

**County of Ulster**  
**Department of Emergency Services**



**Division of Emergency Management**  
**Sheltering and Mass Care Annex**

Updated: October 24, 2022



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## **I. Overview**

The operation of mass sheltering helps communities provide a safe and secure place for individuals and families to stay before, during and/or after a disaster. Ulster County is susceptible to a variety of natural, technological, and man-made hazards. These hazards include but are not limited to Flooding, Wildfire, and HazMat Release In-transit. Anyone of these hazards can result in a large need for sheltering in place but on occasion there is a need for a mass sheltering to be implemented from non-emergent needs. When a mass sheltering decision is made historically Ulster County residents seek shelter via family and friends. However, the demographic makeup of Ulster County has been changing and having family and friends act in a shelter capacity may no longer be an option.

Shelters may open for an event affecting the entire County, or open as Host Shelters for evacuees from other counties, or within specific areas of our County under threat while the shelter locations are not.

***NOTE:** All disasters are different and, consequently, conditions caused by the disaster may require flexibility in the response.*

## **II. OBJECTIVES OF SHELTERING**

Shelters provide a safe place for individuals and families affected by a disaster.

- Shelters provide services to everyone in the community.
- Shelter staff abide by principles of confidentiality when handling shelter resident information.
- Shelter staff strive to accommodate the varying cultural and faith-based preferences of the residents. Such requirements could include variations in sleeping, eating and other areas as well as the provision of space to meet and honor spiritual needs.
- As required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other civil rights laws, shelters must accommodate individuals with disabilities and those who support them. Take steps to ensure that every individual with a disability can fully use and enjoy the programs, services, activities, goods, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations provided by the shelter operator and their supporting agencies.
- Shelter residents who need acute health care that extend beyond the capacity of a shelter should be provided access to a medical facility.

### III. Concept of Operations

The opening of shelter will be coordinate with Ulster County Department of Emergency Services (UCDES) and the American Red Cross for emergency mass sheltering and trained volunteer organizations for non-emergency mass sheltering needs. Municipality stakeholders and local authorities will assist in the opening of mass shelter facilities.

The UCDES will direct the opening and closing of all County shelters. This direction may be given several hours before the public will be ordered to begin evacuation or need of shelter elsewhere.

The Mass Care, Housing and Human Services ESFs are divided into three main areas.

**Mass Care:** Coordination, Shelter, Feeding, Emergency First Aid, Disaster Welfare Information, and Bulk Distribution.

**Housing:** Addresses needs of victims in the affected areas and is accomplished through the implementation of programs and services for both short-term and long-term.

**Human Services:** Implements programs and provides services to assist victims, including but not limited to:

- Crisis Counseling
- Delivery of Emergency Commodities
- Compensation
- Benefit Filling

Initial response activities focus on meeting urgent mass care needs of victims. Recovery efforts may be initiated concurrently with response activities. Close coordination is required among those State and Federal agencies responsible for response operations and recovery activities, and other non-governmental organizations providing assistance.

Housing involves the provision of assistance for short- and long-term housing needs of victims. Human Services include providing victim-related recovery efforts such as counseling and identifying support for persons with special needs.

#### **Actions: Pre-Incident:**

The Department of Social Services works with Local, County, State, and Federal authorities on the development of a recovery plan, as appropriate and plans and supports regular ESF 6 meetings with the primary and support agencies related to preparedness, response, and recovery activities.

ESF members provides guidance for identifying potential housing resources and work with New York State to provide support for crisis counseling, disaster unemployment assistance, and legal services.

#### **Actions: Incident Period**

The Department of Social Services provides appropriate representation, when requested, to the EOC's ESF 6-Mass Care Branch and assesses the situation, validates resource

requests, and forecasts response needs. DSS activates appropriate support agencies and provides technical assistance to support incident priorities and coordinates ESF 6 resource requests with County departments and agencies through the EOC. DSS assesses the situation and determines the adequacy of response and recovery activities, coordinates logistical and fiscal activities supporting ESF 6 associated priorities and activation, and anticipates future requirements.

**Actions: Post-Incident:**

Upon completion of the incident, DSS and ESF 6 prepares a summary after-action report on ESF activities and participates in post-incident after actions to identify lessons learned.

**IV. Resources**

Mass Sheltering trained volunteer organizations or NGO's will be utilized to supplement and assistance ARC with sheltering operations and will be used to open and close non-emergent mass sheltering efforts.

Ulster County Animal Rescue Team (UCART) will be activated and available for any pets and animal sheltering.