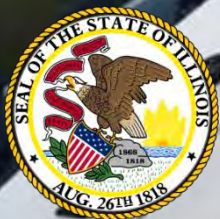# Illinois Emergency Operations Plan

Annex 7 – Mass Care

Appendix 4 – Reunification Support

Illinois Emergency Management Agency

August 2021

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Record of Changes

When changes are made to this document the following procedures will be followed:

1. Changes will be issued by the Interagency Strategic Planning Cell at IEMA and transmitted to agencies, personnel, and other designees specified by the IEMA Director or their designee.

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Mass Care 7-X4, Reunification Support

Primary
Organization: American Red Cross (Red Cross)

Support Agencies: Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC)
                           Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA)
                           Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS)
                           Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT)
                           Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)
                           Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)
                           Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA)
                           Illinois National Guard (ILNG)
                           Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
                           Illinois State Police (ISP)
                           Illinois Secretary of State (SOS)

Support
Organizations: Illinois Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (ILVOAD)

I.   Introduction

      A.   Purpose

            1.   Provide operational guidance, coordination, processes and strategies for
                  implementation of state supported reunification operations.

      B.   Scope

            1.   This annex builds upon concepts, policies and guidance provided in the
                  IEOP Annex 7, Mass Care.

            2.   This appendix addresses support to reunification operations through the
                  utilization of local, state, federal, private sector and non-governmental
                  (NGO) capabilities.

            3.   This appendix addresses reunification operations throughout response
                  and recovery.

            4.   This appendix does not address the following:

                  a)   Requirements for household pet and service animal reunification;
                        see IEOP Appendix 7-X6, Household Pets and Service Animals.

        b)   Repatriation and receiving non-combatant foreign nationals; see IEOP Appendix 7-X5, Emergency Repatriation and Non-combatant Foreign Evacuees.

        c)   Site security; see IEOP Annex 16, Law-Enforcement Coordination and Management.

        d)   Sheltering operations; see Appendix 7-X1, Shelter Support.

        e)   Feeding operations; see Appendix 7-X2, Feeding and Hydration Support.

        f)   Evacuee support; see Appendix 7-X7, Support to Evacuees.

5. This annex does not directly address the care for people with Access and Functional Needs (AFN), but incorporates the principles outlined in Annex 31, Access and Functional Needs to ensure Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) are provided to those who need them.

C. Policy

1. All policies identified in IEOP Annex 7, Mass Care remain in effect.

2. Individual privacy rights will be respected, and information will be safeguarded as required by applicable federal and state laws.

3. The SEOC will coordinate with reunification operations to ensure reunifications are done in conjunction with applicable governmental entities to avoid mistaken identity and misuse of reunification systems.

D. Situation Overview

1. An event has occurred resulting in displacement of affected populations and the need for reunification efforts.

2. The needs regarding reunification are overwhelming the Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJs), non-governmental organizations and emergency dispatch centers, and state resources are requested.

E. Assumptions

1. The AHJs, voluntary and community-based organizations will implement reunification operations both independently and in coordination with partners.

2. Many ad-hoc reunification systems will be created during large events.

These databases, social media sites and message boards may not be interoperable and will result in duplicative efforts.

3.   Missing individuals will include:

   a)   Children;

   b)   Pregnant and nursing mothers;

   c)   Individuals with Access and Functional Needs (AFN);

   d)   Individuals with little or no English proficiency;

   e)   Persons that may be subject of law enforcement inquiries that do not want to be found, and

   f)   Fatalities.

4.   Lack of interoperability among systems designed for reunification, missing persons, unaccompanied minors, fatality management, patient tracking, registries for people with disabilities and evacuation tracking, will contribute to large complexity of tasks, such as validating, reconciling, cross-referencing and sharing data.

5.   Initial tracking data will be collected in silos by individual entities such as emergency medical services, law enforcement personnel, county and state emergency management, public health officials, hospitals and other healthcare facilities, the medical examiner/coroner's office, non-profit disaster relief organizations and private sector organizations.

6.   Social media will be a strong reunification asset used by affected individuals, if operational.

7.   Local emergency responders also will be affected by the incident and will ensure the care of their families before reporting for duty.

8.   Behavioral health support will be required among all populations, particularly children, individuals separated from family and those with Access and Functional Needs (AFN).

9.   Agencies and organizations responsible for the temporary care of children (educational, child-care, medical, juvenile justice and recreational facilities), to include guardianship of children separated from parents or legal guardians as a result of disaster, and those overseeing reunification efforts have clearly identified roles and responsibilities.

10. Schools and child-care providers may not share emergency preparedness plans with first responders and/or local emergency managers.

11. A process for access to reunification systems and coordinated public messaging about availability and accessibility of reunification services to affected individuals and their families will lessen public confusion and result in more effective reunification outcomes.

12. Reunification systems will be utilized at state-recognized disaster shelter locations.

13. Some individuals will use disasters to flee from harmful or illegal situations and will not want to be found.

14. Mutual aid assistance will be available to the state through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).

15. Resources will be limited by location, training and operational readiness.

16. Just-in-time training (JITT) will be required.

17. Lack of internet and telecommunications may hamper reunification efforts.

II. Concept of Operations

A. General

1. AHJ(s) have the primary responsibility to ensure that adequate resources are available to meet the reunification requirements of their residents and visitors to their jurisdiction during an event. AHJs will communicate reunification information and policies within their jurisdictions and amongst responding agencies.

2. Requests for state support will be directed through the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC).

3. State support is based on resource availability, capability, capacity and prioritization of effort through established plans, policies and procedures.

4. Voluntary and community-based organizations that traditionally support reunification in a disaster respond with available resources in accordance with the requirements of their charter and coordinate, facilitate and work with emergency management officials.

5. The success of reunification operations is dependent upon:

a)   Individual access to communications to include landline telephones, cellular phones and internet to connect with email, social media and reunification systems;

b)   Seamless coordination and the ability to share information among agencies and organizations with reunification responsibilities including evacuees and displaced adults, missing persons, disaster welfare inquiries, medical patients (to include those in facilities and those evacuated), fatalities and children, and

c)   Timely and consistent public messaging on available reunification mechanisms.

6.   Unaccompanied minors should, in all cases, be reported to local law enforcement immediately.

7.   The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS) is the lead agency for reunification of children and will coordinate its efforts and requests for resources with the Mass Care Coordinator.

8.   Accounting for all missing persons, whether alive, injured or deceased, will require effective communication and coordination among multiple agencies and organizations, each of which may have responsibility for a different component of reunification.

9.   The Red Cross, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) and other NGOs that traditionally provide family and child reunification in a disaster response in accordance with the requirements of their charters will coordinate, facilitate and work with emergency management officials.

10.   A concerted effort is made to incorporate agencies and organizations providing reunification services into the reunification plan and to identify ad hoc groups that may organize during a disaster to provide reunification services or tools and encourage them to participate in coordinated reunification operations.

11.   If state and/or federal family reunification assets are employed, their deployment will be done in coordination and cooperation through the SEOC with the principal AHJs and NGOs operating in the area. All organizations participating in this plan retain operational control of their assets and resources.

12.   When evacuation sites such as embarkation/debarkation and reception processing centers are utilized, equipment such as cell phones, charging

stations, telephone/cell phone access and/or computers with internet access will be provided to evacuees to contact loved ones.

13. Sites that have no, or limited communications may require deployment of personnel to help survivors register in reunification systems where hard copies can be transported to locations with connections to be input by workers.

14. Significant numbers of missing children and unaccompanied minors may trigger a request for activation of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's (NCMEC) National Emergency Child Locator Center and Team Adam, as well as utilization of the Unaccompanied Minors Registry.

15. Widespread communication outages may result in requests for private sector and voluntary resources that can provide mobile telephone banks, charging stations and cellular towers on wheels to provide for internet access and telecommunications.

B. Operational Priorities

1. Priorities for reunification operations and the eventual consolidation and closure of operations will be established by the SEOC with regards to:

   a) Level of restoration and access to critical lifeline and communications technology infrastructure.

   b) Ability of AHJs, NGOs, service providers and emergency dispatch centers to handle the volume of calls/requests.

C. Organization

1. Direction, Coordination and Control

   a) State agencies and external organizations retain operational control of resources.

   b) The governor or designee has the authority to exercise overall coordination of resources belonging to the state and use directive authority.

   c) The SEOC is the single point of coordination for state support to all operations.

2. Coordinating Elements

a) The SEOC will coordinate with responding agencies, organizations and state officials to determine reunification requirements in impacted areas and coordinate reunification operations.

b) The Business Emergency Operations Center (BEOC) will coordinate with private cellular communications, internet and technology service providers to assist in service restoration in critical areas.

c) Line of Effort (LOE) – Reunification will be activated at the direction of the SEOC Manager.

d) Strategic and operational guidance on LOE operations can be found in IEOP Base Plan, Appendix 4, Line of Effort - Coordination and Management.

3. Federal Coordination

a) SEOC liaison officers (LNOs), state agencies, boards and commissions will coordinate with federal counterparts in accordance with enabling authority.

b) Requests for federal reunification resources will be processed through the SEOC (i.e. Postal Service reunification system).

c) The NCMEC can establish the National Emergency Child Locator Center with a state request to FEMA after a presidentially declared disaster.

D. System Capabilities and Structure

1. Red Cross resources include emergency welfare inquiries staff and liaison to reunification task force and public information staff.

2. NCMEC resources include National Emergency Child Locator Center (call center), Team Adam personnel (deployable teams) and the Unaccompanied Minor Registry.

3. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS) resources include Administration for Children and Families (ACF) technical assistance and personnel to support assessment teams.

4. A variety of organizations including the American Society for the Protection and Care of Animals, National Animal Rescue and Sheltering Coalition and The Humane Society can provide resources to support household pet/service animal reunification.

5.	FEMA resources include the National Emergency Family Registry and Locator System (NEFRLS) reunification system call center and personal and technical assistance.

6.	Reunification Modes

a)	Access to Reunification Systems

i)	Providing access to typical communication channels using telecommunications and internet services to connect with email and social media as well as formal reunification systems.

b)	Physical Reunification.

i)	Reuniting family members who are separated geographically by identifying individuals and their families who are safe and in communication but need support traveling to the same location.

c)	Emergency Welfare Inquiries

i)	Direct service for situations considered to be critical, such as a family member with a pre-existing disability or health or mental health condition.

ii)	In these cases, resources can be directed to locate the missing family member and to either help the client establish direct communication with the inquirer or to relay information back to the inquirer.

iii)	Multiple agencies including Red Cross, ILNG, and ISP can provide emergency welfare inquiry service during a disaster.

d)	Reunification of the Missing, Injured or Deceased with Families

i)	Support for cross-referencing reports of missing, injured, and deceased persons with information reported in reunification systems, evacuation tracking systems, registries, social media and other information sources.

ii)	Coordination among participating agencies/organizations is key to the success of this method and may include development of a single technological solution, such as a

common database used for reporting that is shared among agencies.

iii) Coordination among reunification operations and health/social service systems (e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living, Area Agencies on Aging) to encourage patients/clients to register in reunification systems.

iv) This method does not include notification to families of deceased disaster victims. See Annex 26, Fatality Management.

e) Reunification or Missing Persons Call Center

i) A call center established in a facility or managed remotely by call takers operating via a well-publicized single toll-free telephone number.

ii) Operators take information from those looking for loved ones or making missing persons reports.

iii) Call centers can relieve dispatch center call volume.

iv) The NCMEC can establish the National Emergency Child Locator Center with a state to FEMA request after a presidentially declared disaster.

f) Reunification Multi-Agency Coordination Center (R-MACC) and Reunification Coordination System (RCS).

i) A R-MACC is a facility that co-locates the agencies and organizations involved in reunification operations to include local/state/federal emergency management, mass care, law enforcement, fatality management, health and social services, non-governmental organizations, mental health resources and others in order to facilitate information sharing and to streamlineoperations. It also may house a reunification/missing person call center.

ii) A Reunification Coordination System (RCS) is the coordinated collaborative process put in place by reunification agencies and organizations to provide reunification services.

iii) A national R-MACC, consisting of national organizations with reunification tools and expertise, may be implemented at the request of a state or, potentially, in a multi-state catastrophic incident.

g) Family Assistance Center (FAC)

i) A Family Assistance Center (FAC) is a facility where individual assistance services, including reunification services, are offered or that is exclusively utilized for fatality management activities.

ii) The Red Cross supports FACs during disasters.

7. Reunification System Personnel

a) Reunification operations staffing requirements will be met through state agency support, activation of mutual aid agreements, service contracts and utilization of spontaneous volunteers trained to assigned missions and made aware of potential risks involved.

b) Reunification operations facility requirements will be met through activation of state facilities, mutual aid agreements,service contracts and utilization of donated space and accommodations.

c) Personnel may come from any state agency or external organization providing resources activated through the SEOC.

d) At the direction of the governor or designee, state agencies may be tasked with providing agency personnel in support of reunification operations.

E. Resource and Logistical Support Requirements

1. Resources and logistics support necessary to implement and sustain communications capabilities will be provided through processes established in Annex 9, Resource Management and Logistics.

2. Additional resource and logistics support may be provided through implementation of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC),the federal government and private sector.

III. Roles and Responsibilities

A. American Red Cross (Red Cross)

1. Coordinate with American Red Cross Disaster Response Operation leadership to determine necessity of, identify and coordinate reunification operations.

2. Identify reunification support requirements and make appropriate resource requests to the SEOC Manager.

3. Determine resource providers as necessary (i.e. NECMEC, FEMA, HHS).

4. Determine appropriate modes for reunification operations.

5. Request IDCFS support for youths in state care, and unaccompanied minors.

6. Coordinate and disseminate public information, crisis communications, educational messaging with the SEOC public information officer (PIO) and Red Cross PIO.

7. Coordinate with SEOC LNOs for resourcing and support of reunification operations.

8. Request security and protection support for facilities and sites.

9. Determine the need and coordinate resource requests for staffing and support of facilities and sites.

10. Coordinate collection, receipt, compilation and development ofsituational reports on reunification operations.

11. Coordinate the provision of Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) for those with Access and Functional Needs (AFN) with IDPH and IDHS.

B. Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC)

1. Coordinate the restoration of power, gas and landline telecommunications services in support of reunification efforts.

C. Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA)

1. Coordinate and manage identification and tracking of elderly populations.

2. Support assignment of resources and personnel with skills to support elderly reunification efforts.

D. Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS)

      1.   Support the development of required emergency preparedness plans for child-care providers.

      2.   Advise on safety requirements for children separated from parents or legal guardians and parents or legal guardians seeking missing children during a disaster.

      3.   Provide support of unaccompanied minors in the event significant numbers of children have become separated from parents/legal guardians.

      4.   Coordinate the reunification efforts of children that have become separated from their parents or legal guardians.

E.   Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)

      1.   Coordinate identification and tracking of clients in IDHS facilities.

      2.   Support assignment of resources and personnel with skills to support reunification efforts, if the capacity to conduct such an operation exist within the agency.

      3.   Assist in identifying translators, interpreters and staff experienced in communicating with those with functional needs and other diverse populations.

      4.   Coordinate the provision of Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) for those with Access and Functional Needs (AFN) with IDPH and Red Cross.

F.   Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT)

      1.   Assist reunification efforts by providing technology services to state agencies at locations where displaced persons congregate.

      2.   Assist state agencies establishing hotlines, websites and other technology solutions necessary to assist in the reunification effort.

G.   Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)

      1.   Coordinate with health care providers and the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) for patient identification and tracking requirements during reunification operations.

      2.   Coordinate with local coroners and medical examiners on identification and tracking requirements to assist in reunification efforts.

3. Coordinate the provision of Functional Needs Support Services (FNSS) for those with Access and Functional Needs (AFN) with IDHS and Red Cross.

H. Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA)

1. SEOC Manager

a) Establish critical and essential information priorities.

b) Coordinate state and federal support of reunification operations.

c) Coordinate communications support requirements to conduct public information operations.

d) Coordinate with other states to assist in reunification efforts for evacuees that have left their state of origin.

2. Memorandum of understanding with Illinois Emergency Services Management Association (IESMA):

a) Provide staff and support to reunification facilities and operations at the local and state levels, as requested.

b) Provide generators to reunification facilities and operations, as requested.

3. Business Emergency Operations Center (BEOC)

a) Coordinate with the ICC to re-establish power, gas and landline telecommunications services.

b) Coordinate with private cellular communications, internet and technology service providers to identify functioning locations and assist in restoring service in critical areas.

c) Coordinate with private social media providers and IEMA to help ensure access to social media services in support of reunification efforts.

I. Illinois National Guard (ILNG)

1. Provide health and wellness checks and accountability, as requested.

2. Assist with emergency welfare inquiries, as requested.

J. Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)

1. Support local school districts in the development and maintenance of school emergency preparedness plans and processes that address lockdown procedures, shelter-in-place, evacuation, relocation, and reuniting students with their parents or legal guardians.

K. Illinois State Police (ISP)

1. Support local law enforcement in the resolution of missing person's reports.

2. Coordinate efforts with the Department of Juvenile Justice and applicable SEOC LNOs and law enforcement for identifying unaccompanied minors and supporting reunification efforts.

L. Secretary of State (SOS)

1. Coordinate use of state capitol complex facilities.

2. Coordinate capitol police support.

3. Provide assistance in the replacement of state identification including drivers' licenses, state ID cards, vehicle titles and license plates.

M. Illinois Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (IL VOAD)

1. Coordinate reunification operations with NGOs and Faith Based Organizations, and with the SEOC.

N. Other State Agencies: General Considerations

1. Identify resources, facilities and personnel available to assist in reunification operations.

2. Coordinate notification, activation and deployment of resources, facilities and personnel available to assist in reunification operations.

3. Monitor and advise the SEOC on sustainment requirements for resources, facilities and personnel providing reunification operations support.

IV. Authorities and References

A. Authorities

1. All authorities found in IEOP Annex 7, Mass Care

B. References

1.   All references found in IEOP Annex 7, Mass Care

2.   Multi-Agency Reunification Services Plan, as amended
        nationalmasscarestrategy.org