

# **DISASTER RELIEF HANDBOOK**

**District 4-A3  
Lions Clubs International  
FY 2022-2023**



## **COMMISSIONED BY:**

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## **PREPARED BY:**

**Disaster Relief Committee  
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## **I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE**

- A. The Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) and California Lions Foundation (CLF) websites provide a wealth of information on disaster relief funding mechanisms. However, when disaster strikes, time is of the essence, and it can be time-consuming to locate relevant information in a timely manner.
- B. This handbook is intended as a summary resource listing all disaster relief funding options and providing links to specific reference materials. It is also intended to provide guidance in organizing disaster relief efforts.
- C. This handbook is intended to be updated by the Disaster Relief Committee each July, at the start of the new fiscal year.
- D. This handbook is intended to be stored on the District 4-A3 website, so it is immediately available to all members and clubs when needed.

## **II. INITIATING DISASTER RELIEF EFFORTS**

- A. When a club identifies a need to initiate disaster relief efforts, the first step should be to contact the District 4-A3 Disaster Relief Committee Chairperson (DRCC). The name and contact information for the current DRCC is listed in the District Directory. Region Chairpersons will also have that information. For FY 2021-2022, the DRCC is:

Tom Berry, Conejo Valley Lions Club  
Email: [District4A3DisasterRelief@gmail.com](mailto:District4A3DisasterRelief@gmail.com)

- B. Please include your phone contact information in your initial email. Emails sent between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. will normally receive a response within four hours. Emails sent outside those hours will normally receive a response by noon.
- C. The DRCC can provide advice and assistance in preparing funding requests and organizing disaster relief efforts.
- D. When the DRCC will be unavailable for extended periods, s/he will designate a qualified alternate to fulfill their duties and monitor the District Disaster Relief email.

### **III. DISASTER RELIEF MATERIALS FOR VICTIMS**

- A. The objective of District 4-A3 disaster relief efforts is to assist victims with transitioning between the **response** and **recovery** phases of a disaster. As immediate danger passes, victims begin to assess damage to their residences and re-establishing their lives. They may not yet have gained access to their home, or the property may have sustained major damage. Immediate victim needs may be basic at this phase, including:
1. Water and small purification units
  2. Food (to purchase, distribute, and/or cook and serve meals)
  3. Small cooking supplies and eating utensils
  4. Clothing
  5. Infant needs: diapers, formula, milk, wipes, etc.
  6. Fuel for vehicles
  7. First-aid supplies
  8. Tarps/tarpaulin
- B. Advance purchase of the right items in the right amounts is challenging and can lead to undistributed surplus products.
- C. An effective means of delivering assistance to victims is to purchase and distribute gift cards from stores that stock the items above. For example, a store such as Target stocks most of the items on the list above. Using gift cards, each victim is provided with needed items, avoiding surplus products.
- D. Some funding sources may prohibit using funds to purchase gift cards, in part due to concerns that inappropriate items may be purchased such as alcohol and tobacco.

### **IV. DISASTER RELIEF MATERIALS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS**

- A. In most cases, first responders do not need assistance during a disaster. They travel with a “go bag” that includes toiletries and clean clothing. With few exceptions, ample supplies of food and water are supplied through Incident Management Team **Logistics Section**.
- B. On those rare occasions where first responders are not receiving adequate supplies of food and water, Lions may choose to meet that need. For example, during the 2017 Thomas fire in Ventura County, the Ventura Downtown Lions Club and the Camarillo-Somis Pleasant Valley

Lions Club identified a group of out-of-state firefighters in need of feeding, and they met that need.

- C. When providing assistance to first responders, **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)** such as Lions should work under the guidance of the Incident Management Team Logistics Section to reduce duplication of effort and encourage routine communications between first responders and the **Incident Management Team** to which they are assigned.
- D. Only in the rarest of circumstances do first responders need additional clothing. In most cases, clothing donated for first responders is unused during a disaster and is later donated to NGOs. As with feeding, efforts to provide clothing to first responders should work under the guidance of the Incident Management Team Logistics Section to avoid misunderstandings and/or duplication of effort.

## **V. LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL DISASTER FUNDING SOURCES**

### A. Individual Clubs

- 1. Club expenditures are restricted only by the club Constitution and Bylaws which require public (activity) funds must be returned to public use.
- 2. **There is no restriction on the use of gift cards by clubs.** This is an advantage since some disaster grants may prohibit using funds to distribute gift cards.

### B. Zone, Region, or District

- 1. Typically, there are no funds budgeted for disaster relief at the Zone, Region, or District levels.
- 2. For disasters impacting multiple clubs, a Zone or Region Chairperson, or the District Governor, should consider coordinating receipt and distribution of funds donated by Lions Clubs and/or the public. For example:
  - a. Disaster relief efforts involving two or more clubs within a Zone might be coordinated by the Zone Chairperson.
  - b. Efforts involving two or more Zones might be coordinated by the Region Chairperson.

- c. Efforts involving two or more Regions might be coordinated by the District Governor (or his/her designee).
  3. Regardless of disaster relief funding sources, all donations and expenditures must be accounted for through accurate recordkeeping and receipts.
- C. California Lions Clubs (MD4)
  1. Most, if not all, disaster relief funding available at the state level of Lions is managed by California Lions Foundation (CLF). The District CLF representative can inquire whether funding is also available through California Lions Clubs.
  2. In the event of a widespread disaster impacting multiple Districts, the respective District Governors may coordinate receipt and distribution of funds donated by Lions Clubs and/or the public.
- D. Donations from other Lions Clubs and/or the public
  1. It is common for well-publicized, mega-disasters to generate donations from throughout the state, country, or world.
  2. As an example, the 2018 Camp Fire, which destroyed the town of Paradise, generated over \$200,000 in donations from around the world. A neighboring club in Chico, which was outside the fire perimeter, served as a collection and distribution point for donated funds.
  3. Arranging and advertising one location for receiving donations can simplify the process for donors, possibly increasing the amounts received.
- E. California Lions Foundation (CLF) Grants
  1. Emergency grants in amounts of \$500 and above are available to help Lions districts and clubs with the distribution of immediate relief aid to disaster victims where **100 or more people** have been displaced or affected.
    - a. **In the application criteria, CLF does not prohibit the use of gift cards to provide immediate relief aid such as food, water, clothing, medical supplies, and vehicle fuel.**

- b. Emergency grant funds may not be used for non-immediate needs such as providing shelter, rebuilding damaged facilities and homes, or replacing household and personal belongings lost as a result of the natural disaster.
- c. [Emergency Grant guidelines and the Emergency Grant application and criteria](#) MUST be reviewed in detail.

#### F. Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF) Grants

1. The Disaster Preparedness Grant is for Lions districts interested in partnering with local authorities and other community organizations to plan and prepare for future relief efforts. The goal is to determine the Lions' role in the community before the disaster strikes.
  - a. Grants available in amounts of US\$5,000-10,000.
  - b. Local funds must account for 10% of the grant request.
  - c. Disaster Preparedness Grant guidelines and the [Disaster Preparedness Grant application and criteria](#) MUST be reviewed in detail.
2. The Emergency Grant is for Lions districts interested in addressing the immediate needs of disaster victims in the wake of a natural disaster.
  - a. Emergency Grants provide up to US\$10,000 for districts impacted by a natural disaster. Lions' district governors may apply for Emergency Grants to help meet immediate needs such as food, water, clothing, and medical supplies. LCIF awards nearly US\$2 million in emergency grant funding each year.
  - b. Grants available in amounts of US\$5,000-\$10,000, and the District Governor must apply within 30 days of the disaster's occurrence.
  - c. **At least 100 people** must be displaced or impacted by the disaster.
  - d. **Emergency grants shall not be given or used to provide direct cash assistance, vouchers, or gift cards to disaster victims.**
  - e. Emergency Grant guidelines and the [Emergency Grant criteria and application](#) MUST be reviewed in detail.

- f. This chart summarizes materials that may be provided using an LCIF Emergency Grant (reprinted from the LCIF website):

Eligible Expenses	Non-Eligible Expenses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Relief kits: disaster, hygiene/toiletries</li> <li>✓ Infant needs: diapers, formula/milk, wipes, etc.</li> <li>✓ Food (to purchase, distribute and/or cook and serve meals)</li> <li>✓ Water and small purification units</li> <li>✓ First aid supplies</li> <li>✓ Tarps/Tarpaulin</li> <li>✓ Blankets</li> <li>✓ Clothing/footwear</li> <li>✓ Cleaning supplies</li> <li>✓ Small cooking supplies and eating utensils</li> <li>✓ Flashlights/lanterns/solar lights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>X Cash/voucher/gift cards distribution</li> <li>X Individual cash assistance</li> <li>X Replacement of personal property lost or damaged in the disaster</li> <li>X Home repairs/construction</li> <li>X Providing temporary/permanent housing (ex: hotel accommodations, lodging, rent and similar expenses)</li> <li>X Transportation/relocation expenses</li> <li>X Medical expenses (ex: treatment, screenings, vaccinations, personal medical equipment, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>X Repairs to infrastructure (ex: public buildings, roads, bridges, utility and power sources, etc.)</li> <li>X Supplies and services for animals (ex: pets, service animals and those that are domesticated and/or raised in an agricultural setting, natural habitat or shelter)</li> <li>X Support for operational expenses or reserve funding for any organization or program experiencing a loss of revenue due to the disaster</li> </ul>

3. The Community Recovery Grant is for Lions districts interested in supporting short-term clean-up and repair efforts when other organizations have already met immediate needs. The relief effort will focus on a smaller or specific population among those impacted by the disaster.
  - a. Grants available in amounts up to US\$20,000, and District Governor must apply within 60 days of the disaster’s occurrence
  - b. What types of activities are eligible? The purchase of equipment and supplies for debris removal; equipment and materials for minor repair and refurbishment of groups of homes, medical facilities, schools, and other public institutions; coordination of blood drives; and temporary/mobile eye care clinics for disaster victims to replace lost glasses.
  - c. Community Recovery Grant guidelines and the [Community Recovery Grant application and criteria](#) MUST be reviewed in detail.
  
4. Major Catastrophe Grants are awarded for long-term reconstruction projects due to disasters that occur on a much larger scale. Major Catastrophe Grants are awarded at the discretion of the international president and the LCIF chairperson and cannot be applied for by a district. These grants provide significant funds for catastrophes with major international impact, such as the recent earthquakes in Mexico, the 2016 earthquake in Italy, and Hurricane Harvey (USA).

- a. The Standard Grant is for Lions districts interested in rebuilding or equipping vital public facilities, such as schools, medical facilities, and centers for the elderly and disabled that were damaged by a natural disaster. This is a matching grant opportunity requiring local funding from the Lions. The grant range is US\$10,000-\$100,000. Please refer to the Standard Grant Criteria and Application which is contained in a PDF file on LCI's website and [found at the top of this website search result](#).

## **VI. DISASTER RELIEF DISTRIBUTION LOCATIONS**

### **A. FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs)**

1. DRCs are routinely opened several days into a disaster response to provide one-stop shopping for disaster victims and include services of a wide variety of federal, state, and local agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
2. DRCs provide an opportunity for Lions Clubs and other NGOs to connect with victims as they are seeking assistance. This centralized location provides an efficient opportunity to locate victims.
3. Permission for participating at a DRC is best obtained by making face-to-face contact with the DRC manager or coordinator. Building space may be a limiting factor.

### **B. Distribution Center (or Store)**

1. In a **mega-disaster** impacting tens of thousands of people, establishing a distribution center stocked with items most needed by evacuees has been proven effective.
  - a. As an example, following the 2018 Camp Fire, which destroyed the town of Paradise, local Lions Clubs opened a "store" in Chico, where a majority of the 50,000 evacuees had relocated. The owner donated the use of the building for 62 days after which the store was closed to make room for a new (paying) tenant.



## **VII. GLOSSARY OF DISASTER TERMINOLOGY**

- A. Disaster Management Phases – The four phases of the disaster management cycle are Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery.
1. Mitigation – This phase includes actions taken to prevent or reduce the cause, impact, and consequences of disasters.
  2. Preparedness – This phase includes planning, training, and educational activities for events that cannot be mitigated.
  3. **Response** – The response phase occurs in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. During the response phase, business and other operations do not function normally. Personal safety and well-being in an emergency and the duration of the response phase depend on the level of preparedness.
  4. **Recovery** – During the recovery period, restoration efforts occur concurrently with regular operations and activities. The recovery period from a disaster can be prolonged.
- B. Disaster Relief – Humanitarian assistance during the response and early recovery phases of disaster management. The first and most important form of relief is the provision of basic needs (food, water, clothes, and shelter) to those most seriously impacted.
- C. Disaster Types Common to District 4-A3 (natural and human-caused):
1. Civil disturbance
  2. Earthquake
  3. Flooding and Landslides
  4. Mass Transit Accident
  5. Tsunami
  6. Weather Event
  7. Wildfire/Conflagration
  8. Biologic, Chemical, or Nuclear Disaster
- D. Emergency vs. Disaster and Mega-disaster
1. Emergency – At one end of the spectrum, emergencies are usually small-scale, localized incidents that are resolved quickly using local resources. However, small-scale emergencies can escalate into

disasters when there has been inadequate planning and wasteful use of resources.

2. Disaster – At the other end of the spectrum, disasters are typically large-scale and cross geographic, political, and academic boundaries. Disasters require a level of response and recovery greater than local communities can provide.
  3. **Mega-disaster** – An unexpected natural or man-made catastrophe of exceptional magnitude, causing unusually severe or unprecedented damage.
- E. **FEMA Disaster Recovery Center (DRC)** – FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) are accessible facilities and mobile offices set up after a disaster. DRCs are placed near affected communities, in an area that offers equal access and resources to everyone. State and local agencies, and NGOs are commonly co-located in the DRC to provide a “one-stop shopping” experience to those impacted by a disaster. DMV, local building departments, and social services are examples of state and local agencies that are commonly represented.
- F. First Responder – A person with specialized training who is among the first to arrive and provide assistance at the scene of an emergency, such as an accident, natural disaster, or terrorism. First responders typically include law enforcement officers, paramedics, EMTs (emergency medical technicians), and firefighters.
- G. Incident Command System (ICS) – A standardized approach to the command, control, and coordination of emergency response providing a common hierarchy within which responders from multiple agencies can be effective.
- H. **Incident Management Team (IMT)** – An experienced group of well-trained first responders who have been delegated the responsibility and authority to manage an emergency or disaster.
- I. **Logistics Section** – Those members of an Incident Management Team responsible for providing all facilities, transportation, communications, supplies, equipment maintenance and fueling, and food and medical services for incident personnel.
- J. **Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)** – Organizations that generally are formed independently from the government. They are typically nonprofit entities, and many of them are active in humanitarianism or

the social sciences; they can also include clubs and associations that provide services to their members and others. Lions Clubs International, the American Red Cross, and the Salvation Army are examples of NGOs.

## **VIII. RELATED LINKS**

A. California Lions Foundation (CLF) website:

1. [Emergency Grants](#)

B. Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF) website:

1. [Awarded Grants](#)
2. [Community Recovery Grant Application and Criteria](#)
3. [Disaster Preparedness Grant Application and Criteria](#)
4. [Disaster Relief](#)
5. [Disaster Relief Grants](#)
6. [Disaster Grant Programs](#)
7. [Emergency Grant Criteria and Application](#)
8. [Standard Grant Criteria and Application](#)