

Strategy for Kentucky Interchurch Disaster Recovery Program Leadership Organization

I would like to ask for your help in recruiting volunteers to serve as Regional Coordinators and Area Managers. When we talk to people about KIDRP, we need to make it clear that KIDRP is a recovery organization, not an initial relief provider. Through KIDRP we seek to provide a ministry of presence in the disaster region, especially to those who "fall through the cracks," of state and federal aid. There are numerous organizations that provide initial services immediately after the impact of a disaster for the first few weeks, e.g. the American Red Cross is the official government agency for initial direct support— but the recovery phase begins when all front-line agencies have completed the stabilization process and have departed the area. It is at this point that KIDRP, in cooperation with other church, civic, and governmental groups, can supply the our unique and effective ministry.

I am asking you to recommend individuals who are dependable, likely to be around for while, and experienced managers who could manage money well and serve as Regional Coordinators for the quadrant-regions we will call South-East, Central, North-East, and Western. I am also asking you to recommend individuals who are hard-working, likely to be around for while, and experienced leaders who could serve as managers for seven to sixteen counties. Twelve areas in the state are grouped into four regions. We are seeking sixteen individuals to take a leadership role in the Kentucky Interchurch Disaster Recovery Program.

KIDRP Regional Coordinator's Responsibilities

The Regional Coordinator is responsible for supervising the establishment of local committees in individual counties and coordinating the resources during disaster recovery. All four KIDRP Regional Coordinators in the state must attend quarterly meetings of the Kentucky Council of Churches' KIDRP Committee.

Before disaster strikes, the Regional Coordinator works with the Area Managers in her or his quadrant to establish a local committee that will function as an unmet needs committee when disaster strikes and will do things like identify locations where volunteers can be housed when they arrive to do recovery work, etc. before disasters occur.

Also before a disaster, the Regional Coordinator must meet with state disaster relief groups and national recovery agencies to establish relationships with them because these relationships will be essential to recovery work when the need arises. When adequate damage and needs assessments have been completed and repair & construction work can begin in earnest, the Regional Coordinator must supervise the disaster recovery process if a local unmet needs committee has not been established. It is urgent that volunteer teams are not idle at any time. Most of these teams are willing to do any kind of work, but it is best to suit the task to the expertise they offer. This can become a serious handicap when different groups arrive at the same time, often without prior arrangement with the Regional Coordinator. The Regional Coordinator would not just be coordinating local volunteers, but would be responsible for recruiting as widely as possible. Other outside agencies like Church World Service and UMCOR are willing to send representatives to assist the coordinator with the recovery process.

The KIDRP Regional Coordinator will work closely with the Area Manager(s) to solicit resources to find workers, finance building materials, feed workers, pay administrative costs, and coordinate volunteer support. Because KIDRP's role in this process is to generate funds from member churches for as long as needs exist and to impart experience to the committee through communal sharing, all funds sent to the KIDRP account for a particular disaster could be available for use by the Regional Coordinator in consultation with the KCC Associate Director, as part of KIDRP's contribution to the unmet needs committee.

It is also the responsibility of the KIDRP Regional Coordinator to work with the KIDRP Area Manager to establish local, ecumenical, disaster recovery committees. If the KIDRP Area Manager is not able to attend a meeting of a local recovery-preparedness/unmet-needs committee, the Regional Coordinator must attend or send a representative from the KIDRP committee.

The KCC will not lend its tax-exempt status to any subsidiary organization or local committee. Local committees can autonomously establish a bank account, apply for and receive 501c3 status, apply for and receive an employer I.D. number, or employ persons to assist with its recovery. In no instance or model shall the Kentucky Council of Churches provide taxable remuneration to anyone other than its own staff or contract employees. The positions of KIDRP Regional Coordinator and KIDRP Area Manager are volunteer positions.

Area Manager Duties

Local ownership of a disaster recovery effort is vital to any KIDRP program and avoids the dilemma of having "outsiders" controlling the situation. The preferred M.O. of the Kentucky Interchurch Disaster Recovery Program is to create a situation such that KIDRP representatives simply sit on a local unmet needs committee. Before disaster strikes, this local committee can identify locations where volunteers can be housed when they arrive to do recovery work, etc.

If local 501c3 unmet needs committee already exist (perhaps from a previous disaster or an on-going community program), KIDRP would then join that group(s) and assist for the duration of the recovery period. If no pre-existing group of churches exists, it is the responsibility of the KIDRP Area Manager to work, before a disaster, to establish a local, ecumenical, disaster recovery committee. It is important that the officers are from the local community. Outside agencies, like KIDRP, would sit on the committee and have full voting rights for all decisions. The KIDRP Area Manager should make every effort to attend all meetings if possible. If the KIDRP Manager is not able to attend a meeting, the Regional Coordinator must attend or send a representative from the KIDRP committee. Regular meetings are a must! While this approach is best suited for disasters that are contained in one or several adjacent counties. If the emergency situation spreads over a large area, individual pre-existing committees would be activated in each impact center. Area Managers will be responsible for attending training sessions conducted by KCC and other church agencies.

When the disaster occurs, the Area Managers will be able to be in contact with representatives from church agencies who specialize in moving into the area and making initial assessments for recovery work and the organizing of a local committee. Church World Service (the service arm of the National Council of Churches) has an excellent program and is always ready to send one or more representatives to complete this important work. The KIDRP Area Manager will work with local church and civic leaders and together with the national representative will set up an initial organizational meeting to activate the local unmet needs recovery committee.

The first meeting after a disaster is of great significance. It should include a broad base of religious, community, and governmental leaders. (Area-wide churches, Red Cross, Salvation Army, Emergency Management officials, mental health specialists, United Way, Mennonite Disaster Service, Catholic charities, UMCOR, St. Vincent de Paul, to name just a few.) If not already in place before the event, officers who are willing to devote their time and energies to recovery should be elected at the very first meeting after a disaster strikes.

A name should be chosen that reflects the mission of the community with regard to their particular recovery mission. A local bank account in the committee's name should be established as early as possible. A local fund is easier to manage and again, assures local control of finances. Local businesses or civic organizations are more comfortable contributing to a community fund. The KCC will not "lend" its tax-exempt status to any subsidiary organization or local committee. Local committees can autonomously establish a bank account, apply for and receive 501c3 status, apply for and receive an employer I.D. number, or employ persons to assist with its recovery. In no instance or model shall the Kentucky Council of Churches provide taxable remuneration to anyone other than its own staff or contract employees.

By the time the recovery stage begins, FEMA, Red Cross, Church World Service or other agencies will have done most of the damage assessment. Working with these groups, the KIDRP Area Manager will provide the committee with the list of people who need assistance. If the assessment is incomplete, the committee could assist with this task. Based on priority of need, the committee would then consider each request and make a collective decision about what kind of assistance should be rendered.

Each committee representative brings certain strengths to the table and as needs are presented would respond accordingly. For example: the Mennonite Disaster Service, some church groups, and other independent organizations from outside the community do construction and repair work. Others specialize in providing clothing and household items (vital needs continue to surface beyond the relief phase!). Still others, like KIDRP, finance building materials, food for workers, administrative costs, and volunteer support. Local church youth groups are often available for clean up and repair work-a valuable endeavor for local ecumenism!

KIDRP's role in this process is to generate funds from member churches for as long as needs exist and to impart experience to the committee through communal sharing. All funds sent to the KIDRP account would be available for use by the Regional Coordinator in consultation with the KCC Associate Director, as part of KIDRP's contribution to the unmet needs committee.

Kentucky Interchurch Disaster Recovery Program Volunteer Organization Quadrants and County Clusters

Interested in Serving As Regional Coordinator or Area Manager? Please Call Chris Skidmore at 859-269-7715 or Email wcbs@kycouncilofchurches.org.

A. South-East Region: KIDRP areas 9 and 10

KIDRP Regional Coordinator:

AREA 9: Elliott, Lawrence, Johnson, Martin, Magoffin, Floyd, Pike
Area Manager:

AREA 10: Jackson, Clay, Knox, Bell, Wolfe, Lee, Breathitt, Owsley, Perry, Knott, Leslie, Harlan, Letcher
Area Manager:

B. Central Region: KIDRP areas 5, 6, and 12

KIDRP Regional Coordinator:

AREA 5: Meade, Breckinridge, Grayson, Hardin, Larue, Nelson, Washington, Marion, Taylor, Green
Area Manager:

AREA 6: Trimble, Oldham, Jefferson, Bullitt, Henry, Shelby, Spencer, Anderson
Area Manager:

AREA 12: Mercer, Boyle, Casey, Lincoln, Adair, Russell, Pulaski, Cumberland, Clinton, Wayne, Rockcastle, Laurel, Whitley, McCreary, Garrard, Madison
Area Manager:

C. North-East Region: KIDRP areas 7, 8, 11

KIDRP Regional Coordinator:

AREA 7: Boone, Kenton, Campbell, Gallatin, Carroll, Owen, Grant, Pendleton
Area Manager:

AREA 8: Braken, Robertson, Mason, Lewis, Fleming, Bath, Rowan, Montgomery, Menifee, Rowan, Morgan, Greenup, Carter, Boyd
Area Manager:

AREA 11: Franklin, Scott, Harrison, Nicholas, Bourbon, Woodford, Fayette, Clark, Jessamine, Powell, Estill
Area Manager:

D. Western Region: KIDRP areas 1, 2, 3, and 4

KIDRP Regional Coordinator:

AREA 1: Fulton, Hickman, Carlisle, Ballard, McCracken, Graves, Marshall, Calloway
Area Manager:

AREA 2: Livingston, Crittenden, Lyon, Caldwell, Trigg, Hopkins, Christian, Muhlenberg, Todd
Area Manager:

AREA 3: Union, Henderson, Webster, Daviess, McLean, Hancock, Ohio
Area Manager:

AREA 4: Butler, Logan, Simpson, Warren, Edmonson, Barren, Allen, Hart, Metcalfe, Monroe
Area Manager:

Kentucky Interchurch Disaster Recovery Program (KIDRP)

KIDRP Operating Procedures

Policy Governing KIDRP's Response to Disaster

The Kentucky Interchurch Disaster Recovery Program was established in 1974 after a devastating series of tornadoes ravaged several regions of northern and central Kentucky. At the time there were no organizations that provided long-term recovery support to disaster victims. Sponsored by the Council of Churches as a direct service arm, KIDRP became a vital part of that recovery effort and has been in continuous operation since that time. This document is intended to establish operational procedures for the broad range of natural disasters that plague Kentucky year after year and to inform member churches as to what action they should take when disaster strikes our state.

In order to fully understand the scope of disaster the following information from the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (Long Term Recovery Committee Manual, July 1999) is most useful (KIDRP is a member of the Kentucky branch of this organization):

Phases of Disaster Relief and Recovery.

Incident - "any condition which meets the definition of major disaster or emergency . . . which causes damage or hardship that may result in a Presidential declaration of a major disaster or an emergency." The response to any incident (also known as "impact") of this emergency phase is made by "family, neighbors, congregations, local fire and police departments, search and rescue teams, American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and other voluntary agencies."

Relief - "Basic human needs are cared for in a temporary way, which may last days or weeks. Medical services, food, clothing, and temporary shelter become available from the ARC, churches, other helping organizations, or friends and family." This phase also includes clean up of businesses and neighborhoods. If a Presidential declaration has been made, persons may make applications for FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) or SBA (Small Business Administration) assistance during this period.

Recovery - "People begin moving out of shelters and into temporary housing. Homes and lives begin to be rebuilt. People and communities try to return to normal. The recovery phase usually lasts about ten times as long as the relief stage (or in catastrophic disasters where several years are needed for full recovery)."

KIDRP's role in disaster. Recognizing that the Church has a vital ministry that goes beyond the immediate crisis, KIDRP seeks to provide a ministry of presence in the disaster region, especially to those who "fall through the cracks," of state and federal aid. The initial phase of a disaster-the time immediately after impact that ranges from one to four weeks-is concerned with vital services such as food, shelter, and medical care. There are numerous organizations that provide this kind of support. (The American Red Cross is the official government agency for initial direct support.) The recovery phase begins when all front-line agencies have completed the stabilization process and have departed the area. This is often a sorely depressing time for victims, who had leaned heavily on these organizations for daily assistance. It is at this point that KIDRP, in cooperation with other church, civic, and governmental groups, can supply the most effective ministry. Therefore, it is important to note that KIDRP is a "recovery" and not a "relief" organization. This does not imply a lack of concern for the immediate relief of victims; it simply emphasizes KIDRP's unique ministry of recovery.

All disasters are different, but there are essentially four steps that are followed by KIDRP in the recovery process:

- (1) Information Gathering;
- (2) Preparation of a Plan of Action;
- (3) Solicitation of Resources;
- (4) Implementing a Plan of Action.

Information Gathering. This initial step takes place during the "relief" stage noted above. Upon learning of a disaster, the KIDRP coordinator is in immediate contact with the Red Cross and community leaders to determine the scope of damage, type of disaster (state or federal declaration), and the kind of response needed. This information can emanate from a variety of sources, but the Red Cross is primary and works very closely with KIDRP to provide an accurate assessment of damage and projected needs. As soon as it is feasible, the coordinator travels to the affected area and consults with local religious and civic leaders to determine how KIDRP can help and what "model" for assistance seems most desirable. [Travel into an area does not "presume" any future action;

every local community affected by disaster must invite assistance in whatever form is mutually agreeable to all.] This is also an excellent opportunity to take pictures of disaster sites to be used as disaster fund-raising and educational tools. Preliminary information from these visits is passed along to the Council office, the KIDRP Committee, Church World Service, and church judicatories. Meanwhile, the coordinator remains in close contact with local pastors and other leaders in the disaster area and tries to attend as many local VOLAG (voluntary agencies) meetings as possible to be kept informed and to assure the VOLAG committee members of KIDRP's interest and support. At a minimum, there are daily contacts with Red Cross officials to maintain an accurate picture of continual damage assessments and services provided.

Preparation of a Plan of Action. Since KIDRP is a recovery organization, work in communities does not begin at once. The usual projection is three or four weeks after impact. During this period, plans are made for "how" KIDRP will respond based on the type of emergency and the local community's need and desire for assistance. An emergency meeting of the KIDRP committee is called soon after the coordinator's visit to the area and information derived from that visit is shared. The committee's guidance in assessing the kind of assistance to be given is extremely important. A budget is prepared that addresses needs that correspond to the facts gathered and scope of the disaster. These needs range from building materials, medical supplies, food, and shelter items to caregiver's retreats and advocacy programs. After examining all aspects of the disaster a paradigmatic model is selected that is tailored to the particular needs of the community or communities involved.

The committee's choice of a model is based on several factors: whether the disaster is undeclared or federally declared; the extent or severity of damage; insurance coverage; the scope of damage. (On page 5 of the VOAD manual quoted above, designations for disasters are discussed thoroughly. This information is available to committee members.) The plan of action and other committee recommendations are then presented to the Executive Director for approval.

Solicitation of Resources. In response to the committee's recommendations, request for funds from member churches is made. Judicatories often call and make donations to the recovery effort before this request is made. It is important that members of churches are kept informed of the process of KIDRP's involvement. Every week beyond the initial impact makes fund-raising more difficult. The relief phase gets most of the publicity and because of the heightened awareness during this period funds are more easily solicited.

Funds for recovery are vital to the mission, however, and must be generated for weeks after the occurrence of the disaster. Funds are also requested from Church World Service, which provides "seed" money for immediate use (some of these funds can be used during the "relief" phase if needs present themselves) and the KIDRP account is always open for receipt of funds from any organization, church group or individual for direct use in the present disaster. Monies designated for certain areas or for specific purposes are kept strictly within those bounds or can be returned at the donor's request if unused. Human resources are also a part of the solicitation step.

KIDRP has had a strong working relationship with the Mennonite Disaster Service and they continue to be our principal source of volunteer support. When decisions about what kind of assistance will be provided have been made the coordinator contacts the regional Mennonite office and determines if and to what extent they can support. Other groups from Kentucky and across the nation are often available for clean-up, rebuilding, and general assistance in the disaster area. The coordinator begins to contact these groups (or as in many cases, they will make the initial contact) when it becomes apparent that their help will be needed.

Implementation of the Plan of Action. At the appropriate time, the assistance model selected by the KIDRP committee is implemented. It is obvious from the above steps that the coordinator has been involved since the beginning, but since most of the activity has been "behind the scenes" it may appear that the Council is doing nothing about the disaster. Instead, careful preparation has been taking place and recovery activities can begin. Again, this is precisely the point where the ministry of the Church can be most useful. It is also the most frustrating, because of delays in contracting agreements, insurance adjustments or the frustrations brought on by caregiver fatigue or suppressed trauma of disaster victims. For the community to know that the Church has not forgotten them and that assistance is not "temporary" is the essence of the "ministry of presence." KIDRP then joins with sister organizations to assist in whatever way to help victims on the road to recovery. The "long term," of course, is dependent on the amount of resources and how long they exist.

The Kentucky Council of Churches is unique among state councils in disaster work. In most other states there is a worthy effort to assist with relief and recovery, but there is no on-going organization devoted solely to the long-term recovery process. It is hoped that, by defining the operational policies of KIDRP as the end of almost three decades of service approaches, there will be a better understanding among our churches of this unusual ministry and how it functions during a disaster.