



## Introduction

Hurricanes Gustav and Ike proved that the ESF-6 mission can only be successful through a collaborative effort between the state agencies, evacuating and sheltering parishes, the federal government, non-governmental organizations and sheltering host states. With more than a month and a half left in 2008's hurricane season, the Louisiana Department of Social Services (DSS) met with stakeholders to provide a short-term plan to address areas of concern in case another storm would impact Louisiana after Hurricanes Gustav & Ike.

DSS continues to work with ESF-6 stakeholders, including local officials, vendors, interest groups and past evacuees, to provide a more in-depth plan for the 2009 hurricane season and for future emergencies and disasters. DSS, in conjunction with GOHSEP, convened a statewide disaster sheltering summit in Shreveport on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008 to discuss and revise the state's sheltering plan and begin the work to create a unified long-term plan for fulfilling the ESF-6 mission in Louisiana. GOHSEP also led the effort to bring in officials from those states that shelter Louisiana's citizens during emergencies for a post-Gustav/Ike discussion and to address the major issues and concerns related to sheltering Louisiana's citizens in their respective states.

In an effort to continue a proactive and comprehensive approach to developing the state's shelter plan, DSS focused on some core areas of improvement in focus group sessions at the two Summits:

- Registering and Tracking Evacuees
- Shelter Capacity Development & Out-of-State Sheltering
- Shelter Standards
- Delivery of Shelter Services & Supplies (Logistical Support)
- Human Services in Shelters
- Management/Staffing Structure
- Communications/Public Information

This report contains the information from the previous Short-term Sheltering Plan originally submitted by DSS Secretary Kristy Nichols on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008, which incorporated recommendations received from many sheltering stakeholders prior to the Sheltering Summits. In addition, after each section listed above, there is a list of ideas received during the Summits selected to be considered for incorporation into current ESF-6 planning ("Feedback from Stakeholders at 2008 Shelter Summits for 2009 Shelter Planning"). Each section also contains an update on significant changes that have been made in the DSS planning structure since Hurricanes Gustav & Ike.

**Summit participants were greatly encouraged to provide input on possible improvements to emergency planning activities in Louisiana. Discussions held at the summits were open and honest, and while all ideas and suggestions were taken into consideration, not all of them are necessarily being used in future planning. Some ideas will be built upon for implementation in 2009, while others will be integrated when feasible over the next few years. The attached Appendix reflects a comprehensive compilation of the various summit discussions.**

## Registering and Tracking Evacuees

An evacuee registration system provides the capability to track evacuees from their departure from Parish Pick-up Points (PPP) to their arrival at the shelters. The main goals of tracking evacuees are to allow families to locate loved ones they are separated from during the evacuation process, and to allow governmental entities to track their citizens throughout the sheltering process. Evacuee tracking also aids in the re-entry process by providing shelters with information on parishes of origin for evacuees. This allows buses to be loaded by parish of origin, requiring less transportation assets and faster re-entry for evacuees.

In April 2008, DSS purchased an evacuee tracking system from EWA Phoenix. Plans were developed to use the software to register evacuees in all state-run CTNS and Medical Special Needs Shelters (MSNS). The plan was to register evacuees at the PPP by placing a wristband with a bar code on the evacuee's wrists and entering their personal data into the tracking system, thereby linking the bar code to the person. When a bus arrived at the PPP, evacuees were to be assigned to buses in the tracking system so that manifests could be created and given to bus drivers as buses were loaded. This plan was dependent upon the parishes providing adequate access to the Internet, and was practiced in a hurricane exercise held in Region 1 parishes (Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines and St. Bernard) prior to the 2008 hurricane season.

The Phoenix system was utilized during Hurricane Gustav with mixed success. While the system was successful in electronically registering individuals as they prepared to evacuate, it was hampered by available Internet access, as well as, slow Internet connection speeds. Because of these problems, the lines of people waiting to board buses grew in length and DSS decided to manually register evacuees on the front end and electronically register evacuees on the back-end when they arrived at their designated shelters.

During Hurricane Ike, connectivity problems were not experienced because affected parishes utilized specifications provided by DSS prior to the hurricanes to install proper wiring at the PPP to support Internet connectivity and speed.

### DSS Short-Term Improvement Plan Recommendations

- o Since wireless Internet access is not reliable at the Orleans and Jefferson PPP, DSS will utilize a front-end manual registration process in those parishes for the remainder of this hurricane season, with staff inputting the data collected electronically when evacuees arrive at the shelters. Information on out-of-state evacuees will be coordinated through Louisiana liaison teams that will travel with evacuees to other states.
- o Other parishes will continue to use the Phoenix registration system. If connectivity issues become a problem, DSS staff will immediately convert to a manual registration process.

- o DSS will work with the American Red Cross (ARC) to determine if and how registration at ARC shelters can be integrated with the State's registration system.

### ***Feedback from Stakeholders at 2008 Shelter Summits for 2009 Shelter Planning***

- o Find an evacuee tracking system and create a process capable of quickly registering large numbers of people.
- o Consider a regional approach to evacuation, not one plan for the entire state, as each area has different needs and requirements.
- o In all planning, consider different timeline scenarios and activate contingency plans based on accelerated timelines.
- o Commission further research into improving the evacuee tracking process.
- o Co-locate the DOTD and DSS EOC in order to further integrate the tracking and transportation functions.
- o The State, in conjunction with the parishes and other necessary entities, needs to develop a complete re-entry plan that includes evacuees sheltered in and out of the state.

### ***Significant Adjustments to Previous Structure***

- o DSS has created an internal task force to focus on planning and operational issues related to the registration and tracking functions.
- o DSS has created an internal position to specifically focus on registration and tracking, and to develop detailed procedures related to all registration and tracking functions. This staff person will also lead the task force referenced above.
- o DSS has begun the process of reviewing other tracking systems and software in order to determine if there is a better electronic solution for registration and tracking of Louisiana's citizens during emergencies.
- o DSS and DOTD, in conjunction with GOHSEP, made adjustments to the previous coordinated evacuation efforts after Hurricane Gustav and tested these adjustments during evacuation of southwest Louisiana populations in advance of Hurricane Ike. In light of the success of these adjustments to the evacuation process, DSS and DOTD have begun the process of writing a revised plan, which includes the merging of the evacuation and tracking functions of the DOTD and DSS Emergency Operations Centers (EOC).

## Shelter Capacity Development & Out-of-State Sheltering

Critical Transportation Needs Shelters (CTNS) offer short-term/temporary sheltering to residents (including those with disabilities) who require transportation assistance from the city, parish or state, in order to evacuate out of harm's way during emergencies and disasters. Louisiana's pre-storm planning estimates for a full coastal evacuation anticipated 50,000 residents needing to evacuate to CTNS. Hurricane Gustav was the first full coastal evacuation in Louisiana's history. By all accounts, most residents heeded Hurricane Gustav evacuation orders and evacuated almost all of the coastal regions. An estimated 37,000 residents sought shelter in out-of state and in-state CTNS. In the short-term, Louisiana will continue to use the 50,000 CTNS planning estimate; however, it is clear that actual CTNS capacity needs may not be as high as previously planned.

In-state CTNS capacity for a full coastal evacuation provided for 9,600 people (excluding the new shelter at LSU in Alexandria that was recently constructed). This left an obvious need to develop out-of-state shelter capacity for the remaining 40,000 Louisiana residents anticipated needing CTNS. Unfortunately, the in-state CTNS during Hurricane Gustav could not accommodate the number of evacuees originally planned, resulting in overcrowding and strained resources. As a result, additional CTNS were added and utilized in Shreveport by local officials and in Alexandria at the new state shelter (not scheduled for use until 2009). Furthermore, shelters were limited in their ability to provide separate eating or recreational areas and special space accommodations for the citizens with special needs and children. These conditions, over time, resulted in frustration, tension and a lack of a sense of community at the shelters.

Evacuees are facing a stressful situation by having to leave their homes, and by making some modifications to facility plans, DSS hopes to decrease any additional discomfort or inconvenience experienced by Louisiana's citizens.

CTNS capacity has been re-evaluated to more accurately reflect the actual amount of usable space, as well as, accommodate for separate eating and recreation areas. As a result, capacity at three of the four shelters has been reduced, creating a greater need to coordinate with other states for additional space.

DSS is in the process of visiting facilities and reviewing shelter management plans to determine which modifications can be made to allow for maximization of capacity and identification of solutions for needed accommodations for various shelter populations.

Long-term solutions for in-state CTNS capacity will involve working with parishes to identify new multi-purpose facilities with the capability to serve as shelter locations within the state. This may include strategies that allow for greater usage of state facilities and universities. DSS also hopes to develop additional smaller shelter capacity in partnership with non-governmental and parish entities. DSS will develop criteria for "pre-certifying" local sheltering sites prior to an emergency. A contingency plan will be in place in the event that traditional shelter sites cannot be used because of disaster-

related damage or unforeseen local developments. This may include but is not limited to the use of local schools and local hotels.

### **Out-of-State Shelters**

During a full coastal evacuation, such as Hurricane Gustav, Louisiana must rely on other states to supplement in-state CTNS capacity in order to accommodate more than 40,000 coastal residents that might potentially need shelter. During Hurricane Gustav, Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas sheltered approximately 20,000 Louisiana evacuees who were transported by the state, with a potential to house more if needed. Other states also offered assistance, but were not utilized.

Due to the short-term decreased capacity at state-run shelters, a solid relationship with out-of-state partners is even more important. To ensure that there is an accurate number of out-of-state facilities that can accommodate Louisiana evacuees, GOHSEP is currently contacting our partner states that provided help and assistance during Hurricane Gustav. GOHSEP is verifying and receiving an estimate of how many Louisiana residents the host states would be able to accommodate, as well as any requirements they might specify. GOHSEP is also contacting those states that offered assistance, but were not utilized during Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, to thank them for their past offer, encourage them to extend that offer in future disasters and identify any concerns or requirements they may have for sheltering Louisiana's citizens.

### **DSS Short-Term Improvement Plan Recommendations**

#### **In-State**

- Louisiana will continue to operate the four state-run CTNS.
- The use of these facilities will be prioritized or staggered based on the overall suitability of the facilities.
- The state is reducing the state-run CTNS capacity to more accurately reflect the amount of usable space, as well as, provide more comfort and privacy for shelter residents and ensure fire safety standards are met.
- Facilities will be redesigned to accommodate space needs for feeding, recreation and special needs residents.
- Families with small children will be placed in an area where children are able to play and be supervised closely by their parents.
- The Outlet Mall in Shreveport will only be utilized if necessary due to the need for significant remodeling.

- In order to compensate for the loss of state-run CTNS capacity due to space modifications and the obvious need for more in-state CTNS capacity, DSS will also utilize all of the non-state CTNS that were made available during Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, in conjunction with parish and local officials.

### **Out-of-State**

- The state will provide a point-of-contact at each of the out-of-state EOC to coordinate with local officials, provide real-time status reports back to operations at the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP), and help coordinate the re-entry process.
- GOHSEP, in cooperation with DSS, is developing a written operational plan for out-of-state shelters, to include guidelines for transporting evacuees back home and the requirements of each state to host an evacuation shelter.

### ***Feedback from Stakeholders at 2008 Shelter Summits for 2009 Shelter Planning***

- Work to increase Louisiana's in-state sheltering capacity (for medically- and non-medically needy populations) in order to demonstrate a good faith effort to other states that host Louisiana citizens.
- ESF-6 stakeholders in Louisiana must collaborate more efficiently with regard to shelter inventory management.
  - Explore having one database or system that captures all shelter capacity information for the State, including all local, state and federally-managed facilities.
  - There should be a plan to collect the information and to activate the assets during emergencies in order to maximize all of the state's assets.
- Louisiana should better engage host states in the planning process by holding a pre-hurricane season planning summit and inviting appropriate partner organizations.

### ***Significant Adjustments to Previous Structure***

- DSS is working with American Red Cross (ARC) for assistance in the development of detailed procedures related to shelter inventory management and an updated inventory of all Louisiana shelters.
  - DSS, GOHSEP and ARC have identified staff liaisons that will work together in a coordinated effort to plan for one shelter inventory management tool for all shelters in Louisiana.

- GOHSEP, in conjunction with DSS, is coordinating the effort to develop operational procedures for activation of out-of-state agreements. GOHSEP has placed a liaison in the DSS Emergency Preparedness office to work directly with DSS on cultivating relationships with host states.
- DSS has begun the process of visiting and assessing existing locations to potentially serve as emergency shelters. In addition, DSS is currently seeking alternate funding sources for the construction of new sheltering facilities in key areas of the state.
- GOHSEP, in conjunction with other state agencies, hosted a summit which brought together states that have assisted with sheltering Louisiana's citizens in past disasters in order to hear their ideas and recommendations on future planning for evacuation and sheltering. A follow-up summit will be held prior to the 2009 hurricane season in order to discuss revised plans.

## Shelter Standards

DSS, as the primary agency for Mass Care in Louisiana, is responsible for providing mass care services which are intended to minimize the immediate, disaster-caused suffering of people through the provision of food, shelter and relief supplies. These services are provided regardless of ethnicity, religion, citizenship, age, gender, disability, economic status or sexual orientation. Service provision is made available through one or more of five integrated elements: individual or congregate temporary shelters, fixed or mobile feeding operations, distribution of relief supplies, health and/or mental health services and information on recovery assistance. Shelters should provide a safe, secure and sanitary place for individuals and families affected by disasters to be housed temporarily until persons can return home or be placed in transitional or longer-term housing. Standards of care at shelters should address immediate needs, which are characterized as physical, emotional and informational, and may include the following: Shelter (protection from harm and physical safety), space and materials for sleep, food, water, health assessments and first aid, durable medical equipment/medical supplies, special dietary needs, toiletries, baby supplies, emotional support and psychological first aid, establishment of structured routines, opportunity to communicate personal situations, status of disaster and relief efforts, status of family members, types of available assistance and process for obtaining that assistance.

Prior to Hurricane Gustav, DSS sheltering standards included the minimum provisions that should be made available within a sheltering environment: food, water, cots, blankets, hygiene kits, security, medical monitoring/first aid, toilets hand-washing stations and showers. Showers were to be provided only if it became evident that a shelter would be open for longer than three days. The most problematic issue in state-run shelters during Hurricane Gustav was that some of the services required for minimum standards of care, such as toilets, hand-washing stations and showers were not supplied in sufficient amounts when the evacuees arrived at the shelters. This led to evacuees feeling frustrated and undignified due to long lines to use restroom facilities and lack of proper personal hygiene.

State sheltering standards have not included many provisions for families, especially those that have small children. For example, the pre-Gustav plan did call for a limited numbers of baby beds to be available in the shelters; however, there were no baby-changing stations provided within the state-run shelters, which caused a major sanitary problem in shelters. According to ARC standards, diaper changing tables are extremely important due to health safety considerations.

In addition, there were very limited provisions for the emotional, recreational and informational needs of evacuees, and reactions to these conditions in state-run shelters during Hurricane Gustav proved that this standard of care is not sufficient to maintain a stable, peaceful environment in CTNS. ARC shelter standards include not only providing for the minimum standards listed above prior to the arrival of evacuees, but also providing for the emotional, recreational and informational needs of a community of persons affected by disaster. ARC recommends having staff on hand to address these needs and supplying recreational items and activities in order to keep children

occupied and provide mental relief for evacuees from disaster-related stress. In addition, the following ARC standard ratios for hygiene services ensure that persons in shelters do not have to wait in long lines:

**ARC Ratios (one unit: number of people)**

Toilets = 1:20

Showers = 1:25

Hand-wash stations = 1:20

ARC also uses a standard of 20 square feet per person for pre-storm sheltering and 40 square feet per person post storm. ARC bases their post-storm standard on the fact that many evacuees return home shortly after the storm has passed, allowing for additional space in the shelter. Since CTNS will typically house the same evacuees both pre- and post-storm, DSS will use a modified ARC standard of 30 square feet per person both pre- and post-storm for sleeping arrangements. For the comfort and hygiene of evacuees, along with the cleanliness of our shelters, DSS will adopt the ARC standard for hygiene services.

*DSS Short-Term Improvement Plan Recommendations*

- DSS will apply a modified American Red Cross (ARC) standard of 30 square feet per person for both pre- and post-storm sleeping arrangements.
- DSS will use the ARC standard for hygiene services with a goal to make 10 percent of all hygiene units accessible to persons with disabilities.
- DSS will order all hygiene stations by 72 hours prior to expected arrival of evacuees to ensure timely delivery.
- CTNS will be equipped with adequate pre-staged commodities, supplies and health and human services.

***Feedback from Stakeholders at 2008 Shelter Summits for 2009 Shelter Planning***

- Ensure all sheltering facilities are periodically tested for functionality of systems. Have an on-call maintenance person available 24/7 during shelter occupancy.
- DSS should better engage its own internal agency, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS), for assistance with making shelters accessible and friendlier to persons with disabilities (including mobility and sensory impairments).
  - Group persons with mobility impairments in special areas near restroom facilities only if it is their choice. They may choose differently to be closer to family members.

- Set a minimum standard and give various shelters the flexibility to meet those standards according to available resources. Ensure that minimum standards for shelters are uniform for all shelters and are not discriminatory towards any group of people.
- Compare standards at in-state shelters with those of out-of-state shelters to ensure consistency.
- Consider constructing shower/toilet areas in shelters versus spending up to \$100K per week when the need arises for rental of those services
- Consider including past shelter residents in the shelter planning process.
- Plan with the understanding that certain amenities, such as recreational areas, should be provided only if there is adequate space, and should not greatly decrease shelter capacity.

### ***Significant Adjustments to Previous Structure***

- DSS has engaged the owners of the state-run sheltering facilities to begin the process of testing the functionality of all building systems and exploring the possibilities of construction and upgrades to the facilities. Cost-benefit analyses will be conducted prior to the onset of any construction for facility upgrades.
- DSS has created an internal task force to focus on planning and operational issues related to shelter facility design. This task force includes personnel from LRS who have expertise related to ADA compliance and accessibility for persons with disabilities.
- DSS has engaged past shelter residents in the shelter planning process and is receiving input related to shelter standards from the evacuee's perspective.
- DSS has begun the process of visiting out-of-state shelters to better understand any major differences in standards that may exist in the host state shelters.

## Delivery of Services & Supplies (Logistical Support)

The state was under a three-year contract with OK'S Cascade Company through December 2008 to provide management, operations and logistical support to shelters, as well as hygiene services such as portable showers, toilets and hand-washing stations. DSS has met with OK'S Cascade to review the contract to ensure that if Louisiana were faced with another hurricane in 2008 that these items would be operational when the first evacuee arrives on site. During Hurricane Gustav, showers and hand-washing stations did not begin arriving at shelters until a number of days after evacuees first arrived. This was not the fault of OK'S Cascade, but rather the State's delay in executing the contract with the company. Once activated for Gustav on the evening of August 31, OK'S Cascade met the timeframe stipulated in the contract, which is 72-96 hours upon activation.

DSS is working to make sure that any communications problems between the agency and vendors, such as work orders being delivered in a timely manner, are corrected. OK'S Cascade will have a single point of contact from the State to a single point of contact with the company. During Hurricane Gustav, numerous people were in contact, resulting in confusion and mixed messages. In the future, DSS will work with GOHSEP to study and possibly implement best practices used in other states. Working with GOHSEP, DSS must ensure that these vendors participate in the State's yearly pre-storm hurricane exercises in order to work through any possible problems that might arise.

### DSS Short-Term Improvement Plan Recommendations

- Each shelter will be stocked with a three-day supply of Meals Ready to Eat (MRE), water, and comfort items.
- An inventory of pre-staged CTNS supplies will be completed and maintained. Extra inventory will be warehoused and utilized to replenish pre-staged supplies used at the shelters.
- DSS will activate contracts for service vendors at H-96 (the number of hours prior to tropical storm force winds reaching Louisiana's coast) to provide portable showers, toilets and hand-washing stations, prior to arrival of evacuees, with delivery of services taking place within 72-96 hours.
- DSS is working with OK'S Cascade to reach an agreement to have many of these resources pre-staged, beginning at H-120, in proximity to areas that might be impacted. If the resources are not utilized, the State would only incur charges for the mobilization and de-mobilization of items under contract.
- DSS will designate a single point of contact for service vendors prior to contract activation.

- DSS will work with facility owners to re-assess each facility's ability to absorb the stress placed on all building systems when the shelter is fully-occupied, and enhance systems as necessary.

### ***Feedback from Stakeholders at 2008 Shelter Summits for 2009 Shelter Planning***

- 3-day supply of shelter resources should include resources for infants and children and other sanitary supplies for women and men.
- Supply amounts should include a ratio of more than just 1 item per person, in case of lost items, damaged items, etc.
- Improve the tactical logistics plan for state-run shelters:
  - How many of each item is needed per day of shelter operations, based on the maximum shelter population?
  - Can multiple vendors be tapped to provide a function to provide for contingency planning if primary vendor fails?
  - How far away from shelters can commodities be stored? What kind of building is needed i.e. air conditioned, etc? What type of resources will be needed to transport supplies and commodities from storage to shelter (vehicles, fuel, people)?

### ***Significant Adjustments to Previous Structure***

- DSS, in conjunction with GOHSEP, has completed an inventory of pre-staged commodities at all state-run shelters and ordered replacement resources to ensure there is a minimum of a 3-day supply at each CTNS.
- DSS has created an internal task force to focus on planning and operational issues related to logistics for sheltering facilities.
- DSS has created an internal position to specifically focus on logistics for shelters, and to develop detailed procedures related to all shelter logistical needs. This staff person will also work with the task force referenced above.

## Human Services in Shelters

As discussed previously, there are a number of populous in the shelters that may require special accommodations. While it is important to note that the primary obligation of CTNS is to provide safe shelter for evacuees and house these citizens out of harm's way, it is also important to provide for the comfort and security of shelter residents.

Evacuees with special needs are often a significant portion of the CTNS population. Some anecdotal reports indicate as many as 10 percent of Hurricane Gustav CTNS residents were either elderly or had serious medical conditions. In order to accommodate these needs, CTNS facility layouts will allow for a more private setting for these types of shelter residents. This will allow for more privacy and enable medical staff to properly monitor these individuals.

Medical monitoring is an important component of the CTNS plan. The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) supports the medical needs of both the CTNS and the state's Medical Special Needs Shelters (MSNS). In addition, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides critical medical care in Federal Medical Special Needs Shelters.

The current CTNS medical monitoring plan provides for lower level care for patients that are not in critical condition. This is referred to as medical monitoring and first aid. The medical monitoring plan also includes a minimum of one ambulance per shelter for medical transport. The unexpected volume of individuals with special needs left many shelters ill-equipped to handle the healthcare complexities of the CTNS population. In the future, we must work toward providing enhanced medical monitoring within CTNS. DSS will work with providers near CTNS to identify contractors and proceed with medical monitoring agreements.

We also think it is important to consider the needs of children that are in CTNS. These children need to be safe and comfortable during their stay. We want to first empower parents and caretakers to care for their children in a community-like setting by making sure there is adequate space and an area where children are able to play with parent supervision. As noted, partitions will be utilized in the short-term to accomplish this goal. In addition, we are working with faith-based institutions and non-profit children's advocacy organizations to help provide support and services for children and their families during their stay at CTNS.

### DSS Short-Term Improvement Plan Recommendations

- o DSS will work with DHH and our federal and local health care providers to provide 'strike teams' for CTNS. Strike teams often include a physician, a nurse and two paramedics. Potential service providers that will be contracted to support CTNS include the state's public hospitals, local health care providers and remote (or out-of-state) area medical teams.

- CTNS facility layout will be revised to provide a separate area for evacuees with special needs.
- DSS will work with DHH and our federal and local health care providers to provide enhanced medical care for CTNS.
- Behavioral health counselors will be provided at each CTNS site.
- DSS will work with local providers to identify contractors and proceed with medical monitoring agreements for the provision of adequate medical care in CTNS.
- DSS will partner with faith-based institutions and non-profit children's advocacy organizations to help provide support and services for children and their families during their stay at CTNS.

#### ***Feedback from Stakeholders at 2008 Shelter Summits for 2009 Shelter Planning***

- Develop specific medical care criteria for CTNS.
- Engage nearby schools and universities, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGO) for assistance with the recreational needs of children in shelters.
  - The Children's Coalition of Northeast Louisiana is contracted with DSS in the northeast area to provide recreational activities for children, and this type of service should be consistent throughout the state. Identify and partner with NGO or other such local resources in each region of the state to bring consistency to this service in shelters.
- Ensure that all shelters are accessible to the elderly and persons with disabilities. Pre-staged assistive technology devices such as wheelchairs, walkers, canes, shower chairs and raised toilet seats can be provided by LATAN and/or the Disability and Aging Coalition.
- Continue to provide transportation resources for evacuees to go to pet shelters to care for their pets. This will improve evacuee morale.
- Explore the possibility of creating a customer service/help desk in shelters.

#### ***Significant Adjustments to Previous Structure***

- DSS is currently working with the various organizations to identify the best and most feasible ways to provide for the recreational needs of children and adults in shelters.
- DSS has created an internal task force to focus on planning and operational issues related to human services provisions in shelters. This task force includes personnel

from DSS internal agencies who have expertise related to service delivery for the children, families and the elderly.

- LRS, a DSS internal agency, has been working closely with LATAN and the Disability and Aging Coalition related to provisions for DSS' elderly and disabled clients. DSS will leverage these relationships to ensure that plans for the elderly and disabled in shelters reflect adequate provisions as well.
- DSS has developed an existing internal position to specifically coordinate issues related to human services in shelters, and to develop detailed procedures related to those functions. This staff person will also serve on the task force referenced above.
- DSS is currently reviewing the guidance on principles related to displaced persons provided at the shelter summit. Information from these references will be considered in any future plan revisions as appropriate.
- DSS is beginning the work of updating Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with current sheltering partners and creating new agreements in order to properly engage all entities that can provide a particular service or expertise which enhances Louisiana's in-state sheltering capabilities.
- Working through the parishes, DSS has begun to plan for community advocacy groups to provide leadership in shelter communities and build morale amongst evacuees during the sheltering phase of disasters.

## Management/Staffing Structure

As primary agency for sheltering, DSS collaborates with the Parish Offices of Emergency Preparedness (OEP) and the American Red Cross (ARC) to ensure that evacuees have shelters from the storm that are safe, secure and sanitary. DSS also receives shelter support from Louisiana State Police, Louisiana National Guard, DHH, the Louisiana Workforce Commission, OK'S Cascade (private vendor) and other state agencies and non-governmental organizations.

One concern expressed by stakeholders, evacuees, and local officials was the sense that there was no one person in charge at the shelters. There will be one DSS person designated at each shelter as the lead for that shelter who will have the authority to make decisions relating to the logistics and operations of that individual shelter. OK'S Cascade will provide a minimum of 10 shelter team leaders at each site, with an additional member per every 10 people at MSNS, and per 50 people at CTNS.

One solution that is being explored is the ability of shelter residents to be employed by vendors to help run different aspects of the facility as shelter team members. This will provide responsibility to evacuees, add to the sense of community in the shelter and provide residents with earned money when they return back to their community. OK'S Cascade has utilized this strategy in other facilities around the country with great success and in many cases continues to employ these individuals on a part-time basis when needed for other non-disaster events after they return to their communities.

The lead agency in charge of shelter security and building access control is Louisiana State Police (LSP), in coordination with the Louisiana National Guard (LANG), local law enforcement and private security firms. DSS will work with state partners to reduce anxiety caused by a heightened security presence in dormitory areas of the shelter. In the short term, shelter security personnel will continue to use wands to check individuals when entering the facility, but DSS is working with LSP to explore the possibility of securing walk-through detectors at shelters in the long-term.

The Louisiana Workforce Commission (WFC), in cooperation with the Department of Corrections and the Department of Education, will coordinate the distribution of meals at each shelter. WFC will work with DSS in assessing each shelter and identifying designated areas at each shelter for residents to receive and eat their meals. The Department of Transportation and Development will continue its role in providing and scheduling transportation for evacuees to other local sites, such as pet shelters, pharmacies and retail stores. The Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry will assist pet owners in finding the nearest pet shelter location and will help to reunite owners with pets that were separated during evacuation. A long term goal for DSS will be to have a written operational plan for each individual shelter, based on the facility, services needed, capacity, and stakeholders involved.

### DSS Short-Term Improvement Plan Recommendations

- One DSS manager will be designated at each shelter as the lead and will have the authority to make decisions relating to the logistics and operations of the shelter.
- OK'S Cascade Company, the state's current shelter management, operations and logistical support contractor, will provide a minimum of 10 shelter team leaders at each site, with an additional member per every 10 people at medical special needs shelters, and per 50 people at CTNS.
- DSS will explore the ability of a select number of shelter residents to be employed by vendors to help run different aspects of the facility as shelter team members. This will provide responsibility to evacuees, add to the sense of community in the shelter and provide residents with earned money when they return back to their communities.
- DSS will work with state partners to reduce anxiety caused by a heightened security presence in dormitory areas of the shelter.
- In the short-term, shelter security personnel will continue to use wands to check individuals when entering the facility, but DSS is working with LSP to explore the possibility of securing walk-through detectors at shelters in the long-term.

### ***Feedback from Stakeholders at 2008 Shelter Summits for 2009 Shelter Planning***

- Further integrate the Incident Command System (ICS) roles into the management structure for sheltering and ESF-6.
  - Hold a tabletop exercise to work through shelter command and control issues.
- Empower the Shelter Manager or DSS Lead in each shelter to make decisions in the local command structure and to have access to all resources necessary to run the shelters.
- Consider tapping into other resources for shelter operations staff, including other state agencies, volunteer agencies and private staffing agencies. There is not enough DSS staff to simultaneously manage and operate all state-run shelters on each shift.
- Ensure that each shelter has some form of law enforcement personnel with arrest authority in order to control the criminal element in shelters. Security must remain heavy and be very visible in shelters for this purpose.
  - Conduct sensitivity training with guardsmen and other security personnel for handling people in stressful situations.

- Have a guardsmen/officer gather shelter residents in groups to give a talk at the beginning of sheltering, perhaps right after registration, about the roles and methods of security personnel in the shelter.

### *Significant Adjustments to Previous Structure*

- DSS, ARC and the sheltering parishes which support CTNS have agreed upon a shared management structure, with DSS serving as Lead in each shelter relying on guidance and support from the other entities. ARC will provide support staff to assist with CTNS operations.
- DSS has created an internal task force to focus on planning and operational issues related to staffing in shelters. This task force is currently researching other resources for shelter operations staff, including other state agencies, volunteer agencies and private staffing agencies.
- LSP is currently the lead for security in shelters and has previously written shelter security plans for each state-run shelter, which will be updated as deemed appropriate based on lessons learned from recent disaster events. LANG currently remains a support agency for security in shelters.
- DSS is currently revising the specifications to be submitted to the Division of Administration prior to requesting bids for the State's shelter management vendor (previously OK'S Cascade but the contract expires in December 2008). Upon identifying the winning bid, the shelter management vendor will be engaged throughout the year in the planning process, as well as, drills and training exercises.

## Communications & Public Information

In conversations with stakeholders and shelter residents, one concern involves communication to evacuees on news from home and the ability to contact other loved ones outside of the shelter.

Our goal is to be honest and open with residents on news we may receive regarding their temporary stay at shelters. By having an open dialogue, we can lessen the already stressful situation and help contain any false rumors that might be circulating. In the long term, we feel it is very important to educate evacuees and elected officials on what services will and will not be provided at the shelters. By providing them with an accurate expectation of their time at the shelter, we can hopefully allow residents to prepare in advance for any other needs they may have.

### DSS Short-Term Improvement Plan Recommendations

- Each shelter will have television and radio capability for residents to monitor the local, national and weather stations.
- DSS is working with local phone companies to place a phone bank in each shelter where residents can make a brief call if needed.
- DSS is working with local governments to ensure that an official or designated representative from the evacuated area visits the shelter in order to provide community information to residents.

### ***Feedback from Stakeholders at 2008 Shelter Summits for 2009 Shelter Planning***

- Louisiana must develop a public awareness campaign to help manage evacuee expectations at shelters. Campaigns should highlight personal responsibility of the individuals and families being evacuated.
  - Work to provide a series of community outreach meetings to educate the public in risk areas about the evacuation and sheltering processes. “Piggyback” on local events to get the word out year-round.
  - Instruct them on what to bring to shelters (personal care supplies, cash) and what supplies will be provided.
- Ensure that each shelter has a designated Public Information Officer (PIO) that can be accessed by other agencies, media and the public.
- Evacuees should be given a list of expectations while at the shelters.
  - Rules – List of rules, parameters and etiquette in the shelter environment.
  - Registration – What to expect when registering at the shelter.
  - Food – Number of meals per day and meal schedule.

- Showers – Number per day and shower schedule.
  - Communication – Communications resources available to them in shelters e.g. phones, TVs, radios and/or the Internet.
  - Supplies – Items to be provided upon arrival at shelters.
  - General – Name and location of shelter to which they are being transported.
  - Security – The security set-up for shelter access control, exterior security, internal roving patrols and perimeter security throughout their shelter stay.
  - Medical Provisions – Medical services available at the shelter.
  - Services – Hours of operation for shelter services.
- Inform evacuees of news from home at least twice per day during sheltering. Press releases to inform them should be coordinated and sent to shelters daily.
  - Coordinate a method to provide updates for pet owners to know the locations and status of their pets as soon as possible upon completion of the evacuation process.
  - Ensure that all shelters are equipped with appropriate communications equipment.

### ***Significant Adjustments to Previous Structure***

- DSS has created an internal task force to focus on planning and operational issues related to communications functions.
- The DSS and GOHSEP Public Information Officers (PIO) work closely together to develop programs related to public awareness campaigns for disaster preparedness. These programs will continue to be vetted for effectiveness and revised as necessary.

## Broader Issues Related to Emergency Management and ESF-6

### *Feedback from Stakeholders at 2008 Shelter Summits for 2009 Shelter Planning*

- State sheltering plans should continue to be less hurricane-focused and more all-hazards in their approach to emergency response.
- State sheltering plans should include the scenario of a full coastal evacuation, as with Hurricanes Gustav & Ike.
- All response personnel must be adequately trained for emergency roles prior to emergency activation.
- Work to improve coordination and collaboration amongst ESF-6 stakeholders in Louisiana so that future emergency response efforts will improve upon past experiences.

### *Significant Adjustments to Previous Structure*

- DSS is working with sheltering stakeholders and partners to create one unified state sheltering plan for Louisiana. This will be a long-term process that may take the next few years to strategically plan and implement in shelters.

## APPENDIX

The following is a compilation of all ideas and recommendations discussed by stakeholders at the 2008 sheltering summits. This list includes all ideas that were recommended but these ideas are not necessarily being implemented into ESF-6 planning at this time. All suggestions were taken into consideration in determining the next steps for future ESF-6 planning. **Please note that the opinions and suggestions contained in this appendix do not necessarily reflect the opinions of DSS.**

### Registering and Tracking Evacuees

- o Find an evacuee tracking system and create a process capable of quickly registering large numbers of people.
  - System should have the capability to interface with all other necessary systems or software, and possibly be able to read information from food stamp and Medicaid cards.
  - Allow parishes to provide the option for citizens to pre-register by providing access to the evacuee tracking system prior to emergency events.
  - Issue all households a disaster identification card, but ensure that sex offenders can still be separated. This card could be integrated with other forms of identification such as drivers' license, state ID card, food stamp card or Medicaid card. The problem this creates is this system would fail to address tourists and other visitors to the state.
  - The idea of providing access to pre-registration and a different form of disaster identification creates the capability to have two lines, where a portion of evacuee registration could be expedited.
  - EM Track is a system that can be explored to potentially supplement or replace the Phoenix system.
  - System should be able to track all updates to records, and not allow users to completely erase any entry.
  - Access to the system should be given to various stakeholders across the state, especially the parishes that need to track the location of their citizens.
  - Consider using a tracking system that utilizes a biometric thumbprint scanner in order to speed up the registration process. DHH uses a similar technology to track medical records but there may be privacy issues.
  - Consider tagging power and manual wheelchairs at the point of purchase, through RFID chip or expanded barcode.
  - Conduct a stress test of the system prior to hurricane season. This could be done at a sporting event or other incident where many people are involved. This could be rather costly.
  - Hold more drills and exercises to ensure personnel are trained to use and operate the system properly.
  - Ensure there is adequate equipment available to operate the system at shelters for registration, tracking and security purposes.

- Consider a regional approach to evacuation, not one plan for the entire state, as each area has different needs and requirements.
  - Parishes could develop a point-to-point sheltering concept in which sheltering parishes agree to accept those evacuees from pre-designated risk parishes in order to facilitate a smoother tracking and evacuation process.
  - Heavily populated parishes must have more than one PPP. Ex. Orleans parish
- Giving bus drivers a hard-copy manifest of their passengers should be eliminated with the use of a web-based system. If the state can develop an electronic process that works, a manual process is simply not needed.
- Examine the feasibility of conducting the manifest process on the buses, by potentially having DSS or other representatives ride on the buses with evacuees if there are enough available people for the necessary number of buses.
  - Also, consider giving evacuees a form to complete on the bus and create the manifest upon arrival at the shelter. This negates the benefits of having a manifest prior to bus departure and does not account for the fact that some people may not be able to read/complete the form on their own.
- Consider imitating parishes and use CERT teams to register evacuees and supplement DSS staff in order to speed up the process.
- Use a specific ratio that accounts for expeditious processing of long lines when planning for numbers of registrars in relation to numbers of evacuees to be registered.
- In all planning, consider different timeline scenarios and activate contingency plans based on accelerated timelines.
- Commission further research into the tracking process
  - Work with other organizations that have a specialty tracking function, such as courier companies (tracking packages), airlines and sports organizations.
  - Investigate the voter registration process as a model for evacuee tracking and the re-entry process. Anyone wanting to vote in the US must be pre-registered and tied to a specific precinct.
  - Draft legislation to require an ID card for evacuation.
  - Require people to pre-register for evacuation when updating their addresses on their drivers' license or state ID cards as they move into a hurricane evacuation zone.
  - Consider tracking people by social security numbers.
  - Possibly use the same technology hotels use to give their patrons disposable security cards in order to quickly identify evacuees
  - Work with hospitals to provide discharged patients with information on how to pre-register for evacuation.
- Ensure all registrars have adequate training and knowledge of the tracking system prior to evacuation. Additional training should be provided to parish staff when necessary.

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- Explore the possibility of just registering numbers of people per vehicle instead of associating actual identifying information with each record. The purpose of tracking on the front end is to know how many people are being transported to specific shelters.
- Co-locate the DOTD and DSS EOC in order to further integrate the tracking and transportation functions.
- The State, in conjunction with the parishes and other necessary entities, needs to develop a complete re-entry plan that includes evacuees sheltered in and out of the state.
  - Improved re-entry will reduce the cost of evacuations, the burden on partner states and unnecessary physical and monetary stress of evacuees.
  - Re-entry should be coordinated as soon as possible after the emergency event. There should be unified state and local messaging regarding the status of the region and whether or not it is safe for people to return home.
  - Re-entry planning should include the creation of post-storm shelters within Louisiana where evacuees can be housed in their home state until their parishes are ready to receive them.
  - Better planning on the front end of evacuation will make the re-entry process much more efficient. Process should allow for local officials to have the foreknowledge of the return of their citizens so their resources and facilities can be set up prior to citizen arrival.
  - The re-entry plan should include a plan for efficiently and safely returning Medical Special Needs populations to their home state. This should not happen until the local infrastructure is restored to a certain level. Create a task force that includes HHS, NDMS and VOAD to address this issue.
  - Re-entry planning should identify specific trigger points for the return of various evacuated populations. Ex. Pet re-entry will occur after human re-entry commences.
  - The term “repatriation” should be replaced with a more applicable term such as re-entry.
- Investigate the possibility of negating the need for such an extensive evacuee tracking plan by shortening or eliminating evacuation routes. Harden sheltering facilities in risk areas so that citizens can “hunker down” in shelters in their home parishes and eliminate the need for evacuation. This means developing mass care capabilities within the risk areas.
- ARC operated a Web site, called Safe and Well, where evacuees can get online and register in order to let loved ones know their status. Perhaps this concept, or even this website, can be integrated into the State’s plan for tracking evacuees.

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## Shelter Capacity Development & Out-of-State Sheltering

- Louisiana must increase its in-state sheltering capacity (for medically- and non-medically needy populations) in order to demonstrate a good faith effort to other states that host Louisiana citizens.
  - Investigate hardening existing structures (in risk and non-risk areas) and seek funding for construction of federally-certified sheltering facilities within the state. This could eliminate the need for so much additional capacity in the northern areas of the state.
  - Explore the possibility of making state buildings adhere to sheltering standards in order to use them as shelters of last resort.
  - Louisiana should generate greater sheltering capacity close to at-risk populations in order to shorten evacuation routes.
  - Examine the possibility of using youth camp sites to shelter evacuees instead of expensive “warehouse” facilities. What agencies control these sites? Ex. 4-H, LSU, Boy/Girl Scouts, private non-profit and state-owned property
- There is a need for better collaboration amongst ESF-6 stakeholders in Louisiana with regard to shelter inventory management.
  - There should be one database or system that captures all shelter capacity information for the State, including all local, state and federally-managed facilities.
  - There should be a plan to collect the information and to activate the assets during emergencies in order to maximize all of the state’s assets.
  - The system must include designation of facilities for all-hazards usage, not just for hurricanes.
- Work with partner states that may be affected by the same threat as Louisiana on an improved system to predict what excess sheltering capacity may be available to Louisiana and must determine if providing shelter space to another Gulf Coast state is safe and feasible.
- Louisiana must provide adequate assistance to host states for reimbursement of all sheltering expenses. All costs associated with sheltering must be identified before an event. Ex. Special needs patients sometimes need medications, additional services for caregivers, etc.
- Louisiana should engage host states more in the planning process by holding a pre-hurricane season planning summit and inviting appropriate partner organizations.

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## Shelter Standards

- Ensure all sheltering facilities are periodically tested for functionality of systems. Have an on-call maintenance person available 24/7 during shelter occupancy.
- DSS should better engage its own internal agency, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS), for assistance with making shelters accessible and friendlier to persons with disabilities (including mobility and sensory impairments).
  - Regarding hygiene stations, change verbiage in plan to read “5% accessible facilities and a minimum of one” regarding the number of ADA-compliant hygiene stations.
  - Include universal symbols throughout shelters to identify specific areas to persons with disabilities.
  - Group persons with mobility impairments in special areas near restroom facilities only if it is their choice. They may choose differently to be closer to family members.
- Explore the possibility of making state buildings adhere to sheltering standards in order to use them as shelters of last resort.
- Set a minimum standard and give various shelters the flexibility to meet those standards according to available resources. Ensure that minimum standards for shelters are uniform for all shelters and are not discriminatory towards any group of people.
  - All uniform shelter standards should be upheld by all shelter partners and stakeholders, including state agencies and ARC.
- Offer heavy-duty cots for those evacuees that exceed the weight limit of standard cots.
- Inform evacuees prior to evacuation of the standards to expect in shelters, and they must understand that shelters cannot be held to the standards of home comfort.
- Compare standards at in-state shelters with those of out-of-state shelters to ensure consistency.
- Consider constructing shower/toilet areas in shelters versus spending \$100K per week when the need arises for rental of those services
  - Could build a separate building in the back as campgrounds do.
  - If property owners do not want to alter the facilities, consider investing in the portable units.
  - The construction of state-run facilities negates the need for investment in portable units and non-state run facilities. Florida and California are currently building sheltering facilities in prime locations. DSS can use federal funds, leveraged with state funds to build its own structures.

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- The challenge is to find other purposes for these facilities when they are not being used as shelters. This could be a problem in justification of fund usage.
  - The Southern Baptists own shower units and, as a non-profit organization, will have built on the most cost-effective mechanism. They may be a good resource to draw from in relation to this issue.
- Downsize large population shelters to make them more manageable. Louisiana does not have the infrastructure, especially the medical infrastructure, to support CTNS and other large sheltering facilities in the state.
- Continue to separate the functional medical population from the medical special needs populations in shelters. Life-saving support provided at MSNS is not necessary in CTNS.
- In addition to offering baby-changing stations, add baby-washing areas as well since it is difficult for parents to bathe their small children in mobile shower units. If possible, add a provision for washing baby bottles in shelters.
  - Situate families with small children as close to restroom facilities as possible to avoid accidents.
  - Consider contracting with the Children's Coalition or other NGO to provide a separate facility for this population.
- Other items to provide for infant/child care: Formula (all kinds), wipes for sanitation and hand-cleaning, Lysol wipes, Kleenex, extra underwear for children, blankets (some children will be allergic to wool), and infant/toddler food.
- DSS should use an evacuee-centered approach when planning for shelters and shelter residents should be included in the planning process and treated as a planning partner.
- Understand that a shelter's primary mission is a safe haven. Certain amenities, such as recreational areas, should be provided only if there is adequate space, and not at the expense of shelter capacity.
- Offer coffee service in shelters.

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## Delivery of Supplies (Logistical Support)

- 3-day supply should include resources for infants and children and other sanitary supplies for women and men.
- Supply amounts should include a ratio of more than just 1 item per person, in case of lost items, damaged items, etc. Evacuees are given their allotment upon shelter entry but may need more within a few days of sheltering.
  - Consider charging a nominal fee for certain items after giving evacuees the initial supply upon shelter entry.
- Develop parish-to-parish agreements related logistical support to shelters.
- Thoroughly explore the list of local and state vendors that provide certain services related to sheltering and other ESF-6 functions. Perhaps there are vendors physically located in Louisiana that have not been tapped to provide a specific need.
- Explore other supply warehousing possibilities in addition to ARC warehouses to ensure timely delivery of requested supplies to shelters.
- Create a tactical logistics plan:
  - How many of each item is needed per day of shelter operations, based on the maximum shelter population?
  - Can multiple vendors be tapped to provide a function to provide for contingency planning if primary vendor fails?
  - How far away from shelters can commodities be stored? What kind of building is needed i.e. air conditioned, etc? What type of resources will be needed to transport supplies and commodities from storage to shelter (vehicles, fuel people)? Need to have a plan for this.
- Need a better plan for dirty laundry at large shelters.
- GOHSEP should be in charge of all logistical support issues related to shelters.

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## Human Services

- Develop specific medical care and pharmaceutical criteria for CTNS. Develop an implementation plan for medical strike teams that includes protocols, timeframes and reporting/organizational structure (NIMS).
  - A strike team works when shelter residents are stabilized, but when 8-10 buses arrive at once at a shelter, a strike team will not be sufficient to service those potential medical needs. This requires an experienced team of doctors, nurses EMS staff and/or other medical personnel, especially for Medical Special Needs Shelters (MSNS).
  - Initially, deploying these types of resources (most will have to be contracted) will cause a strain but it will reduce the strain on hospitals and medical centers while shelters are open. An idea for providing personnel would be to have medical practitioners from the evacuated areas travel with the shelter residents and work at shelters. Medical staff from impacted areas should be engaged to support shelters throughout the State. They could be provided off-site accommodations with other shelter staff.
  - Stabilization of patients during the first day of sheltering means that a small shelter clinic can most likely handle the medical needs of the shelter population for the duration of shelter operations. The clinic should probably operate on a 12-hour basis (perhaps 7am – 7 pm) while a small medical team addresses issues throughout the evening and overnight. Alternatively, the shelter could offer a “clinic in a box” when the clinic is closed that includes medical supplies to be accessed by shelter staff when necessary.
  - Talk to partners in other states that have had success with this for other ideas. Ex. Astrodome in Texas after Hurricane Katrina
  - Set up pharmacies in large shelters with appropriate staff.
- Engage nearby schools and universities, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGO) for assistance with the recreational needs of children in shelters.
  - The Children’s Coalition of Northeast Louisiana is contracted with DSS in the northeast area to provide recreational activities for children, and this type of service should be consistent throughout the state. Identify and partner with NGO or other such local resources in each region of the state to bring consistency to this service in shelters.
- Ensure that all shelters are accessible to the elderly and persons with disabilities. Pre-staged assistive technology devices such as wheelchairs, walkers, canes, shower chairs and raised toilet seats can be provided by the LATAN and/or the Disability and Aging Coalition.
  - The Disability and Aging Coalition has developed a mechanism to have personal care available in the shelters for people with varying degrees of disability. LAVA has agreed to host the volunteer registration and the coalition will recruit and train volunteers statewide. GOHSEP has offered to request legislation to cover the liability for these volunteers so this could possibly be offered by next hurricane season. ARC is also interested in

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implementing this program in general population shelters and is working closely with the coalition.

- o Examine the possibility of using bedside commodes in shelters at night. The drawback is that this may create unsanitary and uncomfortable conditions in shelters. There are also privacy issues.
- o Develop plans that include other state agencies and non-governmental organizations to be present and ready to assist with evacuee needs at shelters.
  - Office of Mental Health should develop plan for mental health needs in shelters.
  - LSU Hospitals in northern and southern Louisiana should have a medical support plan with specific personnel and schedules. Include officials from LSUHSC and sister hospitals during emergency planning phases.
  - DSS should work more closely with the faith-based community for volunteers and other services.
  - Department of Ag & Forestry (or designee) should have a liaison at the CTNS to coordinate between the pet shelters and the CTNS.
  - Utilize staff at CTNS who have disability expertise, such as the DHH Office of Citizens with Disabilities and Office of Aging and Adult Services.
- o Adopt the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement to determine and define the State's principles and policies for emergency evacuation, shelter, relief, and recovery standards.
  - The following websites outline what the Guiding Principles are, how they can and have been applied, and what comprehensive standards they establish to ensure that the human dignity of evacuees and displaced persons are respected:

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement  
<http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu2/7/b/principles.htm>

USAID Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons Policy  
[www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200/200mbc.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/200/200mbc.pdf)

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre  
<http://www.internal-displacement.org/>

Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement  
<http://www.brookings.edu/projects/idp.aspx>

US Human Rights Network Katrina Campaign Documents  
<http://www.ushrnetwork.org/projects/resources/publications>

- US Human Rights Network is available to conduct trainings with DSS and/or to arrange for other experts, including UN personnel on Internal Displacement,

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to conduct trainings and reviews of the new guidelines, policies, and procedures the Department is currently developing.

- Provide special items such as formula, bottles, diapers (for children and adults), underwear and supplies for pregnant women in adequate amounts in shelters.
- Implement Psychological First Aid (PFA) training for all response workers. PFA provides information on dealing with personal stress, recognizing mental health issues in others and knowing when to refer others to mental health professionals.
  - ARC has a 3-hour course available for staff and volunteers.
  - Class could decrease the demand for licensed mental health workers, thus allowing them to focus on those with real mental health issues.
- Have some mental/behavioral health care providers travel on the buses with evacuees to shelters and remain at the shelters for duty throughout the duration of sheltering. They could be provided off-site accommodations with other shelter staff.
- Pre-identify CTNS residents to act as community leaders at shelter sites. They can also act as liaisons and organizers of “help committees” to facilitate service delivery in shelters.
  - Utilize community advocacy groups, such as STAND, to assist in this endeavor.
  - These groups can assist with encouraging shelter residents to treat shelters in a respectable manner, including not removing items that belong to the shelter when they leave. Ex. Children’s play pens
- Continue to provide transportation resources for evacuees to go to pet shelters to care for their pets. This will improve evacuee morale.
- Create a customer service/help desk in shelters:
  - People can report abuse or other criminal activity.
  - People can get specific information to meet their needs or schedule appointments for mental health counseling.
  - Establish number of customer service/help desk personnel based on number of shelter residents.
  - The help desk must have a live person 24/7 that can get access to necessary information that is important to residents. This is important as sometimes the shelter resident only needs someone to talk to, and some shelter residents will be illiterate and unable to obtain information from pamphlets and posted bulletins.
- Provide a technology area in shelters where people can charge their cell phones, iPods and other electronic devices brought in by evacuees. This would require adequate security as well so it may not be feasible. It may also add cost due to need for additional electrical wiring to add outlets and electrical capacity.

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## Management/Staffing Structure

- Fully integrate the Incident Command System (ICS) roles into the management structure for sheltering and ESF-6.
  - Need a designated lead for each functional area to create the unified command in the shelter. Specific leads are needed for shelter management (DSS/ARC), security, feeding, transportation, medical support and logistics.
  - Hold a tabletop exercise to work through shelter command and control issues.
- Empower the Shelter Manager or DSS Lead in each shelter to make decisions in the local command structure and to have access to all resources necessary to run the shelters.
  - Have a DSS person with access to order resources and access to WebEOC in the parish EOC 24/7. Also need a representative from DHH and ARC 24/7.
  - Only DSS and its Lead at each shelter should have authorization for purchase of shelter supplies.
- Consider all of the potential drawbacks and liabilities of employing evacuees in shelters: must figure out a fair way to choose who gets the job; this will possibly encourage other evacuees that are not getting paid to not do their part to keep the shelter clean; and there will be liability issues. Ex. What happens when a shelter resident hired by the State abuses a child in the shelter?
- There is not enough DSS staff to simultaneously manage and operate all state-run shelters on each shift. Consider tapping into other resources for shelter operations staff, including other state agencies, volunteer agencies and private staffing agencies.
  - Have local ARC chapters run the CTNS while ARC volunteers from out of state run the less populated shelters. If ARC Chapters ran the CTNS, this provides a standardized shelter management model that has been successful nationwide. ARC also has access to larger pools of shelter staff.
  - Potential obstacle: ARC guidelines differ from State requirements to uphold certain aspects of Louisiana legislation, and therefore, diminish State's capability to "reserve" spaces in shelters for the CTN population. How can the State get past those issues if ARC manages the CTNS? This must be resolved for the ARC shelter management idea to be viable.
- Standardize the management structure across all state-run shelters, thereby increasing the ease of running the shelters. This makes it easier to cross-train shelter managers as well.
- Ensure all necessary law enforcement and first responder personnel are provided floor/site plans for the shelter upon arrival.
- Contract with trained shelter experts for all shelter management, including management of state-run shelters.

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- Contracts should be tied to performance bonds to ensure that contractors are held accountable for quality service.
- Ensure that each shelter has some form of law enforcement personnel with arrest authority in order to control the criminal element in shelters. Security must remain heavy and be very visible in shelters for this purpose.
  - Conduct sensitivity training with guardsmen and other security personnel for handling people in stressful situations.
  - Have a guardsmen/officer gather shelter residents in groups to give a talk at the beginning of sheltering, perhaps right after registration, about the role and methods of security personnel in the shelter.
- Louisiana State Police (LSP) should remain the lead for security in shelters with the Louisiana National Guard (LANG) as their support agency.
- Consider having an on-site representative 24/7 from DOTD to facilitate transportation needs and from Louisiana Workforce Commission to facilitate feeding plans in shelters.
- Each CTNS should have a Medical Officer who decides the number and type of medical personnel needed in the shelter.
- Shelters must provide staff for the various components of care because it is an unrealistic expectation that DSS can be “all things to all people.”
- Create a place in the shelters for non-governmental organizations (NGO) so they can get real-time information and get services to shelter residents quickly.

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## Communications & Public Information

- Louisiana must develop a public awareness campaign to help manage evacuee expectations at shelters. Campaigns should highlight personal responsibility of the individuals and families being evacuated.
  - Need a series of community outreach meetings to educate the public in risk areas about the evacuation and sheltering processes. “Piggyback” on local events to get the word out year-round. Ex. Booths at the State Fair or LSU Fan Day
  - Help them not to become ambivalent to hurricane threats and other hazards.
  - Help them understand that Hurricanes Katrina/Rita did not provide the ongoing standard for services received during emergencies. There were more resources available due to additional funding, donations and organizational support. Instruct them on what kind of assistance they can expect from FEMA, ARC, the State, etc. based on the level of damage caused by the storm.
  - Instruct them on what to bring to shelters (personal care supplies, cash) and what supplies will be provided.
  - Help them understand that these are shelters and not homes. They provide safe haven from threats, but cannot be held to standards of home comfort.
  - Encourage them to bring wheelchairs, oxygen and a 5-day supply of medications as appropriate. If on prescription medications, urge them to at least bring the bottles so that the prescription can possibly be filled while in the shelter.
  - Help them understand the credentialing process (especially self-evacuees).
  - Start the emergency education process in primary school. Send disaster information flyers home with children’s report cards.
  - Local and state entities should visit schools throughout the year to prepare children and teachers for disasters. Local and state entities should also hold shelter summits open to the public to educate people on disaster preparation.
  - Utilize public service notice programs and other entities such as United Way to get the disaster preparedness message to the public. Engage the non-profit and faith-based communities more for assistance with disaster information distribution.
  - Possibly include information from FEMA regarding what costs are reimbursable to citizens.
  - Possibly provide a virtual tour of the shelters prior to emergency activation so that evacuees can see shower areas, feeding stations, etc.
  - Send out reminder messages that are played via television and radio on a regular basis throughout the year. “Repetition breeds remembrance.”
  - Educate them on shelters of last resort.
  - Governmental entities at all levels should pool resources to select the best public education program (Ex. getagameplan.org) and put forth a unified, standard message.

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- Hold focus groups that bring people that have been shelter residents together to obtain assessments on the quality of services provided at shelters. A neutral, non-state agency, such as a VOAD organization, would need to run and manage the focus groups. Someone would need to be responsible for getting this feedback back to the appropriate entities.
- Ensure that each shelter has a designated Public Information Officer (PIO) that can be accessed by other agencies, media and the public.
- Evacuees should immediately be given a list of expectations while at the shelters.
  - Rules – List of rules, parameters and etiquette in the shelter environment.
  - Registration – What to expect when registering at the shelter.
  - Food – Number of meals per day and meal schedule
  - Showers – Number per day and shower schedule
  - Communication – Communications resources available to them in shelters e.g. phones, TVs, radios and the internet.
  - Supplies – Items to be provided upon arrival at shelters.
  - General – Name and location of shelter to which they are being transported.
  - Security – The security set-up for shelter access control, exterior security, internal roving patrols and perimeter security throughout shelter stay.
  - Medical Provisions – Medical services available at the shelter.
  - Services – Hours of operation for shelter services.
- Offer a newsletter daily in the shelter to update evacuees on major news or information pertaining to them.
  - If this is not feasible and to save paper, post various information e.g. shelter rules, parish updates, etc. on bulletin boards accessible to shelter residents.
  - During Katrina, the Governor’s office put out a newsletter that seemed effective. Consider revisiting this idea.
- Inform evacuees of news from home at least twice per day during sheltering. Press releases to inform them should be coordinated and sent to shelters daily.
  - Perhaps these press releases will be written and distributed in conjunction with the GOHSEP daily conference call schedule.
  - Help evacuees understand that re-entry is strategic: a parish may be ready to receive its general population but not its medical special needs population due to infrastructure issues; in the same way, an individual may be returned to his/her parish of origin but may not receive his/her pet back until a few days later. All phases of re-entry must be properly coordinated.
- Coordinate a method to provide updates for pet owners to know the locations and status of their pets as soon as possible during the evacuation process.
- There must be better plans in place for adequate rumor control at in- and out-of-state shelters.
  - There should be unified state and local messaging regarding the status of the region and whether or not it is safe for people to return home. This message

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should be clearly communicated to host states and Louisiana citizens sheltered within host state facilities in order to avoid premature citizen departure from shelters and mistrust of host states by citizens.

- o Include "Louisiana 2-1-1" in the Emergency Operation Plan at every department of the organized state response, and every level of information dissemination. This will reduce the rumors and misinformation, as well as, serve as an easy-access, public information service to citizens as they plan their actions throughout the disaster. It is the established "N11" number for human services in Louisiana and is now a statewide, VOIP Telephony System, with redundancies established within the technological structure for localized and statewide utility outages.
  - Include Louisiana 2-1-1 in the Joint Information Center (JIC) public information releases.
  - With pre-approved instructions and planned scripts already engaged, properly managed public information could have reduced and even eliminated some of the more injurious and problematic misinformation that occurred. It could have also prevented some of the hostility experienced in the long lines at Disaster Food Stamp Office sites and provided information on shelters that were full or never opened. It took significant effort and multiple appeals to gain information that was not posted on [www.Emergency.Louisiana.gov](http://www.Emergency.Louisiana.gov). If 2-1-1 is an authorized public information portal, the lack of universal access and recognition as an emergency preparedness and disaster response partner in fulfillment of that role bears further review.
  - Learned lessons also revealed that there were multiple contractual "Call Center" providers from outside of Louisiana (Arizona, North Carolina, Georgia) and in service to various Departments of the State (LA Workforce Commission, LADOTD, LADHH, LADSS/ACF/TANF) that operated under Statements of Work, and provided scripted information, in some instances contradictory to that provided by Louisiana 2-1-1. The contracted out-of-state providers were also instructed to refer to 2-1-1 for additional resource information as needed. As a Customer Service, Crisis Prevention/Intervention System operating within experienced and certified standards for public information for the State of Louisiana, 2-1-1 was prepared to take all calls and seek validated information before providing any information to the callers. Louisiana 2-1-1 Centers are not merely "Call Centers," but "Customer Service and Crisis Prevention/Intervention Centers." Louisiana 2-1-1 Center staff is uniquely experienced in providing and managing complex and confidential information for all manners of human services specifically related to Louisiana.
- o Eliminate or reduce 2-1-1's role during emergencies. During the past four major hurricanes, 2-1-1 has not proven as capable of fulfilling its emergency role as expected. Increasing capacity has not improved the capability of 2-1-1 to provide services to individuals and organizations during emergencies.
- o There must be better communication between states during emergencies.

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- Need better coordination between Louisiana and host states, amongst state emergency management agencies and state ESF-6 partners (including VOAD).
  - Allow partner states to have access to real-time data regarding Louisiana's emergency planning data through WebEOC.
  - Fully train assigned Louisiana liaison teams to communicate on behalf of the State to appropriate host state personnel.
  - Provide a designated point-of-contact to each host state that can make official decisions and whom host states can consistently have access to for reliable information during emergency events.
- Ensure that all shelters are equipped with the following communications equipment:
    - PA System
    - Televisions (with cable access)
    - Radios
    - Computer Access (when possible)
    - Telephones
    - Messaging Center (White Boards/Message Boards)
    - Devices for persons with disabilities (TTY/CCTV)
    - Utilize new technology, such as Slingbox, to stream web casts to TV inside shelters.
    - Work with private entities to get access for evacuees to mobile computer and phone units, which could be brought to shelters if funding not available for state-provided resources.
  - Distribute shelter information and updates during the meal distribution process when feasible.
  - All communications within shelters, and pre-event campaigns, should ensure that appropriate measures are taken to get the message to those that do not speak English, have a hearing/visual impairment, are mentally ill, etc.
    - What are the provisions for communicating with these persons in shelters?
  - ARC operates a Web site, called Safe and Well, where evacuees can get online and register in order to let loved ones know their status. Perhaps this concept, or even this website, can be integrated into the State's plan for tracking evacuees.

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## Broader Issues Related to Emergency Management

- There should be a movement for a national sheltering system.
- A working group of Gulf Coast emergency management representatives, including Louisiana ESF-6 stakeholders, should collaborate and write a proposal to FEMA for the national plan. Member states should approach their governors to forward and support this issue at the National Governors Association meetings.
- DHS should begin to identify available resources needed to develop a National Mass Sheltering Plan.
- There is a need for official resource typing of shelters, services and management team.
  - The lack of standard terminology for describing what services a shelter provides and the nature of specific classifications of evacuees (Ex. CTN – Critical Transportation Needs) leads to a lack of resources to meet particular needs of evacuees.
  - There is a need for coordination amongst state partners, FEMA and NEMA to create a national shelter typing program and develop categories for evacuees to ensure appropriate resources and services are available in all shelters.
  - Share accurate resource information across the Gulf Coast region.
- There is a need for state and federal levels of government to improve agreements and processes with emergency contractors, especially since some contractors did not fulfill obligations during Hurricanes Gustav & Ike as stipulated in their agreements.
  - Work with FEMA to coordinate Gulf Coast regional resources amongst all needy states during emergencies so no one state hoards all the resources.
  - Establish critical supply list in order to avoid over-extending vendors during emergencies that affect more than one Gulf Coast state.
  - Focus on supplies that are in finite supply, such as generators, ambulances, buses and mobile shower units.
- Sheltering plans should continue to be less hurricane-focused and more all-hazards in their approach to emergency response.
  - There is a need to consider hardening all state-run sheltering facilities to withstand hurricane force winds. What if Hurricane Gustav had sustained hurricane force winds in north Louisiana where most CTNS are?
- Sheltering plans should include the scenario of a full coastal evacuation, as with Hurricanes Gustav & Ike.
- Evacuation is currently a weak process in Louisiana. Even though the people were evacuated safely during Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, this was not without extreme agitation, prolonged bus rides and resource issues. Perhaps this would change if

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there was one primary lead agency responsible for the overall success of evacuation, much like DSS is responsible for the overall success of sheltering. This agency needs to be able to bring all necessary entities together to write an evacuation plan for the State and ensure that all agencies do their parts. The most likely candidate for this coordinating entity is GOHSEP.

- One major reason shelter residents have so many needs is restrictions related to the number of bags they can have on the bus. CTN persons are usually only allowed one bag, placing them in a predicament of choosing between bringing adequate amounts of clothing or other supplies. This issue needs to be further discussed between evacuating and sheltering stakeholders.
- All response personnel must be adequately trained for emergency roles prior to emergency activation.
- There is a need for an enhanced capability to provide more accurate evacuation estimates in the preparedness and response phases of emergencies.
  - There is a need to conduct studies, such as a behavioral analysis.
  - All stakeholders should agree to use a common set of evacuation data.
  - Some local entities inflated planning estimates while others underestimated the need amongst their citizens.
- There must be a system in place to monitor the movement of transportation vehicles during evacuation. Some host states were not notified prior to and could not track the arrival of transportation assets in enough time to properly prepare for receiving evacuees.
- There is a need for better Parish Pick-Up Point (PPP) screening and triage in order to avoid putting medically needy people on long haul buses. Consider placing at least one person with medical training on each bus so that shelters are not overwhelmed with medical needs for which they are unprepared.
- Sheltering (response) and recovery should be integrated so that evacuees are able to be self-sustained as soon as possible after emergencies.
  - Information dissemination for recovery efforts should be disseminated within shelters. Problems that begin during sheltering do not necessarily end after evacuees leave the shelters. Ex. People are out of work for 7-10 days and cannot pay rent as normal, so eviction notices ensue.
  - Financial and social services eligibility could be determined while in shelters.
  - Food stamp distribution could begin in shelters.
- DSS should create a database for volunteers to sign up prior to emergencies and this list can be maintained. Registered volunteers should also be offered specific training related to ESF-6 functions.

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