

Volunteer Connection Benefits for Disaster Services Workforce

September 18, 2012

The following message is from Charley Shimanski, Senior Vice President, Disaster Services, and Jim Starr, Vice President, Volunteer Management:

In August, Jerry DeFrancisco and Jim Starr sent [leadership messages](#) about the implementation of Volunteer Connection. We are excited to follow up with you to share information about how the Volunteer Connection system will benefit Disaster Services, as well as to introduce some new terminology that will further unite Red Cross disaster volunteers and employees across the nation.

We would first like to state our enthusiasm about the new state-of-the-art Volunteer Connection system. For the first time in our 131-year history, we will have an organization-wide volunteer management system that encompasses *all* volunteers including all who carry out the mission of Red Cross disaster response! By February 2013, Volunteer Connection will take the place of DSHR, DROMIS and DOOR, thereby providing the organization with one computer system to attract, match, deploy and retain our most valuable asset — our volunteers.

Furthermore, the implementation of a new system presents the perfect time to introduce new terminology designed to unite Red Cross disaster volunteers and employees as one team, and reflect the importance of the work they do every day:

- **Disaster Services Workforce** refers to Red Cross volunteers and employees who help our communities prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters.
- **Disaster Responder** refers to a member of the Disaster Services Workforce who takes action after a disaster of any size to alleviate human suffering.

This terminology and their definitions are intended to be —

- *Inspiring* — volunteers and employees should be proud to use these terms to describe themselves;
- *Scalable* — the same terms should be able to be used to describe volunteers and employees working in the daily operations of a chapter and to those responding to a large disaster;
- *Intuitive* — terms should make sense internally and also externally to the public, media and partners; and
- *Unifying* — the terms should promote a sense of belonging to one large disaster team and recognize all who serve, regardless of the size and scope of the response and how far from home they respond.

For now, it is important to begin using and sharing this terminology and to [prepare for the implementation of Volunteer Connection](#). In several weeks, Disaster Services will begin sending messages to all current DSHR members about the new terminology and about Volunteer Connection in support of your efforts to on board them into the system. Until then, we are providing some resources for you and your teams:

- [Disaster Services Workforce and Disaster Responder Terminology](#)
- [Information about Volunteer Connection in general](#)
- [Volunteer Connection for Disaster Services Workforce Administrators and how Disaster Services will benefit from Volunteer Connection](#)
- Short documents you may find helpful in introducing the Disaster Services Workforce to Volunteer Connection:
 - [Volunteer Connection for Disaster Services Workforce](#)
 - [Volunteer Connection Coming Soon Flyer](#)

Once the Volunteer Connection system is implemented, the Disaster Services Human Resources computer program, the term “Disaster Services Human Resources” and its acronym “DSHR” will all be retired around February 2013.

For questions specific to Disaster Services business procedures or processes related to Volunteer Connection and related to the new terminology, email DisasterVC@redcross.org.

Our teams are excited about the introduction of the Volunteer Connection and our new workforce language. We appreciate the grant from W.W. Grainger, Inc. that has made Volunteer Connection possible. We hope you share our enthusiasm, and will let us know of any feedback you have.