

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 09/12/05		Item Number: <u>A-1</u>	
AGENDA ITEM: Discussion regarding Hurricane Katrina Relief Efforts in Culver City and the City of Culver City's Involvement.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Shelly W. Chagnon		Phone Number: (310) 253-6008	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☒	
Public Notification: Master Notification List (09/07/05), LA County Office of Emergency Management (09/09/05)			
Department Approval: Jerry B. Fulwood (09/08/05)		CAO Approval: Jerry B. Fulwood (09/08/05)	
City Controller Approval: N/A			
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> That the City Council request that staff provide enhanced public information services relative to Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts and promote the referral of individuals to outside agencies equipped to receive and distribute donations of goods and services. <u>BACKGROUND:</u> Hurricane Katrina was the third most intense hurricane to make landfall in the United States. In the early morning hours of August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina grazed by New Orleans, Louisiana and made landfall in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. The full extent of the humanitarian crisis left in Katrina's aftermath appears to have been greatly increased by the associated general failure of the New Orleans levee system. As the hurricane approached landfall near New Orleans, Mayor Ray Nagin placed the city under a mandatory evacuation order. However, many residents remained in the city. The vast majority of those who stayed were reported to have been unable to leave because they did not have vehicles, money for gas and other transportation. Also, many residents were unable to travel because they were elderly or infirm. As a result, the Louisiana Superdome was opened as a shelter of last resort for those that were to stay in the city. Federal disaster declarations blanketed 90,000 square miles of the United States. The hurricane left an estimated five million people without power, and it may be up to two months before all power is restored. Hurricane Katrina was a catastrophic storm that is likely to be the costliest ever and deadliest in recent US history; disaster relief plans are in operation in the affected areas. (Source: Wikipedia)			

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DISCUSSION:

State of California Response

According to the State of California Office of Emergency Services (OES), under the direction of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, California has provided substantial resources to the Gulf Coast to assist in the Hurricane Katrina Disaster and continues to make additional resources available, at the request of FEMA. To this end, OES activated the State Operations Center on Thursday, September 1 and is in contact with the states of Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi and Florida to identify any additional needs that California might be able to meet through proper channels.

OES is attempting to track all emergency management resources being sent from California to ensure enough resources are retained within the state for adequate response and recovery in the event of a disaster here. California resources deployed to the scene include firefighters, lifeguards, search and rescue task forces, highway patrol officers, and National Guard soldiers and airmen.

To donate or volunteer, OES suggests that interested individuals contact the following organizations:

- American Red Cross
 - o English - 1-800-HELP-NOW (1-800-435-7669)
 - o Spanish 1-800-257-7575
 - o TDD Operator - 1-800-220-4095
- California Kids Care Program children collect pennies for the American Red Cross - <http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/re/ht/yr05ltrckc0902.asp>
- FEMA's List of Organizations Accepting Donations and Volunteers <https://www.fema.gov/press/2005/katrinadonations.shtm>
- FEMA Donations Hotline 1-800-440-6728.
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security National Emergency Resource Registry <https://www.swern.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - Health Care Professionals Relief Workers
- 1-800-KAT-MEDI - <https://volunteer.ccrf.hhs.gov/>

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Culver City Non-Profit Organizations Responses

At the time of printing, staff was able to reach a member of the Exchange Club of Culver City who indicated that the Club would be making a monetary donation to relief efforts on behalf of the local chapter or through the national office of the Exchange Club. Staff is working to identify local non-profit and religious institutions that are making contributions and/or may have space to house evacuees.

Westside Cities' Responses

The City of Beverly Hills has provided links to Hurricane Katrina Information Websites on its home page (Attachment 1). The City of Santa Monica provides similar information, organized by links to websites for individuals interested in making donations and listing other website links for those who need assistance and those who may wish to offer it (Attachment 2). The City of West Hollywood's website provides the same information with the addition of quotes from the Mayor and a summary of the City's core values with regards to emergency response. Additionally, there is an announcement of a proposed benefit concert at a West Hollywood restaurant/lounge (Attachment 3).

Culver City Response

Public Information

The City of Culver City has posted a link to the Red Cross on the City's Home Page. The Red Cross traditionally serves as a major point of contact for disaster relief during a major event.

Housing in Private Homes

Relative to other private housing opportunities, staff was able to look at resources currently available for those wanting to help with the housing relief element for Hurricane Katrina victims. Some of the agencies that are coordinating Housing include: KatrinaHome.com and HurricaneHousing.org (a project of Moveon.org). Several organizations such as these not only have a clearly defined database established to screen applicants and place individuals, but are known entities to disaster relief workers assisting evacuees living in temporary shelters.

For a City the size of Culver City, it would not be efficient to coordinate the placement of evacuees from the affected disaster areas into private residences within the community. There are some issues concerning liability as well. For those Culver City residents who are interested in housing victims of the Hurricane, individuals may look at one of the pre-existing organizations, established for this purpose. HUD funding may not be used to offset expenses incurred by residents housing evacuees in their private homes.

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Schools

The Culver City Unified School District (CCUSD) has already placed a few students within its school system. Evacuees who want to enroll in Culver City Schools may contact CCUSD's Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

Mutual Aid

The Culver City Fire Department (CCFD) states that there is a Mutual Aid plan that has been effect in this country for a long time. CCFD has been in contact with the Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) about requests for assistance passed down from the State. The CCFD will continue to receive mutual aid requests to the affected region and consider donations of resources to the extent that local emergency services will not be compromised.

The Culver City Police Department (CCPD) initially researched establishing a trailer for donations for the victims, but found that companies who are currently donating trucks to transport goods have been challenged by the number of donations and the logistics of transporting the items to the affected areas. Further, CCPD has learned that the donation of trucks in our region has also been maximized to the extent that availability has been limited. CCPD is in stand-by mode to move forward with this plan should the situation changes.

Proposed Culver City Options

Public Information

In light of the extensive efforts already underway with non-profit organizations relative to housing assistance, staff recommends promoting these opportunities to the fullest extent possible. Public Information enhanced through the immediate dissemination of more information through handouts, additional website links through the City's website, cable crawlers, and press releases.

Housing Coordinated through the Community Development Department – Section 8 Voucher Holders

The Community Development Housing Division will respond to persons displaced by Hurricane Katrina. This is mainly in reference to persons who are participants in the Section 8 Program or persons who may be given Emergency Housing Vouchers by HUD in the future. At any time, Section 8 Program voucher holders may use their vouchers anywhere in the United States. According to Housing Staff, Culver City can absorb 25 families, who are active voucher holders. The City of Los Angeles has the capacity to house 500 families, who are active Section 8 Voucher Holders. Section 8 funding is provided exclusively by HUD and does not impact the City's General Fund. Staff's goal is to assist not just the Section 8 Voucher Holder participant person's housing needs, but in all areas they may need assistance. Staff

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will do what is necessary to help in their relocation. If HUD distributes emergency Section 8 housing vouchers for those displaced by the disaster, these individuals are given preference over other people on the waiting list. Although, Culver City has a waiting list of 8,000 people who desire a Section 8 voucher, individuals displaced by a natural disaster would take preference over them according to HUD guidelines. This preference is a common rule among all housing agencies nationally.

Housing staff will distribute “welcome packets” to those persons seeking assistance, who are Section 8 voucher holders. This packet at a minimum includes: list with address and contact information for social service providers such as DPSS; unemployment services; schools; map of Los Angeles City and County; information about Culver City; a food voucher/gift card to local grocery store (as needed); bus tokens (as needed); and Section 8 Participant Handbook.

Housing Coordinated through the Community Development Department – Non Section 8 Voucher Holders

For those evacuees who are not Section 8 participants, Housing staff will do the following:

- Provide them of a comprehensive listing of social services and contact information; and
- Provide them with a map of Los Angeles and assist them with getting orientated around Los Angeles (AAA has donated maps to Housing); and
- Allow these persons access to our telephone if they need to call social service agencies or a shelter (this is a case-by- case basis); and
- Allow them to use the Housing laptop to access the internet if they need to apply for social services or personal information such birth certificates, etc (this will be on a case-by-case basis).

Donations and Contributions

Due to issues concerning liability, efficiency of service delivery and additional costs, staff recommends that any private donations of goods or housing be coordinated through the existing channels available through the Internet. Additional information related to providing private housing to evacuees can be provided on the City’s website and the other means established above.

Coordination with Religious and Non-Profit Organizations

Administration and Housing staffs will continue to work together to identify local opportunities for individuals to volunteer their time or contribute resources. Resources will be updated for the public and the Council, as information becomes available. Staff has learned that the Culver City Interfaith Alliance (CCIA) members

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include individual churches who are working through their own channels to respond to the situation. As of yet, CCIA has not yet taken on any coordinated effort.

Culver City staff will be available at the Council meeting to discuss details of their proposed programs and internal costs associated with them.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

There is no fiscal impact outside of staff time and funds already budgeted for printing materials for the public.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. City of Beverly Hills website information on Hurricane Katrina.
2. City of Santa Monica website information on Hurricane Katrina.
3. City of West Hollywood website information on Hurricane Katrina.

MOTION:

That the City Council:

1. Approve staff's recommendation to provide enhanced public information services relative to Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts; and
2. Promote the referral of individuals to outside agencies equipped to receive and distribute donations of goods and services.