SEJ Disaster Academy
February 20 – 23, 2012
Simpsonwood Retreat Center – Norcross, GA

Class Descriptions

Basic Disaster Ministry (Disaster 101)

PREREQUISITES: None

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you have already completed this course or this course is not a prerequisite for other classes you plan to take, you may register for only those sessions that are of interest to you without taking all four sessions.

This introduction to Basic Disaster Ministry is for anyone interested in the unique and important role the faith community plays in disaster readiness and response in the United States. Participants learn the different phases and types of disaster; the traditional responses to a disaster and how the faith-based response is different; disaster preparation; and ways the local church and individuals can be helpful in response and recovery from disaster.

Basic Session 1 Topics (Monday Afternoon)

1. Common Terms and Definitions
2. UMCOR's Role in Disaster
3. UMCOR funding policies and guidelines
4. VOADS and other partnerships

Basic Session 2 Topics (Tuesday Morning)

1. Conference role in disaster
2. Duties and responsibilities of conference leadership, including the bishop and district superintendents
3. Planning – why have a conference plan?

Basic Session 3 Topics (Tuesday Afternoon)

1. Local church response
2. Early Response Teams
3. Care Teams

Basic Session 4 Topics (Wednesday Morning)

1. Transitioning to Long-Term Recovery
2. Leveraging resources
3. Recovery close out

Connecting Neighbors Leadership Training Program (Local Church Readiness Training)

PREREQUISITES: Basic Disaster Ministry and recommendation from your conference DRC. This training is an ideal opportunity for Lay Leaders in a conference. Certification of fourteen contact hours is provided at the end of the training.
IMPORTANT NOTE: Those attending this class are expected to present this program in their conference at least three times within the next 12 to 18 months.

Connecting Neighbors is a Train-the-Trainer Program that teaches conference representatives how to help local churches develop a disaster ministry.

Churches are better prepared to provide a caring Christian response to local disasters if they have prepared their church families and facilities before disaster occurs. Connecting Neighbors addresses the faith community's responsibility in disaster readiness and response and suggests tools to meet individual and community needs.

Leaders are taught how to present the Connecting Neighbors program; how to connect the church to outside resources and to the community's emergency plans; where the church fits in; and how the church can help the community at large.

Participants are given all the tools necessary to present a meaningful program to local churches and to assist the local congregation in developing a disaster ministry.

Overview of Disaster Case Management

PREREQUISITES: Basic Disaster Training

This training provides participants with an overview of UMCOR's model for disaster case management. This holistic approach incorporates the unique perspective of the faith community with an understanding of the emotional, spiritual and physical impact of disaster on the survivors. The course teaches the goals and outcomes for disaster case management; how unmet needs are identified; first steps to implementing disaster case management; and how the long-term recovery committee/organization works with the case managers.

Disaster Team Leader Training

PREREQUISITES: Basic Disaster Training and ERT Training in the last three years.

This training is designed for those who will lead either an Early Response Team or a disaster recovery team.

Early Response Team (ERT) Train the Trainer

PREREQUISITES: Basic Disaster Training and ERT training within the last three years; in addition, participants must bring a letter of recommendation from conference DRC or UMVIM Coordinator.

All Early Response Team classes are taught by UMCOR-trained and authorized instructors. This program prepares those instructors for volunteer ERT training within their United Methodist Conference. This class has a maximum of 12 participants and all four sessions must be completed. In addition, once trained, the potential ERT Trainers will be evaluated in a class setting. ERT Trainers become certified after successful completion of the UMCOR ERT Train the Trainer course AND the UMCOR ERT Trainer Evaluation.

ERT Site Assessment

PREREQUISITES: Basic Disaster Training and ERT Training in the last three years.

This class teaches how to assess physical damage to a disaster-affected residence so Early Response Teams can safely access and secure the property. Topics include identifying structural problems that may impact the safety and effectiveness of the team's work, identifying tools for damage assessment and how to talk about the disposition of personal property that may have been damaged by the disaster.

Volunteer Hosting and Coordination and On-site Management for ERTs

PREREQUISITES: Basic Disaster Training is recommended

Participants learn how to provide hospitality to volunteers working in a disaster including housing, food, transportation, recreation and affirmation. Participants will also get an overview of the basic ERT, learning the ERT system and guidelines so they can set up appropriately to host and receive ERTs. Special emphasis is placed on permission from homeowners for work to be done, coordination of teams and the tools necessary for setting up and reporting activities. On-site managers are expected to remain for two weeks or more at a location to assist the local community in receiving the help provided by teams responding to the disaster.

Neighbor to Neighbor Outreach Volunteers

PREREQUISITES: Basic Disaster Training

Neighbor-to-Neighbor Outreach Volunteers prepares caring volunteers and local church leadership to respond to their neighbors with accurate and timely information about the emerging community disaster recovery as a gesture of care and a sign of hope. Neighbor-to-Neighbor provides a "just in time" opportunity for volunteers to provide short-term outreach and consolidate information for next disaster response steps. Church leadership, coordinated by the conference and district disaster response coordinators, will use a tool kit for training, debriefing and managing information.

Treasurers' Workshop

No prerequisites.

This workshop is for conference staff who will manage grants and other financial donations coming into the conference as a result of disaster. Topics will include how to request financial assistance from UMCOR, tracking expenditures, fiscal responsibility and accountability, how to set up a process to disburse money appropriately to communities in need, and more.