

Rapid Response Protocol: A Framework for Collaboration

NEW YORK CITY BAR ASSOCIATION
PRO BONO & LEGAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

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INTRODUCTION

When we think of “first responders,” we usually think of firefighters, police, and emergency medical workers. Right behind them, though, are the lawyers. Legal needs in emergencies are numerous and varied, and they often have to be addressed rapidly while situations are still developing. The structures for provision of mass legal services that take shape in the initial period following a disaster help to preserve rights, provide documentation, and create a sense of order that enables people to begin the difficult work of recovery from crisis. For these reasons, it is essential that the legal community’s rapid response to emergencies be efficient, effective, and as comprehensive as is possible under the specific circumstances at the time of need. This requires planning and collaboration.

The New York City legal community has a strong history of collaboration in the face of disaster. We have collectively mobilized for situations ranging from natural disasters like Super Storm Sandy, to terrorist events like 9/11, to Presidential Executive Orders affecting the rights of foreigners entering New York City. This collaboration has been a significant factor in our community’s ability to serve, *pro bono*, thousands of New Yorkers in crisis. Building on that history, and with the goal of increasing the effectiveness of the legal community’s rapid responses and maximizing our ability to serve New Yorkers in a disaster situation, the Pro Bono and Legal Services Committee of the New York City Bar Association has created this Rapid Response Protocol (the “RRP”) to serve as a framework to use in future crises requiring a rapid legal response.

This plan anticipates situations in which the need for immediate legal services surpasses the capacity of legal services agencies, necessitating greater than usual cooperation and collaboration among these agencies as well as heightened involvement by law students and pro bono lawyers at law firms and bar associations. Our hope is that the RRP will be a useful guide for organizations and individuals coming together to respond to a crisis, as well as a tool to help organizations prepare as much as possible in advance of an event that might trigger a need for a rapid legal response. Our ultimate objective, as always, is to facilitate the delivery of comprehensive legal services to the New York City community with efficiency and excellence.

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USING THE RAPID RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Every emergency situation presents new and distinct challenges, and it would be impossible to anticipate and address each potential issue and obstacle that could surface during a crisis-driven legal response. But over the last 20 years we have learned a few key lessons from the calls to action for which the New York City legal community has mobilized that apply uniformly to all rapid legal responses. Regardless of the precipitating cause, an effective rapid legal response requires the following:

Collaboration: Strong and early collaboration among key stakeholders;

Leadership: An early determination of key leaders with clearly defined responsibilities; and

Resources: A marshalling of a wide variety of resources, including both legal and non-legal organizations and individuals, as well as on-line resources.

The sections that follow flesh out these elements and, together, offer a framework for coordinating a rapid legal response. But it is important to remember that the RRP sets forth a guiding framework only, and that not all of the RRP's suggestions will apply to, or be necessary to implement in, all rapid legal response situations. Flexibility is key when applying the RRP's framework to each unique situation.

COLLABORATION

The New York legal community has a strong history of collaborating to help ensure access to justice for all New Yorkers. The *Resources* section of the RRP lists some of the places to consider reaching out to first when a legal emergency occurs that requires a rapid response. Of course, the number of volunteers and organizations involved in the response will depend on the size of the population affected and the capacity of each legal organization involved in the response. Depending on the nature or size of the response, it may not be necessary to utilize all resources, and it may be possible for one legal services organization to lead the response alone, with minimal outside support. But collaboration, whether it be among a few key legal services organizations, legal services organizations and the private bar, or the entire New York legal community, should always be a consideration.

Even if the legal response can be coordinated and managed by one primary organization with the capacity and expertise to take control of the effort, communication with key stakeholders throughout the disaster is critical, and it is advisable to reach out to some of the organizations listed in the *Resources* section to maintain an open line of communication and ensure that efforts are not being duplicated. Key organizations that you may want to consider reaching out to right away, if only to keep the lines of communication open and ensure that important segments of the New York legal community are aware of how a major legal need is being addressed, include:

- New York City Bar Pro Bono & Legal Services Committee (<http://www.nycbar.org/member-and-career-services/committees/pro-bono-and-legal-services-committee>).
- Public Interest Pro Bono Association (<http://pipba.org>).
- Association of Pro Bono Counsel (<https://www.apbco.org>).
- New York Metro Area Public Interest Advisors Network (a network of public interest/pro bono advisors at NY Metro area law schools).

You will find more detail on each of these groups in *Resources*, below.

LEADERSHIP

Drawing on experience with mass legal responses, we suggest in the attached chart an organizational structure that should be adaptable to respond to any urgent mass legal need. The structure divides the elements of a mass legal response into five areas, and assigns a coordinator to take responsibility for leading each area. We believe this division of responsibility will promote speedy and effective coordination and collaboration. Not every role will need to be filled in every response, but this chart provides a prompt for addressing most of the concerns that arise in rapid response situations. The coordinator roles—which should be filled as early as possible after the need for a mass legal response becomes apparent—are:

- 1. Legal Volunteers Coordinator**
- 2. Client Coordinator**
- 3. Public Communications Coordinator**
- 4. Facilities Coordinator**
- 5. Technology Coordinator**

Depending on the nature or size of the rapid response, it is possible that these coordinator roles could be filled by leaders from one legal services organization. However, assuming a broader response is needed, we anticipate that the roles will be filled from several sources coming together to coordinate the response, such as legal services, law firm, and bar association professionals, as well as law school and community volunteers. Each coordinator serves as the point person for their aspect of the rapid response, and will manage additional volunteers who are involved in that aspect.

The coordinators will form the nucleus of a steering committee for the duration of the rapid response that will have primary responsibility for making sure that legal needs are met promptly and efforts are not duplicated. Depending on the situation, it may make sense to include other deeply involved stakeholders in the steering committee, for example, subject matter experts, representatives of the affected communities, representatives from the key groups identified above and/or the New York City Office of Emergency Management. It will be important, however, to keep the steering committee small enough that members can stay in close, frequent contact and, when needed, reach decisions quickly.

The responsibilities of these five key coordinators are discussed in more detail below.

I. Legal Volunteers Coordinator

The Legal Volunteers Coordinator (“LVC”) is responsible for ensuring an organized, knowledgeable, and efficient volunteer workforce of lawyers, paralegals, students, legal administrative support, and legal translators. The LVC will need to work closely with relevant subject matter experts and legal services providers to carry out these responsibilities.

The Protocol envisions the LVC as the manager of a team of sub-coordinators, and one of the first things the LVC should do is gather a team and begin delegating tasks. Exhibit A is a chart detailing the suggested division of labor into sub-coordinator roles.

Another important first step for the LVC and team is to identify the best way to communicate with legal volunteers. There should be one place where the most current and relevant information is available for legal volunteers, and one communication system that can be used to communicate information to potential legal volunteers or current legal volunteers, including answering volunteer questions. This could be a secure messenger app or some other type of secure communication platform. It may be helpful to coordinate with the Public Communications Coordinator and/or the Technology Coordinator in deciding the best method for communicating with legal volunteers. The *Legal Volunteers* section, below, details tools that may be used for these tasks.

Responsibilities

- Identify the need for lawyers. How many? What kind of legal expertise is needed? Is there a need for lawyers who speak a particular language? Lawyers admitted in a particular jurisdiction?
- Identify the need for legal support, including paralegals, law students, translators, notaries, and legal administrative support.
- Target organizations to recruit legal volunteers with the required expertise and experience.
- Maintain database of “expert” volunteers and ensure that some experts are always on hand during volunteer shifts to help less experienced volunteers.
- Maintain system for registering, vetting, and scheduling legal volunteers.
- Manage volunteer work assignments.
- Ensure training and sample documents are readily available.
- Organize mass trainings if needed.
- Maintain communications with legal volunteers and potential legal volunteers. Be able to answer inquiries.
- Track legal community participation and services that are being offered.
- Determine need for remote legal professionals; recruit and manage remote volunteers if needed.
- Knowledge management.

II. Client Coordinator

The Client Coordinator (“CC”) is responsible for ensuring that potential clients are being identified, are made aware of available services and are properly screened, and that adequate services are being offered to the clients based on their needs. Each legal service organization involved in the legal response will have its own screening and intake and procedures. The goal of the CC is not to override or duplicate these procedures, but instead to make sure the process runs efficiently. Depending on the nature and scope of the legal response, this could involve volunteers conducting very simple screenings, where eligible clients are then referred to legal services agencies for more in-depth intakes and service. If a massive response is required, it is possible that screening, intake, and service might flow through a system devised specifically by the coordinated rapid response effort. Client Coordinator responsibilities will therefore vary according to the client service model(s) employed.

If the rapid response legal needs are large and on-going, the Client Coordinator should consider the possibility of creating an intake hotline, or an intake text or email address that potential clients could use to inquire about getting a screening. For example, the NYS Bar Association Legal Referral Service operated a statewide Sandy Relief Hotline in conjunction with the Young Lawyers Committee of the ABA (which contracts with FEMA to provide disaster legal relief). This is an area ripe for collaboration with some of the organizations identified in the *Resources* section of the RRP, such as the New York City Bar Association and the City Bar Justice Center, both of which have call center capacity.

As with every segment of the rapid response, the protocol envisions the Client Coordinator as the manager of a team of sub-coordinators. Exhibit A suggests a division of labor into sub-coordinator roles.

Responsibilities

- Identify potential clients, either through onsite intake or other means by which people request assistance.
- Track and initiate communications with the public about how to access legal services.
- Maintain referral resources.
- Provide information regarding legal services available to clients.
- Make sure clients are appropriately screened for eligibility and needs.
- Maintain confidential client database.
- Track client needs to ensure appropriate services are being delivered.
- Conduct status updates on a regular basis, including reporting on capacity and client service needs.

III. Public Communications Coordinator

The Public Communications Coordinator (“PCC”) can be thought of as the rapid response effort’s liaison to the people and institutions who are not initially involved in

providing or receiving legal services. The PCC is responsible for communications with government and politicians; with interested organizations that are not immediately involved in providing or receiving services; with the press and social media, and, when relevant, with the Red Cross or other emergency management agencies.

As with the other key leadership roles, it may be appropriate or necessary to divide these responsibilities among a team of several sub-coordinators. See Exhibit A for a chart detailing the suggested division of labor into sub-coordinator roles. It will be helpful to identify in advance professionals in the fields of press and public relations, including social media, who may be willing to take charge of those aspects of outreach. These professionals may be at organizations involved in the rapid response (law firms; legal services groups), non-profit communications organizations (e.g., Voices of Civil Justice), or at PR agencies. A discussion of communications strategy appears in *Communicating with the Public*, below.

Responsibilities

- Communicate with government and relevant politicians about legal needs of affected people and, where relevant, requests access to, e.g., emergency assistance centers so that legal services can be offered there.
- Make and maintain contact with government agencies whose cooperation is needed to meet legal needs (e.g. to obtain official copies of lost documents).
- Make and maintain contact with court system to facilitate communication and access to courts if needed (e.g. in situations of mass arrests).
- Issue information to press about situation; ensure timely and knowledgeable responses to press inquiries.
- Maintain contact with and among press offices of entities involved in legal response; attempt to coordinate messaging.
- Reach out to allies beyond geographic area, such as APBCo, NLADA, or issue-based coalitions, to provide information and solicit needed resources. Possible resources include volunteers; legal information, trainings or guides; or contacts. Respond to inquiries and offers of help from allies.
- Create and maintain social media accounts/presence; correct rumors or misleading information spread through social media.
- Coordinate with New York City Emergency Management agency, Red Cross, or other emergency management agency, to share information about legal needs of affected people and obtain necessary support.
- In appropriate situations, keep emergency management agencies updated as new needs or issues arise.

IV. Facilities Coordinator

If the situation requires, the Facilities Coordinator is responsible for locating, securing, and setting up space for “command central,” *i.e.*, a central location to coordinate the rapid response, as well as one or more locations for the actual delivery of legal services. If groups involved in the rapid response can provide space, the Facilities Coordinator may assist with obtaining equipment (such as additional laptops, printers

and scanners) or otherwise helping to adapt the space as needed, coordinating with building security, etc. Additional responsibilities include acting as liaison with employees of the facility where services are being delivered and maintaining the space and work site in an efficient, safe and organized manner appropriate to the particular situation and needs of the service providers and other volunteer staff. The Facilities Coordinator may manage other volunteers in meeting these needs; Exhibit A details a suggested division of labor among sub-coordinators. It will be helpful to identify in advance sources of needed supplies, such as law firms that may be willing to loan hardware, software, internet access points, telephone access points, power strips, and chargers, as well as supplies like toner or paper that will be needed. It will also be helpful to identify potential locations where rapid response services could be provided.

Responsibilities

- Ascertain the criteria of the needed space (what, where and when).
- Identify and set up space for “command central.”
- Identify and set up space for the delivery of legal services, including space for private client interviews or rest areas.
- Work with Technology Coordinator to install power, hotspots and other hardware.
- Locate and provide power sources and lighting for both spaces as well as private interview and rest areas.
- Provide office supplies and furnishings for both spaces.
- Establish lines of internal communication for space needs.
- Provide on-going food, water, coffee and utensils for volunteers and staff.
- Post signage identifying the spaces, entrances, exits and rest rooms.
- Maintain awareness among volunteers and staff of the resources available to them.
- Maintain awareness of established safety protocols of the building/premises.
- Provide driving, walking and public transportation directions to the facility.
- Provide instructions for parking and if necessary, parking permits.
- Restore spaces to their original condition when services have concluded.
- Return borrowed equipment.

V. Technology Coordinator

Any time legal services are delivered in an emergency context, the lawyers delivering them will benefit by incorporating technology into several different functions. Technology will be needed for (a) communication and data management between and among various segments of the rapid response effort (b) volunteer communication and management (including training), and (c) client communication and management (including case filing and recordkeeping). The Technology Coordinator can be thought of as having responsibility for the nervous system of the team, which will carry various kinds of messages to the various cohorts of the project, instructing them on the team’s needs, educating them on important information, and carrying feedback in many directions.

Because functional technology is highly reliant upon variables such as availability of electricity, availability of bandwidth, hardware, and the aptitude of those using it, one of the primary responsibilities of the Technology Coordinator is immediately to identify the team's needs and potential resources and their limitations, so that needed technological support for the rapid response effort can be procured and provided. The Technology Coordinator will work closely with the Facilities Coordinator to install and support appropriate technologies at "command central" as well as service delivery sites.

The Technology Coordinator will ideally be a person with a current understanding of existing technology, the flexibility to get a system up and running under typically suboptimal circumstances, and creative thinking about how the team's needs can be met using available resources. A leader from one of the bar committees on technology or a law firm technology leader would be well suited for this role.

Responsibilities

- Identify and disseminate a method of communication among the steering committee and other high level members of the rapid response effort.
- Build technology support team, including hardware support services and program developers to help create and support appropriate systems within the project.
- Assess available resources, both hardware and human technological expertise, for the command center.
- Establish the technological aspects of the "command center," including computers, phones, and other electronic devices and tools.
- Supervise development of communication mechanism for volunteer attorneys, legal experts, and other rapid response participants.
- Work with Client Coordinator and in conjunction with legal service organizations and city/state government, as needed, to provide mechanism for clients to request legal services.
- Evaluate remote locations where legal services will be delivered, assessing available electricity/energy resources, communications bandwidth, and site-specific data security concerns.
- Ensure hardware and data security for the technology and records that will be amassed in the course of the response. This includes developing security policies and communicating them to all participants in the project.
- Track devices and hardware lent or donated to the project.
- Develop system to assist team in delivering real time tech support to command center and remote service locations.
- Coordinate with legal service organizations, law firms, government and other emergency services to ensure that the rapid response effort is appropriately linked to those organizations' technology, in a way that safeguards client confidentiality.

MOUNTING A SUCCESSFUL RESPONSE

Below are more detailed discussions of several aspects of a rapid response. These include: legal volunteer recruitment, management, and training; secure communications; and communications strategy.

I. Legal Volunteers

A. Recruitment

New York City has a strong infrastructure for recruiting volunteers to provide pro bono legal services. Recruitment from large law firms will be done by the pro bono counsel/coordinators at large law firms, who can be reached quickly through the Pro Bono Coordinators listserv or the Chatter network maintained by the Association of Pro Bono Counsel. The effort should not end with large firms, however. Additional networks to recruit lawyers include:

- The City Bar Justice Center (the pro bono center for the City Bar).
- the New York State Bar Association Pro Bono Network.
- Pro Bono Net, which has a roster of volunteer lawyers.
- Volunteer networks of participating legal services agencies.
- Specialty bar associations with pro bono committees such as the NYC Chapter of AILA and the Federal Bar Council.
- Minority bar associations.
- Local bar associations with pro bono programs such as the Brooklyn and Queens County bar associations.
- Law schools.

The initial messages to legal volunteers should thank them for their interest, direct them to the centralized volunteer management system (see discussion below) and acknowledge the need for patience while the legal response system is being organized. As soon as possible, volunteers should be directed to training resources so they can invest their energy in preparing to provide competent legal services.

B. Volunteer Management System

It is crucial to have a technology-based system in place to control and communicate with volunteers so they know when they are needed and when not, and to parcel out the particular subsets of volunteers that are the best fit for a given situation. The system should be structured so that the onus is on the volunteers themselves to provide information that will create a searchable record of their interests and qualifications, and to opt in to relevant shifts, so that coordinators may direct their energies elsewhere. There may be multiple tools available to serve this role; legal services organizations in New York City have collaborated to create one such system in Salesforce (<https://www.salesforce.com/>), a web-based case and volunteer management system. Whether Salesforce or a different program, at a minimum the tool

should be used to: (1) direct interested people to complete a “volunteer application”; (2) send mass emails to volunteers as needed; (3) search for and reach out to particular subsets of volunteers depending on the particular characteristics that are helpful at the time; (4) provide an “opt-in” shift system for on-site needs that enables volunteers with relevant skills or credentials to plug themselves in to relevant time slots for clinics or other needed events.

For organizations that are not yet making use of Salesforce, Legal Services NYC has created a “start-up kit” which contains instructions for setting up a volunteer management system using Salesforce. Contact the director of pro bono services at Legal Services NYC to get a copy of the start-up kit, or to connect with the collaboration of nonprofits who are participating in the current Salesforce system.

C. Volunteer Training

A rapid response situation by definition will require that legal volunteers can quickly get access to high quality training materials. These materials typically include one or more of the following: recorded legal trainings; PowerPoint presentations; training manuals; sample documents; in-depth discussions of particular topics and live trainings.

With regard to training, the Legal Volunteers coordination team will need to identify reliable training materials, make training materials accessible to volunteers, and identify new or emerging needs stemming from the disaster.

i. Identifying reliable training materials

The team should rely on legal services experts to identify reliable training materials for use by volunteers. Here are some likely resources:

- Legal service agencies’ own training materials.
- Materials available through www.ProBono.net.
- Materials available through the City Bar Justice Center and other programs that have previously run disaster relief programs.
- Materials available through the Practising Law Institute (“PLI”), which has an extensive library of pro bono training resources available on demand, many of them free: <https://preview.pli.edu/en/pro-bono/>.

It is critical that a subject matter expert review training materials to be sure they are adequate and up to date. In some situations, several different legal services agencies (or other sources) may each have available a suitable set of training materials. If multiple sets of training materials are offered to volunteers, it will be important to clarify for volunteers that they need to review only one set of materials to prepare for an assignment.

ii. Making training materials available to volunteers

In New York City, we have determined that the [NYC Pro Bono Center](#) on Pro Bono Net is an ideal host for rapid response training materials. The features it offers, which are detailed below, are a guide to the infrastructure that, ideally, can be built in advance of a rapid response situation to host training resources and create a platform for volunteer access. Pro Bono Net and its sister site, www.disasterlegalaid.org, has the capacity to host training resources to support a rapid legal response anywhere in the country.

The Pro Bono Center includes the following features that could be readily accessed in a rapid response situation.

Resource library: The NYC Pro Bono Center library can house a newly-created folder, e.g., Rapid Response Folder, with recommended/required resources. The administrator (see below about administrators) can easily add resources to a folder. The opening page for a folder can be used to provide directions for using the folder. It is also possible to add an instruction page with links to resources, e.g., “read these materials and view this video before reporting for your first volunteer shift.” (Videos cannot be embedded in the site but links to YouTube or Vimeo are easy to add.) **Password protection** can be required or lifted on a tool-by-tool basis, making it possible to make some materials available only to members of the site while others are available to the public (see below about members).

Calendar: The NYC Pro Bono Center has a calendar that can be used to post trainings, events, service locations, etc. The calendar is mobile-friendly and permits users to apply filters such as topic, organization, city. A calendar listing can include detailed information, including a registration link.

Listservs for volunteers: The NYC Pro Bono Center can host one or more listservs for volunteers. While members of each listserv need to be members of the NYC Pro Bono Center site, it is easy to add people, including en masse. Separate listservs could be created for particular roles in a rapid response structure, for example, a listserv for site managers and one for general volunteers. Listservs can be structured to require pre-approval of messages, as well.

Site access and administration: While some parts of the NYC Pro Bono Center, such as the calendar, are open to the browsing public, most resources are available only to “members” of the site. However, as noted above, groups of members can easily be added to the site. Using the site for a rapid response situation would also require the appointment of one or more administrators who were authorized to post/approve information for the site. Administrators can be given limited permissions if desired, for example, one person could be appointed for a listserv, and another for the calendar. Administrators are appointed in cooperation with Pro Bono Net.

II. Secure Communications

Communications among team members must be secure, keeping the following points in mind:

1. **There can be command center and remote service delivery site-related security issues.** At no time should the physical safety of those delivering or receiving emergency legal services be compromised by unsecured communications among team members. For example, if there is an admission protocol to a particular site, or if a security concern has arisen in a particular location wherein law enforcement must become involved, that information must be securely transmitted.
2. **There are legal security issues for certain types of volunteers that must be considered.** It is possible that community volunteers such as translators, cultural competency facilitators, and others may have immigration, domestic violence-related, and/or other concerns that would be compromised if communications among team members disclosed their personal identifying or contact information to unintended recipients.
3. **Recipients of emergency legal services must be protected from data breaches that might disclose sensitive personal information.** Client financial data, social security and other unique identification numbers, immigration status, and HIPAA-protected records are among the sensitive personal information that volunteer attorneys may be collecting – data that, if compromised, can imperil the client’s credit, security, and safety.

At times it will be possible to communicate through unsecure methods, such as when soliciting volunteers or apprising potential clients of the availability of legal assistance. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., should only be used for the most public of information. Unencrypted email and texts can be forwarded, and therefore can be used for non-public, but not sensitive or confidential information. At other times, security concerns will be paramount, regardless of the additional hurdles they place on access to information. At this time, guidance from the Technology Coordinator should be sought, as available methods of communication will vary depending on the situation under which the team is laboring.

Considerations such as network access, access control (e.g. authentication and password policies), a permissions policy (including privileged or highly-secure accounts), remote access, wireless communication, encryption, and cloud data storage, will all be influenced by the spectrum of needs for security in communication.

Because we often attach data to our narrative, failure to consider secure communications can expose sensitive information to the public, or to wrongdoers. Commonly thought of as secure, Google and Google Docs, are both subject to Google’s data aggregation processes. Slack team messaging, Salesforce, and of course, text and email, are methods of communication that are only as secure as the settings that

were put in place when they were set up, and in certain cases, cannot be made secure at all. End-to-end encryption services, like Signal, may be appropriate for secure texting, but as technology changes on a regular basis, **it is essential that only the communications methods specified by the Technology Coordinator be used for the RRP.** A policy of reporting when inappropriate communications are received will enhance the ability of the team to maintain appropriate secure communications channels.

The security of incoming communications must also be considered. Hacking, malware, and eavesdropping are but a few of the possible breaches that could adversely impact clients and lawyers.

Periodically, a communication security audit should be conducted of the methods of communication that are actually being used in the real world by participants in the project, not to get anyone in trouble, but to ensure that everyone is aware of the critical nature of keeping team communications secure. If the Technology Coordinator approves, consider setting up a MIR 3 system for push notification that increases organizational security efficiently (see <http://futureshield.com/brochures/MIR3-FutureShield-Enterprise-Notification-Overview.pdf> for an explanation of MIR3).

III. Communications Strategy

The legal profession as a whole has an interest in clearly communicating the value of legal assistance in the time of crisis and in addition, highlighting the role of civil legal services organizations in helping low income people in the time of crisis is essential to continued public funding of legal services. This protocol encourages the organizations involved in a rapid response situation to coordinate their public communications with appropriate recognition of each organization's efforts. Below are some suggested principles for collaborating on public communications.

A. Communicate Information Quickly and Accurately

Misinformation and rumors spread quickly on social media, and then are picked up by traditional news outlets. It is thus important to make sure that you get accurate and up-to-date information to social media and traditional media as quickly as possible under the circumstances.

Communications with the public may include:

- Social media like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- News articles or broadcasts.
- Announcements on key web sites, such as government sites, legal service organization sites, etc.
- Public Service Announcements on radio and TV.
- Internet search ads – explore whether Google or other providers offer free announcements (ads) in response to public crises.

- Making information available through public libraries, public assistance centers, and other highly trafficked public locations, for example, by creating a one-page document for paper and electronic distribution.

One of the most important pieces of information that will need to be communicated quickly and accurately to the general public is how affected communities can seek legal assistance. As a result, the Public Communications Coordinator and team need to be in close communication with the Client Coordinator to make sure that all media outlets have accurate information about how communities can seek assistance. A lot of this communication will also be coming from the legal services agencies and community organizations that already have established relationships with affected populations—the Public Communications Coordinator can supplement that effort by pushing out the information to the public and by ensuring that all information in the media about where to seek help is accurate.

If the legal services organization(s) leading the legal response effort needs assistance, the Public Communications Coordinator can also help by directly contacting city agencies, existing legal hotlines, and community organizations with a succinct message about the types of legal help available and how to access that help so that all organizations are providing the same information and message to affected communities.

B. Speak With One Voice

Speaking with one voice helps to ensure that the information getting to the public is accurate. This can mean setting up a hashtag that all can use and can latch onto, creating a one-pager with talking points and a one-pager for messaging principles that can be dispersed across internal channels. One member of the Public Communications team should monitor social media and press conversations as they are developing so that misinformation can be corrected quickly.

C. Organize and Prioritize

As needed, volunteers working on public communications can be assigned responsibility for communications with particular audiences, including:

- Community. This includes potential clients and their families (and so will require coordination with the Client Coordinator), as well as allies like activists, protesters, and coalition groups. Social media plays a bigger role here but the media will also help them understand what is going on and old-school tactics like signs and word-of-mouth are pivotal as well. Consider early on whether communications need to be in additional languages such as Spanish.
- Local Stakeholders. These include local stakeholders not directly involved in providing services for the legal rapid response, such as:
 - Community Based Organizations
 - Crisis management agencies (e.g. Red Cross)

- Elected and other government officials
- City agencies, including law enforcement agencies
- Businesses
- Community leaders

Communication team leaders need to prioritize the list of stakeholders so that volunteers don't get bogged down trying to answer each inquiry right away. Make sure everyone on the communication team knows which stakeholders to prioritize in terms of ensuring accurate, up to date information. If possible, critical stakeholders (e.g., politicians who may be able to assist in filling rapid response requests) should get telephone calls and not email blasts.

This is one area of a crisis response that lends itself to advance planning. It might be helpful to create, in advance, a list of contact information for potential stakeholders in New York City. The list should include emails, social media accounts, and/or telephone numbers. You can contact them in advance to find out the best way to communicate with them in a crisis.

- Traditional Media. It might be helpful to create a press list with contact information that can easily be referenced in a crisis situation. Compile a list of the reporters who are key to getting your message out, as well as the reporters who cover this beat and will probably be at the site of the crisis response. You can also decide in advance how you will communicate with them. Here, Twitter and the hashtag you create for the crisis are paramount. But you can also create a Slack channel and invite reporters to participate for updates (just remember that the Slack app does not provide for secure communications). This can act like a temporary wire service for you to distribute rapid-response statements, press releases, and so on to a wider audience. You can also call press conferences if you have that capacity. None of these are mutually exclusive and you should pursue as many channels as possible. The larger bar associations and legal services groups all have media professionals who can assist with press contacts.

D. Structure and Protocols

It might be helpful to have a structure or protocol in place for handling communications, especially if volunteers are involved with managing the public communication effort. In every crisis, you are going to encounter stress or having to deal with events that you cannot foresee. Having clear protocols in place about who talks to whom, what to do if X scenario emerges, when to update various audiences, and so forth are key. Depending on the nature and scope of the rapid response, the structure/protocol may be as simple as, "Refer all media requests to X email address at X organization", or it may require a more comprehensive and collaborative protocol unique to the rapid response situation.

RESOURCES

The Steering Committee will want to engage with existing networks and resources in the community in order to efficiently activate the appropriate legal services and pro bono volunteers. This final section identifies some of the resources that those engaged in a rapid legal response can call upon, depending on the situation.

I. Legal Services Organizations

It is essential to quickly establish communications with relevant legal services organizations, particularly those with formal pro bono programs. This can be done through a number of networks, including The Public Interest Pro Bono Association (“PIPBA”), a collection of 20+ pro bono professionals at 18 different legal services organizations in New York City; the Pro Bono & Legal Services Committee of the New York City Bar; IOLA (the New York State Interest on Lawyer Account Fund), which is knowledgeable about the expertise and populations served by the dozens of legal services programs that it funds all over the state, and the executive directors of New York State legal services organizations, as follows:

- PIPBA: Email any member of PIPBA; members can be found at <http://pipba.org/membership/>. Or email the general PIPBA address, pipba@pipba.org.
- City Bar Pro Bono & Legal Services Committee: Email the Committee Co-Chairs; current Committee Co-Chairs can be found at <http://www.nycbar.org/member-and-career-services/committees/pro-bono-and-legal-services-committee>.
- IOLA: Email the IOLA Fund of the State of New York at iolaf@iola.org
- Executive directors of NYS legal services organizations: contact the New York State Legal Services Coalition through <http://www.nylscoalition.org/contact/>.

II. Association of Pro Bono Counsel

The Association of Pro Bono Counsel (“APBCo”) is a membership organization of over 200 attorneys and practice group managers who run pro bono practices in more than 100 of the world’s largest law firms. APBCo is an excellent way to communicate with pro bono leaders at law firms, many of which will be heavily involved in any legal response. You can contact any of the Directors of APBCo (a list is available here: <https://www.apbco.org/about/leadership>), or reach out to the general APBCo email address, apbco@apbco.org.

III. Community Based Organizations and Coalitions

In addition to larger nonprofits, there are hundreds of community based organizations (CBOs) across the City. CBOs focus on particular neighborhoods, issues, or populations. Depending on the event that occurs, they may be important partners in crafting a response, particularly when done in collaboration with a legal services organization; assisting in outreach to potential clients in their communities; and recruiting volunteer interpreters. Some of these CBOs may belong to larger coalitions that can be extremely helpful in getting word out to relevant communities. For example, the New York Immigration Coalition (“NYIC”) is comprised of 200 groups that have formed a coalition to represent the interests of New York’s immigrant communities. The NYIC is an excellent coalition to reach out to when an immigration-related rapid response is needed in New York.

IV. Law Schools

Law students, through pro bono and relevant clinical programs, can be a valuable asset in responding to disaster situations. With eight law schools in New York City and many others in the tri-state region and upstate, thousands of law students could potentially be activated in a disaster situation. Clinical programs in relevant areas (disaster legal assistance or immigration, for example) may be able to take on clients directly and/or provide training and support for pro bono attorneys. The New York Metro Area Public Interest Advisors Network, a network of public interest/pro bono advisors at area law schools, can quickly disseminate information about student opportunities, engage clinical or other faculty, and provide information about what types of work would be appropriate for students. There is a member of the network at every law school in the New York area. For a current list, or to send an email to their listserv, contact the director of pro bono programs at Columbia Law School.

V. Bar Associations

Bar associations can disseminate timely information to their members, many have existing referral networks for members of the public to find attorneys, and generally they have pro bono resources and committees that can be critical to the effort as well. Bar associations can also be helpful in creating resource guides for affected communities. For example, the New York City Bar Association distributed a “Helping Handbook,” created by law firms, after September 11th and after Superstorm Sandy.

The American Bar Association (ABA) has a Disaster Legal Services Program that has many helpful disaster preparedness resources. In certain federally-declared disasters the ABA’s Disaster Legal Services Program and its Young Lawyers Division partner with FEMA to create disaster hotlines and mobilize volunteers to serve those affected. The current disaster legal hotlines are available at this link: https://www.americanbar.org/groups/committees/disaster/resources/disaster_legal_hotlines.html.

The New York State Bar Association (NYSBA) Pro Bono Coordinators Network includes law firm pro bono coordinators, legal services attorneys, representatives from the 13 judicial district pro bono committees, county bar associations' volunteer legal project directors, and others interested in expanding the availability of free legal services for low-income persons. This group also runs the online "Legal Answers" pro bono program. Email probono@nysba.org to contact the NYSBA's Department of Pro Bono Services.

The New York City Bar Association (NYCBA) and the City Bar Justice Center have staff attorney experts in providing legal services and disaster relief, and an extensive lawyer volunteer network. To contact the City Bar Justice Center email cbjc@nycbar.org. The NYCBA's Pro Bono and Legal Services Committee includes representatives from legal services organizations, law firms, law schools and in-house law departments; other City Bar committees have specialized expertise that could be relevant to meeting urgent legal needs. You can reach this Committee by contacting the co-chairs, who can be found at <http://www.nycbar.org/member-and-career-services/committees/pro-bono-and-legal-services-committee>.

The bar associations also have access to the leaders of the private bar and can mobilize them and their firms' resources. Various specialized and minority bar associations can be activated as well to involve diverse attorneys and attorneys with language skills that may be necessary in a given disaster response.

VI. Office of Court Administration

The Office of Court Administration ("OCA") organizes and oversees New York's massive court system. OCA is led by the state's Chief Judge, who is assisted by the Chief Administrative Judge and several Deputy Chief Administrative Judges. A legal response that results in a large number of actions in state court will benefit from an open line of communication with OCA, particularly with the Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for Justice Initiatives. OCA also needs to be kept informed of where people affected by disasters can find legal services, as demonstrated by the fact that New York's Chief Judge received requests for pro bono assistance from other jurisdictions that were affected by the 2017 hurricane season.

VII. Hotlines

A number of legal hotlines already exist across the state, and collaboration with these existing hotlines could be helpful if the legal need is large and ongoing. A list of available legal hotlines, organized by category, is available at <https://www.lawhelpny.org/hotlines>. The "Disaster Legal Assistance, Sandy Recovery & Sandy Fraud" section, focused on Hurricane Sandy victim relief, is helpful as it shows the array of hotline resources that might ultimately be made available for a future rapid response situation.

EXHIBIT A – COORDINATOR ROLE DETAILS

| Coordinators | Sub-Coordinators | Role Description |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Steering Committee | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> initiate, guide and coordinate the elements of the rapid response |
| Legal Volunteers Coordinator | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifies need for lawyers and legal support establishes volunteer recruitment and management system oversees communications with legal volunteers ensures availability of training materials tracks legal community participation and services offered |
| | Substantive Legal Expert Coordinator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifies legal services organizations, firms, and individual attorneys with subject matter expertise identifies sources of training materials maintains database of expert volunteers |
| | On-site Legal Volunteer Coordinator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recruits and vets volunteer lawyers responds to lawyer inquiries schedules on-site lawyers manages work assignments maintains database of lawyer info works with client coordinator to track clients per lawyer |
| | Remote Legal Volunteer Coordinator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> manages and tracks work assignments to lawyers working remotely recruits and vets volunteer lawyers coordinates with on-site coordinator maintains database of remote lawyers |
| | Legal Support Coordinator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> recruits law students, translators, paralegals, and administrative professionals tracks project needs and coordinates staffing maintains database of these volunteers tracks opportunities for non-legal staff to contribute |
| Client Coordinator | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> informs public of availability of legal services and identifies potential clients establishes eligibility screening, if needed tracks client needs to ensure adequate services being offered maintains referral resources |
| | Internal Client Coordinator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintains confidential client database regularly provides status updates reports out regarding capacity |
| | External Client Coordinator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> receives requests for services screens clients (if practical) coordinates with on-site coordinator to staff client needs |
| Public Communications Coordinator | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> seeks support and assistance from beyond affected geographic area and keeps these partners informed (APBCo, NLADA, etc.) ensures coordination with government and emergency agencies as needed oversees public communications about legal services, including press and social media |
| | Government Coordinator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> works with government and courts to satisfy project needs communicates to government and courts regarding legal needs of affected persons |

| Coordinators | Sub-Coordinators | Role Description |
|------------------------|---|--|
| | Public Relations and Press Coordinator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pushes out information from rapid response team when appropriate • coordinates with PR departments of participating organizations • responds to press inquiries throughout rapid response • create social media accounts and update them |
| | Red Cross Liaison | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coordinates with Red Cross/emergency management agency to obtain necessary support • maintains open line of communication for updates, needs, and feedback |
| Facilities Coordinator | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determines whether “command center” needed; finds space for it • determines requirements of space needed for delivery of legal services; finds space • sources facilities needs/maintains awareness of resource availability |
| | Command Center Coordinator (not necessarily co-located where legal services are being provided) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sets up and runs space for command center • power • furniture/office supplies • signage • security • internal communications • food/coffee/water • bathrooms • liaison with location(s) of legal services |
| | Legal Services Site Coordinator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sets up and runs space for providing legal services • power • furniture/office supplies • signage • security • internal communications • food/coffee/water • bathrooms • private spaces for confidential discussions or rest areas • works with Red Cross |
| Technology Coordinator | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify secure communications method for steering committee and others as needed • consult on client database, volunteer database, and other technology needs • responsible for technology needs of both command center and legal services site • hardware - printers, scanners, copiers, hotspots, powerstrips, chargers, servers, phones, extension cords, walkie-talkies • software • data security • Wi-Fi/internet/VPN |