

ncacdss

A Future Oriented Source of Leadership

4th Annual NCACDSS Best Practices Awards Nomination Form

Entries must be received by July 21, 2006

Please see the "**Call for Nominations**" letter for criteria and categories before submitting your entry. Please e-mail the completed nomination form in its original format and any supporting documentation in a Microsoft Word document to kris@ncacdss.org. Nominations may also be faxed to: (919) 786-4019 (attn. Kris Wyatt) or mailed to: NCACDSS, 3824 Barrett Drive, Suite 102, Raleigh, NC 27609. Entries must be received by July 21, 2006.

County Department of Social Services:	<u>Alamance County Department of Social Services</u>
Submitted by:	<u>Linda Allison</u>
Title:	<u>Assistant Agency Director</u>
Address:	<u>319 N. Graham-Hopedale Road, Suite C, Burlington, NC 27217</u>
Phone:	<u>(336) 229-2944</u>
Fax:	<u>(336) 570-6538</u>
E-mail:	<u>linda.allison@alamance-nc.com</u>

DSS Director Signature: _____

Project Title Katrina Disaster Response and Preparedness

County Tier (Please check one): Tier 1 Tier 2 Tier 3

To determine your county's tier please refer to the attached chart.

Category: (Please only check ONE)

- Advancement in Staff and Leadership Development
- Empowering Clients to Self-Sufficiency
- Innovations in Services to Customers
- Cost Savings Measures and/or Improvements in Efficiency
- Profiles in Community Collaboration

NC ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES

3824 Barrett Drive, Suite 102 | Raleigh, NC 27609 | P 919.786.4015 | F 919.786.4019 | www.ncacdss.org

Please complete the criteria below in the space provided. Answer all questions completely to maximize your score.

- 1. Project/Program Summary:** Briefly summarize the project's history, purpose, timeline and budget. Alamance County works diligently to plan and prepare to the best of our knowledge; however, Hurricane Katrina was beyond comprehension in how it would impact our nation. In the days and hours immediately following this great disaster, our agency identified that without a coordinated and organized community response, efforts might prove chaotic at best as calls rolled in from all over and the community ran in circles. Working directly with our County Emergency Management Team and our local Red Cross Chapter, our agency volunteered to spearhead a meeting of all community partners. This first meeting was held on the morning of September 2nd at DSS with at least 16 community representatives present including local School System, Health Dept., Mental Health, Red Cross, Law Enforcement, County Administration, Fire Marshall, etc. Assignments were given and a 2nd meeting scheduled to include a broader group of community partners including hospital administrators, faith community representatives, United Way, etc. At this next meeting held on September 6, 2006, there were 34 individuals present. Decisions were made with regard to what should be shared in community press releases, who should coordinate what volunteer efforts and where donation collection sites would be set up so as not to duplicate efforts. We also discussed how information and updates would be shared and it was decided to utilize our county Public Information Officer to disseminate daily debriefings in the form of email to all agencies and community representatives identified in this effort. Through this method, information on further meetings and county plans to shelter evacuees would be shared in the weeks following. While we were set up and prepared to accept between 100 to 200 evacuees, as we had been identified as an encatchment area, we never received a collective group. For the evacuees who did present in our county, we utilized this community network to provide for their needs. Additionally, through our coordinated community efforts, we were able to adopt Gulfport Mississippi as our sister county and to provide direct disaster relief through volunteer efforts from individuals, agencies and the faith community. A Community Fundraiser in the form of a Spaghetti Supper was held in November along with other events such as concerts and yard sales. Some of these connections established between Alamance County and Gulfport continue even today.
- 2. Innovation:** Why is the program unique? How does your project differ from similar projects? While we are a community rich in collaboration and resources to a certain degree, this effort was on a much larger and broader scale than ever before. It was innovative in that we developed universal referral forms to be used by all agencies, set up daily debriefings so that everyone was fully informed, and we provided resources and assistance to the needy in a truly unified and unduplicated manner. Example: Instead of 2 or 3 agencies making housing referrals as is normally the case, it was determined and agreed upon that our United Way Office would be the point of contact and coordinator for housing needs. It was agreed upon that Salvation Army would handle the clothing donations and distribution and have appropriate clothing available at the shelter when evacuees arrived. It was determined that Loaves and Fishes (local food bank) would coordinate all food donations and distribution. This information was shared via press release with the entire community.
- 3. Project Success and Impact:** What were the objectives? How well were they met? How widespread is the impact of the project/program? What is the anticipated long-term impact? Did the project involve collaboration with other agencies, non-profits, businesses, etc.? Describe the outcome of the collaboration. While we did not receive a mass group of evacuees as we had been instructed by State Emergency Management, we were ready and organized including shelter sites equipped, DSS Shelter Teams in place and resources identified to be mobilized should the need arise. Due to the extensive collaboration throughout our county and the level of planning and organization involved with this effort, we now have an increased confidence in our ability to face similar challenges in the future. We think the county now better understands the efforts of Social Services and the key role we play in Disaster Relief and coordination.

4. **Project Effort and Difficulty:** How well did the program use limited resources? What obstacles or challenges did you overcome? How was this done? We basically had no budget or financial cushion to rest upon and our agency simply invited community partners to the table to pool resources. Some of the challenges we had faced in the past such as getting MOU's and agreements in place for sheltering were set aside and true problem-solving took place. Also, duplication of efforts and basic turf issues which commonly plague such an effort were set aside to make way for maximization of resources and a coordinated response. In part this was due to the fact that DSS, Red Cross and County Emergency Management were all in one accord prior to this endeavor and this unified partnership was modeled from the very beginning.

5. **Ability to Replicate Project:** Can this project be duplicated in other counties? What could counties do to minimize obstacles and problems? Yes. What worked in Alamance County could work in any other county so long as a collective body of agencies agree to model partnership for the community and at least one agency agrees to spearhead the effort as our agency did in this situation.

► See attached copy of one daily debriefing. ◀

Shelter Basics

- As of Tuesday 5 PM from Jack Murray: "We will not be getting any evacuees for at least a few days. Raleigh and Charlotte will get them first – then Greensboro. It is our understanding that we will probably be getting the evacuees from Greensboro. However, that situation may change at any time. There are no planned flights into NC due in the next 12 hours." [Jack.Murray@alamance-nc.com]
- We anticipate the arrival of approximately **150** individuals from the Gulf Coast by plane toward the end of the week, weekend or in the days following. There are plans to open up two shelters plus a special needs shelter for these people. The first shelter will be located at **Grove Park Baptist Church** and the second shelter will be located at **Graham Recreation Center**. The special needs shelter will either be at Graham Recreation or, if the numbers exceed six or more, at a location near ARMC, probably the Village at Brookwood. Some people may be housed at local hotels on a short-term basis. Red Cross and DSS are the lead agencies for the general population shelter and DSS and Health Dept. share responsibility for the special needs shelter.
- People flying in from the Gulf Coast will first arrive at RDU or PTI to be "processed" (identifying information, medical history, immunizations, finger printed, etc.) and triaged and then transported to towns and cities where they can be housed for the short term and longer. According to Emergency Management, the county should plan to care for refugees for **30-90 days**.
- All Alamance County agencies agreed to use the all agency registration form (attached) when providing services to a refugee. This form is designed to be filled out quickly and a copy should be faxed to Jack Murray.

Health and Mental Health

- ARMC, Health Dept. and DSS are meeting on Thursday, Sept.8, at 10 AM at the Village at Brookwood lobby to discuss the plans for the **Special Needs shelter**. DSS and the Health Dept. are responsible for staffing this shelter [Beve Butler Smith, smitbeve@armc.com; Marilyn Burns, marilyn.burns@alamance-nc.com; Susan York, susan.york@alamance-nc.com).
- AlaMAP (Alamance Medication Assistance Program of ARMC) will contact local pharmacies about providing **medications to refugees** or running a tab for later reimbursement by FEMA through the county. [Michelle Fritsch, mfritsch@armc.com]
- Karen Kubecka (ARMC Education, KKubecka@armc.com) and Nursing Supervisors at the Health Department are in charge of providing basic **Red Cross training** to medical staff to ensure that there are enough health care providers to staff the general population

shelters (Grove Park and Graham Rec). Health care providers need to watch two Red Cross videos "Introduction to Disaster Services" and "Disaster Health Services: An Overview" and will then be considered trained for purposes of serving in a Red Cross shelter.

- Karen Webb at Alamance-Caswell Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Program is seeking **volunteer mental health care providers** to assist in staffing shelters 24/7. She will show volunteers the Red Cross training videos in HSC 1st Floor Room B on Thursday, Sept. 8th - 9-11 a.m.; 12-2 p.m. and 3-5 p.m. (only one two-hour session necessary). Alamance Caswell MHDDSA will also make handouts available on Crisis First Aid, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Critical Incident Stress Management to their volunteers [kwebb@acmhddsa.org]. ARMC's **Behavioral Health and Pastoral Care** programs may also be involved in staffing shelters [Phyllis Kaiser, kaisphyl@armc.com].
- ARMC has agreed to recruit its 15 social workers to help refugees create discharge plans when refugees are preparing to leave the shelters.
- Environmental health will need to **inspect any areas being used for shelter**, and are notified and working with the CART team to provide care for any **animals** that may arrive with refugees.
- Information from an e-mail from the Louisiana Medicaid Pharmacy Director, M. J. Terrebonne: "**Louisiana Medicaid** provider enrollment number is 225-2373370 or 800-473-2783. **Wal-Mart pharmacies** may have some procedures in place for emergency situations to offer free meds for refugees. We are working on the provider numbers. Confirmation of eligibility can occur by calling the REVS/MEVS line at 1-800-776-6323 if the caller has a provider number. Hospitalizations require prior authorization by calling 1-800-488-6334. Please do not hesitate to call me or my staff for any assistance. Our toll free number is 800-437-9101 or 225-342-9768."
- Information from the Department of Health and Human Services on HIPAA and other privacy concerns related to Katrina are attached to this e-mail.
- Information about Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana Medicaid is available at http://www.medicaid.state.al.us/news/hurricane_update.aspx?tab=2>

Law Enforcement

- Group consensus was that law enforcement will need to provide support to shelters 24/7. Red Cross will be responsible for enforcing shelter rules that are not crimes (e.g. smoking), and law enforcement will provide support to prevent and handle crimes.

Schools

- Cat Berry reports that ABSS knows of at least eight new students currently who have fled Katrina areas. ABSS will take care of helping families with **school supplies**. [Catherine_Berry@abss.k12.nc.us]
- ABSS will seek to place students in several schools, rather than concentrate them in just a few and tax the student support of those schools. ABSS will provide pupil transportation, and students will be eligible for **school breakfast and lunch**.
- NC Division of Public Health, Communicable Diseases, has decided to invoke the "30 day rule" regarding **immunizations for schools**, which allows students to enroll without current immunizations for up to 30 days. The Health Dept. will be the lead agency in providing immunizations.

Community Non-Profit

- David Knotts agreed to make the United Way the lead agency in mobilizing the community to identify **longer range housing** needs for these individuals. He said that community folks have been calling already to offer assistance such as refuge in their homes and that county agencies that get such calls should direct them to the United Way. [dknotts@uwalamance.org]
- David Knotts also will contact Salvation Army about receiving local **donations of clothing** and other items made for refugees sent here. Group consensus was not to send out a call for donations of material goods because of fears that any distribution agency would be overwhelmed. The Health Dept. has 100 bags of new **underwear** sorted by size and ready for distribution to refugees. Red Cross has plenty of "**comfort kits**" (personal hygiene, etc.) and knows of other stocks.
- The Red Cross and DSS encourage anyone wanting to "do something now" to help refugees to purchase **gift cards, phone cards or gas cards** which can be used now or later for disaster relief or for individuals as they become able to leave shelters.

Volunteers

- For now, people calling wanting to volunteer to help should be referred to the Red Cross (Scott Rubright, rubright@piedmontredcross.org) or to the United Way (David Knotts, dknotts@uwalamance.org). Volunteers for the Red Cross shelter must have already or be willing to complete Red Cross training. This week's training is already full and Scott is planning another training for next week, TBA.

Individual Agency Responsibilities

- Each agency should send a list of tasks (responsibilities for which the agency feels responsible) to Kathy Colville (Kathy.Colville@alamance-nc.com). At the next meeting, which will be called by Jack closer to when we will receive refugees, we will then have a better understanding of what gaps remain.

- DSS sent its task list: DSS takes charge for coordinating/staffing the shelters (both General and Special Needs) to assure adequate coverage. We also will continue to coordinate any follow-up meetings of this larger group when it is determined by Emergency Management that we need to re-group as we did today.

Shelter Team Agreements and To Do List

- Kathy Colville needs task lists/lists of responsibilities from all agencies
- Please send information for the daily briefing (any info you get from your state divisions/departments that you want to share, any information on families who have arrived in the county by private transportation, any efforts your agency is undertaking, any rumors you have heard and want more information about) to Kathy.Colville@alamance-nc.com or call 264-7037.
- Someone agreed to help with linens at the shelters but I am unsure who and the details of the offer.
- Did anyone take responsibility for Susan Osborne's request that someone check on post office box availability/access for refugees to receive mail, unemployment checks, etc? (May need to ask for a volunteer to check on this.)
- Did anyone take responsibility for checking into what kind of phone bank or access refugees would have to call loved ones, check on things back home?

List of attachments to this e-mail

- All Agency Registration Form
- HIPAA Privacy Information for Health Care Providers
- Memo from NC Dept. of Health and Human Services—all kinds of info on policies, as well as disaster assistance organization contacts