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CaliforniaVolunteers Announces Launch of Volunteer Coordinator Guidance Documents for Times of Disasters

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – CaliforniaVolunteers today announced new Volunteer Coordinator Guidance Documents as part of California’s emergency management system. These tools will help emergency managers across the state to better coordinate volunteer resources during disaster response operations.

“These first-in-the-nation guidance documents will allow more volunteers to be used more efficiently during disasters,” said Chief Service Officer, Karen Baker. “These materials will help begin to professionalize volunteerism by formally integrating volunteer assets into emergency management planning and implementation.”

"I commend CalVolunteers for their continuing efforts to work with Cal OES to incorporate the numerous benefits of volunteerism into emergency management and disaster recovery programs in California," said California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) Director Mark Ghilarducci.

The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) Advisory Board approved the new guidance today, after more than 25 meetings and workshops were held to solicit feedback from hundreds of stakeholders across California, including local government, state agencies, nongovernmental organizations and tribal governments. The concept for the documents is based on the principles of SEMS, following the resource request process. CaliforniaVolunteers will work to provide key training to help emergency managers develop volunteer coordinators within their own jurisdictions.

Together, these resources will provide guidance on the roles and responsibilities of a Volunteer Coordinator at all levels of the emergency management system and will help increase the use of volunteers for disaster response and recovery efforts.

About CaliforniaVolunteers

CaliforniaVolunteers is the state office that manages programs and initiatives to increase the number of Californians involved with service and volunteering, including the state AmeriCorps program and the management of volunteers and monetary donations during times of disasters. CaliforniaVolunteers is the lead agency for Emergency Function 17 - Volunteer and Donations Management. Executive Order S-04-06 charged CaliforniaVolunteers with ensuring the coordination of volunteer activities in disaster response and recovery. For more information, please visit www.CaliforniaVolunteers.org.

About the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) Advisory Board

The Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) is the cornerstone of California’s emergency response system and the fundamental structure for the response phase of emergency management. SEMS is required by the California Emergency Services Act for managing multiagency and multijurisdictional responses to emergencies in California. The primary purpose of the SEMS Advisory Board is to develop and recommend policy to the Director of California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services related to the administration and coordination of SEMS and the SEMS regulations. For more information, please visit www.oes.ca.gov.