be considered when constructing new school or recreation facilities that may be used in local sheltering.

Backup Power: Backup power capabilities are a common need across the Commonwealth. Backup power at shelters has been identified as a shelter requirement in multiple class action settlements, including the New York City Judge's Opinion and Order in the class action suit against

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the city following Hurricane Sandy (*Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled vs. Michael Bloomberg and the City of New York, U.S. District Court, Southern New York District, 2013*).

Backup power is also critical during extreme weather to maintain HVAC, shelter feeding, and to support medical care for individuals with medical needs. Some funding is available through FEMA's Hazard Mitigation and Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Programs, and VDEM is educating localities on these grant opportunities. Alternative power is also an option to consider, in particular solar-powered microgrids, which could potentially provide backup power to shelters, hospitals, and other critical infrastructure.

Local emergency management needs funding to make shelter facility retrofits and upgrades possible. This funding could potentially bring shelters up to current building code, which would provide more durable shelters, provide for external, professional accessibility site surveys of shelter facilities, or provide the upgrades needed to achieve full compliance with the ADA. In addition, incentivizing the school districts to allow and assist with these assessments, retrofits, and upgrades could be highly effective.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The goal VDEM has established for the Commonwealth-wide sheltering strategy is to effectively support, enhance, and augment sheltering at the local and regional levels. Focusing efforts on closing capability gaps that exist across the Commonwealth will ensure the development of an effective sheltering strategy that is flexible and integrates with local sheltering operations.

USE INDUSTRY STANDARD PLANNING PERCENTAGE

In emergency management it is essential to plan for reality. As discussed above, a planning percentage that is based on real-world events helps ensure that effective and usable plans can be developed. In developing the Commonwealth-wide sheltering strategy and evaluating needs, the Sheltering Coordinator will use the industry standard planning percentage of 10 percent for shelter planning.

IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL SHELTERING OPTIONS

After a disaster, individuals need to stay close to their home communities in order to earn an income, stay connected with service providers, and maintain stability of the household. Currently, the strategy for any disaster that overwhelms local shelters requires many of these survivors to travel hours from their home or community and remain there for an extended period of time. Development of a system for regional sheltering will keep survivors in or near their community, and will help ensure a speedy recovery for both survivors and localities.

VDEM has established a Virginia Mass Care Task Force (described below) to create a sheltering strategy that provides for a range of sheltering options including local shelters, locally-initiated regional shelters, and Commonwealth-initiated regional shelters. Locally-initiated regional shelters are regional shelters opened and operated by participating localities. Commonwealth-initiated regional shelters would be opened and operated by the state at the request and in support of multiple

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localities within a region. The strategy would include the flexibility to begin with one type of shelter and change seamlessly to another as needed. For example, in a large-scale event, localities may open a locally-initiated regional shelter, but as they move into recovery may request the Commonwealth take over operations so that they are able to focus on recovery efforts. Likewise, several local shelters may be opened initially but as the event unfolds, it may become more efficient to merge the shelters into a regional shelter. A flexible, adaptable strategy will enable localities and regions to determine what best suits its needs according to each event and will enable the Commonwealth to efficiently and effectively provide that support.

CO-LEAD THE VIRGINIA MASS CARE TASK FORCE

VDEM and VDSS recently partnered to establish the Virginia Mass Care Task Force (VMCTF). The VMCTF will assist VDEM and VDSS with the agencies responsibilities for mass care planning by guiding the development and implementation of the statewide sheltering strategy.

Membership in the VMCTF includes all state agencies with roles and responsibilities in mass care, as well as local government and regional representatives, community stakeholders, and federal partners. VMCTF is thus a horizontally and vertically integrated, inclusive organization that will advise VDEM and VDSS on mass care related topics. The specific responsibilities of the VMCTF include:

- Guiding the development of a comprehensive, integrated sheltering strategy that effectively augments and enhances local and regional sheltering capabilities.
- Providing subject matter expertise on the development of the sheltering strategy and proposed programs and projects.
- Reviewing existing programs, projects, and services related to mass care, as needed.
- Making recommendations to VDEM and VDSS on the sheltering strategy, proposed programs and projects, and other issues as they arise.
- Maintaining a working knowledge of all mass care related COVEOP annexes.
- Annually reviewing the sheltering strategy and recommending updates as needed based on any changes to the laws, the COVEOP, or other influential factors.
- Supporting regional and state level mass care exercises.
- Monitoring the Task Force's performance against selected, measurable milestones and timelines.

RE-EVALUATE STATE-MANAGED SHELTER PLAN

One of the first issues the VMCTF will address is the SMS plan. The SMS plan, as previously addressed, has significant challenges and is not feasible as a pre-landfall shelter plan. The VMCTF will re-evaluate the SMS plan to determine whether the SMS plan should be revised or if there is a better alternative for state support of sheltering. The state-managed shelter plan represents years of dedicated, hard work, and long-established partnerships, but it may be time to reassess whether this is still the best approach for the Commonwealth.

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IDENTIFY SHELTER FACILITIES USING AN ALL-HAZARDS APPROACH

As discussed above, VDEM has begun and will continue to identify shelter facilities across the state using an all-hazards approach. This will ensure the Commonwealth has a better understanding of sheltering capacity and capability. In addition, shelter information will be added to the annual LCAR report to create and maintain this database of shelter information.

INCREASE AVAILABLE SHELTER FACILITIES

The Sheltering Coordinator will work with localities, regions, and Commonwealth and federal agencies to increase the number of available shelter facilities in regions that do not currently have adequate capacity. This may be accomplished through partnerships with campground facilities, faith-based organizations, state-owned facilities, or large private facilities. The goal will be to identify facilities that would function well as shelters, are accessible to individuals with disabilities, and can be utilized as regional shelters.

CREATE RESOURCE AND ASSET PACKAGES

VDEM will create resource (facilities and staff) and asset (equipment and supplies) packages to assist local and regional shelters. Supplies and equipment will, whenever possible, be prepositioned within the VDEM regions to help ensure availability and rapid deployment. Prioritization for resources will be coordinated by the Logistics Section of the Virginia Emergency Support Team. The following have been identified as critical needs or readily achievable improvements. Creation of all asset packages is dependent upon availability of funding.

Supply Connexes

Currently VDEM has five connex storage containers of shelter supplies located in Richmond. VDEM Logistics will be reorganizing the connexes into deployable packages for easier and quicker deployment of supplies to local and regional shelters. Each package will contain the appropriate amount of supplies to support a set number of people. The Sheltering Coordinator will work with VDEM Logistics on the possibility of pre-positioning these supplies in the VDEM regions.

Assistive Technology Kits

The Sheltering Coordinator will work with other state agencies and disability service organizations to create assistive technology kits for use at local and regional shelters. These kits will ensure accessible communications at shelters, recovery centers, and family assistance centers. Ideally, kits would be housed at each VDEM regional office for use by localities and state staff.

Functional Needs Support Services Equipment Trailers

Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) is the term that encompasses all services and equipment needed to ensure equal access to sheltering programs and facilities for individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. Localities have indicated a significant need for this equipment but with declining grant funds, localities are unlikely to be able to purchase adequate amounts of equipment to support medium to large-scale sheltering operations. VDEM will work

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toward creating trailers of the most commonly needed FNSS equipment and pre-position these trailers in the VDEM regions, if funding is available.

Identify Additional Staffing Resources

Staffing has been repeatedly identified as the most significant gap in sheltering across the Commonwealth. The American Red Cross (ARC) is a staffing partner in some localities, while other localities utilize the local Virginia Department of Social Services.

However, these are not the only staffing options. There are a variety of staffing resources for shelters, including the Adjunct Emergency Workforce (AEW), statewide mutual aid (SMA), volunteer organizations, and the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). The key to successfully solving the staffing issue is to identify all potential sources and create a flexible system that allows localities to request the staffing help the locality needs, when it needs it. The Sheltering Coordinator recommends the following to address staffing in shelters:

Clearly defined, consistent staff positions: The first step in creating staffing teams is to clearly define shelter positions and the requisite knowledge and training. This will ensure consistency in staff capabilities. Positions will, whenever possible, be based upon nationally accepted position standards. All other positions will be defined by the VMCTF and communicated clearly to sheltering stakeholders.

Local to local staffing support: The Commonwealth has a SMA system in place. VDEM will encourage localities to provide staffing support to impacted jurisdictions through SMA. Because response experience and training are essential to maintaining an engaged, well-trained shelter staff but opportunities for experience and training are so limited, providing aid to an impacted locality provides a considerable benefit to the supporting locality.

Adjunct Emergency Workforce (AEW): In addition to locality-to-locality staffing support through SMA, the Commonwealth may also be able to provide staffing support through the AEW program. Although this program is not being actively advertised or utilized, it has great potential to ensure the Commonwealth is able to provide staffing to local and regional shelters when needed. In order to make the AEW program effective, it is necessary to include emergency duties in employee work profiles to ensure state employees are aware they may be required to support disaster response and recovery. Additional changes to the AEW program may be required to make this an efficient and effective resource.

Partnership with American Red Cross: American Red Cross (ARC) provides essential sheltering support to many localities in the Commonwealth. While ARC capacity is sufficient for some local shelters, the scale of the State-Managed Shelter Program precludes the Commonwealth from using ARC as the primary provider of staff or resources for state-operated shelters.

Development of Functional Access Needs Support (FANS) Teams through the Medical Reserve Corps: Personal care services, such as assistance with eating, transferring,

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toileting, and dressing, are required for ADA compliance in shelter operations but are a consistent gap across the Commonwealth. The Sheltering Coordinator is currently working with the Thomas Jefferson/Northwest Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Coordinator to establish FANS team programs in parts of VDEM Region 3, including Charlottesville and Albemarle County. Once the program is operational in these areas, the Sheltering Coordinator will begin working with the Virginia Department of Health and MRC Coordinators in other areas with the goal of creating a statewide program that is capable of providing personal care services in local, regional, and state shelters.

Use of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact: In addition to local to local, state to local, and volunteer staffing support, the Commonwealth is also able to request assistance from other states through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). States may request entire staffing teams or individual positions, as needed.

PROMOTE GRANT FUNDING FOR SHELTER RETROFITS AND ENHANCEMENTS

Funding is needed for retrofits and enhancements of shelter facilities, such as backup power sources, accessibility upgrades, and to increase the ability of shelter facilities to withstand high wind events. To help localities in acquiring funding, VDEM will educate localities on available grant funding for backup power and retrofits. A grant set aside specifically for retrofits, backup power, and enhancements that would increase the high-wind event shelter capacity and capabilities in Virginia, is being considered.

IDENTIFY OR DEVELOP SHELTER SPECIFIC TRAINING

The Sheltering Coordinator has identified several areas where training is needed and has been requested. These areas include:

- ADA compliance and functional needs support services
- Shelter management and operations
- Pet sheltering

The Sheltering Coordinator is working through existing organizations when possible to meet these training needs. Working through existing organizations helps ensure subject matter experts are developing and delivering the training.

The Sheltering Coordinator serves on the Board of Directors for the Virginia State Animal Response Team (VASART) and has been working with this board to identify training and assistance needs. VASART has begun developing a pet shelter training program and has hired training managers to manage and deliver the training sessions.

The Sheltering Coordinator has also been providing technical assistance to the Central Virginia Emergency Management Alliance as they develop a comprehensive shelter training academy. The academy program will utilize existing training courses through the American Red Cross and other organizations to provide shelter training on demand and at low cost to localities. This model can be duplicated across the Commonwealth and requires very little funding. Once this project is

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completed in Central Virginia, the Sheltering Coordinator will work with other regions to establish similar programs.

Just-in-time disability integration training is important and frequently requested, so the Sheltering Coordinator will become a trainer for the Emergency Management Institute's Integrating Access and Functional Needs into Emergency Planning training course to provide the training within the state. The Sheltering Coordinator will also work to create a just-in-time training program on disability integration and functional needs support services for shelter staff.

Milestones

**Timeline is estimated.

Milestone	Anticipated Date of Completion
Establish Virginia Mass Care Task Force	September 2016
Draft framework submitted for review	July 2017
Review of draft strategy by state agencies, localities, community stakeholders	September – November 2017
Final strategy submitted for approval	February 2018
Adoption of strategy	May 2018
Training and outreach on new strategy	June – August 2018

IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management has become a national leader in disability inclusive emergency management. This was accomplished through diligent efforts throughout the agency, the commitment of leadership, and interagency support. VDEM's work, commitment, and success were recognized last year by Portlight Strategies, which selected VDEM as the first recipient of the Mark Johnson Getting It Right Award. Portlight Strategies is a non-profit organization that facilitates a variety of projects involving people with disabilities, including post-disaster relief work and the Getting It Right Conferences on inclusive emergency management programs.

In the past two years, VDEM has made rapid and substantial progress in inclusive emergency management, including:

- Establishing the Access and Functional Needs Advisory Committee (AFNAC).
- Establishing the Functional and Access Needs Network, a network of disability services agencies and organizations committed to distributing preparedness and public information directly to the disability community.
- Requiring accessibility of all parts of the state sheltering strategy.
- Conducting disability partner calls during emergency response operations.
- The Sheltering Coordinator earned her certification as an ADA Coordinator.

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CONCLUSION

As VDEM and sheltering stakeholders continue to improve the Commonwealth's sheltering capabilities and readiness, it is important to correctly identify and clearly understand the gaps in sheltering. While we have found that capacity may not be the primary concern, as previously thought, there are critical capability gaps that need to be addressed and a cohesive, flexible, and integrated approach to sheltering at the local, regional, and state levels must be developed and implemented. VDEM will continue to develop a statewide sheltering strategy that is capable of enhancing and augmenting local and regional sheltering through partnerships and collaboration across all levels of government.